West Ten Sleep Trailhead Users Shouldn’t See New Fees -- Just Yet

By Judy Hagerott

Forty percent of visitors going into the Cloud Peak Wilderness Area use the West Ten Sleep Trailhead, making it one of the most popular corridors to enter the forest. But popularity does come with a price.

The Forest Service has been toying with the idea of charging site amenity fees to cover the costs of deferred maintenance needs at the trailhead, costs which range well over $20,000. These amenities include bathrooms, picnic tables, horse corrals, plus a well with potable water and all are costly to maintain. Proposed fees would be $5 per car per visit or an annual pass of $25.

The Forest Service is seeking public comment of the fee proposal through mid-June, but District Ranger Mark Booth says he does not see a fee this summer, at least, not yet. He said it’s a tough thing to suggest, and there might be some better solutions that may be garnered over the summer.

There are 47 other trailheads to get into the wilderness area, 19 which are developed. The West Ten Sleep Trailhead has parking spaces for 45 passenger vehicles and 8 large spots for trucks with trailers.

Public comments concerning the proposed amenity fees can be submitted in writing to the Powder River Ranger District, 1415 Fort Street, Buffalo, WY 82834 or electronic submissions can be sent to comments-bighorn@fs.fed.us with West Ten Sleep Trailhead in the subject line.