



Date: July 9th, 2026
To: File
From: Christopher Bielecki, Forest Supervisor
Re: Forest Order No. 09-26-02: Wild Horse Holding Facility Closure

It is my decision to implement Forest Order 09-26-02 (Wild Horse Gather Area Closure Order) to protect public, employees, partner and wild horse health and safety. This Order will close the area as described below. This Order will be in effect from July 9th, 2026 at 1:00 p.m., through August 3rd, 2026.

On March 7th, 2025, the Forest Service signed a decision to gather and remove excess wild horses in areas located outside of the Montgomery Pass Wild Horse Territory. The Forest began removing up to 450 horses on July 8, 2026. Gathered horses are being transported to the US Forest Service, Double Devil Wild Horse Corrals in Alturas, CA.

Given the sensitive nature of handling wild horses and the large public interest in the gather operations, it is vital to limit access to this area. The closure is key to protecting the well-being of the wild horses, the public, and our staff as the horses acclimate to their new environment.

The Wild Horse Holding Facility Closure Order will help ensure that wild horses receive uninterrupted care from the staff. This measure is designed to protect the horses, the public, and employees alike.

This Order includes an exemption for persons holding a Forest Permit for Use of Roads, Trails, or Areas Restricted by Regulation or Order (Form FS-7700-48). Authorization under this exemption will only be provided if I or my delegate determine that the risks to public safety and natural resources are reasonable considering the circumstances of the request. We may also require appropriate personal protective equipment and other necessary safety measures. I hereby delegate the authority to sign Form FS-7700-48 granting an exemption to this order to Devil's Garden District Ranger, Glenna Eckel.

Scoping efforts included conversations with the Modoc County Sheriff's Office and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Lassen-Modoc Unit. I have concluded that this decision may be categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Assessment (EA) under the National Environmental Policy Act. This action falls within the category identified in 7 C.F.R. § 1b.4(c)(19) – prohibitions to provide short-term resource protection or to protect public health and safety – and does not require documentation in a finding of applicability and no extraordinary circumstance (FANEC), decision notice, or record of decision. I have determined that there are no extraordinary circumstances associated with this temporary closure. Implementation of the decision may begin at 1:00pm on July 9, 2026.

Christopher Bielecki
Forest Supervisor, Modoc National Forest

