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News Release

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Things to Know When Recreating This Summer-Gunnison National Forest

Gunnison, May 19, 2017 – The Forest Service wants recreationists to know that some changes in dispersed camping rules on the Gunnison National Forest will be in effect this summer. Over the past few years there have been increases in recreation uses throughout our area. It is great to see so many people using their forests! The added numbers do come with a few challenges that require us to step up some management actions. Some challenges we have seen and others have been brought to our attention. These include:

- Increasing numbers of people and camping impacts resulting in user-created roads and trails.
- Human and animal waste disposal problems.
- Campfires left burning.
- Increased season-long use and concentrated groups of users.
- Conflicts with our neighbors (noise, disturbance, etc.).

There are some direct impacts to your forests occurring, including permanent loss of vegetation, soil erosion, sanitation issues, riparian impacts, loss of wildlife habitat and user conflicts that necessitate more effective management of dispersed camping.

It is important that the Forest Service be a good neighbor, as well as, to help our citizens who own and use national forest lands to be good neighbors as well.

This summer and continuing into the future, forest crews will be busy:

- Installing signing and providing information and education to the public and recreationists.
- Physically closing unacceptable user-created roads and trails.
- Identifying and signing spur roads and designating dispersed campsites.
- Assessing areas where dispersed camping can be sustained and impacts mitigated.
- Closing campsites with unacceptable resource impacts.
- Placing physical barriers to prevent the expansion of existing campsites that remain.
- Enforcing rules where necessary.
- Monitoring for effectiveness of management actions and recreation use/impacts.