



Forest Service News Release

Media Contact:
Region 5 Media Desk
SM.FS.MediaDeskR5@usda.gov

Discover Your New Favorite National Forest Spot This Memorial Day Weekend

Know Before You Go — Check access, be kind, and #RecreateResponsibly

VALLEJO, Calif., May 24, 2023 — Memorial Day weekend, as we honor all the heroes who gave their lives in military service to this nation, also marks the kickoff of summer for many visitors to national forests. With the strong storms and heavy snow over the past few months, some forest areas and sites are closed due to lingering snowpack, flooding or road damage. Crews are using all available resources to get these areas open and safe for the public to enjoy.

“With the record precipitation we expect to be busy at our national forests, with visitors excited to get outside and enjoy our rivers, lakes and streams this Memorial Day weekend,” said Jim Bacon, director of Public Services for the Pacific Southwest Region. “We want to urge the public to take extra caution this high-water year. Please plan ahead, check access, stay safe, and recreate responsibly.”

With closures or delayed openings at popular recreation sites, the USDA Forest Service asks for your patience. We value safety first and offer these tips for everyone to have a positive experience on national forests:

Before heading to a forest, have a backup plan. Be open to finding a new favorite area to enjoy. With limited locations in some areas and high use in others, consider reserving a campground at www.recreation.gov or call 877-444-6777.

Know Before You Go. Check in with local Forest Service offices for [closures and alerts](#). Use forest websites and social media for updates on sites and trails for the 18 national forests in California. It is your responsibility to know the area and any restrictions to areas, roads and trails within the national forests.

Pack essentials. Hikers and campers should always bring essentials including navigation, light sources, first aid supplies, clothes for changing weather, food, water and a smartphone. We recommend hikers send someone not on the hike a detailed plan of where they plan to travel and GPS location when arrive, in case of an emergency.

Observe all posted signs and warnings. There may not be barriers or signs at each closed location. Remember, GPS is not always reliable with current closures and conditions. And gates should never be opened when closed, even if GPS shows the best route through the area. Citations may still be issued even if no signs exist when a forest order is in place.

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Be aware of your surroundings. Many campgrounds and hiking trails are near lakes and rivers with changing water conditions. Water could be colder and swifter with the record-breaking snowpack now melting. Be aware of winds and avoid areas with dead standing trees. Look up before you choose a trail, park your car, or set up camp. And no matter how tempting, do not park your car illegally and block emergency vehicle access.

Plus, with May as Water Safety Month, follow these water smart reminders:

- Do not enter cold, fast-running water. It can be dangerous for you and first responders.
- Never enter the water to rescue a victim. Throw something that floats and call 9-1-1.
- Do not drive through high waters. Water is often swifter than it appears.

Additional Weather and Planning Resources

1. [California National Forests | Contact Directory](#)
2. [Caltrans QuickMap](#) — Current information on road closures
3. [Weather Watches, Warnings and Advisories | National Weather Service](#)
4. [Turn Around, Don't Drown | Ready.gov](#)
5. [California Office of Emergency Services | Cal OES](#)
6. [#RecreateResponsibly | Water Safety](#)

For regional happenings, follow Pacific Southwest Region on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). Or search for individual national forests on Twitter.

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