

Ravalli County Commissioners Office

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NEWS RELEASE

Bitterroot National Forest

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United States
Department of Agriculture
Bitterroot National Forest
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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April 23, 2014

2014 MUSHROOM PERMITS AVAILABLE

Hamilton, MT. – The Bitterroot National Forest is currently issuing personal use mushroom permits for the 2014 season. Morel mushrooms are expected to appear later this spring. The Forest will only be issuing personal use permits this year -- commercial mushroom harvest permits will not be issued. The Forest is not issuing commercial permits because most of the fires last summer burned in wilderness, where commercial mushroom harvesting is prohibited.

Mushroom seasons vary depending on local weather conditions and elevations but generally last from May through September. This year's season will be later than normal due to our record snowpack in the mountains. In fact, much of the Gold Pan Fire area on the West Fork Ranger District is still under snow.

To harvest mushrooms anywhere on the National Forest you must have a permit. Personal use permits are free and available at all Forest Service offices. Mushrooms collected under a free use permit must be cut in half lengthwise at the time of harvesting. Free use harvesters have a 5 gallon per day (approximately 2 grocery bags) and 20 gallon per season limit.

The permits allow mushroom harvesting only on the Bitterroot National Forest. All mushroom harvesting is limited to hand picking -- no heavy equipment will be allowed. Motorized travel is restricted to open roads and trails only and parking along many forest roads is extremely limited. Parked vehicles should not block traffic or impede fire or emergency vehicles.

Forest officials remind the public that many areas remain snow covered and inaccessible, especially at higher elevations. If you are venturing out into the woods you should be prepared for spring conditions. Widely varying temperatures and melting snow can create hazardous driving conditions as well as concerns for road damage. Many streams and creeks are also running fast and high. Please be cautious around flowing waters and especially at creek crossings.

For more mushroom harvest information and rules check the *2014 Mushroom Guide* available at all Bitterroot National Forest Offices or visit www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot.

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