

Central Cascades Wilderness management strategy

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PPPM 543 Natural Resource Policy
November 4th, 2019



View of Mount Jefferson from Jefferson Park in Mt. Jefferson Wilderness.
August 2019.

Background

October 14, 2019



- Willamette and Deschutes National Forests propose changes to management of Central Cascades wilderness areas
- Public comment period for proposal
- Fees
 - Day-use permit fee, \$3/person, required at 19 trailheads
 - Overnight permit fee, \$5/person/night, required at all 79 trailheads
 - Processing fees are \$1/person for day use, \$6/group for overnight use
- Limitations
 - Limited number of visitors for limited entry permit areas

Mixed response from the public



Kevin · 6 days ago

Follow the money! then you will know the truth.

^ | v · Reply · Share >



flashsteve · 6 days ago

Gotta say that this is a pretty cowardly way to roll out the discussion, only informal chatting and written comments how ugly a truly public session could become.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Inn Vader · 6 days ago

Another "fee" besides the ridiculous income taxes we pay to our masters!
Put it onto the ballot!

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



priceofsocialism · 6 days ago

can see it now, you are five miles into the Wilderness, and all of a sudden out from behind a



smac2 · 6 days ago

It is wrong to say the Day-use permit fee is \$3.00 per person, Since these permits are only available through [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov) (which is a very for-profit company despite the .gov part of its domain name), a daily permit is \$4. That \$1 represents a 33% surcharge.

Likewise, the Overnight permit fee of \$5.00 per person can be up to \$11 if you are one person spending the night.

What really gets me is having to go through [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov). The cedar mesa area in Utah has a \$2 per person per day permit fee. They also have a weekly rate. And they do not use [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov) so no "processing" fee, Several years ago, Olympic National Park had a per person per day permit fee that they also administered in house. Dog mtn in WA state started a permit system but it's in effect only on weekends and only for part of the year.

ong here and I'd like to see some investigative reporting into the [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov) and the Deschutes nat'l forest. I am not opposed to a plan posed to a highly regressive permit fee system administered by a

Designated Wilderness





History

- Howard Zahniser wrote first draft 1956
- *How many times did Zahniser rewrite it?*
- Rewrote 65 times, died four months before Wilderness Act was signed
- Signed by President Lyndon B Johnson, 1964
- Originally protected 54 Wilderness areas, created the National Wilderness Preservation System
 - Today: 803 Wilderness areas, 111.4 million acres in 44 states and Puerto Rico
 - Today: 5% of US, half of that is in Alaska
- Must be Congressionally designated
- Can be managed by National Park Service, US Forest Service, BLM, US Fish and Wildlife
- Can overlap with National Parks, National Forests, Conservation Areas, and other federally managed lands
 - Ex: 94% of Yosemite National Park is designated Wilderness - some but not all

What is Designated Wilderness?

“A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are **untrammelled by man**, where man... is a visitor who does not remain.” (*The Wilderness Act*)

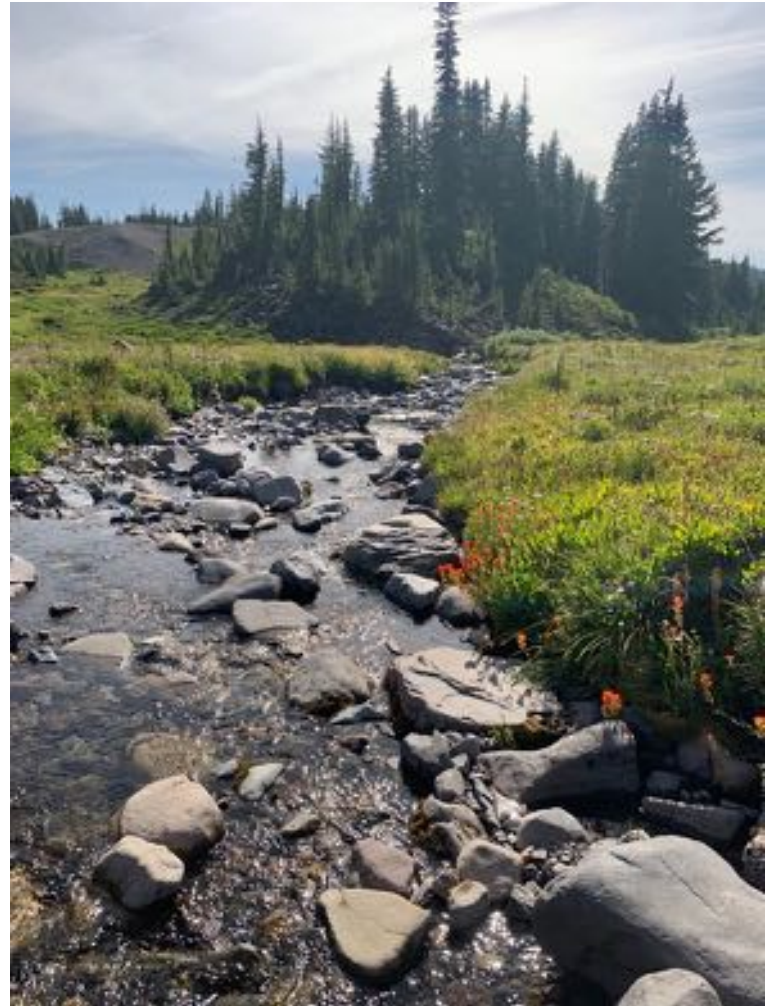
Qualities

- Man is a visitor who does not remain
- Primeval character without permanent improvements or human habitation
- The imprint of man’s work is unnoticeable
- Outstanding opportunities for solitude
- Minimum 5000 acres
- May also contain ecological, geological, or other features of value

Prohibitions

- Motor vehicles, boats with motors, motorized equipment
- Bicycles or hang gliders
- Aircraft landing, dropping off, or picking up
- Timber harvest
- New grazing and mining activity
- Any other kind of development, including roads

Central Cascades Wilderness areas

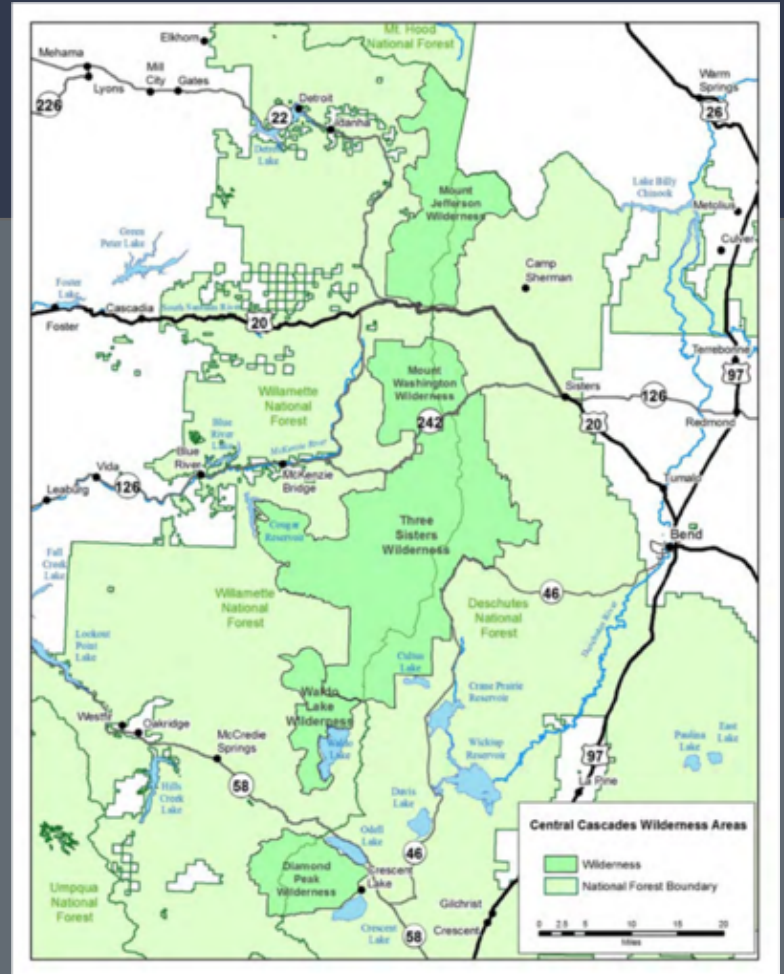


Five Wilderness areas

- Mount Jefferson Wilderness
- Mount Washington Wilderness
- Three Sisters Wilderness
- Waldo Lake Wilderness
- Diamond Peak Wilderness

Two National Forests

- Willamette National Forest on West side
- Deschutes National Forest on East side



Increased visitation

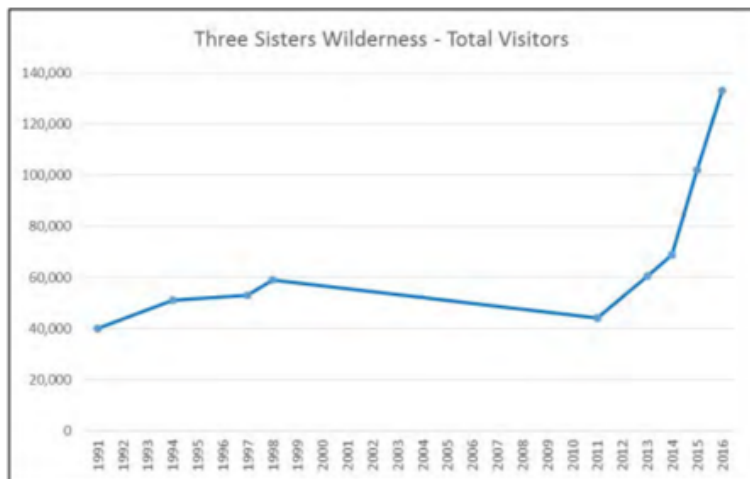


Figure 4: Between 1991 and 2016 use in the Three Sisters Wilderness Area increased 231%.

Resulting issues

- Conflicts between different recreation types
 - Equestrian, hiking, running, hunting and angling, dogs, camping, climbing
- Parking congestion
- Biophysical impacts
 - Trampling, erosion, wildlife disturbance, invasives, trash, tree damage, human and dog waste and toilet paper, campfire rings

Stakeholder Discussion

- Comments gathered during pre-scoping process, prior to the development of the Environmental Assessment and its alternatives
- Publicly available online
- Today, you get to be the stakeholders!

Stakeholders

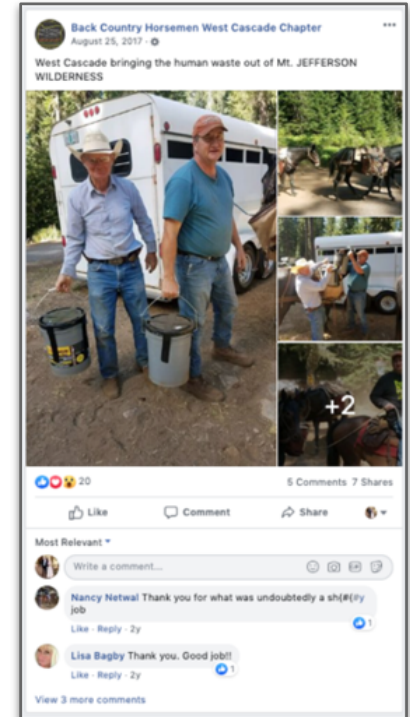
- If you are in favor of increased restrictions in the Central Cascades Wilderness areas, move to the front
 - Why?
 - If you represent an organization, move towards the windows
 - If you are supportive/trusting of the USFS or the government at large, move to the front
 - If your stakeholder is opposed to increased restrictions in the Central Cascades Wilderness areas, move to the back
 - Why?
 - If your comment is from an individual, move away from windows
 - If you express inherent distrust/dislike of the USFS or the government at large, move to the back
-
- Does your comment include suggestions/strategies to help guide wilderness management?
 - Does your comment offer criticism that seems emotional? Is your commenter upset or angry?
 - What else do you notice? Does anyone have a comment from anyone interesting? Is there anything interesting in your comment?

Equestrians



- Back Country Horsemen - equestrian riders and volunteers
- Extensive volunteer trail and facility maintenance on Deschutes and Willamette National Forests

What is the equestrian stance on the Forest Service's proposal?



Policy options



Background

- Last NEPA process for Central Cascade Wilderness areas was in early 1990s
 - self-issue permits for education and monitoring purposes
 - Wilderness focus group formed, which made recommendations for additional management strategies

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1991-498-20

USDA
United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service

WILDERNESS USE PERMIT
ATTACH TO YOUR PACK OR SADDLE
REGULATIONS ON BACK OF PERMIT

Date Trip Begins: 8/14/11
Date Trip Ends: 8/14/11

Point of Entry (Trail): Pine Ridge
Point of Exit (Trail): Pine Ridge

Party Leader Name and Address: Nicholas Hiler
Zip Code: 97030

Number of People: 2
Number of Stock:
Number of Dogs:

Expected Destinations/Camp Locations: Oregon Hills
Number of Nights: 4

LEAVE NO TRACE
OUTDOOR ETHIC

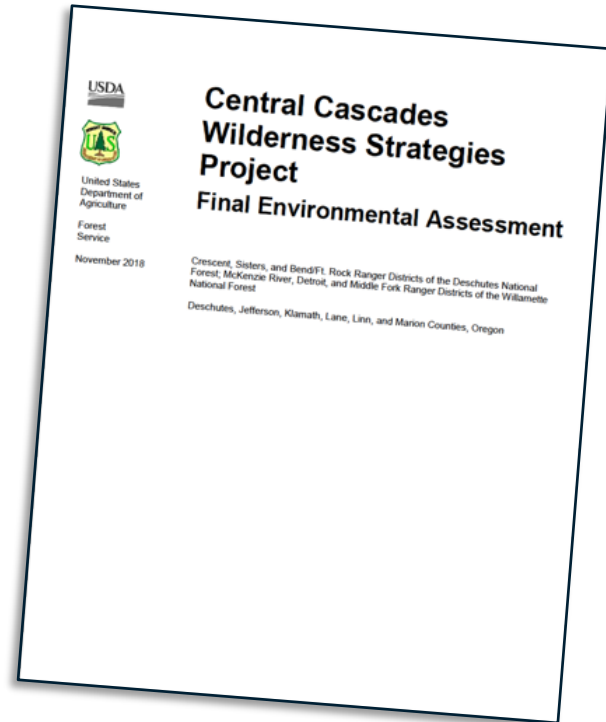
I agree to abide by all laws, rules and regulations which apply to this area and will do my best to see that everyone in our group does likewise.

Visitor's Signature: [Signature] Date: 8/14/11

VISITOR MUST HAVE THIS PERMIT IN POSSESSION DURING STAY IN AREAS REQUIRING A PERMIT

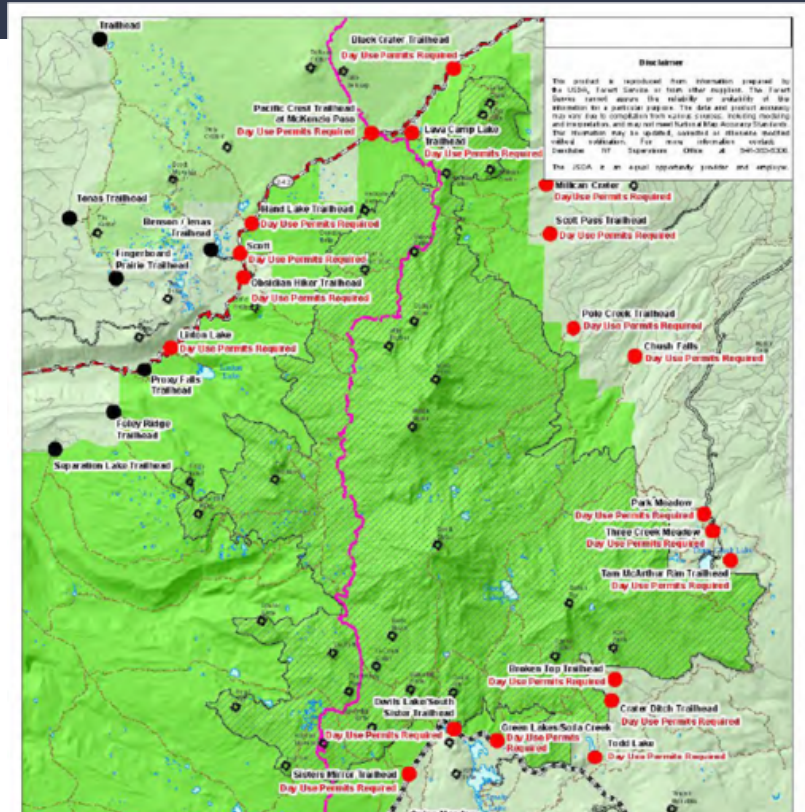
Alternative 1 – No action

- Self-issue Wilderness permits required between Memorial Day weekend and October 31st
- Campfires prohibited in select high-traffic areas
- Two limited entry areas (LEA) - Pamela Lake and Obsidian
- Camping prohibited in certain areas of Mt Jefferson and Three Sisters Wildernesses
- Stock animals are restricted
- Dogs are required to be on leash from July 15th through September 15th
- Monitoring activities continue



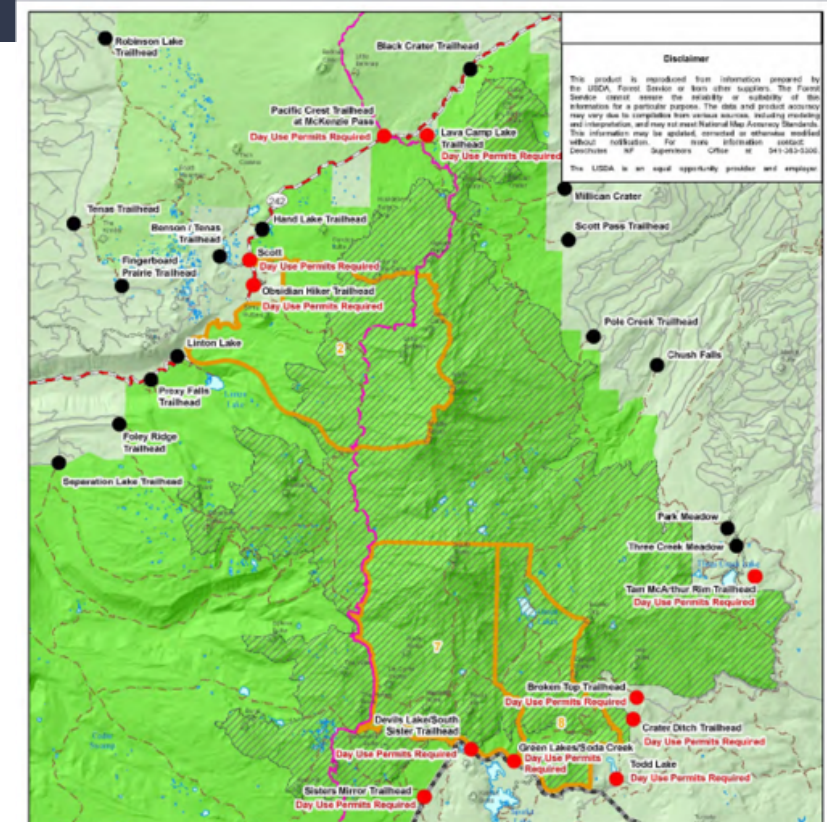
Alternative 2 – Proposed action

- Wilderness-wide regulatory permit system for overnight users
- Permit system for day use at 48 trailheads, with special focus on Cascade Lakes Highway and Highway 242
- Free movement and minimal regulation once inside the wilderness
- Campfire ban is more restricted than existing ban. Generally campfires are banned above 5700 ft, except in Diamond Peak where they are banned above 6000 ft, and in Waldo Lake there is no ban



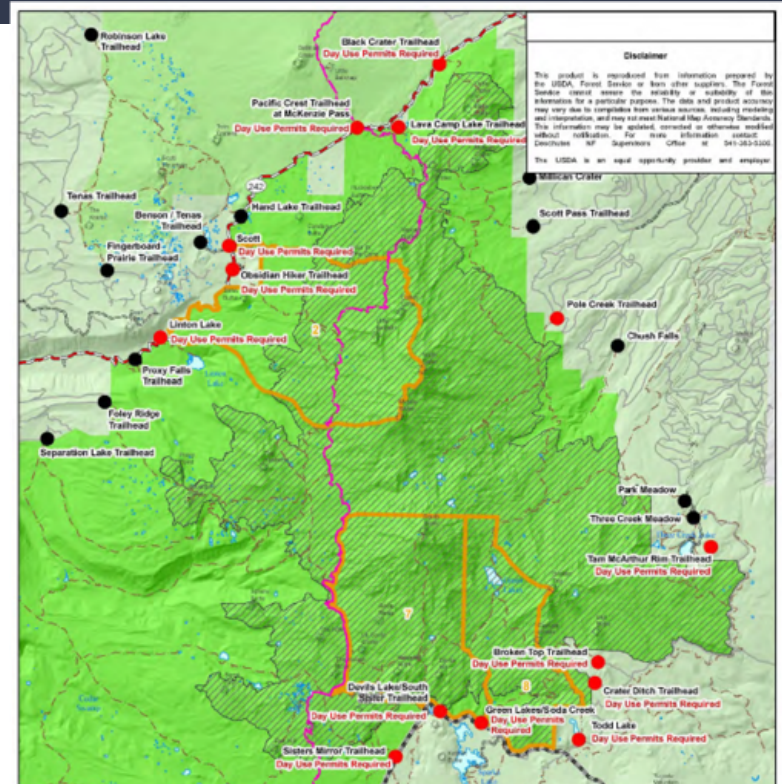
Alternative 3 – Less limited

- Limited entry day use and overnight permits for certain heavily used trails and zones in Three Sisters, Mt Washington, and Mt Jefferson Wildernesses
- No limited entry permit for Waldo and Diamond Peak Wildernesses
- Campfire restrictions same as Alt 2 - campfires banned above 5700 ft generally



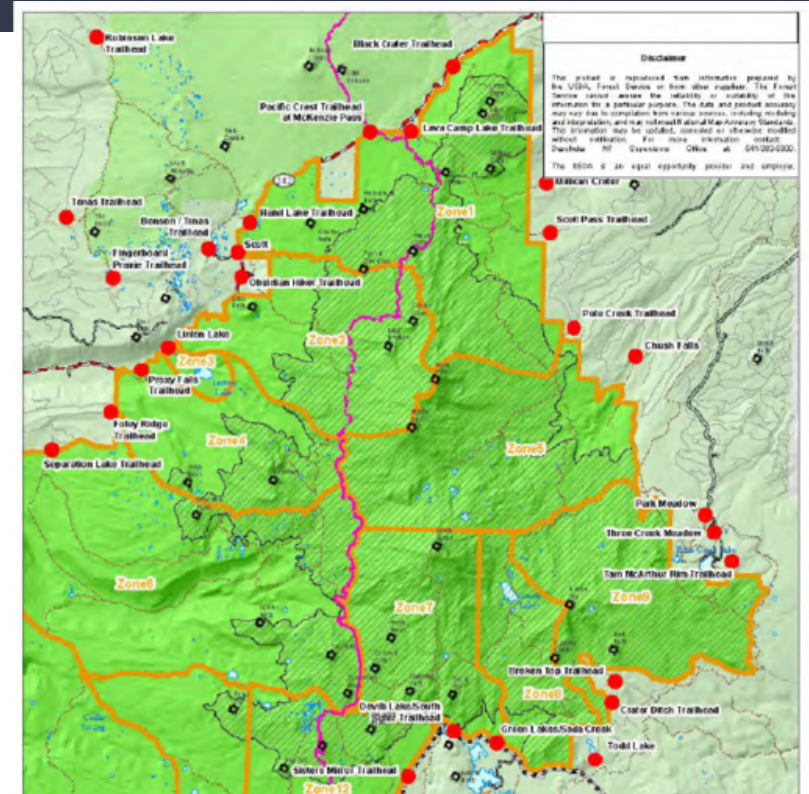
Alternative 4 – Alt 3, but planning ahead

- Limited entry day use and overnight permits for certain heavily used trails and zones in all five Wilderness areas
 - Addition of limitations on areas that are not currently high use, but are gaining in popularity and are likely to receive “displaced users”
- Campfire restrictions same as Alt 2 - campfires banned above 5700 ft generally



Alternative 5 – Highest restrictions

- Limited entry day use and overnight permits wilderness-wide for all five Wilderness areas
- Campfire restrictions same as Alt 2 - campfires banned above 5700 ft generally



Selection

Which alternative do you think was selected?

Which alternative would your stakeholder have preferred?

Which alternative do you think should be selected?

Alternative 3

The Forest Service selected Alternative 3:

- Less limited than the proposed action, Alternative 2
- Limited entry day use and overnight use permits for select trailheads in three Wilderness areas (Mt Jefferson, Mt Washington, and Three Sisters)
- No limited entry permits for Waldo Lake or Diamond Lake Wilderness areas

Modifications to Alternative 3

- No overnight camping zones
- Shorter permit season
- Travel between wilderness areas is now allowed
- Retention of designated campsites at some locations

Limited Entry Trailheads

Table 1: Number of trailheads by wilderness area that will be subject to limited entry.

	Overnight Use		Day Use	
	Limited Entry During Permit Season	Self-Issue Unlimited	Limited Entry During Permit Season	Self-Issue Unlimited
Mt. Jefferson Wilderness	22	0	7	15
Mt. Washington Wilderness	10	0	2	8
Three Sisters Wilderness	47	0	10	37
Waldo Lake Wilderness	0	15	0	15
Diamond Peak Wilderness	0	16	0	16
Total	79	31	19	91

Consideration of stakeholders' comments

*For those trailheads that will have limited entry, it is our commitment to **allow for a portion of permits/use to be reserved in advance and the remainder to be available on the day or day before a trip starts**; for day use, the majority of permits will be available shortly before the trip starts. For overnight use, the majority of use will be reservable... These specifics are outside the scope of this Decision Notice, but we are including it here because it consistently came up in public comments.*

- Equestrians: not exempt from restrictions, but FS will enhance and enforce parking for stock use
- Hunting: hunters with High Cascade deer tags don't have to obtain limited entry permit, and those with general deer/elk tags are exempt from day use limits
 - But hunters must still pay the fee for Wilderness stewardship
- Hikers: opportunity for spontaneity will be preserved with some limited entry permits retained for day-of or day-before
- Conservationists: USFS has been using other management strategies – visitor education, limited group size, etc – to reduce the impact that visitation has on the resources

Present day

- Alternative 3, with modifications, has been selected
- USFS seeks public comment on the selection
 - Public comment period is 45 days, and will close November 25
 - Share your opinion today!
 - Fee amounts
 - What proportion of permits should be set aside for day-of use versus how many should be reservable for future use
 - How far in advance permits should be available

Brown, J. (2019, October 14). National forests seek comment on new day-use, overnight fees. *The Register-Guard*.

To access all documents referenced in this presentation
and provide your public comment:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=50578>