



News Release

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***Closure Order in place on the Sacramento Ranger District
to protect New Mexico meadow jumping mouse critical habitat***

ALAMOGORDO, CLOUDCROFT, NM – May 5, 2016 – The Lincoln National forest has issued a closure order (08-277) pursuant to 16 U.S.C § 551 and 36 C.F.R. 261.50 (a) to protect New Mexico meadow jumping mouse occupied habitat (areas within critical habitat where the New Mexico meadow jumping mouse is known to persist).

The New Mexico meadow jumping mouse is listed as an endangered species with critical habitat (areas considered necessary for the recovery of the species). The Forest Service has a legal obligation to protect the jumping mouse and the critical habitat, under the Endangered Species Act.

The purpose of this closure order is to protect areas of New Mexico meadow jumping mouse occupied critical habitat during the season the species is active and most vulnerable. The closure order will include all occupied critical habitat on the Lincoln National Forest.

These areas include small portions of Agua Chiquita, Silver Springs, Rio Peñasco and Wills Canyon within the Sacramento Ranger District (see attached map). The closure will remain in effect for two years from May 1, 2016 to October 31, 2016 and May 1, 2017- October 31, 2017.

Further analysis will be completed to determine future actions beyond October 2017. The closure restricts all entry to the restricted area. Authorized roads and trails within the restricted area will remain open.

Exceptions to the closure include: Forest Service employees on official duty, anyone authorized by the Forest Service to enter the restricted area, and emergency personnel performing official duty. Any violation of these prohibitions is punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000.00 for individuals and \$10,000.00 for organizations, by imprisonment for not more than six (6) months, or both. [Title 16 USC 551, Title 18 USC 357(b)(6), Title 18 USC 3581 (b)(7)]. Signs will be posted in the closure areas.

For additional information about this closure on the Sacramento Ranger District, please call Ciara Cusack at 575-682-2551, Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Visit the Lincoln National Forest at www.fs.usda.gov/lincoln Follow us on Twitter <http://twitter.com/LincolnUSForest>

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