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Organization:
Title:
Comments: Central Cascades Wilderness Proposed Special Recreation Permit Fee

I agree, with some regret, that the proposed permit fee process is necessary and essential. The regret arises from that fact that we're loving our wild lands to death, and a permit system is perhaps the only fair/equitable way to ensure safe access to these lands--safe for the public and safe for the land. Accordingly, here are some suggestions to help enhance the fairness/equitability of the proposed permit system:

* Honor and apply the existing Lifetime Senior Pass to eliminate or discount these fees for the older population;
* Provide no-cost permits (via gift certificate or other means by which they can reserve dates/locations) to youth/youth organizations within underrepresented communities (i.e., Latinx, African American, Native American, Asian American/Pacific Islander) to encourage their access to our wild lands. Potential organizations for partnership include Centro Latino Americano, the NAACP, and the Asian American Council of Oregon;
* Provide no-cost permits to low income citizens/households (via gift certificate or other means by which they can reserve dates/locations), based on their documented eligibility for SNAP, the Oregon Health Plan and similar public assistance initiatives;
* Within the logistical and fiscal constraints, rigorously enforce litter and vandalism regulations and apply substantial penalties for their violations (including fines, imprisonment and/or banishment from public lands). This could be accomplished by expanding the scope and capacity of the current volunteer programs/organizations that support wilderness access and safety.
* As proposed, provide no-cost permits (via gift certificate or other means by which they can reserve dates/locations) to volunteers serving under an approved volunteer agreement when they attain 32 hours of service within a calendar year.
* Invest an adequate amount of the fee proceeds for public education (including school talks, speaker's bureau, etc.) to promote good stewardship of/safe access to our wild lands.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment and your consideration of my suggestions.

Sincerely,

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