

*Shoshone National Forest*

# News release

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## **Implementation of Food Storage Order delayed to review, address public comments**

After receiving comments at public meetings where expansion of the Food Storage Order was discussed, the Bridger-Teton and Shoshone National Forests have decided to postpone implementation of the order until mid-summer to give them time to address those issues.

Because of concerns about human-bear encounters, both forests had originally proposed expanding the Food Storage Order on April 1 to areas not currently covered by the order. The order requires food to be stored in bear-resistant containers or hard-vehicles or hung above ground out of reach of bears.

The supervisors of both forests said it will take some time to analyze the comments and adapt the Food Storage Order to meet people's concerns while still protecting people and bears.

One suggestion that people made at the public meetings was to change the requirement that an unattended animal carcass must be at least ½ mile from a trail. They feel that is unreasonable.

"This is just one example of the comments we heard that we need time to look at and determine if there are some changes that make sense and will make the order easier to comply with," Shoshone National Forest Supervisor Becky Aus said.

The forests also need time for legal review of the order.

"We want to be responsive to people's concerns and make it as easy as possible to comply with the food order," Aus said. "At the same time, we have to remember that this is a safety issue, and we have a responsibility to do what we can to minimize encounters and other conflicts between people and bears."

While the Food Storage Order is being reviewed, Aus said the Shoshone is doing a number of things to help campers and other forest users be safe in bear country. The forest has already purchased some bear resistant food boxes. These will be installed as soon as campgrounds along the Loop Road near Lander and other areas are accessible. In addition, a number of bear resistant horse panniers and food storage containers for backpackers are available for loan at Forest Service offices.

A list of sources of bear resistant containers of all kinds will soon be available at Forest Service offices so that horse packers, backpackers and others will know where they can be purchased. Forest Service personnel and others also are researching and testing new ways to make cheaper bear resistant containers.

In the meantime, the forests will continue their efforts to educate forest users about how to recreate safely in bear country and encourage them to voluntarily store food.

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