



# Bitterroot National Forest

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### “PERSEID SHOWERS AND A MOONWALK”

Hamilton, Montana —The annual Perseid meteor shower is coming, and forecasters say it could be unusually good.

The shower begins, gently, in mid-July when Earth enters the outskirts of a cloud of debris from Comet Swift-Tuttle. Dust-sized meteoroids hitting the atmosphere will streak across the night sky, at first only a sprinkling, with just a few each night, but the rate will build.

By the middle of August, (12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>) when the shower peaks, sky watchers can expect to see dozens, possibly even hundreds, of meteors per hour.

As a follow-up to the celestial fireworks, the Bitterroot National Forest will hold the “**Perseid Moon**” walk on **Saturday, August 28th** beginning between **8:00** and **8:30 p.m.** at **Lake Como**.

Featured topics for the “**Perseid Moon**” will include:

- ❖ Astronomer **Diane Friend** with the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Montana will point out constellations of the night sky, describe upcoming celestial events, and explain the cycles of the moon. **Bring binoculars.**
- ❖ Meteorologist **John Coefield**, with Montana DEQ, will talk about air quality and clear skies.
- ❖ Storyteller and Wolf Wrangler for Wild Sentry: The Northern Rockies Ambassador Wolf Program, **Bruce Weide** will share moon myths and stories.

The moon walk will begin at the Lake Como boat launch on the south side of the lake, which can be reached by traveling roughly 11 miles south of Hamilton on Highway 93 and turning west on the Lake Como Road. Follow the signs to the boat launch.

Moonwalks have a staggered, flexible start and end time to allow visitors to participate at their own pace, in smaller more intimate groups. Participants may want to bring binoculars and a flashlight in case the moon does not cooperate. Anticipate the weather and dress accordingly. Participants with questions or special needs can call the Bitterroot National Forest @ (406) 363-7100.

“Perseid Moon” pins will be available for a small donation. The Bitterroot National Forest would like to thank the University of Montana, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, and Bruce Weide for their participation in this walk.

The schedule of 2004 walks is available at each of the moonwalks, at each Forest Service office on the Bitterroot National Forest, or on the web site at [www.fs.fed.us/r1/bitterroot/recreation](http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/bitterroot/recreation).

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