Theft, vandalism prompt Forest Service to close 16 on-site stations for recreation passes

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Siuslaw National Forest

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Terry Richard, The Oregonian

The passes will still be required, but on-site stations will be removed from 12 sites along the Oregon coast this summer. Stations will also be removed from four sites at Marys Peak and along the Alsea River corridor in spring 2014.

Visitors can purchase recreation passes at Forest Service offices, from participating local businesses and online. The forest, extending from Tillamook to Coos Bay, operates more than 50 recreation day use sites where a pass is required.

In most cases, visitors can obtain a pass within a mile of recreation sites where onsite payment isn’t available, forest officials say.

-- Scott Learn
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Theft, vandalism prompt Forest Service to close 16 on-site stations for recreation passes...
Not sure why people think that putting cameras at trailheads is a good idea. They will get stolen or vandalized. Just remove the "iron rangers" instead of spending even more money just for the convenience of a pay station at a trailhead. Buy an annual pass or pick up a day use permit at the ranger station.

Got to love the headline writers again. Theft and vandalism isn't the reason for the closures. The lack of enforcement funding is the reason for the closures.

Cameras could work and they wouldn't have to be live feed. A simple well placed motion detection camera would do the trick. Hunters use them regularly to scout an area hoping to get images of the game going by.

My suspicion is that it is usually local yahoos. Folks who travel to enjoy these areas tend to revere them and have strong stewardship values. Of course much of the vandalism is bullet holes and not all the hunters are local and while I have great respect for some hunters I know, many are just alcoholics running around the woods with a high powered rifle. Ultimately if it makes it harder to use natural areas, all of us who enjoy the woods suffer.

Hidden cameras are the way! My not so bright friend shot "Scruffy" last fall when it was all said and done it cost him $3000, his rifle and his hunting privileges for three years. They told him that they would return his rifle but it's been eight months. The USFS could actually generate more money catching these human rats than the Trail Pass system brings in............
Good move by the Forest Service to eliminate these "iron rangers". Much easier and less expensive to go with an annual pass.

How hard is it to go online and buy a pass? The money that has been wasted on these pay stations over the years could have been put to better use.

For a 3G camera to work, they would need an internet connection. Besides if there was a camera, that's just something else for someone to destroy.

Let them destroy a camera after their license plate has been captured. I'll bet hardened cameras are available. For that matter, the USFS could purchase trail cameras by the truckload and hang them along the road to places that need protected. All it would take is to catch an occasional scofflaw to make it a workable solution.

You don't know what you're talking about. You don't need an internet connection for a 3G camera. You just need to be within the range of a 3G wireless network. You obviously don't know much about technology.
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Holmes
(https://connect.oregonlive.com/user/S03Sherlock/index.html)
How about some cellular surveillance cameras? Catch and punish the hooligans. There is a site on Redwood National Park that isn't safe to park because of vandalism. I often wondered why they haven't installed a 3G camera there. I suppose when every Forest and National Park has their own drone these problems will disappear. Not into a big brother culture personally; but given the way things are going I see little other choice.
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nerdling
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In theory it's a good idea. But huge areas of the forest don't have cell service to get something like that to work. Also just think of the cost of replacing those cameras when they either break or get stolen as well.
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Holmes
(https://connect.oregonlive.com/user/S03Sherlock/index.html)
Satellite service is always an option. Judges could require the criminals to pay for the satellite service that apprehended them. Elsewhere I also suggest trail camera usage. On sale they are under $75 at retail. I have seen trail cameras along hiking trails in heavily used sites. I'll bet most people would walk by and never notice them. Now imagine having
cameras in random locations along forest roads. They would never be seen.

nerdling

Yes we can buy trail cameras for under 75 dollars. But the USFS can't. They have to buy everything from a contracted website. Just ask me how I know that. I had to order a new scanner one day and found one for 80 bucks. But then found out it had to be ordered from this website. Well it ended up costing 200 bucks. It would end up costing way to much for what it would be worth. You would also have to create a new department to just deal with setting those things up and processing all the photos. Either that or hire new employees for the USFS LEO department. In the end it is just easier for everybody to remove the pay stations. Yes it sucks that people do what they do, but the way the department budgets work it really isn't feasible.

davej2007

It's a nice idea, but the Parks Service has virtually NO money. Their budget is bare bones, and they can barely afford what they've already got. There's no chance they have the budget to afford the purchase, installation, and upkeep of wireless security cameras, not to mention the time to send guys out to investigate every suspicious thing those cameras pick up. (And all that is ignoring the technical feasibility of locating something like that out there.)

KidCharlemagne

Too bad a few creeps have to ruin it for everyone. Another example of a deteriorating society. Unfortunately with all the corrupt banksters, corporations, and politicians, many people feel like they have nothing left to look up to.

2old

Two articles today regarding Forest Service reductions of service, and not one mention of sequester.
Fredbox
People have clearly stated "whatever, dude" about the sequester -- consider it the new normal.

Grickle
The Forest Service has been short of funds for years. Well-travelled roads go unmaintained and a ranger station was closed in E. Oregon this year.