



# News Release

Gila District Office, Arizona

For Immediate Release

Date: August 21, 2017

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## **Las Cienegas National Conservation Area complete opening post Sawmill Fire**

**TUCSON, Ariz.** – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Gila District is re-opening all areas within the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area (NCA), after a partial and emergency temporary closure due to the Sawmill Fire and related Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation efforts.

“The BLM removed a total of 45 dangerous and burned cottonwood trees in Empire Gulch and Cienega Creek that posed a significant safety risk to the public,” said Las Cienegas Manager Karen Simms. “We are pleased to re-open the area to safe public access for recreational activities and are continuing to work with our permittees affected by the fire.”

The BLM issued an emergency closure on April 28 for public safety. A post-fire assessment revealed burned cottonwood trees weakened by the fire and numerous ash sinkholes in the Empire Gulch and Heritage Discovery Trail areas near the Empire Ranch Headquarters. In addition, hazards were found along portions of Cienega Creek and connected streams. The BLM opened portions of the NCA that the post fire assessment deemed non-hazardous on May 23.

The Sawmill Fire was reported on Sunday, April 23, off Highway 83, near Sonoita, Ariz. The fire burned approximately 47,000 acres, including over 12,000 acres on the NCA. Additional information on the Sawmill Fire is available at <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5164/>.

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*The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. In Fiscal Year 2015, the BLM generated \$4.1 billion in receipts from activities occurring on public lands.*

# United States Department of the Interior

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**EMERGENCY FIRE CLOSURE TERMINATION  
Las Cienegas National Conservation Area  
Bureau of Land Management  
Tucson Field Office**

Pursuant to 43 CFR 8351.2-1 or 43 CFR 9212.2 (a) and effective at 12 a.m. August 22, public access is now restored to all areas within the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. The Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation work to remove hazards from the Sawmill Fire is complete.



District Manager  
Bureau of Land Management,  
Gila District