



September 1, 2009

Badger-Two Medicine travel plan to take effect Oct. 1

By Tribune Staff

The U.S. Forest Service said Monday that a new travel plan restricting most motorized travel in the Badger-Two Medicine area will go into effect Oct. 1.

When the Forest Service announced the plan in March, it banned motorized travel on almost 200 miles of trails, and it also banned snowmobiles in the area.

The Forest Service based the plan on the need to protect unspoiled wildlife habitat and lands with cultural significance to the Blackfeet Tribe.

"We will begin implementing the new travel plan requirements for the Badger-Two Medicine area on Thursday, Oct. 1," said Mike Munoz, Rocky Mountain District Ranger. "We chose to implement the new travel plan effective Oct. 1 to give us time to spread the word to the public this summer, to answer their questions, and to get the entry points properly signed to reflect the significant changes," he said.

A Forest Service release said, "The new travel plan continues to provide several motorized access points to the area and limited motorized opportunities for cutting firewood and dispersed camping. The new travel plan does not allow any motorized over-the-snow use."

The decision to implement these new travel plan requirements in the Badger-Two Medicine area was released this past spring and was administratively appealed by 21 individuals desiring more motorized use than provided for in the new decision.

The Badger-Two Medicine travel decision was reviewed and upheld by the deputy regional forester earlier in the summer, clearing the way to begin implementing the new plan.

Few places in the United States rival the solitude, wildlife viewing and hunting afforded by the 130,000-acre Badger-Two Medicine, which tipped the scale in favor of travel by foot, horse and bicycle, Forest Supervisor Spike Thompson said when the plan was released in March.

"When you talk about the Last Best Place," said Thompson, referring to the state's nickname, "the Rocky Mountain Front is it as far as I'm concerned."

Badger-Two Medicine is located along the Rocky Mountains, beginning at Birch Creek west of Dupuyer and stretching north to U.S. Highway 2. The collision of mountain and prairie landscapes produces a diverse array of wildlife and stunning views.

The new map may be viewed online at www.fs.fed.us/r1/lewisclark/. The map is found within the link titled "Lewis and Clark National Forest Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUM)" and is identified as the map valid Oct. 1, 2009 in the Rocky Mountain Ranger District portion of the MVUM information.

Copies of the new map also will be available at Forest Service offices. The existing MVUM for the Badger-Two Medicine area will be invalid after Sept. 30.

For additional information on the new Badger-Two Medicine travel plan, contact the Rocky Mountain Ranger District Office at 466-5341 or the Lewis and Clark National Forest Supervisor's Office at 791-7754.
