

Recreation Not Red-Tape Act Summary Senator Ron Wyden

Outdoor recreation has become a major economic driver in Oregon and nationwide, especially in rural areas. Visits to national parks, forests, wilderness areas, wildlife refuges and national heritage sites generate an estimated \$646 billion in consumer spending and support more than six million jobs annually, according to the Outdoor Industry Association. But recreation opportunities aren't always easily accessible. Getting outdoors often requires permits, parking passes and camping fees that are important to help maintain public lands, but too often involve confusing, complicated and lengthy processes. This bill removes barriers to outdoor recreation, making it easier for more Americans to get outdoors--enjoying its benefits and generating jobs.

Expediting Permits for Recreation Guides

The bill simplifies the permitting process for accessing public lands in several ways:

- Requires the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to adopt a uniform and consistent permitting process for outfitters and guides, including standard forms, deadlines, and informational materials.
- Encourages all federal land management agencies to work with states to allow visitors to buy a state and federal pass at one location in one transaction.
- Directs land management agencies to make all visitor passes and permits for outfitters and guides available online.

Getting More Veterans, Seniors and Kids Outdoors

- The bill encourages all military branches to provide servicemembers and veterans with information about outdoor recreation opportunities as part of the basic services provided to servicemembers and veterans and through the current Transition Assistance Program.
- It encourages all military branches to allow active-duty servicemembers to engage in outdoor recreation activities without taking away their hard-earned leave.
- The bill requires agencies to provide free America the Beautiful passes, which grant access to more than 2,000 federal recreation sites, to schools that serve low-income students and their families.
- It encourages increased participation in outdoor recreation and volunteer opportunities on public lands for Americans age 55 and older.

Holding Agencies Accountable to Make Recreation a Priority for the First Time

The bill:

- Directs the Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (which controls water flows at hydropower dams) to promote new recreation opportunities and recreation-based jobs in land and water management decisions.
- Requires all land management agencies to report on the number of jobs and the types of jobs that are recreation-based.
- Directs the agencies to develop creative partnerships to extend recreation seasons.

- Directs revenue from ski area permits on federal lands to fund recreation projects on the same lands where the ski area is located, just like revenue from other recreation permits.
- To eliminate confusion for hunters, fishers, bikers and recreation users, the existing Recreation Area program will be simplified and streamlined.

Maintaining Public Lands

The bill:

- Encourages volunteer opportunities to help agencies carry out public lands maintenance projects, such as trail maintenance on federal lands.
- Requires the land management agencies to select from 9 to 15 priority landscapes for trail maintenance and improved recreation opportunities.
- Establishes a pilot program for interagency trail management for trails that cross agency jurisdictional boundaries, to ensure trails are maintained according to the same standards.
- Expands the Public Lands Service Corps to include the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as a participating agency, broadens the types of projects corps members can work on, raises the age of eligibility for military veterans to 35, and establishes an Indian Youth Service Corps to work on Indian lands.