

USDA Forest Service Resumes Select Timber Management Activities

Court approves stipulation modifying the injunction on certain activities in New Mexico and Arizona

ALBUQUERQUE, Oct. 23, 2019 - Today, the United States District Court for the District of Arizona issued an order approving the recently filed stipulation to modify the ongoing court-ordered injunction, allowing select timber management activities to resume on five national forests in New Mexico and on the Tonto National Forest in Arizona.

In September, USDA Forest Service received an order from the court stating that the agency's "timber management" actions must cease on the six national forests pending formal consultation regarding potential effects to the Mexican spotted owl. On October 21, 2019, the plaintiff and the Forest Service submitted a stipulation to modify the injunction for certain activities.

Activities to resume include the cutting of the U.S. Capitol Christmas tree, personal Christmas tree cutting, the cutting of personal use forest products such as vigas and latillas, special product collection by tribes for ceremonial purposes, and the cutting of hazard trees that pose a risk to life or property. Certain projects entirely outside Mexican spotted owl protected activity centers, critical habitat and recovery habitat will resume, along with prescribed burning projects within certain limitations listed in the order. Certain commercial firewood gathering projects are also allowed to resume with restrictions, as specified in the court's order. Personal use firewood cutting was approved by the court earlier and will continue to be allowed. Other timber management activities not listed in the court's orders are still restricted.

"We continue to extend our gratitude to our state and federal partners and countless community leaders for their continued support. We are committed to being as open and transparent as possible in notifying interested groups and individuals when we take steps aimed at alleviating the stressors of the recent court-ordered injunction," Regional Forester Cal Joyner said.

The national forests affected by the court's order remain open to the public for recreation and other activities. For the most up-to-date information from the Forest Service, including copies of the court documents, please go to <https://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/r3/mso>.

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