

N E W S



Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area



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Visit our website at www.fs.fed.us/r6/columbia

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Take Care When Hiking in the Columbia River Gorge During the Winter Months

HOOD RIVER, December 18, 2008 – Each winter hikers turn to the trails in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area for exercise and adventure. And each winter several individuals or parties get lost or hurt in the woods. Most commonly, hikers get lost following a trail into the snow and then losing the trail or attempting to travel cross-country in the snow.

The USDA Forest Service, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, Cascade Locks Fire Department and Crag Rats Search and Rescue team encourage hikers to be prepared before departing. Search and rescue efforts can be expensive, are often risky to the searchers and create worry for family and friends. Before venturing into the Gorge the above organizations recommend the follow precautions.

- Leave a trip itinerary with someone who will check in with you regarding your return time.
- Remember to carry the “10 essentials” which include map and compass, extra food, extra water, whistle, poncho, extra clothing, waterproof matches and fire starter, flashlight, first aid kit.
- Be prepared for extremely cold temperatures, snow and/or rain.
- Although GPS devices and cell phones are helpful, do not rely on them, especially in the deep canyons of the Gorge. Even a few hundred yards up some trails there is no cell phone reception and batteries wear out at the most inconvenient times.
- Know your limitations and experience level and make sure you are fit for the type of outing you are planning.
- If hiking with others, stay together; it is highly recommended that you hike with at least one other person.
- If you think you are lost, do not panic. Stop and plan your next action which often is to stay in one place, especially if darkness is near.
- Leave plenty of daylight for travel and set up an emergency camp while there is still daylight.
- Know the predicted weather conditions before leaving and do not attempt snow travel unless you are well-trained and experienced.
- Call ahead to get the latest conditions for the areas in which you will be traveling.

For more information please visit the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area website:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/columbia/recreation/trails/safety.html>.

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