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Comments: Fee comment

Hello,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed fees to access our amazing wilderness areas. I am an avid user of Federal, State, and local trails and recreation areas and appreciate all the work that goes into maintaining and protecting these critical places. I support the intent of the fee and I have concerns related to three areas: accessibility, equity, and use of funds. I imagine you are getting a lot of comments so I will keep mine brief.

Accessibility - my understanding is the permits would be available through a website. While this is certainly an efficient way of providing access to getting the permits I have concerns it will not be accessible for those who have limited access to the internet or slower connections. This may be especially true for popular areas where permits go quickly. What options have been considered to address this?

Equity - while I appreciate that limiting use will help protect these important areas, fees create barriers and that barrier will be more impactful to certain populations - including people with limited or low incomes. Can limited use be implemented without fees or are there other ways to structure the fee so people who may not otherwise have the opportunity to participate can be included?

Use of funds - the information indicated that 80-95% of the funds would be invested in the wilderness areas. I think it will be very important for people to have clear information on how these fees are used and what the remaining - up to 20% - of the funds go to. Can you provide more detailed information on the cost to implement the fee system and how the funds will be budgeted, who will make those decisions?

Thank you for the time and opportunity to comment.

Laura Hammond

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