

Fire Prevention Communication Plan

Carson National Forest 2003 Fire Season

Objectives: This communication plan has been developed to insure that the communities of the Carson National Forest are kept informed on all fire related activities. The plan is designed to incorporate all jurisdictions and cooperators in the gathering and dissemination of Fire information. While this communications plan sets the general guidelines for Fire information, communication plans for specific Fire activities have been developed and will be used during a Fire event.

I. Actions

II. Communication Contacts

III. Restrictions and Closures

IV. Fire Communications Outreach

V. Prescribed Fire

VI. Smoke Management

VII. Prevention Message

VIII. Safety Message

IX. How are we doing?

I. Actions:

- a. Provide information for internal and external use. Deliver current, accurate, consistent information on the status of wildfire, prescribed fire, prevention, wildland urban interface, restrictions, closures, and smoke management on the Carson National Forest.
- b. Provide clear and concise information for public dissemination.
- c. Advise forest users, recreationists, hunters, etc. about the possible effects that the wildfire, prescribed fire, **planned use** and management-ignited fires may have on local communities and

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forest users.

- d. Alert all users of **ANY POTENTIAL DANGER** as a result of the wildfire or prescribed fire activities.
- e. Work with cooperators to better utilize communication tools to affect a larger audience.
- f. Provide a pro-active Fire Prevention Education message for communities and schools.
- g. Establish and maintain a good working relationship with state, regional and local medias to get the Fire message out.
- h. Emphasize **SAFETY** to all firefighting resources.

II. Communication Contacts

a. Internal

The information necessary for the implementation of these OJECTIVES is to be shared internally with all Forest Service personnel, Fire Prevention Teams, Fire Information Officers, Forest Public Affairs Officer, and Frontliners across the Forest and Taos Zone Coordination Center.

“Burning Issues” form is to be completed and posted on all Rx burn activities by FMOs and Frontlines, submitted to Fire Information for distribution of information at SO, Districts, and Taos Zone. Form needs to be submitted with ample time to properly inform the public.

Updated information on fire incidents and activities should be submitted from FMOs through frontliners to Fire Information daily prior to 9:00 am.

Fire Prevention Techs and Fire Information Officers (IOF) will be assigned as needed.

The Fire Prevention Communication Plan will be posted on the Carson National Forest Web Page for access by all employees and the general public at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/carson>.

b. External

All fire-related actions listed below will be coordinated and processed for distribution by the Carson PAO or designee:

Fire-related updates to Congressionals

Fire-related updates to State and Local Government Officials

Fire-related information to local entities

Fire-related information disseminated to local communities using “Trapline” methods

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All fire-related media contacts will be initiated by or directed to:

Fire Information Officer

Carson National Forest
208 Cruz Alta Road
Taos, New Mexico, 87571
Phone Number: 505-758-6211
E-mail address: bromero/r3_carson@fs.fed.us

Fire Information Officers will provide fire-related information to Carson PAO.

**An Incident Information Center (Fire Information)
has been established in the Supervisor's Office
Coordinators:
Ben Romero, Public Affairs Officer
Ignacio Peralta, Fire Information Officer
Phone Numbers: (505) 758-6211 or (505) 758-6344**

III. Fire Restrictions and Closures

Under certain prolonged extreme fire weather conditions, normal prevention and detection measures may be insufficient to reasonably reduce the risk of a major conflagration. When such conditions occur, it sometimes becomes necessary to implement Fire Restrictions and Specific Area Closures.

The Carson National Forest will use the Forest's Fire Restriction Plan to implement any restrictions or closures.

- a. List of the different levels of Fire Danger and the restrictions or closures that apply.
 - Level 1: forest is open.
 - Level 2: Smoking and Campfire Restrictions
 1. Campfires allowed only in Forest Service designated campgrounds and picnic areas, within pre-constructed fireplaces or in other areas with a fire permit.
 2. Campfire Permits will be issued on a judgment basis, depending on location of camp, fuel type, resource values, etc. Permits will be free of charge. All permits will be automatically cancelled during windy conditions. If the District requires water within a certain distance as a condition of the permit, a standard of 200 feet will be used.
 3. Smoking will be allowed only while traveling on paved or surfaced, graveled roads, in parked vehicles, in Forest Service designated camp and picnic areas, and in other areas with a campfire permit.
 4. A campfire does not include any cooking or heating device consuming kerosene, gasoline or propane gas provided such a device meets the Fire Underwriter's Specifications for

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safety. Charcoal broilers, wood and coal stoves outside of dwellings are prohibited, except under permit.

Level 3: No Smoking, No Campfires, No Fireworks anywhere in the Forest, including improved campsites and campgrounds.

Level 3: Specific Area Closures.

Level 3 Specific Area Closures does not have predetermined boundaries, but will be established as conditions warrant taking into consideration weather, vegetation and topographic influence as well as potential.

Information on the current Fire Level on the Carson National Forest and greater detail of fire restrictions and closures can be found on the web at http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/carson/html_main/list_fire.htm

A *Fire Information Office* has been established in the Supervisor's Office. The phone number is (505) 758-6211 or (505) 758-6344. The office is staffed from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday thru Friday. Hours may be extended during fire season as conditions dictate.

Information on Fire Level, restrictions and closures on Public Lands not in the Carson National Forest can be found on the web at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/fire/welcome.htm>, click on Fire Information.

- b. The Southwest Area is continuing to experience some of the driest seasons in recorded history. Increased and sustained amounts of precipitation will be necessary to significantly change the overall condition of the forest for an extended period of time.
- c. As long as this continued trend of dry conditions exists, firefighting resources will suppress all unplanned fires, however, *under no circumstances* will firefighter safety be compromised.
- d. During times of dry conditions, the Carson National Forest may consider implementing SPECIFIC AREA CLOSURES. The primary reason for implementing closures is public safety. (Please visit Carson Web Site listed above for closure information.)**
- e. Persons or groups planning outings in the Forest in June and July *should* consider establishing alternative sites, *in the event that a Specific Area Closure is implemented*. They should contact the Forest Service prior to their travel to obtain information regarding the status of restrictions and closures.

Proposed Restriction and Specific Area Closure dates will be constantly reviewed to ensure that current conditions warrant these actions.

WHAT ABOUT ---CLOSURE?

Forest Service Resource Managers recognize the impact that a Closure could have on the communities, small businesses and Forest visitors. All options will be looked at in order to minimize these impacts. One of those is SPECIFIC AREA CLOSURES.

WHEN SPECIFIC AREA CLOSURES ARE IMPLEMENTED, THIS IS WHY: a critical factor in determining whether any type of CLOSURE should be implemented is the potential for

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NUMEROUS SIMULTANEOUS WILDFIRE STARTS. The scenario is this: It's hot and dry, we receive "dry-lightning," which causes numerous wildfire ignitions. In trying to respond to the fires, we quickly exhaust all Wildfire fighting resources. Implementing SPECIFIC AREA CLOSURES will allow us to keep visitors safe and reduce the risk of placing firefighters in potentially hazardous situations. For the most part, with good information Forest visitors are supportive and understanding. It is important to stress, though, that with the existing conditions of hot, dry weather, dry fuels and wind---fires will have the potential to grow quickly and cover large areas in a substantially short amount of time. This is why SPECIFIC AREA CLOSURE may be needed in some areas of the Forest.

The weather service continues to predict drier than normal and warmer than normal conditions. Based on the number of lightning caused start we experienced last year, we can anticipated a longer than normal wildfire season.

Let's not forget who we are ultimately supporting out there...the firefighters who rise to the challenge...they're counting on ALL OF US...thanks again!

IV. Fire Information Outreach

- a. Fire Prevention Techs are scheduled to patrol all Districts. Should it be necessary to impose restrictions or closures they're efforts will extend Zone wide as we coordinate this effort with all our Zone partners. Their work is being coordinated through The Fire Prevention Team.
- b. Fire Prevention Techs will continue with the "Defensible Space" campaign...and making personal contacts throughout the Forest and communities. They will also be available to conduct fire prevention activities in local schools and surrounding communities. Fire Prevention Techs will coordinate with the Fire Information Officer to keep communities informed of Fire related activities. (Rx Burns, Smoke, mechanical treatments etc.)
- c. Fire Information Officers and Frontliners will be kept current on fire related information from the districts to be able to respond to inquires from the public, make appropriate media contacts and inform internally Forest wide.

V. Prescribed Fire Projects

- a. There are currently prescribed fire projects planned on all Ranger Districts of the Carson National Forest. The objective of these projects is to reduce fuel loads, create firebreaks, and improve forest health.
- b. These projects will be implemented when climate and fuel conditions meet the pre-established burning prescriptions. Should any component of the prescription be out of compliance, the project will not be implemented. These projects will be closely monitored at all times.
- c. Fire Information Officers and Fire Prevention Techs will make every effort to properly notify the

To Wildland Firefighters: Monitor your work schedules and pace yourselves. Keep in mind that we will probably be "fighting fire" longer in 2003 than we have in the past.

FOR YOUR LOCAL FIRE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Canjilon Ranger District, Paul Baca (505)-684-2489

El Rito Ranger District, Cornelio Lopez (505) 581-4554

Jicarilla Ranger District, Kelly Castillo (505) 632-2956

Camino Real Ranger District, Manuel Romero (505) 587-2255

Tres Piedras Ranger District, Loren Suazo (505) 758-8678

Questa Ranger District, Paul Mondragon (505) 586-0520

Supervisors Office (Taos), Ignacio Peralta (505) 758-6344

IX. How Are We Doing?

WHAT IS THE TONE OF OUR MESSAGE?

Let's continue to maintain a positive and courteous attitude in delivering the message. Sometimes the public may perceive our actions as negative ones. It is important that we share with them the message that-->we have implemented restrictions as a necessity--due to the severe conditions that the Forest is in--and we have a genuine concern in keeping folks from harm's way. We are concerned with public safety, firefighter safety, and private property in the urban-interface settings.

**Guess what?....In New Mexico, as os _____, there have been _____
fires...that have "affected" _____ acres!**

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This document is dynamic and will be updated as new information becomes available. Updates will be posted on the IBM Bulletin Board and forwarded accordingly.

----January, 2003 ----