



News Release

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

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Snowmobilers Reminded of Their Responsibilities When Riding on the Routt National Forest

(STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, CO. - December 12, 2011) – As snowmobilers hit the trails for the 2011-12 season, Routt National Forest officials are reminding riders of their responsibilities, including staying out of wilderness areas.

Snowmobiles, like all motorized and mechanized equipment, are illegal in wilderness areas and each year violators are caught and cited by Forest Service and Colorado Parks law enforcement officers.

“It is a privilege to have so many freedoms when recreating on public lands, but with that privilege comes responsibility,” said Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer Mike Seawall. “Snowmobilers must know where they are riding at all times to avoid illegal trespass into wilderness or other areas where snowmobiles are prohibited.”

The minimum fine for riding snowmobiles in wilderness is \$525 and violations can cost riders up to \$5,000 and/or six months in jail. Seawall noted that offenders’ snowmobiles can also be impounded.

The 1964 Wilderness Act set aside wilderness as places to enjoy primitive adventure and solitude, as refuges from the sights and sounds of the mechanized world. Local wilderness areas include the Mount Zirkel, Sarvis Creek and Flat Tops.

Snowmobiling is a very popular activity in northern Colorado that attracts visitors from across the country and provides economic support to many local communities. The Routt National Forest provides around 350 miles of groomed snowmobile trails and hundreds of thousands of acres of off-trail areas on each of its three ranger districts for snowmobilers to enjoy.

Snowmobilers are also reminded of the following requirements as well as safety and etiquette recommendations:

- A free Backcountry Permit is required for snowmobilers riding in the Buffalo Pass Winter Recreation Area on the Hahns Peak-Bears Ears Ranger District. Maps of this area are available at the trailheads, online at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/mbr>, and at the Hahns Peak-Bears Ears Ranger District office in Steamboat Springs.
- Within the Mixed Use and Commercial Area in the Buffalo Pass Winter Recreation Area, snowmobiles must stay on signed, designated routes.
- Snow depths must be at least 12 inches to protect vegetation.
- Snowmobiles are required to have a valid Colorado Snowmobile Registration.
- There is no avalanche control and riders must know the snow conditions and their abilities. For avalanche information go to <http://avalanche.state.co.us>
- Due to the increased threat of falling trees from the pine beetle epidemic, visitors are reminded to stay out of the forest when strong winds could blow down trees. If you are already in the forest when winds kick up, head to a clearing out of reach of any potential falling trees.

- Conditions can change rapidly in the backcountry. Be prepared for extreme conditions, carry appropriate survival gear and be prepared for self-rescue.
- Riding under the influence of alcohol or drugs is illegal and enforced by Forest Service and State law enforcement officers.
- Snowcats have the right-of-way; snowmobiles should move to the side of the trail and pass snowcats slowly.
- Riders should be aware of other trail users and travel slowly around blind corners.

For more information about winter recreation on the Routt National Forest, please visit or contact our offices in Steamboat Springs at (970) 870-2299, Walden at (970) 723-8204, or Yampa at (970) 638-4516, or visit us at www.fs.usda.gov/mbr.

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