

Forest Order No. 15-15-02
Sierra National Forest
Food and Refuse Storage Requirements

Pursuant to 16 USC 551 and 36 CFR 261.50(a), and to provide for public safety and protect natural resources, the following act is prohibited within those portions of the Ansel Adams, John Muir, Dinkey Lakes, Kaiser, and Monarch Wilderness Areas that are located within the Sierra National Forest, as shown on Exhibit A. This order is effective from May 1, 2015, through November 1, 2016.

Possessing or storing any food or refuse, unless stored in a container designed to prevent access by bears, or counter-balanced at least 15 feet above the ground and 10 feet horizontally from a tree trunk.
36 CFR 261.58(cc).

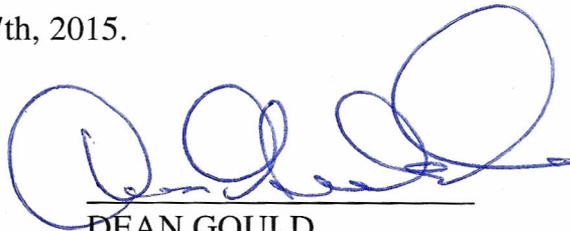
Pursuant to 36 CFR 261.50(e), the following persons are exempt from this Order:

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

These prohibitions are in addition to the general prohibitions contained in 36 CFR Part 261, Subpart A.

A violation of these prohibitions is punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization, or imprisonment for not more than six months, or both. 16 USC 551 and 18 USC 3559, 3571, and 3581.

Executed in Clovis, California on April 27th, 2015.



DEAN GOULD
Forest Supervisor



File Code: 2670
Route To: File

Date: April 27, 2015

Subject: Forest Order – Food and Refuse Storage

From: Dean Gould, Forest Supervisor 

This document explains my rationale and the regulatory basis for renewing and implementing a Food Storage Order within wilderness areas on the Sierra National Forest.

An increasing number of black bears were gaining access to human food in the Sierra Nevada during the 1990s. Through a process known as habituation, when bears gain access to food they become less fearful of people. Habituated bears can destroy property and injure people while attempting to gain access to improperly stored food. Once a bear has damaged property or injured someone, California Department of Fish and Game authorities will attempt to find and kill the bear. In recent years, state authorities have attempted to kill one bear in the John Muir Wilderness following an incident that resulted in injuries to a visitor on the Inyo National Forest.

Over the past few years, the Sierra NF has continued to receive reports of bear incidents. Our wilderness rangers continue to encounter visitors who have disregarded the risk of proper food storage. The Inyo NF, Yosemite NP, and Sequoia-Kings Canyon NP, which border the Sierra NF, also have food storage restrictions in effect.

The wilderness program recommends the Sierra National Forest renew Forest Order 15-13-02 that requires visitors to properly store their food and refuse in wilderness areas. The Order is necessary to promote public safety and to protect wildlife and wilderness character.

The Order would require visitors to properly store their food in wilderness. The Order would apply year-round to all designated wilderness on the Forest. The Order is based upon direction in the 2001 Record of Decision for the Management Direction for the Ansel Adams, John Muir and Dinkey lakes Wildernesses Final EIS. The ROD indicated the Forest will “Establish food storage restrictions wilderness-wide to reduce bear/human conflicts and protect wildlife from dependency on human food.”

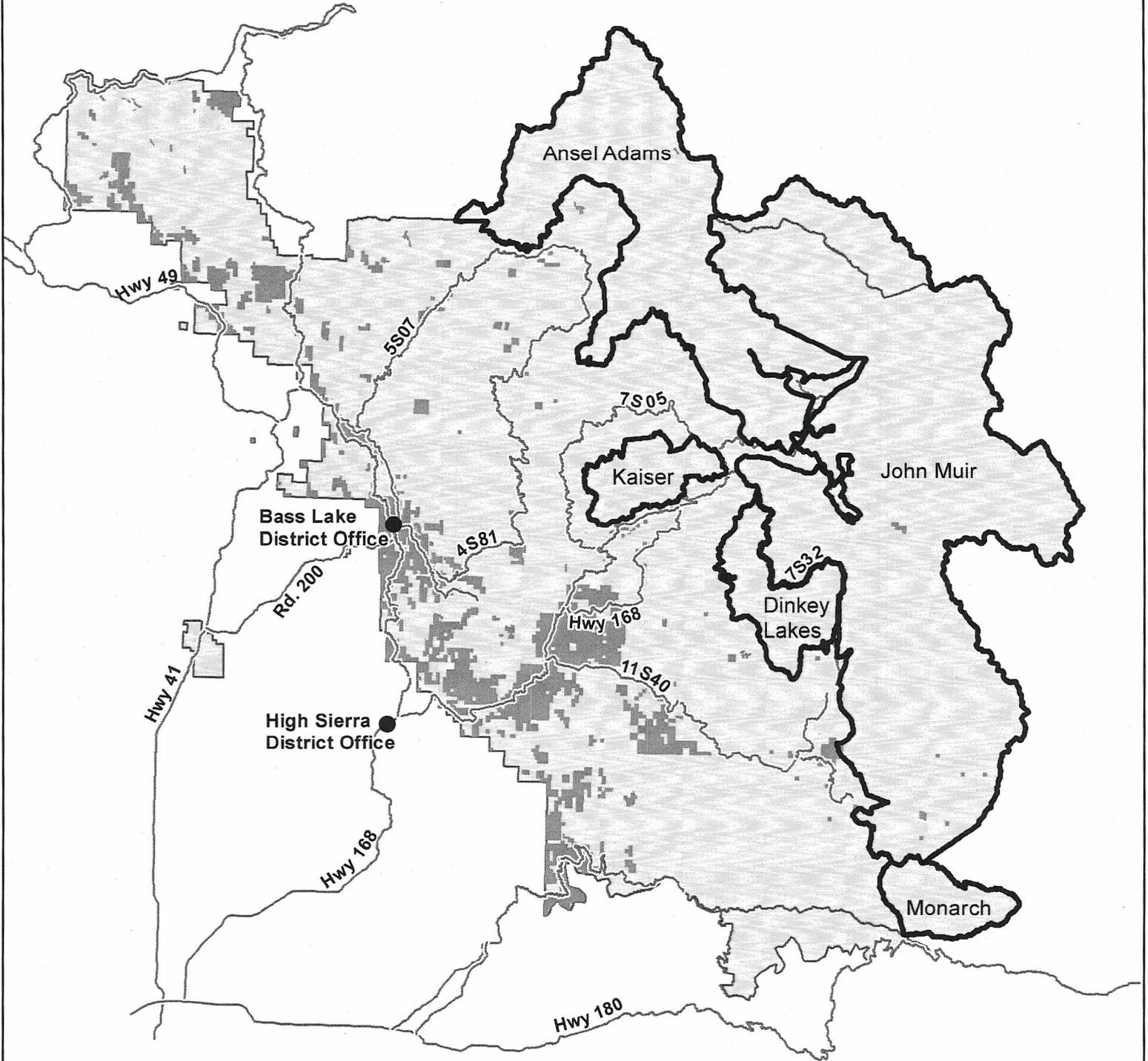
The food storage requirement is necessary to prevent bears from gaining access to human food, which can lead to human-bear conflicts. The Order defines two food storage practices as “proper.” The preferred and only effective method of food storage is a container designed to prevent access by bears. This Order would also allow visitors to use the counter-balance method in wilderness administered by the Forest. Where the counter-balance method is allowed, there has not been a record of human-bear conflicts and bears have not yet learned to defeat a well-executed counter-balance.

Sierra NF staff has conducted internal scoping and has not identified any significant issues related to renewing the food storage restriction.



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.

ORDER NO. 15-15-02
SIERRA NATIONAL FOREST
FOOD STORAGE RESTRICTION
EXHIBIT A



- Major Roads
- Wilderness
- Sierra National Forest Boundary
- Other Ownership

