



Inyo National Forest, Pacific Southwest Region

Forest Service News Release

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Road openings and closures update on Inyo National Forest

BISHOP, Calif., July 13, 2023 — It's no secret this past winter's effects on the roads within Inyo National Forest (Forest) have been long-lasting. The Forest has continued reassessing roads after record-breaking snowmelt runoff and thunderstorms caused heavy damage to numerous Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) routes and has developed a prioritization protocol for repair based on access for fire personnel, developed recreation sites and high-use areas.

With it still being a very dynamic situation expected to last into the summer and beyond, the forest has some updates to share regarding the reopening of some roads with additional closures of others, broken down by each Ranger District:

Mammoth Ranger District

- **Lake Mary Road** and roads within the **Lakes Basin**: opening Friday, July 14 at 8:00 a.m.
 - Hazard tree abatement will continue and there will be temporary traffic stops.
 - The only campground open will be Twin Lakes.
 - Coldwater Creek is overflowing. Drive slowly, and do not park in flooded shoulders.
 - Parking is extremely limited. Please check the [ESTA website](#) for trolley information.
- **Reds Meadow Road** will remain closed up to the Mammoth Mountain Inn/Main Lodge. Admin access is only allowed past this point as staff continue clearing the road, assessing for damage and conducting trainings before ESTA can begin providing shuttle service. More information will be forthcoming jointly from the Inyo National Forest and Devils Postpile National Monument regarding the reopening of Reds Meadow Road to the public.

Mammoth Ranger District staff would like to thank the Town of Mammoth Lakes and Mammoth Mountain Ski Area for their continual assistance in clearing these roads!

White Mountain Ranger District

- **Buttermilk Loop Road** is now open.
- **Silver Canyon Road** is now open.

- **Coyote Flat, Sugarloaf Road, Sand Canyon, Wyman Canyon, and White Mountain Road (past Patriarch Grove)** remain closed.
 - Of these roads, Coyote Flat and Sand Canyon are the top priority.

The Coyote Flats area has been and continues to be one of the worst-affected roads on the forest from snowmelt runoff and thunderstorm damage this year. After a recent attempt to work on the road forest service engineering staff had to retreat because the road surface was unstable and unsafe for them to operate their equipment. Staff then headed four miles further up the road and found a new, larger gully washout. It was then determined that the road closure would need to be kept in place while further planning for repairs is conducted, as the type of work needed will not be supported by the current heavy equipment on-hand.

Forest Service staff are working on agreements with individuals in the community who have the proper and right-sized heavy equipment and also with volunteer groups such as Valley Outdoors to organize additional public work day events, as have happened in the recent past.

“With the now dwindling budget available to utilize in ordering equipment, the forest is grateful for a community that is so enthusiastic about getting involved in their public lands,” said Mike Wiese, Incident Commander for the team managing the storm damage. “The Forest continues working with locals to facilitate a faster reopening, while also ensuring safety to those involved.”

Mono Lake Ranger District

- **Big Springs Road and Sawmill Cutoff Road** are currently being repaired for fire access.
 - Big Springs Road has been repaired as of July 7 and is being prepared for opening shortly.
- **Walker Lake Road (Forest Road 1S23), Bohler Canyon Road (Forest Road 1N106), Horse Meadow Road (Forest Road 1N16), Forest Roads 1S131, 1S131A, 1S131B** remain closed due to storm damage.
 - Walker Lake and Horse Meadow Roads are the priority for repairs.
- Three new roads have been partially closed this week due to excessive storm damage as well:
 - **Sagehen Meadow Road** (Forest Road 1N02 junction of 1N02G and 1N02H)
 - **Wild Horse Meadow Road** (Forest Road 1S56 (junction of 1S17 and 1S56B)
 - **Pilot Springs Road** (Forest Road 1S04 junction of 1S167 and 1S04J)

All roads listed in the Closure Order are open to foot traffic or bicycles. Motorized vehicles are not.

Forest engineers are working diligently to address and repair the above damaged roads, get campgrounds open, and set up new volunteer agreements to fix roads as well. Operations have been challenging, but are moving in the right direction. We ask for your continued patience and understanding as we continue to deal with the effects of this year’s historical precipitation and the limited resources and staff we have to address it.

If you would like to get involved with efforts to help repair these roads, please contact our partner organization at Valley Outdoors: Volunteer@valleyoutdoors.org

www.fs.usda.gov/goto/inyo/alerts-notice/roadconditions



Other agencies manage roads that are partially Forest Service-owned or lead into our roads. Please “know before you go” by visiting their websites:

Inyo County:

<https://www.inyocounty.us/services/public-works/news/inyo-county-road-open-closed-status>

Mono County: <https://monocounty.ca.gov/roads>

Los Angeles Department of Water and Power: ladwpeasternsierra.com

BLM - Bishop Field Office: www.blm.gov/office/bishop-field-office

CalTrans: quickmap.dot.ca.gov

Nevada Department of Transportation: <https://www.nvroads.com/>

Forest officials want to remind the public of the following:

- Driving around closed roads, boulders, blockades, or driving over carsonite posts or through ruts creates further resource damage and also endangers the traveler and others. It can also create a further backlog of repair work, causing road closures to last longer.
- Region-wide, the road damage repair is so extensive that repairs may not be done in a timely enough manner before reopening. Therefore, if a road appears to be fine to drive but it is officially closed, it is imperative that you don't.
- Travelling over snow-covered roadways results in water flowing down ruts created by the vehicles, causing road damage and erosion.
- Violation of entering closed roads is punishable by a fine of \$5,000 or less for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization, or imprisonment for not more than six months or both.

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