



Sequoia National Forest  
Giant Sequoia National Monument

## Forest Service News Release

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### Sequoia National Forest officials urge backup plans this Memorial Day Weekend

*Know Before You Go — Check access, be kind, and #RecreateResponsibly*

**PORTERVILLE, Calif., May 24, 2023** — Memorial Day weekend, as we honor all the heroes who gave their lives in military service to this nation, also marks the kickoff of summer for many visitors to national forests. With the strong storms and heavy snow over the past few months, some forest areas and sites are closed due to lingering snowpack, flooding, or road damage. Crews are using all available resources to get these areas open and safe for the public to enjoy.

Typically, Memorial Day is one of our busiest, with campers, boaters, hikers, and recreation enthusiasts enjoying activities in the Sequoia National Forest. As warm weather melts the Southern Sierra's record snowpack, Forest officials urge the public to make backup plans before visiting because many of the forest's facilities and roads are not open or are under the seasonal closure order until June 15, 2023.

There is a heightened risk of flooded roads and bridges, landslides, and debris flow from snowmelt, especially in or downstream of recent wildfires. Visitors should watch out for snow-covered and slippery roads, trees fallen across roads and trails, erosion washouts on hiking trails and off-highway vehicle (OHV) routes, and many other hazards.

With closures or delayed openings at popular recreation sites, the USDA Forest Service asks for your patience. Forest staff and concessionaire [ExplorUS](#) employees are working to clean, repair, and open campgrounds as soon as possible.

#### **Hume Lake Ranger District - 559-338-2251**

Welcome to the Hume Lake Ranger District of Sequoia National Forest! This region has scenic vistas, select OHV roads, and campgrounds open for Memorial Day weekend. Open roads include Highway 180 to the Hume Lake Junction, Chicago Stump, Millwood OHV and approximately eight miles of the northern portion of Generals Highway. Campgrounds that are open for reservation this weekend are the Hume Lake Campground, Tenmile Campground, Princess Campground, and Aspen Hollow Group campground.

There are closures in effect from winter storm damage. Many popular roads remain closed including the Kings Canyon Scenic byway at the Hume Lake Junction, Big Meadows Road, and the Boole Tree Road.

Hume Lake Ranger District recreation report available on inciweb at [CASQF Sequoia National Forest Emergency Flood Response Information | InciWeb \(wildfire.gov\)](#)

#### **Western Divide Ranger District - 559-539-2607**

The iconic Trail of 100 Giants is open, however, it is not accessible from Springville this summer due to storm damage-related closures of Highway 190. Instead, visitors can travel through California Hot Springs, Kernville, and Johnsondale to reach this popular destination site.

Redwood Meadow Campground (near Trail of 100 Giants) and Long Meadow (group only) Campground is now open. Other developed campgrounds: Quaking Aspen and Holey Meadow will tentatively open in mid-June, further delayed by weather conditions.

Vehicle access to the Golden Trout Wilderness trailheads is not currently available. Once the Lloyd Meadow Road is repaired, Jerkey Meadow and Forks of the Kern trailheads will be open. Lower Peppermint Campground will also open once the Lloyd Meadow Road is cleared, estimated mid to late June.

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As a reminder, Highway 190 sustained major damage in several locations, making it impassible between Springville and Ponderosa. [Caltrans](#) is working on repairs in anticipation of having it open from Springville to Camp Nelson by late summer and from Camp Nelson to Ponderosa before winter sets in. Access to day use areas along the Tule River; Lower and Upper Coffee Camps, as well as several campgrounds; Wishon, Belknap and Coy Flat, will not be available until Highway 190 is fully open to the public.

Western Divide Ranger District recreation report available on inciweb at [CASQF Sequoia National Forest Emergency Flood Response Information | InciWeb \(wildfire.gov\)](#)

### **Kern River Ranger District - 760-376-3781**

The Kern River Ranger District has campgrounds available for public use around Isabella Lake and the Kern Plateau. Check out our recreation report available on inciweb at [CASQF Sequoia National Forest Emergency Flood Response Information | InciWeb \(wildfire.gov\)](#) for sit specific information.

Kern River water levels are higher, and the water is moving fast. Although the river is beautiful, water flow from the storm system could increase the powerful rapids to dangerous levels. Avoid camping and recreating near rivers and streams, as water levels are expected to rise rapidly during and after the storm.

On May 4, 2023, Tulare County Sheriff Mike Boudreaux issued a temporary river closure for parts of the Kaweah, Kern, and Tule Rivers. Sections of the Kings and St. John's Rivers are also closed to the public. Kern River white-water rapid enthusiasts can enjoy the excitement, but only experienced Rafters and Kayakers or with the help of Kern River outfitters and guides are allowed to enter the river due to the closure order.

### **Practice Water Safety**

Are you planning to visit our world-class rapids? BEWARE! As the weather continues to warm, a significant amount of snow remains in the higher elevations. Stream and river currents are much more robust and deeper than normal. Avoid parking, camping, and recreating near rivers and streams, as water levels will likely continue to rise and overflow embankments.

We value safety first and offer these tips for everyone to have a positive experience on national forests:

**Before heading to a forest, have a backup plan.** Be open to finding a new favorite area to enjoy. With limited locations in some areas and high use in others, consider reserving a campground at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) or call 877-444-6777.

**Know Before You Go.** Check in with the Sequoia National Forest Ranger Stations listed below or the website for [closures and alerts](#). It is your responsibility to know the area and any restrictions to areas, roads, and trails within the national forests.

**Pack essentials.** Hikers and campers should always bring essentials including navigation, light sources, first aid supplies, clothes for changing weather, food, water, and a smartphone. We recommend hikers send someone not on the hike a detailed plan of where they plan to travel and GPS location when arrive, in case of an emergency.

**Observe all posted signs and warnings.** There may not be barriers or signs at each closed location. Remember, GPS is not always reliable with current closures and conditions. And gates should never be opened when closed, even if GPS shows the best route through the area. Citations may still be issued even if no signs exist when a forest order is in place.

**Be aware of your surroundings.** Many campgrounds and hiking trails are near lakes and rivers with changing water conditions. Water could be colder and swifter with the record-breaking snowpack now melting. Be aware of winds and avoid areas with dead standing trees. Look up before you choose a trail, park your car, or set up camp. And no matter how tempting, do not park your car illegally and block emergency vehicle access.

We are committed to providing customer service and offering recreation opportunities. Please help us keep your favorite recreation site pristine by practicing [Leave No Trace](#) principles. Recreate responsibly by packing out your trash and parking only in designated areas.

Check conditions in advance by contacting your local District Ranger Station, visiting the Forest's website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/sequoia/>, emailing [SM.FS.SequoiaNF@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FS.SequoiaNF@usda.gov), and by following the Sequoia National Forest on Facebook [@SequoiaNF](#).

For additional information regarding Forest Road and Recreation Sites, and Forest Service efforts to find and repair damage roads across the Sequoia National Forest, please visit the [CASQF Sequoia National Forest Emergency Flood Response Information | InciWeb \(wildfire.gov\)](#)

### **Weather and Planning Resources**

1. [California National Forests | Contact Directory](#)
2. [Caltrans QuickMap](#) — Current information on road closures
3. [Weather Watches, Warnings and Advisories | National Weather Service](#)
4. [Turn Around, Don't Drown | Ready.gov](#)
5. [California Office of Emergency Services | Cal OES](#)
6. [#RecreateResponsibly | Water Safety](#)

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