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First name: Julie

Last name: Polhemus

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Limited Entry Fees Comment

Hi there, Forest Service Folks,

Thank you for stewarding our Wilderness areas. I know this hasn't been an easy decision or process for you. While I'm sad that it has to happen, I do believe in preserving our Wilderness for future generations; and, if this seems like it'll work, I'm for it.

My comments, in no particular order:

Children shouldn't be charged up until the age of 18, not 12. Consider that, otherwise, for a family of four to go out backpacking for the weekend for two nights would cost \$40, plus fees. That seems steep for backpacking--and the fees would just add up if you went out for a week.

Alternatively, the fee could be charged for the permit but not for each night, because that can really end up being prohibitively expensive.

Horses should be charged as users (e.g. \$3/horse/day). I know that horse-packers are good public land volunteers, and I appreciate them; but I also know what it's like to backpack after horse-packers. The trail is heavily impacted, campsites are very impacted, and there's horse manure everywhere. If we want to limit impact, we should limit numbers of horses allowed just as we're limiting people--and those horse-owners should pay.

I definitely think there should be an Annual Pass, largely because I just can't stand being nickel-and-dimed. I'd much rather spend \$100 (or whatever you determine) each year for my family to have all of our limited-access fees covered. I understand that we'd still have to reserve by trailhead.

How many hours volunteers should work for a pass should depend upon the cost of the Annual Pass (which should exist). If it's \$100, then assume your volunteers are working for minimum wage. A day's work earns you an Annual Pass.

A question you had:

- * The 60% reservable/40% last-minute for overnight permits sounds reasonable. And I'm leaning more toward 30% reservable/70% last-minute for day-use. And I think the last-minute should be released 48 hours before.

Things I appreciate in your plan:

- * October is free--and sometimes beautiful!

- * I'm really glad that you're trying to figure out how to get permits to lower income recreationists.

* Cancelled trips would probably be refunded. I think they should be refunded up until 24 or 48 hours before-then people could still get last minute permits.

A question:

* Is McKenzie Pass limited access before the road opens to cars?

Two large concerns:

* Recreation.gov isn't always the easiest website to use, so I'm concerned about this. If I want to go out the day after tomorrow, I don't want to have to click on every single trailhead to see if there's availability. I want to put in my date and a region and have recreation.gov tell me where there's availability. Then I'll go run there!

* And, along those lines, I see that PCT hikers are exempt, but PCT section hikers just hiking the Oregon section are not. They should be, even if they're not hiking at least 500 miles. They're not going to leave much of a trace, and they're not spending considerable time in the Wilderness, either, because they're moving too fast. And where would they get a permit anyway?

Outside of scope but important to the conversation:

We should develop more trails outside of Wilderness areas in Oregon-but still places where we can get up high. I love trail running mountains, and our Wilderness areas are a great place to do that, because I can climb peaks. If we have more developed trails, then we can spread out some of that use.

Good luck, thank you, and here's to this process being very easy to use!

All best,

Julie Polhemus