

# News Release

USDA Forest Service

Bighorn National Forest

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## **Bighorn National Forest Announces Temporary Closure of the Bench Trail #184 in Shell Canyon during Bench Timber Salvage Project**

The Bench Trail #184 in the Shell Canyon area of the Bighorn National Forest continues to be closed and is expected to remain that way until timber sale operations are finished sometime during 2008.

Medicine Wheel / Paintrock District Ranger, David Sisk, instituted the closure in 2006, to ensure visitor safety during the Bench Timber Salvage Project. The Bench Trail is on the south side of Shell Canyon between Post Creek Picnic Area and Ranger Creek Campground. The closure period will be the season of operations associated with the timber salvage operation –anticipated to be June 1 through October 31 annually. The trail closure starts at T53N R89W SESE1/4 of Section 23 (near the Schulte Cabin) and continue west to T53N, R89W, NWSW 1/4 of Section 16, approximately 1/4 miles west of the furthest west cutting unit (unit 16). “I’m taking this action to ensure the safety of the public during the logging period. The Bench Timber Salvage project is unique to the Bighorn National Forest since we will be using helicopters to yard the timber. Helicopters help protect the area’s sensitive soil and water resources. Helicopter operations and recreational trail use in the same area are incompatible activities, so Trail #184 is temporarily closed,” said Sisk. The purpose of the Bench Timber Salvage project is to further the goals of the President’s Healthy Forest Initiative to protect communities, firefighters, wildlife and forest health by reducing the threat of catastrophic wildfires. It may also reduce the potential for accelerated losses from Douglas-fir beetle infestations. Additional information about the Bench Timber Salvage Project is available by contacting the Medicine Wheel / Paintrock Ranger Districts at (307) 548-6541 or by visiting the Forest website at

[http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/bighorn/projects/projectfiles/bench/bench\\_webpage.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/bighorn/projects/projectfiles/bench/bench_webpage.pdf)

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RELEASE DATE: 08/07/07

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