

September 2015



Ranger Roundup

Larry Cospers, Black Range District Ranger



Fall is my absolute favorite time of year especially on the Black Range. The days are warm and the nights and mornings are just chilly enough for a light jacket. Wood cutters, pinyon pickers and hunters are beginning their forays into the woods. It is a beautiful time of year to look at the changing colors of the aspens, Rocky Mountain maples and oaks. A trip on New Mexico State Highway 152 to Emory Pass and on to San Lorenzo portrays the magnitude of the 2013 Silver Fire. Wildflowers and the constantly changing regrowth and regeneration provide a living display of the earth's natural processes. Keep an eye out for the mule and white-tailed deer, elk and wild turkeys repopulating the burn area. You may even be lucky enough to see black bears.

If you travel north into the Winston, Chloride and Beaverhead area you will be sharing the woods with elk and deer hunters, some who travel from as far away as the east coast. During the fall, the bull elk will begin their ancient ritual of bugling to attract the cows. If you are lucky enough to hear a bugle, you may wonder at first what is making that haunting sound and then as you allow the quiet to set in and listen, you may hear a response.

A good side trip for those with high clearance four-wheel drives is Forest Road 226 up Chloride Canyon. You may see Native American petroglyphs, towering canyon walls and wildlife along the route. Monument Cabin is a nice rest stop (with toilet) and a beautiful picnic area nearby. The cabin was originally built to house the person working the lookout above you to the north. Each day they climbed the mountain to the lookout tower and returned each night; talk about a tough commute! We are exploring the possibility of making the cabin available for overnight rental by the public, so stay tuned.

When visiting the forest, you should go prepared. Always carry plenty of water (at least a gallon a person per day), some food, a way to build a fire and a warm sleeping bag. You will not be able to depend on your cell phone over much of the Black Range district and in some areas the next vehicle to come along could be days away. Your GPS may not always be accurate, so we recommend a map and checking on local conditions. We have Forest Service recreation maps and USGS topographical maps for sale at the Black Range District office at 1804 N. Date St., Truth or Consequences.