

## Carson National Forest

## Taos Ski Valley, Questa & Red River

### *is the place to be when the snow is on the hills*

Taos Ski Valley, Red River and Sipapu Ski Areas are all located on portions of the National Forest and provide downhill and Nordic skiing. Plenty of opportunities for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling and sledding also exist on the Carson.

Detailed guides for many of the trails listed are available at Carson National Forest offices.

Some trails are shared by cross-country skiers, snowshoers, and snowmobilers. Please keep trails safe by operating snowmobiles at minimum speed near skiers or snowshoers and maintaining minimum speed until well beyond those on foot. Skiers and snowshoers should also be alert for snowmobilers. Some trails are designated for skiers only and some for snowmobiles only. Restrictions are posted, but check with the local Forest Service office for more information.

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### **Beware of Hazards**

Many people are unaware of the hazards of winter recreation. A “Winter Recreation Safety Guide” is available at all Forest Service offices. Also please stop by or call any Forest Service office for information about possible trail closures, avalanche hazards, weather conditions, and new trails not shown on the map. Local Forest Service addresses and phone numbers are listed. Please do not cross-country ski, snowshoe or snowmobile alone if you are inexperienced and /or unfamiliar with the terrain. Most shops which rent equipment can also advise you on trails.

### **Food and Water**

A good rule is “lightweight but loaded,” meaning loaded with calories. Plan your meals to ensure a diet of high energy foods. Water is often difficult to find in winter. All that is available may be what you carry in containers or melt from snow. The body loses as much as 2-4 quarts of liquid per day under exertion. Eating snow provides only limited water (10-20%), drains energy and cools the body temperature. Avoid melting snow by body contact. Travel equipped with proper implements to melt snow. Save your energy.

### **Litter and Sanitation**

Litter is ugly-particularly when viewed against a mantle of white snow. Please carry out what you carry in. Please do not leave human waste near streams and lakes.

### **Hypothermia**

Hypothermia is aggravated by wind, exhaustion, and being wet. Avoid wearing cotton next to your body, as cotton will soak up perspiration and cool your skin. Hypothermia is the number one killer of outdoor recreationists.

### **Protect Wildlife**

Please view big game animals from a distance. They work hard to survive during the winter. Snowmobilers who chase and harass wildlife usually do not realize the hardships they cause. Occasionally death is the result. State laws prohibit harassing wildlife.

### **Beware of Avalanches**

Avalanches can occur at any time during the winter. Avoid mountainous terrain after heavy snowfalls or prolonged periods of high wind. Stay on the windblown side of ridges. Avoid crossing steep side hills and entering narrow, steep canyons.

## Questa District

The Following developed ski areas and trails are in the Questa/Red River/Taos Ski Valley vicinity. The places listed are some of the more popular areas. Additional Forest Roads are open on the district but not described here. They are open to both snowmobiles and cross-country skiers. Recreation Opportunity Guides (ROGs) are available describing many of the trails in more detail.

### Snowmobile Trails: Groomed



#### Mallette Canyon Trail Canyon Sawmill Mountain

Mallette Canyon Trail and Sawmill Mountain trails are groomed for snowmobile access. Trail grooming is done by the Town of Red River and Red River Snowmobile club in partnership with the Forest Service. These trails are also open to cross-country skiers. Forest Road 597, Mallette Canyon Road runs into Red River at the northwest end of town. There is a sign. Parking is along the road at Red River City Park near the mouth of the canyon. Mallette Canyon Road provides access to Cabresto Canyon, Trail Canyon and Sawmill Mountain. Trail Canyon starts approximately 1- 1/2 miles north of the city park and Sawmill Mountain is approximately 5-1/2 miles northwest from the park. Sawmill Mountain and Trail Canyon trailheads are signed. Sawmill Mountain road ends at upper Cabresto Canyon Rd. Trail Canyon ends at Midnight Meadows. Mallette Canyon is suitable for all skill levels. Sawmill Mountain and Trail Canyon are intermediate. Both snowmobilers and skiers use these roads and trails. Please be courteous to other users. **USGS QUAD: Red River**



#### East Fork to Ditch Cabin

Drive Upper Red River Canyon to where the pavement ends. This road should be cleared. There is room at the end of the road for several cars to park. The East Fork road is signed. Cross the bridge and turn right (south). Follow this road to Ditch Cabin. You will cross private land after the turnoff. Please stay on the designated roadway. Snowmobilers are not allowed beyond the Ditch Cabin site. **USGS Quad: Wheeler Peak, Eagle Nest**



#### Ditch Cabin to Sawmill Park

Drive east through Red River and take the right fork at the east end of town (State Hwy 578, Upper Red River Rd.). Go south on Highway 578 until the pavement ends (approximately 6-1/2 miles) The trail begins here and there is room for several cars to park. Ski across the bridge and head south on Forest Road 54A. You will cross some private land. Please be respectful by staying on FR54A. Continue on Trail56 to the intersection of Trail 55. Go left and proceed to Sawmill Park. Sawmill Park begins approximately 2 miles from the intersection of Trails 55 and 56. **USGS Quad: Wheeler Peak, Eagle Nest**

### Developed Ski Areas: Downhill

| Basic Information        | Red River Ski Area                             | Taos Ski Valley                                |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Average Snowfall         | 218 inches                                     | 305 inches                                     |
| Average days of sunshine | N/A  | 300 days                                       |
| Total Acreage            | N/A  | 1,294  |
| Number of Trails         | 57   | 110  |
| % of Trail Difficulty    | 32% Beginner<br>38% Intermediate<br>30% Expert | 24% Beginner<br>25% Intermediate<br>51% Expert |
| Number of Lifts          | 7  | 13 - 4 quads, 1 triple, 5 double, 3 surface    |
| Elevation                | Base 8,750 Top: 10,350                         | Base 9,207 Top: 11,819                         |
| Uphill Capacity          | 7,920  | 15,000 skiers/hr                               |



## Long Canyon Bull-of-the-Woods

These trails start from the Taos Ski Valley (TSV) parking area on the north side of the East Fork of the Rio Hondo. To reach TSV, travel east on NM 150 from the intersection of NM and 150. These trails are steep and suited for advanced skiers only. Avalanche hazards are significant. **USGS Quad: Wheeler Peak**



## Pioneer Creek

Pioneer Creek is accessible from the Red River Ski Area. Parking may be a problem. Take the road at the end of the parking lot. Approximately 60 yards up this road across the creek is the Pioneer Creek Road turnoff, Forest Road 485. It is used by both snowmobilers and skiers. **USGS Quad: Red River**



## Goose Creek

This trail is for cross-country skiing only. Two and one half miles up State Road 578, Upper Red River Canyon Road, past the turnoff to Eagle Nest is Goose Creek Trail 65. It is on the west side of the road. Goose Creek trail should not be confused with Goose Lake Road which comes before Goose Creek and is nearer to Red River. The trail is steep, suited to experienced skiers and closed to snowmobiles. Snowmobiles can use the Goose Lake road. **USGS Quad: Red River**



## Columbine Creek

For cross-country skiing only, this trail takes off at the beginning of Columbine Campground. The campground is located 8 miles west of Red River and 4 miles east of Questa on Highway 38. The trail is marked at the south end of the campground. There is parking space available at the gate to the campground. The first 3 miles of the trail is for beginners and intermediate skiers. After that it becomes expert terrain. Beware of avalanche hazards. **USGS Quad: Questa**



## Middle Fork and West Fork Roads

Open to both cross-country skiers and snowmobiles, these roads consist of steep trails and numerous switchbacks for expert skiers and snowmobilers. At the end of Upper Red River Road (State Hwy 578), take Forest Road 487. West Fork road turns off from the main road and heads west. Follow the road 2 miles to Middle Fork Road which is signed. Middle Fork turns off to the south and crosses a bridge. **USGS Quad: Wheeler Peak**



## Cabresto Lake Road Lake Fork Trail

Snowmobiling is permitted as far as the lake, beyond that it is cross-country only. Cabresto Lake Road 134A takes off in a northerly direction from Cabresto Canyon, Forest Road 563, about 5 miles from the intersection. It is about 2 miles to Cabresto Lake in 134A and the Lake Fork trailhead, Trail 82. There are toilets at the lake. Lake Fork Trail is for experienced skiers only. **USGS Quad: Questa, Latir, Red River**

## Developed Ski Areas: Cross-Country

### Enchanted Forest Cross-Country Ski Area

- Open: 9a.m.-4:30 p.m. (5 p.m. beginning March 15)
- Elevation: 9,800-10,300 feet
- Terrain: 19 miles (30K) of trails over 1,400 acres, signed with an accompanying map. Trails have tracks set and picnic areas. There are trails for all levels of skiers trail fees.
- Average Temperature: 38 degrees

Also: All day tours, moonlight tours and video recording are available along with rentals, demos, and instruction. Whether you want to ski the tracks or make your own, panoramic views and treat times await you. Call (575) 754-2374 for information.



## Exploration Road

Forest Road 597 runs into Red River at Mallette Canyon Road. There is parking along the road near the mouth of the canyon. Mallette Canyon Road provides access to Exploration road. Exploration Road starts approximately 1 mile northeast of the park and ends at Midnight Meadows. It is advanced terrain. **USGS Quad: Red River**



## Greenie Peak Midnight Meadows

Open to cross-country skiing and snowmobiling. The Greenie Peak and Midnight Meadows area is easy terrain for cross-country skiing and snowmobiling. The meadows in Greenie Peak are particularly popular with snowmobilers. The wide open spaces provide outstanding snowmobile opportunities for all skill levels. **USGS Quad: Latir Peak, Comanche point**



## 4<sup>th</sup> of July Canyon

For snowmobiling only. Takes off from State Road 578, Upper Red River Canyon, approximately 4 miles up from the Eagle Nest turnoff. The road is signed and connects with a trail from Red River Pass. There are several open parks between this canyon and Red River Pass. It is steep and suitable for experienced snowmobilers only. **USGS Quad: Red River**



## Old Red River Pass

For snowmobiling only. Head south on State Hwy 578 to Upper Red River Canyon past the Eagle Nest turnoff. Approximately 2 miles on the east side of the road is the old pass turnoff. It is steep and suitable for experienced snowmobilers only. **USGS Quad: Red River**



## Valle Vidal

The Valle Vidal Unit offers a wide range of outstanding winter fun. Road access is via Costilla from the west and Cimarron from the east. Forest roads are not plowed. Snowmobile access is available from the southwest side via Mallette and Cabresto Canyons through the Midnight area to Chuck Wagon Canyon. The west side (except for the La Cueva area) is available for winter sports when the District Ranger announces it is open. The opening is timed to coincide with the movement of elk to the east side winter range, which incidentally, is when the snow is deep enough for winter recreation use. Separate cross-country skiing and snowmobiling area are designated on the west side of the Valle Vidal Unit. Cross-country skiing is permitted on the north side of the Forest Road 1950. Snowmobiling is only permitted on the south side. The area east of the county line is closed to all off-road activities. **USGS Quad: Ash Mountain**



## Powderhouse-Little Costilla Peak Trail (Valle Vidal Unit)

This is a "thru" trail that you can access from either end. One trailhead is located about 3 miles south of Comanche Point on Forest Road 1950. The other is located north of Comanche Point on Forest Road 1900 near the Valle Vidal boundary. Both trailheads are signed. Typically, though, it is difficult to drive past Comanche Point. Check with the District office for snow conditions. It is about 10 miles from either end to Little Costilla Peak. Views of Big Costilla Peak and the Latirs are spectacular. The trail follows old logging roads that frequently fork. A quad map would be helpful. **USGS Quad: Ash Mountain**

## Williams Lake

Extreme avalanche hazards exist throughout the area. Back-country travel is **not** recommended due to frequent avalanches. **USGS Quad: Wheeler Peak**