

WELCOME TO THE SAN JUANS

The San Juan National Forest may seem like a winter wonderland, but venturing into the backcountry in winter takes experience and skill. Most National Forest land is open for winter travel; however, some areas are closed to motorized vehicles. Although some trailheads are accessible by snowplowed roads, most National Forest roads are not snowplowed. General recreation maps (with specific information on which backcountry areas are open to motorized recreation and which are not) are available from our offices.



BE PREPARED

To explore the mountains safely, you need to know:

- the topography of the area you plan to visit;
- what kind of weather to expect;
- the backcountry route you plan to take;
- the limitations of your body and equipment;
- how to avoid avalanche danger (some trails in these tables are listed as having higher avalanche danger than others, but avalanche danger can be present elsewhere).

TAKE WITH YOU -

- A map & compass;
- Tools & spare equipment parts;
- Extra clothing & space blanket;
- A flashlight & first aid or survival kit;
- Nonperishable food & drinking water;
- An avalanche beacon & snow shovel.

AVALANCHE DANGER

- Check on avalanche conditions before you go out at this Website:
<http://geosurvey.state.co.us/avalanche>;
- Make sure everyone in your party carries & knows how to use an avalanche beacon;
- Do not go out in whiteout conditions - snow amount and wind contribute to avalanche danger;
- Keep track of the rate of snowfall, wind intensity & temperature changes - all affect the potential for avalanches;
- Avoid potential avalanche paths - ie., steep slopes where no trees are present, areas under or above cornices, wind-loaded leeward slopes, old slide paths, snow with cracks in it or that sounds hollow beneath your skis;
- If you see evidence of recent avalanches, suspect dangerous conditions;
- Cross potentially dangerous areas in single file;
- If you must ascend or descend a dangerous slope, go up or down the edge - do not traverse.

AVALANCHE SURVIVAL

- Discard all equipment;
- Make swimming motions - try to stay on top and to the side of the slide;
- As you come to a stop, try to make an air space in front of your face;
- Remember - the only sure way to survive an avalanche is to avoid it.

WINTER RECREATION TIPS

- Remember - motorized vehicles are prohibited in Wilderness Areas;
- Snowmobiles - use caution in areas shared with nonmotorized recreationists - do not drive over fences, signs or vegetation;
- Snowmobiles used on public lands in Colorado must be registered;
- Skiers - keep dogs in control and near you;
- Respect private property signs - do not trespass;
- Observe wildlife from a distance - during winter survival, they can be endangered by stress from human interaction & dog harassment;
- Pack out all your trash;
- Cross highways & roads with extreme caution;
- Don't drive automobiles on unplowed National Forest roads.



Many trails & areas are managed for multiple uses - so all forms of recreation are allowed. But, in other areas, motorized & nonmotorized recreation uses are segregated. Please respect closure signs - violators risk fines.

BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

- Call 970 247-8187 for a weather/avalanche forecast before you head out;
- Leave word of your destination & expected time of return & don't go out alone;
- Remember - your group is only as strong as its weakest member;
- Avoid hypothermia - dress in layers with a waterproof, windproof outer garment
- Don't cross frozen water unless you know the thickness of the ice.