



NEWS RELEASE

Southwest Area

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Monsoon Arrival Helps Reduce Fire Restrictions and Closures

Phoenix, AZ, July 22, 2004----“The monsoon rains have helped reduce the fire danger allowing land managers to lift most fire restrictions and closures across Arizona,” stated Bill Waterbury, Assistant Regional Director Fire and Aviation Management, USFS. “A large portion of the State’s high country has received significant rainfall, however, it is not as extensive as we would like. Even in the high country, some areas did not receive heavy rains.”

Yesterday, 10 “reporting units” still recorded Very High fire danger in various areas of Arizona. On Wednesday, there were 58 lightning fires and 6 human-caused fires in the State. The lightning-caused Magazine Fire in the Tonto National Forest was the largest, growing to 300 acres. “A forecast of higher humidity and an increased chance of rainfall in the desert areas should lessen the fire danger over the next week.”

The lack of “widespread” monsoon rains has caused some closures and restrictions to remain in effect in Arizona. Closures are limited to the KP and Three Forks Fire areas, Forest Road 9350, and Highway 191 between Blue Vista and Rose Peak (fuel spill cleanup) in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, and the Willow Fire area in the Tonto National Forest, and the Nuttall Fire area in the Coronado NF.

Campfire and smoking restrictions remain in effect for portions of the Kaibab and Tonto National Forests, as well as for San Carlos, Hopi, Navajo, Arizona State Trust, and Arizona BLM lands. Campfire and smoking restrictions also remain within the Grand Canyon National Park and the Chiricahua National Monument and at some Arizona State Parks. Maricopa County Parks is continuing its ban on open fires. Restrictions in wildlife refuges along the Lower Colorado River are in effect year-round.

“Even though we are in the monsoon season, there are still areas that remain dry and visitors across the state are urged to be careful with campfires and smoking materials, especially in dry grassy areas, Waterbury added. There always seems to be an area somewhere in the state that is dry enough to burn, no matter the time of year.”

The latest restriction/closure information can be found on websites www.azfireinfo.com and www.fs.fed.us/r3/fire or by calling toll-free 1-877-864-6985.

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