

News Release – Idaho Congressional Delegation

FOREST FEE INCREASE FOR SENIORS SCRAPPED

Idaho delegation pushed for rescission of plan to drop discounts

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Washington, DC – Idaho’s congressional delegation says the decision by the U.S. Forest Service to scrap a proposal to cut discount pass rates available to senior citizens and disabled Americans is a good one. The Forest Service was reviewing a proposal to reduce discounts under the Interagency Pass Program and Golden Age and Golden Access Passports from 50% down to 10% for programs and services operated by Forest Service concessionaries. However, today, the delegation heard from the Forest Service that the proposal has been dropped and the current discounts will remain in place.

Senator Mike Crapo said, “Idahoans and people across the West spoke loud and clear in opposition to this ill-conceived proposal, and I am glad that the Forest Service heard their voices. This proposal to force senior citizens and permanently disabled Americans to pay more for access to lands that they already pay for was unnecessary and inappropriate, and it is great that the Forest Service reversed its course.”

“I am pleased the Forest Service agreed with our call to not penalize seniors and the disabled by reducing their campground discounts. This was the right thing to do,” said Senator Jim Risch.

“I’m pleased to hear that the Forest Service has withdrawn this controversial proposal,” said Congressman Mike Simpson. “When I raised my concerns about it during a recent hearing with the Chief of the Forest Service, he acknowledged that the feedback they received had been overwhelmingly negative. Withdrawing the proposal—and continuing to ensure that all Americans, including seniors and the disabled, have access to our nation’s public lands—is the best solution.”

“This is good news for Idaho’s seniors and citizens with disabilities,” said Congressman Walt Minnick. “It shows what can be accomplished when our bi-partisan delegation works together to solve issues important to Idaho and to the nation.”

Last month, the delegation went to bat for the discounts in a letter to Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell, explaining that the proposal would hit an especially vulnerable group of Americans at a time when that group is using Forest Service lands and facilities at a higher rate.