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Forest Road Closed Due To Spring Runoff

Hamilton, Montana (April 26, 2018) – The Stevensville Ranger District has announced that it is temporarily closing Willow Creek Road #364 east of Corvallis due to spring runoff. Several vehicles have reported getting stuck recently due to excessive snow-melt causing the road surfaces to soften. When vehicles drive on soft roads, they create wheel tracks and ruts which can hold and channel water and lead to erosion, expensive repairs, and sometimes road failure.

The closure begins at the forest boundary, two miles before the trailhead and continues to the end of the road.

“It’s that time of year when some roads are closed for short periods of time due to spring break-up,” said Bitterroot Forest Supervisor Julie King. “The Forest can experience damage to roads when people are trying to get out early to explore or gather firewood when road conditions are at their worst. We will continue to monitor conditions and re-open closed roads as soon as conditions improve.”

Besides causing damage to forest roadways, early spring conditions can also create significant safety hazards for the public. Hazardous conditions can develop quickly from rapidly rising waters. Roads and trails that are passable early in the day may become unsafe in the afternoon as rivers and creeks rise due to increased snowmelt. The condition of a road bed cannot be determined when the road has moving water over it and the road may be partially washed out. Outside shoulders of roads may also be soft due to snow melt. Motorists are advised to use extreme caution in these situations.

The Bitterroot National Forest typically issues short-term closures each spring. The orders allow for placement of temporary road barriers that can be moved as conditions change. The public is asked to respect the signs or barricades that will be used to keep vehicles off these roads until they dry out or firm up. If motorists find themselves on a soft road bed, they should turn around before they become stuck or cause damage to the road which could result in additional closures.

Notify your local Forest Service office of any road damage, downed trees, plugged culverts or flooding conditions on Forest Service roads.

For more information contact the Stevensville Ranger District at (406) 777-5461. Stay in touch with us through www.facebook.com/DiscoverBitterrootNF and www.twitter.com/BitterrootNF.

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