Should you have to pay daily fees to simply enter public lands, which all Americans ostensibly own, to hike or watch birds or simply revel in the immaculate glory of creation? The George W. Bush administration thought so—and so does Obama's, writes Bill Schneider at New West, citing recent indications that the government will continue to back a controversial fee-based recreation policy.

Obama's administration, Schneider reports, has basically continued the same hard line as his predecessor on the policy known alternately as the Federal Land Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) or Recreational Access Tax (RAT), depending on which side you're on.

Instead of giving us the "Change We Need" and calling off the legal dogs when he moved into the White House, Obama let his solicitors continue to pursue the legal defense of the unpopular policy and passed up multiple opportunities over the past 15 months give us a break, for a change, and show support for keeping public lands more accessible and affordable to low- and middle-income Americans.

If this trend keeps up, it's going to render obsolete a seemingly timeless nugget of advice from Edward Abbey.

"A journey into the wilderness," the cantankerous green author once wrote, "is the freest, cheapest, most nonprivileged of pleasures. Anyone with two legs and the price of a pair of army surplus combat boots may enter."

Source: New West

Image courtesy of Western Slope No-Fee Coalition.