

# News Release

## USDA Forest Service

### Los Padres National Forest



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Forest Service Expands Zaca Fire Closure into Ventura County**

GOLETA, CA...Due to the threat posed by the fast-moving Zaca Fire, the area of Los Padres National Forest closed to public entry has been expanded to the south. The closure now encompasses all national forest lands from Highway 166 on the north roughly to Highway 33 in Ventura County on the south, including the San Rafael, Dick Smith and Matilija Wilderness areas. The 614,223-acre emergency closure will be in effect until further notice.

“This is a dangerous fire that is capable of advancing several miles in a matter of hours,” warned Forest Supervisor Ken Heffner. “We are fighting the fire aggressively, but it may continue to spread southeastward through the San Rafael Wilderness, and possibly beyond. I don’t want anyone to be injured out there, either firefighters or forest visitors. I recognize this closure is an inconvenience, but these are extraordinary conditions, and safety has to remain our number one priority,” Heffner added.

The emergency closure prohibits all public entry to national forest lands, trails, roads and recreation sites within the designated area. It does not apply to private land inside or adjacent to the national forest. Some national forest facilities at the edge of the closure such as Wheeler Gorge and Holiday Campgrounds on Highway 33, and the campgrounds in the Lower Santa Ynez Recreation Area, will remain open for the time being. A detailed description and map of the closure will be available at Forest Service offices and on-line at <http://www.inciweb.org>. The map and information also will be posted on Thursday at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/lospadres>.

In addition to the Zaca Fire and Rancho Fire area closures, forest visitors are reminded that fire restrictions are in effect throughout Los Padres National Forest. The restrictions prohibit the use of wood or charcoal fires in all areas; limit the use of gas-type stoves to designated Campfire Use Sites with a California Campfire Permit; prohibit recreational target shooting except at the Winchester Gun Club and Ojai Valley Gun Club; and limit smoking to buildings, enclosed vehicles and Campfire Use Sites.

The Zaca Fire started on July 4, and as of this evening has burned approximately 28,346 acres. It is currently 35 percent contained. The fire is well-established in the San Rafael Wilderness and containment remains very difficult due to rugged inaccessible terrain and extreme burning conditions. The fire is being managed by a National Incident Management Team in Unified Command with Santa Barbara County Fire Department.

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