



## Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest

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# News Release

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## Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Expects Crowds During Warm Weather

**Spark, NV., April 24, 2020** – As the weather warms up and the skies clear, The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest expects larger-than-normal crowds over the weekend and would like to remind outdoor enthusiasts that while trails remain open, crowded recreation areas and parking lots are places where COVID-19 transmission could occur.

“We understand how important it is for people’s physical and mental health to get outside and exercise during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, it is important that the public honors the States’ “Stay at Home” directives to not travel for recreation needs. If some time outside is needed, please keep close to home in areas where social distancing can be practiced,” said Forest Supervisor Bill Dunkelberger.

All Forest campgrounds, group day use areas, visitor centers, and offices are closed in Nevada as well as a portion of eastern California. In addition, the popular Buckeye Hot Springs and dispersed camping and day use area along Buckeye Road on the Bridgeport Ranger District in California are closed. The Forest has also restricted group sizes to no more than nine people in an area.

“Our priority is always to protect the health and safety of both the public and our employees,” said Dunkelberger. “We are monitoring heavily used areas on the Forest and will adjust management of these areas as appropriate to best meet social distancing direction and keep group sizes small. We are committed to supporting our communities and fulfilling our mission as we all work together to minimize the impacts and spread of the virus,”

Fire restrictions have been put in place earlier than normal to reduce firefighter exposure and to help prevent routing critical fire and medical resources to help fight human-caused wildfires. Currently, the following is prohibited on the Forest:

Igniting, building, maintaining, attending or using a fire, including charcoal grills and barbecues, coal and wood burning stoves, and shepherd’s stoves.

Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle, trailer, or building.

These actions were taken based on the best available medical advice to limit gatherings of large numbers of people, to promote social distancing, and to support Nevada and California “Stay at Home” directives.



“Visiting public lands while facilities are closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic can leave major impacts on the environment, such as trash and human waste accumulate on the landscape,” added Dunkelberger. “Many small actions have a magnified effect.”

Forest Officials are asking the public to follow Leave No Trace principals (<https://lnt.org/why/7-principles/>), plan ahead, be prepared, stick to trails, and dispose of both trash and human waste properly.

The public should also be aware that many of the Forest campgrounds, roads, trails, and wilderness areas are not accessible until Memorial Day, especially on the high elevation Ranger Districts like Austin-Tonopah, Bridgeport, Ely, Mountain City-Ruby Mountains-Jarbidge and Santa Rosa.

Virtual services are available to purchase California campfire permits, maps, passes, etc., while all Forest offices remain closed to the public. Here are is a list of services available online:

- Annual or Lifetime Federal Recreation Pass, including all Senior Passes (<https://store.usgs.gov/recreational-passes>)
- Forest Maps
  - USGS Store (<https://store.usgs.gov/filter-products?categories=%5B216%5D&page=1>)
  - Avenza (Mobile Devices) (<http://www.avenza.com/avenza-maps/>)
  - Forest Service Virtual Interactive Maps (<https://www.fs.fed.us/ivm/>)
- Exclusive national forest merchandise offered through our partner organization the Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association (<https://esiaonline.org/shop-online>)

For information and updates on recreation closures and fire restrictions on the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, please visit the following sites:

- <http://www.fs.usda.gov/htnf>
- <https://www.facebook.com/HumboldtToiyabeNF/>
- <https://twitter.com/HumboldtToiyabe>

Forest users are urged to take the precautions recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For tips from the CDC on preventing illnesses like the coronavirus, go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html>.

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*The Humboldt-Toiyabe's spectacular 6.3 million acres make it the largest national forest in the lower 48 states. Located in Nevada and a small portion of eastern California, the Forest offers year-round recreation of all types.*

