

ORDER NO.02-13-07
EMERGENCY CLOSURE
CLEVELAND NATIONAL FOREST

Pursuant to 16 USC 551 and 36 CFR 261.50(a) and (b), and to protect natural resources and provide for public safety, the following act is prohibited on the Descanso Ranger District within the Cleveland National Forest. This Order is effective from August 15, 2013 through December 31, 2013.

Going into or being upon National Forest System lands within the Chariot Fire Closure Area. The Chariot Fire Closure Area consists of two parts. The boundary of part one of the Chariot Fire Closure Area begins at the Big Laguna Trailhead, then continues to the west and south along the southern edge of the Big Laguna Trail to its intersection with the El Prado Campground, then continues east along the north side of the El Prado Campground Road to its intersection with the entrance to the Laguna Campground, then east to the intersection of Laguna Campground road and Sunrise Highway, then continues north/northwest along the western edge of the Sunrise Highway back to the starting point. The boundary of part two of the Chariot Fire Closure Area begins at the entrance to the Sierra Club Foster Lodge, then continues southeast ¼ mile along the north side of the Sunset Highway, then continues northeast along the flagged line to its intersection with the Pacific Crest Trail, then continues southwest, along the southeast edge of the Pacific Crest Trail back to the starting point, as shown on Exhibit A.
36 CFR 261.52(e).

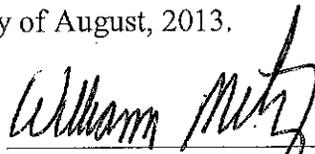
Pursuant to 36 CFR 261.50(e), the following persons are exempt from this Order:

- (1) Any Federal, State or local officer, or member of an organized rescue or fire fighting force in the performance of an official duty.
- (2) Persons with a permit from the Forest Service specifically authorizing the otherwise prohibited act or omission.
- (3) Owners or lessees of private land within the Chariot Fire Closure Area, to the extent necessary to gain access to their land.

This prohibition is in addition to the general prohibitions in 36 CFR Part 261, Subpart A.

A violation of this prohibition is punishable by a fine of not more than \$5000 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 San Diego, California, on this 15th day of August, 2013.


WILLIAM METZ
Forest Supervisor



Date August 15, 2013
TO: File
FROM: Will Metz/Forest Supervisor *WM*
SUBJECT: FOREST ORDER NO. 02-13-07/Chariot Emergency Closure

It is my decision to issue a Forest Order authorizing the temporary closure of a portion of the Descanso Ranger District in the Chariot Fire burn area and adjacent locations. The Chariot Fire Closure Area consists of two parts. The boundary of part one of the Chariot Fire Closure Area begins at the Big Laguna Trailhead, then continues along the southern edge of the Big Laguna Trail to the west and south to its intersection with the El Prado Campground, then continues east on the north side of the El Prado campground road to its intersection with the entrance to the Laguna Campground then east to the intersection of Laguna Campground road and Sunrise Highway, then continues north/northwest along the western edge of the Sunrise Highway back to the starting point. The boundary of part two of the Chariot Fire Closure Area begins at the entrance to the Sierra Club Foster Lodge, then continues southeast ¼ mile along the north side of the Sunset Highway, then continues northeast along the flagged line to its intersection with the Pacific Crest Trail, then continues southwest, along the southeast edge of the Pacific Crest Trail back to the starting point, as shown on Exhibit A. 36 CFR 261.52(e). These restrictions will be in effect from August 15, 2013 through December 31, 2013 to address resource protection, protection of public and private property, and public health and safety concerns related to the fire. The order will also serve to protect forest resources and critical watersheds within the fire area.

There is a need for this action because human life, property, and resource values are threatened by a wildfire that originated on July 6, 2013. The fire has been controlled at approximately 7,055 acres. Fire hazards have been identified and pose a threat to public safety as the road and trail system within the burn area are narrow and hazardous. Additionally, there are numerous natural hazards created by the fire, such as tree snags, stubs, root holes that have been created by roots burning beneath the surface of the soil, etc. The fire also burned over a 100 structures permitted on Forest Service land resulting in hazmat concerns.

An additional threat to public safety created by this fire is flash flooding caused by loss of vegetation and exposed soils. This area has historically had severe monsoonal thunderstorms that result in some flash flooding and the loss of vegetative resources increases the probability of severe flash flooding and/or mud flows.

In addition to the public health and safety aspect of the Chariot Fire there are numerous archeological, historical, and culturally relevant sites that have been exposed by the fire. Many of these sites are cataloged; however, numerous other sites, now exposed by the fire have not yet been surveyed. The topography of the area is steep with sensitive soils. The topography combined with sensitive soils invite erosion when traversed by either mechanical means or by primitive means.



This Closure is felt to be the most immediate and effective method to reduce the potential for loss of life, and loss of significant physical, and cultural resource values on the forest. The Closure area was designed to provide for the viability of projects and businesses currently in operation on Mt. Laguna where they could be accommodated.

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.

Coordination with the following co-operating agencies was conducted prior to implementation of the fire restriction order:

1. Cal Fire Department
2. San Diego County
 - Sheriff's Department
3. State of California
 - Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
 - Highway Patrol
 - Cal-Trans
 - Department of Parks and Recreation
4. Angeles, Los Padres and San Bernardino National Forests

No significant issues were raised during these scoping conducted with the cooperators identified above.

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Exhibit A

