



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – JULY 14, 2009

Front Country Trails
Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force
County of Santa Barbara
US Forest Service/Los Padres National Forest
City of Santa Barbara

For More Information Contact: US Forest Service: Joe Pasinato, 805-961-5745
County of Santa Barbara: Erik Axelson, Santa Barbara County Parks, 805-681-5651
City of Santa Barbara Parks & Recreation: Jill Zachary, 805-564-5437

SOME FRONT COUNTRY TRAILS TO RE-OPEN WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2009.

RATTLESNAKE, WEST FORK OF COLD SPRINGS, & JESUSITA TRAIL FROM SAN ROQUE ROAD TO INSPIRATION POINT TO RE-OPEN; TUNNEL AND TUNNEL CONNECTOR TRAILS, PART OF SAN ROQUE TRAIL, TO REMAIN CLOSED.

The US Forest Service, County of Santa Barbara and City of Santa Barbara will reopen several trails closed since May 5 due to the Jesusita Fire. Effective July 15, open trails will include Rattlesnake Trail, West Fork of Cold Spring Trail, and the Jesusita Trail from San Roque Road to Inspiration Point.

“Tunnel and Tunnel Connector trails, and the eastern leg of the Jesusita Trail from Inspiration Point to Tunnel Trail will remain closed due to additional clean-up and stabilization work that needs to be done over the next couple months to aid in the recovery efforts for the Mission Canyon area,” according to Santa Barbara County Parks Director Daniel C. Hernandez. A temporary “No Parking” zone along portions of Tunnel Road limits traffic in the area while demolition, clearing, erosion control, and utility work occur. The temporary parking restrictions will continue until further notice.

“The other trail segments being re-opened are in good condition now,” said Kerry M. Kellogg, the Recreation, Wilderness, and Trails Manager for the US Forest Service, Los Padres National Forest. “Agency crews, with the help of more than 100 volunteers last month, made repairs and we’re happy to announce that the trails can be used once again.”

Trail users are encouraged to access the reopened trails from San Roque Road for the Jesusita Trail western segment; from the Las Canoas Road trailhead opposite Skofield Park for Rattlesnake Trail; and from the Mountain Drive and Gibraltar Road trailheads for the West Fork of Cold Springs Trail.

Trail visitors are cautioned to be mindful of ground conditions, including “some slides of stone ravel (small rock debris) during the summer as these trails initially may have a slightly less stable base,” Mr. Kellogg said. “Hikers will also notice less vegetation and very little shade.” Given the harsher conditions, hikers, bikers and equestrians are still being asked to consider other locations for recreation, he said.

Agency staff also stressed the importance of remaining on the trails themselves, and avoiding off-trail activities. “Off-trail activities can damage the soil, engender erosion, and for those reasons are they are unacceptable,” declared Assistant Director Jill Zachary of the Santa Barbara Department of Parks & Recreation. Rampant off-trail activity could lead to some trails being closed again, Ms. Zachary warned.

Trail users are cautioned to respect neighboring private property, especially in the Jesusita Fire burn area. Trails may also be closed again if trail conditions worsen, or for seasonal or weather conditions that could result in landslides and unsafe conditions, as well as concerns for property protection.

Task Force representatives said a successful June 13 volunteer trail maintenance day that attracted more than 100 participants was a helpful factor in reopening the trails. Task Force staff are looking at scheduling additional volunteer trail days, in late summer or autumn before the rainy season. New volunteers are encouraged to contact Mr. Kellogg at kkellogg@fs.fed.us or at (805) 967-3481, ext. 231, for more information.

Cooperative trails management among the Forest Service, County and City is guided by the Front Country Trails Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force. The Task Force was established in 2006 to develop joint management of approximately 25 miles of trails in the foothills of the Santa Ynez Mountains overlooking Santa Barbara and Montecito. This six-member body has two representatives each from the US Forest Service, Santa Barbara County Park Commission, and City of Santa Barbara Park & Recreation Commission.

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