



United States Department of Agriculture

## Forest Service

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# News Release

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## Tonto National Forest to Open Many Recreation Sites By May 15

**PHOENIX, May 14, 2020 — For Immediate Release.** Beginning Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, much of the Tonto National Forest's developed recreation sites will be open for use. This includes all developed sites for the lower Salt River and Saguaro Lake. Most developed sites at Apache, Canyon, and Roosevelt Lakes will also be open. Additional Bartlett Lake sites will open on Saturday.

"In conjunction with Governor Ducey's phased reopening of Arizona, we are opening many popular sites on the forest for public use and enjoyment," Tonto National Forest Supervisor Neil Bosworth said. "We recognize the importance of providing recreational opportunities to forest visitors while providing for the safety of our employees and the public."

If you are planning to visit the Tonto National Forest, we ask that you keep the following in mind:

- We ask visitors to our Nations Forests be good stewards of public lands and natural resources. Please recreate responsibly.
- We ask visitors avoid crowded areas and parking illegally. Over the past month, the entire forest has seen unprecedented visitation numbers. While opening additional recreation sites will help address crowding and parking issues, we anticipate visitation will continue to exceed capacity in some areas.
- Starting May 15<sup>th</sup>, recreation passes will be required. Purchase of passes will be available at machines located at some sites across the forest, at participating vendors, and virtually by contacting a district office during normal business hours.

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- We ask visitors to provide for their own hygiene and safety when using these facilities. It is important to note that restroom cleaning may be limited in some areas; cleaning schedules will be posted at each site. This will also be the case for picnic tables and other areas that may be touched often by others.
- Use common courtesy and “Leave No Trace” principles related at recreation sites to avoid creating a public health hazard for employees and other forest users. For more information on Leave No Trace and “The 7 Principles”, please visit <https://lnt.org/why/7-principles/>.
- Visitors to national forests are urged to take the precautions recommended by the CDC, such as practicing social distancing and limiting group sizes. For additional tips from the CDC on preventing illnesses like the coronavirus, go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html>.

Some sites on the Tonto National Forest remain closed due to shortages of personal protective equipment for employees, shortage of sanitizing products, and small spaces that force congregations of large groups in violation of [Center for Disease Control guidelines](#).

Additional recreation sites that can be safely opened and maintained will open guided by conditions on the ground, seasonal availability and facility conditions. For a detailed list of what remains closed, please visit our website at [www.fs.usda.gov/goto/r3/safety](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/r3/safety).

For more information about recreation opportunities, please visit our website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/tonto> and click the *Check Your Rec* icon on the right side of the page. You can also visit our Interactive Visitor Map at <https://www.fs.fed.us/ivm/>.

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