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New restrictions in effect at Max Patch

Changes will protect forest resources and public health and safety

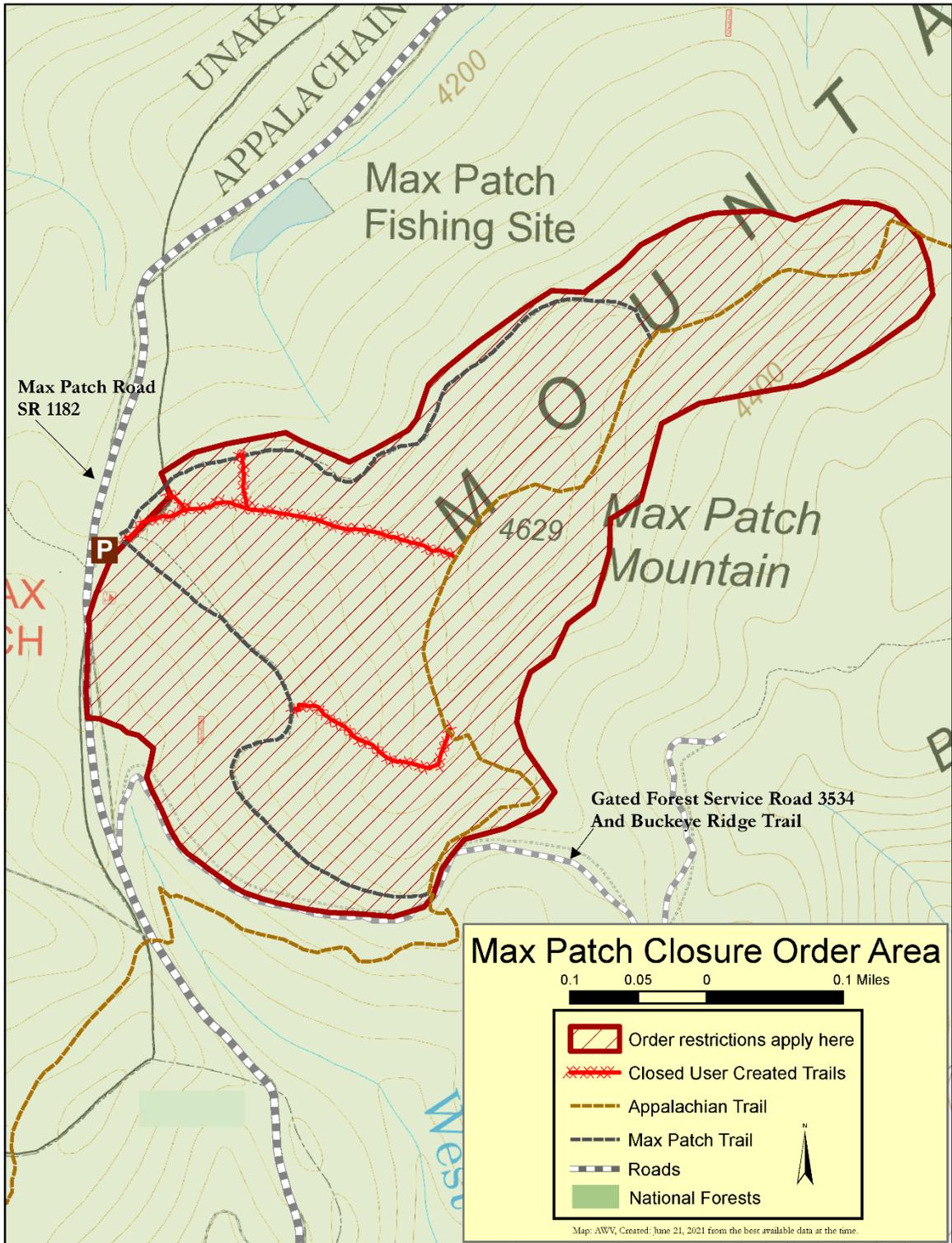
Mars Hill, NC, July 1, 2021—The Pisgah National Forest is implementing new restrictions at Max Patch designed to reduce impacts to natural resources and protect public health and safety. Effective immediately in the area around Max Patch as delineated on the map below, the following rules apply:

1. No camping.
2. No fires.
3. Area closes 1 hour after sundown. Reopens 1 hour before sunrise. Visitors prohibited during closed hours.
4. Group size limited to 10.
5. Dogs and other animals must be on a leash no longer than 6 feet, or in a crate or cage.
6. Stay on designated trails.
7. Aircraft may not land nor drop off or pick up anything in this area. Drones are prohibited on Appalachian Trail.
8. No fireworks.
9. Bikes must stay on roads only.
10. Horses and other saddle and pack animals may not be ridden, hitched, tethered, or hobbled in this area.

“We’ve been working with partners to achieve sustainable recreation at Max Patch because of the impacts due to a significant increase in visitors over the past decade,” said Appalachian District Ranger Jen Barnhart. “Unfortunately, the level of use is causing a public safety hazard as well as serious damage to wildlife habitat.”

The restrictions will be in effect for two years, during which time visitor use and impacts will continue to be monitored and addressed. Past efforts of visitor education and engineering controls such as barriers and fencing have not been sufficient to address the challenges. A visitor use monitoring group consisting of local partners, the USFS, and local community members has helped to develop solutions and will also help to educate visitors on the new restrictions.

For more information, see the full text of the closure order at https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd927643.pdf and PDF of map showing area in which restrictions apply at https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd927758.pdf.



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