



NEWS RELEASE

United States
Department of Agriculture

Forest Service
Nez Perce National Forest
104 Airport Road
Grangeville, Idaho 83530

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – May 12, 2008

**Contact: Jennifer Stephenson
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Recreation Opportunities on the Nez Perce National Forest

Grangeville, Idaho – It's the time of year to head out to a favorite spot on your national forest, whether it's a trail, road, river or campground. But this year, pack your nordic skis and showshoes. Opening of higher elevation trails and campgrounds is late due to snow and dependant on warmer temperatures.

The National Weather Service Northwest River Forecast Center is predicting well above average peak flow for the Selway River and slightly above average peak flows for the South Fork Clearwater and Salmon Rivers. Peak flow predictions more than a few days in advance are difficult and the actual timing and magnitude of the peak will depend on weather conditions.

Nick Gerhardt, Forest Hydrologist, cautions, "River users need to watch weather and river flow forecasts closely this spring. There is potential for peak flows to exceed what we've experienced since 1997, especially in the Clearwater Basin. If that is the case, a considerable amount of floating debris will likely be present. The 2007 wildfires in the Salmon Basin could also produce a considerable amount of floating debris."

Low elevation trails and campgrounds along the South Fork Clearwater and Salmon Rivers have been open (following the snow-line) since mid-April. South Fork and Castle Creek Campgrounds on the South Fork Clearwater River are open and receiving use. Welcome Clara Smith for her seventh volunteer season as a campground host at the South Fork and Castle Creek campgrounds!

Our higher elevation campground, Fish Creek, is another story all together! There is still 2-3 feet of snow blanketing the meadow and the nordic ski trail.

Camping in the Elk City and Red River areas is also affected by slow snow melt. The Lower Crooked River and Newsome creek areas are expected to be accessible by Memorial Day. They are still experiencing cold temperatures day and night.

Along the Salmon River, Spring Bar campground is open. We are recruiting for volunteer camp hosts at this site. Please contact Jena Daly at 983-4018 for more information.

Fee campgrounds, O'Hara and Johnson Bar and group site, Johnson Bar on the Moose Creek Ranger District are open. Other campgrounds along the Selway River are also open, free of charge. O'Hara Campground and Johnson Bar have their own water systems. The water is not approved for drinking at this time, but should be soon. Potable water can be obtained at the RV dump station which is located upstream approx. ½ mile above the Fenn Ranger Station.

Reservations can be made for O'Hara Campground, the Johnson Bar group site, Group site #5 at South Fork Campground, as well as the large group site two miles beyond Fish Creek by calling toll free, 1- 877-444-6777, or via the internet at www.Recreation.gov. Meadow Creek Cabin, Adams Ranger Station, and Lookout Butte are also reservable.

All roads that leave the Selway Corridor (Coolwater, Fog Mountain, Indian Hill, Falls Point) will remain closed to highway vehicles until the normal opening of June 15th. Four wheelers are permitted on these roads, but the distance that can be traveled may only be three to four miles, to the snowline.

Downed trees have been removed from most of the trails that leave the Selway Corridor for the first mile or two. Winter debris may be encountered beyond that, so be prepared to cut out the trail. The Selway River Trail #4 is open and usable to the Moose Creek Ranger Station, which is located within the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness.

“The first 7.5 miles of the Meadow Creek Trail #726 is also open and usable, thanks to a volunteer group which has been working very hard to remove many downed trees”, says Paul Christensen, District Recreation Manager.

While visiting the Selway area, stop at the Historic Fenn Ranger Station Visitor Center, Monday-Friday, 7:30 – 4:00.

For additional information about recreation opportunities on the Nez Perce National Forest please call:

*Nez Perce National Forest Headquarters ~ (208) 983-1950
Salmon River Ranger District ~ (208) 839-2211
Moose Creek Ranger District ~ (208) 926-4258*

*Clearwater Ranger District ~ (208) 983-1950
Red River Ranger District ~ (208) 842-2245*

Or visit us online at www.fs.fed.us/r1/nezperce.

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