

Current Conditions – Rifle Ranger District

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Christmas Tree Information: Please be cautious of where you are cutting and look at the maps. Cutting is not allowed at Battlement Mesa Trailhead due to being on private property and you will have to hike to the reservoir to get a tree. Rifle Creek/ Little Box/ Coulter Mesa Road, you will have to hike past the gate to get a tree. **DO NOT cut in the State Park or Rifle Mountain Park as these are not federal lands.** Look at recreation.gov or call the office to see what rules there are if you are unsure.

Current Condition Overview: The Rifle Ranger Station is open Monday through Friday, 8am to 4:30 except for Federal Holiday. Please see Google for days that are closed on Federal Holidays. Currently there is no snow in lower elevations but once it reaches 8,000 feet and above there is an average of two inches. 10,000 feet and above has about six inches. Gates to access the forest closed on 11/25/2025, except for two roads, see below.

Campgrounds: Two campgrounds are located on this district. Meadow Lake and Meadow Ridge campgrounds are closed for the winter season and will be reopening in late May. Meadow Lake is expected to be refilled by then by Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

E-bikes: E bikes are considered motorized vehicles and are only allowed on trails marked as such on the MVUM or on roads when they open to **off highway vehicle use.** **Under winter conditions, e-bikes are not allowed past closed gates or snow barriers.**

Fire Restrictions: The White River National Forest and Rifle Ranger Station have no fire restrictions as of this date. Campfires are allowed and please follow campfire safety to ensure no wildfires pop up this fall. **We are currently in low fire danger.**

Forest Roads: All forest service roads on the Rifle Ranger Station will be closed for winter recreation and to reduce damage to the roads. **Buford New Castle (FS 245) and West Divide (FS 800) will be open for Christmas Tree gathering until snow makes these roads unsafe.**

Please refer to the table below which will be updated regularly as to updated winter conditions. **During winter use, only over the snow vehicles or tracked UTVs are allowed past gates and barriers.** OHV use requires current state registration through Colorado Parks and Wildlife– please refer to the Winter Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) for where gate closures are and where over the snow vehicles are allowed to go. The MVUMs can be found outside of any district front door or can be found on the app Avenza for free.

Hiking Trails: Most trails may have variable conditions including downed trees from snow. Please see trails conditions at the bottom of this report. Many of our trails allow for cross-country skiing and hiking. Please bring plenty of water and safety equipment.

Dirt & 4WD Roads	Current Conditions
Garfield County Forest Roads	
Buford New Castle - FS # 245, 860, 830 822,820, 845, 819.	<p>OPEN to highway legal vehicles only- NO ATVs, UTVs or any other non-highway vehicle. Under the current opening, we are allowing cars on the road and not snowmobiles or tracked UTVs yet.</p> <p>The road will remain open to Buford until snowpack makes it unpassable.</p> <p>Current Condition: Muddy, some snow in shaded areas and near Meadow Lake.</p>
Uncle Bob – FS # 801, 804	<p>Closed to all vehicles on the 801 and not accessible to the 804 from CR 311. Can also be accessed from CR 313 when East Divide is open.</p> <p>804 Closed to winter recreation until there is snow accumulation. The gate will be closed at Mosquito Lake to vehicles and will reopen for winter recreation.</p> <p>Current Condition: Dry in lower end near Cayton Ranger Station, small ruts about 3 inches deep, muddy near Mosquito Mountain.</p>
Coulter Lake Guest Ranch – FS # 832, 832.2B, 832.2X, 835, 832.2D, 833, 211, 811, 848, 837, 839	<p>Closed to ALL Vehicles. Will Reopen for winter recreation once there is snow accumulation.</p> <p>Current Conditions: 2 inches of snow in shaded areas and muddy.</p>
Blair Mountain – FS # 601, 651	<p>Closed to all vehicles. Will be open to winter recreation when there is enough snow.</p> <p>Current Conditions: 6 inches of snow and muddy in open areas.</p>
Elk Lakes - FS # 640, 601,651,601.2C, 601.2A, 636	<p>Closed to all vehicles.</p> <p>Current Conditions: 6 inches of snow and muddy.</p>

Beaver Creek- FS # 824

Closed to all vehicles. Will reopen when Cline tops reopen for winter recreation or when Coffee Pot Road (FSR 600) is open to the East.

	Current conditions: Muddy, little snow.
Battlement Mesa- FS # 847	<p>Closed to all vehicles. There is no access from 847. No Christmas Tree cutting in this area due to it being private property with a land easement that allows for the trailhead.</p> <p>Over the snow recreation can be accessed from the Grand Mesa side to the South, but much of the area is restricted. Please see MVUM for where winter recreation is allowed.</p> <p>Current conditions: Snowy.</p>
Cline tops- FS # 603, 651, 653. 2A, 603.1R, 603.1A, 603.1E, 603.1P, 603.1M	<p>Closed to all vehicles. Will reopen to winter recreation when there is snow accumulation.</p> <p>Current Conditions: Dry at the bottom and there is a little snow on top of the plateau.</p>
East Road Gulch- FS# 816	<p>Open to all vehicles. This route is plowed during winter snow.</p> <p>Current Conditions: Dry road.</p>
Little Box Canyon- FS # 825	<p>Closed to all vehicles. Will be open to winter recreation. Gate is closed at forest boundary.</p> <p>Current Conditions: Rocky and narrow road. Dry. Need high clearance vehicles when there is no snow.</p>
Transfer trail – FS # 602, 635, 638, 631, 632.1C, 637, 637.1A, 632, 614, 233.2	<p>Closed to all vehicles. Will be opened by BLM for winter recreation when ready.</p> <p>Current Conditions: Muddy.</p>
Haystack mountain and Quaker Mesa – FS# 814, 808, 800, 812	<p>Closed to all vehicles. Past the gate will be open winter recreation.</p> <p>Current conditions: Dry on 814 road with small ruts.</p>
Reservoir Park – FS# 843, 801, 801.2A	<p>Closed to all vehicles. Will be open with East Divide opening for winter recreation.</p> <p>Current conditions: Muddy with small ruts. Not too difficult roads.</p>
Cayton/ West Divide – FS# 814, 800	<p>Open to all vehicles. Will remain open for as long as possible with snow. Will be closed at the gate to Haystack Mountain and Baldy Mountain/ Mosquito Lake.</p>

	<p>Current conditions: Please do not stop on the road at the private property. You can walk up to Cayton Ranger Station to see the old building.</p> <p>Muddy with smaller ruts. When it rains, the road is very slick even with AWD.</p>
West Mamm- 818	<p>Closed to all vehicles and no winter recreation allowed.</p> <p>Current conditions: Snowy and muddy.</p>
Meadow lake – FS# 601, 601.4E, 832,821,648,821.1B, 650, 649,647, 601.2F. 601.2E	<p>Open to all vehicles. Will be closing once BNC #245 closes at West Elk Trailhead. No Christmas Tree cutting in the Meadow Lake area due to construction and campgrounds.</p> <p>Current Conditions: 6 inches of snow and muddy.</p>

Trail	Conditions – More information can be found on the app CO TREX
Cherry Creek and Mansfield #2256 and #2291	<p>Difficulty: Difficult</p> <p>Elevation gain: 1,843 feet</p> <p>Current conditions: Crew removed trees and cleaned up the trail but there is little snow.</p> <p>Cross country skiers can access these routes from the West Elk Trailhead.</p>
Three Forks #2150	<p>Difficulty: Moderate/ Difficult</p> <p>Elevation gain: 1,600 feet</p> <p>Current Conditions: Dry trail. The first 1.5 miles is moderate with some sloping that follows the creek with some marshy areas. Trail becomes difficult as it becomes rocky with increased elevation. No work will be done on this trail now.</p> <p>Closed at forest boundary and will have to hike to get to the trail. Roads will reopen when there is enough snow. No snowmobiles are allowed but snowshoeing and cross-country skiing are allowed.</p>
Cline Tops/ Hadley Gulch #1840	<p>Difficulty: Difficult</p> <p>Elevation gain: 3,246</p> <p>Current Conditions: Rocky, Dry and hot due to the south facing slope.</p>

Centennial/ East Elk #1841	<p>Difficulty: Difficult Elevation gain: 4,800 Current conditions: Dry in open areas, still wet in shaded areas with some snow. Crew will work on trail the week of July 22nd for tree removal and bridge repair. Trail becomes steep and narrow canyon further up East Elk Creek.</p> <p>Not open for motorized winter recreation as roads are closed in winter at the forest boundary.</p>
Patterson/ Crater/ Blair Lake Trail (#2048)	<p>Difficulty: Moderate Current Conditions: Dry, minimal shade. No crew maintenance this year.</p> <p>No snowmobiles on these trails and restricted area for over the snow motorized recreation.</p>
Battlement #2160	<p>Difficulty: Difficult Elevation gain: 2,020 feet Current conditions: Trail runs from Battlement Trailhead across the Mamm Peaks all the way to Mud Hill on the east side of the Rifle Ranger Station for a total of 21 miles. High elevations, forest and open areas. Dry with some snow patches in the shade. No work on it this year.</p> <p>No access to forest as this road and trailhead is closed to motorized winter recreation.</p>
Cayton Gulch (#2162)/ Lake Park (#2171)	<p>Difficulty: Moderate Current Conditions: Dry trail that gets wet when it rains. Crew will be working on the trail the week of July 29th through August 5th.</p> <p>No over the snow recreation allowed on these trails.</p>
Grizzly Creek #2065	CLOSED DUE TO TRAIL RECONSTRUCTION.
No Name/ Jess Weaver trail #1847	<p>Difficulty: Difficult Current Conditions: Trail is open for the first 3 miles then closed at the bridge that connects to Grizzly Creek and beyond due to reconstruction and repair from the Grizzly Creek fire. Crew cleaned trails and trees on July 3rd. Quick elevation gain and moderate trail.</p> <p>Hiking allowed on these trails but no motorized recreation.</p>

Cliff Lake Trail #1831

Difficulty: Moderate
Elevation difference: 2.200

Current Conditions: Dry with some snow sticking in the shade. Take you up to the lake and can see the valley below. Crew will not be going up to maintain trail this year.

No Motorized Winter Recreation allowed on this trail to South Fork but allowed in the surrounding area south near Meadow Lake.

