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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Proposed Special Recreation Permit Fee - Comments

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this important issue. I am a Bend, OR resident, a member of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness, a hiking club leader, and a wilderness lover. Here are my comments and questions.

* Annual Pass. I understand that you are still considering an annual pass or something similar. I live in Bend because of the outdoor lifestyle it offers. My hiking club hikes twice a week from May through September (and beyond if weather permits). Trying to coordinate separate permits for so many trails will be cumbersome and difficult to manage. An annual permit for a group, such as a hiking club, would be wonderful, as coordinating the payment of fees for every hike will be a pain. Depending on the cost, it would be good to have an annual pass to cover the cost all at once, even if we need a reservation for each hike.

* Our hiking club (and most others that I am familiar with) self-limits our attendance to 8 rather than 12 to enhance our experience and those we encounter on the trail. Please consider limiting your group sizes to smaller than 12, and to perhaps offer more permits.

* We are concerned about our ability to change our group size at the last minute, or to cancel a hike. Things come up (health/injuries, fire, smoke, weather) that often keeps our group size changing to the very last minute before our hikes.

* Our club plans our hikes one month in advance, so we would be able to plan ahead, except for these unexpected situations. We hope to be able to reserve at least one month in advance, and would even consider planning the entire summer in advance.

* Cancellations. Fees should be refunded if the trip is canceled within 7 days of the trip. Weather reports are usually fairly accurate that far out. If the temps will be 90+ degrees, or snow/rain/lightening is expected, people should be able to cancel without losing their money.

* Will existing permit-only areas (e.g. Obsidian-\$12) remain at their current prices, or would all permits be changed to \$3pp?

* The recreation.gov site is cumbersome. I hope this website will be improved with some of the fee dollars, including the addition of a cancelation refund feature.

The Sole Sisters appreciate all you do for us (22 members). Thank you all very much.

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Be silly. Be honest. Be kind. ~Emerson