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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Recreation Fees

Dear Willamette and Deschutes National Forests,

Dear U.S. Forest Service:

We enjoy hiking Mount Jefferson, Mount Washington and Three Sisters Wilderness areas in the Oregon Cascades and oppose an added fee to enjoy that right.

The Wilderness Act was supposed to protect Wildernesses from commercialization and commodification. Wilderness areas belong to all of the American people, not just those that can afford to pay. Citizens across the nation already own the Wildernesses in the National Wilderness Preservation System as we have paid for them with our taxes. It is simply unjust to charge people to visit the Wilderness they already own.

These fees would also be illegal under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act and would exclude the public from accessing and enjoying their public lands.

The Mount Jefferson, Mount Washington and Three Sisters Wilderness Areas already plan to require limited-access permits starting next year to prevent overcrowding and resource damage. While I support quotas to protect Wilderness areas from being over-run by people, I'm adamantly opposed to the federal government charging hikers a fee simply to take a walk in the Wilderness.

I do understand that the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) allows a fee for &quot;specialized recreation uses&quot; such as group activities, recreation events, and motorized recreational vehicles. I don't believe that it was ever meant to apply to private individuals who are hiking, walking, horseback riding and camping in a completely undeveloped part of a national forest.

Such fees would set a horrible national precedent for other Wilderness areas around the country and I urge you to abandon your fee scheme for the Mount Jefferson, Mount Washington and Three Sisters Wilderness areas.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Karen Genest

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