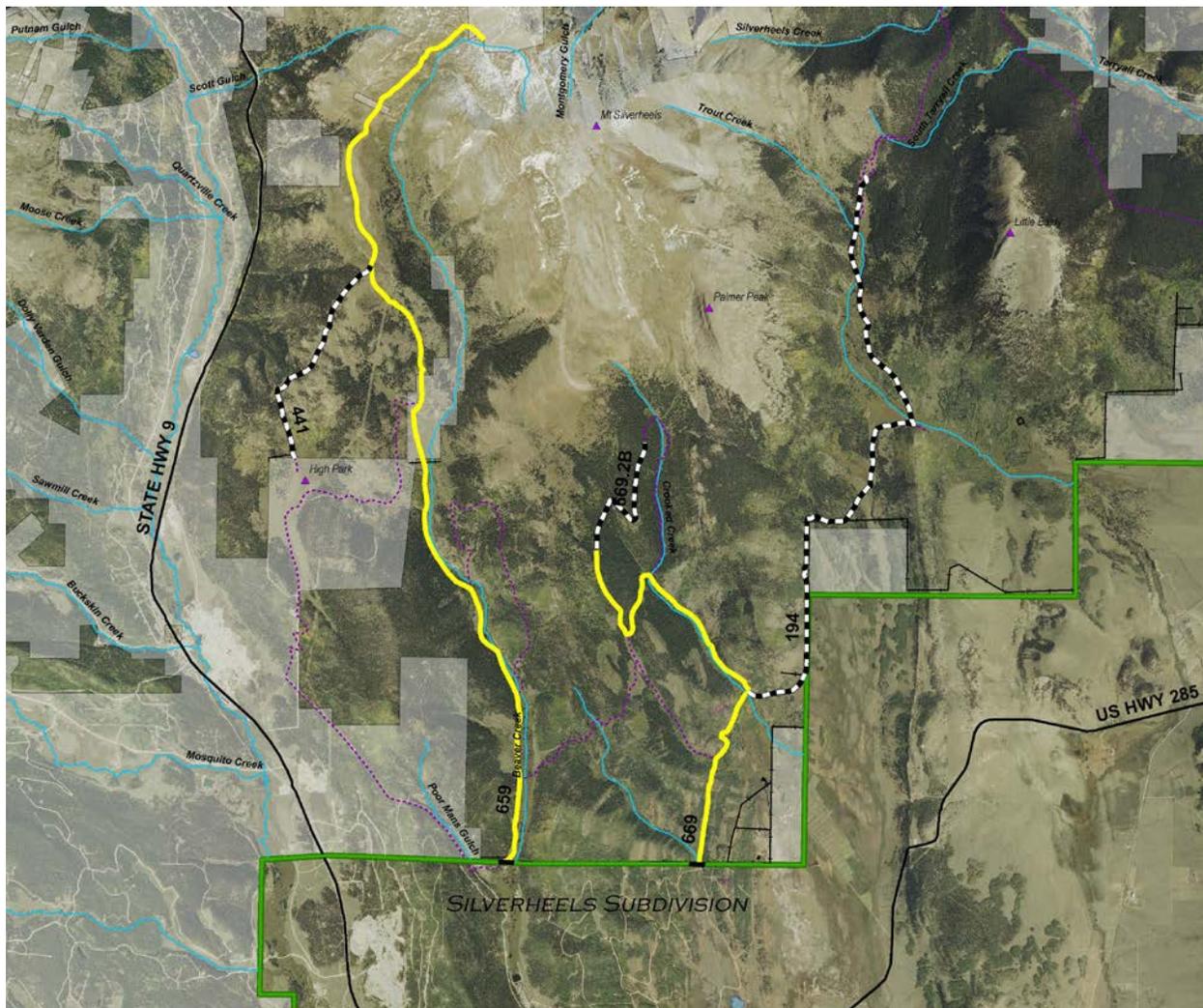




*As always, the Forest is open year-round to foot traffic and horse/stock use. If you're an outdoor enthusiast, you can still hike, sled, snowshoe, cross-country ski, walk your dog, ride your horse, ride your bike or jog your burro.*

If you ride an ATV/OHV or unlicensed motorcycle, you can only ride on the FS roads coming off of the Beaver Creek and Crooked Creek roads as symbolized below with the black/white checks. These roads are FSRs 441 (High Park road), 669.2B (Crooked Creek extension), and 194 (Trout Creek road). For example, you may NOT ride your unlicensed vehicle from your house in Silverheels up the Crooked Creek road to then *legally* ride on the Trout Creek road. If you'd like to ride your unlicensed vehicle on the Trout Creek road, you must trailer it to the point at which FSR 194 begins (approximately 1.5 miles up Crooked Creek) and then begin your ride. This restriction has been in place since the issuance of the 2010 MVUM.



*When open, unlicensed vehicles (ATVs/OHVs and motorcycles without license plates) are allowed on black/white checked roads only. These vehicles must be trailered to the points at which their use is allowed. Non-motorized system trails are shown as dotted, purple lines and are always open for use.*

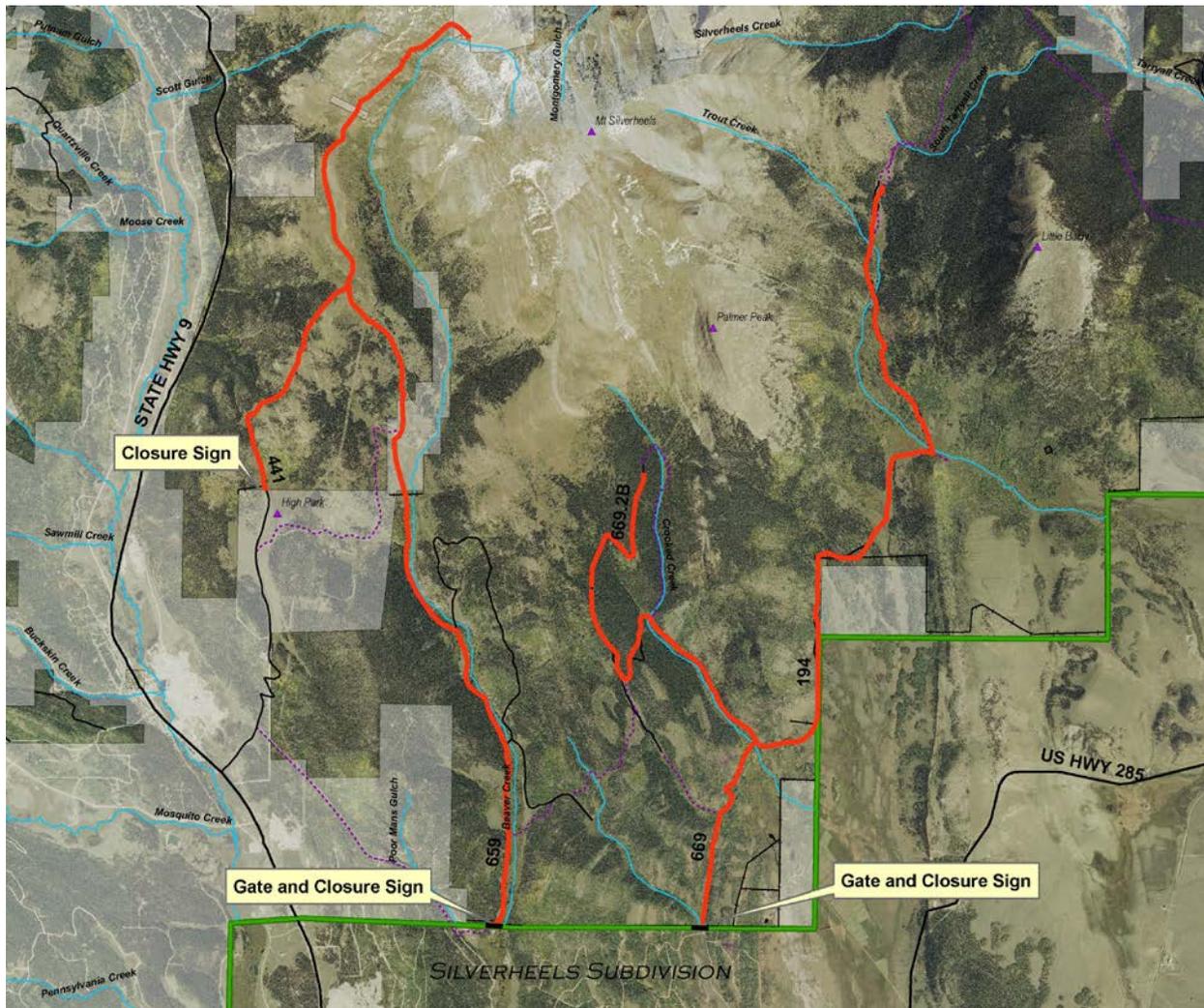
### **What about roads that aren't on the map?**

Any road that exists on the ground on National Forest that isn't on this map (or on the MVUM map available at FS Ranger District offices and online) is **ILLEGAL**. They have often been created as a result of people driving to a good camp spot or creating a shortcut between roads or trying to reach a great view. The FS is trying hard to limit the travel system to legal roads. Tickets may be issued for driving on illegal roads.

## Seasonal closures near Silverheels

If you've ventured out to visit the Forest behind Silverheels subdivision this spring, there's no doubt that you've seen the seasonal road closures on the Beaver Creek road (FSR 659), Crooked Creek road (FSR 669) and possibly the High Park road (FSR 441). These roads are closed to **all** motorized vehicles from January 1<sup>st</sup> to June 15<sup>th</sup>. The Forest Service has heard from several individuals who are distraught over this "new" closure and that this must surely be the beginning of closing the entire Forest to vehicles.

First, these seasonal closures are not new. These roads have been closed seasonally for at least 25 years. This may be the first time that you are seeing new signs or new gates, but the road closure has been in place for a while. Perhaps you have seen vehicles on these roads during closure times which makes you think the roads are open. They are not. Any person driving any type of vehicle on these roads during the seasonal closure is doing so illegally. They are subject to ticket and court appearance.



*All of the orange-colored roads are seasonally closed to all motorized use from January 1<sup>st</sup> to June 15<sup>th</sup>.*

### Why???

So why does the Forest Service feel the need to close these roads for almost half of the year? To be clear, the Forest Service doesn't make decisions based on whims or desires. Decisions are well thought-out, supported by NEPA (national environmental policy act) when necessary, coordinated with other agencies (such as CPW), often handed-down from higher levels (national, regional or forest-wide policies) or mandated by federal courts.

The purpose for the seasonal closures behind the Silverheels subdivision is two-fold. The primary reason is wildlife and the secondary reason is the roads themselves.

In terms of wildlife and because of where you live, you've probably been fortunate enough to observe the activity of elk, deer, moose, bear, antelope, coyotes, fox and maybe even bobcat in the subdivision or on Forest. Winter is a tough time for all of these animals, but big game (elk, deer, antelope, and moose) can be especially stressed by harsh conditions. Therefore, many areas of the Forest that meet certain habitat requirements serve as big game winter-ranges. The area behind Silverheels is one such place. The Forest Service is under court-order to close these places to motorized travel to allow for relatively undisturbed wildlife use during their most difficult time.



*Elk congregating on winter range.*

Other important activities taking place on the Forest during the seasonal closure are fawning, calving, denning, and hatching of all sorts. Allowing for relatively quiet places during this time helps wildlife successfully birth and rear their young.



*New elk calf on National Forest land.*

In addition to wildlife purposes, roads are seasonally closed to prevent people from getting stuck in their vehicles in deep snow and to protect the roads themselves from rutting and damage caused during “mud season” and spring runoff.



*Typical Forest road in spring conditions when NOT protected by closure. Note the illegal drive-around on the left side leading to more resource damage.*



*Resource damage to Forest Service road during spring runoff.*

### ***Summary***

It can be inconvenient to be restricted from driving on or using roads whenever we want. However, there are good reasons for closures. Are there beautiful, sunny, dry days in May when it would be great to be able to drive up Crooked Creek and camp? Yes. Are there times in February when there are no elk on the Forest side of the subdivision, when a quick motorcycle trip would be great? Yes. Not every single day within a closure time meets a grand objective. However, it just isn't reasonable to manage these areas on a day-by-day basis. As a national federal agency mandated to manage natural resources for the greatest good, the Forest Service is trying to do the right thing. It may be bothersome or annoying to us as individuals to abide by rules or follow policy – but it is best for all of us in the long run. As human pressure on wild places increases, it becomes more important to consider and care for all parts of the ecosystem. It has been said that common sense isn't too common. Basic respect for land and animals isn't as much of a given as it once was, which forces the Forest Service to enact and enforce regulations for achieving results that benefit all.

For questions or explanations of rules or regulations pertaining to travel management (or others) please contact the South Park Ranger District at 719-836-2031. Thank you!