



File Code: 1010
Route To: (1950)

Date: May 28, 2020

Subject: Forest Order No. 06-20-06 COVID-19 Fire Restrictions

To: Project Files

From: Deb Bumpus, Forest Supervisor 

I am issuing Forest Order No. 06-20-06 as I have determined that it is necessary to issue fire restrictions within the Lassen National Forest to protect natural resources and to provide for public and employee safety by reducing potential exposure to COVID 19. This Order will prohibit campfires outside of Forest campgrounds and wilderness areas; smoking, except in certain areas; and use of combustion engines off National Forest System roads and trails. This Forest Order will be in effect from May 29, 2020 through November 30, 2020.

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infection and potentially fatal disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus which leads to respiratory illness. The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. As of May 27, 2020, the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported a total of 1,678,843 cases of COVID-19 nationwide (up from 1,324,488 since May 14, 2020) with 96,733 cases in California (up from 66,680 since May 14, 2020). While local cases remain small in number, many of the cases have been determined to be exposures from out-of-county. The Lassen has also seen an increase in the number of visitors from out of state and county.

California has seen rapid community spread of the coronavirus. On March 19, 2020, the Governor of California issued Executive Order N-33-20, which directs all individuals living in the state to stay home or at their place of residence. On May 7, 2020, California's Public Health Officer issued an order explaining California's path forward from this "Stay-at-Home" Order through implementation of its Pandemic Roadmap. This Roadmap identifies four stages of the pandemic: safety and preparation (Stage 1), reopening of lower-risk workplaces and other spaces (Stage 2), reopening of higher-risk workplaces and other spaces (Stage 3), and finally an easing of final restrictions leading to the end of the stay at home order (Stage 4). The Lassen National Forest includes lands in portions of six California counties: Butte, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, and Tehama. Each of these counties is at least in Stage 2 and in alignment with the state guidelines for reopening.

As America and the State of California begin to open up again, suggested guidance for responsible public behavior consistent with continuing to prevent the spread of COVID-19 includes social distancing, frequent washing of hands, and the use of face coverings. To further protect first responders, the general public, and local communities, restrictions on traditional



recreational activities such as the building and enjoyment of a campfire are necessary.

Human-caused ignitions are a significant fire management challenge for the Forest and unintentional human-caused ignitions far outnumber intentional ones. When a forest fire ignites, the proximity of the Forest to large population centers and communities within the wildland-urban interface creates a situation in which the potential for catastrophic property damage and loss of life is high. In California, over the past ten years, escaped campfires have accounted for igniting 25% of all wildfires. Reducing the number of these starts will best enable us to successfully suppress the fires that do occur while protecting the safety of our employees and the community.

The Caribou, Ishi, and Thousand Lakes Wilderness Areas are exempted from this Order because winter weather has moderated the susceptibility of fuel conditions to fire and visitor use is low.

Our priority is to protect the health and well-being of our first responders and the public. This means that we are taking additional precautions now to prevent wildfire ignitions on the forest. These precautions include assessing the current availability of firefighting resources, reviewing the methods by which the agency fights fires, and issuing fire restrictions. Responding to wildfires compromises our firefighters' abilities to take precautions against the spread of COVID-19. If our fire crews do contract COVID-19 while responding to one fire, the capability of a response to future fires will be further reduced. Additionally, we as an agency who cares about our employees, strive to minimize the situations in which our firefighters may be exposed to or contract COVID-19.

In preparing this order, the following entities have been contacted or have otherwise offered their support of this action: CALFIRE, Lassen National Park, Susanville Fire Department, and local county authorities.

This Forest Order includes the following exemptions: 1) an exemption for any Federal, State or local officer, or member of an organized rescue or fire fighting force in the performance of an official duty; 2) an exemption for those persons with a valid California Campfire Permit who desire to use a portable campfire pit, stove or lantern that uses gas, kerosene, jellied petroleum or pressurized liquid fuel, with a shut-off valve, in an area at least three feet from any flammable materials; 3) those persons with a valid 2020 Forest Products Removal Permit (firewood permit) from the United States Forest Service are not exempt from the prohibitions listed above, but may operate an internal combustion engine off National Forest System roads and trails only to the extent necessary to cut firewood, provided the cutting of firewood is done in compliance with the terms of the permit; 4) an exemption for persons with a valid Forest Service special use authorization for a recreation residence, resort, or organizational camp from Prohibition No. 1 of the order, while at their recreation residence, resort, or organizational camp; and 5) an exemption from Prohibition No. 3 for persons with a Forest Service non-special-use written authorization to conduct non-recreational activities, such as harvesting timber or forest products, or grazing livestock.

I have concluded that this decision may be categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Assessment (EA) under the National Environmental Policy Act. This action falls within the category identified in 36 CFR 220.6(d)(1)

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– prohibitions to provide short-term resource protection or to protect public health and safety – and does not require documentation in a decision memo, decision notice, or record of decision. I have determined that there are no extraordinary circumstances associated with this temporary closure. Implementation of the decision may begin immediately.



FOREST ORDER No. 06-20-06
USDA FOREST SERVICE
Lassen National Forest

Pursuant to 16 USC 551 and 36 CFR 261.50(a), and to protect natural resources and provide for public safety, the following acts are prohibited on the Lassen National Forest. This Order is effective from May 29, 2020, through November 30, 2020.

1. Building, maintaining, attending or using a fire, campfire, or stove fire outside of a developed recreation site or a wilderness area. 36 CFR 261.52(a).
2. Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building, or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable material. 36 CFR 261.52(d).
3. Operating an internal combustion engine off paved, gravel or dirt National Forest System roads and trails, except boats on a water surface. 36 CFR 261.52(h).

Pursuant to 36 CFR 216.50 (e), the following persons are exempt from this Order:

1. Any Federal, State or local officer, or member of an organized rescue or fire fighting force in the performance of an official duty.
2. Persons with a valid California Campfire Permit are not exempt from the prohibitions listed above. However, persons with a valid California Campfire Permit may use a portable campfire pit, stove or lantern that uses gas, kerosene, jellied petroleum or pressurized liquid fuel, with a shut-off valve, in an area at least three feet from any flammable materials.
3. Persons with a valid 2020 Forest Products Removal Permit (firewood permit) from the United States Forest Service are not exempt from the prohibitions listed above, but may operate an internal combustion engine off National Forest System roads and trails only to the extent necessary to cut firewood, provided the cutting of firewood is done in compliance with the terms of the permit.
4. Persons with a valid Forest Service special use authorization for a recreation residence, resort, or organizational camp are exempt from Prohibition No. 1, while at their recreation residence, resort, or organizational camp.
5. Persons with a Forest Service non-special-use written authorization to conduct non-recreational activities, such as harvesting timber or forest products, or grazing livestock, are exempt from Prohibition No. 3, to the extent allowed by the written authorization.

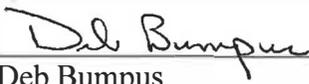


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These prohibitions are in addition to the general prohibitions contained in 36 CFR Part 261, Subpart A.

A violation of these prohibitions is punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization, or imprisonment for not more than 6 months, or both. 16 USC 551 and 18 USC 3559, 3571, and 3581.

Executed in Susanville, California, this 28th day of May, 2020.



Deb Bumpus
Forest Supervisor
Lassen National Forest