

News Release

USDA Forest Service

Coronado National Forest

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Effective Immediately

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FOREST ROADS ON MT. LEMMON CLOSED FOR SEASON

Roads to Reopen March 1, 2012

TUCSON, AZ (December 15, 2011) – The Santa Catalina Ranger District of the Coronado National Forest has closed and locked gates on seasonal roads and day use sites in the upper elevations of Mt. Lemmon due to weather-related unsafe driving conditions. The main road leading up the mountain, the Catalina Highway, is currently open.

Seasonal road and day use site closures occur every year. In recent years the Forest Service has delayed closures until snow accumulated. Roads and day use sites affected by winter weather will be closed annually on the same date, December 15, and reopen on March 1, unless weather conditions render them unsafe prior to that date. The seasonal closures are primarily for public safety but also aid the District in limiting road maintenance arising from damage to forest roads during winter. The roads remain open to hikers, cross country skiers, bicyclists and other non-motorized users.

Roads and day use sites affected by the seasonal closure are: Lower and Upper Control Road; Marshall Gulch Road; Lower and Upper Bear Wallow Road; Bigelow Road; Incinerator Ridge Road; Organizational Ridge Road; General Hitchcock Campground and Loma Linda Picnic Area rest room. Lemmon Rock Road to the top of Mt. Lemmon above Ski Valley is currently closed due to ice and snow on the road and will remain closed until March 1, 2012. The roads into Rose and Spencer canyon campgrounds were closed at an earlier date when the recreation areas were closed for the season.

“We apologize for any inconvenience due to road closures,” said Larry Pratt, Developed Recreation Project Manager. “However, we realize snow and ice make travel difficult. Often, people in vehicles become stranded, resulting in emergency responses by Forest Service staff, the Pima County Sheriff’s Department, and towing companies. Our goal is to reduce this impact to people by closing seasonal roads and sites. Freezing and thawing of the forest road surfaces this time of year can also make them more prone to damage from vehicles, which then results in poor road conditions in the spring and summer when the demand for their use is highest.”

For more information contact Larry Pratt, Urban Developed Recreation Project Manager for the Coronado National Forest, at (520) 749-7710.

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