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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Unfavorable Outlook Toward New Fee system

To whom it may concern:

I would like to put forth my official disagreement and/or protest of the new proposed fee structure in the Mt. Jefferson, Mt Washington, and Three Sisters Wilderness area.

I am not opposed to paying a fee for my hiking experience (assuming the money directly goes into reinvesting on the trail), but the current system is overly complicated and unnecessary.

It's unclear that the usage statistics of the 79 trailheads are being accurately reported. Why all 79 -- do we have factual proof that all of these trailheads are being overused? In a more likely scenario, there are approximately 10 trailheads are overcrowded, and not on weekdays/inclement weather/etc. In the cases of these limited trailheads, I can see the permit system being an effective method of controlling crowds, but I believe further study is needed and greater transparency with the public on FACTUALLY why they are being chosen.

Quoted in the decision is "Based on visitor use data from 2016, the quotas still provide for use somewhere in each wilderness on most days of the summer; for example, only 15 days in 2016 had overnight use levels in excess of the capacity in the Three Sisters; it was only 13 days in the Mt. Jefferson." This should be incentive to NOT create permits that may unnecessarily limit usage.

On top of this, when the permits can only be bought online ahead of time, you have the inevitable problem of people buying permits and deciding last minute that they will neither utilize this permit nor return for use (on rec.gov) for someone else. This kind of logic makes sense for a profit-based organization, who is incentivized by someone paying for the service regardless of whether they use it. It is not appropriate for a government organization that is trying to make public spaces available to the public. People should be allowed to make spontaneous choices to do some of their favorite hikes, and not have to plan weeks in advance to grab a permit online, all in hopes of fair weather.

I, along with many others, do not have access to a printer at home, and had to go out of my way every time I had to use the current permit system to get a printed version of the permit this year. This problem will only be exacerbated with the expanded permit system. There should be means for self-issue at the trailhead in addition to the recreation.gov source.

As a side note, the amount of human resourcing necessary to staff and police these 79 trailheads is an extreme overhead cost in itself. The forest service can better use its resources to maintaining and widening trails rather than wandering around fining users. When I used the Pamela Lake trailhead this summer (with an already implemented similar permit system), I was asked 3 separate times on my single overnighiter to show my permit, which honestly degraded my wilderness experience and did not encourage me to practice LNT principles

anymore than I already was.

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Sincerely, Archana