

Big chunk of N. Idaho national forest closed for fire danger

Scott Maben/SR

The U.S. Forest Service today closed [a large chunk](#) of the North Fork Coeur d'Alene River drainage due to a forecast of hazardous fire weather and because of close to 20 fires already burning on the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District.

"It's probably among the most popular forest access in all of the Idaho Panhandle," said Jason Kirchner, spokesman for the Idaho Panhandle National Forests.

The closure, unprecedented in its size for this area, is necessary to protect public safety, Kirchner said.

"We're not aware of ever needing an area closure this large before, but we're also in a fire season where we haven't seen this much fire on the landscape since 1926," he said.

The public is barred from campgrounds, trail heads and day-use areas in the nearly 10-square-mile area northeast of Coeur d'Alene and north of Kellogg. Officials swept through the campgrounds today asking people to leave, and barricades have been erected on forest roads.

"If (firefighters) see people they will definitely chase them out," Kirchner said.

The closure encompasses the area generally east of Forest Roads 422, 812, 6749, 900 and 400 between Magee and state Highway 9; north of Highway 9, Forest Roads 152, 2349 and 1551 between Forest Road 400 and the Idaho/Montana border; west of the Idaho/Montana border between Forest Road 1551 and Forest Road 992; and south of Forest Roads 992, 600, and 6310 between the Idaho/Montana border.

The closure includes the length of the North Fork Coeur d'Alene River road between Shoshone Base Camp and Cinnamon Creek.

The following recreational areas also are closed:

- Devil's Elbow Campground
- Big Hank Campground
- Kit Price Campground
- Shoshone Rest & Dump Station
- Pritchard Bridge Day Use
- Avery Creek Day Use

- Berlin Flats Campground
- Eagle Creek/ Settlers Grove Trailhead
- Big Long Pool Designated Dispersed
- Hawkseye Designated Dispersed
- Independence Designated Dispersed
- Clee Creek Day Use
- Avery Creek Cabin
- Little Guard Lookout
- Spyglass Lookout & Ground House

For questions about campground reservations, go to www.recreation.gov or call (888) 448-1474.
For questions about reservations at any of the rental cabins, call Barb Hansen at (208) 769-3050.