

Glenda Wiles

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Subject: News Release: Memorial Day Weekend on the Bitterroot National Forest
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Memorial Day Weekend on the Bitterroot National Forest

Hamilton, Montana (May 22, 2017) – 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 1,500 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 this weekend.
- 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.
- 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. Free Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUM) are available at all Bitterroot National Forest offices. The maps show designated routes for motorized recreation users.
- Bring potable drinking water as some campground water systems have not been opened yet.
- 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. See list below of campgrounds/recreation sites. Please contact the appropriate Ranger District for the latest updates and conditions.

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

- Lake Como Recreation Area: ****PLEASE NOTE** - There is no potable water available at this time. A new water system is being installed and work should be completed by mid-summer or earlier.** Contact the Darby/Sula District for updates pertaining to the water system.
 - Lower Como Campground = Open with 11 pull-through sites, electrical, accessible toilets, and garbage service. Potable water is not available at this time. Please plan accordingly. No reservations - first-come, first-served site selection. Camp host on site.
 - Three Frogs Campground = Open with 21 pull-in sites. No reservations - first-come, first-served site selection. Camp host on site. No water.
 - Lake Como Picnic Area and Trailhead = Open
 - Lake Como Beach = Open. Swim lines installed after Memorial Day.
 - Lake Como Boat Launch = Open. Dock is installed.
 - 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.
 - Three Sisters Group Site = Open and currently taking reservations. Can accommodate groups of 75 people. Pavilion, picnic tables, BBQ grills, toilets. To reserve, call the Darby/Sula District.
 - Woods Cabin = Already reserved for the entire summer. To reserve your fall/winter dates visit the National Recreation Reservation System - www.recreation.gov or call 1-877-444-6777.
 - Recreation Passes – Day Use Fees = Required beginning Saturday, May 27. Cost of the passes are \$5/vehicle or \$30 for a season pass and are available at all Forest Service offices and area retailers. Day passes are also available on-site at the recreation area. Day use fees and camping 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.
- Spring Gulch Campground – Open with 10 campsites, water, garbage, and accessible toilet. Camp host on site. To reserve campsites visit www.recreation.gov
- Indian Trees Campground - Open with 15 campsites, water, garbage, and accessible toilet. No camp host on site until July 1. To reserve campsites visit www.recreation.gov
- Warm Springs Campground - Open with 14 campsites, garbage, and accessible toilet. Camp host on site. *No water available this year. To reserve campsites visit www.recreation.gov

- 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.
- Jennings Campground - Open with 4 campsites, water and accessible toilet. 'Pack it in, pack it out' garbage.
- 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.
- 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 Water 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.
 - 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. There is no drinking water available. 'Pack it in, pack it out' garbage. Camp host on site. No reservations.
- Gold Creek Campground – Open with 5 campsites and accessible toilet. No water, 'pack it in, pack it out' garbage. No reservations.

West Fork Ranger District: (406) 821-3269

- Rombo Campground – Open with 15 campsites, water, garbage, and accessible toilet. Camp host on site. To reserve campsites visit www.recreation.gov
- Alta Campground – Open with 15 campsites, water, garbage, and accessible toilet. Camp host on site. To reserve campsites visit www.recreation.gov
- 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. _
- Slate Creek Campground – Open with 12 campsites and accessible toilet. No water. 'Pack it in, pack it out' garbage. No reservations – first-come, first-served.
- Fales Flat Campground – Open with 3 campsites and accessible toilet. No water. 'Pack it in, pack it out' garbage. No reservations in the campground - first-come, first-served. To reserve the group site visit www.recreation.gov
- Nez Perce Pass is open to Paradise Campground. Contact the West Fork District for road updates.

A 16-day stay limit that went into effect last year is in place 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.

The Bitterroot National Forest offers visitors a unique recreational experience at one of our rental cabins and lookouts. There are three rental lookouts that provide stunning views of the Sapphire, Bitterroot, and Anaconda Pintler mountain ranges. Five rustic cabins offer a serene and relaxing getaway.

For more information about rentals and for current trail conditions visit us at www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot and click on 'Recreation'.

Stay in touch with us through www.facebook.com/DiscoverBitterrootNF and www.twitter.com/BitterrootNF.

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