



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Gila National Forest

Forest Service News Release

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Quemado Lake closed due to toxic algae

High concentration of illness-causing microcystins detected

QUEMADO, N.M., Nov. 10, 2025—The Gila National Forest has issued a public health and safety area closure of Quemado Lake due to a harmful algal bloom. The area closure prohibits public access to Quemado Lake and National Forest System lands south of Quemado Lake Road (Forest Road 13). This includes Cove Day Use Area, Juniper Campground, El Caso Campgrounds 1 - 3, Largo Trail #14, Quemado Lake Fishing Trail #144, Lakeshore Access Trail #1441, Juniper-Lake Access Trail #1442, and Cove-Lake Access Trail #1443.

The Surface Water Quality Bureau of the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) has detected very high levels of microcystins in their water samples from Quemado Lake, indicating a potential for acute poisoning and short- or long-term effects to humans or animals. To protect the public, the NMED has issued a danger advisory and recommended closing the area. The water is unsafe for drinking, swimming, wading, boating, paddling, water skiing, or fishing, and dogs should not be allowed to play in the water. NMED will continue to sample water quality and provide updated guidance as conditions develop.

Harmful algal blooms occur most often during the summer when sunlight warms stagnant water with high nutrient levels, creating a hospitable environment for them.

Closure Order # 03-06-03-25-001 can be found online at [Gila National Forest Alerts](#). The area closure will remain in effect until NMED advises that the lake is safe for public use.

About the Forest Service: The USDA Forest Service has for more than 100 years brought people and communities together to answer the call of conservation. Grounded in world-class science and technology— and rooted in communities—the Forest Service connects people to nature and to each other. The Forest Service cares for shared natural resources in ways that promote lasting economic, ecological, and social vitality. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, maintains the largest wildland fire and forestry research organizations in the world. The Forest Service also has either a direct or indirect role in stewardship of about 900 million forested acres within the U.S., of which over 130 million acres are urban forests where most Americans live.

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