



U.S. Forest Service
Coconino National Forest
1824 S. Thompson Street
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001

News Release



Public Information: (928) 527-3600
www.CoconinoNationalForest.us

MEDIA CONTACTS
Brady Smith – Public Affairs Officer
George Jozens – Dep. Public Affairs Officer
Media Only: (928) 224-8306

Coconino NF to close high-risk areas due to fire danger

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz., May 18, 2018, For Immediate Release – Coconino National Forest will temporarily close six large areas to public access beginning Wednesday (May 23) at 8 a.m. due to fire danger and for public safety. Areas outside of the closures will remain in [Stage 2 Fire Restrictions](#).

Of these areas, four are located in the Flagstaff Ranger District, one in the Mogollon Rim Ranger District, and one in the Red Rock Ranger District.

Flagstaff Ranger District

- San Francisco Peaks/Mt. Elden area
- Kelly Canyon area
- Fay Canyon/Fisher Point area
- Mormon Mountain area

Mogollon Rim Ranger District

- Mogollon Rim area south of state Route 87

Red Rock Ranger District

- Fossil Creek area

For details and maps of these specific closure areas and the boundaries, please visit <https://bit.ly/2wTqzAv>.

Forest closures of any kind are not taken lightly, as they affect many people, partner agencies, projects, permit holders, prior plans, and the public. Everyone is prohibited from entering forest closure areas – including Forest Service personnel, unless they are responding to a wildfire or other emergency or patrolling to ensure enforcement of the closure.

Work on thinning and other forest and watershed restoration projects ceases within forest closure areas. Partner agencies, organizations, concessionaires, outfitters, permit holders, and contractors, including utilities, are all prohibited from entering the forest to make repairs or work on infrastructure running through the national forest. Access can only be obtained by a special permit authorized by the district ranger.

Leaving trailers, vehicles, personal property or other objects, including tents, in the forest for the purpose of reserving a campsite or storing property is illegal and in violation of Title 36CFR 261.10(f). In

addition, leaving property unattended for 72-hours is considered abandoned property and may be impounded by the Forest Service.

Forest Law Enforcement Officers experience an increase in violations during busy holiday weekends and during the hunting season. To avoid a citation and/or impounding of your personal property do not leave property unattended in the forest.

Forest and district leadership carefully decide which areas meet specific criteria for closure, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Fire danger:** Areas where the moisture content level is extremely low, as indicated by the [Energy Release Component](#).
- **Vulnerability:** Areas that are most vulnerable to fire suppression efforts due to inaccessibility, limited resources, and are difficult to evacuate people quickly and safely.
- **Values at risk from wildfire:** Values such as life, private property, communities, critical watersheds, trailheads, campgrounds, utility corridors, and critical infrastructure, etc.
- **Topography:** Areas with steep slopes and canyons that are difficult to access and effectively suppress wildfires, which often align with traditional wind directions.
- **Cohesiveness with neighboring national forests:** The Coconino NF borders several other national forests, which have implemented closure areas that abut the boundary of the Coconino NF. We try to be consistent in areas across boundaries to reduce confusion.

Closures and fire restrictions will be lifted when sufficient precipitation is received to adequately reduce the risk of wildfire, and hot, dry weather conditions are not forecast to continue. A closure across the entire national forest may be implemented in the future if dry and hot conditions persist without precipitation.

Violating closures and fire restrictions is a violation that carries a mandatory appearance in federal court, punishable as a Class B misdemeanor with a fine of up to \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization, or up to six months in prison, or both.

For further information about fire restrictions in the Coconino National Forest, please call the Fire Restriction Hotline at 928-226-4607. Questions may also be addressed to each ranger district by contacting the following:

- Flagstaff Ranger District: 928-526-0866
- Mogollon Rim Ranger District: 928-477-2255
- Red Rock Ranger District: 928-203-2900

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