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Comments: New Permits and fees for hiking in Sisters Wilderness area and Jefferson Wilderness areas

I feel the need to send one more email to beseech the powers that be to reconsider the planned fee structure for permits to hike in the above mentioned wilderness areas. I am a senior and started seriously hiking and backpacking in 2011. The joy and the sense of well being and health it has brought into my life cannot be over-emphasized. I understand the need to limit the entry to these areas due to the amount of people now hiking. But to put these fees in place will not only limit the amount of people enjoying nature but it will deter families from bringing their kids out there to appreciate these wilderness areas and the wildlife one sees out there. It will make these places accessible to only those people who have the money to afford it. I was pleased to see that children under 12 will now be free, but that does not make it easier for adults on a tight income to afford the fees they have to pay for themselves. I also have a major problem with those fees (which I don't feel should be charged) being charged per person rather than for a group. It should be done in the same way the Obsidian trail was done in the past.

The permits themselves will limit the amount of people entering, which will limit the ecological damage to these areas while still keeping it accessible to those that enjoy it and may not have the money for permits. It will be difficult enough to get the permits themselves, the fees charged are unnecessary and I am sure will add to the expense and manpower to run this program.

I want to add that I am also a member of several hiking groups. These groups are what originally got me out into areas I had never been to or known existed. The beauty I saw encouraged me to go out more and more, started me backpacking in my 60s and I now use GPS programs and can find my way in most wilderness areas. With this new fee plan and individual signups for the permits, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for groups to continue as they have, opening up this beautiful world to so many newbies. The people that run these groups are volunteers. Often peoples plans change, emergencies occur and with the fees the leaders of these events will have a very difficult time planning and orchestrating these events. At this time, I also do not know how far in advance one will be able to get the permits and that is also a major consideration. I hope it is within a couple of weeks of the date desired so people can plan more realistically.

In Washington they have permits and lotteries for some areas, but it is very few. What I see on the information I had viewed is that it covers almost all hikes in the beautiful areas around me. I can't help but wonder what you are thinking in making these areas so inaccessible.

Please reconsider how you structure this program, and the purpose of the permit system. Nature should not be a money maker. It is there for all to enjoy.

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