



## Forest Service News Release

Public Affairs: Aaron Voos  
(970) 819-2898

[aaron.voos@usda.gov](mailto:aaron.voos@usda.gov)

[www.fs.usda.gov/mbr](http://www.fs.usda.gov/mbr)

### Changes announced for winter recreation access in North Routt County

*Multiple management actions occurring near the community of Columbine, north of Hahns Peak.*

**(STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, Colo.) December 16, 2021** – New winter recreation opportunities have been implemented this season in North Routt County, Colo. by the Hahns Peak/Bears Ears Ranger District. The improvements on the Routt National Forest include a new parking area, new section of plowed road, new section of groomed snowmobile trail, and a designated non-motorized use area.

The focused area is near the community of Columbine, north of Hahns Peak, and along Forest Road 550 and County Road 129. All improvements are on National Forest System lands managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service.

A [map](#) of the area and recreation site descriptions are available on the [Forest web site](#) and the Steamboat Chamber's [Know Before You Go](#) site.

“The improvements we’ve made this year and our important partnerships with the county and state in North Routt are a direct result of public feedback,” said Hahns Peak/Bears Ears District Ranger Michael Woodbridge. “Our intent is to decrease impact to private land, improve visitor experience, and address historic areas of conflict.”

Changes include:

- A new parking area named **Elkhorn South Winter Trailhead**. It is recommended for motorized use and trailer parking and is located approximately one mile northeast up the 550 Road from the historic parking area near Columbine and before Little Red Park. The road and lot will be plowed through an agreement with Routt County. The 550 Road is a secondary plow route and during big storms the primary paved routes will be prioritized. Unplowed conditions on the road and in the parking area are likely after large storms. Four-wheel drive or all-wheel drive and chains is recommended when traveling on this section of road. No fee will be charged in the lot. No wheeled vehicular access is allowed beyond Elkhorn South on the 550 Road, over-the-snow vehicles only during the winter.
- The existing **Quarry (Columbine) Trailhead** will be retained, with an emphasis for non-motorized users and a recommendation for no trailer parking. The lot will be plowed, no fee will be charged, and no overnight camping is allowed.
- Approximately 850 acres of Forest south and east of the parking areas has been designated as a suggested non-motorized dispersed use area. The intent is to improve non-motorized opportunity and reduce user conflict with area designations like on Rabbit Ears Pass. Motorized users are asked to stay on the groomed route through this area.
- A new, groomed snowmobile connector route has been established that traverses through the non-motorized area. The groomed trail connects Forest Road 490 on the south with the 550 Road on the north. Recreationists will no longer have to use the 490 Road and County Road 129 to access the 550 Road.

In the event of inaccessible roads and for all the recreation opportunities mentioned, secondary or overflow parking to access North Routt terrain is available at the Marina Parking Lot at Steamboat Lake State Park.

For more information about National Forest winter recreation access locations, please call the Hahns Peak/Bears Ears Ranger District office at (970) 870-2299.

Additional information may be found on our [website](#) or on the Forests' [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) accounts.

**-USDA-**