



NEWS RELEASE

September 15, 2020

Siuslaw National Forest

For Immediate Release

Contact: Lisa Romano

(541)-750-7075, lisa.romano@usda.gov

Twitter: [@siuslawnf](https://twitter.com/siuslawnf)

www.fs.usda.gov/siuslaw

Fire Danger, Hazard Assessments Continue as Officials Plan Reopening

Corvallis, OR – Siuslaw National Forest officials are preparing a reopening strategy following the historic windstorm last week and ongoing extremely high fire danger that necessitated a public safety forest closure. Managers are assessing fire danger as weather patterns start to shift, and employees are assessing and mitigating safety hazards, which resulted from the wind storm, along roads and at recreation sites. The forest remains closed, but will re-open gradually as health and safety measures are met.

"There are a lot of factors we must consider as we plan to re-open," said Robert Sanchez, Forest Supervisor. "The safety of the public, our communities, and our employees is our top priority and we're working diligently to ensure we can safely begin to re-open as soon as possible."

Some of the factors that are being considered as part of the re-opening strategy include current fire danger, road and recreation site conditions, and community readiness to invite visitors back to the area.

Fire Danger

As of this writing, fire danger across most of the Siuslaw National Forest is rated extreme, conditions that mean even a small fire start could rapidly grow into a significant fire. At this fire danger level, many activities that could inadvertently ignite a fire, such as using a chainsaw, are restricted.

Safe Roads and Recreation Sites

Hundreds or thousands of trees fell during last week's wind storm. Engineers and recreation staff are continuing to conduct assessments of wind storm damage to roads and at recreation sites; however, the persistent fire danger has limited the ability to remove hazard trees. Staff capacity to perform assessments is also limited as many employees are assisting with emergency wildfire response locally and throughout the region.

<Continues>

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.



Forest Service



Community Readiness

With the number of fires burning locally and throughout the region, resources available to respond to new emergencies have been stretched thin. Prior to reopening sites, we are coordinating with local community officials to ensure their readiness to respond to issues that may arise as visitors return to the area.

"I understand how disappointing this closure may be for people who were planning on visiting the forest," said Forest Supervisor Sanchez. "It's been a challenging year and I hope to be back to normal operations soon. I'm grateful for the flexibility of our staff and the patience of the public as we move towards re-opening."

Forest closure updates will be added to the [Siuslaw website](#) and [social media](#) as conditions change.

####

The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The Agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to State and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

