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**Sent:** Monday, August 30, 2021 2:34 PM  
**To:** FS-r5\_org <r5\_org@usda.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: All Employee Message - Forest Closure Order



Teammates,

I have made the difficult decision to temporarily close all R5 National Forests in order to better provide public and firefighter safety due to extreme fire conditions throughout the state, and strained firefighting resources throughout the country. This closure will be effective on Tuesday August 31, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. through September 17, 2021 at

11:59 p.m. This order does not affect the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, which is not in the Pacific Southwest Region.

By temporarily reducing the numbers of people on National Forests during this extreme threat, this Regional Order will minimize the likelihood that visitors could become trapped on National Forest System lands during emergency circumstances, decrease the potential for new fire starts at a time of extremely limited firefighting resources, and enhance firefighter and community safety by limiting exposure that occurs in public evacuation situations, especially as COVID-19 continues to impact human health and strain hospital resources.

I do not take this decision lightly but this is the best choice for public safety. It is especially hard with the approaching Labor Day weekend, when so many people enjoy our national forests. Drought conditions, dry fuels, and winds make our initial attack and containment of fires very difficult and our resources are strained. These temporary closures are necessary to ensure public and firefighter safety, as well as reduce the potential for new fire starts.

The closure order will be promulgated later today.

The following persons are exempt from this Order:

1. Persons with Forest Service Permit No. FS-7700-48 (Permit for Use of Roads, Trails, or Areas Restricted by Regulation or Order), specifically exempting them from this Order.
2. Any Federal, State, or local officer, or member of an organized rescue or fire fighting force in the performance of an official duty.
3. Persons with a Forest Service special use authorization for an electric transmission line, an oil or gas pipeline, communications site, or any other non-recreation special use.
4. Persons with a Forest Service non-special-use written authorization to conduct non-recreational activities, such as harvesting timber or forest products, or grazing livestock.
5. Owners or lessees of land, to the extent necessary to access their land.
6. Residents, to the extent necessary to access their residences.
7. Persons engaged in a business, trade, or occupation are not exempt from the prohibitions listed above, but may use National Forest System roads to the extent necessary to carry out their business, trade, or occupation.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge and thank our front liners, first responders, and all of our unsung heroes across our National Forests. This wildfire season continues unabated with nearly 11,000 federal firefighters assigned to California fires.

I also look to the events in Afghanistan and I am reminded of the men and women who deliberately choose professions that run toward danger and crisis. I have met so many dedicated and brave first responders over the years and I am continually humbled by their sense of sacrifice and duty to protect our communities. Today, take a moment to personally reach out to someone who's on the front lines – check in on them, thank them, and be a willing, listening ear if needed.

It's about taking care of one another. As such, there may be some of you who have been personally affected or displaced by the wildfires. Resources are available to Forest Service employees that include lodging, transportation, and per diem assistance, advance of salary payments, as well as resources for emotional support. Please see the attached for more information.

To close, I am thankful to serve in a community that values service, conservation, interdependence, diversity, and safety, and I am proud to be your Regional Forester.

With Utmost Gratitude,

Jennifer



**Jennifer M. Eberlien**  
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**Pacific Southwest Region**

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