

## CAMPFIRE BAN ON ALL NEW MEXICO FORESTS

USDA Forest Service officials are providing recreation opportunities where possible, while keeping employees, the public, and our communities safe from the COVID-19 virus. At the same time, we are preparing for a fire season unlike any we have ever experienced.

Since abandoned campfires are the leading human cause of wildfire, we are taking necessary steps to protect communities and our natural and cultural resources by implementing region-wide campfire restrictions.

- Until further notice, the following fire-related activities are prohibited on National Forest System lands within the Southwestern Region:
  1. Igniting, building, maintaining, attending or using a fire, including charcoal grills and barbecues, coal and wood burning stoves, and shepherd's stoves.
- Exceptions to the prohibited fire-related activities include:
  1. Persons with a Forest Service permit, specifically exempting them from this Order.
  2. Any Federal, State or local officer or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force in the performance of an official duty is exempt from Prohibitions.
  3. Persons using pressurized liquid or gas devices (stoves, grills or lanterns) with shut-off valves are exempt from Prohibition #1.
- During this fire restriction period, igniting, building, maintaining, attending or using a fire is a violation of the law and may result in an appearance in federal court, fines, and possible time in jail.

Given the demonstrated risk of exposure to the virus from large, concentrated gatherings of people, USDA Forest Service officials are asking the recreating public to comply with all federal guidelines and state and local health orders as well as USDA Forest Service Orders.

- Law enforcement and/or search and rescue operations may be limited due to response to the current health crisis. High risk or backcountry activities that may increase your chance of injury or distress should be avoided.
  1. Federal wildland fire agencies are working closely with state and local partners to support the U.S. response to the current health crisis. At the same time, the Southwestern Region is preparing for the 2020 fire season. These restrictions are in place to prevent overtaxing federal, state and local fire and medical resources.