



***NEWS  
RELEASE***

United States  
Department of Agriculture

Forest Service  
Salmon - Challis National Forest  
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**Rockslide Closes Middle Fork Trail at Simplot Ranch**

A large rockslide has closed a section of the Middle Fork Trail near Simplot Ranch in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness. The rockslide, which occurred Monday, contained about 100 tons of material and completely obliterated a 30 to 40 foot long section of the trail. "One huge bolder is about 25 feet in diameter" said acting Middle Fork Ranger Laurie Mathews.

The trail parallels the Middle Fork of the Salmon River and provides hiking and horseback access to the Wild and Scenic River corridor. The slide is located near the south west end of the Lower Loon Creek Bridge between the bridge and the river. The bridge was not damaged by the slide and the trail up Loon Creek remains open. However, the slide has completely blocked trail traffic between Loon Creek and the river. The slide did not affect river float traffic.

A Forest Service team, including trail crews, a blasting specialist and a fisheries biologist is assessing the damage and trying to restore access. However, because of the extent of the damage and the steep rocky terrain, there is no estimate on when the trail will be open. Trail access to the area is still available by way of the Loon Creek Trail and the Middle Fork Trail upriver from Camas Creek Trail.