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Forest  
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File Code: 1010/1950/2300

Date: April 30, 2013

Subject: Cherry Lake Camping Restriction

To: Project Files

From: Christina Welch, Acting Forest Supervisor

Cherry Lake is located on the Stanislaus National Forest, Groveland Ranger District in Tuolumne County, CA. Boat-in camping is very popular; however, boaters repeatedly use a limited number of campsites with boat access and adjacent ground suitable for camping. Many campsites are heavily trampled by foot traffic with little or no remaining vegetation and no organic soil cover. Most of these campsites slope downhill, directly contributing sediment into the water and degrading resources at locations around the perimeter of Cherry Lake.

In response to the natural resource concerns related to the impacts caused by use at campsites located just above high water line of Cherry Lake, the Forest Service will issue a temporary Forest Order prohibiting camping within 100 feet of the high water mark at Cherry Lake. This Order will protect the resources in and around the heavily-trampled campsites near the lake while reducing sediment build up in the water. The City and County of San Francisco holds the water right for the stored water in Cherry Lake, which is primarily used for hydropower generation as part of the Hetch Hetchy project. The water in Cherry Lake is also a backup, secondary domestic water source that would be used during a severe drought. The Forest Service will install signs to alert the public to these prohibitions and restrictions.

An additional concern at Cherry Lake is the possible contamination of the water from the nearby camping activities. The California Department of Public Health regulates this domestic water supply to assure that the water is safe for human consumption. With portions of the shoreline littered with garbage and human fecal material, Hetch Hetchy staff identified these boat-in campsites as a potential source of sediment and bacteriologic contamination to the City and County of San Francisco water supply. On National Forest land, general criminal prohibitions at 36 CFR 261.11(b, c, and d) already prohibit improper disposal of garbage and human waste; and, most importantly, prohibit leaving waste in a manner that does or even may pollute a body of water. Groveland Ranger District personnel conduct education through signing, personal contacts and publications to minimize the improper use of the area. Forest Law Enforcement Officers and Forest Protection Officers also seek compliance with the applicable rules by contacting visitors and issuing warning notices and violation notices as needed.

Scoping determined that anticipated effects of the proposed action would be administrative in nature. Minimal ground disturbance will occur, and no other additional impact on any natural resources will occur with the implementation of this project. Groveland Ranger District staff discussed the proposed Forest Order with many recreation users of the Cherry Lake area from early 2009 through early 2010. Most conversations occurred at the Cherry Lake Boat Launch.



The Ranger District posted a sign at the front desk informing the public about the reasons for the proposed action. No one submitted negative comments during that time period. The City and County of San Francisco expressed concern about the water quality in Cherry Lake and support the proposed Forest Order.

In summary, I made my decision to issue a temporary Forest Order for the following reasons:

- The Forest Order will protect water quality and prevent shoreline resource degradation at Cherry Lake.
- The Forest Order is an interim measure to reduce the level of impacts until a recreation management plan is developed and funded.

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. Pursuant to 36 C.F.R. § 215.12(f), this decision is not subject to administrative appeal. I have determined that there are no extraordinary circumstances associated with this temporary closure and the procedures for legal notice and opportunity to comment (36 CFR 215.4) do not apply to this project. Implementation of the decision may begin immediately.

For further information regarding this decision, contact: Maggie Dowd, District Ranger; Groveland Ranger District; 24545 Highway 120; Groveland, CA 95321; (209) 962-7825.