



## News Release

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

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### **Forest Service Urges Public Responsibility with Late-Season Open Roads**

**(Laramie, WY. - December 6, 2012)** – A dry, warm start to winter in southeast Wyoming has resulted in many U.S. Forest Service roads remaining accessible and open later than usual.

These open roads are a bonus for forest users who want to recreate and access areas they normally cannot drive wheeled vehicles to this time of year. For example, those searching for Christmas trees can cut in areas that normally cannot be accessed.

However, early-winter roads can be very similar to late-spring roads in that conditions are often wet and muddy, which sometimes prompts the temptation to travel off road.

The Laramie Ranger District would like to remind the public that off-road travel is not allowed on the Medicine Bow National Forest.

Illegal motor vehicle travel is causing serious resource damage in many areas on the Forest, notably the Pole Mountain area. Efforts have been made by the Forest Service and a wide variety of volunteers and partners, such as local Conservation Districts, to restore areas where damage has occurred.

One way of accomplishing that reclamation is to fence off areas where illegal off-road damage has taken place. This work is often assisted by volunteers building buck and pole fence.

Within the last few weeks several large sections of that type of fencing have been intentionally destroyed multiple times by vandals, or those who want to off-road in the area, specifically along the 712.A and 707.AA roads.

“The Pole Mountain unit is one of the most highly used recreation areas on the National Forest,” said Laramie District Ranger Frank Romero. “We manage for multiple uses of that area and recognize that on legal roads and trails motorized travel is a legitimate, popular recreation activity. Unfortunately, there are those who take their vehicles into places where they shouldn’t be and resource damage is now a big concern on Pole Mountain. It has the attention of our law enforcement and we will be focusing on the issue in multiple ways.”

Protection of natural resources is a priority of U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement and patrols are being increased in areas where abuse is apparent. Officers will be employing the use of trail cameras and using inter-agency cooperation. As a last resort, if abuse and damage continue, roads could be closed. All Forest visitors are urged to take care of their public lands and are encouraged to report any violations they witness.

Refer to the Forest Service’s free Motor Vehicle Use Maps for roads, trails, and areas that are designated open to motor vehicle travel.

Motor vehicle users of all kinds should resist the temptation to travel outside of designated routes and through muddy, rutted areas. Skirting an obstacle leads to widening the route, which can cause resource damage, including harm to streams, lakes and wetlands. Increased erosion and sedimentation can negatively impact wildlife and fish habitat, as well as water quality.

For additional information on recreational use or to obtain a free Motor Vehicle Use Map, please contact the Laramie Ranger District office at 307-745-2300 or visit <http://fs.usda.gov/mbr>.

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