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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Wilderness Fee Permits

Hello,

I am writing in for an official comment about the fee structure for the new permit changes. I understand that funding for the forest is much lower than a national park like Yosemite, but I do think the fee structure is better. Instead of a charge per night, which discourages longer backcountry forays, I think it is better to charge a flat per person fee with the processing fee. In Yosemite, for instance, if you are on a 5 night trip with 3 people total, the permit will cost \$20. \$5/person, with a \$5 advance reservation fee. All walk-up permits are Free.

I'm also not sure what the day hiking reservation system looks like, but it sounds like a daily lottery like how Mt. Whitney or The Wave does would work out fine. I think the price here seems valid for people going in to climb one of the Sisters or another larger day hike, but does seem cost prohibitive for someone who just wants a short day hike and already pays a yearly fee for a NW Forest Pass or an America the Beautiful Pass (I.e. the "free parking with permit" incentive is lost on those people). I do think because it is such a popular area, that you shouldn't just open up the dates to reserve, but a lottery system, like for the Enchantments and Mt. Whitney, would be better suited. It would look like paying the "reservation" fee when entering the lottery, then if they win the lottery, pay the per person fee. This way, everyone will have a level playing field in terms of chances for getting their itinerary. This also promotes the first principle of Leave No Trace: Plan ahead and prepare. By submitting a lottery itinerary, the individual needs to already have a plan for where they're going and camping. And you get to know this ahead of time.

Anyways, just my 2 cents on the matter. I think a less expensive lottery has been done successfully in many places and can easily be adapted for this region. I look forward to seeing what happens here, and I feel blessed to have been able to walk the PCT through these areas in 2018.

Best,

Emily Schrick