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Organization:

Title:

Comments: rec fee comments

Hi-

First of all, I want to say at the outset that I agree something needs to be done with our most used trails. I live in Bend, so am mostly on the Deschutes NF.

I am conflicted about the limited access permits, as I assume many others are also. As a local who has hiked in these wilderness areas since the early 70's, it is distressing to realize that I can't just go &quot;take a hike&quot; in many of my favorite spots. And, I already avoid areas like Green Lakes that are so overcrowded.

I have come to the conclusion that Limited Access Permits are inevitable if we want to preserve any sort of wilderness experience at the high use areas.

My biggest concern is the cost of the permits, in particular the backpacking permits. I am not clear how they are figured if a group would be in a LEA and also not in a LEA in the same trip. In any event, as a parent who went backpacking as a family when my child was younger, and we were much poorer- I am not sure that we could have afforded the fees that are proposed. Perhaps children under 16 that are in a group with adults would not have to pay? These days I mostly hike and backpack by myself, so the fees won't affect me that much, but I am concerned about the access for children and families.

Even for myself, going on a multiday packpack trip can add up. Not to mention the challenges of planning ahead of time, when one doesn't know what the weather or the SMOKE situation is going to be. I would have been out quite a bit of money 2 and 3 years ago if I had bought permits for the trips that I had planned but didn't go on due to the high smoke levels.

In conclusion-

I begrudgingly understand that LEA permits are becoming more and more necessary.

Locals should have some priority.

There needs to be a clear, easy way to get last minute permits, including if someone has cancelled theirs. Which means that there needs to be an incentive for people to cancel if they have to change their plans.

Please don't charge per day, and especially for children.

Also-- for areas like Todd Lake, which are very accessible and a short 2 mile hike, there could be more than the 30 permits per day that I saw somewhere. I don't know if that number is still accurate.

Thank you,  
Signy Erickson  
hiker, backpacker, USFS solitude monitor volunteer