



**MEDIA RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Aspen-Sopris Ranger District
White River National Forest
Contact (s): Bill Kight, 970-945-3227; bkight@fs.fed.us
Karen Schroyer, District Ranger,**

**Required Closure of Overnight Camping at Crater Lake, Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness,
White River National Forest**

Glenwood Springs, CO (Aug. 5, 2015) – A Forest Order is now in effect closing overnight camping at the 11 designated sites at Crater Lake, in the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness, effective immediately until rescinded or until Dec. 31, 2015.

Forest Service staff, working in partnership with Colorado Parks and Wildlife, determined that it is a reasonable and prudent measure given the escalation of human-bear conflicts documented there since June. This action keeps overnight visitors away from an area of potentially dangerous bear activity, prevents bears from further obtaining human food and garbage, and encourages bears to begin finding their natural food.

Officers from Colorado Parks and Wildlife will be staging in the Crater Lake area this week to use non-lethal methods for adverse conditioning the bears, including Tasers and rubber buckshot and bean bag rounds fired from shotguns to discourage bears from visiting Crater Lake campsites, where the bears often find meals of human food and garbage.

"We are working closely with Colorado Parks and Wildlife to do everything we can to re-train these bears to search for food in their natural environment. We are being forced to take these measures due to a small but consistent number of campers who do not properly store their food and garbage while camping in the area," said Aspen-Sopris District Ranger Karen Schroyer. "It only takes one irresponsible camper to perpetuate the problem."

On July 10, an emergency regulation was enacted requiring all overnight campers in Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness on White River National Forest to store food, garbage and other attractants in hard-sided storage containers that are approved under the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee Courtesy Inspection Program.

Since the regulation has been in place, Forest Service personnel patrolling the wilderness area have seen 50-75% compliance with the food storage restriction. Rangers have been issuing warning and violation notices in an attempt to increase compliance. Some visitors do not come prepared or are not using storage canisters correctly. As a result, emboldened bears in West Maroon Valley continue to become increasingly dangerous to visitors in search of human food and garbage, particularly at Crater Lake where bears have been rewarded with human food and garbage regularly.

All visitors to White River national Forest are reminded that approved hard-sided storage containers are required when camping in the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness. Visitors may encounter bear activity on any given day. Bears may be aggressive in search of human food, garbage and other attractants.

Campers and overnight hikers should be diligent to keep canisters sealed unless in immediate use. Be sure all food, garbage and other attractants are stored in canisters and place canisters at least 100 feet from campsites. Prepare and cook all food away from sleeping areas and where storage canisters are placed. Do not hang canisters or tie them to trees, rocks, tents, or other objects; the rope gives a bear something to hold onto.

Bear resistant containers may be purchased online, at suppliers across North America, and at the following local outdoor stores: Aspen Expeditions or Four Mountain Sports, at Aspen Highlands; Bristlecone Mountain Sports, Basalt; Factory Outdoors or Summit Canyon Mountaineering, Glenwood Springs; and Ute Mountaineering, Aspen; Ragged Mountain Sports, Carbondale.

For more information, contact US Forest Service Wildlife Biologist Phil Nyland, at (970) 404-3156. Additional information about camping on the White River National Forest can be obtained by calling the Aspen-Sopris Ranger District, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at 970-963-2266. Information may also be found on the Forest Service website at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/whiteriver/>.

To report a wildlife conflict, immediately call the nearest CPW office or Colorado State Patrol. To reach CPW's office in Glenwood Springs, call 970-947-2920 ###

FOREST ORDER

**USDA FOREST SERVICE
WHITE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST
ASPEN RANGER DISTRICT**

EMERGENCY AREA CLOSURE to Overnight Camping

Pursuant to 16 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 551 and 36 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) § 261.50 (a) and (b), **overnight camping is prohibited within 1/4 mile of Crater Lake, in the Maroon Bells Snowmass Wilderness**, of the Aspen Ranger District of the White River National Forests in Pitkin County, State of Colorado. (the "Restricted Area").

The Restricted Area surrounds Crater Lake located in the 6th Principal Meridian, T11S R83W Section 22, NE 1/4 and Section 23, NW 1/4. The closure covers approximately 300 acres.

The Restricted Area is shown on the attached map hereby incorporated into this Order as Exhibit A.

The purpose of this Order is the protection of health and safety to the public due to emboldened bear behavior documented at the site which has escalated to dangerous levels.

PROHIBITIONS:

- 1) **Camping is prohibited**. 36 C.F.R. § 261.58(e)

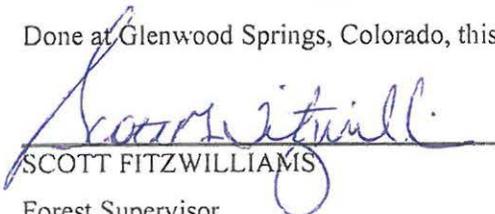
EXEMPTIONS:

Pursuant to 36 C.F.R. § 261.50(e), the following persons are exempt from this order:

- (1) Persons with a Forest Service permit 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.

This Order will be in effect when signed and shall remain in effect until rescinded or until December 31, 2015, whichever event occurs first.

Done at Glenwood Springs, Colorado, this 4th day of August, 2015.


SCOTT FITZWILLIAMS

Forest Supervisor
WHITE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST

Violations of this prohibition are punishable as a Class B misdemeanor by a fine of not more than \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization, or imprisonment for not more than 6 months, or both. (16 U.S.C. § 551 and 18 U.S.C. §§ 3559 and 3571).

Required Food Storage Order for Bear Resistant Containers in Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness

Release Date: Jul 14, 2015

NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

USDA Forest Service

White River National Forest

900 Grand Ave., Glenwood Springs, CO 81602

Contact: Bill Kight, 970-945-3237 (office)

Phil Nyland, 970-963-2266 (office)

Required Food Storage Order for Bear Resistant Containers in Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness

ASPEN, Colo.– July 14, 2015 – The Aspen-Sopris Ranger District is implementing a regulation (known also as a “Special Order”, or “Order”) for the 162,333 acre Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness Area on the White River National Forest. This order requires mandatory storage of all food, garbage and attractant in hard-sided bear-resistant containers. All overnight hikers need to provide their own hard-sided containers approved by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee, which are readily available on-line from several manufacturers and retailers.

Bear resistant containers may also be purchased at the following local outdoor stores: Aspen Expeditions or Four Mountain Sports, at Aspen Highlands; Bristlecone Mountain Sports, Basalt; Factory Outdoors or Summit Canyon Mountaineering, Glenwood Springs; and Ute Mountaineering, Aspen. Bear resistant food canisters can also be rented at the following local vendors: Aspen Expeditions and Ute Mountaineering.

According to Aspen-Sopris District Ranger Karen Schroyer, “Based on recent human/bear incidents in the heavily used Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness, we are implementing this emergency special order requiring hard-sided bear-resistant food canisters for all overnight visitors. Hanging food in trees is not effective and too many people are continuing to store food in their tents. I hope that visitors will understand that this special order is being implemented for their own safety, the safety of others camping nearby and conservation of our bear population.”

The Forest Service works in close coordination with Colorado Parks and Wildlife on bear management issues and they support this order. Over the past few years there have been multiple bear incidents within the Maroon Bells Wilderness. Incidents involved bears feeding on human food, buried garbage and other attractants such as cooking waste and toiletries when visitors to the Wilderness were absent from camp or sleeping.

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.

Food storage is an integral part of bear management on White River National Forest and the Rocky Mountain Region. The Forest Service needs this order in place in order for visitors to effectively manage food, garbage and attractants in bear country. By enforcing the order, the Forest Service is acting to protect both humans and bears. Human safety will be protected by reducing conflicts with bears. Bears will be protected by minimizing habituation and possible destruction of problem animals.

Violations of these prohibitions are punishable as a Class B misdemeanor by a fine of not more than \$5,000 for an individual, \$10,000 for an organization or imprisonment for not more than six (6) months, or both (16 U.S.C. Section 551; 18 U.S.C. Sections 3559, 3571). Forest Service personnel can consider the circumstances of the situation and elect to give a warning notice or educate visitors of the importance for proper storage of food, garbage, and attractants.

For more information contact Phil Nyland, Wildlife Biologist at (970) 404-3158.

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ORDER
EMERGENCY WILDERNESS OCCUPANCY AND USE RESTRICTIONS

MAROON BELLS-SNOWMASS WILDERNESS
USDA FOREST SERVICE
WHITE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST

Pursuant to 16 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 551 and 36 Code of Federal Register (C.F.R.) § 261.50(a), the following acts are prohibited within the **Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness** of the White River National Forest, Pitkin and Gunnison Counties, State of Colorado (the "Restricted Area"). This Order also incorporates the attached definitions in Exhibit B.

The Restricted Area is shown on the attached map hereby incorporated into this Order as Exhibit A. The restricted area covers approximately 162,333 acres.

The purpose of this Order is to protect people and property from possible dangerous bear interactions that have increased over time.

PROHIBITION:

1. Possessing or storing any food or refuse, as specified in the order in the Restricted Area. 36 C.F.R. § 261.58(cc)
2. Possessing, storing, or transporting any bird, fish, or other animal or parts thereof, as specified in the order. 36 C.F.R. § 261.58(s)

EXCEPT WHEN:

1. The food or refuse is "acceptably stored" or "acceptably possessed" during daytime hours;
2. The food and refuse is being prepared for eating, being eaten, being transported, being prepared for acceptable storage, or is "acceptably stored" during nighttime hours.

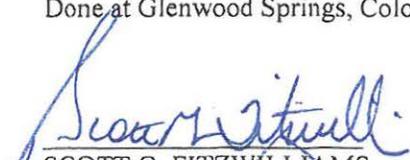
EXEMPTIONS:

Pursuant to 36 C.F.R. § 261.50(e), the following persons are exempt from this Order:

1. Any federal, state, or local officer or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force, in the performance of an official duty, or
2. Any federal, state, or local officer placing baits to capture animals for research or management purposes in the performance of an official duty, or
3. Any person with a permit issued by the Forest Service specifically authorizing the otherwise prohibited act.

These restrictions are in addition to the general prohibitions in 36 C.F.R. Part 261, Subpart A. This Order shall remain in effect from the date signed until December 31, 2015 or until rescinded, whichever occurs first.

Done at Glenwood Springs, Colorado this 10th day of July, 2015.


SCOTT G. FITZWILLIAMS
Forest Supervisor,
White River National Forest

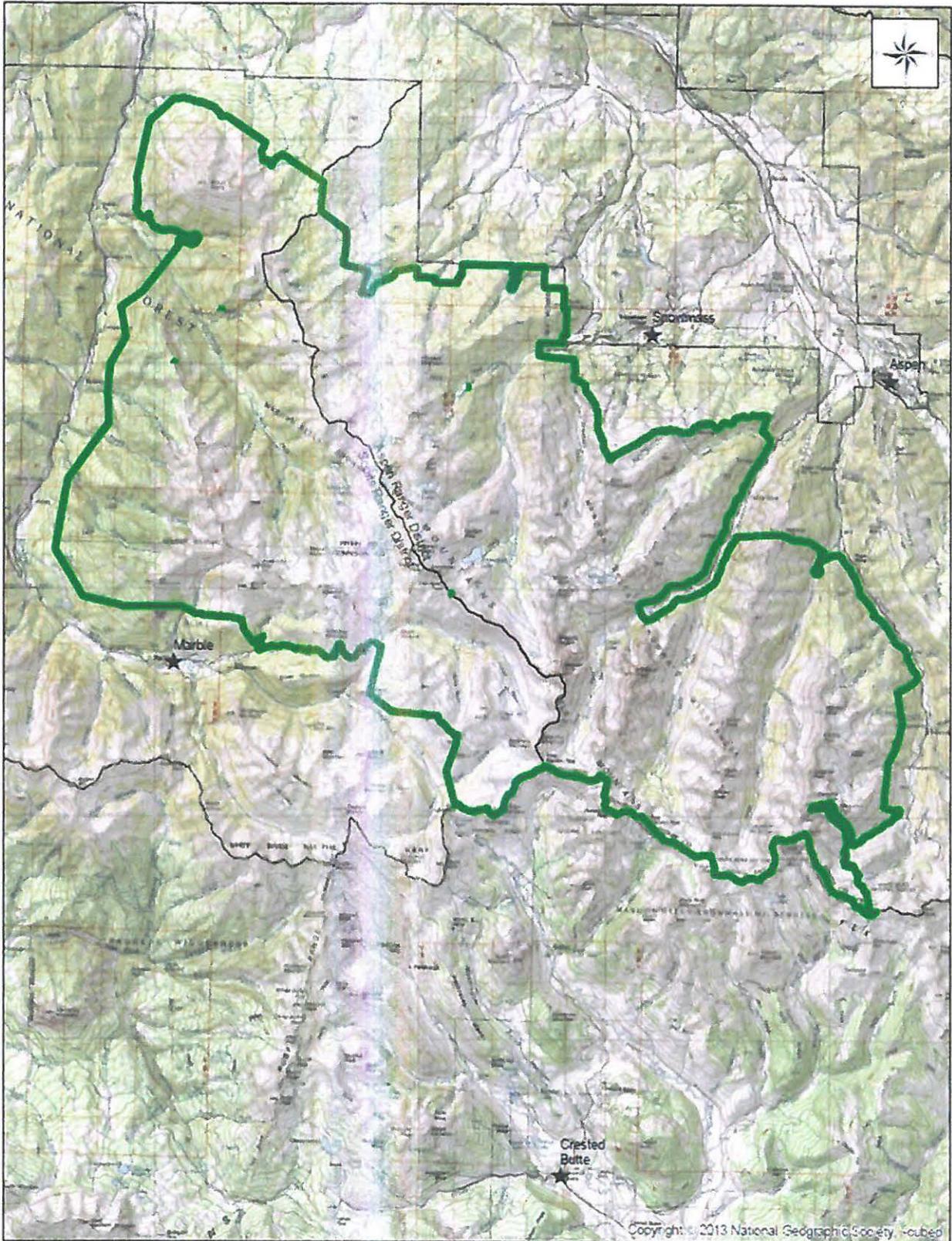
Violations of these prohibitions are punishable as a Class B misdemeanor by a fine of not more than \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for a corporation, or imprisonment for not more than 6 months, or both. 16 U.S.C. § 551 and 18 U.S.C. §§ 3559 and 3571

EXHIBIT B

Definitions:

1. "Food and Refuse" means any substance, solid or liquid (excluding water, baled hay, or hay cubes without additives) which is or may be eaten or otherwise taken into the body to sustain health or life, provide energy, or promote growth of any person or animal or any refuse which might attract bears. It includes items such as soft drinks, alcoholic beverages, canned foods, pet foods, processed livestock feed and grains, personal hygiene products, empty food and beverage containers, and any item that may attract bears including trash, food residue, garbage, and similar items that may contain odors.
2. "Acceptably stored" means:
 - a. Stored in hard-sided bear-resistant container certified through the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee Courtesy Inspection Program. Soft-sided containers are not acceptable. A container may be certified by the local District Ranger or their designated representative(s) if it meets the IGBC criteria and is hard-sided, or
 - b. Stored by other methods approved in a permit issued by the Forest supervisor responsible for the area where the method is proposed for use.
 - c. Meat carcasses or game parts harvested by hunting that occurred legally under Colorado State Hunting Laws are more than 100 yards from overnight camping sites.
3. "Acceptably possessed" means:
 - a. Possessed or attended during daytime by a person(s) that is physically present within 100 feet and direct sight of the accessible food, refuse, or item.
4. "Daytime" means ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset, Mountain Time.
5. "Nighttime" means ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise, Mountain Time.

EXHIBIT A: The Maroon Bells – Snowmass Wilderness, White River National Forest, where storage of food, garbage, and other bear attractants is required.



Food Storage and Sanitation Order

Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness, White River National Forest

Your safety is important

This food storage order was created to help keep you and other forest visitors safe by avoiding encounters with bears and preventing bears from being attracted to camping areas frequented by people.

All food and other items that might attract bears must be stored where bears can't access them at night and during the daytime when they are unattended. "Attended" means that a person is physically present within 100 feet and in direct sight of items that must be stored in a bear-resistant manner.



These items must be properly stored

- 1) Human food including fresh and canned food, soft drinks, alcoholic beverages, and unclean cooking equipment and supplies
- 2) This also includes garbage, food scraps, and empty food and beverage containers.
- 3) Attractants including pet food and edible hygiene items such as soap, toothpaste and deodorants.

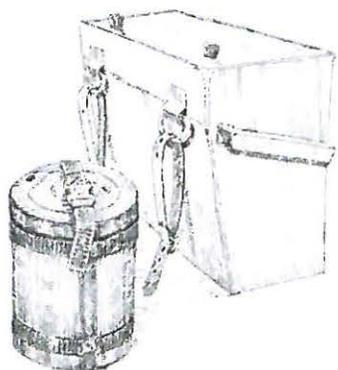
Proper storage methods

Proper storage methods include placing food and other items in hard-sided bear resistant containers. Legally harvested meat carcasses or game parts must be stored more than 100 yards from overnight camping sites unless acceptably possessed.

Bear resistant containers

Approved hard-sided bear resistant horse panniers and backpackers' containers that are certified through the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee Courtesy Inspection Program.

NOTE: Plastic or metal food coolers, soft-sided containers, backpacks, and leather or canvas horse panniers are NOT bear resistant containers.



Bear Resistant Canisters

Required for overnight camping in Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness Area
Recommended for Hunter Fryingpan Wilderness Area

Available at the following locations:

Aspen

Aspen Expeditions (across the plaza)
\$10/day to rent, plus \$10 cleaning fee upon return
\$95 to purchase

Four-Mountain Sports (through doors in lobby)
No rental
\$85 to purchase

Ute Mountaineer (on Galena St. in Aspen)
\$8/day to rent
\$50 (approximately) to purchase

Basalt

Bristlecone (in Willits area near Starbucks)

Carbondale

Ragged Mountain Sports
902 CO-133 (off Roundabout)
\$6/day to rent
\$80 to purchase

Glenwood Springs

Factory Outdoors (on Hwy
82) No rental
\$80 to purchase

Summit Canyon Mountaineering (corner of 8th and Grand
Ave.) No rental
\$80 to purchase

Front Range

Various REI locations