

## WALLOW FIRE CLOSURE Q&A

Information about White Arrow System, hunting, fuelwood, and general recreation within the Wallow Fire perimeter  
08-29-11

### ROADS and the WHITE ARROW SYSTEM

**Where can I drive within Wallow Fire Perimeter?** Motorized use within the fire perimeter is only allowed on roads designated as open, indicated on the ground with white arrows. With certain exceptions for motorized big game retrieval and fuelwood collection, cross-country (off-road) motorized travel is not allowed (see hunting and fuelwood sections below).

Roads within the burn perimeter are not currently maintained for passenger cars. High-clearance vehicles are recommended.

**When will you open more roads?** Crews are working daily to evaluate conditions, mitigate hazards, and determine if additional roads or areas are safe for reentry. Remember that some open roads are still receiving extensive flooding and may need to be temporarily reclosed for safety purposes. We typically know of any changes by mid-week.

Be sure to *Know Before You Go* – double check conditions with your local Apache-Sitgreaves office or the website before you venture out.

**If I encounter a road that is not shown as open on the map, but is posted with a white arrow on the ground, can I use it?** Yes, so long as it's not barricaded/gated/signed closed. The map is only being updated on a periodic bases (weekly, at most), but changes on the ground are occurring daily. White arrows on the ground supersede the map; however, closed gates, barricades, and other closure signs supersede white arrows. Woodcutters and hunters with valid licenses may use other roads that are numbered with a horizontal or vertical sign as long as they are not posted or barricaded closed.

**Can I use routes not designated with an arrow for *non-motorized* activities?** Yes, so long as the routes are not within a designated closure area, you may use routes for non-motorized activities. Please keep in mind that any area affected by the wildfire can be prone to hazards such as falling trees, flooding and burned out stump holes. Any time you enter the forest, you should be aware of your environment and changing weather conditions. You are responsible for your own safety! Always look up, look down, and look all around.

**Crews are installing several gates on the roads that are marked as open. Are you going to close those roads?** Not at this time. These gates are intended to remain open unless emergency situations warrant an immediate closure for public safety.

### HAZARDS

**What hazards should I be aware of in burned areas?** Stump holes, flooding potential, washed out roads, falling trees/branches. Any time you enter the forest, you should be aware of your environment and changing weather conditions. The environment you are entering is highly susceptible to rainstorms and wind events. You are responsible for your own safety! Always look up, look down, and look all around.

Bear in mind that certain roads – such as FR275 and FR26 are experiencing extensive flooding and damage during monsoon storms, and may be temporarily impassable or even temporarily closed.

In addition, *roads within the burn perimeter are not currently maintained for passenger cars.* High-clearance vehicles are recommended.

### HUNTING

**What routes am I allowed to drive while hunting within the perimeter of the Wallow Fire?** Except in areas closed to motorized entry, individuals with a valid big game hunting license are allowed to operate motorized vehicles on any Forest Service system road (posted on the ground with either a horizontal or vertical road number) that is not barricaded closed. Hunters should *be prepared with chainsaws* or other equipment to clear the road should the exit be obstructed by falling

trees. Other hazards such as stump holes and flooding continue to exist in the area. You're responsible for your own safety -- Look Up, Look Down, and Look All Around.

**Can I drive off-road to retrieve my legally harvested big game animal within the Fire perimeter?** Yes, you may drive off-road to retrieve legally harvested animals so long as you do not cause resource damage or enter into areas designated as closed to entry. In certain circumstances, either the Apache-Sitgreaves or Arizona Game and Fish Department officials may consider limited entry into a closed area for retrieval of a deceased game animal. Entry is NOT guaranteed. You must contact the Operation Game Thief hotline or the ASNF's to obtain such permission. Under no circumstances will you be allowed to drive off-road to scout for game.

**Can I pursue an animal that I wounded into a closed area?** In certain circumstances, Apache-Sitgreaves or Arizona Game and Fish Department officials may consider limited entry into a closed area in pursuit of mortally wounded or deceased game animals. To request an exception permit, you must contact either the Operation Game Thief hotline (24-hour, 7-day/week) at 1-800-352-0700 or the local Forest Service office (Alpine Ranger District Office at (928)339-5000, or the Springerville District office at (928)333-6200) prior to entering the closure area.

**I am a CHAMP hunter, am I allowed motorized use off designated roads and trails, or in areas designated as closed?** No. With the exception of retrieving legally harvested big game animals by motorized means, you are not allowed to use motorized vehicles off designated roads and trails.

#### FUELWOOD

**Where will I be able to collect firewood within the fire perimeter?** With a valid fuelwood permit (available only at the Alpine and Springerville District Offices), you may retrieve fuelwood within 150 feet from any Forest Service system road, numbered with a horizontal or vertical sign, except in closure areas and areas where fuelwood collection is normally restricted (campgrounds, wilderness, etc). Remember that hazards such as falling trees, stump holes, and potential flooding continue to exist in the area. You're responsible for your own safety -- Look Up, Look Down, and Look All Around.

**Can I drive off-road to collect firewood within the perimeter of the Wallow Fire?** With a valid permit, you may retrieve your fuelwood by motorized means as far as 150ft off the numbered road, so long as you do not cause resource damage. Under no circumstances will you be able to enter areas designated as closed. Remember that hazards such as falling trees, stump holes, and potential flooding continue to exist in the area. You're responsible for your own safety -- Look Up, Look Down, and Look All Around.

#### FISHING/CAMPING/HIKING

**Can I go fishing within the Wallow Fire Perimeter?** Yes, with a valid fishing license, and as long as you remain in areas designated as open and along routes designated as open with a white arrow. Remember that hazards such as falling trees, stump holes, and potential flooding continue to exist in the area. You're responsible for your own safety -- Look Up, Look Down, and Look All Around.

**Can I go camping in the campgrounds associated with the Wallow Fire?** Yes. Most of the developed recreation sites within the burn perimeter are open, except South Fork Campground and all the developed recreation sites in East Fork and West Fork of the Please keep in mind that certain campgrounds have been closed for an in determinant length of time until hazards can be mitigated, and flooding potential subsides.

**Can I camp in dispersed areas, outside of campgrounds, within the perimeter?** Yes. Dispersed camping supported with a motorized vehicle will be allowed within 30 feet of any motorized route, which is identified and posted on the ground as open with a white arrow.

Dispersed camping not supported by motorized means (e.g. backcountry camping, etc.), will be allowed within areas designated as open. Please keep in mind that certain areas remain closed to dispersed camping in order to limit potential exposure to hazards by forest users, mitigate erosion potential, and minimize impacts to vegetation.

**Can I camp further than 30 feet away from an open road if I walk in?** Yes. If you walk in, you may camp in any area designated as open. Vehicles must remain within 30' from an open road bear in mind that these areas have not been mitigated for hazards and pose a higher risk to your safety. Hazards such as falling trees, stump holes, and potential flooding continue to exist in the area. You're responsible for your own safety -- Look Up, Look Down, and Look All Around.

**Can I hike on trails within the fire perimeter?** While the trails within the open areas can be used, they have yet to be mitigated of hazards and they pose a higher threat to your safety. We recommend that you try to find other locations across the ASNF's. Remember that you're responsible for your own safety. While you're hiking, continue to Look Up, Look Down, Look All Around

### The CLOSING/OPENING PROCESS

**Why do portions of the Forest need to remain closed after the fire is out?** Our number one priority is human safety. We're dedicated to avoiding accidents and injuries as much as possible. After the fire is out, many hazards still exist including stump holes, falling dead trees, and the potential for flash flooding. We'll continue to work hard mitigating some of these hazards so we can begin opening certain areas for public reentry. Some areas may continue to be closed for several months, and some areas we open may need to be re-closed if conditions change.

**How long until *the entire* area within the fire perimeter are open?** The length of closure is dependent upon many criteria including public safety, protection of property, and protection of forest resources (i.e. soils, vegetation, water quality, wildlife, fisheries, recreation, heritage, etc.). We're working diligently to remove hazards and restore the forest to safer conditions for public use. We'll be able to open some areas over the next several weeks. Other areas with severe damage will have to remain closed for some time. Keep in mind that some areas that have been opened may need to be re-closed if safety conditions change.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**What is the penalty for going into areas or on routes that are designated as closed?** Any violation of closure order is punishable by a fine of up to \$5,000.00 for individuals, \$10,000.00 for organizations and/or imprisonment up to than six (6) months.

**Where can I get a map of the routes designated as open to motorized use?** As motorized routes are assessed and opened for motorized entry, they will be depicted on a map, which will be available to the public. This map will be updated on a periodic basis to accurately reflect conditions as they appear on the ground. The most recent maps are available at any Apache-Sitgreaves NFs office or on our website at [www.fs.fed.us/r3/asnf](http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/asnf)

**How often will the map be updated?** The map will be periodically updated to reflect changes. Be sure to call one of our offices or check the website *prior* to venturing into the forest to ensure you have the most recent information.

**Does the white arrow program preempt Travel Management Rule?** No. The White Arrow designation of motorized routes within the Wallow Fire Perimeter is being used as an interim measure for the protection of public safety, property and forest resources. Further assessments will occur at a later date, which will aid Travel Management planners in determining how best to move forward in the Travel Management process.

**Safety Messages:**

*You are responsible for your own safety!*

Check in with a friend or family member; tell them where you are going, when you're leaving, and when you plan to return. Whenever possible, travel in pairs.

When parking your vehicle, look up for overhead hazards within 1 ½ times the length of the tallest tree surrounding your vehicle.

Don't camp in areas that have dead trees within 1 ½ tree lengths.

Carry a communication device and check-in at regular intervals.

Locations in, near, and downstream of recently burned areas are very susceptible to flash flooding and debris flows. Remember...it does not take a heavy downpour to result in flash flooding on a burn scar. Even a short period of moderate rainfall on a severely burned watershed can lead to flash floods or debris flows. After soils and vegetation have been charred, rainfall that would normally be absorbed will run off extremely quickly. Severely burned soils can be as water repellent as pavement.

Rapidly moving flood waters can pick up large amounts of debris that can damage or destroy culverts, bridges, roadways, and buildings, potentially causing injury or death. Flash floods in and near burn scars can be life threatening.

Do not attempt cross washes and roads when water is present!