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A Lighter Take | Debra A. Klein

More ways for the National Park Service to raise money

By Debra A. Klein October 25, 2017

With budget shortfalls on the horizon, the Department of the Interior wants to raise national park fees to a staggering \$70 per car for entry, but that's just one of the revenue-generating ideas that came up at the meetings. Here's a list of others they are probably considering:

Fee for Singing "This Land is Your Land" by the carful at any time on approach, or within the park boundaries. Fines doubled for robustly starting in on the second stanza with no real lyric destination in mind. Additional "Denver Penalty" for singing "Rocky Mountain High" every time you see a sign that says Rocky Mountain NP (or pass a Rocky Mountain Chocolate Store at the mall).

Leaf Comparison Fee for making any statements about how "great it was" either (a) last time you were here, or (b) at home on your own street, or (c) at the place a mile back where you wanted to turn off.

Wondering About the Safety of Rangers Fee. This one will be assessed by anyone hearing anyone else say they could never be a Park Ranger because they'd be afraid to live all alone with no humans around for hundreds of miles because no one could hear them scream if they were attacked by wild animals, but really meaning attacked by the kind of crazy ax murderer who would be hiding at a national park at night.

Anthropomorphism/Misidentification Fee. Ranger-imposed, for the crime of either calling a woodland creature by its inappropriate Disney name or misattributing "details" about, say, Yogi Bear that are clearly characteristics of Smokey the Bear.

Musing Fees can be assessed for any statement that begins "I wonder," such as, "I wonder if there was a giant wall of water would it fill this whole valley and how could we get out?" Or, "I wonder if cavemen lived right here on this very spot where the Pepsi machine is." Or, "I wonder if that's his grandfather or his dad with the 'new' wife." Or even, "I wonder if we could make it back to that cute town with the Starbucks and ye old-timey candy shoppe if we left right now."

Know-It-All Fee charged for any use of the suffix "eous" or casual recitation of the "types of rocks" from fourth-grade geology by anyone who is not a fourth-grader; naming of birds beyond their color or shape; or bringing up that podcast you heard about how Henry David Thoreau was a misanthropic fraud.

Miscellaneous Nasal Add-Ons include Flower Smelling Fee, assessed per nostril; Breathing Fresh Air

Fee, mouth and nose.

Attempting to Get Reception on your devices, while a good suggestion, will carry no fee, since that is punishment enough.