



Flathead National Forest

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Media Release

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Contact: Wade Muehlhof
406-758-5252
Teresa Wenum
406-758-5218

US Forest Service Hits Slopes to Encourage Kids to 'Discover the Thrill of the Chill'

KALISPELL, MT – The Flathead National Forest and the U.S. Forest Service is breathing new life into its Junior Snow Ranger program to get kids outside in the winter by showing them how to “dress like an onion” in layers to keep warm, make frozen bubbles using soap, investigate snowflakes under a magnifying glass and learn about the need for wildfire prevention even in chilly weather.

Flathead National Forest Supervisor Chip Weber says, “It’s great when we can engage children in the great outdoors, help them connect with our natural resources, and combine some fun outdoor activities with meaningful safety messages. We hope the participants have a great time becoming Junior Snow Rangers.”

The program will re-launch Friday, January 27, 2012, with Junior Snow Ranger books geared to fourth and fifth graders available at the Whitefish Mountain Resort and the Blacktail Mountain Ski Area, both on the Flathead National Forest, as well as locations on National Forest lands in five other states. The books are also available at the Flathead National Forest offices through the winter and free online through the agency’s Conservation Education office (<http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/conservationeducation/home>).

A group of students from Elrod Elementary School in Kalispell will be the first to go through the updated Junior Snow Ranger Program and will complete their activities Friday, January 27, 2012, during a snowshoe program at Whitefish Mountain Resort. Junior Snow Ranger, like the Junior Forest Ranger program, encourages children to complete activities in the 16-page book and then mail the enclosed official form to the Forest Service. In return, they receive a patch, a bandana and an I.D. card designating their new status as a Junior Snow Ranger.

The Forest Service Conservation Education and recreation programs geared toward young people support Let’s Move and Let’s Move Outside, programs initiated by First Lady Michelle Obama to reduce childhood obesity and related diseases. Forest Service programs also support President Obama’s America’s Great Outdoors Initiative to develop a 21st century conservation and recreation agenda. A component of the initiative is to engage young people.

For more information contact the Flathead National Forest Conservation Education Coordinator Teresa Wenum at 406-758-5218.

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