



George Washington & Jefferson National Forests
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Forest Service Reminds Visitors to the National Forests to be Safe this Summer

With Memorial Day weekend marking the beginning of the summer outdoors season, the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, reminds hikers and campers to be prepared during their outdoor adventures. The most effective way to prevent mishaps is to adequately prepare for the trip. Knowledge of the area, weather, terrain, limitations of your body, plus a little common sense can help to ensure a safe and enjoyable trip.

Every year across the country, hikers and campers end up lost or in trouble when they do not take the time to prepare for their outdoor excursions. The Forest Service cautions that having a cell phone in hand is not being prepared, especially since there is limited or no cell coverage across much of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. Even if headed out for just an hour, an injury, severe weather, or a wrong turn could become life threatening.

The following is a list of things to consider prior to heading out to the national forests:

- Travel with a companion, or let someone know where you are going
- Watch your footing while hiking
- Wear weather appropriate clothing
- Monitor local weather conditions
- Check your equipment prior to your trip
- Learn basic first aid
- Setup campsites before dark
- Purify drinking water prior to drinking
- Check campsite for potential hazards
- Check for any local rules and regulations concerning campfires, pets, etc.

A complete list of outdoor safety tips for recreational activities can be found at:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/safety/safety.shtml>. For specific information on recreating in the national forests, contact your local district ranger office at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/gwj/>.

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The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.