



Date: March 12, 2026

To: Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Partners and Cooperators

From: District Superintendent II, Angeles District, California State Parks (CSP)  
Superintendent, National Park Service (NPS)  
Executive Director, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC)  
Executive Director, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA)

Subject: Park Closure Protocols During Red Flag Warnings

As the four signatories of the 2025-2030 Cooperative Management Agreement (G8540250001 / P24OT001) between the State of California and the United States of America for the Santa Monica Mountains Zone, we are outlining new collective protocols for park closures on lands under our jurisdiction during red flag warnings.

Our agencies are dedicated to protecting natural and cultural resources and providing recreational access on public lands. These closures seek to reduce risks to park users, park resources, and neighboring communities. Providing education and limiting access to park lands during dangerous conditions reduces the potential for fire ignitions as well as limits the number of people in the area who would need to be evacuated in the event of an emergency.

#### **Authorities**

- For California State Parks: California Public Resources Code Sections 5003 and 5008, and California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 4326.
- For National Park Service: 36 CFR 1.5(a) Closures and Public Use Limits, and the Administrative Procedures Act (6 USC Section 551)
- For SMMC/MRCA: California Public Resources Code Section 33211.5(a)(2)

#### **Predictive Service**

This protocol will be triggered by official forecasts from the National Weather Service Los Angeles/Oxnard office (NWS-LA). NWS-LA forecasts red flag warnings based on established criteria measuring relative humidity, sustained wind speeds, wind gusts, and dry lightning. These atmospheric conditions must also be coupled with dry fuels (low fuel moistures) to justify a red flag warning. In extreme conditions, NWS-LA will categorize the red flag warning as a “Particularly Dangerous Situation (PDS).”

#### **Closure Decisions**

- **Geography** – Park superintendents and directors have the discretion to determine closures based on the geographic extent of the forecast. Refer to Appendix A for the list of potentially affected parks

sites. Beach sites are generally not subject to closure under this protocol unless specific hazards warrant restrictions.

- **Timing** - Park superintendents and directors will make closure decisions on a daily basis and announce those decisions, when possible, the day prior to the closure. For ease of communications and operations, if a forecast only includes a portion of a day, the park closure will apply to that entire day.

### **Implementation of Closures**

- **Interagency Coordination** – Chief rangers and fire management officers from each agency will coordinate regarding the closures. They will also serve as points of contact for local cities and Los Angeles / Ventura counties.
- **Law enforcement** – Each agency will adhere to their own internal requirements or policies for establishing closures. Enforcement of closures will be handled by each respective agency.
- **Public Notifications** – Agencies will notify the public via website information, social media, coordination with partners, and physical signage and/or locked gates in certain designated areas. Not every closed area will be signed or locked.
- **Agency Operations** – Regular agency operations and administration during a red flag closure will be governed by internal policies. Agency operations may be further limited during a Particularly Dangerous Situation (PDS) forecast.

### **Status of Facilities and Operations**

While general public messaging will communicate that parks are closed during red flag warnings, certain facilities and operations will remain accessible to the public.

- **Closed and/or Cancelled**
  - Trails
  - Undeveloped, backcountry areas
  - Visitor Centers
  - Events and programs
  - School field trips
  - Volunteer events
  - NPS parking lots
  - Permitted Activities (at superintendent/director discretion)
  - Certain facilities may be closed during PDS conditions at superintendent/director discretion
- **Open and Accessible**
  - Roads (unless behind a locked gate)
  - CSP developed parking lots
  - Roadside overlooks (unless signed)
  - Campgrounds (standard evacuation and hazard communications in effect)

### **Communications Language**

To reduce public confusion, agencies will adopt similar messaging. Examples include:

- Physical signage – *“Park Closed due to Red Flag Warning.”*
- Social media and websites – *“Parks within Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area are closed. The National Weather Service has issued a red flag warning based on weather and fuel conditions. This closure applies to lands managed by California State Parks, National Park Service, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority.”*

- Additional talking points - *"This is NOT a good time to be hiking, biking, horseback riding, or picnicking in the mountains. Staying out of the area reduces the chance of accidentally starting fires. It also reduces the number of people who would need to be evacuated in the event of an emergency. Thank you for helping us protect people, property, wildlife, native vegetation, and cultural resources."*

### Expiration and Exemptions

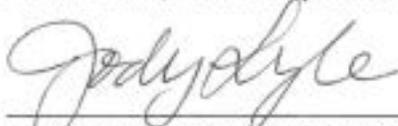
This protocol remains in effect until amended or cancelled by the four partnering agencies. The superintendents and executive directors may grant exemptions to this order if determined necessary. All exemption requests and approvals must be made in writing through the respective agency channels.

### Approved by:



3/19/2026

Richard Fink, District Superintendent, Angeles District, California State Parks



3/16/2026

Jody Lyle, Superintendent, National Park Service



3-16-26

Joe Edmiston, Executive Director, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy



3-16-2006

Rorie Skei, Chief Deputy Executive Officer, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

## **APPENDIX A: Potentially Affected Park Sites**

Depending on the geographic extent of the official forecast, superintendents and directors will determine which of the following sites warrant closures.

- For California State Parks:
  - Topanga State Park
  - Malibu Creek State Park
  - Leo Carrillo State Park
  - Point Mugu State Park
  - Will Rogers State Historic Park
  - Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park
- For National Park Service:
  - Rancho Sierra Vista
  - Solstice Canyon
  - Peter Strauss Ranch
  - Rocky Oaks
  - Paramount Ranch
  - Cheeseboro / Palo Comado
  - Circle X Ranch
  - Arroyo Sequit
  - King Gillette Ranch
  - Franklin Canyon
  - Fryman Canyon
  - Deer Creek
  - Zuma / Trancas Canyons (Bonsall and Busch parking lots)
  - Backbone Trail (including parking lot on Kanan Road)
  - Sandstone Peak / Mishe Mokwa parking lots and trails
- For the Conservancy and MRCA: (\*\* indicates sites outside the boundary of the National Recreation Area)
  - Cameron Nature Preserve at Puerco Canyon
  - Corral Canyon Park
  - Ed Daviis Park in Towsley Canyon \*\*
  - Escondido Canyon Park
  - Happy Camp Canyon Park \*\*
  - King Gillette Ranch
  - Marvin Braude Mulholland Gateway Park
  - Mentryville \*\*
  - Mill Creek Ranch
  - Sage Ranch Park \*\*
  - Summit Valley Ed Edelman Park
  - Temescal Canyon Park
  - Tuna Canyon Park
  - Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve
  - Westridge-Canyonback Wilderness Park
  - Whitney Canyon Park \*\*