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Organization:
Title:
Comments: Special Recreation Permit Feedback

Greetings,

Thank you for considering the public input in these important changes. I am a long time wilderness user formerly in California and Washington states and now in Oregon. I would urge you to look to existing structures from other heavy use areas in states like Washington in devising the new fee structures. The overnight fees and quotas seem in line with other areas I have experienced, such as the Alpine Lakes wilderness in Washington. I would like to know how you plan to implement it however. Some sort of lottery system would be most fair, rather than a free-for-all on recreation.gov.

However, the bigger issue I see is with day use. I have never been to a wilderness area that requires a per-head fee for day use on top of the parking costs. Having to make a reservation ahead of time for a day hike is absurd and onerous. Also a quota on day use is really unnecessary and excessive. Day users have less impact than overnight users and even busy recreation areas like Alpine Lakes do not limit them.

I urge you to go slower with this process and start with addressing the overnight use. Evaluate how that permit system is working for a few seasons then if there are still huge impact problems you might consider day use quotas. I cannot imagine the chaos of people showing up to a trailhead to find that you can't dayhike there. The cost (including a fee equivalent to 30% of that cost) for those with limited incomes will further create disparities in who can recreate in our PUBLIC lands. It is overly complex, inequitable, and unnecessary.

Implementing a well-planned overnight permit system with a mechanism for fairly selecting permit winners is reasonable. The day use system is untenable and should be scrapped.

I look forward to seeing how you incorporate this public feedback and make sensible changes to your plans.

Thank you,
Chelsea Ayers