



## Flathead National Forest

Media Release

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### **Snowmobilers Reminded to Respect Wilderness and Jewell Basin Areas**

The Flathead National Forest offers diverse opportunities for snowmobile enthusiasts, including approximately 200 miles of groomed trails, numerous areas for over-snow riding enjoyment and areas for extreme high elevation riding.

The diverse opportunities for snowmobilers **do not** include riding in designated wilderness, such as the Bob Marshall, Great Bear and Mission Wildernesses, or the Jewell Basin Hiking Area.

The 1964 Wilderness Act prohibits all motorized or mechanized use within wilderness. The three wilderness areas on the forest were congressionally designated between 1964 and 1978. The Jewell Basin Hiking Area was created in 1970 and snowmobiling has been restricted for over 35 years in that area.

Recent snowmobile intrusions into wilderness and the Jewell Basin Area have prompted the Flathead National Forest to increase patrols of these areas. Citations will be cited with fines up to \$500, mandatory court appearances and confiscation of the snowmobile. The federal judge will have the discretion to fine up to \$5000 or five years in jail for these offenses.

Hungry Horse and Glacier View District Ranger Jimmy DeHerrera said, "Winter is a great time to enjoy and explore the forest, and there are some great opportunities for snowmobilers. We ask that snowmobilers respect the wilderness and the Jewell Basin Areas and not ride in those areas."

The public is encouraged to contact a local forest service office prior to recreating on the forest to determine where you can ride, and obtain maps and other pertinent information. It is the responsibility of the individual rider to know boundaries and land ownership.

Anyone with information on snowmobile intrusions in wilderness or Jewell Basin areas are encouraged to contact Forest Service law enforcement rangers at 758-5277 or TIP-MONT at 1-800-847-6668. If information provided leads to an arrest, you could be eligible for a cash award up to \$1000 through the TIP-MONT program.

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