

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service

Santa Fe National Forest

Jemez Ranger District



For Immediate Release

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PUBLIC INPUT NEEDED ON POTENTIAL CHANGES IN RECREATION MANAGEMENT ALONG THE EAST FORK JEMEZ WILD AND SCENIC RIVER

(JEMEZ SPRINGS, NM)— The Jemez Ranger District of the Santa Fe National Forest is planning to hold two public meetings to request public input on potential camping and recreational restrictions in the East Fork Jemez Wild and Scenic River corridor. Over the past several years, Jemez District employees have been documenting ongoing impacts to soil, streamside vegetation, rare plants, and water quality as a result of the high volume of recreational use in the area. The District hopes to gain input from the public before designing a proposal to reduce recreation impacts to the congressionally designated Wild and Scenic River.

In 1990, Congress designated 11 miles of the East Fork of the Jemez River located on the Jemez Ranger District of the Santa Fe National Forest as a Wild and Scenic River. This small meandering stream winds its way through grassy meadows and steep-walled rock canyons on the south side of the Jemez Mountains. On its way to its confluence with the Rio San Antonio, the river passes through the heart of the Jemez Mountains' most popular recreation area. Popular recreation sites such as the Las Conchas Trailhead, the East Fork box, Jemez Falls Campground, McCauley warm springs, and the East Fork hiking trail all occur within or next to the East Fork Jemez Wild and Scenic River corridor.

Over the past decade, ecological assessments of the river have repeatedly illustrated impacts from recreation to the stream system as a result of user-created trails along the river bank, trampling of stream-side vegetation, and improper camping practices. “The river is being loved to death,” said Ranger Linda Riddle, “We hope to continue to allow Forest visitors to camp and enjoy the river, but manage this use so that the East Fork Jemez River maintains its natural beauty and ecological function.”

The Jemez Ranger District will hold two public meetings to help educate the public on the ongoing impacts to the river, as well as receive input on several potential management options that may be used. Meeting information is available below:

Date and time	Location	Address
Tuesday, April 21, 2009 – 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.	Rio Rancho, NM – Loma Colorado Main Library	755 Loma Colorado Drive Rio Rancho, NM 87124
Friday, June 5, 2009 – 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.	Valles Caldera National Preserve Main Office	18161 Highway 4 Jemez Springs, NM 87025

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Specific information about what camping restrictions may be implemented will be available for comment once a proposal developed and analyzed under the National Environmental Policy Act. Those who request to be included on the mailing list for this project or have specific questions, can contact Environmental Planning Coordinator, Mike Dechter or District Ranger, Linda Riddle, at the Jemez Ranger District Office at (575) 829-3535.

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