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June 25, 2026

Mr. Tom Schultz
U.S. Forest Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Chief Schultz:

I write to request that the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) take direct and immediate action to address the publicly reported issues surrounding the Recreation.gov permit and reservation system, where bots appear to be rapidly securing permits and reservations at release times, shutting out the public and leaving campsites and river launches unused despite appearing fully booked. These reports raise serious concerns about the integrity, fairness, and oversight of a system that is supposed to ensure equitable access to public lands.

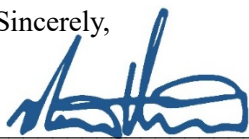
As reported, individuals with the resources or expertise to develop technical workarounds can disproportionately secure access to limited permits and reservations on Recreation.gov.¹ This dynamic undermines the intent of Congressional direction to increase recreation access on public lands. The current system, created and operated by contractors at Booz Allen Hamilton, appears to reward the most technologically advantaged with access to the most sought-after recreational sites and leaves many Americans without fair access to public lands.

In light of these ongoing challenges, I request that the USFS establish a clear policy prohibiting the use of automated systems, bots, or similar tools to procure permits or reservations on [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov). I stand ready to work with my colleagues in Congress to provide any additional statutory authority necessary to implement or enforce such a policy.

At a time when the outdoor recreation economy generates \$351 million every day from activities on our public lands and waters, it is critical that the USFS prioritize addressing these systemic issues. The public deserves transparency, accountability, and a reservation system that allows them to spend their spare time on public lands connecting with the places that bring peace, joy, and solace.

I look forward to your timely response on this important matter.

Sincerely,



MARTIN HEINRICH
United States Senator

¹ Lauren Goode, "The U.S. Built a Site to Ensure Fair Access to Public Lands. Then Everything Went Wrong," *Wired*, 19 May 2026, <https://www.wired.com/story/the-us-built-a-site-to-ensure-fair-access-to-public-lands-then-everything-went-wrong/>.