

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE
CHATTAHOOCHEE-OCONEE NATIONAL FOREST
CHATTOOGA RIVER RANGER DISTRICT**

Order No. 08-03-05-25-02

FOREST ORDER

Pursuant to the provisions of 16 USC §551, and Title 36 CFR §261.50(a) and 261.50(b), **the area of National Forest System lands in the “Big Ridge Fire Area” located on the Chattooga River Ranger District of the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest is closed to entry.** The area is closed to entering or occupying in order to minimize risks to public health and safety, to provide for disaster and safety operations, and to protect forest resources while responding to and recovering from the Big Ridge Fire. This Order is effective through April 30, 2025, or until rescinded by an authorized Forest Service official, whichever occurs first.

The area is signed closed from entering or occupying until further indicated on the attached map. Only National Forest System lands are impacted by this closure. Some private land inholdings appear within the area perimeter, but this order does not apply to lands that are not National Forest System lands. **The closure includes all National Forest System lands inside the following perimeter:**

- East of US 23 / US 441
- North of Warwoman Rd
- West of Hale Ridge Rd (FSR 7)
- South of Georgia state line (GA/NC border)

The closure area bounded by this perimeter includes, but is not limited to, the following facilities, trails, and roads:

Recreation Facilities & Areas

- Darnell Creek Shooting Range – Closed to all visitors and activities
- Sarah’s Creek Campground – Closed to all visitors and activities
- Warwoman WMA – Closed to all visitors and activities

Trails

- Bartram Trail (FST 164) – Closed to all types of traffic from Warwoman Dell to Hale Ridge Rd (FSR 7) and closed to all visitors
- Bartram Trail Connector (Beegum Gap to Bartram Trail) – Closed to all visitors and activities
- Becky Branch Trail (FST 65)– Closed to all visitors and activities
- Courthouse Gap (FST 47) - Closed to all visitors and activities
- Darnell Creek Horse Trail (FST 61) – Closed to all traffic and activities
- Pinnacle Knob Trail (FST 58) - Closed to all visitors and activities
- Rabun Bald Trail (FST 211) – Closed to all traffic and activities

Roads

- Chintilly Rd (FSR 156A) – Closed to all types of traffic and visitors
- Dan Gap Rd (FSR 155E) – Closed to all types of traffic and visitors
- Darnell Creek Rd (FSR 150) – Closed to all types of traffic and visitors
- Finney Creek Rd (FSR 153) – Closed to all types of traffic and visitors
- Hale Ridge Rd (FSR 7) – Closed to all types of traffic and visitors from intersection with Tottery Pole Rd (FSR 86C) to the north to the USFS property line
- Rabun Bald Rd (FSR 413) - Closed to all visitors and all forms of traffic
- Sarah’s Creek Rd (FSR 156) – Closed to all traffic and visitors
- Tuckaluge Creek Rd (FSR 153) – Closed to all traffic and visitors
- Walnut Fork Rd (FSR 155) – Closed to all traffic and visitors

The above prohibited acts are set forth in Title **36 CFR §261.53(e)** Special Closures for Public Health or Safety. It is prohibited to go into or be upon any of the area described in this order.

Pursuant to §261.50(e) the following persons are exempt from the above prohibitions:(e) the following persons are exempt from the above prohibitions:

1. Persons with a permit specifically authorizing the otherwise prohibited act or omission.
2. Any Federal, State, or local officer, or member of an organized rescue or fire fighting force in the performance of their official duty.

These prohibitions are in addition to the general prohibitions in 36 CFR Part 261,

Subpart A. Executed in Gainesville, Georgia, this 27th day of March, 2025.

Judy Toppins
Forest Supervisor
Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest

A violation of these prohibitions is punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization, or imprisonment for not more than 6 months, or both. 16 USC 551 and 18 USC 3559, 3571 and 3581.