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Comments: Public Comment on Special Recreation Permit Fee

Hello,

Before I get to my comments, I want to say that I support a fee system for the proposed wilderness areas, the increase in traffic warrants it.

Two comments:

The proposed fees seem large enough to be a barrier to entry to people with less resources. This is especially true for the overnight fees. That seems to me to be the opposite of the philosophy we should operate from where public wilderness is concerned.

The additional "processing" fees are unreasonably large and, as I understand it, go to a private company. I haven't spent a lot of time looking into it so I could be wrong about that.

As a software engineer and consultant with 25 years of experience with websites, there is no justification for the size of the processing fees.

There is no cost (in terms of development labor, maintenance, network or hardware) that requires the processing fees to be that high. The majority of those fees will be pure profit.

This would perhaps be justifiable if it were going to support our wilderness in some way but I believe that is not the case?

If it isn't then it seems to me that it's a breach of the public trust. Likely unintentional as, quite often, tech service providers take advantage of lack of tech fluency to get away with unreasonably high profit margins.

Whatever happens with the permit fees, I implore you to make the attempt to negotiate a fair price for the processing fees. The people who will ultimately end up paying them have no choice in the matter and it seems grossly irresponsible to enrich a private company at their expense.

Thank you for all the work you do to protect and maintain our natural areas!