



Forest Service News Release

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Annual Climbing Restrictions in Mill Creek Canyon

Hamilton, Mont., February 4, 2026 - The Stevensville Ranger District implemented the Mill Creek area rock climbing closure on February 1st. The annual closure of multiple rock climbing routes prevents disturbance of cliff-dwelling raptor nesting sites.

Located north of Hamilton, on the north side of Mill Creek the closure includes the “Pie for Strength” climbing area and cliffs on the south side of the canyon.

Maps of the area closed to rock climbing are posted at area trailheads and on the Bitterroot National Forest (BNF) website. If Forest Service Wildlife Biologists determine that the nests are not active later this spring, the restrictions will be lifted.

The area is a popular destination for hikers, horseback riders, and 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 BNF offices and at trailhead bulletin boards. The area will be monitored for compliance. To learn more about these climbing tips and recommendations visit www.fs.usda.gov/activity/bitterroot/recreation/climbing

For more information, contact the Stevensville Ranger District at (406) 777-5461.

About the Forest Service: The Forest Service has for more than 100 years brought people and communities together to answer the call of conservation. Grounded in world-class science and technology, and rooted in communities, the Forest Service connects people to nature and to each other. The Forest Service cares for shared natural resources in ways that promote lasting economic, ecological, and social vitality. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest wildland fire and forestry research organizations in the world. The Forest Service also has either a direct or indirect role in stewardship of about 900 million forested acres within the U.S., of which over 130 million acres are urban forests where most Americans live.

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