

**Clearwater National Forest**  
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Orofino, ID 83544  
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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Clearwater National Forest Welcomes 4<sup>th</sup> of July Visitors**

Summer's finally arrived and it's time to celebrate! The sun is shining, the snow is melting and many people are looking forward to recreating on the Clearwater National Forest during the 4th of July weekend. So dust off your favorite fishing rod, break out the camping equipment and top off the tank in your ATV. The Forest Service would like to share road, trail and campground information to help you plan your trip; some of Idaho's best and most beautiful backcountry awaits your arrival!

#### **Campsites**

Dozens of campsites in several Forest Service campgrounds will be open for visitors. Most campgrounds offer first-come, first-served site selection, but a few campgrounds have sites that you can reserve; Wilderness Gateway, 49 miles east of Kooskia along U.S. Highway 12; Powell, 12 miles west of the Idaho-Montana state line along Highway 12; and Elk Creek, 1 mile north of Elk River. Call toll free at 877-444-6777, or reserve online at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov).

Campgrounds with good access and sites for RV campers include Powell, Wendover and Whitehouse (a few miles west of Powell), Wilderness Gateway and Elk Creek. Powell and Elk Creek also have several electrical hookup sites.

If you're traveling U.S. Highway 12 near the Idaho-Montana line, stop by the Lolo Pass Visitor Center to view the camas coming into bloom in the next week or two in Packer Meadows behind the Visitor Center. According to the Connie Marsh with the Powell Ranger District, the camas at Packer Meadows is on the verge of blooming and may be at its brightest and "bluest" by the end of June. Allen Pinkham, a member of the Nez Perce tribe, will be presenting a talk about the camas flower and its traditional use by the Nez Perce and Salish peoples. Mr. Pinkham will speak on the afternoon of the June 28 and the morning of June 29; call the Powell

Ranger District at (208) 942-3113 for more information.

Along the North Fork Clearwater River, the popular Aquarius, Washington Creek, Weitas, Noe and Kelly Forks Campgrounds are up and running and waiting for Independence Day visitors. There are no overnight camping fees at Weitas Campground.

The Hidden Creek Campground was only recently opened and does not yet have water. The Cedars Campground is also open and ready for happy, high-country campers.

On the Palouse Ranger District, the Giant White Pine, Laird Park and Little Boulder Campgrounds are great places to spend the long holiday weekend. If you're planning a fun, 4<sup>th</sup> of July family get-together, the Palouse District also boasts three picnic sites that can be reserved; call (208) 875-1131 for more information or to make reservations.

Visitors can camp at sites outside developed campgrounds called "dispersed sites." 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.

## **Roads and Trails**

Forest Service Road 250, the Pierce-Superior Road, is open from French Mountain to Elizabeth Creek, approximately five miles north of the Kelly Forks Work Center. A large slide is obstructing Road 250 at Elizabeth Creek. The road above Elizabeth Creek is open to all the way to Hoodoo Pass, although the pass remains blocked by several feet of snow. Road 250 was recently bladed to smooth out some deep washboards and rough spots.

Road 255, which runs from the Kelly Forks Work Center, along Kelly Creek and north through Deception Saddle, is open all the way to its northernmost junction with Road 250, three miles south of The Cedars Campground. Travelers should use caution when attempting to drive through or over any snow that they may encounter.

The Beaver Creek Road, Road 247, is open all the way from Headquarters to Bungalow. The route is in good condition but travelers should be wary of washboards and soft shoulders. Drive carefully!

Forest Road 500, the Lolo Motorway, remains closed due to snow. Elk Summit Road 360 is also blocked by 3' to 4' snowdrifts and isn't expected to reopen until mid- to late July.

A handful of Forest trails have been cleared of winter debris at lower elevations (below 3500-4000 foot elevations). Check with your local ranger districts for a complete listing of trails recommended for your favorite activity. Remember to stay on trails and yield to stock users.

Holiday hikers may want to consider a leisurely trek along the popular Kelly Creek Trail, Trail 567. The trail is open from Moose Creek to the South Fork of Kelly Creek.

Fish Lake Trail 419 is currently closed to all motorized vehicles. The restrictions are necessary for resource protection. This trail is wet, and motorized traffic could cause resource damage.

### **Fire Information:**

Remember, be careful, and be responsible with your cigarettes and campfires. Use existing fire rings if available. Make sure your campfire is completely out when you leave the site.

Possessing, discharging or using any kind of fireworks on public lands is strictly prohibited. The standard fine for violating the fireworks prohibition is \$100, but fines of up to \$5000 and/or six months in jail may be levied against offenders. In addition, anyone found responsible for starting a forest fire can be held liable for fire suppression costs, which could total millions of dollars. Please report violations to the nearest Sheriff's office.

### **Visitor Centers**

The Lolo Pass Visitor Center at the Idaho-Montana state line along Highway 12 is open from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., PDT, seven days a week. The visitor center will be open on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

The Lochsa Historical Ranger Station, located 48 miles east of Kooskia along Highway 12, is open seven days a week, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Labor Day.

In Orofino the Forest Service office located along U.S. Highway 12 is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The office will be closed on July 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **For Information**

For more 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).