

Jan. 16, 2009

RE: Document ID: FS-2009-0001-0001: Proposed Directives for Forest Service Concession Campground Special Use Permits

To:
USFS Chief Tom Tidwell

Deputy Chief Joel Holtrop

Director of recreation Jim Bedwell

Dear Sirs;

Regarding your proposal to increase concession payments by senior citizens, I refer you to the full & excellent discussion provided in Ms. Kitty Benzar's letter that you've no doubt read but which can be seen at:

http://www.westernslopenofee.org/pdfuploads/WSNFC_Comment_re_Concession_Policy_Changes.pdf.

I would like to make the following observation based on this statement: "The discounts date back some three decades to a time when the Forest Service was embarking on a fee-based system that relied upon private concessionaires to maintain campgrounds." from the article published in the Dec. 8th Missoulian (http://www.missoulian.com/news/local/article_d2d46a8e-e3af-11de-acbb-001cc4c002e0.html).

Unless it has escaped your attention, this is another example of the failure of so-called 'Reaganomics' (also known as NeoLiberalism, Free-Marketism) to actually succeed and function in the real world despite a fingers-in-the-ears, 'la, la, la, I can't hear you' approach from the right-wing of both the GOP and Democratic parties.

The key term in "National Parks" is the word "National". They exist for the public good and are funded by taxes collected from the public. They are not, and never should have been, a 'profit center' for private enterprise and, now that private enterprise is unable to succeed under 'free-market' conditions, I object strongly to another government bailout of private enterprise by the body politic... commonly known as socialism for the elite paid for by taxes on the workers.

So, NO! Do not lower the senior's discount. They've earned it both through their service to our country but also by the taxes they've paid. They should not have to pay more to enjoy the same services because a private concessionaire can't make ends meet in a situation in which the entire service provided should have been available for free because the consumer's already paid for it once.

The same should also be applied to the park fees non-senior citizens are charged as well.

Respectfully,

Rael Nidess, M.D.
Marshall, TX