

## **Winter Travel and Recreation Conditions**

Snowy weather has arrived in the Rim Country and White Mountains of Arizona leaving some roads impassable and prompting a temporary winter closure of other roads on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests. Drivers and winter recreationists should call the local Ranger District to inquire about road conditions and temporary winter closures of Forest Service roads.

The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) has closed Highway 273 from the Forest/Reservation boundary to the Big Lake Recreation Area, and also Highway 261 from the junction of FR 8070A to Crescent Lake. To provide for public safety, Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) has posted no parking signs along Highway 260 from the Mogollon Rim east towards Forest Lakes. Parking along this stretch of highway to play in the snow has become popular but is very dangerous, and violators will be ticketed.

## **Winter Travel and Recreation Conditions** Sitgreaves National Forest

### **Black Mesa Ranger District (928) 535-7300**

On the far west end of the national forest in the Rim Lakes Recreation Area, Forest Road (FR) 300 is gated and closed for the winter at the junction of Highway 260 and Rim Top Trailhead west to the Coconino/Sitgreaves forest boundary, and north to Wiggins Crossing on FR 225, and FR 34, and FR 169 at junctions of FR 100 and 119. There is a parking area at the junction of Highway 260 and FR 300 for visitors to use to start their cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, or other winter activities.

Willow Springs Lake is gated and closed for the winter, as is the Rim Visitor Center parking lot and both sides of FR 171, at the junctions of Highway 260 and the Young road. These areas also remain open for winter recreation activities such as snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and snowplay.

To provide for public safety, Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) has posted no parking signs along Highway 260 from the Mogollon Rim east towards Forest Lakes. Parking along this stretch of highway to play in the snow has become popular but is very dangerous, and violators will be ticketed. For additional winter recreation information in this area, call the Black Mesa Ranger District.

### **Lakeside Ranger District (928) 368-2100**

In the Pinetop-Lakeside area, the 9600T road, the Country Club Escape Route, is gated and locked for the winter but remains available for winter recreation activities such as snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and snowplay. This area has a snowmobile access gate that is now open.

The roads to all three lookout towers on the Lakeside Ranger District are gated and locked for the winter, and FR 185 may be gated and locked in the future if necessary, but still available for winter recreational use. For additional winter recreation information in this area, call the Lakeside Ranger District.

## Apache National Forest

### **Springerville Ranger District (928) 333-4372**

On the east end of the forest on the Springerville Ranger District, ADOT has closed Highway 273 from the Forest/Reservation boundary to the Big Lake Recreation Area, and also Highway 261 from the junction of FR 8070A to Crescent Lake. Both of these areas are designated snowmobile trails, with some parking available at the trailheads.

Cross-country skiers can use the groomed trail systems at Pole Knoll Recreation Area on Highway 260 just west of the Greer turnoff, and also the Squirrel Spring Recreation Area trail system near Greer on Highway 373, about 2 miles from the Highway 260 turn off. For additional winter recreation information in this area, call the Springerville Ranger District

### **Alpine Ranger District (928) 339-5000**

On the Alpine Ranger District, Buffalo Crossing and Luna Lake campgrounds are gated closed for the winter, and most FS roads will become snow-packed and impassable, but remain available for winter recreation activities such as snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and snowplay.

Located just north of Alpine on FR 249 is the Williams Valley Winter Sports area, a popular destination for forest visitors seeking both non-motorized and snowmobile opportunities. Williams Valley visitors can sled and go tubing on Toboggan Hill with only a very short climb. There are also 13 miles of groomed cross-country ski trails, offering loops rated as easiest, more difficult, and most difficult. **Motorized use is prohibited in the Toboggan Hill and the cross-country ski areas.** For snowmobile enthusiasts, the far west end of the Williams Valley Winter Area is the snowmobile staging area, a gateway for miles of traveling perhaps to the Big Lake area, or heading south towards the Hannigan Meadow area.

Located along Highway 191 about 23 miles south of Alpine is the Hannigan Meadow Winter Recreation Area. This area offers nine miles of groomed cross-country ski trails, and the opportunity for miles and miles of snowmobile travel. For additional winter recreation information in this area, call the Alpine Ranger District.

### **Clifton Ranger District (928) 687-8600**

The southernmost portion of the forest is the Clifton Ranger District, accessed from the Springerville/Eagar area by traveling south on Highway 191. The scenic Coronado Trail (Highway 191) is a twisting and winding road with numerous blind curves. Motorists are urged to be especially cautious during winter remember that the Arizona Department of Transportation does not plow this road at night, on weekends, or during snowstorms. and ADOT may temporarily close this road because of snowstorms during the winter.

Located near the forest and San Carlos Reservation boundary, Forest Trail 45 to Malay Gap is gated and closed for the winter. For additional winter recreation information in this area, call the Clifton Ranger District.