



News Release

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

Contact: Hahns Peak/Bears Ears Ranger District, (970) 870-2299, Parks Ranger District (970) 723-2700, Yampa Ranger District, (970) 638-4160

Routt National Forest Roads Closed for Public Safety

(Steamboat Springs, May 23, 2011) – Record snowpack and continuing snow and rain has created unsafe conditions for public travel on Routt National Forest roads.

“Public safety is our first concern, followed closely by protection of natural resources” said Phil Cruz, Forest Supervisor for the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests. “Most roads are still closed due to snow and others are slick, muddy, flooded and dangerous to travel on. So, in coordination with our counties, we’ve decided to keep the roads closed until weather allows for safe travel that doesn’t damage roads and trails.” The Routt National Forest lies primarily within Jackson, Routt, Rio Blanco, Moffat and Grand counties.

Kent Crowder, Director of Emergency Management in Jackson County, said the road closures are a proactive measure to prevent people ending up in potentially dangerous situations. “We’ve had historic – and I mean historic – snowfall this year. There’s over 200 inches on Buffalo Pass and the majority hasn’t melted yet because temperatures have been cool this spring. Add to that the snow and rain that continue to fall and we’ve got a very high potential for flooding, washed out roads and other hazards.”

Mountain Data from National Resources Conservation Service SNOTEL sites indicate that many areas on the Routt National Forest have more than 200 percent of average snow water equivalent this year. A period of high temperatures can lead to elevated melt rates, flooding and landslides. During the melt, when rivers and streams are flowing at or near capacity, any precipitation can increase the risk of flooding.

The public is asked to respect the road closures and not endanger themselves or cause road damage by driving around gates, barricades or through snowbanks. The roads and recreation areas will be opened as soon as is safely possible. For more information about your national forests, please visit

<http://fs.usda.gov/mbr>.

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