



News Release

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

Media Contacts: Kent Foster, (970) 870-2142 or Aaron Voos, (307) 745-2323

Winter Recreationists Should Heed Area Boundaries East of Steamboat

(STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, Colo.) February 10, 2015 – Routt National Forest officials would like to remind winter recreationists that they need to be aware of where they are on Forest, as regulations for usage vary widely east of Steamboat Springs.

Many areas are open to all forms of winter recreation, motorized or non-motorized, whereas some areas, such as Buffalo Pass, Rabbit Ears Pass, and wilderness areas have permanent restrictions in place.

Specific regulations include:

- Operating any motorized equipment, including snowmobiles, is illegal in all wilderness areas.
- The west side of Buffalo Pass has a Winter Backcountry Permit Area, where a permit is required for all use. It also provides an area where only non-motorized use is allowed.
- Rabbit Ears Pass has separate areas for non-motorized and motorized use.
- There are also several areas near town designated as wildlife winter range where motorized travel is off-limits and non-motorized use is discouraged.

Annually, there are Forest users who choose to ignore the boundary signs and ultimately end up with a citation and associated fine for failing to abide by area regulations. Recently, snowmobilers have been ticketed for riding in the Mount Zirkel Wilderness, and numerous citations have been issued for violations in the Buffalo Pass and Rabbit Ears areas.

All violations have ramifications; however, many Forest users don't realize that penalties include fines, and in some severe cases possible jail time and equipment forfeiture.

"We deal with these issues every winter," said Kent Foster, Recreation Staff for the Hahns Peak/Bears Ears Ranger District. "It would be nice if everyone paid attention to the boundary signs and maps at winter trailheads. Most do, but there are still some who choose to do as they wish without regard for the winter travel regulations that are in place.

"Particularly, snowmobilers should pay attention to the area boundaries, based simply on how easy it is for them to cover large amounts of ground and get from Point 'A' to Point 'B'.

"We make the effort to inform users, but ultimately it is their responsibility to know where they are and to avoid areas that are off-limits," Foster said.

For information or maps about Routt National Forest winter recreation opportunities, please contact the Forest Service offices in Steamboat Springs at (970) 870-2299, Walden at (970) 723-8204, or Yampa at (970) 638-4516. Visitors can stop by any of the offices listed above to get more information or refer to posted signs at parking areas. Additionally, information is available at www.fs.usda.gov/mbr, or you can follow us on Twitter, @MBRNFsTBNG.

Maps are also available on the Routt Powder Riders website – www.routtpowderriders.com.

###