

Forest Order No. 15-15-03  
Sierra National Forest  
Kaiser Wilderness Requirements

Pursuant to 16 USC 551 and 36 CFR 261.50(a), and to protect natural resources, the following acts are prohibited within the Kaiser Wilderness Area of the Sierra National Forest. This Order is effective from May 5, 2015, through November 5, 2016.

1. Camping in the following areas:
  - a. Upper Twin Lake for a distance of 200 feet from the shoreline, as shown on Exhibit A.
  - b. Nellie Lake for a distance of 200 feet from the shoreline, as shown on Exhibit B.
  - c. Within a distance of 100 feet from all other lakes, streams and National Forest System trails.

36 CFR 261.58(e).

2. Using pack stock or saddle stock in the following areas, as shown on Exhibit C.
  - a. Jewel Lake for a distance of one-quarter mile from the shoreline.
  - b. Campfire Lake for a distance of one-quarter mile from the shoreline.
  - c. Walling Lake for a distance of one-quarter mile from the shoreline.
  - d. Bill Lake for a distance of one-quarter mile from the shoreline.
  - e. Bobby Lake for a distance of one-quarter mile from the shoreline.
  - f. Bonnie Lake for a distance of one-quarter mile from the shoreline

36 CFR 261.58(s).

3. Camping for more than seven consecutive days. 36 CFR 261.58(a).

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

1. Persons with a permit from the Forest Service specifically authorizing the otherwise prohibited act or 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 May 4th, 2015.



DEAN GOULD  
Forest Supervisor



File Code: 2670  
Route To: File

Date: May 4, 2015

Subject: Forest Order – Kaiser Wilderness

From: Dean Gould, Forest Supervisor 

This document explains my rationale and the regulatory basis for implementing an Occupancy and Use order for the Sierra National Forest.

The Sierra National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) includes standards and guidelines for management of the Kaiser Wilderness. There is a continuing need for more effective tools to enforce the occupancy and use restrictions identified below because the threats to natural resources exist at a similar level as in 1991, when the LRMP was published. Below is an explanation of the reasons for issuance of the Forest Order.

1. Camping too close to water. (LRMP Pages 4-30, 31, Items #341, 374)

Research indicates that a 100-foot setback from water would provide the highest level of protection for water quality and riparian ecosystems. Camping in areas that are closer to the water causes a loss of fragile riparian vegetation that prevents erosion and provides habitat to riparian species. This restriction would also provide consistency with the other Sierra NF wildernesses. The 100-foot setback is a LRMP wilderness standard and guideline.

Additionally, a camping prohibition within 200 feet of Nellie Lake and Upper Twin Lake is a standard and guideline in the LRMP. Nellie Lake and Upper Twin Lake are the two most popular camping destinations within the Kaiser Wilderness. Because of the popularity of these lakes, campsites have degraded the vegetation along the shoreline further than 100 feet from the lakes. Therefore, even groups camping at a distance of 100 feet from water risk contaminating the water of these lakes because there is a reduced amount vegetation (due to camping impacts) within 100 feet of the lakeshore, and thus there is an increased likelihood of erosion of the lakeshores and sediment reaching the lake itself. A campsite setback of 200 feet from these lakes will allow for adequate runoff and sediment filtration between campsites and the lakes, and will allow the shoreline vegetation to recover.

2. Stock Use Restrictions (LRMP Pages 4-31, Item #375)

Because of the steep terrain and difficult access to the lakes included in this area, the LRMP standards and guidelines state that pack and saddle stock are prohibited within one-quarter mile of the lakes. The steep terrain and absence of engineered system trails mean that stock travel in the area could cause a proliferation of incised and eroding trails that would allow for unmitigated sediment deposition in the lakes. A prohibition of stock use within one-quarter mile of these lakes will ensure that incised non-system trails do not develop, and that the lakes remain free of significant sources of human-caused sediment.



3. Length-of-Stay Limits (LRMP Page 4-31, Item #373)

The LRMP specifies that overnight visits should be limited to seven days. The Kaiser Wilderness is set apart from the other wilderness areas on the Sierra National Forest, and therefore is essentially an isolated "island" of wilderness. Visitors do not generally travel between the Kaiser Wilderness and other wilderness areas on the forest. Without length-of-stay restrictions, crowding would be likely to occur within the Kaiser Wilderness since there are only two lake basins (Twin Lakes Basin and Nellie Lake Basin) that attract visitors in this 22,500 acre wilderness. Crowding generally leads to increased damage to natural resources and impacts wilderness solitude. Considering the proximity of the Kaiser Wilderness to the popular Huntington Lake Recreation Area, and therefore the large number of people who are entering the Kaiser Wilderness, there is a need to restrict the length of stay in the wilderness to seven days.

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.