



News Release

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests &
Thunder Basin National Grassland
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Calamity Pass, Owl Mountain and Helena Roads Open – Onion Park Road to Close Soon

(WALDEN, Colo.) September 5, 2011 – The US Forest Service has announced that visitors will now be able to access several popular roads on the Parks Ranger District that had been closed by road damage and flooding after this past winter's record-setting snowpack. "Fall in North Park is a great time to get out in the National Forest, and I'm glad we can reopen some roads that were closed for public safety and road damage after the high flows this spring," said District Ranger, Mike Wright.

NFSR 740 over Calamity Pass, between the Michigan and Illinois rivers, opened on September 2. However, visitors should be aware that this road will be closed again for hazard tree clearing operations beginning in late September. Several washouts and slides were repaired that had made this narrow road too dangerous for public travel. Although the damage has been repaired, drivers are still cautioned to travel with care, because few pullouts for passing are found along this primitive road. Once hazard tree removal begins, the road will be open only on weekends, between 5 p.m. Fridays and 7 a.m. Mondays. No through access will be allowed during weekday logging operations.

Major repairs were also needed on NFSR 792 where the South Fork Michigan River washed out a large culvert at the turnoff to Owl Mountain. The Tower Loop via Roads 790, 791 and 792 is now open for the rest of the summer and fall season. However, logging activities will resume in the Owl Mountain North project area this winter, and changes to the groomed snowmobile route near Gould can be expected again this year.

At the opposite end of North Park, NFSR 660 between Big Creek Lakes and the Helena Trailhead opened on September 1 after months of flooded conditions. Forest Service crews worked for several weeks to clear nearly 5 million gallons of snowmelt and rainwater from the road. Access south on the Helena Road is important for ditch riders and livestock permittees as well as hunters and trail riders. Note that the Helena Trailhead itself will remain closed this fall during construction of a trail bridge across the North Fork North Platte River that should begin in mid September and continue through October.

Also in the Big Creek Lakes area, hazard tree clearing operations may begin on NFSR 609 at Onion Park as early as this month. NFSR 609 will be closed at all times while the hazard tree operation is active. Private landowners and permittees should contact the Parks Ranger District for more information.

Whether hunting, camping or looking for fall colors, visitors should call or visit the Parks Ranger District for most current conditions. The Parks Ranger District office at 100 Main Street in Walden is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.. Information is also available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 970-723-2700, then selecting Option 5 for the Recreation and Roads Hotline, or at www.fs.fed.us/r2/mbr.

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