

Mogollon Rim Ranger District, Coconino National Forest



News from the Forest Service

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NEWS RELEASE
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Additional Winter Road Closures on the Coconino

Happy Jack, AZ—Due to winter conditions, many roads across the Coconino National Forest have already been closed. Additional snow predictions are prompting the Mogollon Rim Ranger District of the Coconino National Forest to close most forest roads to public entry.

Effective Saturday, January 20th, the Mogollon Rim Ranger District will close all gates along portions of Forest Highway 3 (Lake Mary Road) and State Highway 87 and 260. Specifically, this includes the following areas:

- Forest roads accessed from State Highway 87 from the forest boundary north of Strawberry at milepost 273, continuing north to milepost 300.
- Forest roads accessed from State Highway 260 from the junction with State Highway 87 west to milepost 245.
- Forest roads accessed off of Forest Highway 3, between Clint's Well (milepost 290) and the Mogollon Rim district boundary at milepost 314. Those forest roads already closed north of this boundary will remain closed.

“The Mogollon Rim is extremely remote and rugged. Winter storms are common and somewhat unpredictable. Cell phone coverage is generally poor and services for motorists are limited. Together, these factors increase the risk of getting stranded with grave consequences,” said District Ranger, Mindee Roth. Many roads on the neighboring Mormon Lake and Peaks Ranger District have already been closed and as well as areas of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest to the east. State highways and county roads will remain open.

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Gated roads will be reopened as conditions allow. Similar to recent fire danger closures, access for contractor, permittee, and private lands on the Mogollon Rim District will need to be coordinated through the district office, at 928-477-2255 or 928-477-2172.

For further information about winter conditions on the Coconino National Forest, call 928-527-3600 and ask to speak to your local ranger station. Information is also posted at www.coconinoforest.us.

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An El Nino Winter

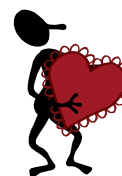
You've probably already heard that there is another "El Nino" developing in the Pacific Ocean this winter. The National Weather Service explains that the term El Nino refers to a large-scale ocean-atmosphere climate phenomenon linked to a period of warming in the sea surface temperatures across the central and east-central equatorial Pacific Ocean. El Nino events influence the position and strength of the jet stream over the Pacific Ocean, which in turn affect winter precipitation and temperature patterns across the country. The central and east-central equatorial region of the Pacific Ocean becomes 2-6 degrees warmer than usual. This in turn changes atmospheric circulation patterns across the Southern U.S. including Arizona. Increased storminess and wetter-than-average conditions occur from Southern California across the Southwest to Texas and across the Gulf Coast to Florida. The effects from El Nino typically are most evident in Arizona from January through April. Across northern Arizona, El Nino winters tend to have more prolonged stormy periods with fewer and shorter dry breaks than normal. Our recent weather and heavy snows sure validate this unique weather pattern so far this winter! We have measured nearly 2 feet of snow the first 3 weeks of January.



Forest Service Chief of 41 Years Retires

Chief Dale Bosworth announced his retirement on January 12th and Abigail Kimbell has been appointed by the USDA as the next Chief of the Forest Service. Abigail currently serves as the Regional Forester for the Northern Region in Missoula, Montana, which includes northern Idaho and North Dakota. "Abigail Kimbell is a veteran of the Forest Service who began as a seasonal worker and has since filled an impressive series of field assignments," said Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns. "She is a wealth of knowledge and is well respected." We would like to welcome Abigail.

*Happy Valentine's
Day!*



*Until next month,
Jean Gilbertson
Editor*