



News Release

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

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District Ranger Extends Comment Period for Proposed Eastern Snowy Range Seasonal Big Game Road Closures

(LARAMIE, Wyo.) March 15, 2016 – Laramie District Ranger Frank Romero announced today that he is extending the public comment period for a proposal to improve crucial big game habitat along the southeast boundary of the Snowy Range.

The comment period will be extended two weeks until Tues., March 29. The original deadline for comment was today, March 15.

“I have heard from multiple people who are interested in this project that they were unaware of the comment period and caught off-guard by the deadline,” said Laramie District Ranger Frank Romero. “I want to receive input from as many affected parties as possible, and so I have decided to extend the comment deadline by two weeks.

“We distribute information about our projects in a broad and timely fashion, but can’t always control the various outlets through which people receive their news. That said, we have received some good comments about the project thus far and hope that by extending the deadline we can accommodate those who feel like they need more time.

“Bottom line, I want to hear from the public about our proposed projects so that I can make well-informed decisions,” concluded Romero.

Following is information on the project:

The Laramie Ranger District proposes to extend existing seasonal road closures on the Medicine Bow National Forest, as well as install new gates to assist with compliance, and place new sections of area roads under seasonal closures.

- In order to better protect deer and elk from disturbance during their most sensitive times, the Forest Service proposes to extend seasonal closures from the current dates of Nov. 15 - April 31 to a longer timeframe of Oct. 1 - June 15 each year. There are currently seasonal closures in place for 37 miles of roads on a narrow section of Forest that runs south from near Lake Owen along the foothills to the Wyoming/Colorado state line.
- Also proposed is the installation of five new gates at locations which access the seasonally closed roads. These gates are meant to better enforce the closures.
- In some cases, roads that do not currently have seasonal closures would have seasonal closures applied so that gates can be installed at practical traffic pinch points. Approximately 8.6 total miles of roads would have this new seasonal closure, spread over 10 different sections of road directly adjacent to crucial big game habitat.

The area on Forest affected by these closures is critically important to local deer and elk herds as it contains transition habitat, winter range, and fawning and calving areas. Typically, October begins the important transition period as big game animals move from summer to winter range. It is important that the animals maximize their forage intake during this time, so as to build up fat reserves for winter and early spring months. Late spring is when deer fawns and elk calves are born, also in the transition range, and a reduction in human disturbance gives the young animals time to become mobile and devote energy to growth.

Project information, including a map that shows locations of roads with proposed seasonal road closures and gate locations is available on the Medicine Bow National Forest web site at: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=47351.

The project was developed in collaboration with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. A decision is expected in April, 2016.

Written comments should be submitted to the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests, Laramie Ranger District, Attn: Frank Romero, 2468 Jackson St, Laramie, WY 82070, or fax: 307-745-2398. Oral and hand-delivered comments must be provided at the Responsible Official's office during normal business hours (8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, excluding holidays). Telephone comments can be submitted to the Responsible Official at (307) 745-2300. Electronic comments can be submitted to comments-rocky-mountain-medicine-bow-laramie@fs.fed.us.

For additional information please contact Frank Romero, District Ranger, at (307) 745-2300 or feromero@fs.fed.us. Information can also be obtained by calling the Laramie Ranger District office at the above number, visiting <http://fs.usda.gov/mbr> or following the MBRTB on Twitter, [@FS_MBRTB](https://twitter.com/FS_MBRTB).

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