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Comments: special recreation permits fee

In response to Congressional budget cuts in the early 1990s, the Forest Service took the unprecedented step of introducing fees to park at many forest trailheads. This was deeply unpopular, but the fees remain in the shape of the Northwest Forest Pass, required for recreation at many if not most sites on Northwest forests. This situation is now practically taken for granted, but had the effect of limiting access by lower-income Americans who, as part-owners of these lands, reasonably expected to be able to enter these lands for lawful and non-extractive purposes.

Undoubtedly the great increase in numbers of users today calls for some management. Regretfully, many of us admit that trial use of a quota system, reasonably and fairly applied, may be in order to protect both the lands and the experience of those visiting them. In addition, increased public education on proper trail etiquette-regarding, for instance, disposal of material and human waste, dogs, walker-biker-horse priority, etc.-is imperative. Instructional signage at most trailheads is currently inconspicuous and easily ignored. BUT under NO circumstances should additional fees be imposed. Having to pay for a forest pass is quite enough; additional fees present an unreasonable burden and also make hiking, skiing, etc. a "privilege" rather than the RIGHT it is- after all, the National Forests were created for multiple use, and recreation was one such recognized use.

Many thanks for your attention. Respectfully,

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