

**Ojai, California
City Council**

On August 24, 1999, the Ojai, California City Council sent the following letter to their Congressional Delegation:

“After holding a public hearing on August 24th 1999, the Ojai City Council voted to take an official position of opposition to continuation of the U.S. Forest Service's Recreation Fee Demonstration Program, commonly known as the 'Adventure Pass'.

The reasons for this position include the fact that the fee constitutes an extremely regressive tax, which bears no relation to the actual costs of many types of passive recreation such as hiking, having a roadside picnic or observing wildlife. Additionally, many members of the public are gravely concerned that this fee program represents the first step towards establishing a 'revenue stream' from National Forests for the purpose of creating a basis for the privatization or commercial use of public lands. Finally, a practical problem with the Adventure Pass is that many local merchants and retail outlets, which were counted on to be a convenient means of distributing the Pass to Forest users, refuse to sell them.

The Council believes that it is the responsibility of the United States Congress to provide adequate funding for the maintenance and protection of Forest Service lands. The failure to do so in the early and mid 1990's created a fiscal environment which sent the National Forest Service into a crisis, and damaged our public land resources. This is the real issue. The Adventure Pass Program reflects an attempt to redress this mistake, but it has created more problems than it has solved. While we recognize that in some ways the Adventure Pass program can be viewed as an innovative attempt to generate funding, from the local perspective, the Program must be judged a failure. It has proven to be an extremely unpopular and flawed method for raising the necessary revenues. Furthermore, while the controversy over the Adventure Pass roars, the core issue of providing adequate funding for Forest maintenance remains unresolved.

Therefore, we would urge you to support legislation that would restore Forest Service funding levels from other tax revenues and eliminate the Adventure Pass program.

Towards this end the Council endorsed HR 2295, introduced by Lois Capps of Santa Barbara, which would end Forest Service participation in the Fee Demonstration Program and offset revenue losses by redirecting monies appropriated to subsidize the construction of timber logging roads towards National Forest maintenance needs. In our view, this approach makes sense because one class of Forest users (recreationists) should not be asked to pay a new user fee while the Congress provides a subsidy to another type of Forest user (timber companies). We ask for your support of this legislation, as well as any other approaches that would restore adequate maintenance funding without the necessity of the Adventure Pass program.”