

NEWS



Forest Service

*United States
Department of
Agriculture*

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Lassen National Forest

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Winter Wonderland Opportunities

A sunny sky, a chilly bite of winter in the air, and snow on the ground in the higher elevations are an invitation to many snowmobile enthusiasts to enjoy snowmobile trails on the Lassen National Forest. However, there have been many sunny days and snow conditions have changed for snowmobilers. Scott Bell, law enforcement officer for the Lassen commented, "There are bare areas out there, especially in the lower elevations, and trees that were blown down during the wind storms in December are starting to show on the trails."

Snowmobile enthusiasts are reminded that Wilderness areas and the Lassen Volcanic National Park are closed to motor vehicle use. "We continue to have snowmobile trespass in these areas, which will end up hurting our entire program," commented Forest Supervisor, Ed Cole. "Offenders can be fined up to \$500, repeat offences can result in fines up to \$5000 or six months in jail, we take illegal motorized access very seriously," Cole commented. "Additionally, all groomed snowmobile trails are closed to wheeled vehicles that weigh more than 1000 pounds."

The Lassen National Forest has six snowmobile staging areas and over 477 miles of groomed trails. In addition, there are several open areas on the forest where cross-country travel by snowmobile is available. A map of the forest's snowmobile system and staging areas can be obtained from any Lassen National Forest office located in Susanville, Chester, and Fall River Mills. The Forest Service posts all Wilderness

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boundaries, and the National Park mark their boundaries. Continued law enforcement patrols by both agencies will occur to ensure signs are not destroyed or removed.

While on the trail, snowmobilers are urged to abide by the following “Tread Lightly” principles:

- Ride only on designated snowmobile trails or in areas where snowmobiling is permitted.
- Respect wildlife and their habitat. Enjoy viewing wildlife from a distance to avoid disturbance.
- Excessive noise bothers people and wildlife. Snowmobile exhaust and noise is the single most important issue causing visitor conflict. Respect skiers, snow shoers, and people enjoying a day of tubing or sledding.
- Ride only when there are more than 12 inches of snow to avoid soil impacts and damage to plants.
- Ride carefully, remember, you may not be the only person riding the trails.
- Be prepared for unexpected changes in the weather, dress appropriately and let someone know your plans.

For more information, or an update of trail conditions, contact your local Forest Service office, or call (530) 257-2151.

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