



News Release

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

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Fire and Hazard Tree Awareness Important this Labor Day

(Laramie, WY. - August 29, 2012) – Following multiple large fires this year, plus extensive work to mitigate impacts from bark beetles over the past few years, most roads, trails, campgrounds and picnic areas are now open on the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland (MBRTB). However, because many hazards still exist, visitors planning their final summer trip to the MBRTB are reminded to be aware of these and other potential dangers as well as their responsibility in making their stay safe and enjoyable.

Fire Still Poses a Threat - Although moderating fuel moisture and weather conditions have allowed fire restrictions to be lifted across most of the MBRTB (the Douglas Ranger District is the exception and remains in Stage 2 Restrictions), campers are still reminded to use extra care when building and maintaining campfires.

“Even when fire restrictions are not in effect, many wildland fires start each year as a result of carelessness with campfires,” said MBRTB Fire Management Officer Vern Bentley. “It is critical that those who choose to have a campfire do so responsibly.” To ensure visitors do their part to reduce the potential of a simple campfire turning into a dangerous wildland fire, the following basic fire safety rules should always be followed.

- Scrape dead grass and other flammable materials away from campfire sites.
- Keep campfires small and under control.
- Keep a shovel and a water container nearby to douse escaped embers.
- Put campfires dead out before leaving your campsite or going to sleep; this requires adding water and stirring hot coals until they are cool to the touch.
- Do not park vehicles in tall dry grass, since hot tailpipes can cause fine fuels to catch on fire.
- Do not use fireworks as they are strictly prohibited on federal lands.
- Remember that any ignition – cigarettes, campfires, gunfire, vehicles – could cause a wildland fire, under the right conditions.

Dead and Dying Trees Have Increased Risks - While many campgrounds and picnic areas have reopened following removal of beetle-killed trees, most undeveloped/general forest areas still contain extensive dead and dying trees that can fall without warning, endangering people and blocking roads. Recreationists should consider the following guidelines to reduce their risk when traveling through or recreating in beetle-killed areas.

- Be aware of your surroundings and avoid dense patches of dead trees.
- Stay out of the forest when weather forecasts call for strong winds. If you get caught in the forest when winds kick up, head to a clearing out of reach of any potential falling trees.
- Place tents and park vehicles in areas where they will not be hit if trees fall.

- When driving in remote areas of the forest, park close to a main road, rather than on a spur or one-way section. If trees fall across the road you may be trapped.
- Bring an ax or chainsaw to remove fallen trees from roads to avoid being trapped.
- Do not rely on cell phones for safety as there is no coverage in many areas of the forest.
- Work to remove beetle-killed trees is ongoing. Please be aware of and stay away from heavy equipment and log trucks. Also, please respect associated road closures and do not try to drive around barriers.

Other Notable Items and Reminders:

- The east side of Buffalo Pass on the Routt National Forest is closed for hazard tree removal; however, travelers can still access the summit from the Steamboat Springs side.
- Seasonal shooting restrictions on the Pole Mountain Unit of the Laramie Ranger District remain in effect through September 10.
- Following repairs and hazard tree removal, the popular loop that includes Forest Road 261 (a.k.a. Cedar Pass) Forest Road 100 on the Brush Creek-Hayden Ranger District is now open. Additionally, Forest Road 801, which runs through “Aspen Alley,” is now open following hazard tree removal work.
- Except for the east end of the Arapaho Trail, which remains closed due to poor road conditions following the Arapaho Fire, all recreation sites on the Douglas Ranger District are now open.
- Campground reservations may be made at some sites through *Reserve USA* by phone at 877-444-6777 or online at www.recreation.gov. Where available, reservations are recommended for holiday weekends such as Labor Day.

For more information contact the following Forest Service Offices, visit our website at

<http://fs.usda.gov/mbr>, or follow the MBRTB on Twitter, [@MBRNFsTBNG](https://twitter.com/MBRNFsTBNG).

Brush Creek-Hayden Ranger District Office

2171 State Highway 130
Saratoga, Wyo., (307-326-5258)

Laramie Ranger District Office

2468 Jackson Street
Laramie, Wyo., (307-745-2300)

Douglas Ranger District Office

2250 E. Richards St.
Douglas, Wyo., (307-358-4690)

Parks District Office

100 Main Street
Walden, Colo., (970-723-8204)

Hahns Peak-Bears Ears District Office

925 Weiss Drive
Steamboat Springs, Colo., (970-870-2299)

Yampa District Office

300 Roselawn Street
Yampa, Colo. (970-638-4516)

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