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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Please no fees or permits for trails in the 3 Sisters wilderness

Hello,

My family moved to Bend, Oregon years ago in order to have the freedom to go on a hike in wilderness more or less whenever we felt like it. Your required permit system is going to significantly lower the standard of living by now making us likely have to plan many weeks in advance if for example to take a day trip to Todd Lake. This is a ridiculous decision. To start with 1) please double the amount of day permits allocated so locals whom wish to hike can actually have a chance of getting access the day of and 2) please allocate more than 2/3rds of the permits for pickup the day or night before.

I want to also express how upset a number of us are that you did not allow public comments at your hearing in Bend last week. Due to this action you have angered a large community of wealthy hikers (including myself) in Bend who are willing to challenge the legality of your decisions to create a fee based permit. Giving anyone of us a ticket for not having a permit will enable us to challenge the permit fees in court as we have consulted with lawyers whom think we have a great chance of winning.

The FLREA (Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act) special recreation permit fee says:

(h) Special recreation permit fee

The Secretary may issue a special recreation permit, and charge a special recreation permit fee in connection with the issuance of the permit, for specialized recreation uses of Federal recreational lands and waters, such as group activities, recreation events, motorized recreational vehicle use.

It does not say individual dispersed camping for 4 months of the year for 430,000 acres in 3 Wildernesses. you are widely interpreting the law to their liking way outside scope of Congressional intent. Fees have to be zero for these permits by law.

You may point to Maroon Bells, but there you only charge for parking not permits. Therefore, I think you will find your plan to charge for permits overturned. However, as stated above the biggest complaint is the greatly limited supply of daily permits that will likely be swept up by out-of-staters. If you make the permits free and increase the number available by a significant amount that would help meet the needs of locals and tourists alike.

Thank you,

Zachary W. Price

