



News Release

Dixie National Forest

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PINE VALLEY MOUNTAIN TRAILS REMAIN CLOSED FOR SNOW

ST. GEORGE, Utah – Spring is in the air and temperatures are indicating that summer is just around the corner in Utah’s Dixie. People are out and excited to hike and enjoy their public lands. Bevan Killpack, District Ranger for the Pine Valley Ranger District of the Dixie National Forest, warns that conditions on Pine Valley mountain are still very winter-like. Killpack says that each year when the temperatures in St. George warm up as they have this past week, people think that it is time to hike the trails in the high country.

Even though that big grey mountain looks dry, there are still 3-4 feet of snow up there. Conditions are such that you cannot find the trails, and spring is the time when our southern mountains receive their best moisture. Tropical storms out of south bring snow and cold temperatures that settle in and around the Pine Valley mountains, Killpack said. Each year in the spring the Washington County Sheriff dispatches its search and rescue team to find those who have looked at a map and decided that it wouldn’t be too much of a hike from Oak Grove to Pine Valley or vice versa.

Conditions on that mountain can change in seconds, and with snow still deep the trails cannot always be found. People get ledged up and become lost. It is very expensive and sometimes dangerous to fly helicopters in to rescue people, and because Pine Valley mountain is a designated Wilderness Area, special permission must be granted prior to landing or long lining with a helicopter.

Killpack said that the Pine Valley Ranger District hires seasonal employees to open and maintain the trails each year. These employees usually don’t start until late May or early June because of the snow conditions. Winters on the mountain can cause blown down trees and sometimes heavy runoff from snow, making trails unusable until crews can get in and open them.

Anyone wanting to hike and get out in the Forest should contact the Interagency Information Office for conditions at (435) 688-3246. There are many lower elevation trails that are open and can be used at this time, Killpack said.

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