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News Release

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White River National Forest Winter Motor Vehicle Season Starts Nov. 23

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GLENWOOD SPRINGS, COLO. - The White River National Forest's winter motor vehicle use season begins Nov. 23 and ends May 20. During the winter season, all wheeled vehicles (including bikes) are limited to plowed routes or routes opened through special order. Winter Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUM) identify routes and areas designated for "over the snow" motor vehicle travel. MVUM's are free and available at all Ranger Districts. Please respect the shift from summer travel to winter even if the snowpack is low. Seasonal closures are in place to protect road quality, public safety and to provide critical winter habitat for wildlife.

The Vail Pass area switched to winter use and "over the snow" vehicles Nov. 15. The Vail Pass Winter Recreation Area, which traditionally opens the day after Thanksgiving, will start charging fees when sufficient snow has fallen to begin grooming operations. Season passes are now available for purchase at the Eagle-Holy Cross and Dillon Ranger District offices for \$40. Day passes will be available at Vail Pass Winter Recreation Area trailheads for \$6.

During the winter months, snowmobile clubs groom many roads as a public service using a combination of volunteer time, private, and partner funding, such as Colorado Parks and Wildlife snowmobile program. Please help protect their investment, groomed surfaces, and winter recreation opportunities by respecting signage and travel restrictions.

Fat-tire biking is allowed on roads open to wheeled vehicles that are plowed. Currently, all trails are closed to fat-tire bikes in the winter in accordance with the White River National Forest 2011 Travel Management Plan. The White River National Forest acknowledges that technology has changed that enables mountain bikes greater capability to operate on packed snow since the 2011 Travel Management Plan was finalized.

The forest is working with the local International Mountain Biking Association representatives who will lead a public process and develop a potential proposal for winter routes that would be open to fat tire biking. International Mountain Biking Association is encouraging users and interested publics to work with local organizations on how the process will work and what routes can be considered or not. Until then, forest users are asked to obtain and adhere to the Winter Motor Vehicle Use Maps and special orders to provide for visitor safety and protect underlying vegetation and wildlife habitat.

For more information contact your local Ranger District. You may also find information by visiting our home page <http://www.fs.usda.gov/whiteriver> and clicking on “Ranger Districts” in the upper right hand corner menu.

Both winter and summer MVUM’s are available to download at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/whiteriver/home/?cid=stelprdb5328680>.