

Ravalli County Commissioners Office

From: McKay, Tod G -FS <tgmkay@fs.fed.us>
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Subject: News Release: Areas open temporarily for firewood cutting
Attachments: Firewood Cutting Areas.docx

Areas Open Temporarily For Firewood Cutting

Hamilton, Montana (July 13, 2015) – The Bitterroot National Forest has announced that it is temporarily opening several roads for the public to gather firewood beginning this Wednesday, July 15th. To learn more about each area, the current fire restrictions and receive a map of the locations, the public can stop by any Bitterroot National Forest office.

The 2015 firewood cutting areas are:

- Forest Roads 740 & 739A (Silverthorne Loop) – Stevensville Ranger District
- Forest Roads 711 and 711A (Railroad Creek) Darby Ranger District
- Forest Road 728 (Andrews Creek) – Sula Ranger District
- Forest Road 5753 (Tolan Ridge), which will allow access to 13343, 73288, 5757, 13355, & 73274 roads – Sula Ranger District
- Forest Road 5685 (Thunder Mountain Road) – West Fork Ranger District

The forest has opened these designated areas in an effort to provide more accessible firewood. The firewood cutting areas are open until August 15th or sooner depending on fire restrictions. Currently, the forest is under Stage 1 Restrictions and campfires are permitted in approved recreation sites only. In addition, firewood cutters are asked to observe voluntary “Hoot Owl” restrictions under which:

- Restrict operation of internal combustion engines between 1:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.
- Do not park, drive through, or turn around vehicles in tall grass.
- Ensure your vehicle is properly maintained, with nothing dragging on the ground. A loose safety chain or dangling muffler can send a shower of sparks into dry vegetation.

Woodcutters are also reminded of the requirements to have a spark arrester on their chainsaws and to carry a shovel, bucket, and fire extinguisher at all times.

You can purchase firewood permits at any Bitterroot National Forest office, M-F 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. The cost is \$5 per cord and there is a four cord (\$20) minimum purchase. Each household is allowed a maximum 12 cords of firewood per year. Permits are good through March 31, 2016. ____

The designated roads are open for firewood cutting only during daylight hours, no other motorized access purposes will be allowed. Please use wide shoulders and turnouts for parking. As with wood cutting

elsewhere on the forest, no trees are to be felled onto the roadway and all slash must be piled. Law enforcement will be monitoring the roads. Forest officials advise woodcutters to drive defensively and notify them of any downed trees or road damage.

For more information contact the Bitterroot National Forest at (406) 363-7100. Stay in touch with us through www.facebook.com/DiscoverTheBitterroot and www.twitter.com/BitterrootNF.

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