

## History

What we know today as the Blue Mountain Recreation Area was originally part of the Fort Missoula Military Reservation. On November 5, 1952 President Harry S. Truman signed Executive Order 10403 that transferred 4,869 acres of the Military Reservation at Blue Mountain to the Lolo National Forest.

Nearly 20 years later, the 1970 Blue Mountain Report said that the area “*is probably receiving the highest intensity of unregulated recreation use in Region One*” of the Forest Service. Military training activities and cattle grazing caused additional impacts. Cross county vehicle travel had caused extensive soil damage and indiscriminate shooting caused critical public safety hazards. Abandoned car bodies littered the recreation area (81 car bodies were removed in 1964). Garbage dumps and litter from shooting, picnicking, and parties were common. The recreation area was a mess. In 1975, a number of civic groups joined the Forest Service in a major clean up effort.

In 1986, the Forest Service completed the Blue Mountain Recreation Plan. It put in place an action plan to restore eroded roads and trails and included travel management to stop indiscriminate off road vehicle travel. In 1992, cattle grazing was terminated, an aggressive weed control program began and the 18-hole golf course was established. The Blue Mountain Recreation Area you see today is a restoration success story and a very different place than it was in the 1970s and 80s.

## Facilities

At the lower Blue Mountain Trailhead you will find parking, horse unloading facilities and a restroom. A working Forest Service lookout is located 11 miles up Road 365 and is open during the fire season from 9 A.M. to 6 P.M. Three visitors at a time can climb the 50 foot tower for a personal tour.

At Maclay Flat, you will find parking, restrooms, trail side picnic tables, interpretive signs and two connected hiking loops. These two loop trails are 1.25 and 1.75 miles long and include benches and wide paths. Dogs must be leashed at Maclay Flats.

## Trails

The 4,900 acre recreation area includes 41 miles of trails. Trails are restricted to the uses identified on the map in this brochure (see “Trail Uses” on map). A 0.25 mile nature trail is located 1.7 miles up Road 365 and includes a viewpoint and numbered posts keyed to an interpretive brochure, available at the trailhead. A motorcycle trailhead is located 3.1 miles up Road 365 and provides 14.5 miles of motorcycle trails, 3.8 miles of which are open to ATVs. An OHV decal, available at the Missoula County Courthouse, is needed to ride these trails. Montana law also requires that motorcycles and ATVs driven on public roads be street-legal and registered with the Montana Dept. of Motor Vehicles. The 9.1 mile Blue Mountain National Recreation Trail (NRT) No. 3.01 goes from the lower Blue Mountain Trailhead to near the lookout. The 7.8 miles of the NRT north of Road 365 is closed to motorized vehicles and mountain bikes.

In the winter, Road 365 is closed and available for snowmobiling above the gate one mile up Road 365. The gate is closed on December 1. Snowmobiling is prohibited below the lower gate on Road 365 and on the open grasslands and lower foothills above the lower Blue Mountain Trailhead.

## Restrictions

- Mountain bikes, motorcycles and ATVs are prohibited north of Road 365 and off designated open trails (see map).
- Construction of user built trails, jumps and/or other structures is prohibited.
- Rifle hunting, camping and campfires are only allowed in the west area beginning 4.5 miles up the mountain, west of Road 365 (see map).
- Fireworks are prohibited.
- Snowmobiles are prohibited below the gate one mile up Road 365 and on the grasslands and foothills around the lower trailhead and golf course (see map).
- Unleashed dogs are prohibited at Maclay Flats.
- Control your pets and pack out your dog’s waste.

## How to Find It

From Missoula, travel two miles south of Reserve Street on U.S. Highway 93 South. Turn right at the first light onto Blue Mountain Road. There are three main access points off this road:

- The lower trailhead with horse facilities is located about 0.5 miles north on Blue Mountain Road 559.
- Forest Road 365 turns left (west) off Blue Mountain Road about 1.2 miles from Highway 93 South. Go up this road to get to the Nature Trail, Motorcycle Trailhead and Lookout.
- Maclay Flats is about 1.7 miles on Blue Mountain Road from Highway 93 South.

## Opportunities

- Picnicking
- Mountain Biking
- Snowmobiling
- Running
- ATV and motorcycle riding
- Scenic driving and wildlife viewing
- Hiking
- Hunting
- Folging
- Dog walking

## Food & Attractant Storage Order

Wildlife food/attractant storage order in effect, April 1– Dec. 1; suspend food/attractants 10 feet off the ground and 4 feet from an upright support, or in a hard sided vehicle or camper, or in an approved bear resistant container. Must be done when unattended and at night.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers. If you believe you experienced discrimination when obtaining services from USDA, participating in a USDA program, or participating in a program that receives financial assistance from USDA, you may file a complaint with USDA. Information about how to file a discrimination complaint is available from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. To file a complaint of discrimination, complete, sign and mail a program discrimination complaint form, available at any USDA office location or online at [www.ascr.usda.gov](http://www.ascr.usda.gov), or write to: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410. Or call toll free at (866) 632-9992 (voice) to obtain additional information, the appropriate office or to request documents. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA’s TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

For further information contact:  
Missoula Ranger District  
Fort Missoula Bldg. 24  
Missoula, MT 59804 • (406) 329-3814

# Blue Mountain Recreation Area



Missoula Ranger District  
Lolo National Forest