



United States Department of Agriculture



Sawtooth NATIONAL FOREST NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact: 208-423-7500

Julie Thomas, Public Affairs Officer

Web: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/snf/>

<https://twitter.com/SawtoothNF>

<https://www.facebook.com/sawtoothnf>

Required Food Storage Order for the Sawtooth National Recreation Area

Ketchum, Idaho

July 13, 2020

The Sawtooth National Forest is implementing a regulation (known also as a “Special Order”, or “Order”) for the Sawtooth National Recreation Area outside of the three designated wilderness areas. This Order requires mandatory storage of all food, garbage and attractants in hard-sided vehicles or bear-resistant containers approved by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee from the Saturday before Memorial Day through Labor Day. All forest visitors are responsible for their own bear-resistant storage. The Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee website (<http://igbconline.org/bear-resistant-products/>) provides a list of certified bear-resistant containers which are also appropriate in deterring black bears. Bear resistant containers are readily available locally and on-line from several manufacturers and retailers.

According to Sawtooth NRA Area Ranger Kirk Flannigan, “Based on human/black bear incidents that have occurred in the past on the Sawtooth NRA, I have determined that it is time to implement a food storage order with the hopes that it will discourage bears from becoming habituated to human food. I hope that visitors will understand that this special order is being implemented for their own safety, the safety of others camping nearby, and conservation of our black bear population.”

The Forest Service works in close coordination with Idaho Department of Fish and Game on black bear management issues and they support this order. Over the past several years there have been multiple bear incidents within the Sawtooth NRA, including more than 20 in 2017 alone. Incidents involved black bears feeding on human food, pet food, garbage and other attractants such as cooking waste and toiletries when visitors to the Sawtooth NRA were absent from camp or sleeping.



Forest Service



Once rewarded, bears can become more emboldened, escalating the potential for adverse encounters with visitors. In rare cases, visitors have been injured during these encounters. These bears become dangerous to people and are often euthanized in defense of human safety and property.

Violation of the above prohibition(s) is punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000.00 for an individual, or \$10,000 for an organization, and/or imprisonment for not more than six (6) months. [Title 16 USC 551, Title 18 USC 3571 (b)(6), Title 18 USC 3581 (b)(7).] Forest Service personnel can consider the circumstances of the situation and elect to give a warning notice or educate visitors of the importance for proper storage of food, garbage, and attractants.

For more information please visit:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/sawtooth/home/?cid=FSEPRD734582&width=full>

The mission of the Forest Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world. Public lands the Forest Service manages contribute more than \$13 billion to the economy each year through visitor spending alone. Those same lands provide 30 percent of the nation's surface drinking water to cities and rural communities and approximately 66 million Americans rely on drinking water that originated from the National Forest System. The agency also has either a direct or indirect role in stewardship of about 900 million forested acres within the U.S., of which over 130 million acres are urban forests where most Americans live.)

#

"USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender."

