



United States Department of Agriculture

**Forest Service**

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# News Release

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## **White Mountain National Forest Shuts Down Some Busy Recreation Sites**

**CAMPTON, NH** April 24, 2020 –In alignment with current federal, state and local guidance for physical distancing and to ensure health and safety of employees, visitors and volunteers, the White Mountain National Forest is shutting down several high use trailheads, day-use areas, and dispersed recreation facilities until further notice. While the White Mountain National Forest remains open, we are reminding the public to please recreate responsibly. New Hampshire has a Stay Safe at Home order in place and has asked the public to recreate locally.

There have been unseasonably high numbers of visitors to the National Forest resulting in increased potential for exposure to Coronavirus where visitors are not able or willing to follow guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or with current federal, state and local guidance for physical distancing. In order to ensure such guidance from experts at the CDC, state and local for physical distancing, the White Mountain National Forest is shutting down some recreation sites and trailheads. *Closing these areas will allow the Forest to assess our ability to do work safely, reduce the number of vehicles and congregation at trail heads, help control vandalism and to meet CDC guidance and cleaning standards.* Trails would remain open, but only accessible by foot traffic in order to discourage long distance travel and to adhere to the State's Stay Safe at Home orders. If you are able to walk to the trailhead without driving, you can access the trail. Parking on most roads is prohibited. Remember to pack out what you pack in.

“As the warmer weather approaches, the Forest continues to see increased visitation at recreation sites, trailheads and trails. It is difficult to practice physical distancing and maintain high use sites to CDC guidelines. The safety of Forest Service employees, our visitors and the local communities is priority as we operate in the new Covid-19



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environment,” said Connie Carpenter, Acting Forest Supervisor on the White Mountain National Forest.

White Mountain National Forest offices remain open, operating virtually to protect the health and safety of employees and members of the public during the COVID-19 outbreak in accordance with guidance from federal and state authorities. Customers needing information, permits and maps are encouraged to call Forest Headquarters at: (603) 6100, Saco Ranger Station (604) 447-5448, and Androscoggin Ranger Station (603) 466-2713 during regular business hours for prompt, customer service.

These actions have been taken based on the best available medical advice to limit gatherings of large numbers of people and to promote social distancing. Visitors to our National Forests are urged to use guidance from the CDC, go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html>.

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