



## USDA Forest Service: Stanislaus National Forest

### Rim Fire Recovery

### Rim Fire Forest Closure Expires on Nov. 17, 2014

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Forest Closure Order 2014-01, which was put in place in April, 2014, expires Nov. 17th. The primary purpose for the order was to protect the public from hazards such as falling snags and accelerated runoff caused by erosion. Though much has been done to mitigate the risks of the burned landscape, the public should be cautious while visiting the newly opened portion of the Forest.

#### **Roadway Hazards:**

- Unstable, structurally damaged trees can topple at a moment's notice.
- The public should minimize their exposure to areas that have a high density of unstable trees. Winds, winter storms and insect infestations increase the likelihood that these trees will fall unexpectedly, without warning.
- Many forest roads are narrow and winding. Drive defensively and be watchful for large vehicles on roadways. Look ahead and navigate tight corners strategically, being mindful that not all drivers are used to mountainous driving conditions.
- Visit <http://www.caltrans.ca.gov/roadsandtraffic.html> for traffic information and road closures.
- Numerous hazardous trees, that were lining roadways, have been removed by salvage logging efforts.

#### **Watershed Concerns:**

- Though post-fire vegetation has sprung up following the fire, bare ground still exists in some places. Erosion risks will persist for several years until watersheds heal more thoroughly.
- As rainstorms occur, risks include: erosion, sedimentation flows, rapid water runoff and increased volume in affected streams.
- Following a storm, when known dangers exist, NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association) will broadcast warnings.
- If you notice a sudden rise in the volume of water output in a canyon stream, seek higher ground.
- Additional warning signs can include a sudden change in the color of the water from clear to a muddy, ash-colored brown.
- The Burned Area Emergency Response Team arrived a year ago to help stabilize the area burned by the fire. Efforts such as mulching and the installation of numerous culverts, dips and water bars have done much to improve the hydrologic function of the area.

#### **Additional Information:**

- A few areas covered by the former closure order were not lifted as those locations are still not safe for travel. These include the Spinning Wheel and Cottonwood areas.
- View current closure information at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/stanislaus> under the "Alerts & Warnings" section for a legal description of the areas that remain closed.
- Private land owners, and others who have been granted admittance by permit through the District Rangers, will be able to access their property or permitted area under the new closure orders.
- On Dec. 16, annual road closures will go into effect. Check the Motor Vehicle Use Maps for details:

[http://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/stanislaus/maps-pubs/?cid=FSM91\\_057724&width=full](http://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/stanislaus/maps-pubs/?cid=FSM91_057724&width=full)

- The El-Portal Closure Order is still in effect and will not be affected by the expiration of the Rim Fire Closure Order.

#### **Access to Cherry Lake:**

- Though the majority of the Rim Fire Closure Order will expire, two new closure orders will be in effect; to include unsafe areas in Spinning Wheel as well as affected roadways leading up to Cherry Lake.
- Though Cherry Lake is a cherished recreational site, steep cliffs and unstable trees remain an issue along the Cottonwood Road (1N04). Hazard tree removal has not been completed in this area and there is a danger of trees falling onto the roadway from steep cliffs perched above the road.
- As a result, it is not possible to access the lake from Highway 108 or Tuolumne City.
- Nor is it possible to access Cherry Lake via the Cottonwood Road (1N04) as the road will remain closed around Thompson Meadow, per the original closure order.
- Though access from the north or west is not available, you can get to the lake from Groveland by way of Highway 120.
- The Cottonwood Road (1N04) could open early in 2015 once the hazardous trees are removed.
- If visiting Cherry Lake by way of Highway 120, be aware that boats are not advised. Due to low water levels at the lake, the boat ramp has been rendered non-functional for motorized watercraft.
- Other roads still affected by the closure include:
  - 3N01N will remain closed from its intersection at 3N16 all the way down to the Cottonwood Road (1N04) as hazard trees are actively being removed from this area.
  - Signage will be placed at 2N08Y, 2N04 and 2N05 to alert travelers of the 3N01N closure.
  - 2N14 will remain closed at 2N29 near the Bourland Trustle.
  - 3N01S was closed under the Rim Fire Closure Order and will remain closed under the new order.
- A great deal of work has already been accomplished on various Cherry Lake Roads but the U.S. Forest Service cares about the safety of the public. Too many hazard trees still overhang some locations. Affected roadways will be reopened as soon as possible.

#### **Access to the Spinning Wheel Area:**

- The severely burned area of Spinning Wheel, known for its campground, remains closed.
- Though much work has been done to minimize natural resource damage in Spinning Wheel, the lack of vegetation renders the area unsafe for public use or travel as the area is still subject to mudslides and sedimentation flows.
- Public facilities have yet to be replaced in this area as well.
- The forthcoming Closure Order will describe the closed area and will be posted online at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/stanislaus> under the “Alerts & Warnings” section.
- Spinning Wheel will likely open next spring, providing there is adequate vegetative cover to stabilize burned hillsides.
- A restroom facility is on order to replace the one consumed by the fire.

**Providing safe recreational opportunities to the public is important to the Forest Service.  
Please enjoy our beautiful Forest and be safe along the way.**