

# NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region  
Umatilla National Forest

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541-278-3722 (Joani Bosworth, Public Affairs)

May 21, 2008

## MOUNTAIN SNOWPACK COULD IMPACT HOLIDAY WEEKEND PLANS

Memorial weekend traditionally kicks off the summer recreation season on the Umatilla National Forest, however this year, much of the Forest is still under snow and access to favorite camping sites may be difficult if not impossible.

This is a very unusual spring for the Blue Mountains, said Larry Randall, Recreation Staff Officer for the Umatilla National Forest. We estimate that anything over 4,500 feet in elevation is still snow covered to the point of being inaccessible. For example, snow depth at Tollgate is still at 3.5 to 4 feet. Though recent warm weather has helped to open up areas, snow levels are still significant at about 4,500 feet in elevation. Roads with shaded areas or cut banks below 4,500 feet may still have large impassible snowdrifts.

A number of the lower elevation campgrounds will be open for the Memorial weekend though water systems and garbage facilities may not be provided. Some dispersed campsites may be snow free but very muddy. "We're concerned about folks getting stuck as they pull off the road to camp. Recreationists should avoid driving off the road and onto wet, unstable ground to load their firewood to prevent getting stuck or leaving behind large, deep ruts.

For additional information about the status of Forest campgrounds, trails and roads, please contact the Umatilla National Forest offices or visit the website at:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/uma>.

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