



January 5, 2022

Meeks Bay Fire Protection District
Edward I Miller, Board President
PO Box 5879
Tahoe City CA 96145

Dear Mr. Miller,

Your letter dated October 15, 2021, to California Department of Parks and Recreation Director Armando Quintero has been referred to me for response.

Thank you for your input and recommendations regarding the California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) campfire policies. While it is important for CDPR to be able to employ adaptive management strategies for park-specific needs and issues, I believe there is more opportunity for CDPR campfire policies in the Sierra region to align with state and local fire designations/restrictions.

CDPR has the statutory responsibility of designating when and where campfires can be allowed safely in California State Parks. This determination is being made on a daily basis by on-the-ground public safety staff with first-hand knowledge of current conditions. Things like weather conditions, public safety staffing levels, and campground occupancy levels are part of the calculus used to determine if and when campfires can be allowed. Restrictions on fire and flame in California State Parks is likewise approached in an iterative fashion based on conditions. The 2021 Summer season was a challenging one in the Sierra region as indicated by the succession of restrictions via Superintendent Orders:

- May 2021: Districtwide Day Use – Wood/Charcoal Prohibition
- June 2021: Districtwide –Red Flag Conditions Wood/Charcoal Prohibition
- July 2021: Malakoff Diggins SHP Chute Hill Campground Fire Prohibition
- August 2021: Plumas-Eureka SP Wood/Charcoal Fire Prohibition
- August 2021: Districtwide Wood/Charcoal Prohibition

Even with these important restrictions, the 2021 campfire program was a great success with no significant incidents. By providing an opportunity for the recreating public to have campfires in a controlled/managed setting, we are reducing the likelihood of illegal/unmanaged campfire activities that can lead to significant issues. Minor mishaps as recounted in your correspondence are indicative of an otherwise safe activity.

As we approach the 2022 camping season, CDPR will take extra steps to align campfire policies with state and local fire designations/restrictions for our Sierra area parks.

Thank you very much for your correspondence and I will plan on joining in the February 16, 2022 meeting of Meeks Bay Fire Protection District to continue the discussion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Canfield', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Daniel Canfield
California Department of Parks and Recreation
Sierra District Superintendent
PO Box 266
Tahoma CA, 96142
(530) 525-9523