

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service -- Northern Region



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Illegal Snowmobiling Not Tolerated

MISSOULA, Mt. – As winter approaches here in the Northern Region, Forest Service and State Recreation Specialists remind snowmobile users to ride responsibly this winter season.

Recreation specialists say the biggest issue they deal with in this region is trespassing into closed areas.

Chris Ryan, Wilderness Program Leader for the Northern Region, says these areas are deliberately closed for a variety of reasons, including legislation, visitor safety and protection of wildlife and habitat. Congressionally designated wilderness areas are closed to motorized and mechanized travel. In addition, some other roadless areas are closed to motorized travel through a forest order. These areas do allow non-motorized users such as cross-country skiers and snowshoers.

“These area closures make up less than 25 percent of federal land in the Northern Region, which includes northern Idaho, Montana, North Dakota and northwestern South Dakota,” said Ryan.

“Snowmobile riders have outstanding opportunities to ride responsibly on millions of acres and on thousands of miles of marked and groomed trails here in the region.”

Wherever possible, area boundaries are posted with yellow or orange signs identifying the closure areas. Boundaries are patrolled for trespassers and violators will be prosecuted. Violations are punishable by a fine of up to \$5000 and six months in jail. Violations may also result in seizure of the violators’ snowmobile.

Before heading out, riders can educate themselves on where to go on public land. Please contact your local Forest Service or state agency office for maps and information.

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