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Comments: Comment on Special Recreation Permit Fee

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a native Oregonian and have spent much of my time exploring and discovering my love for the Cascades throughout my life. It was a place I could travel to as a poor college student to discover myself and find peace. Though I know these areas are precious and should have protection, I am very concerned the proposed fee structure will likely have unwanted consequences. The biggest issue is it will create a gatekeeper outcome, favoring those who have higher incomes with flexible schedules and cash to spare. Is that what we want for our public lands, closing off the areas to those disenfranchised?

My research focuses on recreational impacts to our public spaces. I have looked for documentation on why carrying capacity was the first implementation of the regional management, instead of using the New Visitor Use Management framework and nothing is publicly available. It is important for Park Managers to be transparent. You are our stewards, as well as stewards to our public lands. It is unclear why you're choosing to ignore other options in the management toolbox and going straight to carrying capacity restrictions. Why not modify location use by closing of campsites throughout the season or focusing on other campsite dispersal management tactics? If you are going to take such a drastic tactic provide the data and research conducted to support this route. I currently see this decision as a way to close off access to those with lower incomes. Public lands to me should be accessible to all--it is a commodity that everyone should be able to enjoy--not only those with extra disposable income.

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Thanks,

Ashley Lowe