

News Release

CLEVELAND NATIONAL FOREST

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WEEKEND SNOW PLAY ON LAGUNA & PALOMAR MOUNTAINS

Cleveland National Forest

San Diego, CA- February 12, 2008. .. With the storm system that passed through the area on Tuesday leaving behind 8 to 10 inches of snow on Laguna Mountain and Palomar Mountain, these recreation areas will be a destination point for many people this weekend. Playing in the snow on the mountain is always a great deal of family fun, but the Forest Service would like to ensure that everyone is properly prepared for the trip.

“Most people will certainly remember the typical things, such as warm jackets, hats, gloves and a sleigh,” said Brian Harris, Public Affairs Officer on the Cleveland National Forest, “but it’s the travel to, and from the site that can be a little hazardous if people are not well prepared.”

As snow play has become more popular in recent years, getting to the mountains has become more complicated. Traffic can be backed up for miles along the Sun Rise Highway and Highway 79 leading to Laguna Mountain, and Highway 76, South Grade Road and East Grade Road that lead to Palomar Mountain. In January, all of these routes were temporarily closed as a result of “snow play” traffic as law enforcement agencies attempted to deal with traffic that was backed up for miles. If you plan on going, the best advise that can be offered is to head out early and be prepared if you become stuck in traffic – know that it is possible that you and your family may not reach your designation if traffic warrants the closing of highways.

In the interest of safety, carrying some basic supplies and equipment can reduce the risk of a tragedy. Please plan ahead before heading out. Here are a few tips that can help make your visit fun and safe.

Head out early, but be aware that traffic will likely cause a problem.

Drinking water, snacks, extra warm clothing, and blankets should be carried in your vehicle for emergencies as well as basic use after play. (kids will likely be soaking wet when finished playing in the snow)

A flashlight with batteries that is working properly as darkness does fall quickly over the Forest at this time of year.

Take along some basic tools like a shovel and reflectors, these will be needed should you get stuck in the snow or mud.

Don’t forget to bring trash bags so you can take your trash home with you.

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Snow conditions can result in closure of some Forest Service roads and state highways over mountain passes. Tire chains may be required. "Winter travelers should carry tire chains at all times and be prepared to spend long periods of time in the car," adds Harris, "carry blankets or sleeping bags, a shovel, water, food and other necessities, and always travel on a full tank of gas."

Visitors to the Forest are required to display the "Adventure Pass" in their vehicles when recreating on the Forest in posted recreation fee areas. Adventure Passes are available at all Forest Service district offices and a variety of vendors throughout southern California at a cost of \$5.00 per day or \$30.00 per year.

For more Adventure Pass or vendor information please visit www.fs.fed.us/r5/sanbernardino/ap/index.php. Golden Age, Golden Access and Golden Eagle passes are also honored. Have fun in the Cleveland National Forest – it's yours to enjoy!

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