



## News Release

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests &  
Thunder Basin National Grassland  
<http://fs.usda.gov/mbr>

**Media Contact:** Aaron Voos, (307) 745-2323

### **Pole Mountain Winter Recreationists Need Understand Area Usage, Risks**

**(LARAMIE, Wyo.) January 4, 2016** – Public demand for winter recreation opportunities continues to grow, as does the potential for conflicting activities and risky endeavors. With that in mind, the Laramie Ranger District would like to remind users of winter recreation guidelines on the Pole Mountain unit of the Medicine Bow National Forest.

The Pole Mountain unit is one of the most highly used recreation areas on the National Forest, and cross country skiing, fat bike riding, snow shoeing, hiking, tubing, running, and sledding are just some of the many activities enjoyed by the public in the area.

Happy Jack and Tie City day use sites are particularly well-used and provide access to miles of trails, as well as unmaintained downhill slopes.

“Everyone has their favorite winter activity on Pole Mountain, but often those different activities overlap on the same trails or are potentially hazardous,” said Laramie District Ranger Frank Romero. “We are appealing to people to take a moment before recreating to consider the risks and possible conflicts. Read the signage that is posted at trailheads and in parking areas, and take advantage of trail maps and brochures.

“Ample opportunity exists for everyone to have a safe and enjoyable experience on Pole Mountain, but it is important to understand that some activities are inherently risky and that cooperative efforts have taken place to minimize usage overlap and the subsequent conflicts.”

Below are some of the key recreation guidelines that area users should consider:

- All groups are urged to use common courtesy while recreating. Multiple uses occur on National Forest System lands and you will likely encounter that variety while recreating.
- All winter recreationists need to be aware of Forest conditions and changing weather. Be aware and prepared when going into the Forest.
- Many larger trees in the area have been killed by the bark beetle epidemic. These trees are susceptible to falling when soils are saturated or during high winds. Please avoid recreating in areas with dead trees during high wind events.
- The old Happy Jack ski hill is unmanaged and any recreation usage is done at the user’s risk. Signage at the fee area reflects this situation.
- Medicine Bow Nordic Association (MBNA) regularly grooms a portion of the Tie City area trails for skiing under a cooperative/partnership agreement with the USDA Forest Service. The mechanically-groomed trails are also used for a variety of programs and lessons sponsored by MBNA. The grooming directly benefits public use and the association is allowed to post signs regarding suggested, but not exclusive, usage of the trails in cooperation with the Forest Service.

- To minimize conflicts, walkers, runners, snowshoers, dog sledders, and fat bike riders are asked to use the multi-use trails, and other ungroomed trails in the area.
- Multi-use, ungroomed trails have recently been improved and are periodically packed by a group of citizens in cooperation with the Forest Service.
- Dogs are allowed to be off leash outside of the designated recreation sites; however, they must be under the owner's control at all times. Whatever the control method, it should solicit an immediate and desired response from your dog.
- Please remember that you may want to recreate with your dog, but other Forest users may not feel that same way.
- It is ultimately the responsibility of dog owners to keep their pets under control and equally as important for non-dog owners to keep in mind the multi-use nature of public lands.
- At the Tie City trailhead, dogs must be leashed inside the parking lot and all the way through the Campground Loop.
- A U.S. Forest Service Season Pass (\$30) or Day Use Fee (\$5) is required to use the Happy Jack, Summit, and Tie City recreation sites. A portion of those fees are used for ongoing maintenance of the sites, including plowing of Happy Jack and Tie City.
- Safe, recreational shooting is allowed on Pole Mountain from Sept. 11 – March 30, however, due to the high recreational usage in the Happy Jack area, shooters are urged to find alternate areas away from the trail systems.

For additional information on recreational use of the Pole Mountain area please contact the Laramie Ranger District office at 307-745-2300, visit <http://fs.usda.gov/mbr> or follow the MBRTB on Twitter, [@FS\\_MBRTB](https://twitter.com/FS_MBRTB).

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