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First name: Julie

Last name: Schaffner

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Proposed Fees

When my children were little and my husband and I were starting our small business, hiking and backpacking in the wilderness areas was our main form of recreation. We couldn't afford anything else! These fees would have kept us out. As it was, we succeeded in raising kids who appreciate and know how to behave in the wilderness.

I really feel that the Willamette Forest needs to make sure that low income folks are not locked out of the wilderness. According to the presenters at the open house I attended, yur proposed solution is to partner with non-profits and libraries. However, many low income families are not served by these groups. A much more fair option might be for families who qualify for Earned Income tax credit to be able to apply for an annual fee exemption card.

I really worry that access to wilderness, National Parks, and public lands in general will become limited to well-off folks, and that there might be a hidden agenda to keep the low income "losers" and "people who don't look like us" out. (Given the current administration, this is not an outlandish paranoid idea.)

Julianne Schaffner