Order#0412-457

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE
PAYETTE NATIONAL FOREST
NEW MEADOWS RANGER DISTRICT

Winter Travel Restrictions

(Granite Mountain Over-Snow Vehicle Closure)

PROHIBITIONS:

Pursuant to 36 CFR 261.50 (a) and (b) the following act is prohibited on the area described in this order, all within the administrative boundaries of the New Meadows Ranger District, Payette National Forest. This order will be in effect from January 15, 2014 through March 31, 2014.

1. Possessing or operating any over-snow vehicle, as defined under 36 CFR 212.1, within the area described below. **36 CFR 261.56**

EXEMPTIONS:

Pursuant to 36 CFR 261.50 (e), the following persons are exempt from this order:

1. Persons with a permit specifically exempting them from the effect of this Order.
2. Personnel of Brundage Snow-Cat operating an over-snow vehicle as authorized in the special use authorization for the Brundage Mountain ski area.
3. Any Federal, State, or local officer, or member of an organized rescue or fire fighting force in the performance of an official duty.
4. Federal or State administrative personnel in the performance of an official duty.
5. Operation or possession of over-snow vehicles on the shared Cat skiing and Snowmobile route shown on the attached area closure map.

AREA DESCRIPTION:

The Granite Mountain Over-Snow Vehicle Closure Area is described as the area **(including all roads within the closure area with the exception of the shared snowmobile and Cat-ski route)** beginning at the south-west corner of Goose Lake continuing south approximately .25 miles to the intersect with Forest Trail #172 continuing west along Trail #172 to the intersection of Six Mile Creek, continuing west along Six Mile Creek until it turns south in Section 20, T.20N, R.2E follow west/north-west approximately .5 miles to the intersection of Forest Road #294, then continuing north along Forest Road #294 to the intersection with the un-named creek on the east side of the road in, Township 20 North, Range 2 East, Section 5, then continuing along the top of the ridge extending south/south-east through Township 20 North, Range 2 East, Section 10 to the west boundary of Township 20 North, Range 2 East, Section 11, continuing north along the boundary between Sections 10 & 11, and in Township 20 North, Range 2 East, Sections 2 & 3 to the intersection with Forest Trail #165, then continuing east along Forest Trail

#165, approximately .75 mi. to the 7000' elevation level, then continuing east/south-east approximately ½ mi. to the northern end of Goose Lake, then continuing south along the western edge of Goose Lake to the point of beginning.

(See Attached Map).

All areas affected by this Order are within the administrative boundaries of the New Meadows Ranger District, Payette National Forest, Adams County, Idaho, Boise Meridian.

PURPOSE:

The closure of portions of the Granite Mountain area to over-snow vehicle use for the time period of January 15, 2014 – March 31, 2014, preserves the non-motorized recreation experience and safety of all visitors using the area.

IMPLEMENTATION:

1. This Order will be in effect from January 15, 2014 through March 31, 2014.
2. A map identifying the closure areas is attached and made part of this Order.
3. Any violation of this order is punishable by a fine of not more than $5,000 for an individual or $10,000 for an organization, and/or imprisonment for not more than six (6) months. [Title 16 USC 551, Title 18 USC 3571(b)(6), and Title 18 USC 3581(b)(7)].
4. This Order supersedes any previous orders prohibiting the same acts covered by this Order in the above-described area.
5. Further information regarding this Order may be obtained at the Payette National Forest Supervisor's Office located in McCall, Idaho, 208-634-0700 or at the New Meadows Ranger Station located in New Meadows, ID, 208-347-0300.

Done at McCall, Idaho, this 13th day of November, 2013

KEITH B. LANNOM
Forest Supervisor
Payette National Forest

ASSESSMENT of NEED and ENFORCEMENT PLAN
PAYETTE NATIONAL FOREST
NEW MEADOWS RANGER DISTRICT
Granite Mountain Over-Snow Vehicle Closure

Background and Intent:

The PNF has roads, trails and areas that have travel restrictions regarding where and when motorized use may be used. In some cases types of travel are restricted to insure user safety. Restrictions have been developed to protect resources (to reduce runoff and sedimentation, provide wildlife and fish security, reduce hunting vulnerability for game species, reduce degradation of water quality, protect riparian areas, and to restore or protect habitat for Threatened, Endangered, Candidate and Sensitive species), and to provide socio/economic benefits (improve safety for Forest visitors, provide a mix of experience opportunities, reduce the cost of road and trail maintenance and protect investments in recreation and transportation infrastructure). Restrictions reflect results of decisions made through administrative and NEPA processes across the Forest.
In the past, both summer and winter restrictions on motorized travel on the PNF were displayed on the 1995 Visitor Map accompanied and updated by the yearly back-roads map, enforced through a Special Order.
Publication of the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) in accordance with 36 CFR 212.56, in July 2009, completed the motorized route designation for use of motor vehicles on the PNF during the non-snow season and replaced the 1995 Visitor Map and updated back-roads map. Winter travel was to be covered with the winter over-snow decision (November 2010), but that decision was appealed and remanded back to the Forest in February of 2011, leaving the Forest with no winter travel map. The proposed Granite Mountain Special Order, along with the Forest-Wide Special Order completed in 2012 (#0412-415) that closed portions of the Forest to over-snow motorized use for the above mentioned reasons, are needed to regulate the use of vehicles over-snow that are not covered under the recently issued MVUM and summer travel plan decisions.

The Forest has worked for five years in order to develop a winter travel plan that would provide a quality recreation experience for both motorized and non-motorized user groups. The winter travel plan decision would have closed four new areas to over-snow vehicle use, of which, Granite was one. The over-snow vehicle use decision was remanded back to the Forest in February of 2011, which meant none of the four areas would be closed in the future. The many individuals and organizations, including the Winter Recreation Forum that worked on the winter travel plan approached Forest managers asking them to consider some type of strategy that would allow for non-motorized use of a portion of the Granite Mtn. area for back-country skiing. This was one of the decision points in the Over-Snow Vehicle Use Record of Decision that had wide spread support. The Winter Recreation Forum (a group of both motorized and non-motorized users) and other partners want to implement part of their effective collaboration to the benefit of all winter recreation groups. Forest Recreation Staff worked with the Winter Recreation Forum to draft a recommendation for the Payette Forest Supervisor to consider. This Special Order is a result of this collaboration. Comments on the 2012 Granite Special Order (0412-414) were gathered over the 2012 winter season. The Forest held another Public Open House on October 25th, 2012 to gather additional comments on the success or failure of the 2012

Granite Over-snow motored use closure. Comments were primarily in support of the closure continuing. The Forest Supervisor, with the support of the McCall Winter Recreation Forum group, made the decision to re-issue the same closure area identified in the 2013 Granite closure for one more year to enable another year of monitoring to see if it is a success. Full scale winter travel planning will not be addressed again on the Forest in the near future and this group and the Forest agrees that for safety and other reasons, this change needs to be made.

Proposal:

The Payette National Forest (PNF) proposes to issue a one year over-snow season special order that would modify the restrictions to over-snow motorized use currently in effect (451,200 acres closed to motorized use), in three areas. The proposed changes are:

- Granite Mountain: 4730 acres to be closed to over-snow motor vehicle use from January 15 – March 31 for the 2014 season.
- Hitt Mountain: 764 acres to be opened to over-snow motor vehicle use for the entire 2013-2014 winter season.
- Squaw Point: 1234 acres to be opened to over-snow motor vehicle use for the entire 2013-2014 winter season.

All other existing non-motorized over-snow use areas would be re-instated.
1,998 acres in the areas around Hitt Mtn. and Squaw Point would be opened (change from existing condition) to over-snow motor vehicle use for the entire 2013-2014 season. 4730 acres in the Granite Mtn. area would be closed to over-snow motor vehicle use from January 15 – March 31 (75 days).
451,200 acres are currently closed to over-snow vehicle use. The modifications above would adjust the number of total acres closed to over-snow motorized use to 453,932 acres for the 2013-2014 Winter Season. This acreage figure does not include the acres within the PNF portion of the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness, which are closed by law to over-snow motorized use.

Monitoring:
Included in the proposal is a **monitoring** strategy. The Forest proposes to monitor the following items for one season while the Special Order is in effect.

1. Was the Granite Mountain area closure during the right timeframe, too short or too long?
2. Did the Granite Mountain area closure provide the desired non-motorized recreation opportunities?
3. Was the Granite Mountain area closure obeyed? How many intrusions were documented? (Brundage Mountain Cat-ski to assist in the monitoring).
4. Was safety of the back-country skier improved with this order? How?

Enforcement Plan:
The PNF will focus its enforcement plan efforts primarily on the new Granite Mountain closure to motorized use (except as authorized under a special use permit, i.e. Brundage Snow-Cat; or other type of written authorization) , which is effect from January 15 – March 31. The Forest will have both maps and brochures available displaying the closure at the West Face and Upper

Elevation parking lots. Forest-wide maps reflecting the entire special order travel restrictions will also be posted at and available at these trailheads. Brundage Snow-Cat Program will be responsible for helping post and maintain closure signs along portions of the Granite closure boundary. Brundage Snow-Cat will build and maintain snow-cat roads along the north and eastern boundaries of the closure that will also serve as the on-the-ground boundary. The Granite closure area was specifically designed to utilize the already existing and approved snow-cat roads for these boundaries. The southern boundary is Six Mile Creek, and the western boundary is road 294, both are easily definable geographic and man-made features, which should help snowmobilers easily recognize the boundaries on the ground. The Forest will station personnel at both West Face and Upper Elevation parking lots throughout the closure season when possible, to hand out brochures and maps of the closure and discuss the rationale behind the closure with visitors at the parking lot prior to them leaving on their snowmobile trip. The closure area and roads affected by this order will be patrolled by LEO's, FPO's and field personnel. The Forest will monitor the closure boundaries and see which ones are effective and which ones have motorized intrusions during the closure period of January 15 – March 31.

Action	Responsible Official	Date
Prepare proposed order	Amy Ohme	9/18/2013
Review proposed order Review proposed order	Supervisory LEO RO LE&I and OGC	2013 2013
Approve proposed order	Forest Supervisor	When Signed
Post order in accordance with 36 CFR 261.51	District Staff	By 1/15/14
Prepare news release for local media describing the order and management objectives	Forest PAO Staff	As needed
Educational contacts will be made to obtain voluntary compliance as needed	Appropriate Staff LEO/field going personnel	On going

Approved for Implementation

Keith B. Lannom

KEITH B. LANNOM
Forest Supervisor
Payette National Forest

11/13/13
DATE

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