

News Release
USDA Forest Service
Coronado National Forest
300 West Congress
Tucson, AZ 85701
www.fs.fed.us/r3/coronado



Effective Immediately

CONTACT: Larry Pratt (520) 749-7710

SEASONAL CLOSURE FOR MT. LEMMON FOREST ROADS EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 15

TUCSON, AZ (December 8, 2008) - The Santa Catalina Ranger District of the Coronado National Forest will close and lock gates on seasonal roads and day use sites in the upper elevations of Mt. Lemmon beginning December 15, 2008. Seasonal road and day use site closures occur every year. In recent years the Forest Service has delayed closures until snow accumulated. Beginning this year, and in following years, roads and day use sites affected by winter weather will be closed annually on the same date, December 15, and reopen on March 1. The seasonal closures are primarily for public safety but also aid the District in limiting road maintenance arising from damage to forest roads during winter. The roads remain open to hikers, cross country skiers, bicyclists and other non-motorized users.

Roads and day use sites affected by the seasonal closure are: Lower and Upper Oracle Control Road; Marshall Gulch; Lower and Upper Bear Wallow Road; Bigelow Road; Incinerator Ridge Road; Organizational Ridge Road. The Lemmon Rock Road to the top of Mt Lemmon above Ski Valley is currently closed due to ice on the road and will remain closed until March 1, 2009.

“People find it very confusing when our seasonal road closure dates change from year to year,” said Sherry Tune, Deputy District Ranger. “We better serve the public by providing reliable dates when seasonal forest roads will be closed. People can then more easily plan their visit to the high elevation areas of Mt. Lemmon in the fall and spring.”

Larry Pratt, Developed Recreation Project Manager, points to public safety and road maintenance as contributing to the need for seasonal road and day use site closures.

“We have delayed closing the upper elevation roads on Mt Lemmon in the past until snow and ice make travel difficult,” said Pratt. “Often, peoples’ vehicles become stranded, resulting in emergency responses by Forest Service staff, the Pima County Sheriff’s Department, and towing companies. Our goal is to reduce this impact to people by closing seasonal roads and sites in a timely manner before such situations arise. Freezing and thawing of the forest road surfaces this time of year can also make them more prone to damage from vehicles, which then results in poor road conditions in the spring and summer when the demand for their use is highest.”

For more information contact Larry Pratt, Urban Developed Recreation Project Manager for the Coronado National Forest, at (520) 749-7710.