

## Glenda Wiles

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**From:** McKay, Tod G -FS <tgmkay@fs.fed.us>  
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**Subject:** News Release - Forest Service Offers Tips to Hunters  
**Attachments:** Hunting tips - 2017.docx

### **FOREST SERVICE OFFERS TIPS TO HUNTERS**

Hamilton, Montana (October 17, 2017) – Good luck to all hunters looking for that trophy bull elk or other game animal in the Bitterroot National Forest. The Forest Service hopes you have a good hunt and offers some tips for making your hunt even more enjoyable.

- All hunters during the firearm deer season should wear "hunter orange" (hat, cap, vest, jacket or rain gear). It must be the outermost garment and be visible from all sides. Also, put an orange vest or bright bandana on pets (dogs, horses, etc.)
- Hunters should treat every firearm as if it were loaded and be careful where they point the muzzle. Know where your hunting partners are at all times and never assume you are alone in the woods.
- Leave a trip itinerary with family or friends. If hiking by yourself and don't have family or friends in the area with whom you could leave an itinerary with, leave an itinerary in the vehicle.
- Every hunter should carry these "ten essentials": map, compass, flashlight, extra food and water, extra clothes, sunglasses, first-aid kit, pocket knife, waterproof matches, and fire starter.
- Shooting and/or hunting is prohibited in developed recreation sites and trailheads including Lake Como and Bass Creek Recreation Areas.
- Be aware that there may be bears in the area, store food properly. Also, carcasses should not be closer than 100 yards to your sleeping area.
- Your cell phone can save your life, but don't depend on having sufficient coverage, particularly in remote parts of the Bitterroot National Forest.
- Follow the 'Pack It In, Pack It Out' and 'Leave No Trace' principles while camping.
- Campers, hunters and others are not allowed to camp for more than 16 consecutive days in one location. New camps must be located five air miles from the previous camp.
- Be sure to stop in one of our offices to get a Bitterroot National Forest map. Our maps are sold in two parts, split into the North and South half of the forest. Maps are \$10 each. Office hours are 8am to 4:30pm, Mon-Fri. You'll find Forest Service offices in Hamilton, Stevensville, Darby, and West

Fork. Forest Visitor Maps can also be purchased online at the Forest Service Map Store <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/nationalforeststore/>

- You can also download Forest Visitor Maps onto your phone or tablet using the Avenza PDF Maps App. Avenza makes navigating your National Forest easy, as it tracks your location on the map using your device's internal GPS. The app also allows you to measure distances or areas, and records waypoints so you can find your way back to that new secret spot. To learn more, head to the App Store (Apple Devices) or Play Store (Android Devices) on your mobile device and search for the free "Avenza PDF Maps" application.

In order to protect our public lands and natural resources, the Forest would like to remind visitors of the importance of using designated routes. To that end, there have been a number of recent changes to our road system as a result of last year's Travel Management Plan. The travel plan designates 2,246 miles of forest roads and trails open to motorized use. These areas are designated on a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) now available free of charge at all Bitterroot NF offices and online at: [www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot](http://www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot). MVUMs are also available for free at the Avenza Store. The new maps identify which areas are open to motorized use, the types of vehicles allowed and any seasonal restrictions that apply.

All vehicles must stay on existing routes and not drive cross-country. Many seasonal use restrictions include the period from October 15 to December 1. These types of restrictions help to reduce hunting pressure on big game animals and allow Fish, Wildlife & Parks to maintain desired elk numbers and herd structure. Do not drive around barricades, gates, or snow drifts. Barricades and gates are meant to close a road, frequently for the benefit of wildlife. Violations of these closures can result in fines. Check the MVUM for the travel rules in the area you're interested in.

Please notify the Forest Service if a violation or resource issue is observed (example, driving behind a locked gate, camping for more than 16 days, tree blocking road, washout, etc.)

If you use horses, mules, goats or llamas anywhere on National Forests, you're required to bring in only certified weed free hay, cubes, pellets or grain. In the past, contaminated feed introduced invasive weeds to many prime wildlife backcountry areas. Help stop new invaders from getting started.

Power wash the undercarriage and inside/outside of the bumpers of your trucks, horse trailers, ATV's or other vehicles you drive into the hills. Invasive weed seed can travel over a thousand miles on vehicles and bounce out at the wrong time on our rough mountain roads.

In Montana, outfitters and guides must be licensed to operate on federal, state, as well as private lands unless it's their own. Be sure your guide or outfitter is licensed. Call the Montana Board of Outfitters at (406) 841-2304 or Idaho Outfitter and Guide Licensing Board at (208) 327-7380 for more information.

Choose a site for a campfire carefully, near water if possible, and clear it of any combustible material. Remember, just because it's cold in the morning doesn't mean fires can't spread quickly! NEVER walk away from a smoldering campfire. ALWAYS make sure a fire is dead out. Most human-caused fires in Southwest Montana start in the fall, either from cigarettes or warming fires.

Good luck to our local hunters! Stay in touch with us through [www.facebook.com/DiscoverBitterrootNF](http://www.facebook.com/DiscoverBitterrootNF) and [www.twitter.com/BitterrootNF](http://www.twitter.com/BitterrootNF).

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