

File Code: 2670
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Date: December 9, 2019

Subject: Forest Order No. 05-15-00-19-10 – Camping Restrictions

From: Dean Gould, Forest Supervisor 

This document explains my rationale and the regulatory basis for implementing a Forest Order prohibiting camping for more than 14 days, within any 30-day period on the Sierra National Forest. The Forest Order will be effective from December 10, 2019 through December 09, 2021.

The purpose of this Forest Order is for public safety and the protection of natural resources. The orders intention is to prohibit long term or semi-permanent occupancy of National Forest System Lands within the Sierra National Forest. With close proximity to the Fresno metropolitan area and greater Central San Joaquin Valley region, the demand for recreational opportunities are high, resulting in long-term occupancy in many locations within the National Forest. Developed and undeveloped camp sites often experience extended occupancy from forest visitors storing camping gear, personal property and equipment to secure coveted camping areas. This causes conflict with other forest visitors and the “first come, first serve” approach to fair recreation. Homeless populations also contribute to this conflict year-round, by constructing makeshift dwellings, taking up residence and creating sanitation issues on the National Forest.

Areas that are occupied for extended periods of time often experience excessive soil compaction, and removal of vegetation and natural ground litter within riparian zones, all of which adversely impact critical habitat of sensitive and/or threatened species. Extended human occupancy may threaten resources when addressing basic necessities such as bathing, washing and removing water from adjacent natural waterways. Extended occupancy campers frequently remove brush and vegetation to clear camp sites and illegally cut and/or damage live trees in the process. Repeated accumulation of trash and human waste on a regular basis in specific locations diminish the vitality and quality of the land. Without periodical cycles of occupants vacating sensitive areas, the natural and managed restoration efforts of these areas are hindered.

Scoping efforts included discussions with California Land Management who concurred with the camping limits, and their effect on designated recreational sites. 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.



Forest Order No. 05-15-00-19-10
Sierra National Forest
Camping Restrictions

Pursuant to 16 USC 551 and 36 CFR 261.50(a) and (b), and to protect natural resources and provide for public safety, the following acts are prohibited within the Sierra National Forest. This Order is effective from December 10, 2019, through December 09, 2021.

Camping in one place for more than 14 days within any 30-day period. 36 CFR 261.58(a).

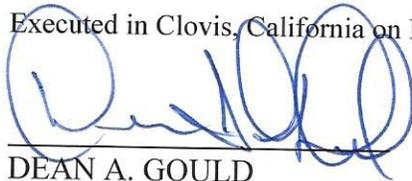
Pursuant to 36 CFR 261.50(e), the following persons are exempt from this Order:

1. Persons with a valid permit from the Forest Service authorizing the otherwise prohibited act or omission.
2. Any Federal, State, or local Officer or member of an organized rescue or fire fighting force in the performance of an official duty.

This prohibition is in addition to the general prohibitions contained in 36 CFR Part 261, Subpart A.

A violation of this prohibition 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 six months, or both. 16 USC 551 and 18 USC 3559, 3571, and 3581.

Executed in Clovis, California on December 09, 2019.



DEAN A. GOULD
Forest Supervisor
Sierra National Forest