



**U.S. Forest Service  
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# News Release

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## **Driving on wet roads and off-road causes serious resource damage and safety concerns**

**Springerville, AZ; March 18, 2016—For Immediate Release.** Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (ASNFs) Acting Supervisor Steve Best encourages people to minimize natural resource damage from travel by avoiding wet, muddy roads and trails and choosing the more hardened ones. Best says “We want people to enjoy their forests, however during wet conditions such as spring run-off and the monsoons which create muddy conditions, resource damage can easily occur.”

Land managers on the ASNFs are concerned that mild spring conditions and early access to forest roads and trails will increase the number of “mudding” incidents on the forests. Mud bogging or “mudding” may look like fun to some, but it leaves behind scars on the land and frequently causes long-term resource damage, erosion issues and is very expensive to repair. Not only is mud bogging extremely damaging to the land, but it is also illegal. It is unlawful to operate a vehicle on or off-road in a manner which damages or unreasonably disturbs land and vegetation. These actions could result in an arrest, a fine and restitution if convicted.

Horse, bike, and foot traffic during muddy conditions can also cause damage to trails that require costly maintenance. These types of forest activities destroy vegetation, expose soil to erosion, and leave scars upon the land that may last for years. So stay on the drier or hardened trails.

Safety is also a concern to the ASNFs. Becoming stuck and unprepared for a long hike out or an overnight stay in the mountains can be very unpleasant. Forest roads are not plowed or maintained for winter travel. When recreating on the forests, you should be prepared by bringing plenty of water, food, and warm clothing, and **always** let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return.

The ASNFs want forest users to enjoy their public lands. Responsible use of forest roads and trails will avoid not only further damage to the resources but also ensure future access opportunities on the forests.

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