



**U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service
Custer Gallatin National Forest
Beartooth Ranger District**

**Occupancy and Use Prohibition
Pryor Mountain Caves Seasonal Area Closure**

PROHIBITIONS:

Pursuant to 16 U.S.C. § 551 and 36 C.F.R. § 261.50(a), the following acts are prohibited on National Forest System (NFS) lands in the Pryor Mountain Unit of the Beartooth Ranger District, Custer Gallatin National Forest, described below and shown on the attached map incorporated into this Order as Exhibit A:

1. It is prohibited to go into or be upon any area which is closed for the protection of threatened, endangered, rare, unique, or vanishing species of plants, animals, birds, or fish. 36 C.F.R. § 261.53(a).

EXEMPTIONS:

Pursuant to 36 C.F.R. § 261.50(e), the following persons are exempt from this Order:

1. Persons with Forest Service Permit No. FS-7700-48 (Permit for Use of Roads, Trails, or Areas Restricted by Regulation or Order), specifically exempting them from this Order or a written determination by a Forest Service authorized officer that a permit is not required under 36 C.F.R. § 251.50(e)(1) or (2).
2. Any Federal, State, or Local Officer, or member of an organized rescue or firefighting resource in the performance of an official duty.

AREA CLOSURE DESCRIPTION:

All caves encompassed in the following area are closed to entry: All National Forest System (NFS) lands east of Highway 310, north of the Wyoming state line, south of the Crow Indian Reservation, and west of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area, as further shown on the attached map.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Order is to limit the disturbance of hibernating bats and minimize the human-assisted spread of the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome.

IMPLEMENTATION:

1. This Order shall be in effect from October 15, 2023 through May 1, 2024, unless rescinded.
2. A map identifying the Described Area is attached and made part of this Order as Exhibit A. For a digital version of this Order and Exhibit A, go to <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/cgf/alerts-notice>.
3. Unless otherwise expressly defined in this Order, the terms used in this Order are defined by the regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture, 36 C.F.R. Chapter II, Parts 200-299. If there are terms in this Order that are not expressly defined in the Order or 36 C.F.R. Chapter II, Parts 200-299, their meaning shall be determined by their plain language definitions.
4. A violation of the above prohibitions is punishable as a Class B misdemeanor by a fine of not more than \$5,000 for individuals and \$10,000 for organizations, or by imprisonment for not more than six months, or both. 16 U.S.C. § 551; 18 U.S.C. §§ 3559, 3571, and 3581.
5. Contact the Beartooth Ranger District in Red Lodge, MT, (406) 446-2103, and Custer Gallatin National Forest Supervisor's Office in Bozeman, MT, (406) 587-6701, for more information about this Order.
6. This Order supersedes any previous Orders prohibiting the same or similar acts in the same Described Area.

Signed and issued on this ___ of 12th day of October, 2023.

Mary C. Erickson
Forest Supervisor
Custer Gallatin National Forest