



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

TEMPORARY CLOSURE ORDER

Bureau of Land Management California

TEMPORARY MOTORIZED VEHICLE CLOSURE OF Panoche Hills Recreation Management Area

March 1, 2023

Action: Pursuant to 43 CFR 9268.3, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) hereby provides notice that effective March 1, 2023, the Panoche Hills Special Recreation Management Area will be temporarily closed to motorized vehicle use. This closure is necessary to prevent unnecessary destruction of plant life and wildlife habitat; protect scientific studies and preserve scientific values.

The closure to motorized use will prevent undue degradation of wildlife habitat for species listed under the Endangered Species Act. A distinct population segment of blunt-nosed leopard lizards has been documented on the Panoche Plateau. The lizard breeding season begins this time of year and motorized vehicle closure is needed to support recovery efforts for the distinct population segment on the Panoche Plateau that is at risk of extirpation. The lizards that live on the Panoche Plateau are part of a captive breeding program with the Fresno Chaffee Zoo and the motorized vehicle closure will protect scientific values and studies needed to recover the species population. The BLM-administered lands in the Panoche Hills and Tumey Hills Special Recreation Management Areas are closed to motorized vehicles annually from April 15 to the beginning of upland game season in October.

Affected Area: This closure applies to all BLM roads in the Panoche Hills in Fresno County, California.

Prohibitions: The public must not drive motorized vehicles within this area during the temporary closure.

Dates: This closure is effective at 7:00 AM on Wednesday, March 1, 2023, and will remain in effect until April 15, 2023. The BLM-administered roads in the Panoche Hills and Tumey Hills Special Recreation Management Areas are closed to motorized vehicle use annually from April 15 to the beginning of upland game season in October.

Supplemental Information: The following persons are exempt from the provisions of this Order:

1. Any federal, State, or Local Officer, or member of an organized medical, rescue or firefighting force engaged in fire, emergency, or law enforcement activities, or public utility employees engaged in emergency repairs.
2. BLM employees, contractors, or agents engaged in official duties:
3. Individuals operating within the scope of their official and legitimate governmental duties.
4. Parties who carry written approval signed by the BLM Authorized Officer allowing access to the described public lands.

Penalties: Any person who knowingly and willfully violates this order shall be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned for not more than 12 months, or both. Vehicles found in violation of this order may be removed.

Effective: This Order is effective at 7:00 AM on Wednesday, March 1, 2023.

Signed by:

ZACHARY ORMSBY

Digitally signed by ZACHARY ORMSBY

Date: 2023.02.09 14:06:00 -08'00'

Field Manager

Date