



**Forest Service**  
Intermountain Region  
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# News Release

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## **Forest Service Intermountain Region Issues a Ten Person Group Size Limit for Outdoor Recreation Groups to Help in Easing Closures of Recreation Sites**

**OGDEN, Utah, April 29, 2020** — In alignment with current federal, state and local guidance for social distancing, and to ensure health and safety of its employees, visitors and volunteers, the Intermountain Region has issued a 10 person group size limit for outdoor recreation on National Forest System Lands in Idaho.

While this group size order may seem to place further restrictions on the recreating public, it may allow for National Forests to open some previously closed sites, and can provide an alternative to closing sites where social distancing cannot be ensured.

“We greatly value the opportunity for people to use their public lands, and we fully recognize the connection people have with National Forests,” said Dave Rosenkrance, Deputy Regional Forester. “Our intent in issuing this group size order is not to reduce recreation opportunities, but in fact, this may allow us to open some sites that had been closed due to COVID-19, while ensuring the safety of our employees and the public.”

Forest Service leadership is paying close attention to the current COVID-19 situation throughout the region, and working closely with other federal, state, and local officials regarding the opening of recreational facilities. With the understanding that COVID-19 impacts vary in each community, all closures are being evaluated on an ongoing basis. This order will be reviewed in accordance with statewide plans.

Many recreation opportunities remain available to the public – please contact our local Forest for the most up to date information. To protect public health and safety, all visitors are encouraged to:

- Be fully self-contained. Take everything you may need with you in order to avoid unnecessary stops at stores and gas stations.
- If an area is crowded, search for a less occupied location. Consider avoiding the forest during high-use periods.
- Avoid visiting the forest if you are sick and/or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- Follow CDC guidance on personal hygiene and social distancing before and during your visit to the forest.
- Follow all local guidance regarding outdoor recreation, including guidance from local health agencies, state government and federal organizations.
- Take your trash with you when you leave. Trash overflowing the receptacles can be harmful to wildlife and attract predators.
- Make arrangements to use the restroom before or after your visit to the forest. Unmanaged waste creates a health hazard for our employees and for other visitors.

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Visitors to national forests are urged to take the precautions recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For tips from the CDC on preventing illnesses like the coronavirus, go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html>. Information from the U.S. Department of Agriculture is available at: [www.usda.gov/coronavirus](http://www.usda.gov/coronavirus).

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**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOREST SERVICE  
INTERMOUNTAIN REGION  
REGIONAL OCCUPANCY AND USE RESTRICTIONS**

**PROHIBITIONS:**

Pursuant to 16 U.S.C. § 551 and 36 C.F.R. § 261.50(a), the following acts are prohibited in the areas described in this Order and depicted on the attached Maps ("Restricted Areas"), hereby incorporated into this Order as Exhibits A, within the Intermountain Region National Forests and National Grasslands in the states of Idaho.

1. Entering the Restricted Areas with a "group" in excess of 10 individuals. **36 C.F.R. § 261.58(f)**

**DEFINITIONS**

The 10 "group" refers to "any collection, assemblage, cluster, or aggregation of persons."

**EXEMPTIONS:**

Pursuant to 36 C.F.R. § 261.50(e), the following persons are exempt from this Order:

1. Persons with a Forest Service permit specifically exempting them from the effect of this Order.
2. Any Federal, State, or local officer, or member of an organized rescue or fire fighting force in the performance of an official duty.

**RESTRICTED AREAS:**

**(Includes all Forest Service system lands within the Intermountain Region in Idaho)**

Boise NF	Salmon-Challis NF
Caribou-Targhee NF	Sawtooth NF
Payette NF	

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this Order, which reflects federal and state guidance to limit the spread of COVID- 19, is to protect public health and safety.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

1. This Order will be effective on April 29, 2020 at 12:01 AM and shall remain in effect until May 31, 2020, or until rescinded, whichever event occurs first.
2. Any violation of this prohibition is punishable as a Class B misdemeanor by a fine of not more than \$5,000 for individuals and \$10,000 for organizations, or by imprisonment for not more than six (6) months (see 16 U.S.C. § 551, 18 U.S.C. § 3571(b)(6), 18 U.S.C. § 3581 (b)(7)).
3. Maps identifying the Restricted Areas are attached and made a part of this Order.
4. This Order supersedes, rescinds, and replaces any previous orders prohibiting the same acts covered by this Order.
5. Further information regarding this Order may be obtained from the Intermountain Region Regional Office located in Ogden, Utah, telephone number: 801-625-5605, and at the following websites and phone numbers:

USDA Forest Service Intermountain Region website:  
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r4>

IDAHO Department of Health & Welfare: <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/>  
Contact number: 1-888-330-3010

Done at Ogden, Utah this day 29 of April, 2020.

NORA RASURE  
Regional Forester Intermountain Region