



Forest Service News Release

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Memorial Day Weekend on the Bitterroot National Forest

Hamilton, MT, May 23, 2023 — Memorial Day weekend marks the traditional kickoff of the summer season. The 1.6-million-acre Bitterroot National Forest offers unmatched recreational opportunities including nearly 250 campsites in 26 campgrounds, hiking on more than 1,800 miles of trails, boating, biking, horseback riding, and more.

Forest officials hope visitors will incorporate the following safety tips, along with the status of campgrounds, trails, and roads, into their adventures during the upcoming Memorial Day weekend.

Key Safety Messages:

- Be prepared for changing weather conditions. Temperatures at night are still cool and isolated showers are in the forecast.
- Many campgrounds and hiking trails are located near streams that are running extremely fast and high. Please be cautious around flowing waters and especially at creek crossings.
- There have been bear sightings near recreation areas. Please keep a clean camp and properly store food to reduce attractants and minimize adverse interactions between bears and humans.
- Expect heavier traffic than normal on forest roads and trails over the holiday weekend. Drive defensively and notify the Forest Service of any flooding conditions, plugged culverts, downed trees or road damage, so repairs can be made.
- Stay away from soft and muddy roads as this is unsafe and can damage the roadbed, leading to expensive repairs. Driving around snow drifts can damage vegetation and soil.
- Please stay on designated routes. Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUM) are available on our website at www.fs.usda.gov/main/bitterroot/maps-pubs. The maps show designated routes for motorized recreation users.
- Bring potable drinking water as some campground water systems have not been opened yet. Please remove all trash in sites that do not have trash disposal services.

- Never leave a campfire unattended and make sure your coals are cool to the touch before you leave.
- Be extremely careful when traveling and camping around areas of dead trees including burned areas or beetle killed patches.
- Contact your local Forest Service office to find out if your favorite campground is open and what services are being offered. See list below of campgrounds/recreation sites. Certain services may still be unavailable, so visitors are asked to plan accordingly and remain flexible. Please contact the appropriate Ranger District for the latest updates and conditions prior to heading out.

Darby/Sula Ranger District – (406) 821-3913

- Lake Como Recreation Area:
 - Lower Como Campground - Open with 11 pull-through sites, water, electrical, accessible toilets, and garbage service. No reservations - first-come, first-served site selection. Camp host on site. \$25/night.
 - Three Frogs Campground - Open with 21 pull-in sites, water, accessible toilets, and garbage service. No reservations - first-come, first-served site selection. Camp host on site. \$15/night.
 - Lake Como Picnic Area and Trailhead = Open
 - Lake Como Beach - Open. Swim lines installed after Memorial Day.
 - Lake Como Boat Launch - Open. Dock will tentatively be installed prior to Memorial Day weekend but please call the Darby-Sula Ranger District for updates.
 - Rock Creek Horse Camp - Open with 11 campsites, hitch rails, feed troughs, accessible toilets and garbage service; no water. No reservations - first-come, first-served. \$12/night.
 - Three Sisters Group Site - To reserve this site, visit the National Recreation Reservation System - www.recreation.gov or call 1-877-444-6777.
 - Woods Cabin - To reserve the cabin, visit the National Recreation Reservation System - www.recreation.gov or call 1-877-444-6777.
 - Recreation Passes – Day Use Fees - Required beginning this Saturday, May 27. Cost of the passes are \$5/vehicle or \$30 for a season pass and are available at area retailers and Forest Service offices. Day passes are also available on-site at the recreation area. Day use fees are charged at Lake Como from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend.
- Black Bear Campground - Open with 6 campsites and accessible toilet. No water. ‘Pack it in, pack it out’ garbage. No reservations. First-come, first-served.
- Skalkaho Pass (State Highway 38) is currently closed. For the latest road information visit www.mdt.mt.gov or Dial 511.
- Lost Horse Road is only accessible six miles beyond the intersection with Lick Creek Road. The road is closed to motorized beyond the gate due to soft road conditions and snow at higher elevations.

- Spring Gulch Campground – Open with 11 campsites, water, garbage, and accessible toilets. Camp host on site. \$15/night. Spring flooding of the East Fork of the Bitterroot River may occur which could potentially close the campground. Contact Darby-Sula Ranger District for latest conditions. Reservations begin July 1. To reserve campsites, visit www.recreation.gov.
- Indian Trees Campground – Open with 15 campsites, water, garbage, and accessible toilet. \$15/night. Camp host on site. Reservations begin May 26. To reserve campsites, visit www.recreation.gov
- Warm Springs Campground – Open with 11 campsites, garbage, and accessible toilet. No reservations – first come, first-served site selection. \$12/night.
- Martin Creek Campground - Open with 7 campsites, water, and accessible toilet. ‘Pack it in, pack it out’ garbage. No reservations – first-come, first-served site selection. \$12/night.
- Jennings Campground - Open with 4 campsites and accessible toilet. ‘Pack it in, pack it out’ garbage. No reservations – first-come, first-served site selection.
- Crazy Creek Campground –Open with 7 campsites, water, and accessible toilet. ‘Pack it in, pack it out’ garbage. No reservations – first-come, first-served site selection. \$12/night.
- Crazy Creek Horse Camp – Open with 7 campsites and accessible toilet. No water. ‘Pack it in, pack it out’ garbage. No reservations – first-come, first-served.

Stevensville Ranger District: (406) 777-5461

- Bass Creek Recreation Area:
 - Charles Waters Campground – Open with 26 campsites, and accessible toilet. Camp host on site. Potable water and trash services available. No reservations – first-come, first-served site selection. \$15/night.
 - Larry Creek Group Camp - Available for reservation through the National Recreation Reservation System - www.recreation.gov or call 1-877-444-6777.
- Blodgett Campground – Open with 5 campsites and accessible toilet. No water, ‘pack it in, pack it out’ garbage. No reservations – first come, first-served site selection.
- Gold Creek Campground – Open with 5 campsites and accessible toilet. No water, ‘pack it in, pack it out’ garbage. No reservations – first come, first served site selection.

West Fork Ranger District: (406) 821-3269

- Rombo Campground – CLOSED due to water system repairs; the campground will re-open when the work is completed. Please contact the West Fork Ranger District for updates.

- Alta Campground – Opening May 23 with 14 campsites, water, garbage, and accessible toilet. Camp host on site. To reserve campsites, visit www.recreation.gov. \$15/night.
- Sam Billings Campground – Open with 12 campsites and accessible toilet. No water. ‘Pack it in, pack it out’ garbage. No reservations – first-come, first-served. \$10/night starting May 23rd.
- Slate Creek Campground – Front loop is currently open. No water. Back loop temporarily closed due to flooding and will open when water recedes. Check with Ranger District for latest conditions on the back loop. ‘Pack it in, pack it out’ garbage. No reservations – first-come, first-served. \$10/night starting May 23rd.
- Fales Flat Campground – Open with 3 campsites and accessible toilet. No water. ‘Pack it in, pack it out’ garbage. No reservations in the campground. To reserve the group site visit www.recreation.gov.
- Nez Perce Pass to Paradise Campground. Open. Contact the West Fork District for latest road updates.

There is a 16-day stay limit for the Bitterroot National Forest - except for the portion of the Frank Church Wilderness in Idaho. A Food Storage Order is also in place for the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness, located on the Bitterroot and Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forests. The purpose of the food storage order is to minimize adverse interactions between bears and humans.

Please be aware that rental cabins and lookouts will not be cleaned in between use. As in previous years, it is up to the individual renters to bring their own cleaning supplies and to clean before and after use of the site.

For more information about rentals, campgrounds, and road and trail updates, visit us at www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot and click on ‘Visit Us, Recreation’.

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