

## Current Conditions – Rifle Ranger District

**Our regular phone line is down so please use 970-625-2373**

970-625-2371 ~ 0094 County Road 244, Rifle, CO 81650

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### LAST UPDATED: April 27th, 2026

**Current Condition Overview:** The Rifle Ranger Station is open Monday through Friday, 8am to 4:30 except for Federal Holidays. Please see Google for days that are closed on Federal Holidays. Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> had snow and added 2-4 inches in the high country above 9,000 feet. Gates are closed to all snowmobiles and vehicles to allow for the roads to dry and not allow the road to become rutted in this current mud season. We currently do not know if we will open the gates earlier than May 20<sup>th</sup>.

**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 June 4<sup>th</sup> with camp hosts but the area will be open May 20<sup>th</sup> if dry enough. Meadow Lake may not be refilled due to the lack of snow melting. **We do not manually fill this lake.**

**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 to all vehicles and snowmachines to allow them to dry and avoid rutting.

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 cross-country skiing and hiking. Please bring plenty of water and safety equipment.

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Dirt & 4WD Roads	Current Conditions
<b>Garfield County Forest Roads</b>	
<p>Buford New Castle - FS # 245, 860, 830 822,820, 845, 819.</p>	<p><b>Open</b> to highway legal vehicles only to West Elk Parking lot- NO ATVs, UTVs or any other non-highway vehicle. The road past West Elk is not open to vehicles</p> <p>Current Condition: 1-2 inches of snow at Meadow Lake and above. Wet all the way up.</p>
<p>Uncle Bob – FS # 801, 804</p>	<p><b>Closed</b> to all vehicles on the 801 and not accessible to the 804 from CR 311.</p> <p>Current Condition: Dry in lower end near Cayton Ranger Station, small ruts about 3 inches deep, muddy near Mosquito Mountain.</p>
<p>Coulter Lake Guest Ranch – FS # 832, 832.2B, 832.2X, 835, 832.2D, 833, 211, 811, 848, 837, 839</p>	<p><b>Closed</b> to all vehicles until May 20<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p>Current Conditions: Dry at Spruce picnic area, snow on trail further past going up to Coulter Lake with snow drifts as of 3/25/2026.</p>
<p>Blair Mountain – FS # 601, 651</p>	<p><b>Closed</b> to vehicles.</p> <p>Current Conditions: 1 inch of snow and muddy in open areas.</p>
<p>Elk Lakes - FS # 640, 601,651,601.2C, 601.2A, 636</p>	<p><b>Closed</b> to all vehicles.</p> <p>Current Conditions: Dry on the switch backs and muddy and wet with snow up to 32 inches at the top.</p>

<p>Beaver Creek- FS # 824</p>	<p><b>Closed</b> to all winter recreation and vehicles.</p> <p>Current conditions: Muddy, 1 inch of snow.</p>
<p>Battlement Mesa- FS # 847</p>	<p><b>Closed</b> to all vehicles. There is no access from 847.</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: Wet and muddy and rocky.</p>
<p>Cline tops- FS # 603, 651, 653. 2A, 603.1R, 603.1A, 603.1E, 603.1P, 603.1M</p>	<p><b>Closed</b> to all vehicles. Will reopen to winter recreation when there is snow accumulation.</p>

	<p>Current Conditions: Dry at the bottom and there is snow on top of the plateau past Joe Hill Spring.</p>
East Road Gulch- FS# 816	<p><b>Closed</b> to all vehicles. This route is plowed during winter snow.</p> <p>Current Conditions: Dry road.</p>
Little Box Canyon- FS # 825	<p><b>Closed</b> to all vehicles. 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><b>Closed</b> to all vehicles. No vehicles allowed past gate.</p> <p>Current Conditions: Muddy with snow up to 3-4 inches at Windy Point and 32 inches nearing Heart Lake.</p>
Haystack mountain and Quaker Mesa – FS# 814, 808, 800, 812	<p><b>Closed</b> 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><b>Closed</b> 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><b>Closed</b> to all vehicles. 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><b>Closed</b> to all vehicles and no winter recreation allowed.</p> <p>Current conditions: Muddy.</p>
Meadow lake – FS# 601, 601.4E, 832,821,648,821.1B, 650, 649,647, 601.2F. 601.2E	<p><b>Closed</b> to all vehicles.</p> <p>Current Conditions: 2 inches of snow.</p>

Trail	Conditions – More information can be found on the app CO TREX
Cherry Creek and Mansfield #2256 and #2291	<p>Difficulty: Difficult  Elevation gain: 1,843 feet  Current conditions: Crew removed lower trees and cleaned up the trail on 4/22/2026 but there is little snow on upper trail.</p> <p><b>Hikers can access these routes from the West Elk Trailhead.</b></p>
Three Forks #2150	<p>Difficulty: Moderate/ Difficult  Elevation gain: 1,600 feet  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>Gate is closed at Rifle Mountain Park boundary but welcome to hike past to get to trail. No vehicles allowed past gate.</p>
Cline Tops/ Hadley Gulch #1840	<p>Difficulty: Difficult  Elevation gain: 3,246  Current Conditions: Rocky. Snow at the top of the Mesa with no snow on 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. Trail becomes steep and narrow canyon further up East Elk Creek.</p> <p><b>Do not park at the private property, please park at the open lot near the kiosk and the bathroom.</b></p>
Patterson/ Crater/ Blair Lake Trail (#2048)	<p>Difficulty: Moderate</p> <p>Current Conditions: Little snow. No crew maintenance this year.</p> <p><b>No snowmobiles on these trails and restricted area for over the snow motorized recreation.</b></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>

	<b>No access to forest as this road and trailhead is closed to motorized winter recreation.</b>
Cayton Gulch (#2162)/ Lake Park (#2171)	Difficulty: Moderate Current Conditions: Dry trail that gets wet when it rains.  <b>No over the snow recreation allowed on these trails.</b>
Grizzly Creek #2065	<b>CLOSED DUE TO TRAIL RECONSTRUCTION.</b>
No Name/ Jess Weaver trail #1847	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. Quick elevation gain and moderate trail.  <b>Hiking allowed on these trails but no motorized recreation.</b>
Cliff Lake Trail #1831	Difficulty: Moderate Elevation difference: 2,200  Current Conditions: Dry with some snow sticking in the shade. Takes you up to the lake and can see the valley below. Crew will not be going up to maintain trail this year.
Mitchel Creek	

