



**File Code:** 5330

**Date:** August 19, 2021

**Route To:**

**Subject:** Regional Order No. 21-04

**To:** File

I have decided to issue Forest Order No. 21-04 to prohibit going into or being upon National Forest System lands in the following National Forests (NF): Tahoe NF, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, Plumas NF, Lassen NF, Mendocino NF, Klamath NF, Six Rivers NF, Shasta-Trinity NF, and Modoc NF. This Order will be in effect from August 22, 2021, at 11:59 p.m. through September 6, 2021, at 11:59 p.m. This Regional Order will protect forest visitors by preventing them from getting trapped on National Forest System lands during emergency circumstances, decrease the potential for fire starts at a time of very limited firefighting resources and extreme drought/fire behavior, and enhance firefighter safety by limiting exposure that occurs in public evacuation situations.

California is once again experiencing an historic and unprecedented fire season. Severe-to-exceptional drought persists across the State and continued hot, dry weather for extended periods has led to extreme and dangerous fire growth and behavior across Northern California and parts of Southern California. At this time, there are several large uncontained fires burning on National Forest System lands in the State, 7 of which are in Northern California (see table below). So far this year, 6,574 wildfires have burned over 1.3 million acres across all jurisdictions in California. By this date last year, just over 860,000 acres had burned, making this year even more severe than last year’s historic fire season. For example, the Dixie Fire on the Lassen and Plumas National Forests has surpassed 650,000 acres, making it the largest single fire in State history.

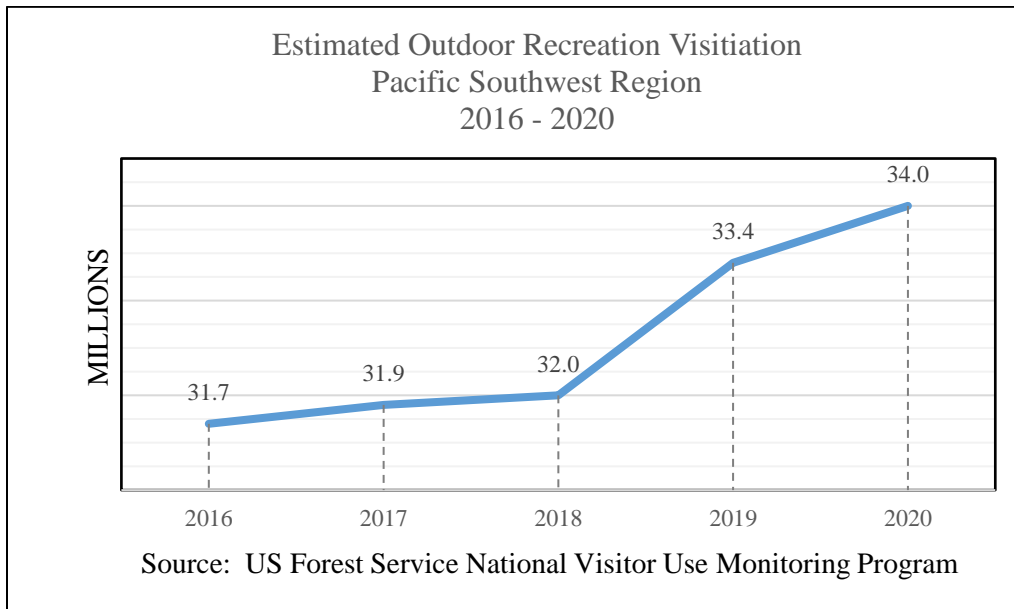
Nationally, we are at Preparedness Level 5 (PL5), meaning that all fire-fighting resources are currently committed to fire incident response. The Northern California Geographic Area for wildfire is also currently at PL5 with all available fire-fighting resources committed. There are more than 10,000 personnel, 197 crews, 739 engines, and numerous aircraft committed to fire fighting in California. There are no federal incident command teams available to manage large federal fires across the country and availability of on-the-ground resources is extremely limited to fight current and new fires.

Fire	National Forest	Acres	% Containment	Cost to Date
Caldor	Eldorado	62,586	0%	\$2.8M
McCash	Six Rivers/Klamath	6,788	1%	\$5.3M
Antelope	Klamath/Modoc/Shasta-Trinity	60,634	27%	\$17.8M
River	Klamath	53,071	10%	\$14.6M



Complex				
Monument	Shasta-Trinity	128,613	10%	\$21.7M
McFarland	Shasta-Trinity	111,016	51%	\$23.3M
Dixie	Lassen/Plumas	662,647	35%	\$285M

Meanwhile, visitor use of National Forest System lands has been on the rise the last two years during the COVID-19 pandemic (see graph below). Like last year, increasing numbers of people have once again taken to visiting their public lands to enjoy a variety of outdoor recreational pursuits. Recreation of all types on National Forests has increased dramatically with more new users getting outside than ever before.



With nearly 90% of all wildfires being started by humans (as opposed to lightning or other natural causes), this increase in public use poses additional risk for igniting fires that have a high potential to burn out of control given our extreme drought, weather, and draw-down of fire-fighting resources. Therefore, these closures are needed as proactive measures to mitigate our current wildfire situation in the Region.

This Regional Order includes an exemption for persons with a Forest Service Permit for Use of Roads, Trails, or Areas Restricted by Regulation or Order (Form FS-7700-48). Authorization under this exemption will only be provided if I or my delegate determine that the risk to personal health and safety is reasonable considering the circumstances of the request. We may also require appropriate personal protective equipment and other necessary safety measures. I hereby delegate the authority to sign Form FS-7700-48 granting an exemption to this Regional Order to the Forest Supervisors of the Tahoe NF, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, Plumas NF, Lassen NF, Mendocino NF, Klamath NF, Six Rivers NF, Shasta-Trinity NF, and Modoc NF.

The closures implemented through this Order will be accomplished with notification to the public through traditional and social media, as well as signs and/or barricades, and monitored by law enforcement personnel.

Agency administrators have communicated with congressional representatives, affected timber company operators, and executive leaders from state and other federal agencies and related partners. 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 C.F.R. § 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.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Eberlien". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "E".

JENNIFER EBERLIEN  
Regional Forester

Enclosure: Regional Order No. 21-04