



## Clackamas River Ranger District Frequently Asked Questions

### ROAD ACCESS & CLOSURES

#### **1. *What roads are now open?***

Forest Roads (FR) 46, FR 63, FR 70, FR 42, and most of their spurs are some of the popular routes that are open, following the 2020 and 2021 wildfires. Virtually all forest roads outside of the Riverside, Lionshead, and Bull Complex fire perimeters are open. Additionally, most of our minor, low traffic roads within the fire areas have opened. Many of these roads require high clearance vehicles.

However – FR 46 is only open to the Mt. Hood-Willamette National Forest border. You cannot reach Detroit from Estacada via FR 46. See #8 below for more information.

#### **2. *What roads remain closed?***

Several roads with relatively high historic traffic volumes still have danger tree work that will be completed before we can open them to vehicles.

Roads that will remain closed to motor vehicles until danger trees are removed include:

- FR 4220 between FR 46 and Olallie Lake
- FR 45 (Hillockburn Rd.) at forest boundary
- FR 4620 at Hwy 224 junction
- FR 4631 at Hwy 224 junction
- FR 54 (Fish Creek Rd.) at Hwy 224 junction
- FR 57 between Hwy 224 and Lake Harriet
- FR 4630 between Hwy 224 and Lake Harriet

[Read the Forest Order](#) describing the road closures or [view the map](#).

#### **3. *Why hasn't the Forest been able to clear forest roads of danger trees already?***

In May 2022 the Mt. Hood National Forest received \$76 million in disaster funding to address danger trees, recreation sites, infrastructure, and other damage from the 2020-2021 wildfires. Since the estimated cost of restoring, replacing, and rehabbing wildfire damaged resources is over \$130 million, this disaster funding is essential. Following the recent completion of the [Clackamas River Roadside Danger Tree Environmental Assessment decision](#) we have begun work to clear these roads as soon as possible.

#### **4. *Why can't you open all the roads?***

In some places the risk to the public and our employees is greatly elevated and the potential for a tragic outcome is just too high to accept. Before we reopen high traffic volume roads with hundreds or thousands of trees, we need to mitigate hazard trees that are likely to fall and cause harm. While



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unpredictable accidents can happen, we don't want anyone to get hurt or killed and keeping road segments we have identified as a high probability for tragic outcome closed until we can clear them is our responsibility and commitment to our public, our employees, and our partners and stakeholders.

### 5. *Can I walk on closed roads & across the land in burned areas?*

Yes. Please be aware of your surroundings for hanging limbs, loose rocks and soil, stumps, and other burned area hazards. In addition to looking around you, listen. Even a light breeze may cause burned trees to sway or fall, and your ears may be the first indication to stay out of an area or get out of the way. Get more burned area safety tips: [www.fs.usda.gov/goto/mthood/burnsafety](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/mthood/burnsafety)

### 6. *Why were you able to open Forest Road (FR) 46?*

Firefighters, forest employees, and Forest Service contractors required constant access on FR 46 to safely access fire areas for ongoing fire suppression, suppression repair, and burned area emergency response (BAER) work. Because of the ongoing work that has been done to monitor and maintain firefighter safety on FR 46 throughout the fire events of 2020 and 2021, this route required none of the additional post-fire danger tree work and analysis for other routes noted above.

### 7. *What roads will receive danger tree work first?*

**Roads that are highly used or access key sites will be prioritized.** This includes FR 57, FR 54, and a few others. The Forest recently completed its [Environmental Assessment](#), which allows the Forest to begin clearing these fire-killed trees that are likely to fall on roads and other infrastructure. [Read the Decision Notice.](#)

### 8. *When will the entire road to Detroit (Forest Road 46) reopen?*

Forest Road (FR) 46 travels about 58 miles from Ripplebrook to Detroit. Currently, the entirety of FR 46 within the Mt. Hood National Forest is open. However, several miles of FR 46 in the northern part of the Willamette National Forest also suffered fire damage from the Lionshead Fire and is closed to motorized vehicles. A gate has been placed at the Mt. Hood-Willamette boundary. For more information about Willamette National Forest's fire recovery visit: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/willamette/fire>

### 9. *Can I get from Hwy 224 to Lake Harriet/Timothy Lake?*

Not yet. Until danger tree work along Forest Roads (FR) 4630 and FR 57 is completed, access to Lake Harriet and Timothy Lake is via US Hwy 26.



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### RECREATION IMPACTS & ACCESS

#### **1. *What recreation sites are now open on Clackamas River Ranger District?***

**Forest recreation sites along Hwy 224 open:** Moore Creek and Hole in the Wall boat access sites, Big Eddy day use, and Carter Falls overlook.

Timothy Lake, Harriet Lake, and Clackamas Lake are all accessible via Highway 26.

Olallie Lake is now accessible by two routes: via Highway 26 to FR 42 to FR 4220, or by traveling on FR 46 to FR 4690.

Find the current closure map at: [www.fs.usda.gov/goto/mthood/2020fires](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/mthood/2020fires)

Because of the short season remaining, campgrounds outside the Riverside Fire perimeter (south of Ripplebrook along FR 46) will not open, as the campground operator was unable to hire staff for such a shortened season.

#### **2. *Will campgrounds reopen at the same time as the roads reopen? If not, when will they reopen?***

Campgrounds along the Clackamas River corridor from Lazy Bend upriver to Riverside Campground suffered severe damage during the Riverside Fire, including lost and dead trees, burned down toilets and picnic tables, damaged water systems, and impaired access roads. While some of these sites may open within a year or two, others will remain closed for several years, depending on the level of damage.

Dispersed camping along State Hwy 224 is not allowed.

#### **3. *When will the trails within the fire areas reopen?***

Most trails are open. While many sections of trail were lightly impacted, many trails lost bridges, have scorched and damaged soils, suffered rockslides, or are covered with down trees.

Keep in mind the Forest Service will not clear standing dead and dying trees along entire trails, so hikers should use extreme caution and [keep aware of hazards](#).

Trails that remain closed include Clackamas River Trail #715 and Riverside Trail #723 as they were highly damaged, lost trail bridges, and are dangerous in many parts. Double Peaks #735 is effectively gone as a trail and will need to be rebuilt. Check our website for other individual trails in fire areas: [www.fs.usda.gov/goto/mthood/2020fires](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/mthood/2020fires)



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### **4. *Where can I access the Clackamas River to boat or fish along Hwy 224?***

Both Hole in the Wall and Moore Creek boat access are open as they largely escaped damage. Both are operated by Portland General Electric (PGE). Sandstone Bridge and Fish Creek day use suffered more damage and there are many roadside danger trees that need to be removed before they can open.

### **5. *Will the Ripplebrook Store reopen?***

The Ripplebrook Camp Store was not burned, but it did suffer quite a bit of fire-related damage and lost its internet & telecom infrastructure. We don't know when it will reopen.

### **6. *Are there toilets open?***

There will be a few toilets, but not nearly as many as before since most toilets were lost or are in campgrounds that are still closed due to hazard trees and hazmat. Toilet locations: Moore Creek and Hole in the Wall boat access sites. Remember to recreate responsibly and dispose of all litter and waste properly!

### **7. *What is the status of the Olallie area? Will the roads be open, and will the resort reopen?***

Olallie Resort and a few campgrounds are operating with their normal seasons. Olallie Lake is accessible by two routes: via Highway 26 to FR 42 to FR 4220, or by traveling on FR 46 to FR 4690.

Campgrounds south of Olallie Lake, as well as the adjacent Pacific Crest Trailhead have not had any danger trees removed yet and will remain closed in 2022.

Visit Olallie Lake Resort's website for more information: [www.olallielakeresort.com](http://www.olallielakeresort.com)

### **8. *When will Bagby Hot Springs reopen?***

Probably in summer 2023. Bagby Hot Springs requires an operator on site for safety and damage concerns. A new concessionaire begins their term January 2023 and will begin repairs to the tubs and site once winter conditions subside.

### **9. *Is the Pacific Crest Trail open?***

The PCT is open but did burn during the Lionshead Fire. The Forest Service will not clear standing dead and dying trees along the entire trail, so hikers should be extremely careful and aware of possible hazards.

There is no PCT access on Mt. Hood south of Olallie Lake Resort and the Olallie PCT Trailhead will remain closed for required danger tree work. The PCT can be accessed where it crosses FR 4220 immediately north of Olallie Lake Resort. Access points also exist near Triangle Lake and Olallie



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Meadow campgrounds. It's a good idea to check with the PCTA for closures and reroutes regularly through the season at: [www.pcta.org](http://www.pcta.org)

### **10. Is it safe to be in burned areas?**

Situational awareness is critically important for staying safe in burned areas. Practice the Four Steps for Safety to improve your awareness of natural hazards:

- **LOOK UP** for upland burned areas, snags, and exposed rocks that may fall.
- **LOOK DOWN** for debris from falling rocks, erosion – especially at road and trail edges, and ash pits (which may form from root pockets or stumps of burned trees)
- **LOOK AROUND**. Be situationally aware. Check the weather before you travel, including at higher elevations. Wind, rain, ice, and snow can increase the risk of tree fall, rock fall, slides, and other hazards. Flash floods and landslide risks are elevated below severely burned areas.
- **LOOK BELOW** the surface of standing water and moving water for floating logs, submerged trees, and other debris, which can strike or entangle swimmers and boaters and damage other infrastructure.
- More safety tips: [www.fs.usda.gov/goto/mthood/burnsafety](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/mthood/burnsafety)

## **FOREST HAZARD AND DANGER TREE MITIGATION WORK**

### **1. Is Mt. Hood National Forest conducting hazard tree work on forest roads?**

Yes- Hazard tree work will only include those trees that are likely to fall on recreation sites, roads, and buildings. About 95% of burned areas will have no fire-killed or weakened trees felled.

2. The Forest recently completed its [Environmental Assessment](#), which allows the Forest to begin clearing these fire-killed trees that are likely to fall on roads and other infrastructure. [Read the Decision Notice](#).

### **3. Why can't you just leave all the dying trees in place?**

Nearly all fire-killed or weakened trees will be left in place- only trees that will likely fall on a road, recreation site, or other infrastructure are being considered for removal. The Forest has a responsibility to mitigate known high probability hazards to employees and public safety. While unpredictable accidents can happen, we don't want anyone to get hurt or killed where it was reasonably clear that would be a likely outcome of doing nothing.

Additionally, Forest employees would be required to enter these unsafe areas to respond to public requests for assistance, law enforcement and fire patrol, and responses to any human-caused fires.

### **4. Where can I learn more about danger tree work and evaluation on Forest lands?**



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The best place to start is on our hazard and danger tree webpage. It has info, videos, links, and infographics: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/mthood/fire/?cid=fseprd937474>

### **5. *What happens to the trees that are cut as part of hazard tree work?***

Many of the hazard trees that will be felled may be offered for personal use firewood gathering, moved to aquatic habitat project sites to support non-Forest or partner restoration projects, or left on site for habitat. Money from any commercial timber sales will fund the hazard tree work as well as reforestation projects in fire affected areas.

### **6. *Can I collect firewood from dead or down trees in the Hwy 224 corridor?***

There will be ample firewood opportunities over the next 5 years within the 2020 burn areas. Once danger tree work along forest roads starts, foresters will identify specific areas with good firewood opportunities and help our front desk staff issue free use firewood permits to interested people. Cutting firewood directly along state highways is never allowed on the Forest for safety reasons. More info about firewood and how to get a firewood permit is here: [www.fs.usda.gov/goto/mthood/firewood](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/mthood/firewood)

### **7. *Are you replanting the trees killed in the wildfires?***

It depends on the rate of tree mortality, terrain, and what kind of management designations the land is under. Learn more about post-fire reforestation: [www.fs.usda.gov/goto/mthood/reforestation](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/mthood/reforestation)

- Areas that had a lower mortality rate will largely be left to reseed and regenerate themselves, since there will be enough tree seed already in the soil to germinate at a rate that will effectively reforest an area.
- In areas where nearly every tree was killed by the fire and/or the soil was damaged enough that natural regeneration is unlikely foresters will replant trees to get enough trees per acre for a healthy forest. The Mt. Hood National Forest regularly collects conifer seeds from cones and stores them. After the 2020 fires, the forest sent many thousands of these seeds to a Forest Service nursery in southern Oregon to grow out into little seedlings. Over the next three years forest crews will hand plant these tree seedlings across severely burned areas.
- Some areas are too steep, too rocky, or otherwise too inaccessible to reseed by hand. The Forest recently used drones to aerially seed about 54 acres in the Fish Creek drainage that would normally have been unplantable by ground crews. Over the coming years, foresters will monitor these plots and reforestation rates compared with other methods to see how we can most effectively use another technological tool to encourage healthy forests.
- Some areas are legally mandated to recover naturally without humans. These areas include Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers. As the Mt. Hood National Forest is one-third



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wilderness, there are a lot of areas that will be left to reforest on their own, regardless of burn severity.

### **GENERAL FIRE QUESTIONS**

#### **1. *What fires currently impact the Clackamas River Ranger District?***

- The 2020 Riverside Fire burned 85,625 acres of Mt. Hood National Forest land and 138,126 acres total.
- The 2020 Lionshead Fire burned 17,231 acres of Mt. Hood National Forest land around Olallie Lake and the southern end of the district. Its total size was 204,180 acres.
- The 2021 Bull Complex burned 24,894 acres of Mt. Hood National Forest land in and around the Bull of the Woods Wilderness.
- The 2020 Beachie Creek Fire burned 577 acres on the southern boundary of the ranger district. Its total size was 192,631 acres.

#### **2. *What was damaged in the fires?***

In addition to the significant losses on state, county, tribal, and private lands, the 2020 and 2021 fire seasons impacted 26 campgrounds and day use sites, 24 trailheads, and 37 trails on Mt. Hood National Forest. 100 miles of trails are within burn perimeters. The Forest lost picnic tables, toilets, water systems, signs and kiosks, dumpsters, administrative buildings, employee housing, vehicles and equipment, communications and utilities infrastructure, and many hundreds of thousands of trees. Fallen trees and rocks damaged road infrastructure, including asphalt, culverts, guard rails, signs, and rock barriers.

Review a [site-by-site inventory](#) of recreation damage from the Riverside Fire.

#### **3. *Can I see what the burned area looks like now or how it looked right after the fire?***

Photos, videos, closure area maps and other info is on our website:

[www.fs.usda.gov/goto/mthood/2020fires](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/mthood/2020fires)