



Flathead National Forest

Media Release

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Winter Motorized Recreation Plan Decision on Flathead National Forest

Flathead National Forest Supervisor Cathy Barbouletos recently signed a record of decision that establishes a winter motorized recreation plan for the forest, and amends the existing forest plan. The decision determines when, where and under what conditions over-snow vehicles (snowmobiles) are allowed on the forest, while ensuring that this use is not significantly affecting important wildlife habitat and other natural resources.

The decision continues to allow 91% of the terrain that has been historically used for snowmobile use to remain open. Approximately 787,000 acres of the forest will be available for over-snow vehicles from December 1 through March 31. Of this area, 52,400 acres will offer an extended spring season within four areas of the forest:

- Groomed routes in the Canyon Creek area until April 14,
- 3,100 acres at Sixmile until April 30,
- 17,500 acres in the Challenge/Skyland area until May 14, and
- 31,800 acres in the Lost Johnny area until May 31.

The recent decision meets the requirements of a settlement agreement between the Flathead National Forest, Montana Wilderness Association and the Montana Snowmobile Association. The agreement resulted from a lawsuit from Montana Wilderness Association challenging over-snow motorized use on the forest.

This decision is subject to appeal. Any appeal must be submitted in writing by January 5, 2007, to Forest Service Northern Region Regional Forester Gail Kimbell. The decision will not be implemented until the appeal process is complete.

For more information and a copy of the decision, please visit the forest's web page at www.fs.fed.us/r1/flathead. Paper and CD copies of the decision are also available from the Supervisor's Office in Kalispell at 1935 Third Ave East.

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