



**Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service, Southern Region
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Francis Marion National Forest Reopens to the Public

The U.S. Forest Service today announced that as of 4 p.m. the Francis Marion National Forest is open to the public. The forest had been closed since noon on September 6, 2008 because of anticipated threats from Tropical Storm Hanna.

“I am pleased to report that the forest received little, if any, damage from Tropical Storm Hanna,” said Francis Marion National Forest Supervisor Jerome Thomas. “Safety is always our number one priority, both for the public and for Forest Service personnel. Our Incident Management Team has completed a post-storm assessment of the forest and has determined that the area is safe for public use. Therefore, I am officially terminating the Forest Closure order effective 4 p.m. today.”

All Forest Service roads and recreation areas are open and safe for public use. Facilities on the Francis Marion, including the Witherbee and Wambaw ranger stations and work centers, sustained no damage from the storm. In addition, all employees are safe and accounted for with no reported injuries.

For more information on the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests, visit our Web site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/fms>.

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The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.