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Organization:

Title:

Comments: ATTN: Recreation Fees

I am a Washington resident planning to section hike the PCT in Oregon-Ashland to Cascade Locks---in Aug/Sep 2021. My trip is 428 miles total, and 216 miles to the start of the new restricted area. My hiker demographic would best be described as "old guy with questionable knees." It will be near impossible to predict the day I reach the entry point. If I plan on 15 miles a day, then every mile/day faster or slower will put me off by about a day. Plus every zero day more or fewer than planned puts me off by a day. And of course, if I arrive 2 days late at the entrance, I am already 2 days late at the exit. This doesn't even consider days lost while avoiding forest fire smoke. You'll be writing a lot of tickets, or reprocessing a lot of permits, when that happens-at a time the Forest Service probably has better things to do. This exact day restriction is ridiculous and illogical. The trail doesn't really care if the earth has rotated 360 degrees since the last hiker passed by. Plus, time crunches while on-trail tend to lead to injuries and bad decisions.

If you are going to charge me a fee to travel, then fine, that is the market at work. But if you are going to approve me, it needs to be done before the hike, while I still have a car and computer and ability to go to a Ranger station. Approvals should be for a reasonable window of time. How about 5 days either side of estimate? How about 7 days? If you have 100 section hikers doing the 110 miles, odds are some will be a little earlier than planned and some will be a little later. Doesn't it work out the same in the end?

But, I can dodge this restriction if I hike another 80 miles on the Washington side to make a 508 mile trip, right? What does Oregon care what I do in Washington, or outside the 110 mile area for that matter. It is sad to say that my two first thoughts on reading about this pace-prediction roulette were 1) it doesn't matter if I plan to hike 500&#43; miles, only that I tell you I plan to hike 500&#43; miles, and 2) gee!-how much is the ticket? It is probably worth it to avoid the hassle. I sure many others have thought the same. These loopholes help prove this is a bad rule.

The PCTA can require thru-hike reservations to the exact day because it is the start of the trip. The only variable is how long it takes you to get from airport to trailhead. That is not an unreasonable thing to predict. But, to accurately predict how long it will take you to hike 200 or 300 miles to Irish Lake or Breitenbush Lake trailheads is an unreasonable requirement.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ed Viering

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