



NEWS RELEASE

US Dept of
Agriculture

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Black Mesa Ranger District implements winter closure order that includes Forest Road 300

Springerville, AZ; December 11, 2013— Snowy weather has arrived in the Rim Country leaving many forest roads impassable and prompting a temporary winter closure of the Rim Lakes Recreation Area including vehicle access to Woods Canyon and Bear Canyon Lakes. At this time Willow Springs and Black Canyon Lakes will remain open but may be closed without further notice. This winter closure order applies to wheeled motor vehicles only. The forest will remain open for winter recreational activities, including, but not limited to the use of snow machines. These closures are placed to protect forest resources and safeguard forest snowmobile routes. The snow route originates at the Rim Top Trailhead off of forest road 300 and extends north. Access to the snow route by car and truck traffic will be restricted by closed gates on forest roads 300, 169, 34, 63, and 70A.

This closure order will limit access to Christmas tree cutting area 1A on the Black Mesa Ranger District to snowmobiles only. Christmas Tree Cutting area 1B will remain open and accessible to most motor vehicles. Christmas tree permits will be available at The Mogollon Rim Visitor's Center this Friday and Saturday only, December 13th and 14th from 9:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.

For general forest travel on open roads, it is important to remember that forest roads are not maintained or regularly patrolled during the winter months. Traveling on forest roads is not advised during the winter and is at your own risk. When exploring the forest in winter don't overestimate the ability of your vehicle. If a road looks impassable, it likely is. If you find that you are leaving ruts in the road, please reevaluate your need to enter the forest. Visitors found to be causing ruts or other damage on or off forest roads are subject to fines for resource damage and are responsible for any costs incurred if they need a tow truck to pull their vehicle back onto solid ground. No extraordinary measures will be taken to help remove personal vehicles and equipment that becomes stuck on snowy forest roads. If you must venture into the forest, four wheel drive vehicles are recommended, and always carry extra clothing, blankets, food, water, and a cell phone. Remember to tell friends and family which roads you plan to travel and when you expect to be home. Plan ahead and be safe.

For further information on forest conditions, call the Black Mesa Ranger District at (928) 535-7300 to inquire about road conditions and the temporary winter closure. The closure order and map are posted on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest website www.fs.usda.gov/asnf. The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) is also a source for road information across the state and their web address is <http://www.az511.gov>.

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