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Forest
Service

Stanislaus National Forest

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Date: April 30, 2020

Subject: Forest Order No. STF-16-2020-02, COVID-19 Public Health & Safety Closure Road and Area

To: Project Files

From: Jason Kuiken, Forest Supervisor

I am issuing Forest Order No. STF-16-2020-02 to provide for public and employee health and safety by closing roads and areas on Stanislaus National Forest (STF) system lands. STF16-2020-02 is a continuation of Forest Order No STF-16-2020-01, which was issued for the same purposes and intent, but is due to expire as of April 30, 2020.

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infection and potentially fatal disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus which leads to respiratory illness. The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with once another (about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. As of April 27, 2020, the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported a total of 985,975 cases of COVID-19 nationwide (up from 186,101 since April 3, 2020) with 41,338 cases in California (up from 8,155 since April 3, 2020). While local are county cases remain small in number (currently 20 confirmed cases, up from 6 since April 3, 2020), many of the cases have been determined to be exposures from out-of-county. In addition, limited local testing has taken place.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. As a result, the best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus. The President's Coronavirus Guidelines suggest that individuals avoid social gatherings in groups of 10 or more people, remain home whenever possible, and avoid discretionary travel.

California has seen rapid community spread of the coronavirus. As a result, the Governor of California issued Executive Order N-33-20, which directs all individuals living in the state to stay home or at their place of residence. The STF includes lands in portions of four California counties: Tuolumne, Mariposa, Calaveras, and Alpine. Each of these counties has issued a local public health state of emergency order. In addition, the following local orders have also been issued due to COVID-19:

1. March 16, 2020: Tuolumne Band of Me Wuk Indians – local state of emergency.
2. March 16, 2020: City of Sonora, local state of emergency.
3. March 23, 2020: Alpine County Order, clarification of stay-at-home, short term rentals.
4. March 26, 2020: Calaveras County Order, clarification of stay-at-home with regard to lodging facilities.
5. March 27, 2020: Calaveras County Order, Implementing Regulations for N-33-20.



In addition to the local orders listed above, the USDA, Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region issued a Regional Order on March 27, 2020. This order closes recreation sites (campgrounds, picnic areas, day use sites, etc.) while the State Order (N-33-20) is in effect in an effort to protect public and employee health and safety, along with natural and cultural resources by prohibiting people from visiting and using designated recreation sites.

Despite these orders in place, the STF is seeing an increase of out-of-area visitors. Under normal circumstances, visitation this time of year is typically low during the spring 'shoulder' season. With spring like weather early this year – and people weary of sheltering-in-place – visitation to the Forest started to increase after the State Order was issued. STF-16-2020-01 was issued, encouraging visitors from outside the local area to not visit the Stanislaus at this time. For several weeks, visitation decreased. Despite summer approaching – continuation of the order will help encourage visitors to delay their trip to the Stanislaus until more favorable conditions exist.

The STF is a Sierran foothill forest which lies within rural communities. A next door neighbor to Yosemite National Park (currently completely closed due to COVID-19), the STF serves as a highly sought out destination landscape offering a multitude of recreation opportunities with most visitors coming from the Central Valley and the Bay Area, current 'hotspots' of the coronavirus. Typically, the STF and local counties welcome visitors / recreationists as tourism is the economic driver for the local area. With COVID-19, however, we join our local partners in their concern regarding the potential for a large outbreak of COVID-19 and our ability to successfully respond as rural communities.

Our rural communities have limited medical facilities (small hospitals / clinics), with limited equipment (ventilators). Personal protective equipment for frontline hospital staff (masks, gowns and gloves) are already in short supply. Many visitors continue to participate in high risk activities (snowmobiling and wheeled over snow use) adding challenges to already taxed local law enforcement and search and rescue staff. With developed sites already closed, no restroom facilities are available to visitors. Human waste is still created, just being deposited on the ground rather than in a facility. Many of the desired recreation areas - in and around lakes - provide the water supply for local counties as well as the Bay Area.

In consideration of the above listed concerns, I have decided to extend the closure of a number of roads, portions of roads, and areas adjacent to roads. This will continue to support our community partners in managing out-of-area visitation during the ongoing national health crisis. Overall, the closure covers approximately 56,000 acres (about 5% of total STF land) and approximately 400 miles of road (about 15% of STF system roads).

In preparing this order, the following entities have been contacted or have otherwise (in writing) offered their support of this action: Tuolumne County Administrator's Office / Office of Emergency Services; Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors; Public Health Officials from each County; Tuolumne County Sheriff's Office; Sonora Police Department; California Highway Patrol; and Calaveras County Sheriff's Office. (Please see attached support letters). The STF participates in conference calls / meetings taking place three times a week that include the entities above, as well as the following: Tuolumne Band of Me Wuk; Tuolumne County

Schools; CALFIRE; Sonora City Fire and others. In addition, staff contacts with STF permittees (resorts, permitted water providers, for example) have indicated support to help minimize out-of-area visitation until corresponding shelter in place orders are lifted. Finally, a Joint Information Center (JIC) is being stood up in Tuolumne County to provide consistent, real time informational and educational messaging to visitors regarding the need to honor the shelter in place in your home community - thereby eliminating all unnecessary travel - until conditions change.

I have found no significant objections to the necessity of closing roads, portions of roads and areas due to public health and safety risks. I have determined that anticipated effects of this proposed action would be administrative in nature.

This Forest Order includes an exemption for persons with a Forest Permit for Use of Roads, Trails, or Areas Restricted by Regulation or Order (Form FS-7700-48). Authorization for entry 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-700-48 granting an exemption to this Forest Order to all District Rangers on the Stanislaus National Forest.

This order will be in effect from today's date until May 15, 2020 and may be extended until Executive Order N-33-20 is lifted. Conversely, if conditions change that are favorable to opening some roads and areas, the order may be terminated sooner.

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. I have determined that there are no extraordinary circumstances associated with this temporary closure. Implementation of the decision may begin immediately.



**Forest Order No. STF-16-2020-02
Stanislaus National Forest
COVID-19 Public Health and Safety
Road and Area Closure**

Pursuant to 16 USC 551 and 36 CFR 261.50(a) and (b), and to provide for public health and safety, the following acts are prohibited within the Stanislaus National Forest. This order is effective from May 1, 2020 through May 15, 2020, unless terminated sooner.

1. Being on the National Forest System roads listed in Exhibit A and shown on Exhibit B. 36 CFR 261.54(e).
2. Going into or being within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of State Highway Nos. 4, 108 and 120, and the National Forest System roads listed in Exhibit C and shown on Exhibit B. 36 CFR 261.53(e).

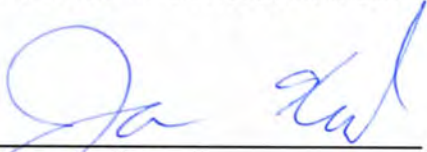
Pursuant to 36 CFR 261.50(e), the following persons are exempt from this Order:

1. Persons with a Forest Permit for Use of Roads, Trails, or Areas Restricted by Regulation or Order, Form FS-7700-48, 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. Residents, to the extent necessary to access their residences.
6. Owners or lessees of land, to the extent necessary to access their land.
7. Persons performing Critical Infrastructure Service Work as defined in the State of California Governor's Executive Order N-33-20.

These prohibitions are in addition to the general prohibitions in 36 CFR Part 261, Subpart A.

A violation of these prohibitions is punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000 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 Sonora, CA, this 30th day of April, 2020.

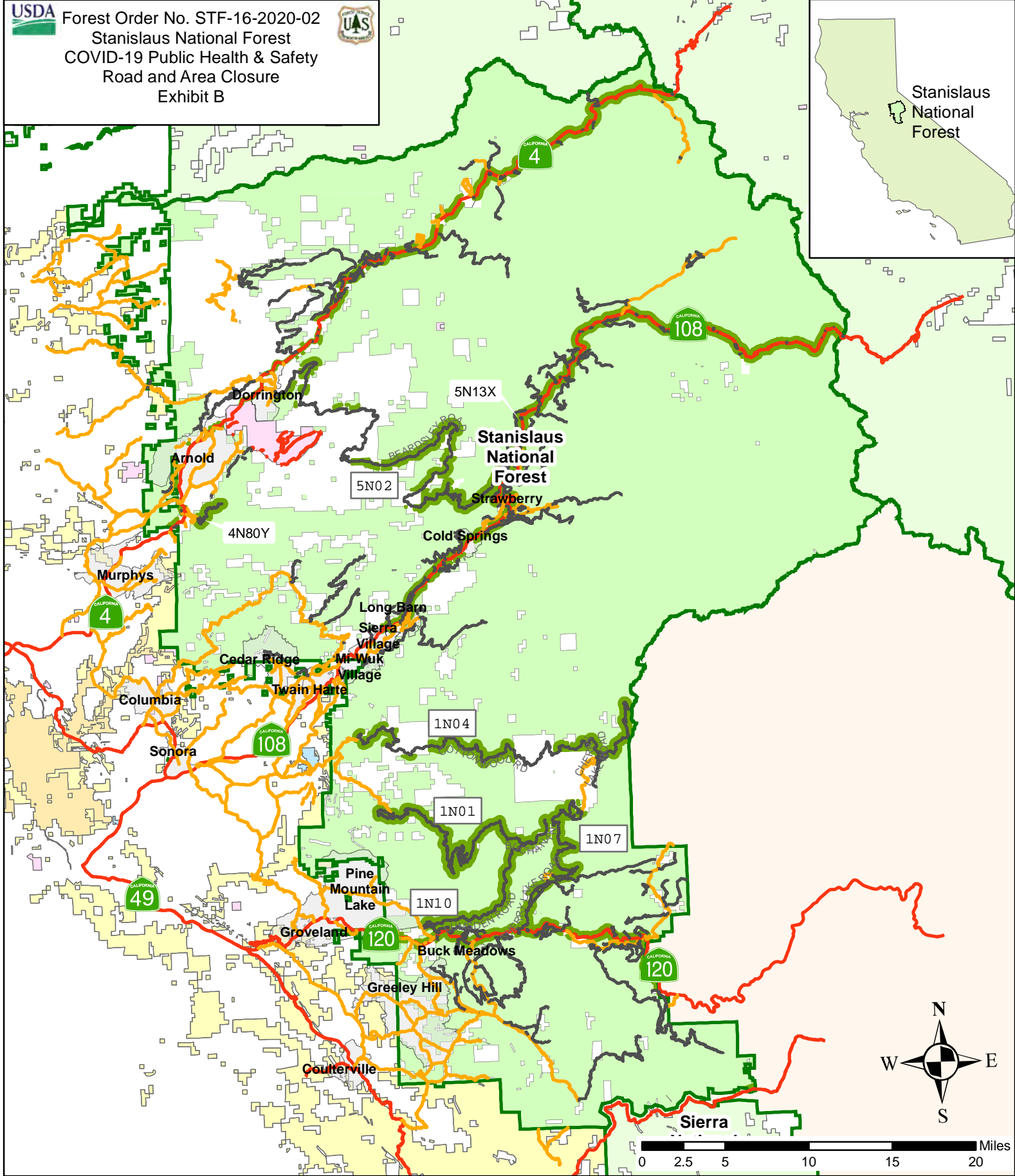


Jason Kuiken
Forest Supervisor
Stanislaus National Forest

Forest Order STF-16-2020-01
Stanislaus National Forest
COVID-19 Public Health and Safety
Road and Area Closure
Exhibit A: List of Closed Roads

ROAD #	ROAD #	ROAD #	ROAD #	ROAD #	ROAD #	ROAD #	ROAD #
01N01	01S66	03N52	05N02	06N13X	07N01	07N12A	07N30YB
01N04	01S66A	03N58	05N06	06N13Y	07N02	07N13	07N31Y
01N07	01S69	03N69	05N08Y	06N14	07N03Y	07N13A	07N31YA
01N10	01S70	03N69A	05N11	06N16	07N05Y	07N13Y	07N40Y
04N80Y	01S70B	03N70A	05N12	06N16A	07N08	07N16X	07N41Y
05N02	01S71	03N71	05N14Y	06N16B	07N09	07N17	07N47
05N13X	01S72Y	03N73	05N17	06N23	07N12A	07N20	07N50Y
01N14Y	01S75	03N73B	05N17Y	06N24	07N13	07N21	07N51Y
01N23	01S75A	03N78	05N21	06N24Y	07N13A	07N23	07N52
01N83	01S89	03N87	05N26	06N32Y	07N13Y	07N30Y	07N52Y
01N98	01S96	03N89	05N28	06N33	07N16X	07N30YA	07N68
01S01Y	02N01D	03N90	05N30	06N33Y	07N17	07N30YB	07N68A
01S01YB	02N26	03N91	05N32	06N34Y	07N20	07N31Y	07N70
01S02	02N32Y	03N95	05N32A	06N36Y	07N21	07N31YA	07N70Y
01S03	02N63A	04N01	05N35	06N37Y	07N23	07N40Y	07N71Y
01S08	02N63B	04N06	05N40Y	06N39Y	07N30Y	07N41Y	07N71Y1
01S08Y	02S01	04N06Y	05N50	06N40	07N30YA	07N47	07N71YA
01S09	02S03	04N06YA	05N51YA	06N43Y	07N30YB	07N50Y	07N76
01S12	02S03Y	04N11	05N55	06N44Y	07N31Y	07N51Y	07N78Y
01S13	02S07Y	04N11X	05N56	06N45	07N31YA	07N52	07N79Y
01S13Y	02S09	04N12	05N63	06N45Y	07N40Y	07N52Y	07N80Y
01S14	02S14	04N13	05N63Y	06N46Y	07N41Y	07N68	07N83B
01S15	02S17	04N16	05N67Y	06N51Y	07N47	07N68A	07N93
01S16Y	02S17Y	04N17	05N76Y	06N58	07N50Y	07N70	08N01A
01S19Y	02S23Y	04N18	05N77Y	06N58Y	07N51Y	07N70Y	08N01B
01S21Y	02S24Y	04N22	05N92	06N59Y	07N52	07N71Y	08N02
01S22	02S28A	04N23	05N92Y	06N64Y	07N52Y	07N71Y1	08N04
01S23	02S30	04N26	05N95Y	06N71Y	07N68	07N71YA	08N06
01S23D	02S83	04N28Y	05N95YA	06N74Y	07N68A	07N76	08N07
01S24	02S90	04N28YB	06N01A	06N77	07N70	07N78Y	08N07A
01S25	03N01	04N34	06N01B	06N77A	07N70Y	07N79Y	08N12
01S25Y	03N01D	04N35E	06N02X	06N77B	07N71Y	07N80Y	08N13
01S26	03N01U	04N39	06N03	06N78	07N71Y1	07N83B	08N14
01S28	03N02	04N40	06N05Y	06N78A	07N71YA	07N93	
01S29	03N14	04N44	06N06	06N79	07N76	07N12A	
01S29C	03N19	04N47Y	06N07Y	06N80	07N78Y	07N13	
01S32	03N33	04N48Y	06N08Y	06N81	07N79Y	07N13A	
01S36	03N34	04N50	06N09	06N81Y	07N80Y	07N13Y	
01S42Y	03N39	04N51Y	06N09Y	06N81YA	07N83B	07N16X	
01S48Y	03N41	04N59	06N10	06N82	07N01	07N17	
01S50Y	03N41Y	04N68Y	06N10X	06N82Y	07N02	07N20	
01S53	03N48	04N69	06N11	06N84Y	07N03Y	07N21	
01S57	03N48B	04N73	06N11X	06N85Y	07N05Y	07N23	
01S63	03N51Y	04N73Y	06N12X	06N91Y	07N08	07N30Y	
01S64	03N51YB	05N01	06N13	06N91Y1	07N09	07N30YA	

USDA Forest Order No. STF-16-2020-02
 Stanislaus National Forest
 COVID-19 Public Health & Safety
 Road and Area Closure
 Exhibit B



Legend

Closed Roads	OWNER	OTHER NF	PVT
Closed Area	BIA	LG	STATE
C - COUNTY, PARISH, BOROUGH	BLM	NPS	Stanislaus National Forest
S - STATE	BOR		

**Forest Order STF-16-2020-02
Stanislaus National Forest
COVID-19 Public Health and Safety
Road and Area Closure**

Exhibit C: List of Buffered Roads

ROAD NUMBER

01N01
01N04
01N07
01N10
04N80Y
05N02
05N13X