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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Recreation Fees

Dear Willamette and Deschutes National Forests,

Dear U.S. Forest Service:

I have some questions about your proposal to charge a day use fee for access to Mount Jefferson, Mount Washington and Three Sisters Wilderness areas in the Oregon Cascades. These are areas I would like to hike in.

Firstly, are these fees legal under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act?

How will longer-distance hikers, such as PCT hikers, be affected? Will this create an undue barrier to their access?

What are the specific arguments for charging a fee as opposed to simply requiring a permit, and how would the money be used? Will the funds generated by the fees go toward trail maintenance or other relevant, sustainable projects on the NF?

Will there be studies done to ensure that the fees are affordable for local and lower-income citizens? Also, will data be gathered to demonstrate that the fee system will be supported or at least accepted by the people who use the trails?

How is this particular NF, which would be the first to implement a fee system of this kind, particularly affected by day usage? I see heavy (sometimes too-heavy) usage in other NFs as well. Is it a pilot program?

The Mount Jefferson, Mount Washington and Three Sisters Wilderness Areas already plan to require limited-access permits starting next year to prevent overcrowding and resource damage. I definitely support this as long as the permit system is transparent and easy to use.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kyri Freeman

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