



News Release

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SFNF Will Implement Stage 1 Fire Restrictions May 24 Due to Extreme Drought, High Fire Danger

SANTA FE, NM – May 14, 2021 –The Santa Fe National Forest (SFNF) will implement Stage 1 fire restrictions forest-wide on Monday, May 24, to reduce the risk of human-caused wildfire during extreme drought conditions, historically low fuel moisture levels and high fire danger.

Stage 1 fire restrictions are a proactive way to reduce the very real risk of human-caused wildfire, protect natural and cultural resources, and enhance public and firefighter safety. The Lincoln and Gila National Forests implemented Stage 1 fire restrictions in April, and the Carson National Forest plans to implement Stage 1 restrictions the same day as the SFNF.

Under Stage I restrictions, fires, campfires, charcoal grills, and coal and wood stoves are allowed only in developed campsites or picnic areas with Forest Service-built fire rings or grills. Campfires are prohibited at all dispersed camping sites.

Stoves, grills, lanterns and heaters fueled by propane or other liquified petroleum fuels may be used if they meet manufacturer's safety specifications and have on/off switches. Propane devices require an area at least 3 feet in diameter that has been cleared of flammable materials.

Smoking is allowed only in enclosed vehicles or buildings, at developed recreation sites or while standing in an area at least 3 feet in diameter that has been cleared of all flammable material. Fireworks and other pyrotechnic devices are always prohibited on national forests.

"We welcome visitors to the Santa Fe National Forest," Forest Supervisor Debbie Cress said. "But we also know that abandoned or unattended campfires are the leading human cause of wildfire. Fire patrols on the Santa Fe National Forest have already found close to 30 abandoned campfires this season. Based on current conditions on the forest and the anticipated surge in campers, we believe it's prudent to impose some restrictions on where you can and cannot build a campfire."

Forest managers use several criteria to determine when to implement restrictions, including current and predicted weather, fuel moisture, fire activity levels and available firefighting resources. Fire staff are already considering the possibility of moving to Stage 2 fire restrictions, which ban campfires entirely, if conditions warrant it.

Forest visitors are asked to use extreme caution when fire restrictions are in place. Violations are punishable as a Class B misdemeanor by a fine of not more than \$5,000 for individuals and \$10,000 for organizations and/or by imprisonment for not more than six months. Fire prevention and law enforcement will be patrolling, and anyone who violates Stage 1 restrictions will be ticketed.

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