

# Carson National Forest



## Travel Guide & Map

United States Forest Service  
National Forest System

### CARSON NATIONAL FOREST

#### NEW MEXICO

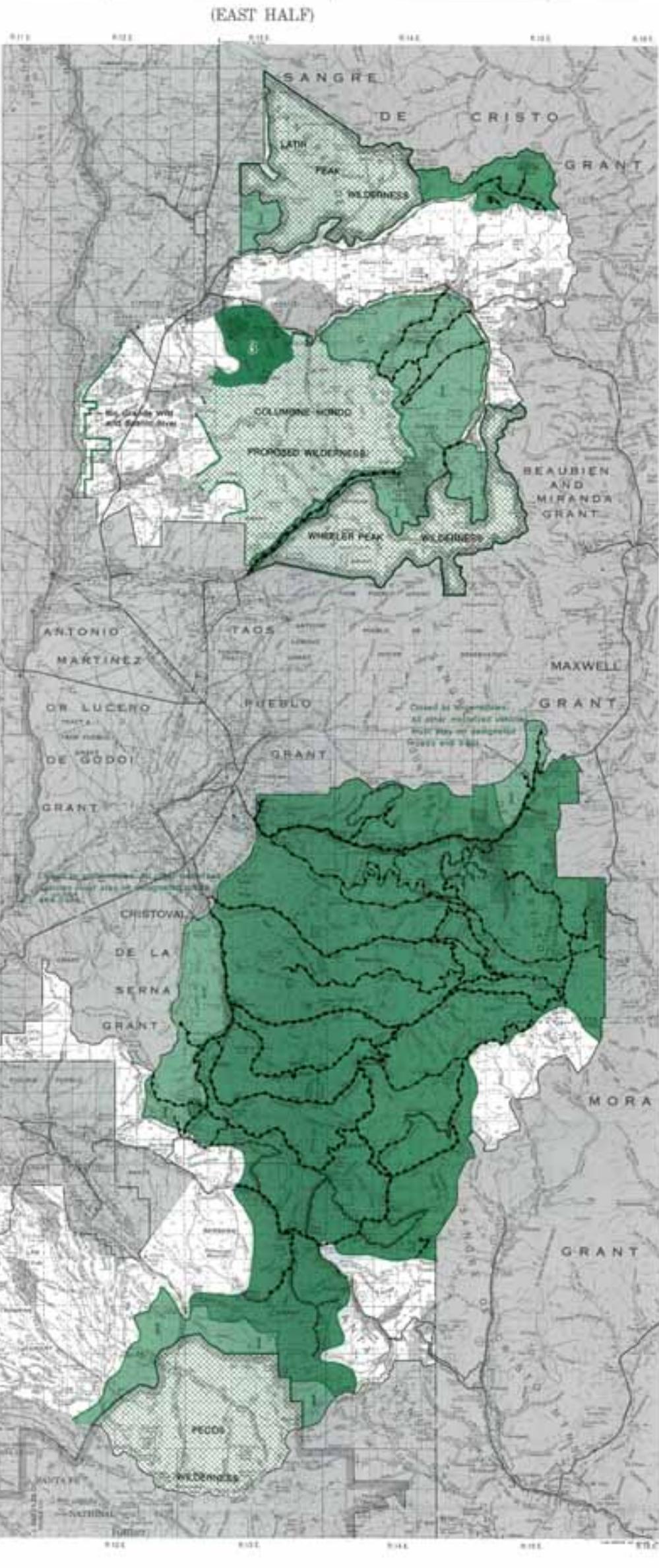
#### NEW MEXICO PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN

CARSON NATIONAL FOREST	
NEW MEXICO	
NEW MEXICO PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN	
Legend	

#### Non-Carson National Forest Lands

#### LEGEND

- Closed to all motorized use (Wilderness and Wild River Areas)
- All motorized use permitted on designated roads and trails only. No off-road use.
- Snowmobiles permitted off roads. All other motorized use permitted only on designated roads and trails.
- Closed to vehicles for wildlife protection January 1 - August 15.
- Designated road
- Designated road/no snowmobiles or vehicles when signed as closed (Reserves for cross-country skiing)
- Non-motorized trail (No snowmobiles reserved for S-C skiing)
- Designated motorcycle trail (Plus ATC's/ATV's under 48" wide)
- Designated snowmobile trail



### Carson National Forest Travel Guide

#### WELCOME to the Carson National Forest and its many opportunities for your use and enjoyment!

Because millions of acres of the National Forest provide travel areas for another, it has become necessary to establish restrictions for use of certain areas and trails, or areas on the Forest System. These restrictions are designed to protect forest resources, safeguard users, and increase control of use. With these exceptions, the majority of the forest remains open to vehicle travel and other public uses.

The Forest Travel Guide, originated in 1979 pursuant to Executive Order #11914, requires the Travel Guide to be reviewed and revised if necessary each year. Public comment is sought during each year's period. You are strongly encouraged to give us your thoughts at any time. We invite you to contact your ranger office and discuss the Travel Guide or any other aspect of National Forest Management that interests you.

The rules and restrictions listed herein are established under Federal law, thus motorists are subject to fines, imprisonment, or both, upon conviction. We have found, however, that user education and public cooperation are far more effective in helping safeguard forest resources.

Please take a moment to familiarize yourself with the Travel Guide and the points of interest you may want to visit. With little effort, you can do a great deal in helping us better manage your public lands and forest resources.

Thank you for your help and cooperation.

#### Carson National Forest

Named for Kit Carson, noted frontier soldier, the Carson National Forest offers some spectacular mountain scenery, including the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, a portion of the Pecos Wilderness, and Wheeler Peak, at 13,161 feet the highest point in the Southwest. Indian cultures that flourished in the shadow of these mountain heights were followed by the Spanish settlers more than three centuries ago.

The Carson is part of the Forest Service's Southwest Region. The Forest Supervisor maintains his headquarters at Taos from where he oversees the activity of seven District Forest Rangers. District offices for the 1,490,000-acre forest are at Capitan, El Rio, Geronimo, Pecos, Questa, Taos and Taos Pueblo.

The high, cool country of the Carson National Forest is a southern extension of the San Juan and Sangre de Cristo Ranges of Colorado.

Areas of true pristine high plateau range from 10,000 to nearly 11,000 feet. Open parks and meadows alternate with stands of spruce, fir and aspen. Above the Rio Grande Gorge to the west, Taos lies at the foot of the Sangre de Cristo Range. Red River Canyon, Honda Canyon, Taos Canyon, U.S. 60, Hill, and the Rio Pueblo give access to permanent mountain streams, high alpine valleys and virgin spruce-fir forests. Far to the west the famous Jemez River occupies a long band of high meadows covered with ponderosa pine and juniper.

#### Pack-in, Pack-out

Because of increasing visitor use, the Forest Service cannot regularly pick up litter over the entire National Forest. This forest has placed trash cans at intervals along recreation sites. If you camp or park away from developed recreation sites, please carry trash home.

#### Other ORV Restrictions

Outside of restricted areas many roads are designated for timber harvesting and other purposes have been "put to bed". Drainage and regeneration measures have been installed to permit these roads to heal and stabilize.

You can recognize this situation by a physical barrier such as earth berms or ditches. Your cooperation will permit us to avoid proliferation of "road closure" signs and further expansion of restricted areas.

#### Fire

When the danger is extreme, travel on the forest may be restricted to certain roads or areas; your help in the cooperative fire prevention measure is needed. If you are in doubt, ask at the nearest Ranger Station shown on this map.

#### What Closures Really Are

Most of the designated areas you see on this map are closed or restricted in the sense that cross-country travel is not permitted. In other words, trails used by people and motor vehicles in the past have been left open to provide access through the areas.

#### A Long-term View of the Travel Guide

The areas shown as restricted or closed on this map will not necessarily remain unchanged in the years to come. The process of regulating use is designed to change to meet new public needs and demands.



#### Why Is This Road Closed?

There are a number of reasons some routes of travel are restricted within National Forests. These are not always wellunderstood, particularly if encountered unexpectedly. Here are the reasons for them:

**Wildlife Habitat Protection** — Many animals are put at risk to predators and disease when they are forced to travel through areas where they are not normally found. These areas are sensitive and often include winter ranges, calving grounds, or security areas. These same areas often open to vehicle use during other times of the year. Hunting and trapping are also prohibited in these areas. The New Mexico Department of Fish and Game is responsible in this effort.

**Water Quality and Erosion Control** — Some roads and trails are closed during wet weather to prevent damage to stream banks and soil. To reduce erosion and the amount of sediment that can be transported to streams, road maintenance crews also are subcontracted reduced.

**Public Safety** — In some specific instances, areas of travel are closed to insure user safety. These areas are closed to prevent or reduce heavy traffic, others are winding and narrow, and virtually all had or will have logging truck and other heavy equipment use.

#### Temporary Use Restrictions

Additional temporary restrictions other than those shown on this map may be established during periods of emergency or to protect specific areas of resource values. Information concerning these areas will be available at District Offices having jurisdiction of the areas or routes. These emergency routes will be posted on the ground and/or marked with signs indicating they are in effect. Likewise, areas of resource values may be closed to protect or manage these areas. These areas and/or resource management objectives can be met without closing the use restriction in effect. This includes temporary areas for such uses as firewood gathering.

### Summer Use



### On The Carson

The Rio Pueblo and Rio La Plata are mostly forested, while mountain valleys frequently drenched by summer thunderstorms. Most of the routes leaving the Rio Pueblo-La Plata area are special motorcycle trails that lead to the divide overlooking the Rio Grande Gorge. These trails are narrow, steep and rocky. Various "wash" roads provide a variety of shelter and a range of demand on riding skill.

The "Great" hearing board for many years offers a wide range of travel routes. Most of the through roads remain open for exploration by auto and motorcycle. Logging "haul roads" have been closed since the Forest Service acquired the land in 1981, to enable reforestation and healing. Do not drive on any road unless it is marked with an "open road" arrow. (This, of course, applies to all the restricted areas marked on this map.)

The Mimbres area has a network of road trails that provide one to pass around the river or the mountains for many years now. The route of most interest to motorcycle riders is a mix of the flatland and cut-off paths — it has been well-maintained for decades or perhaps not only an effort to visitors who follow, but also a federal effort. The gentle high country is open with open meadows which in places have been severely damaged by indiscriminate vehicle use. Please stay on open roads only.

The existing roads on Pecos Creek and the Pecos Creek route to Dona Ana Lake are poor. A small drive and trail system connecting the two areas is the best way to go. The Pecos Creek Road is also open to horseback use. But not a wheel-chair or a long leg can be made.

The Middle Fork Lake trail is definitely for short-wheelbase 4-wheel drives or rockcrawlers only; congestion and lack of "turn-offs" may make it unsatisfactory to travel during the peak of the summer.

### Winter Use



### On The Carson

Closures or restrictions imposed on trails, 4-wheeled drives, and motorcycles in some cases do not apply to snowmobiles. Snowmobile travel routes are not specifically marked.

**Highest Lake Area** — The trail is usually closed due to heavy snow east of Hopkins Lake. It is possible to take a wide range of trips over rolling terrain through large timber canyons bounded by stands of aspen, spruce and fir. This is high (10,000 feet +) so it's usually closed.

**Carson High Country — Asotile Area** — Forest Road 680 between Capitan and El Rio, or from Forest Road 227A. This is gentle, rolling terrain featuring with open meadows and expansive views.

**Rio Grande Gorge** — Many trips are possible from the summit of U.S. 66 on Highway 2 south of Manzano de Taos, or from the valley of the Rio Grande del Norte (Rio Grande). Many of these rugged and canyon bottom routes are appealing for snowmobiling.

**Albuquerque** — From the winter resort town of Pecos River, many snowmobilers take the trail to the headwaters of the Rio Chama Valley, then go on to the Madrid Mine area. The Madrid area is a turn-of-the-century mineral boom site that has many old mine workings and wastewater buildings.

**Remember** — plan your trip to match your physical condition, equipment and driving skill.

#### Regulations Governing Motor Vehicles On All National Forest System Lands

Regulations governing motor vehicles on all National Forest System lands are set forth in Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 261. As required by the Code of Federal Regulations, a copy of each closure notice for a road, trail or area is posted in the Forest Supervisor's office in Taos, and the appropriate Ranger District office (see locations listed).

#### Things to Remember

**Forest Development Road and Trail** — Unless a road or trail under Forest Service jurisdiction, the travel guide comments do not apply to State and County system roads.

**Designated Road or Trail** — A road or trail open to restricted use generally or parking in areas otherwise closed.

**Trail** — A forest development trail that is limited to motor vehicles less than 40 inches in width.

**Vehicle** — Any motor vehicle.

**Trail Vehicle** — A motor vehicle less than 60 inches in width used as a trail-like motor motorcycle, designed for trail use.

**Snowmobile** — A motor vehicle capable of use over snow or ice that is driven by a combination of clutch, brake, track, track, disk or snow pressure tires.

**Road Numbers** — Identification numbers are shown for all main roads. Numbers are not shown for some of the shorter side roads to avoid confusion.

**Camping, Parking, Firewood Gathering** — Travel is permitted 300 feet east of designated roads for these uses. Please avoid continuous travel over the same route to protect vegetation.

#### For Information (Area Code 505)

Rocky Mountain Ranger District  
Taos, NM 87571  
Phone: 748-2511

Carlsbad Research and Development Center  
P.O. Box 25122  
Carlsbad, NM 88221  
Phone: 785-2800

Albuquerque Research and Development Center  
P.O. Box 25122  
Albuquerque, NM 87123  
Phone: 860-2800

El Paso Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
El Paso, NM 88221  
Phone: 860-2800

Glendale Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Glendale, NM 88241  
Phone: 860-2800

Forest Supervisor's Office  
P.O. Box 25122  
Taos, NM 87571  
Phone: 748-2511

Las Vegas Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Las Vegas, NM 87701  
Phone: 785-2800

Mora Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Mora, NM 87544  
Phone: 785-2800

Mountain Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Custer, NM 87720  
Phone: 785-2800

Mountain Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Custer, NM 87720  
Phone: 785-2800

Mountain Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Custer, NM 87720  
Phone: 785-2800

Mountain Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Custer, NM 87720  
Phone: 785-2800

Mountain Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Custer, NM 87720  
Phone: 785-2800

Mountain Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Custer, NM 87720  
Phone: 785-2800

Mountain Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Custer, NM 87720  
Phone: 785-2800

Mountain Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Custer, NM 87720  
Phone: 785-2800

Mountain Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Custer, NM 87720  
Phone: 785-2800

Mountain Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Custer, NM 87720  
Phone: 785-2800

Mountain Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Custer, NM 87720  
Phone: 785-2800

Mountain Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Custer, NM 87720  
Phone: 785-2800

Mountain Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Custer, NM 87720  
Phone: 785-2800

Mountain Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Custer, NM 87720  
Phone: 785-2800

Mountain Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Custer, NM 87720  
Phone: 785-2800

Mountain Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Custer, NM 87720  
Phone: 785-2800

Mountain Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Custer, NM 87720  
Phone: 785-2800

Mountain Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Custer, NM 87720  
Phone: 785-2800

Mountain Ranger District  
P.O. Box 25122  
Custer, NM 87720  
Phone: 785-2800

Mountain Ranger District  
P