

File Code: 2670
Route To: File

Date: May 26, 2016

Subject: Forest Order No. 05-15-00-16-03 – Recreation Site and Road Closure

From: Dean Gould, Forest Supervisor

This document explains my rationale and the regulatory basis for implementing a recreation site and road closure Order on the Sierra National Forest.

The purpose of this Forest Order is to protect public safety and natural resources due to the unprecedented number of hazard trees present and the associated risk on the Sierra National Forest. Due to the extremely large volume of tree mortality in the areas addressed by the Order, this Order will prohibit use of recreation sites and road use in those locations. High risk of hazards to the public are expected in these areas since they would be directly in the path of potential falling dead trees that could lead to property damage and injury or death to a person. Salvage logging and tree falling operations will be taking place to improve conditions. These efforts will remove weakened trees in and adjacent to recreation sites and roads, preventing conditions from rapidly worsening over the next three to five years as more snags deteriorate and fall.

Although the Forest is addressing fallen trees where possible, some forest roads included in this Order are blocked entirely at present and need to be re-opened prior to entry by tree-falling crews. Additionally, while falling and salvage operations are taking place, Forest Service employees, logging contractors, and other equipment operators will be using forest roads listed in the Order that are one-lane and in severely sloped locations. The combination of hazard trees being present combined with frequent hauling, mid-road logging equipment, and road repair equipment constitutes an unacceptable safety risk to the public in the roadway and recreation sites listed in this Order. Closure of these roads and recreation sites will not only allow for present public safety but will allow the work to get done in a timely manner for fire prevention and possible suppression efforts.

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) - 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.

