

Hello CCORP members and other interested people,

The Forest Service, without basis, is, in essence, preventing us from selling the remaining improvements left after the Caldor Fire which is a direct threat to the entire cabin program

CCORP with guidance and help from National Forest Homeowners, is asking everyone to write their congress person, senators, secretary of Agriculture, the White House and most importantly, the Forest Service Chief, Randy Moore. We have sample letters, below, you can use. Of course, you may need to edit parts to fit your situation.

For those of you not familiar with the issue, there are people whose cabins burned in the Caldor Fire who can not or do not want to rebuild the cabin. There are lots of people out there that would love to build a cabin in the woods. The Forest Service practice is to only allow the issuing of a new permit to lots with habitable structures. That practice, which is not supported by any policy, law, permit language, etc., is preventing burned cabin owners from selling their remaining improvements, which include power, water, septic systems, etc. The county is still taxing the burned cabin owners on those improvements. When someone gives up their lot, it essentially is lost and currently never built on again. With every fire, flood, other weather events, etc. more and more cabins are lost. This constant erosion, will eventually make the cabin program unsustainable.

We encourage you to forward this message to others who might write.

If you could drop me an email when you send letters and email, we can be better prepared when we or NFH talks directly with the FS.

Please let us know if you have any questions or comments.

Here are some of the email and snail mail addresses you can send to.

<p>Senator Dianne Feinstein One Post Street, Suite 2450 San Francisco, CA 94104</p> <p>Email: casework@feinstein.senate.gov Email subject line: Caldor Fire Cabin Owners Request This will open a case. The Senator will ask for a release form. This form is attached. Fill out the form and include it with your letter. If you don't want to open a case, just send your letter to the address above</p>	<p>Senator Alex Padilla 112 Hart Senate Office Building Washington DC 20510</p> <p>Email: sac_general@padilla.senate.gov Email subject line: Caldor Fire Cabin Owners Request</p>
<p>Congressman Tom McClintock Direct email: Kimberly.Pruett@mail.house.gov</p> <p>email subject: ccorp – cabin owner assistance request</p> <p>2200A Douglas Blvd, Suite 240 Roseville, CA 95661</p>	<p>Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi 90 7th Street, Suite 2-800 San Francisco, CA 94103</p>
<p>Congresswoman Doris Matsui</p> <p>Email: https://matsuiforms.house.gov/contact/ 501 I Street, Suite 12-600</p>	<p>Congressman Ami Bera Email: https://bera.house.gov/connect-with-me/email-ami 8950 Cal Center Drive, Building 3, Suite 100</p>

Sacramento, CA 95814	Sacramento, CA 95826
Thomas J. Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W. Washington, DC 20250	The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Washington, DC 20500 Prefer email: https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/
Randy Moore, Chief of USDA Forest Service (cc Greg, Mark and Aaron) email: randy.moore@usda.gov	
Gregory C. Smith, Associate Deputy Chief email: Gregory.Smith4@usda.gov	
Mark Chandler, Realty Specialist email: mark.chandler@usda.gov	
Aaron Mayville - Acting Forest Supervisor email: aaron.w.mayville@usda.gov	

Sample letter to Randy Moore

Email to Randy Moore, randy.moore@usda.gov

cc: Gregory.Smith4@usda.gov, mark.chandler@usda.gov, aaron.w.mayville@usda.gov

Subject: Caldor Fire burned cabins. The FS is unnecessarily adding insult to injury

Dear Chief Moore,

Since you have spent time in California and the central Sierra Nevada, you know how special the recreation residences in this area are. I am one of the 177 cabins that burned in the 2021 Caldor Fire on the Eldorado National Forest. As burned cabin owners, we first had the devastating loss of our cabins, the community, the history... Then, we were told we'd have to pay for the debris removal. With the Forest Service's help, legal firms, congress as well as many others, we fought, and FEMA agreed to pay for the debris removal.

Now, we are being told that the Forest Service will only authorize the existing permit holder to rebuild a cabin and only a habitable structure can be sold. Many of us either didn't have insurance, were extremely underinsured, or just can't face the idea of rebuilding. Many of us would like to sell our remaining improvements (community water systems, power, septic systems, etc.) to someone who has the resources to rebuild and continue our lifelong forest stewardship. They have value and we, as personal property owners, should be allowed to sell our property. In addition, El Dorado County is taxing us on our remaining improvements. The FS has not been able to cite any law, policy, permit, or handbook sections that support this practice of not issuing a new permit to a new owner to rebuild the recreation residence

There are numerous reasons why the cabins are beneficial to the forest, the communities, and the nation. For example,

- 6.5 million visitor days to the National Forests for unique multi-generational recreation opportunities where 44% of the visitor days are youth 19 and younger.

- The Recreation Residence Program generates slightly over \$4,700 in revenue per acre making it one of the highest returns to the Forest Service and the U.S. taxpayer for the recreational use of National Forest lands

I know you see the value in the cabin program and encourage you to remedy this unjust, seemingly arbitrary, unwritten practice and allow us to sell our remaining improvements.

If you need more details, justification, background, have questions, etc., please talk with National Forest Homeowners (NFH) or the Caldor Cabin Owners Recovery Project (CCORP) leaders.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter,

Letter/email to congress people

Dear Congressman or Congresswoman XXXXX,

I am writing to you as a victim of the 2021 Caldor Fire in California. I lost our family's cabin (located on the Eldorado National Forest) in that fire, and I am asking you to help break bureaucratic stalling by the Forest Service that is preventing us from selling our remaining personal property improvements.

As I'm sure you can imagine, this loss has been devastating. We, as cabin owners, consider ourselves stewards of the forest. We would like to see all 177 recreation residences burned in the Caldor Fire rebuilt. Unfortunately, many of us either didn't have insurance, were extremely underinsured, or just can't face the idea of rebuilding. Many of us would like to sell our remaining improvements to someone with the resources to rebuild and continue our life-long forest stewardship. The Forest Service is saying they will not issue a recreation residence permit to any new applicant if we sell our remaining improvements. Many FOIA requests by National Forest Homeowners have yet to uncover any policy, permit, or handbook language prohibiting the sale. In addition, the Forest Service has not been able to cite anything. When questioned why we get vague answers sort of pointing to the Forest Service's Washington Office.

Our remaining improvements have value. To name a few, we have community water systems, power, and septic systems. The county is taxing us on that value, yet the Forest Service is basically saying there is only value if there is a habitable structure.

We firmly believe this practice of only authorizing existing permit holders to rebuild their cabins is neither supported by policy nor law. With our efforts (along with those from Congress and others) to get FEMA to change their policy of not paying for the debris cleanup, we have shown we are more than willing to get lawyers involved. We hope that reasonable minds will prevail and not lead to that.

There are numerous reasons why the cabins are beneficial to the forest, the communities, and the nation. For example, the Recreation Residence Program brings \$141 million to rural communities. Please help us to get this simple change in practice. All the Forest Service needs to do is issue a new permit to individuals that purchase our remaining improvements regardless of their state of repair, just as they do for the sale of existing cabins.

I thank you for your consideration in this.

Letter to Secretary of Agriculture

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

I am writing to you as a victim of the 2021 Caldor Fire in California. I lost our family's cabin (located on the Eldorado National Forest) in the fire, and I am asking you to help break bureaucratic stalling by the Forest Service that is preventing us from selling our remaining personal property improvements.

As I'm sure you can imagine, this loss has been devastating. We, as cabin owners, consider ourselves stewards of the forest. We would like to see all 177 cabins burned in the Caldor Fire rebuilt. Unfortunately, many of us either didn't have insurance, were extremely underinsured, or just can't face the idea of rebuilding. Many of us would like to sell our remaining improvements to someone with the resources to rebuild and continue our lifetime forest stewardship. The Forest Service is saying they will not issue a recreation residence permit to any new applicant if we sell our remaining improvements. National Forest Homeowners has issued many FOIA requests in search of Forest Service policy or directives prohibiting issuing a new permit to build a cabin on a lot authorized for the Recreation Residence Program. No prohibitions have been found. In addition, the Forest Service has not been able to cite anything. When questioned why we get vague answers sort of pointing to the Washington Office.

Our remaining improvements have value. We have community water systems. We have power. We have functioning septic systems. The county is taxing us on that value, yet the Forest Service is basically saying there is only value if there is a habitable structure.

This unwritten practice appears to support an old no longer supported notion from the 60s and 70s that the cabin program should not exist. Since then, laws passed by congress and Forest Service policies state the value of the cabin program, yet we seem to find ourselves fighting this old anti-cabin thinking.

We firmly believe this practice is neither supported by policy nor law. With our efforts to get FEMA to change their policy of not paying for the debris cleanup, we have shown we are more than willing to get lawyers involved. We hope that reasonable minds will prevail and not lead to that.

There are numerous reasons why the cabins are beneficial to the forest, the communities, and the nation. For example,

- 6.5 million visitor days to the National Forests for unique multi-generational recreation opportunities where 44% of the visitor days are youth 19 and younger.
- The Recreation Residence Program generates slightly over \$4,700 in revenue per acre making it one of the highest returns to the Forest Service and the U.S. taxpayer for the recreational use of National Forest lands.

Please help us to get this simple change in practice. All the Forest Service needs to do is process the selling of improvements regardless of their state of repair, just as they do for the sale of existing cabins.

I thank you for your consideration in this.

Email/Letter to Congressman McClintock (the congressman for the actual cabins)

This email may be a bit long. We have included it because it has a lot more arguments that you may also want to use.

To: The Honorable Tom McClintock

From: Insert your Name, address

Subject: Caldor Recovery: Thank You and Next Steps for USFS cabin owners

Dear Congressman McClintock,

My name is INSERT YOUR NAME and I am a cabin owner in the Eldorado National Forest, a 40 year resident of Placerville, and one of your constituents (ADJUST FOR WHERE YOU LIVE). Just over a year ago, my cabin at INSERT CABIN Tract burned in the Caldor fire. I would like to thank you for the assistance you and your staff provided in reversing the policy decision of FEMA not to reimburse the State of California for removing hazardous debris of burnt cabins from Forest Service lands. This decision has resulted in the cleanup of 177 cabins before the start of the next winter season. Having seen what was involved in this cleanup I cannot imagine this being accomplished with the inadequate insurance available to cabin owners. Your intervention on our behalf and the work of your staff is much appreciated, valued, and precedent-setting.

We now find ourselves in a bureaucratic limbo, a limbo that threatens the future of many of the cabins in El Dorado National Forest. Over 15 months after the fire, we still do not have permission to rebuild, nor do we know what we can build. We are being taxed on "our ashes" by El Dorado County while waiting for this permission decision to be made. Many do not have the resources nor desire to rebuild; but also, don't want to see the cabin lost forever, as would currently happen if they give up their permit. The Forest Service says they cannot issue a new permit for improvements that do not include a "habitable structure", an undefined term that appears nowhere in our permits nor in the Forest Service handbook. After the fire, we still have improvements that are taxed by the county. These include such things as power, water and septic systems. Being denied the ability to sell our remaining improvements is just adding insult to injury.

The Caldor fire may result in the permanent loss of more cabins in one single event than ever in the history of the cabin program. We can't let that happen. There were 177 cabins burned in the Caldor fire. As many as 100 cabins or more may disappear permanently if measures to allow the sale of improvements are not allowed. While existing owners may not want to rebuild, there may be many in the general public who would like the opportunity to build a cabin on one of these lots. However, if the current owners choose to not rebuild, the lots will become vacant according to current USFS practice. This could result in the loss of many cabins, making some tracts no longer viable. National Forest Homeowners is very interested to see a policy of **no net loss** of cabins and is a great resource on this issue.

From the Forest Service Manual (section 2347.1)

Recreation residences are a valid use of National Forest System lands. They provide a unique recreation experience to a large number of owners of recreation residences, their families, and guests. To the maximum extent practicable, the recreation residence program must be managed to preserve the opportunity it provides for individual and family-oriented recreation. It is Forest Service direction to continue recreation residence use and to work in partnership with holders of these permits to maximize the recreational benefits of recreation residences.

The cabins provide many benefits to the forest and the communities, but the program is endangered by vague wording and unreferenced, most likely nonexistent, policies that result in the permanent loss of cabins after fires. This practice needs reversal for the following reasons:

- The Cabin Fee Act passed by Congress in Dec 2014 that stipulates fee retention to the USDA Forest Service beginning in 2025. The estimate is \$35 million will be retained by the Forest

Service in 2025. Fee retention makes the Recreation Residence Program not only self-sustaining, but retained revenues are greater than the cost to administer and support the program. As per the CFA, excess revenue from retained fees must be used on recreation programs in the National Forests.

- The Recreation Residence Program generates slightly over \$4,700 in revenue per acre, making it one of the highest returns to the Forest Service and the U.S. taxpayer for recreational use of National Forest lands.
- Economic benefit studies, including an extensive report in 2021-2022, finding that the Recreation Residence Program brings \$141 million to rural communities. Additionally, cabin visitors donate over \$3 million to organizations local to their cabins, the majority to volunteer fire departments, and volunteer over 145,000 hours of which the majority to forest stewardship activities.
- 6.5 million visitor days to the National Forests for unique multi-generational recreation opportunities, where 44% of the visitor days are youth 19 and younger.
- There was a high of close to 20,000 cabin permits in the 1960s. There were 13,811 cabins when CFA was passed in 2015. Today there are over 440 less now because of wildfires. The cabin program itself is in danger. If nationwide, the number falls below some level, the program is no longer viable. That is a loss of recreation opportunities, economic benefits to rural communities, and American heritage.

I would like to once again request your assistance to intervene with the Forest Service on the issue of no net loss of cabins and to seek a modification of USFS practice to make that goal real. I hope you will engage in this situation on behalf of the owners of burned forest service cabins on the Eldorado National Forest and the general public who would appreciate the opportunity to buy or build a cabin on approved USFS lots.

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME