



## Flathead National Forest

## Media Release

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### **Reminder: Wilderness and Jewel Basin Closed to Snowmobiles**

The Flathead National Forest recently conducted a snowmobile monitoring flight and noted snowmobile tracks in areas of the Bob Marshall Wilderness, Mission Mountains Wilderness and Jewel Basin Hiking Area. All three of these areas have been closed to motorized use, including snowmobiles, from their inception in the mid-1960s to the 1980s.

“There are several opportunities for snowmobile activity and it is disheartening to see these violations of designated wilderness and Jewel Basin,” said Swan Lake District Ranger Steve Brady. Brady continued, “A few of the areas with violations include Bunker Creek into Inspiration Lakes in the Bob, Jim Lakes in the Missions, and Wildcat Lake in Jewel Basin, which have all been closed for over three decades.”

Based on the aerial surveys, riders appear to be accessing the Mission Mountains and Bob Marshall Wildernesses from the Swan Valley. Riders appear to be accessing Jewel Basin from either Wounded Buck/Wildcat or Clayton Creek drainages. Wilderness and Jewel Basin are clearly marked on the forest’s snowmobile access information map as closed areas. It is the riders’ responsibility to know where the open snowmobile terrain is on the ground.

“We hope riders would respect the closed areas but since a few have not, the Forest Service is responding with additional flights and patrols, including officers on the trail and at key access points,” said Hungry Horse Glacier View District Ranger Jimmy DeHerrera. Citations and fines up to \$5000 will be issued if a snowmobiler is found in these closed areas.

“If any member of the public has information regarding illegal snowmobile activities, we welcome the information,” said Spotted Bear District Ranger Deb Mucklow. “Riding in closed areas is unacceptable, especially in designated wilderness and Jewel Basin. Please

help preserve and protect the open riding areas by respecting the closed ones,” said Mucklow.

The Flathead National Forest will continue to monitor snowmobile activity, trends, and incursions. For more information about snowmobiling and winter recreation on the Flathead National Forest, please visit or call a local Forest Service office.

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