

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Durango winter trail closures begin December 1 for wildlife protection

DURANGO, Colo. – Annual winter closures go into effect Dec. 1 for public areas and trails managed by the Bureau of Land Management, Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the City of Durango to protect wildlife winter range on public lands. These closures remain in place through Apr. 15.

The BLM, in cooperation with the City of Durango, utilize CPW information regarding deer and elk movement throughout the year. This data shows closures in lower elevations are necessary to protect critical foraging habitat for game species. Closing areas to human activity is important to allow deer and elk to conserve energy and survive the winter. When animals flee due to disturbances caused by people, calories are used that are needed to survive through the rest of the winter. Pregnant deer and elk are particularly sensitive to disturbances, and stand a better chance of survival when the habitat is free of interactions with humans and pets. The closure areas prohibit all public access until conditions allow for wildlife to move back to higher elevations.

“We appreciate the public’s willingness to transition their trail use in the winter,” said Connie Clementson, BLM Tres Rios Field Manager. “Temporarily giving up beloved outdoor space is especially hard when the weather is nice during the winter months, but is necessary for our wildlife.”

Closure areas are signed and include:

- Big Canyon and Sale barn trailheads off U.S. Highway 160 will be closed to all public use.
- South Rim trail, including portions of Sidewinder and Cowboy trails on BLM (accessed from Carbon Junction trail or Crites Connection).
- Grandview BLM trails (accessed from Three Springs).
- BLM lands above the lower loop trail near Animas City Mountain (accessed from the 32nd Street trailhead).
- All upper trails in the Twin Buttes Wildlife Area.
- Bodo State Wildlife Area (except the Smelter Mountain Trail that is open daily from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.).
- Perrins State Wildlife Area (accessed east of County Road 208 and closed through July 31).

The BLM worked with a variety of local, state and federal partners to identify areas where trail use can continue. The following areas remain open for hiking, biking, snowshoeing and skiing:

- Horse Gulch area including the Meadow, Stacy’s, Mikes, Telegraph, Crites and Sugar trails (accessed from the east end of 3rd Street)
- Lower Twin Buttes trails (accessed off of Highway 160 West)
- The Skyline trail including all of the Raider Ridge Trail to Medicine, Down and Out and Snake Charmer trails (accessed at Jenkins Ranch Road Trailhead - northeast of Ft. Lewis College)
- All of Dalla Mountain Park (accessed at Junction Creek Road)
- Overend Mountain Park (accessed at Leyden Street and Hidden Valley Circle)
- Trails accessed near Fort Lewis College include Lions Den, Chapman Flow and Jump Line
- The Rim, Squawker, Talker, Skyline and Shocker trails (access from the Powerline trail)
- The Colorado trail (accessed at Junction Creek)

- The Carbon Junction trail is open from Highway 3 to Crites Connection
- Crites Connection is open to Telegraph trail
- A 1.5-mile trail loop on the lower portion of the Animas City Mountain (accessed from the Birkett and 32nd Street trailheads or Dalla Mountain Park)

To learn about accessing routes near Durango, Trails 2000, a local non-profit group, provides comprehensive online information including maps, trail difficulty indicators and trail conditions at www.trails2000.org. For more information, contact the BLM Tres Rios Field Office at 970-882-7296.

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Social media posts: Local, state and federal partners remind the public several areas and trails near Durango, Colorado, are closed from Dec. 1 through Apr. 15 to provide wildlife a secure area to forage for the winter. To learn about accessing routes, Trails 2000, a local non-profit group, provides comprehensive online information including maps, trail difficulty indicators and trail conditions at www.trails2000.org.

Public trails near Durango, Colorado, are closed from Dec. 1 through Apr. 15 for wildlife. Learn about trail access at www.trails2000.org.