

Ochoco N.F. Watershed Closes To Motorized Vehicles

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Motorized vehicle use will be prohibited in parts of the McKay Creek watershed on the Lookout Mountain Ranger District of the Ochoco National Forest from December 1, 2006 to May 21, 2007, to protect natural resources.

McKay Creek flows from the western edge of the national forest toward Prineville, along Forest Road 27. Open routes in the closure area include Forest Roads 27, 2705, 2710, 33, 325, 350 and 3320. Dispersed camping will be allowed up to 300 feet from open roads.

Maps of the closure area are available at the Ochoco National Forest headquarters at 3160 NE Third Street in Prineville. All roads within the emergency closure area will be closed, unless marked with a marker and decal stating "Road Open". Cross-country off-road use will also be prohibited.

Travel restriction maps and information will be displayed on signs along roads leading into the forest. Hunters and firewood cutters will need to follow the closure order, which will be included in firewood synopses.

Violation of the order is punishable by up to a \$5,000 fine or imprisonment for up to six months, or both.

Forest Service managers instituted the order because increasing off-highway vehicle use has destroyed native vegetation, increased noxious weed spread, disturbed critical big game habitat and impacted culturally-sensitive areas. Sediment is also being carried into creeks and stream beds are being compacted at vehicle crossings.

Non-motorized and snowmobile use will still be allowed within the area.

Call the Lookout Mountain Ranger Station at (541) 416.6500 for additional information.

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