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Organization:
Title:
Comments: Recreation Fees

Dear Willamette and Deschutes National Forests,

Dear U.S. Forest Service:

It's in preventing overcrowding and resource damage that limited-access permits will apparently be required starting next year for The Mount Jefferson, Mount Washington and Three Sisters Wilderness Areas. Open to the general public, it's by limiting the number of people being able to visit these places that quotas should be able to protect these irreplaceable wilderness areas from being over-run.

A birthright to all citizens whose taxes should be enough to cover entrance fees, it seems nevertheless that there's a proposal to charge people for simply taking a walk in any of these three wilderness areas. The Willamette and Deschutes National Forests would be the first national forest in the U.S. to implement a fee system across three Wilderness areas even though charging a fee apparently violates the intent and purpose of the Wilderness Act and is probably illegal under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act. Nevertheless, the fee proposal will apparently charge for all overnight use plus day use at 19 trailheads across 450,000-plus acres of Wilderness.

It's under the circumstances that the USFS is incorrectly claiming authority for charging such fees under a clause in the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) which allows a fee for "specialized recreation uses" such as group activities, recreation events, and motorized recreational vehicles. But Congress never meant to apply to private individuals who are hiking, walking, horseback riding and camping. Imposing fees establishes a horrible national precedent for other Wilderness areas around the country.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Bob Hoekstra
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