

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Where can I cut my Christmas tree?

A. In the Buffalo Creek tree cutting area on the South Platte Ranger District of the Pike National Forest.

Q. Do I need a permit to cut a Christmas tree in the Buffalo Creek tree cutting area?

A. Yes, you must have a permit for each tree you cut in the Buffalo Creek cutting area.

Q. When can I buy a permit to cut my Christmas tree?

A. Permit sales begin on Friday, November 1 and last until the permits are sold out, usually within about two weeks.

Q. How much does it cost for a permit?

A. Permits cost \$10. You need one permit for each tree you cut. You are allowed to purchase up to five (5) permits per family.

Q. Where can I buy a permit to cut my Christmas tree in the Buffalo Creek area?

A. Permits can be purchased at the South Platte Ranger District Office (19316 Goddard Ranch Court). **New this year:** you may pay with a credit card, cash or check. **PERMITS WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE IN THE CUTTING AREA!**

Q. Do I have to purchase a permit for a specific cutting day?

A. Yes, permits are sold for specific days. When purchasing a permit, you must select a specific day to cut your tree. Permits are checked as individuals enter the area and permit holders are only allowed to cut their tree on the day they have purchased their permit for.

Q. What if the day I want to cut my tree is sold out?

A. You will need to choose a different day.

Q. What if I can't cut my tree on the day that I have bought a permit for?

A. Any permit can be used on weekdays between December 2 - December 6, and on Monday - Friday, December 9 - December 13, and on the make-up date, Sunday, December 15.

Q. Are there other restrictions?

A. Only trees that are less than 6 inches across AT GROUND LEVEL and less than 25 feet tall can be cut. Cut the tree as close to the ground as possible. Leave stumps no more than 6 inches high. The entire tree must be removed from the forest, including all branches and stemwood. Permits must be attached and visible on tree as you leave the cutting area. Do not cut trees marked with signs, paint or flagging.

Q. What if I want to cut a very big tree.

A. Tree size in the Buffalo Creek area is limited to trees that are less than 6 inches in diameter at ground level and no more than 25 feet tall. Trees larger than 6 inches in diameter at ground level and more than 25 feet tall cannot be cut in the Buffalo Creek area. **Individuals cutting trees larger than 6 inches in diameter and/or more than 25 feet tall may be issued a Federal Petty Offense Violation Notice subject to up to 6 months in prison and/or a \$5,000 fine.**

Q. Are there any new areas open this year?

A. No new areas are open this year, however, the Buffalo Creek area is a very large area with a lot of valleys and hillsides that have many trees to choose from. Tree cutters can find a very large selection of trees by walking a little further off of the road to search for their tree.

Q. What kind of tree makes the best Christmas tree?

A. Options vary on what tree is best. Here are some general guidelines:

- Ponderosa Pines: Make fine Christmas trees, however their needles are very long and the cones have sharp bristles. Ponderosa Pines have strong branches that do not bend under the weight of heavier decorations.
- Douglas-Firs: Very good, best option due to their soft and silky needles. Douglas-firs have small branches and are best suited for smaller, light weight decorations.
- Lodgepole Pine: Also a fine tree, but hard to find in the Buffalo Creek area.
- Spruces: (Engelmann and Colorado Blue) are prized as beautiful Christmas trees; however, spruces have sharp pointed needles that some people find objectionable. Spruce trees are very difficult to find in the Buffalo Creek area.
- Rocky Mountain Juniper: Juniper trees can be found all over the Buffalo Creek area but they do not make good Christmas trees. They stink really bad when they warm up in your house.

Q. Do you have any tips on making the tree fire-resistant?

A. A dry holiday tree is a tragedy waiting to happen. As soon as you bring yours home, make it fire-resistant by following columnist Jack Eden's recipe:

- 2 gals. boiling water
- 2 cups (one pint bottle) clear corn syrup
- 2 oz. wetting agent (available at garden shops) or 2 oz. liquid Woolite
- 2 oz. cider vinegar
- 1/2 tsp. Borax
- 4 oz. liquid chlorine bleach

Stir mixture well in a 3 to 5 gallon container. Make a fresh straight cut about 2 inches across the base of the tree. Then place the tree in the solution.

It will take about five days for the tree to absorb the mix. When you bring the tree indoors, use the mix in the stand at all times. (Home Mechanix, Dec. 1989)

Q. I only have a 2WD vehicle. Is there any place I can go for my tree?

A. Most areas are accessible by 2WD, but you may have to hike, snowshoe, or ski in to find the best trees. If the weather is bad, tree cutters with 2WD vehicles may be limited to the main roads.

Q. What else do I need to know?

A. Dress warmly. Be prepared for changes in weather. **FOREST SERVICE ROADS MAY BE SNOWY AND ICY.** We recommend you carry chains and/or use a 4WD vehicle. High clearance may also be necessary. Have a full tank of gas. Pack out your trash. Do not trespass on private property. Be sure to allow plenty of daylight time to find your tree; it gets dark by 4:30pm as Christmas approaches.

Q. Will Smokey be at the tree cutting area?

A. Smokey plans on being in the tree cutting area on November 29, 30 and December 1, and also on December 7, 8, and 14. However, due to limited staffing, Smokey may not be able to make all the days the area is open.

Individuals cutting trees larger than 6" in diameter and/or more than 25 feet tall may be issued a Federal Petty Offense Violation Notice subject to up to 6 months in prison and/or a \$5,000 fine.

If you have further questions, please call the district office at (303) 275-5610