



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Lake Tahoe Basin
Management Unit

35 College Drive
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150
(530) 543-2600
(530) 543-0956 TTY

File Code: 1950

Date: February 24, 2014

Dear Interested Parties, Organizations, and Agencies:

The U.S. Forest Service is seeking comments on this Proposed Action to issue a Forest Order requiring proper storage of food and refuse at developed recreation sites on National Forest System lands on the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. Developed recreation sites affected would include but are not limited to: all Forest Service campgrounds in the Lake Tahoe Basin, resorts, organization camps, and day use sites such as Kiva, Pope, and Baldwin Beaches, and trailheads. The Proposed Action would be phased-in, with Fallen Leaf Lake Campground, Meeks Bay Resort, and Meeks Bay Campground representing initial implementation locations of what will eventually be a Forest-wide Forest Order (see attached map Exhibit A for initial locations affected). Locations that currently do not have Forest Service-approved bear-proof food storage lockers and refuse containers will be exempt from the Order until such facilities are made available at those sites.

Forest Orders that require proper storage of food and refuse under 36 CFR 261.50(a) and (b) are not uncommon in Region 5 (Pacific Southwest Region). Several other National Forests—including the Tahoe and Inyo National Forests—have had Forest Orders in place for many years and in some cases, decades. These Forest Orders have resulted in a noticeable reduction in conflicts between humans and bears and the associated impacts of property damage and removal of “problem” bears. In addition to these Forest Service units, popular national parks in the Sierra Nevada region such as Yosemite and Sequoia and Kings Canyon also require visitors to properly store food and refuse with similar results. Under this new Order, individuals who do not properly store food and refuse at developed recreation sites may be subject to a violation notice.

The Forest Service wants to issue a Forest Order in response to a rise in human-bear encounters in the Lake Tahoe Basin, which in some cases has resulted in damage to property as well as the issuance of depredation permits by California State Department of Fish and Wildlife to remove “problem” bears. A Forest Order requiring proper food and refuse storage would help protect both humans and black bears by reducing the number of human-bear encounters and ultimately providing for a safer recreation experience at Forest Service sites in the Lake Tahoe Basin. By implementing the Proposed Action, the Forest Service’s bear management strategy would become consistent with those of adjacent California State Parks as well as nearby National Forest and National Park Service units.

An environmental assessment (EA) will be prepared for this project. A 30-Day comment period will be provided on the EA and draft Decision Notice (DN), following preparation of the EA. This project will follow the objection procedures as directed by 36 CFR 218. The objection process provides an opportunity for members of the public who have participated in opportunities for public participation provided throughout the planning process to have any unresolved concerns receive an independent review by the Forest Service prior to a final decision



being made by the responsible official. Only those who provided specific written comments during opportunities for public comment are eligible to file an objection.

How to Comment and Timeframe

This project is in the initial (scoping) stage of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis. We are asking for your comments on this Proposed Action. This scoping notice is intended to provide those interested in or affected by this project with an opportunity to make their concerns known. If you have information the Forest Service may not be aware of, or feel you have issues (points of dispute, debate, or disagreement) regarding potential effects of the Proposed Action, please send your written comments to Stephanie Coppeto, Wildlife Biologist, Food Storage Order, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, 35 College Dr., South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150.

Written, facsimile (530-543-2693), hand-delivered, and electronic comments concerning this project will be most helpful if they are submitted by Friday, March 14, 2014. The office business hours for those providing hand-delivered comments are 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), portable document format (.pdf) or Word (.doc or .docx) to comments-pacificsouthwest-ltbmu@fs.fed.us using subject: Food Storage Order.

The Proposed Action and maps, as well as any project updates, are posted on the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit website at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/ltbmu/FoodStorageOrder>. For further information regarding this Proposed Action, contact Stephanie Coppeto at (530) 543-2679 or sacoppeto@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,

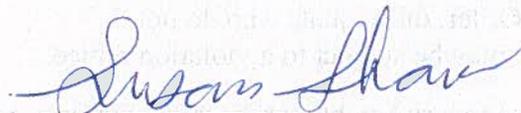
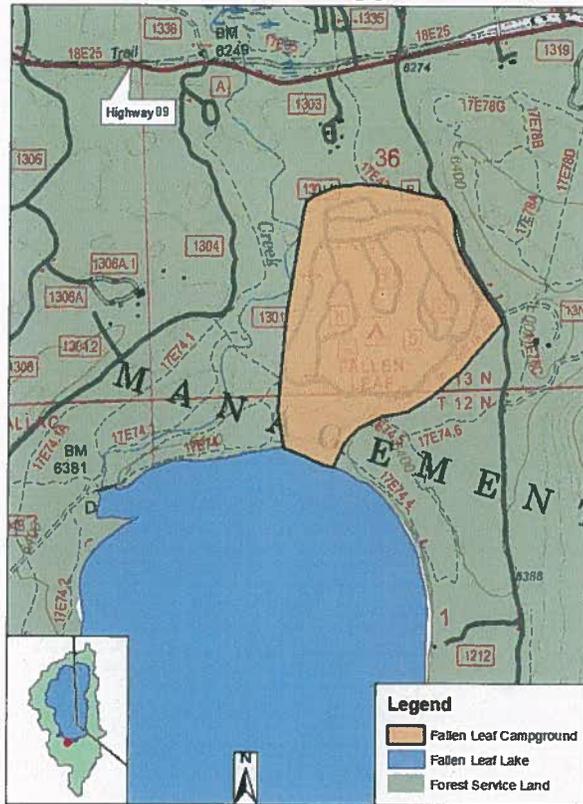

For **NANCY J. GIBSON**
Forest Supervisor

EXHIBIT A
Map depicting initial Forest Order implementation locations:

Fallen Leaf Campground



Meeks Bay Campground and Resort



