

Pioneer Fire Recovery and Restoration Update

January 27, 2017



Backcountry skier carving up the slopes around Mores Creek Summit

The Forest continues to implement actions to reduce the Pioneer Fire Closure Area, opening the Bear Creek area located northeast of Idaho City. Access to popular groomed snowmobile routes are open increasing opportunities for winter recreationists. National Forest Systems (NFS) Roads open include: 312, 348, 348J and NFS trail 565 (Crooked Pike Loop Trail). For all closures within the Boise National Forest visit: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/boise/alerts-notices>.

Safety is always important, especially within burned areas as there is a higher degree of hazards. Many immediate threat hazard trees were removed along priority roads and snowmobile routes however, burned trees will continue to fall as snow loads increase. Winter enthusiasts headed into the backcountry, should be aware of avalanche conditions. Know your ability; avalanche danger may be higher in and around burned areas.

Winter travel conditions change rapidly and visitors should plan ahead, check with the local Forest Service Ranger Station or the Idaho Department of Transportation about road/trail conditions, bring extra clothes, food and water and most importantly; tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return.

Useful links:

National Weather Service – Boise Forecast Office: <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/boi/>

Know Before You Go – Avalanche Basics: <http://kbyg.org/>

Idaho Transportation Department: <http://511.idaho.gov/>

SNOTEL stations for snowfall amounts: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/id/snow/>

Payette Avalanche Center: <http://payetteavalanche.org/>

Sawtooth Avalanche Center: <http://www.sawtoothavalanche.com/>

2016 Accomplishments

Despite fall and winter weather, the Boise National Forest made good progress at reducing hazardous trees along priority travel routes using a fell and leave approach. More than 100 miles of roads, trails and groomed snowmobile and ski routes were treated before winter weather set in. Felling operations also reduced hazardous trees around Banner, Rocky Ridge and Stargaze yurts also using a fell and leave approach. Two of the three yurts (Banner and Stargaze), were reopened for reservations.

Additionally, forest officials offered four hazard tree salvage sales opportunities to local businesses for a total estimated volume of 2,336 MMBF. Weather permitting, these hazardous trees are being removed on 482 acres along priority routes and developed sites.



Pine Flats Campground hazard tree salvage sale

To assist with recovery, additional salvage sales and reforestation actions are planned.

Following the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), teams of technical and professional specialists are developing the North and South Pioneer Fire Environmental Assessments (EAs), to analyze the effects of salvage and reforestation activities within some areas of the fire perimeter.

Late January, two proposed actions will be released and in early February, open houses are scheduled to launch the 30 day public comment period. Your feedback on the proposed actions will help the Boise National Forest recover and restore this landscape. For more information visit: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/boise/home/?cid=fseprd530485>

Please join forest experts:

Feb. 8, at the Boise, Best Western (near the Boise Airport) from 6-8 p.m.

Feb. 9, at the Boise Basin High school Cafeteria (Idaho City) from 6-8 p.m.

Feb. 10, at the Garden Valley High School multipurpose room from 6-8 p.m.