



# U.S. Forest Service National Forest System Talking Points

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Date: March 29, 2012

**Topic: R5, Cleveland National Forest, San Diego River Gorge (Cedar Creek Falls) Trail and Trailhead**

## **What is happening on April 1, 2012?**

- New Forest Orders issued by the Cleveland National Forest will allow restore public access to Cedar Creek Falls but only from the East entrance located off the Eagle Peak County Road in Pine Hills (near Julian).
- The trail system leading to Cedar Creek Falls from the Thornbush Trailhead remains closed at this time. The closure includes the area at the Thornbush Trailhead, trail to the falls and Forest Service lands at the end of Ramona Oaks Drive with the exception of the open West Side Truck Trail.

## **Why was the Cedar Creek Fall Trailhead, trail system and falls closed July 9, 2011?**

- The purpose of the closure is to give the Forest Service time to design and implement a management plan to address issues of overcrowding, resource impacts, and public safety

## **Why is the Forest Service reopening the east (Eagle Peak Rd, Pine Hills) entrance on April 1, 2012, but keeping the West (Thornbush Rd, Ramona) entrance closed?**

- We are progressing but not finished with new management rules for this area. The West entrance has is difficult to manage as almost unlimited parking takes place throughout the subdivision, and is adjacent to a residential neighborhood that was impacted by unregulated use last year.
- In contrast, the rural East entrance has comparatively less parking and therefore less visitation.
- Opening the east entrance also allows for hunter access with spring turkey season in full swing.

## **What should I know about the Parking at the East Entrance to Cedar Falls?**

- Parking is extremely limited.
- If visitors block the county roadway and emergency vehicles cannot pass, the Sherriff's Office, California Highway Patrol and or US Forest Service are likely to issue citations and vehicles blocking the roadway will be towed at owner expense.

## **When can I expect that the West entrance will be reopened?**

- A decision on whether or not a permit would be required to hike the trail in the future will not be made until the conclusion of the NEPA decision process in early summer, 2012.
- Instituting a permit system could address over-use and prevent conflicts with residents at the west entrance.
- Last year, as many as 750 vehicles parked outside of the Forest Service parking area in a single day in the adjacent residential neighborhood.
- A news release will be issued when this decision occurs and accurate information is available on our website <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/cleveland>.

## **What rules should I be aware of before visiting the Falls via the East Entrance?**

- The trail is very steep and is a 7 mile round-trip hike recommended for only advanced hikers.
- Parking is limited and vehicles blocking county road access will be towed at owner expense.
- The West Side entrance located on Thornbush Road in Ramona remains closed.
- Alcohol possession and/or use are prohibited in this area.
- The cliffs surrounding Cedar Falls is closed to jumping and diving (swimming is still allowed).
- Visitors are not required to have a permit at this time.
- Camping, fireworks or fires continue to be strictly prohibited.
- Multiple law enforcement agencies have joined forces to enforce these rules.

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