



News Release

U.S. Forest Service
Lincoln National Forest
3463 Las Palomas Road
Alamogordo, NM 88310
Voice: 575-434-7200
Web: www.fs.usda.gov/lincoln
Twitter: @LincolnUSForest

Media Contact: Loretta Benavidez
575-434-7290
llbenavidez@fs.fed.us



Special Closure for Resource Protection within Agua Chiquita, Rio Peñasco and Wills Canyon on Sacramento Ranger District

ALAMOGORDO, CLOUDCROFT, NM, August 12, 2016 – For Immediate Release. The Lincoln National Forest has issued a closure order pursuant to 16 U.S.C § 551 and 36 C.F.R. 261.50 (a) for resource protection and for the protection of public health and safety. Temporary electric fences along with barbed wire and pipe enclosure fences have been put in place to protect endangered species, water quality and to improve management of riparian habitat. The fences have repeatedly been taken down by members of the public for recreation and camping purposes within the areas needing protection. A closure is necessary for all the fenced areas to prevent members of the public from handling the electric fences, which poses a safety threat, and to effectively protect endangered species habitat and water quality by reducing the impacts in these sensitive areas.

The closure order will include areas fenced off by temporary electric fences, barbed wire or pipe fences within Agua Chiquita, Rio Peñasco and Wills Canyon riparian areas on the Lincoln National Forest (see map). The closure will be in effect when signed and shall remain in effect until October 31, 2016. The closure restricts all entry to the restricted area. Authorized roads and trails within or near the restricted area will remain open.

Exceptions to the closure include: persons with a permit specifically authorizing the otherwise prohibited act or omission; any Federal, State or local officer, or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force engaged in the performance of an official duty; any other person meeting exemption requirements specified in the order. Livestock access lanes (breaks in fences within protected habitat) are provided in order to allow permitted livestock access to water and access to livestock handling facilities, and are considered outside of the restricted area. Grazing permittees are permitted to enter the restricted area to remove livestock from

the restricted area, to utilize designated access lanes, or to perform necessary operations with prior approval from the Forest Service. Hunters are permitted to enter the restricted area to retrieve game animals when necessary.

Any violation of these prohibitions is punishable as a Class B misdemeanor by a fine of not more than \$5,000.00 for individuals and \$10,000.00 for organizations or by imprisonment for not more than six (6) months, or both. [Title 16 USC 551, Title 18 USC 3571(b)(6), Title 18 USC 3581 (b)(7)]. Signs will be posted in the closure areas as well as at the Lincoln National Forest Supervisors Office in Alamogordo, NM and at the Sacramento Ranger District in Cloudcroft, NM.

For additional information about the 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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Lincoln National Forest Closure Order 08-278

