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Organization:
Title:
Comments: I oppose your proposed trail fee scheme

I unequivocally oppose your proposed trail fee scheme for the Mt Jefferson, Mt Washington, and Three Sisters Wilderness Areas.

Your rationale that the FLREA allows these fees for "specialized recreation use" clearly violates both the letter and intent of the FLREA. The FLREA does NOT allow you to take the proposed action.

I completely reject attempts by the USFS and BLM to burden public land users with the creeping incrementalism of fees to merely be on the land. Furthermore, by such action you will administratively create a violator class among those who do not comply. The violations will have nothing to do with actual crime, only with not paying an illegal fee (again, see the FLREA for why this cannot be done). The upshot is an unnecessary added workload on your law enforcement personnel, and real harm to the users who are taken to task under the ensuing enforcement actions for something that heretofore was perfectly fine until you made a fee a fundamental controlling condition of being on the public land.

The public lands once were managed as they should be: without unwarranted intrusions on the ability of users who were not engaging in commercial activities, but merely privately enjoying undeveloped federal public lands.

The abomination of recreation fees to use federal public lands began with the obscene fee demo process in the 1990s. That 'experiment' (which merely was a test to see what the public would tolerate) never was going to be deemed unacceptable or a failure once the lure of easy fee money was given to the land agencies.

The abuses of that program led to the FLREA, and agencies ever since constantly are seeking ways to artfully circumvent the clear restrictive language of that act in order to advance the cancer of expanding and increasing fees on the public to be on their public lands.

The proposed fee scheme, beyond being prohibited by the FLREA, is stunningly exorbitant. Per-day, per-person fees, with a reservation fee on top of that for the 'convenience' of being charged for something that does not meet the requirements of the FLREA can be called nothing but 'exorbitant.'

Clearly, you are taking a page from the National Park Service, which nickels and dimes their clientele with a never-ending cycle of adding and increasing fees.

This is where you obviously are headed. It is WRONG and you are not managing the public lands for the benefit of the public, but using them as a revenue generator, which will produce little income but require unnecessary administrative overhead expenses. It you don't know what you are doing is wrong, then you are oblivious (willingly or otherwise) to your responsibilities to the public, as well as to what actions the FLREA allows and prohibits.

I do not go to NPS areas, precisely because their fees are obscene and unregulated. It's not that I cannot afford the fees, I simply refuse to pay them. I spend my time (considerable amounts of it, in retirement) on the undeveloped public lands of the USFS and BLM, where I am free of fees and the crushing oversight of the NPS.

I have no doubt that should you ignore the will of the public, and implement fees for which you have no legal authority, it won't be long before other Forests emulate your disdain both for the public and the very clear

language of the FLREA.

I expect better from federal land managers and, more importantly, I expect them to comply with the law.

Thank you.

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