
Custer and Gallatin National Forests News Release



For Immediate Release
Date: August 27, 2008

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Hunting Season Begins Soon

Bozeman and Billings, MT... With hunting season approaching, the Custer and Gallatin National Forests remind hunters and forest visitors to stay safe and be careful. Food storage orders are in effect for both Forests that require appropriate storage of all wildlife attractants, including animal carcasses. In addition, both Forests have travel management regulations in place that visitors should be aware of.

The Gallatin and Custer Forests provide the following advice for avoiding bear encounters while recreating in bear country:

- Keep a clean camp with food and attractants stored inaccessible to bears. Bears will enter camp areas if food is accessible. Over time, a bear will associate camp areas with easy food. Habituated bears can lose their fear of humans, become dangerous, and are often lethally removed from the population.
- Inquire about recent bear activity in the area.
- Carry and know how to use bear pepper spray for emergencies. Bear spray should also be readily accessible should you need to use it.
- Let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Travel in groups of three or more people whenever possible and plan to be out in the daylight hours.
- Stay on trails and roads.
- Watch for signs of wildlife such as bear scat, diggings, torn-up logs and turned over rocks.
- Keep children close.
- Make sure your presence is known by carrying a bell or talking when near streams or in thick forest where visibility is low.
- Avoid approaching a bear, respect their space.

In addition to food storage orders, the Custer and Gallatin would like to remind visitors to learn about travel regulations for the areas you are visiting. The Forests continue to educate and inform people about travel regulations to ensure that everyone is successful in implementing and following the travel plan directions.

The Gallatin re-published the Forest's Motor Vehicle Use Maps in June 2008. These maps represent the open or designated trail and road systems on the Gallatin Forest and are available at all Ranger



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District offices and the Supervisor's Office free of charge. The Forest reminds visitors to stay on all designated roads and trails. For more information on the Gallatin Forest's Motorized Vehicle Use Maps please visit the Forest's website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin/>.

National Forest visitors can report violations at any time to 1-800-Tip-Mont. This toll-free number is similar to the well-known Crimestoppers program and assists managers in apprehending persons abusing Montana's natural, historic or cultural resources.

There are fire restrictions in effect on the Custer National Forest. The Beartooth Ranger District, outside of Red Lodge, Montana is in Stage 1 restrictions. Under stage 1 restrictions, campfires are allowed only in designated, metal ringed fire pits, and smoking is allowed only in enclosed vehicles or in a 3 foot diameter area cleared of all flammable material. In addition, the Custer has two area closures in effect. These closures are in the West Fork of Rock Creek and the Benbow Jeep Trail, both on the Beartooth Ranger District. Please visit the Custer National Forest website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/custer/> for more information. The Gallatin currently has no fire restrictions in effect.

For more information please contact any Custer or Gallatin National Forest office.

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