



Gifford Pinchot National Forest | 2023

Special Recreation Permit Plan, Mt. Adams Climb

Mt. Adams Ranger District

May 2022 (updated Jan 2023)

Purpose and Background

This management plan and proposal seeks to increase the existing Special Recreation Permit (SRP) fee for Mt. Adams Climb. This document describes the rationale for the SRP fees, the locations where an SRP is required, the specialized services, the enhanced management activities offered, and how the SRP revenue is used.

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) authorizes a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) fee for permits issued for specialized recreation uses of Federal recreational lands and waters, such as group activities, recreation events, and motorized recreational vehicle use [16 U.S.C. 6802(h)]. SRP's are issued to allocate capacity or disperse use, protect natural and cultural resources, provide for health and safety of visitors, and help cover the higher costs for providing these specialized services.

The Cascade Volcano Pass, now called the Mt. Adams Climbing Pass, was put into place as an outcome of the 2001 Wilderness Resource Protection Environmental Assessment. The Mt. Adams Climbing Pass is required for climbing Mt. Adams above 7,000 feet in elevation.

Climbing above the 7,000-foot elevation of Mt. Adams is considered a specialized recreation activity because it requires technical equipment, experience, and good physical conditioning by the visitor in sensitive alpine environments. It also requires specialized management to address health and safety issues associated with the recreational use and address damage caused by recreational activities to an environment sensitive to changes caused by recreational use.

The South Climb is by far the most popular route to climb Mt. Adams and is relatively easier in comparison to other glaciated Cascade Range volcanoes. Ascending to the summit does require visitors to have excellent physical stamina, knowledge of technical mountaineering skills, and appropriate equipment. Depending on the conditions, climbers must possess and know how to use snowshoes or skis, crampons, and ice axes. Knowledge of self-arrest techniques is essential, as well as the ability to descend using skis or by glissading.

The eastern portion of the mountain is Yakama Nation land and is generally not open to public use except for the Bird Creek Meadows Recreation Area (on a very restricted basis).

Rationale

The Mt. Adams Climbing Pass is currently required during the primary season of use, which runs from May 1 through September 30. In the past, passes were available for sale at the Mt. Adams Ranger District; the Cowlitz Valley Ranger District; the Killen Creek Trailhead; and by mail. As of 2020, [climbing passes](#) can be purchased on Recreation.gov. There is currently no limit on the number of climbers that want to ascend Mt. Adams.

The current cost for the climbing pass is as follows:

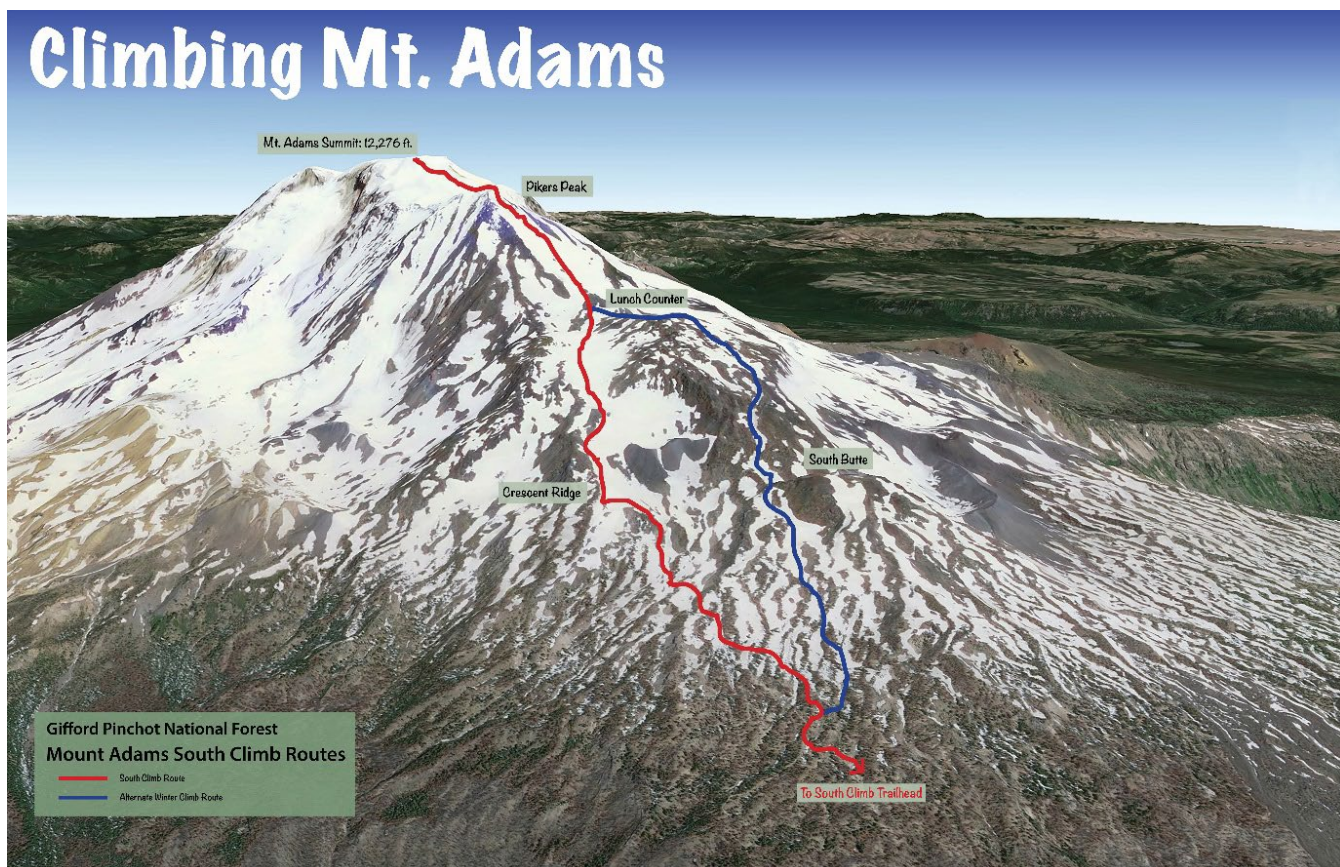
- Weekend Pass (Friday – Sunday), valid for a single climbing trip involving any weekend day, \$15 per person
- Weekday Pass (Monday – Thursday), valid for a single climbing trip on weekdays, \$10 per person

Proposal

The Forest Service is proposing to increase the fee to \$20/climber, every day of the week.

	Total Climbers, weekend	Total Climbers, weekday	Total Climbers	weekend, \$15/person	weekday, \$10/person	TOTAL	\$20/climber
2019*						\$105,107	
2020	5880	2014	7894	\$88,200	\$20,140	\$108,340	\$157,880
2021	5479	2106	7585	\$82,185	\$21,060	\$103,245	\$151,700

*In 2019, climbing permits were sold at the Ranger District. In 2020, Mt Adams Climbing Passes were made available on Recreation.Gov. In 2019, data was tracked by hand, so we currently only have total permits sold, and do not have the breakdown of weekend vs weekday. In 2020 and 2021 data could be pulled from Recreation.Gov.



Use of Special Recreation Permit Fee Revenue

Recreation fees are used for the following. Additional detail in the table below.

- Forest Service staff (up to four seasonal employees) to patrol the climbing route for visitor safety and information, natural resource protection, compliance, and other associated duties.
- Trail maintenance along the climbing route.
- Trailhead and facilities construction (in support of implementing the South Climb Trailhead Improvement Project).
- Partially fund a front desk employee to provide visitor services and information.
- To support partnership efforts with [Mount Adams Institute](#).

Item	Cost	Description
Climbing Program Manager - 90 days	\$31,950	Duties include: Maintain program support for administrative tasks (e.g., hiring, budgeting, ordering, NEPA, Wilderness Management, and cross program coordination).
GS-6 Lead Climbing Ranger/Volunteer Coordinator - 120 Days	\$24,000	Duties include: Supervision of the climbing rangers, including training, and logistical support, with an additional focus on improving and growing the volunteer program.
Up to three GS-4/5 Climbing Rangers – 100 days each	\$53,000	Duties include: Patrol climbing routes for compliance, natural resource protection, and interpretation.
GS-4 Front Desk Staff – 45 days	\$7,650	Duties include: Provide visitor services, answer questions, maintain website.
GS-4 Developed Rec – 90 days	\$15,300	Duties include: Maintain trailhead facilities
Mount Adams Institute Partnership Position (e.g., Americorps, SCA, International Intern, etc.)	\$16,000	To support a regular recurring position with Mount Adams Institute. Focus areas would include: climber education; public/private grant opportunities; volunteer recruitment; and programs for youth, diverse, and economically disadvantaged populations.
Volunteer Program Support	\$5,000	Mileage reimbursement and other volunteer incentives to help grow the volunteer program.
Human Waste Disposal / WAG Bag.	\$5,000	This would maintain the existing human waste disposal bag system which is critical to protecting the resource. These bags are provided to climbers for free.
Toilet Pumping	\$8,000	\$1000/vault, 4 vaults, 2 times per year
Materials and Supplies	\$5,000	-
Fleet (2)	\$10,000	-
Training	\$10,000	Includes FPO and mountaineering training, first aid, and search and rescue.
Trail Maintenance	\$2,000	Continue to provide routine trail maintenance.
Trailhead and Facilities Construction	\$25,000 - \$500,000	Support implementation of the South Climb Trailhead Improvement Project, which includes replacing toilets, delineating parking, adding bivouac sites, etc.
TOTAL with RANGE	\$215,350 - \$690,350	-



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