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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Central Cascades Wilderness Project

Chris Robertson

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Dear Willamette National Forest,

Good day,

I ran into this permit system when climbing the Sisters this summer. It was totally unwieldy and did not work. Clearly the number of cars at the trailhead were far fewer than would fill the quota. Of course, the trailhead is outside any cellular service, so we could not call in. After hiking up the trail a few miles, we got reception and tried to register. The east coast centric recreation.gov site did not reflect the few people in the area and had unrealistic telephone service hours. Next, I tried talking to the local ranger station - for a good 20 minutes. They knew almost nothing of the permit system other than telling us to call recreation.gov. They did not even know the limited areas. In our case, all we wanted to do was hike through the limited area and camp above it. They mistakenly thought the entire wilderness was limited. In total, we saw one two group on the trail hiking in and three while hiking out.

The Forest Service should implement other, less restrictive management tools prior to implementing limited-entry day-use permits. Examples include educational programs focused on leave no trace practices, administrative signage, revegetation and restoration projects to address areas of concern, and installation of toilet facilities and/or wag bag stations to address human waste issues. I did not see any measures to require packing out human waste - That seems like a larger impact than a few more people hiking through.

Sincerely,

Chris Robertson