

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE
GIFFORD PINCHOT NATIONAL FOREST
VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON



FOREST ORDER NO. 06-03-01-21-02

APE CAVE INTERPRETIVE SITE ENTRY RESTRICTIONS

Pursuant to 16 USC § 551 and 36 CFR § 261.50 (a) and (b), the following acts are prohibited in Ape Cave Interpretive Site of Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument within the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. The restricted area is as described in Exhibit A and shown in Exhibit B. This Order is effective 07/16/2021, through 07/16/2023.

PROHIBITION:

1. Entering or being in the Ape Cave Interpretive Site, including the cave, year round. 36 CFR 261.53(a),(c),(e)]

RESTRICTION AREA DESCRIPTION:

Starting one half mile from the junction of Forest Road 8300 and 8303 and continuing one hundred feet either side of Forest road 8303 for approximately .27 miles to the junction of the of the Ape Cave overflow parking area; then following the southern and eastern edge of the overflow parking area; then along the trail that leads to the upper parking area; then along the paved trail which leads to the cave entrance; then along the outer edge of the depression that forms the cave entrance; then back down the paved path to the upper parking area and along the western edge of the upper parking area back to the junction of Forest Road 8303. The area also includes a 200' diameter circle around the upper entrance to Ape Cave and all subterranean areas of Ape Cave Interpretive Site.

EXEMPTIONS:

Pursuant to 36 CFR § 261.50(e), the following persons are exempt from this Order:

1. Persons with a timed reservation for Ape Cave Interpretive Site from recreation.gov.
2. Persons remaining in their vehicle and driving through the closure area on Forest Road 8303.
3. Persons under a special use authorization or agreement that allows the otherwise prohibited activity, and approved contractors and their agents directly engaged in approved work outlined in an operating plan or permit.
4. Any Federal, State, or local officer, or member of an organized search and rescue or fire fighting force in the performance of an official duty.

These restrictions are necessary to protect National Forest System lands from adverse impacts to nonrenewable, fragile cave resources. The 1988 Federal Cave Resources Protection Act

mandates Federal agencies secure, protect, and preserve significant caves on Federal lands for the perpetual use, enjoyment, and benefit of all people. Many caves on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest are recognized as significant caves in every category, for outstanding biota, cultural, geologic-mineralogical, paleontological, hydrologic, recreational, and/or educational-scientific characteristics.

The purpose of this Forest Order is to: provide protection and use of the Ape Cave Interpretive Site on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest; reduce the risk of spread of white-nose syndrome to bats on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest; avoid adverse impacts to cultural resources, geologic features, wildlife, mosses, and other cave resources from Forest users, and to provide for visitor safety during hazardous winter conditions.

This prohibition is in addition to the general prohibitions in 36 C.F.R. Part 261, Subpart A.

Violations of this prohibition is punishable as a Class B Misdemeanor, by a fine of not more than \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization, or imprisonment for not more than 6 months, or both (16 USC § 551; 18 USC § 3559 and 18USC § 3571).

Executed in Vancouver, WA this 16 day of July, 2021.

Eric R. Veach

ERIC VEACH
Forest Supervisor
Gifford Pinchot National Forest

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Exhibit A

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