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Comments: Comments on the Special Recreation Permit Fees

The proposed fees for the Mt Jefferson, Three Sisters and Mt Washington wilderness areas are an outrage for all US citizens and specifically an abrogation of the benefits guaranteed for past purchasers of the Senior Pass. Wilderness belongs to the people, not the government. While it is reasonable to limit access in areas that are being damaged by overuse, charging prohibitively high fees for access to wilderness is an egregious violation of all that is sacrosanct in the meaning of the word 'wilderness' itself. This is especially so for people on a low or fixed income - why is it that 12-year-old kids (who presumably have wage-earning parents) are exempt from wilderness fees but people living below the poverty line and senior citizens on fixed incomes are not? Not only is this discriminatory, I suspect it may be illegal.

But don't get me wrong - I don't believe 12-year-old kids should be charged for entering wilderness. My point is that charging anyone prohibitive fees is an abomination that tramples on the need - indeed, the right - of all citizens to access public lands. This proposal must be abandoned and the old policy preserved in its place: Require free permits for limited-entry areas to preserve their resources, and retain the affordable Northwest Forest Pass.

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