

# News Release



**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
San Luis Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
9383 El Rancho Lane  
Alamosa, Colorado 81101**

*For Immediate Release*  
May 1, 2020

## **Rio Grande Nature Trail at Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge Seasonally Closed for Endangered Species Protection**

**Contact:** Refuge Manager Suzanne Beauchaine, 719-588-3473, [suzanne\\_beauchaine@fws.gov](mailto:suzanne_beauchaine@fws.gov)

**Alamosa** – A seasonal closure of the Rio Grande Nature Trail on Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) will be in effect starting Friday, 05/01/2020 to protect the federally endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (SWFL). The SWFL is a small riparian dependent songbird that uses willow and cottonwood habitat for migration, foraging, and nesting. Human activities (e.g., hiking, bicycling) have the potential to disrupt nesting territory establishment and foraging and nesting activities, making adults less attentive to their eggs or young, and expose nests to predators. Any human disturbance that leads to temporary or permanent negative effects to breeding success slows the recovery of this species.

Riparian habitat along the Rio Grande on Alamosa serves as an important breeding area for the SWFL. This seasonal closure of the Rio Grande Nature Trail will reduce conflicts between human activities and SWFL throughout the nesting season when they are most vulnerable to impacts from disturbance. Conservation and recovery of imperiled species is one of the highest priorities of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and we appreciate the cooperation of visitors in protecting SWFL in helping us achieve our conservation mission. Signs at the trail head will indicate where public entry is prohibited. The reopening of the trail is expected when the nesting season is completed, on or about September 1, 2020. The 3.5 mile loop wildlife drive (auto tour route) will remain open on the refuge and we welcome visitors to hike, bike, and drive this area. For more information regarding this closure please contact Refuge Manager Suzanne Beauchaine at 719-588-3473.

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