



**Bitterroot National Forest**

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Web: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot>

# News Release

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## Annual Climbing Restrictions in Mill Creek Canyon

Hamilton, Montana (January 31, 2020) – Now that warmer weather is just around the corner, the Stevensville Ranger District is reminding everyone of the annual climbing closure in the Mill Creek area north of Hamilton to allow for nesting of cliff-dwelling raptors. Beginning February 1<sup>st</sup> several climbing routes will be closed to prevent disturbance to these known raptor nesting sites.

On the north side of Mill Creek, the spring raptor closure will be the same as last year and includes the “Pie for Strength” climbing area. The closure will be expanded this year to include cliffs on the south side of the canyon due to the presence of additional nests. See attached map of the closed areas.

Maps will also be posted at area trailheads and on the Bitterroot National Forest website. Forest Service Wildlife Biologists plan to visit the area later this spring to determine the presence or absence of birds using the nests. If the nests are not active, the restrictions will be lifted.

The Bitterroot National Forest would also like to remind everyone of the continued moratorium on bolting in Mill Creek Canyon. The “No Bolting” moratorium prohibits the installation of any new bolts and also prohibits expanding any of the current bolted routes in Mill Creek. Climbers should be aware that vandalism of bolts has been reported recently within the climbing area and they should pay close attention and inspect all bolt protection prior to use. Replacement of existing bolts for safety reasons is acceptable.

The area is a popular destination for hikers, horseback riders, and in the last several years has become very popular with rock climbers. Forest officials want to remind climbers of their responsibility to regulate use and self-police their activities by following the “Leave No Trace” and “Pack it In, Pack it Out” principles. Copies of the “Leave No Trace Climbing” brochure are available at all Bitterroot National Forest offices and at trailhead bulletin boards. The area will be monitored for compliance.

To learn more about these simple climbing tips and recommendations visit [www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot](http://www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot). Click on Recreation and Climbing.

For more information contact the Stevensville Ranger District at (406) 777-5461. Stay in touch with us through [www.facebook.com/DiscoverTheBitterroot](https://www.facebook.com/DiscoverTheBitterroot) and [www.twitter.com/BitterrootNF](https://www.twitter.com/BitterrootNF).

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