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Comments: comments on Proposed Special Recreation Permit Fee for Central Cascades Wilderness Limited Entry System

I have concerns about the proposed special recreation permit fee.

I understand how underfunded the forest service is with respect to wilderness area trail maintenance and ranger presence. I understand the need for increased funds.

I have volunteered at Camp Melakwa in the Willamette National Forest for 18 years. There is no internet service at camp to make online reservations. Each week, campers make numerous trips on trails to and from camp, beginning with a mile long hike into camp on the trails. Each day, scouts hike to nearby lakes on the trails. Typically the campers decide while they are in camp which hikes they will go on and when. Making advance reservations is not feasible.

My first preference would be to exempt campers and staff from Camp Melakwa from the special recreation permit fee. Camp operates three weeks per year (one week of staff setup and training and two weeks with campers) and has two additional long weekends where volunteers come in to setup and take down the major facilities in camp such as the water system, docks and major maintenance and repairs. Staff and campers provide many volunteer hours of service to the forest service now. Considering the amount of time spent maintaining the land and facilities and the difficulties of managing a fee for the campers and staff, I think exempting the camp from the fee is reasonable.

If an exemption is not possible, my second preference is to have a flat fee for camp that covers all staff and campers during the setup, training, operation and take down of camp. These dates are known in advance each year.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

David Derlacki, camp staff volunteer
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