

Summary of Action: The USDA Forest Service is requesting public input on a directive that establishes a definition for emergency closures of areas located on national forests or grasslands to hunting, fishing, or recreational shooting. This change is part of a larger suite of updates to agency directives that would implement the John D. Dingell Jr. Act (Dingell Jr. Act).

Why Do We Need to Change This Directive? The Forest Service is updating its directives as outlined in the John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act to facilitate access to hunting, fishing and recreational shooting on national forests and grasslands. These updates include a greater role for public participation, codify the national practice on Federal lands of “open unless closed” to hunting, fishing or recreational shooting into policy, and establish a process to temporarily or permanently close areas. They also include adding a definition for *emergency closures*, which is needed to ensure that the Forest Service has clear and transparent guidelines for closing an area to these recreational activities.

What We Are Changing: The Forest Service will be establishing a definition for an emergency closure, so that preventative measures can be taken to minimize impacts prior to an emergency situation, such as:

- Wildfire prevention
- Prevention of imminent and potentially irreversible damage to the environment or plant/animal species.

Anticipated Results/Outcomes:

- Increase transparency when engaging in an emergency closure
- Improve communication between the Forest Service and state fish and wildlife agencies
- Increase communication with the recreational sport shooting community and other associated user groups
- Increase public participation and further facilitate the use of the National Forest System for certain recreational uses