

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/23/2019 12:12:31 AM

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Comments: Oregon Forest Plan comment

Why is the Forest Service interested in a new plan for wilderness areas? Is it to:

1) Keep most people out, especially those families with small children? A day hike on the weekend sounds great, but securing a permit months in advance does not allow for poor weather conditions or spontaneity to capture the only sunny, warm day in weeks. And where is the crowd the service is intending to keep out? Yes, some parts of the Three Sisters Wilderness are heavily used, but these already require a permit. Yet, our family, which includes an eleven-year-old grand child and a couple of septuagenarians, enjoys the short day hikes to such places as Blow Lake and Lucky Lake which are accessible from trailheads along Century Drive. Moreover, we rarely see other hikers on most short trails, and there is virtually no apparent damage from traffic. These trails are in great shape. Litter is not an apparent problem along trails or in campsites. How are we supposed to instill an appreciation for our forests if we don't make it difficult for people to experience them?

Although the lack of spontaneity is our greatest concern, the plan does seem to discriminate against individuals who may not have the funds (although they are required to pay federal taxes), computer, credit card, or set work schedule that allows them to schedule recreational pursuits in advance.

2) Establish a new source of funds? Nickel and diming people who enjoy spending time in a natural setting seems wrongheaded, especially when there is a required permit which comes with processing fees payable to a private company. Instead, why not use part of our Federal income tax revenue to support wilderness administration?

3) Hire more rangers? More rangers would degrade the wilderness experience by harassing hikers and campers who have been lucky enough to secure a permit, and by catching violators who failed to pay \$4 for a day hike (\$20 for our family) or stayed an extra day on the PCT! Rangers are expensive, but if justified, should be paid from general forest revenue. Or would the Forest Service contract out this task to another private company? And presuming the rangers would need horses to cover the territory, this would increase damage to trails and excrement near lakes and streams as well.

We strongly oppose the recommended new fees and quotas and the potential outsourcing of jobs better filled by Park Service personnel.