

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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CORONADO FOREST TO LIFT CAMPFIRE, SMOKING RESTRICTIONS

TUCSON, AZ (July 19, 2004)—Effective 8:00 am, Tuesday, July 20, Forest Service officials will rescind campfire and smoking restrictions in all areas of the Coronado National Forest in southeast Arizona and the “boot heel” of southwestern New Mexico.

“Wildfire danger in our Forest is significantly lower since the onset of the monsoon,” said Dean McAlister, Coronado National Forest Fire Management Officer. “However, forest visitors should continue to be cautious with fire, especially when building campfires, driving or smoking in areas with dry grass.” Visitors who build campfires outside of developed recreation areas on the Santa Catalina Ranger District, including Mt. Lemmon and Redington Pass, must possess permits to do so. The permits are free and available at local Forest Service business offices and from fire prevention patrol officers.

McAlister said that although the worst of the 2004 fire season seems to have abated in the southeastern part of the state, many national forests elsewhere in the Southwest still may have restrictions in place, and cautioned that fireworks are prohibited on all National Forest System lands year-round.

On May 28, Forest Service fire managers imposed “Stage 1” fire restrictions limiting campfires to developed recreation areas and smoking to debris-cleared areas. On June 17, restrictions were increased to “Stage II” which banned campfires and smoking in all areas of the Coronado National Forest.

Forest managers determine whether campfire and smoking restrictions are necessary by evaluating the dryness of forest fuels; risks to the public and firefighters; ongoing fire activity and availability of suppression resources; as well as social, economic and political impacts of imposing restrictions.

For other local fire restrictions and fire information for any Southwestern Forest:

- Check our website www.fs.fed.us/r3/fire
- Phone 1-877-864-6985 (toll free).