

**Clearwater National Forest**  
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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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**May 19, 2008**

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

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### **Memorial Day on the Clearwater National Forest**

#### **A Long, Wet Winter**

It's been a long, wet winter on the Clearwater National Forest and due to residual snowfall, blow-down and wet, soggy conditions, a few popular campgrounds won't be open by Memorial Day weekend. The good news, though, is that there are still dozens of nice campsites that *will* be available for forest visitors to use and enjoy.

#### **Campsites**

Most campgrounds offer first-come, first-served site selection although you can reserve a campsite at a few campgrounds.

To reserve a campsite at campgrounds with reservable sites call ReserveUSA at 1-877-444-6777, or visit the ReserveUSA website to make your reservation: [www.Recreation.gov](http://www.Recreation.gov) (also accessible via the former website, [www.ReserveUSA.com](http://www.ReserveUSA.com)).

Visitors can camp at sites outside developed campgrounds called "dispersed sites." However, due to this year's abnormally wet conditions, campers who choose to stay in undeveloped sites must take extra care to protect natural resources, such as plant life. If you camp at a dispersed site, leave no trace of your stay. Use existing fire rings if available, and pack out your trash.

Whether you choose a developed campground or a dispersed site, your stay is limited to 14 days at any one site.

#### **North Fork Ranger District**

According to Larry Vogel, Recreation Staff Officer, this winter's above-average snowfall has delayed the opening of some campgrounds along the North Fork Clearwater River; the Washington Creek Campground will remain closed through the Memorial Day weekend and the Hidden Creek and Cedars Campgrounds are still inaccessible due to snow. The popular Aquarius, Noe Creek and Kelly Forks Campgrounds are already open to forest visitors. These campgrounds do not yet have water, and no overnight fees are being charged. The Weitas Creek Campground is also open.

The Bungalow and Cold Springs dispersed campsites are open, but visitors should anticipate plenty of mud and boggy conditions.

### **Lochsa Ranger District**

If you're looking for a pretty campsite along the Lochsa River, why not consider the Wild Goose or Apgar Campgrounds? Both campgrounds are up and running and ready for holiday visitors. There is no water, but overnight fees are being charged.

Are you interested in reserving a campsite? Consider Wilderness Gateway Campground, 49 miles east of Kooskia along U.S. Highway 12. Camp Loops B, C and D are open and the campground has some sites available for reservation through ReserveUSA. Water is not yet available at the Wilderness gateway Campground, and overnight fees apply.

### **Powell Ranger District**

On the Powell Ranger District, the Jerry Johnson, White Sands and Powell Campgrounds will be open for Memorial Day. Visitors should expect less-than-ideal camping conditions, with the probability of lingering snow and standing water in the campgrounds. The access road to the Powell Campground, as well as the individual campsites, has been plowed, but visitors may encounter high snow berms inside the campground. According to Lochsa Ranger District Recreation Officer Brenda Yankoviak, as recently as one week ago, there was "three feet of snow on the picnic tables" at the Powell Campground.

The Whitehouse and Wendover Campgrounds remain closed due to snow.

### **Palouse Ranger District**

Palouse Ranger District campgrounds include Giant White Pine, northeast of Potlatch; Little Boulder, south of Helmer; Laird Park, east of Potlatch; and the new Elk Creek Campground, located one mile west of the town of Elk River. It features 23 sites with electrical hookups. All Palouse District campgrounds will be opened on May 22, just in time for Memorial Day visitors.

Some of the sites at Elk Creek Campground can be reserved through ReserveUSA by calling the toll-free number or making reservations on the ReserveUSA website.

There is no trash service at Little Boulder or Elk Creek Campgrounds. Please take your refuse with you when you leave.

You can reserve group picnic areas at Little Boulder and Laird Park Campgrounds by calling the Potlatch Ranger Station at (208) 875-1131

### **River and Stream Conditions**

River users are asked to be extremely careful when recreating on or near the North Fork Clearwater and Lochsa Rivers. Water levels are already at near-record highs, and the potential for peak flows to exceed what we've experienced since the late 90s is looming. A considerable amount of floating debris makes river access especially difficult and dangerous.

An added note of caution: Be extremely careful near streams. All streams are running very high and fast with snow melt from recent hot weather

### **Roads and Trails**

#### **Trails:**

On account of this year's cold, snowy winter, most Clearwater National Forest trails are still inaccessible. For your safety and to prevent damage to the land stay on roads and trails but avoid those that are too wet or muddy. Spring break-up can wreak havoc on roads. Check with local ranger stations for trails recommended for your favorite activity.

Carol Hennessey, Clearwater National Forest Trails Coordinator, asks early-season hikers and trail users to think twice before planning a trip to the backcountry. "Low elevations trails are just now being

opened on the Forest, and high elevation trails are still blocked by snow and slides,” Carol said, “It’s safe to say that the opening of higher elevation trails will be delayed and is dependent on warmer temperatures.” Carol would also like to remind visitors that above-normal amounts of downed trees and rocks slides may be encountered, so recreationists should be prepared to cut out trails. Travel on all accessible national forest trails will be “slow going.”

Trail systems on the Powell and North Fork Ranger Districts are largely inaccessible due to snow and adverse conditions.

When on trails, remember to yield to stock users.

Off-highway vehicle users, note: ATVs and motorcycles driven on national forest roads and trails are subject to state of Idaho registration laws and requirements. Contact your local motor vehicle department or the state of Idaho Parks and Recreation website ([www.idahoparks.org/recreation](http://www.idahoparks.org/recreation)) for a listing of registration sticker vendors and regulations.

#### Roads:

Many roads on the Clearwater National Forest are still blocked by snow. These include Road 500 (the Lolo Motorway), Pierce-Superior Road 250 from French Mountain to Bungalow, Elk Summit Road 360 and Palouse Divide Road 377.

You can travel into the North Fork Clearwater River country via Beaver Creek Road 247. The road is open from Headquarters all the way to Bungalow, but travelers are advised to use extreme caution. Road 247 was plowed only recently and high snow berms still flank each side, making the road very narrow. Drivers should be wary of soft shoulders, saturated ground and generally wet, soggy conditions. Because of residual snow, it isn’t possible to access any of the spur roads that junction Road 247. At this time, the road is not recommended for RV traffic.

While parts of Pierce-Superior Road 250, from French Mountain to Bungalow and above Kelly Forks are still obstructed by deep snowpack, Road 250 from Bungalow to Kelly Forks has been reopened. The same traveler’s advisories apply to the open segment of Road 250.

Road 103, the Kamiah-Lolo Creek-Weippe Loop is open, but all spur roads are inaccessible.

## **Visitor Centers**

There are a handful of places you can stop for information, wood permits and maps.

The Lolo Pass Visitor Center on Highway 12 at the Idaho-Montana state line is open seven days a week through late September. Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (Pacific Time) each day.

Forty-eight miles east of Kooskia along Highway 12 stop by the Lochsa Historical Ranger Station, open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. seven days a week. Retired Forest Service volunteers host the site and are ready to answer your questions about what life was like on remote ranger stations in days gone by.

In Orofino, the Clearwater National Forest Supervisor's Office located along U.S. Highway 12 is open 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. The Supervisor's Office will be closed on Memorial Day.

## **Summer Programs**

Visitors are invited to enjoy fireside programs on Friday and Saturday evenings at two Clearwater National Forest campgrounds beginning Memorial Day weekend: Wilderness Gateway and Powell.

Stop by or call the ranger stations at Kooskia and Powell for schedules of weekly fireside program speakers and theme day events.

## **For Information**

For additional information call the Clearwater National Forest Supervisor's Office in Orofino at 208-476-8267 or check online at [www.fs.fed.us/r1/clearwater](http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/clearwater).