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Forest
Service

Stanislaus National Forest

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Route To: (1950)

Date: November 14, 2014

Subject: Spinning Wheel Closure Order STF 2014-13

To: Project File

From: Jeanne Higgins, Forest Supervisor 

On August 17, 2013, the Rim Fire started along Jawbone Ridge on the Groveland Ranger District near the confluence of the Clavey River and Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River in Tuolumne County. The Rim Fire ultimately burned 256,428 acres (400 square miles) and although it is fully contained planned recovery work is ongoing and some identified areas still need critical natural processes to occur before public access can be allowed. In addition while the natural resources are recovering the area presents a public safety risk of mudslides.

The area known as Spinning Wheel is an area that sustained severe fire damage. The soil remains subject to erosion and time is needed for vegetation to grow and stabilize. Foot and vehicle travel over the unprotected soil will cause disturbances that will delay vegetation growth.

As a result, I have decided to close public access to the Spinning Wheel area. This order will be in effect until November 18, 2015.

Scoping determined that anticipated effects of this proposed action would be administrative in nature. The following organizations were included in scoping efforts: Mi Wuk Indian Tribe, Spinning Wheel Residents, and the owners of Spinning Wheel Resort. The Forest Service will install signs and post notices to alert the public to these prohibitions.

This order includes an exemption for persons with a permit from the Forest Service specifically authorizing the otherwise prohibited act or omission. We have received requests for access to the closed area from members of the public. The criteria for granting written authorization for access to the Spinning Wheel Closure Area will be as follows:

1. The applicant must provide a reasonable explanation for the need to access the closed area,
2. The applicant must possess personal protective equipment appropriate for the dangers present in the area to which access is requested,
3. The applicant must understand and accept the risk of entering the closed area,
4. I or my delegate must determine that the risk to personal health and safety, and the potential for resource damage, is reasonable considering the circumstances of the request.

Written authorization may allow access to only a circumscribed portion of the closed area. If I am unavailable at the time a request is received, I hereby grant the Groveland District Ranger or,



in their absence their designated actings, the authority to sign any and all written authorizations for entry into the closed area.

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.

cc: Stanislaus LEI Patrol Captain, Heidi Rieck