Order Number: 0414-04-123

Assessment of Need and Enforcement Plan

Sawtooth National Recreation Area-Sawtooth National Forest

Background. Over the past several years there have been multiple bear incidents within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (NRA). Incidents involved bears feeding on human food, trash, and other attractants such as cooking waste and toiletries when visitors to the Area were absent from camp or sleeping. Incidents involving visitors feeding bears intentionally have also been documented. In 2017, there were approximately 20 incidents on the Sawtooth NRA and two bears were killed by IDFG as a result of the incidences. Seventy percent of the IDFG Salmon Region bear incidents in 2017 were on the Sawtooth NRA. Over the previous ten years (2006-2016), bear/human conflicts have ranged from 2-15 incidents/year on the Sawtooth NRA, comprising 80% of all incidents in the Region.

Once rewarded, bears can become more emboldened, escalating the potential for adverse encounters with visitors as a result of being food-conditioned through human carelessness. In rare cases, visitors have been injured during these encounters. These bears become dangerous to people and are often euthanized in defense of human safety and property.

A food storage order would allow the Sawtooth NRA to more effectively manage food, garbage and attractants in bear country and reduce human/bear encounters. The Forest Service works in close coordination with Idaho Department of Fish and Game on bear management issues and they support a food storage order. Food storage practices are necessary to protect both humans and bears. Humans would be protected by reducing conflicts with bears. Bears would be protected by minimizing habituation and possible destruction of problem animals.

Feasibility

Local vendors rent bear proof garbage containers. These are currently used at many campgrounds managed by concessionaire. Many other bear proof products are available for purchase.

The Sawtooth NRA would implement the order over a 2 year period focusing on education during those years. Permittees affected by this Order would be allowed two years to comply or if not feasible, permittees would be required to develop an implementation plan approved by the Area Ranger. There would be a financial burden and a necessary change in behavior associated with the Order for some permittees. Existing facilities and administrative sites on the Sawtooth NRA would need to be modified to meet the intent of the Order within two years or an approved implementation plan would be developed.

Intent of Order. For the purpose of minimizing adverse interactions between bears and humans. The following food storage practices would be required on all public lands within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area with the exception of designated wilderness. The Food Storage Order would be in affect annually from the Saturday before Memorial Day through Labor Day.

1. All food and refuse must be acceptably stored or acceptably possessed during daytime hours.
2. All food and refuse must be acceptably stored during nighttime hours, unless it is being prepared for eating, being eaten, being transported, or being prepared for acceptable storage.
3. All animal carcasses must be hung farther than 100 yards of a camping/sleeping area and/or NFS trails.

Enforcement Plan. On site Forest Service personnel will make educational and compliance contacts as needed. Sawtooth NRA staff would provide bear aware education whenever funds are available. Seasonal employees would assist with education efforts on bear aware messaging unit-wide. Campground hosts would help to educate users in developed areas. Partners would be recruited to assist with messaging.

Sawtooth NRA staff will post and maintain on the ground signing and implement media that reasonably bring the restrictions and prohibitions to the attention of the public. Forest protection officers, LEOs, other Sawtooth NRA staff will patrol areas to inform users and gain compliance and take enforcement action on persons not in compliance with these orders.

Action	**Responsible Official**	**Date**
Prepare proposed Order	Appropriate Staff with LE&I input	11/25/2019
Review proposed Order	Supervisory LEO	12/5/2019
Review proposed Order	RO LEI/OGC	12/6/2019
Post Order in accordance with 36 CFR 261.51	District Staff Officer and Staff	When signed
Patrols will occur to maintain Signs and ensure compliance.	Appropriate Staff, LEOs and IDF&G personnel.	On going

Plan approved for implementation:

JAMES DEMAAGD Digitally signed by JAMES DEMAAGD
Date: 2020.05.06 08:44:39 -06'00'

JIM DeMAAGD DATE
Forest Supervisor
Sawtooth National Forest