



Forest Service
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News Release

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Forest Service Takes Steps to Reduce Human Caused Wildfire during Global Pandemic

Albuquerque, NM – April 21, 2020 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service, Southwestern Region is enacting a campfire ban to protect the health and safety of employees and communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Beginning April 22, igniting, building, maintaining, attending or using a fire will be prohibited on all six national forests in Arizona until June 30, 2020, or until rescinded.

Forest Service officials are taking the necessary steps to ensure first responders are available to safely respond and manage incidents. This campfire restriction will prevent the drawdown of fire and medical resources to unwanted human-caused wildfires and reduce firefighter exposure to COVID-19 during the current pandemic.

“While we know that going outside provides forest and grassland visitors needed space, exercise and satisfaction, we are taking the risks presented by COVID-19 seriously,” said Acting Regional Forester Elaine Kohrman. “We are providing some recreation opportunities where we can while protecting and keeping employees, the public and our communities safe from the virus and unwanted human-caused wildfires.”

The following is prohibited under the April 22 campfire ban order:

- Igniting, building, maintaining, attending or using a fire, including charcoal grills and barbecues, coal and wood burning stoves.

Violating the campfire ban may result in an appearance in federal court, fines, and possible time in jail. Forest visitors will still be able to use pressurized liquid or gas devices (stoves, grills or lanterns) with shut-off valves, in an area at least three feet from any flammable materials. While these restrictions are in place, the majority of the six national forests in Arizona are still open, and dispersed camping – outside of developed campsites – and other recreation opportunities are available.

Visit the Interactive Visitor Map at www.fs.usda.gov/goto/ivm for more information on available activities. For additional information on COVID-19, go to <https://www.coronavirus.gov>. Information from the U.S. Department of Agriculture is available at: www.usda.gov/coronavirus. Information on public lands use in Arizona is available at <https://tourism.az.gov/responsible-recreation-across-arizona/>

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