



January 29, 2020

MEMORANDUM

FROM: JAMIE KINGSBURY  
FOREST SUPERVISOR

TO: FILE

SUBJECT: Middle Fork Trail Temporary Closure Order - NEPA

FILE CODE: 1950

The intent of this memorandum is to describe the need for the continued temporary closure of the Middle Fork Trail (No. 1003) and to document the environmental review and NEPA compliance for this closure.

**BACKGROUND AND NEED**

In April 2018, a significant slide (approximately 200' x 500') occurred 1.1 miles upstream of the Middle Fork Trailhead, blocking access along the trail and requiring the trail and surrounding area to be closed to ensure public safety. Conditions at the site remain hazardous with a large area of unstable soil and scarps from 5' to 20' high. A 200' section of the Middle Fork trail goes right through the slide and is impassible because of soft mud and downed trees in the middle of the slide. The Forest Geologist, Todd Griffin, visited the slide April 14, 2018 and observed tension cracks as well as active sliding. He also heard trees falling within the area of the slide. Follow-up visits to the area were made during the year. As of November 29, 2018, active sliding was still occurring and as of January 2020, the trail remains covered by debris. The Forest is currently assessing options for rerouting the trail to avoid the slide.

A temporary trail and area closure (# 06-05-18-02) was issued April 13, 2018 and expired December 31, 2018. The closure order was renewed January 30, 2019 (# 06-05-19-01) and expires January 29, 2020 ). A temporary closure continues to be needed until the debris is removed from the trail and any potential remaining hazards associated with the slide assessed or until the trail is rerouted to avoid hazards associated with the slide.

The proposed closure is located within the Snoqualmie Ranger District, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. The closure area comprises portions of T24N, R10E, Sections 22 and 27 as well as the length of Middle Fork Trail No. 1003.

The Middle Fork Trail is located close to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness boundary and a portion of the trail extends into the Wilderness boundary. However, wilderness access points to the northwest and southwest of the closure area would not be affected.

**SCOPING**

A notice has been posted on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie NF website and at the following locations: Middle Fork trailhead kiosk and trail entrance, at the Dingford trailhead kiosk and at



another sandwich board about a 1/4 mile up the Dingford Trail that also provides access to the Middle Fork Trail. Copies of the renewed closure order will be posted at these locations.

Forest employees also continue to be notified of the slide, safety concerns, and need for closure.

**REASONS FOR CATEGORICALLY EXCLUDING THE ACTION:**

A proposed action may be categorically excluded from further analysis and documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or environmental assessment (EA) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the proposed action is within one of the categories established by the Secretary at 7 CFR 1b.3; or within a category listed in 36 CFR 220.6 (d) and (e), per 36 CFR 220.6(a).

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 C.F.R. § 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.
- Based on a review of the proposed order and consultation with District and Forest resource specialists, I have determined that there are no extraordinary circumstances associated with this temporary closure.

The closure would have no impacts on civil rights as they will apply to all individuals. The closure will temporarily limit all access in the described area and along the trail, no one group or person will be affected more than another group or person.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOREST SERVICE  
MT. BAKER-SNOQUALMIE NATIONAL FOREST  
EVERETT, WASHINGTON

ORDER NO. 06-05-20-01

Pursuant to 16 USC § 551 and 36 CFR § 261.50 (a) (b), the following acts are prohibited upon the Middle Fork Trail #1003 located within the Snoqualmie Ranger District of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest as described below and shown in Exhibit A. This Order will be effective beginning January 30, 2020 and ending January 29, 2021.

PROHIBITION:

1. **Entering into or being upon area closed for the protection of public health or safety, as shown on the attached map, as described in this order.** [36 CFR § 261.53(e)]
2. **Being on a trail within the closure area, as shown on the attached map.** [36 CFR § 261.55(a)]

This order prohibits anyone from entering the closure area which consists of National Forest System land in portions of T24N, R10E, Sections 22 and 27 and the entire length of Middle Fork Trail No. 1003. (See Exhibit A)

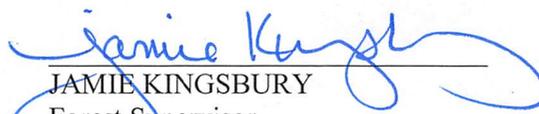
EXEMPTIONS:

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

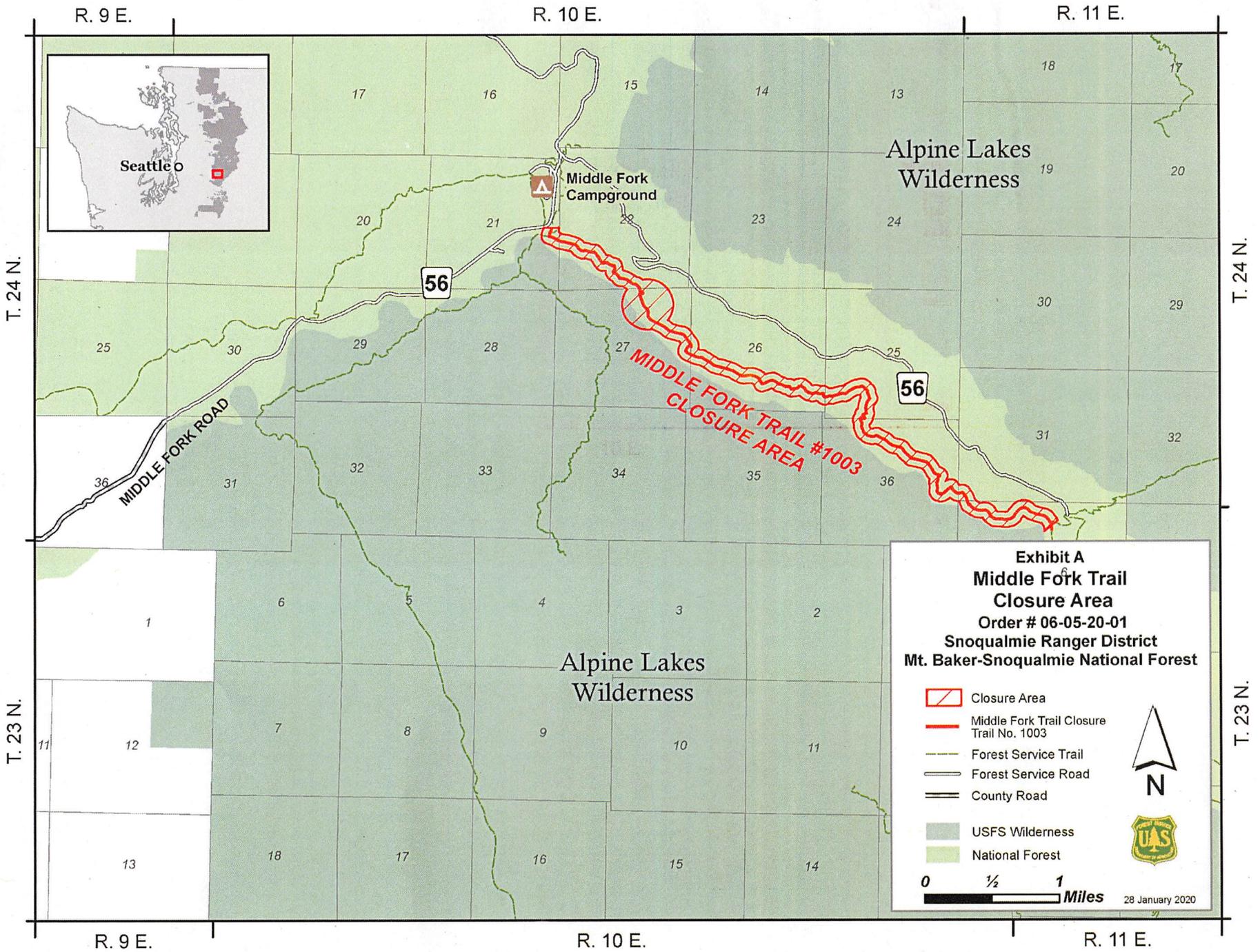
1. Persons with a permit specifically authorizing the otherwise prohibited act or omission.
2. Any Federal, State, or local officer, or member of any organized rescue or fire fighting force in the performance of an official duty.

This prohibition is in addition to the general prohibitions in 36 C.F.R. Part 261, Subpart A.

Executed in Everett, Washington this 5th day of February, 2020.

  
JAMIE KINGSBURY  
Forest Supervisor  
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest

Violations of this prohibition are punishable as a Class B Misdemeanor, 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; 18 USC § 3559 and 18 USC § 3571).



Alpine Lakes  
Wilderness

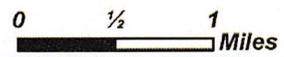
Middle Fork  
Campground

MIDDLE FORK TRAIL #1003  
CLOSURE AREA

MIDDLE FORK ROAD

**Exhibit A**  
**Middle Fork Trail**  
**Closure Area**  
**Order # 06-05-20-01**  
**Snoqualmie Ranger District**  
**Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest**

-  Closure Area
-  Middle Fork Trail Closure Trail No. 1003
-  Forest Service Trail
-  Forest Service Road
-  County Road
-  USFS Wilderness
-  National Forest



28 January 2020