

Forest Service

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News Release

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Officials closing Tonto National Forest July 2

Some lakes, forest roads will remain accessible

PHOENIX, June 30, 2020 — For Immediate Release. Wildfires have burned more than 224,500 acres this year on the Tonto National Forest. Ongoing extreme fire danger due to dry conditions and hot temperatures following a wet winter that produced an abundance of dry brush and grass, have led Tonto officials to close the state’s largest national forest beginning at 6 a.m. on July 2.

“We are currently seeing record setting fire danger conditions and new fire starts have become increasingly difficult to control. This closure represents the best option at this time to deal with these conditions, and both reduce risk to the public and protect their forest lands for the future.” Taiga Rohrer, Tonto National Forest Fire Management Officer said. “Additionally, it is extremely important that people travelling along highways through these areas ensure that their vehicles and trailers are in good condition and tow chains are properly secured to avoid causing roadside fires.”

The Stage 3 Forest Closure means that all National Forest System lands contained within the Tonto are closed to the public, with the exception of the following:

- Open areas:
 - Roosevelt Lake - Beginning at the intersection of State Route (SR) 188 and Forest Route (FR) 84 Grapevine Road, then north along FR 84 to the east side of Grapevine Boat Ramp at the waterline of Roosevelt Lake. Then following the waterline east to the confluence of the Salt River. Then continuing along the Roosevelt Lake waterline northwest to the confluence of Tonto Creek. Then up Tonto Creek to FR 60 then southwest to SR 188 and southeast along SR 188 back to the intersection of FR 84. Note – Bermuda Flat, Cholla Bay and Bachelor Cove Shoreline Areas are closed.
 - Bartlett Reservoir - Beginning at Bartlett Dam along the waterline south and then east and then north up to the confluence of the Verde River. Then following the western waterline south down to the Yellow Cliffs Boat Ramp and SB Cove Day Use Areas which are open, then south down the waterline to the Rattlesnake Day Use Area which is open. Then south along the waterline to the Jojoba boat launch which is open, then up FR 19A to FR 19, then south to FR 185 and Bartlett Marina, which is open. Then back down to the waterline of Bartlett Reservoir and then south along waterline back to Bartlett Dam.

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- Canyon Lake – Starting at Mormon Flat Dam south along Mormon Flat Dam access road to SR 88 then east along SR 88 to Tortilla Creek Drainage then following drainage northwest to Canyon Lake waterline then along waterline to the base of Horse Mesa Dam then along waterline back to Mormon Flat Dam.
 - Saguaro Lake & Lower Salt River – Starting at Stewart Mountain Dam following waterline east to Mormon Flat Dam then along waterline west to the courtesy dock near the end of Forest Road 206 (Saguaro Del Norte Recreation Area) above the lake. Then following FR 206B to the Bush Highway, then north along the Bush Highway to SR 87 then along SR 87 to the Forest Boundary. Then following the Forest Boundary south and west and across the Salt River to the Bush Highway. Then along Bush Highway east to the Blue Point Bridge, then following the southern bank of the Salt River around east back to the Stewart Mountain Dam. Houston Mesa Campground – Elk, Black Bear, and Mountain Lion Loops
 - Tortilla Flat Restaurant
 - Roosevelt Lakeview Mobile Home Park off of SR 188 at Roosevelt Lake, but not beyond the park.
- Open roads:
- Bush Highway (FR 204)
 - FR 19 to Bartlett Reservoir Jojoba Boat Launch and Bartlett Marina
 - FR 459A to Rattlesnake Day Use Area
 - FR 459 to Yellow Cliffs Boat Launch and SB Cove Day Use Area
 - FR 582 from SR 87 to the Buckhead Mesa Landfill
 - FR 583 from SR 87 to Tonto Natural Bridge State Park

According to Neil Bosworth, Forest Supervisor, the decision is rooted in public and firefighter safety during the extreme fire danger currently being experienced throughout Arizona. “We understand that closing the Tonto impacts businesses, partner agencies and the public as well as our restoration and other work on the forest,” Bosworth said. “Everyone is prohibited from entering the forest, unless specifically permitted for emergency activities.

“Steps to minimize the risk of fires and the danger to people are more important than recreation at the moment” Bosworth added.

Violations of these restrictions are punishable as a Class B misdemeanor, which means a fine of up to \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization, or imprisonment of up to six months, or both. Fines and punishments are determined by a federal court judge.

The detailed closure order can be found on the Tonto National Forest website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/tonto> by clicking on the *Closure Orders & Restrictions in Effect* link.

Numerous fires on the Tonto National Forest including the Bush Fire have been caused by vehicle fires, sparks from tow chains, or flat tires already this season. For more information about the One Less Spark, One Less Wildfire campaign, please visit: <https://wildlandfire.az.gov/prevention-news>

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