

# News Release

## Nez Perce National Forest

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## Clearwater National Forest

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Nez Perce - Clearwater National Forests welcome 4<sup>th</sup> of July visitors

*Grangeville, ID* – June 21 marked the first day of summer; it's time to celebrate! The sun is shining, the snow is melting and many people are looking forward to recreating on the Nez Perce - Clearwater National Forests over the long 4th of July weekend. So dust off your favorite fishing rod, break out the camping equipment and top off the tank in your ATV. The Forest Service would like to share road, trail and campground information to help you plan your trip; some of Idaho's best and most beautiful backcountry awaits your arrival!

### **Campsites:**

Dozens of campsites in several Forest Service campgrounds will be open for visitors. Most campgrounds offer first-come, first-served site selection, but a few campgrounds have sites that you can reserve. If you'd like to pre-select a campsite, visit [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) or call (877)444-6777 to locate campgrounds, nationwide, that accept reservations.

Many campgrounds have helpful hosts who can provide information about outdoor attractions in the local area.

Camping is allowed at sites outside developed campgrounds. If you camp at a dispersed site, leave no trace of your stay. Use existing fire rings if available, and pack out your trash.

### **Nez Perce National Forest:**

Are you interested in reserving a campsite on the Nez Perce National Forest? Three options are O'Hara Campground, located seven miles east of Lowell along Selway River Road; Fish Creek Group Site, eight miles south of Grangeville past the Fish Creek Meadows Campground; South Fork Group Use Site #5 at the South Fork Campground located on Highway 14, east of Grangeville.

Campgrounds with good access and sites for RV campers include O'Hara, Fish Creek,

South Fork, Castle Creek and Spring Bar.

**Roads:**

Although crews continue to make progress clearing trails and roads, shady areas and high elevations still may have several feet of snow, making vehicle travel on some roadways tricky. Vehicles can break through snow's crust and leave travelers stuck. Cell phone coverage may not be available to contact emergency responders so it's best to avoid the temptation to plow on through in snowy areas; conditions could worsen the farther you go. Drive smart and stay safe.

On the Nez Perce National Forest's Moose Creek Ranger District, three major travel routes remain closed by snow, including Road 486, the Magruder Road Corridor; Road 222; Dixie Guard Station to Mackey Bar and Road 464, Boundary Road, between Limber Luke and Lytle Cow Camp.

Visitors are reminded that there is a detour via PFI Road #1194, around Trapper Creek Grade, Road 1190, to Red Mail Box (open to White Water). Water levels at trail fords are higher than usual for this time of year.

Landslides and washouts have closed Indian Hill Road #290, Falls Point Road #443 and O'Hara/Hamby Road #65, from mile markers 6.27 to 12.65. Coolwater Road #317 and Fog Mountain Road #319 are open for the first seven miles. Fog Mountain Road is very rough and road is badly eroded in a couple of places.

Further south, on the Salmon River Ranger District, Grangeville-Salmon Road, Road 221, is partially open from Grangeville to two miles past Rocky Bluff Campground. Free Use Road 243 is open to just past Twin Cabins Road 642; the road is closed one mile from Four Corners. Road 441, Nut Basin Road, is open about nine miles, to the junction with Road #2038.

**Trails:**

Trail conditions on the Moose Creek Ranger District can be described as "pretty good", although hikers may run across standing water in spots, the upshot of a long, rainy spring.

Meadow Creek Trail, Trail 726, is impassable to stock due to slides at Reverse Creek.

**Clearwater National Forest:**

On the Clearwater National Forest, most campgrounds offer first-come, first-served site selection, but a few campgrounds have sites that you can reserve; Wilderness Gateway, 49 miles east of Kooskia along U.S. Highway 12; Powell, 12 miles west of the Idaho-Montana

state line along Highway 12; and Elk Creek, one mile north of Elk River. Call toll free at (877)444-6777, or reserve online at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov).

Campgrounds with good access and sites for RV campers include Powell, Wendover and Whitehouse (a few miles west of Powell), Wilderness Gateway and Elk Creek. Powell and Elk Creek also have several electrical hookup sites.

On the Powell Ranger District, Elk Summit Campground remains closed due to snow. The Jerry Johnson Campground is closed for the season.

Along the North Fork Clearwater River, the popular Aquarius, Washington Creek, Noe Creek and Kelly Forks Campgrounds are up and running and waiting for Independence Day visitors.

The Hidden Creek Campground and the Cedars Campground are also open and ready for happy, high-country campers.

The Weitas Creek Campground is currently inaccessible due to the closure of the Weitas Creek Bridge. According to Travis Mechling, District Engineer, a recent inspection revealed that the center pier's concrete cap is deteriorating. Mechling explained that the bridge is structurally unsound and poses an extreme hazard to Forest visitors. Weitas Creek Trail 20 will also be inaccessible until high elevation snows subside, but when the snow melts, the trail will allow access to the campground from a different direction.

On the Palouse Ranger District, the Giant White Pine, Laird Park and Little Boulder Campgrounds are great places to spend the long holiday weekend. If you're planning a fun-filled 4<sup>th</sup> of July family get-together, the Palouse District also boasts three picnic sites that can be reserved.

#### **Clearwater Forest announces campfire program schedule.**

Kearstin Edwards, North Zone Resource Specialist, invites people to attend an exciting line-up of interesting and entertaining programs at Forest campgrounds throughout the summer season.

During the month of July, presentations will be held at the Kelly Forks Campground on the North Fork Clearwater River. Programs include hands-on opportunities for gold panning, wildlife identification, s'more building, movies and much more. The programs, which are free of charge, are appropriate for all ages. They will be held Saturday evenings starting July 2.

Program schedules are available on the Clearwater National Forest website (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/clearwater/>) and at the Clearwater National Forests Supervisor's

Office in Orofino. For more information, contact the Forest's Information Desk at (208)476-8267.

### **Roads:**

Forest Service Road 250, called French Mountain or Pierce-Superior Road, is open from Pierce to the Cedars Campground. Hoodoo Pass is still blocked by several feet of snow

Road 255, which runs from the Kelly Forks Work Center, along Kelly Creek and north through Deception Saddle, is open all the way to its northernmost junction with Road 250, three miles south of The Cedars Campground. Travelers should use caution when attempting to drive through or over any debris that they may encounter.

The Beaver Creek Road, Road 247, is open from Headquarters to Bungalow. The route is in good condition but travelers should be wary of washboards and soft shoulders. Drive carefully!

Forest Road 500, the Lolo Motorway, Road 581, Toboggan Ridge and Road 360, the Elk Summit Road, remain closed due to snow. Call the Powell Ranger Station at (208)942-3113 for updates.

### **Trails:**

Many Forest trails, even at low elevations, remain snow-covered and inaccessible. Check with your local ranger districts for a complete listing of trails recommended for your favorite activity. For safety's sake, and to protect sensitive plant life, trail users are asked to stay on trails. Always yield to stock.

Holiday hikers may want to consider a leisurely trek along Windy Creek Trail #20. The trail is open for the first 17 miles.

The popular Fish Lake Trail #419 is still blocked by lingering snow.

### **Forest Service offices and visitor centers:**

Most Nez Perce - Clearwater National Forests offices, with a few exceptions, will close on Monday, July 4 in observance of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday. If you're thinking of buying a firewood cutting permit, America the Beautiful Senior Pass (Golden Age Passport) or a national forest map for use over the holiday weekend, please be sure to stop by your nearest forest office prior to the close of business on Friday, July 1. We'll be happy to help you!

The Lolo Pass Visitor Center at the Idaho-Montana state line along Highway 12 is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., PDT, seven days a week. The visitor center will be open on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

The Lochsa Historical Ranger Station, located 48 miles east of Kooskia along Highway 12, is open Wednesday through Monday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., through Labor Day. The LHRS will be open to welcome visitors on July 4.

**Fire information:**

Remember - be careful and be responsible with your cigarettes and campfires. Use existing fire rings if available. Make sure your campfire is completely out when you leave a campsite.

A polite reminder: fireworks are not allowed on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests. Forest Supervisor Rick Brazell would like to remind visitors and campers that the use of all fireworks and other pyrotechnic devices is prohibited on almost all national forests regardless of weather conditions or holidays. According to Jill Forth, Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer, regulations regarding fireworks are enforced. Violations are punishable as a misdemeanor by a fine of not more than \$500.00, or imprisonment of not more than six months, or both.

**For information:**

For additional information, call the Nez Perce National Forest Headquarters in Grangeville at (208)983-1950 or the Clearwater National Forest Supervisor's Office in Orofino at (208)476-8267. Or check online at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/nezperce> or [www.fs.fed.us/r1/clearwater](http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/clearwater).

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