



Forest Service

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News Release

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Gila NF Encourages Responsible Recreation by Avoiding Unnecessary Exposure and Overcrowding over Easter Weekend

Silver City, NM, April 9, 2020 - The Gila National Forest (NF) has been noticing crowds and parties at day use sites and heavy visitor traffic through gateway communities in spite of federal, state and local guidance on social distancing and group size to help contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

With the Easter holiday ahead, the Gila NF asks the public to recreate responsibly on national forests. As a reminder, at this time:

- All developed campgrounds on the Gila NF are closed to overnight camping.
- All toilet facilities on the forest are locked.
- Some picnic/day use sites are closed to the public.
- Trash collection is suspended.

To protect public health and safety, all visitors to the forest are encouraged to:

- Avoid visiting the forest if you are sick and/or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- Follow [New Mexico State Public Health Orders](#) and [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) guidance](#) on personal hygiene and social distancing before and during your visit to the forest. Stay at least 6 feet away from other visitors and visit in groups of fewer than five people.
- If an area is crowded, please search for a less occupied location. Also consider avoiding the forest during high-use periods.
- Take your trash with you when you leave. Trash overflowing the receptacles becomes litter and can be harmful to wildlife and attract predators.
- Please use the restroom before or after your visit to the forest. If necessary, bury human waste at least 6-8 inches deep and 200 feet away from water, trails and recreation sites to prevent health hazards to our employees and for other visitors.

Visit the [Interactive Visitor Map](#) for more information on available activities and closed sites.

Last, but not least please drown any campfires! #OnlyYou

For information on the Gila National Forest, check out our website at

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