

# NEWS RELEASE

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **WEEKEND VISITORS TO SABINO CANYON FIND PARKING A CHALLENGE** **Forest Service Official Recommends Ways to Avoid Parking Frustrations**

(TUCSON, AZ, January 29, 2009) – Visitors to Sabino Canyon Recreation Area are finding it increasingly difficult to find a parking place during weekend peak hours, and Forest Service officials are reminding the public that illegal parking outside the Recreation Area along Sabino Canyon Road may result in parking citations by local law enforcement.

“We’re not sure whether it’s the great weather, people taking “stay-cations” at home, or the fact that the shuttle is operating all the way to Stop 9 for the first time in 2 years,” said Larry Pratt, Urban Developed Recreation Project Manager for the Coronado National Forest. “But, there has been a significant upswing in visitation at Sabino Canyon unusual even for this busy time of year.”

Pratt says that parking is most challenging on weekends between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. “During those prime hours, drivers are likely to find lines of vehicles at the entrance stations, and then once inside it can take time and a lot of patience to find an open parking space. The key thing is to be courteous to other drivers and especially pedestrians.”

While the majority of visitors are willing to wait for parking to become available, some people are choosing to park along Sabino Canyon Road near the recreation area entrance where “NO PARKING” areas are clearly signed. Others are parking illegally inside the Recreation Area, occupying non-parking space set aside for public safety or essential for safe turns by tour buses and RVs. Pratt warns that public safety requires rigorous enforcement of parking regulations by law enforcement officers and recommends a few simple ways visitors can avoid parking frustrations and fines:

- If possible, visit on weekdays when parking is rarely a problem.
- On weekends, avoid the crowds by arriving before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.
- Carpool. Instead of meeting your hiking buddies at the Canyon, drive there together.
- Walk or bike to Sabino Canyon. Pedestrians and bicyclists enter free.

Sherry Tune, Santa Catalina Deputy District Ranger says that some relief for parking congestion is in development. “The Friends of Sabino Canyon are assisting the Forest

Service with development of an overflow parking area. This overflow area will be available starting later this calendar year.”

In addition, the Forest Service is partnering with the John A. Volpe Transportation Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts and local government officials and citizens to study future potential for developing mass transit access to the Recreation Area, improve bicycle and pedestrian access, even use green technology to power the popular shuttles operated within Sabino Canyon.

For more information about Sabino Canyon Recreation Area, the public is invited to contact the Santa Catalina Ranger District at (520) 749-8700 or the Coronado National Forest Supervisor’s Office at (520) 388-8300.

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