

Glenda Wiles

From: McKay, Tod G -FS <tgmkay@fs.fed.us>
Sent: Thursday, March 9, 2017 12:28 PM
Subject: News Release: Forest Trails in Roaring Lion Fire Area Re-Opened
Attachments: Roaring Lion trails re-opened.docx; Roaring_Lion_Trailhead.JPG

Forest Trails in Roaring Lion Fire Area Re-Opened

Hamilton, Montana (March 9, 2017) – The Darby/Sula Ranger District has announced that the Ward Mountain, Sawtooth, and Roaring Lion trails southwest of Hamilton are now re-opened to the public. The trails have been closed since this summer’s wildfire that burned 8,700 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands along with private property and 16 homes.

The trails have been closed for public safety to allow the Bitterroot National Forest to complete hazard tree removal and salvage logging operations near the trailheads and parking areas. The purpose of the project which was completed earlier this week, was to mitigate snag tree hazards to the public near the popular trails, reduce long-term hazardous fuels in the wildland urban interface and provide raw materials for the wood products industry.

Forest officials are advising the public that even though the trails are now open, they should still exercise caution and be alert to hazards associated with recreating in burned areas. These hazards include falling snags or trees, rolling rocks and debris and flash flooding/mud flows in areas without vegetation. There are also numerous snags over the trails that forest crews will clear later this spring when the snow melts.

The bridge leading over Roaring Lion Creek was also damaged in the fire and is scheduled to be replaced later this year. Forest users should use caution when crossing the creek and be aware that the crossing may become impassable due to high water from snowmelt or flood events.

Recreationists should also use caution while driving on Forest Service roads. Many are not plowed during winter months and vehicles can easily get stuck in the deep snow. Some roads and trails at lower elevations are experiencing excessive snowmelt during the day and resulting runoff freezes at night, creating sheets of ice that are dangerous to negotiate. Conditions are often much different in town than they are in the forest and you should not travel into the backcountry without proper winter gear and supplies. Four-wheel-drive or high clearance vehicles are recommended.

For more information, contact the Darby/Sula Ranger District at (406) 821-3913. Stay in touch with us through www.facebook.com/DiscoverBitterrootNF and www.twitter.com/BitterrootNF.

###



Tod McKay
Public Affairs Officer

Forest Service
Bitterroot National Forest

p: 406-363-7122
c: 406-531-1130
tgmckay@fs.fed.us

1801 N. First
Hamilton, MT 59840
www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot



Caring for the land and serving people

This electronic message contains information generated by the USDA solely for the intended recipients. Any unauthorized interception of this message or the use or disclosure of the information it contains may violate the law and subject the violator to civil or criminal penalties. If you believe you have received this message in error, please notify the sender and delete the email immediately.