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Title:
Comments: Proposed Fees for Central Cascades Wilderness Areas

November 18, 2019
To: Willamette and Deschutes National Forests

Thank you for holding public meetings to discuss development of the Fee Permit program. A few comments follow:

I would prefer not to have permits and fees required for use of our Wilderness Areas. Yet it is clear that we are overusing and abusing these rare and special places. And for this reason, permits appear necessary to limit use. I also believe Congress should provide better funding for our resource protection agencies like the Forest Service. Yet, since this is not happening, user fees also seem necessary.

A fee of $3 for day use and $5 for an overnight permit seem about right. And it's important to keep permits free for youth under 12 and to provide a mechanism for underrepresented groups to obtain a permit without a fee.

Applying through Recreation.gov will work well enough for most users when applying from home with computer and printer. However, an alternate should be developed for those who are travelling and not close to a Ranger Station during regular office hours. Consider developing a system for getting permits online through cell phones. Travelers could print a standard blank permit in advance of travel. Then, after identifying a permit date with an opening, they could complete the form online, pay the fee and obtain a permit number. With this, the user could fill in the permit number and any other information required for the dashboard permit and place it appropriately in their car at the trailhead.

Thank you for your work to protect our Wilderness Areas and for gathering public input for the Fee Program.

Sincerely,
Jim Quiring
(503) 869-9217

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