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Comments: Central Cascades Wilderness Project

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Dear Willamette National Forest,

I'm a climber. Every time one of these restrictive permit systems goes into place it definitely has the effect of limiting my use. I stop going to the area altogether. Regardless of the existence of a permit system, I wait until there is a reasonable weather window to go to my objective, so permit systems that clog up at the beginning of some sign up period lock out my chances of getting a permit. For me, personally, I don't care *that* much about the cost, although if it's higher than about \$10 per registration/reservation, I find it to be a waste of money if I sign up for several days on the off-chance that the weather will be good, and it isn't. I don't like limited length permits because they tend to cause irrational decisions to be made for climbers, where they attempt a climb even though weather is coming in, just because this is the day that they have a permit.

I've been trying to think of a rational implementation. My personal experience is that most heavy use is near trailheads, so I've not understood why those with farther destinations have to fight for access just for the trailhead. It sounds as though the new system is currently just restricting access to trailheads, with number of overnight passes based on trailhead access? Everything that I've been able to read seems to suggest this, but maybe I missed something. It's true that I may change where I choose to camp based on how far I have to walk to get to my final destination, but I don't think that it helps the planning any because the destination is what will take away from "wilderness experience". If 100 people all want to climb 3 Finger Jack, it doesn't matter that they use 5 different trailheads to do it (except for parking - that helps to spread the cars around), there will still be 100 people climbing 3 Finger Jack, the Wilderness experience at the mountain will definitely not exist.

I keep trying to think of a reasonable implementation. I read that the reason for implementation at all is because of degradation of conditions, but it's unclear to me if the my climbing any of these mountains is contributing to the degradations that are happening. If it's at the mountains, themselves, where the problems are happening, then I guess that suggestions are reasonable. If the degradations are in certain places, I don't understand why there aren't restrictions put in place at those places, but not all of the rest of the places. It appears that the plan is designed to make sure that there are just fewer people ANYWHERE in the wilderness areas, especially at night. Is there a way to make it so that people who are wanting to climb, get access to a certain number of permits? I'd still want to know, ahead of time, whether I should make the long trip over there. But if a number of permits for climbers, were to open a couple days prior, that might give me an opportunity to find out, ahead of time, and actually have an opportunity to get a permit.

If something like that can't be done, then I guess that the system will work really well, because people like me will just stop going. And, of course, I'll stop bringing my out of town visitors to that area. South Sister was a favorite place for me to bring folks who wanted to go up a significant mountain. I would frequently go in one of the weeks after Labor Day, since there would usually be a good weather window in there, and, we could walk up and find camping places. Now, it sounds as though I'll have to apply for a permit for those same areas and in those same

timeframes, even though I'd never experienced crowding in that time frame. So, even though it's not a high traffic time, we'll have to get permits. (Of course, now that other popular times will be limited, maybe September will *become* a high traffic month?)

Sorry for not writing this message better: Unless the mountains are the actual things that you're trying to protect, I'd like access to them to not be so restricted. I'm sure that there's a way to do it. I'm sure that there are climbers who will still work through the permit system to access the mountains, but I don't think that I'll be one of them. Thank goodness I'll still be able to climb in the winter.

Sincerely,
Leora Gregory