



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service
Northern Region

Rexford Ranger District
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Fortine Ranger District



FIELD NOTES

(Rexford and Fortine Ranger Districts' quarterly newsletter to be distributed in December, March, June, and September)
September 2013 (distributed in November due to furlough)

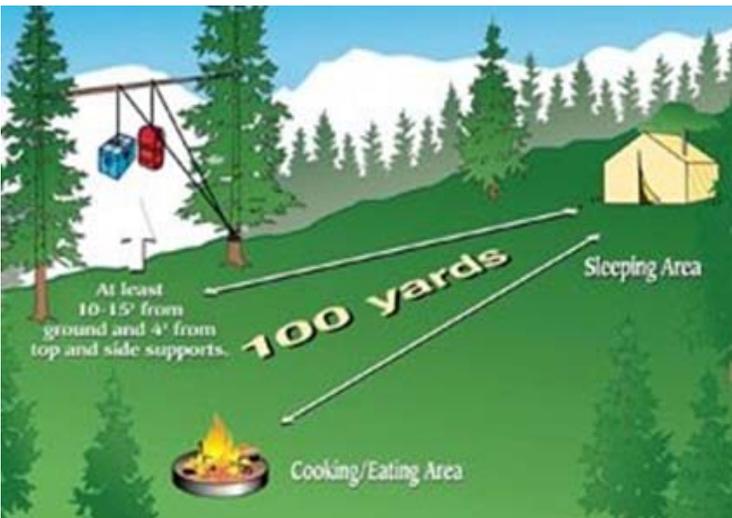
Issue #4

THE OUTDOOR AMUSEMENTS (Pleasant outdoor activities that entertain and rejuvenate.) - Hunting season is upon us.

Given that the Kootenai National Forest (KNF) is home to both black and grizzly bears it is important to know how to keep yourself safe in bear country.

Hunters typically try to be very quiet, but this can surprise bears. Surprised bears can be dangerous. Be alert to your surroundings and note signs of recent bear activity.

When recreating, it's always a good idea to carry bear spray and know how to use it. It can be very effective at defending yourself from bear attacks and is non-lethal. It sprays out in a large cloud and also works on moose and mountain lions. With it you don't have to worry about using your weapon in a close-quartered, chaotic situation or killing an animal you aren't hunting for. For more information see <http://www.igbconline.org/index.php/safety-in-grizzly-country/bear-spray>.



Once you've harvested your game, make sure to follow the regulations listed in the KNF Food Storage and Sanitation Order which requires any carcass within 1/2 mile of a sleeping area or within 200 yards of a trail to be stored appropriately. Appropriate storage includes inside a closed vehicle, a hard-sided building, a commercial bear-resistant container, hung 10 feet off the ground and 4 feet away from vertical supports, or surrounded by approved electric fencing. All other bear attractants, including garbage, processed pet or livestock feed, human food, dishes, and toiletries must be stored appropriately at night or whenever you're not within 100 feet. When in hunting camp,

portable electric fencing is a great solution. String it around the entire area (or just the storage area) and all attractants, including harvested game, will be secure. Remember, bears are attracted to beverages too so don't forget to put the cooler away.

ROAD RESTRICTIONS - Roads that normally would have been opened to motorized use on December 1 will not be opened until December 2 in 2013. This will ensure the road restrictions continue to provide wildlife habitat security during the big game rifle season, which does not end until dusk on December 1. A special closure order is in place for this extra day and is available at the District Offices. For additional information on road restrictions obtain a Motor Vehicle Use Map, available at the District Offices.

FOREST PLANNING - The Kootenai National Forest Land Management Plan Revision is entering the final stages. Documents now available to the public include the draft Record of Decision, revised Forest Plan, and Final Environmental Impact Statement. These documents will guide management decisions on the Forest for the next 10-15 years. Electronic copies are available on DVDs or hard copies can be obtained at Forest Service offices. Documents can also be accessed at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/kootenai/landmanagement/planning>.

The Revision is in the objection period whereby those that provided substantive comments on the draft can object to the decision. All objections will be reviewed and considered prior to the final decision. After the objection period ends individuals can also identify themselves as an Interested Person and can take part in the discussions to resolve the objections. For more information contact the local Ranger Districts or Ellen Frament at 406-283-7660.

MORE OUTDOOR AMUSEMENTS (Pleasant outdoor activities that entertain and rejuvenate.) - All the Ranger Districts on the Kootenai National Forest offer the “Hunters with a Disability” program designed to provide special, additional controlled motorized access on selected currently-restricted Forest roads. This access is only for hunting and is only for those individuals that meet the program requirements. This program is provided only during the general big game rifle season, this year from October 26th through December 1st.

Three elements are required to qualify for a permit under this program on all or parts of the Kootenai National Forest. Participants must:

- ◆ Hold a Montana Disabled Resident Conservation License
- ◆ Hold a valid Montana hunting license
- ◆ Hold a Montana State Permit to Hunt from a Vehicle (non-ambulatory) and display a Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks orange “Disabled Hunter” placard.

Call or visit the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks office in Kalispell for more information regarding the licenses mentioned above.

When participants provide the documents listed above, a district access permit can be issued to the participant on a road by road basis. Participants are required to post the gated road with a sign showing they are currently using the road. The roads utilized for this program are posted prior to the hunting season to inform all hunters that the road is part of the program.



Different roads across the Districts are provided for this program in response to variable program use levels and local public concerns. The districts review their specific elements each year and can make changes based on past use and public comments. Road packets explaining the districts program more fully, and listing available roads on the rest of the forest are typically available in mid- September. For more information on this program locally, call either ranger district or for information on programs on the rest of the forest, call the supervisors office in Libby.

Forest Service Motto: **Caring for the land and serving people.**

THE FAUNA (Animals, especially the animals of a particular region or period, and considered as a group.) - The wolverine is the largest land-dwelling member of the mustelidae family and inhabits portions of the Rexford and Fortine Ranger Districts. This stocky, muscular carnivore resembles a small bear with a short neck and legs and a bushy tail, but is more closely related to the weasel and marten, more commonly known animals in this family. Its feet are proportionately large and contain sharp, curved, robust claws. Body color varies from dark brown to black, with distinctive blond to reddish bands extending from the shoulder, along the side, ending on the rump. A light-silver facial mask is distinct in some individuals. Wolverines have thick, dark, oily fur which is highly hydrophobic, making it resistant to frost. This has led to its traditional popularity among hunters and trappers as a lining in jackets and parkas in Arctic conditions. The adult wolverine is about the size of a medium dog and can weigh from 17 to 27 pounds with a male sometimes weighing twice as much as a female.

Wolverines live in rugged, remote country, spending most of their time in high elevations near or above the timberline. Wolverines hunt or scavenge a wide variety of animal species. In summer, high-elevation rock slopes provide



Wolverine (*Gulo gulo*)

small mammals such as ground squirrels and marmots, while adjacent forested areas provide snowshoe hare, mice, voles and porcupine. The wolverine has been recorded killing prey such as adult deer, however, insect and plant material is an occasional part of their diet. As snow deepens in the high country wolverines move to lower elevations in search of dead animals (carrion), on which they depend almost exclusively in winter and early spring. Whether eating live prey or carrion, the wolverine's feeding style appears voracious, leading to the nickname of "glutton" (also the basis of the scientific name).

Wolverines do not hibernate, and are especially adapted for winter existence, with large feet like snowshoes that allow them to stay on top of deep snow, and crampon-like claws that enable them to climb up and over steep cliffs and snow-covered peaks. Wolverines are nomadic in behavior, traveling widely across the landscape in search of food, or during the breeding season, in search of potential mates. Male wolverine in Glacier National Park routinely travel more than 93 miles in a week.

Females use two types of dens, natal dens where 2-3 kits are born in mid-March, and maternal dens where kits are reared. Both types of dens are formed by natural cavities formed from down trees or within boulder fields, and both are under a layer of snow 6.5 - 10 feet deep that persists until late spring. Young may be moved to several different maternal dens during this period.

Literature cited includes: Foresman, K.R. 2012. Mammals of Montana, 2nd Edition

FIRES - In 2013, through the month of October, Fortine and Rexford Ranger District personnel responded to 38 local fires, as shown in the table to the right.

In the last 14 years there has been an average of 41 fires per year on the two Ranger Districts. The lowest number of fires in that time period were in 2011 (11 fires) and the most fires were in 2000 (75 fires). In the last 5 years there has been a total of 130 fires on the two Districts.

The Forest Service has been designated by the State of Montana as the party responsible for fire suppression on the vast majority of the local private and state land, excluding structures, through a Cooperative Agreement.

BURNING - Burn permits are not required for the month of November. Each day burners need to verify air quality allows for burning. To verify air quality call 1-800-225-6779 or see www.smokemu.org. The local area is in Airshed #1 and a 4-6 mile radius around Eureka, is Impact Zone E.

Open burning is not permitted in the months of December—February.

2013 Fires on Rexford and Fortine Ranger Districts, Through October

Start Date	Incident Name	Cause	Size			General Area of Fire
			Forest Service Acres	State of MT	Private Acres	
3/11	Trails End	Person			2	Sophie Lake Area
3/12	Whitetail Dr	Person			0.25	Sophie Lake Area
3/19	Ballpark	Person			0.5	Hwy 93, North of Eureka
3/25	Downwind	Person			6.5	Airport
3/25	Survival	Person		3.5		Hwy 93, North of Eureka
3/27	Grave Cr	Person			3	Grave Creek
4/1	Circle J	Person			5	Hwy 93, South of Eureka
4/1	Weigh Station	Person			2	Hwy 93, North of Eureka
4/1	93 South	Person			0.8	Hwy 93, South of Eureka
4/1	Meadow Cr	Person			5.5	Meadow Creek
4/3	Ballpark 2	Person			0.75	Hwy 93, North of Eureka
4/12	Water Tower	Person			1	Eureka FS Protection
4/15	Fishing Access	Person	0.1			Pidgeon Bridge
4/18	Lower Edna	Person			20	Edna Creek
4/18	Plum Creek	Person			2	Old Mill site
4/24	West Road	Person			8	West Road
4/26	Green Basin	Person			0.25	West Kootenai
4/26	Sinclair Cr	Person			0.1	Lower Sinclair Creek
5/4	Border	Person	0.25			Gateway Boat Camp
5/8	Lost Lake	Person	0.1			Old Highway
5/11	Little Feet	Person	0.25			Grave Creek Operations Fire
6/5	Blue Rhino	Person	0.2			Hwy 37 and Big Bridge
7/4	River Cracker	Person			0.1	River Walk
7/14	Olsen Hill	Person	0.25			West Kootenai
7/15	River Walk	Person			0.1	River Walk
7/19	Hay Graver	Person			3	Grave Creek
7/19	Outhouse Hill	Person			0.1	Douglas Hill
7/23	Eureka Hill	Person	0.5		0.5	Lower Sinclair Creek
7/25	Edna Mtn	Person		0.1		Edna Creek
7/28	Pinkham Falls	Person	0.1			Pinkham Falls
8/14	Maxine	Lightning	0.1			Big Creek
8/17	Pinkham	Lightning	0.7			Pinkham Creek
8/22	South Pluid	Person			0.3	
8/28	Young Creek	Person	0.1			West Kootenai
9/2	Charlie Creek	Lightning	0.1			Big Creek
9/9	Petered Out	Lightning	0.1			Peter Gulch/Warex
9/12	Scotty Mtn	Lightning	0.1			Grave Creek
10/7	Furlough	Person			0.4	North of Eureka
TOTALS			2.95	3.6	62.15	

CHRISTMAS TREE

PERMITS - Are for sale at the District Offices. Permits cost \$5 and a household can purchase up to three permits. A permit is needed for each tree.

