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Mary,

While skimming your draft forest plan, I noticed Standard 31: "Allow dispersed camping on the forest only with a permit."

How is the F-M going to implement this standard? I ask because the standard appears to conflict with overarching federal regulations. The Forest Service's "use and occupancy" rule is found at 36 CFR 251.50. To paraphrase, this rule states that every use of national forests requires a permit, except for noncommercial recreational uses, e.g., camping, which don't require a permit.

Line officers do have authority to close an area to certain uses (36 CFR 261.50 et seq.). They exercise this authority by signing an order that is posted in each office and "Displaying each prohibition imposed by an order in such locations and manner as to reasonably bring the prohibition to the attention of the public." 36 CFR 261.51.

While it is possible for your forest supervisor to sign an order banning camping on the F-M unless the camper "meet[s] exemption requirements specified in the order," (i.e., has obtained a permit, see 36 CFR 261.50(e)(6)), I have a hard time imagining how the FS will display such an order sufficiently to bring it to the visiting public's attention. The FS would have to post every trail head, every road, every regularly used dispersed camping site, and replace those postings after they've been vandalized, removed, defaced, or just rotted away.

Can you help me understand the rationale behind this standard and how the FS will go about implementing it? Note that the land and resource management plan itself regulates only the Forest Service's conduct. Standing alone, the plan has no regulatory force or effect on anyone else, including dispersed campers.

Thanks,

Andy Stahl  
Executive Director

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