

# News Release



USDA Forest Service  
Ouray Ranger District  
2505 South Townsend  
Montrose, CO 81401

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **SEASONAL RESTRICTION ISSUED TO PROTECT ROAD**

**Montrose, CO., (February 20, 2009)** – The Ouray Ranger District has issued a seasonal closure Order for wheeled vehicles on portions of the Owl Creek Pass Road that are part of the groomed snowmobile route system.

“The snowmobile route has been signed as “Closed to Wheeled Vehicles” for many years and until recently has generally not been an issue,” stated Tammy Randall-Parker, Ouray District Ranger. “However, this issue is causing major headaches lately and has resulted in several occasions where a Snowcat has been needed to pull out vehicles that should not be there in the first place.”

The snowmobile routes on the Plateau and in the Cimarron country are groomed by the Uncompahgre Trail Riders through agreement and partnership. Citizens driving wheeled-vehicles have been attempting to drive on the snowmobile routes, which not only affect grooming, but in some cases, also cause safety concerns for snowmobiles. It also results in stuck vehicles which need to be towed and/or removed from the drifts and when snow levels recede, it can result in damage to the road surface. This Order will allow offenders to be ticketed, where warranted, for violating the restrictions that have been in place years.

Randall-Parker went on to emphasize that the purpose of this Order it is not to restrict access to national forest lands, but to provide for public safety, to protect the road surface and investment in the road and route grooming, and to promote recreation opportunities that are most suited for the season of use. She also asked for assistance from the public and our partners to “get the word out” about this so that nobody is surprised and to gain support and compliance with the closure until weather and road conditions allow for the route to be opened up again for wheeled vehicle travel.

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