



Forest Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Gold Lake Staging Area

Plumas National Forest
Beckwourth Ranger District



Winter Fun

Every winter the county closes Gold Lake Highway and the Gold Lake Staging area becomes the Plumas National Forest's access point to 38.2 miles of groomed snowmobile trails. This is an excellent opportunity for fun and enjoyment visiting this part of the forest during winter. Grooming begins when snowpack reaches 18 inches.

A comprehensive brochure including map, safety concerns and trail destinations is provided by USDA Forest Service at https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5129881.pdf

This is not a snow park and does not offer play areas for families. The hillsides are steep bolder-strewn forest, not suited to sledding. The destinations listed in the Lakes Basin Snowmobile Trails brochure are snowmobile trails.

Plumas Eureka State Park has a fun location for families to play in the snow at the Johnsville Historic Ski Bowl.

<http://www.plumas-eureka.org/>

Getting There

On Hwy 89, 1.5 miles south of Graeagle, turn onto Gold Lake Highway (County Road 519) and follow to staging area.



Safety First

Outdoor recreation in winter requires extra planning and caution for a safe and pleasant trip. This part of the Sierra Nevada is known for getting over five feet of snow from a single storm system. Blizzards regularly produce white-out conditions. Equipment can break-down. There are frequent reports of people getting lost or stranded when going off of groomed trails here.

It is the responsibility of the OHV operator to be aware of Federal and State OHV restrictions and regulations. It is the responsibility of all visitors to do the planning, provisioning and acquire needed knowledge to make their trip a safe one. Always come prepared to change your plans to suit current conditions.

Under the best conditions very few locations in Lakes Basin have dependable cell service. That said, dial 911 in an emergency.

Always tell a friend about your trip. Include the location, planned time of return, vehicle information, descriptions of you and those accompanying you. Give them your contact information and make a plan for contact upon your safe return.

The Forest Service takes a support role to the county sheriff in all search and rescue operations. If the services of Sierra County Search and Rescue are needed, contact the Sierra County Sheriff's Office at 530-289-3700

Cross Country Skiing

A 1.5 mile cross-country ski trail connects the parking area at the Gold Lake Staging Area to the Smith Lake, Graeagle Creek and Long Lake trailheads.

This trail is identified as a groomed trail, however It does not get grooming. It is shared with snowshoers and hikers and may become damaged with subsequent post holes. Use caution when opting to ski on the groomed snowmobile trails.

Volunteers at the Plumas Eureka State Park provide quality grooming of their cross country ski trails. For a ski trail map, grooming updates and contact information go to www.plumas-eureka.org

Snowshoeing

Snowshoeing can be a surefire cure for cabin fever. Just strap on a pair of snowshoes and hit the trail. Besides observing nature in a frozen state, you will stay in shape for hiking season. After your great day on the snow, return home to that fireside recliner and know that life is grand.

Be cautious whenever opting to use the groomed snowmobile trail since snowmobiles have the right of way. Therefore, snowshoers accept some risk when opting to use it. Snowshoers must be vigilant and listen for fast-moving machines and make themselves seen, especially in poor visibility conditions and during weather events. Stay on the edge of groomed surface and cross only when safe to do so



OHV Funds at Work

Snowmobiles and other over-snow motor vehicles using this facility, trails and public lands are required to register their vehicle. All 4X4 and other wheeled vehicles are not allowed past the winter road closure.



Information about OHV registration and other related topics is available at

https://ohv.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=26886.



All photos by Jim Bradeen

Partnerships

A partnership between Plumas National Forest and the State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation provides funding for operation of this staging area and maintenance of OHV trails. Volunteer grooming work is provided by the Sierra Buttes Snowbusters Snowmobile Club, using State-funded snow tractor and grooming equipment.

A Wild Location

The forest environment is hazardous by nature. Conditions may change quickly and unexpectedly. Visitors are responsible for knowing and accepting risks of visiting and recreating in wild locations. Risk sources include disorientation, lightning, avalanche, hypothermia, frostbite, white out, blizzards, limited field of vision, other users and many more. Use caution.

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For more information;

Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region — <https://fsweb.r5.fs.fed.us/>

Plumas National Forest — www.fs.fed.us/r5/plumas — (530) 283-2050

Beckwourth Ranger District, PO Box 7, Blairsden, Ca. 96103 — (530) 836-2575

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