

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service

Eldorado National Forest

100 Forni Road, Placerville, CA 95667



Date: January 23, 2007
Release: Upon Receipt

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Improving Visitor Safety on Mormon Emigrant Trail

Placerville, CA... Forest Service management of the Mormon Emigrant Trail (MET) that connects Highway 50 at Pollock Pines and Highway 88 will change this winter season to improve public safety and to better assist forest visitors recreating on the Eldorado National Forest. Wheeled motor vehicle use such as, cars, trucks, four-wheel drives, and all-terrain vehicles, is prohibited along the five mile section from the Iron Mountain Sno-Park near Highway 88 to the Silver Fork Road junction on MET during the winter season when the road is snow covered and used by snowmobiles.

The Forest Service reports that visitors attempting to travel over-the-snow from Highway 50 to Highway 88 via the 25 mile long MET frequently become trapped behind a gate near Highway 88, or become stuck in the snow along the road.

“Just last weekend multiple vehicles became stuck and visitors needed to be rescued,” said Anthony Scardina, Acting Amador District Ranger. “The recent fatality of a stranded motorist in southern Oregon emphasizes our need to be proactive to improve public safety.”

The eastern section of the MET near Highway 88 is utilized in the winter as part of the Silver Bear snowmobile trail system and is already closed to wheeled over-the-snow travel. Scardina says wheeled vehicle over-the-snow travel damages the groomed trail and creates an additional safety risk when snowmobiles and motor vehicles travel on the same route.

Approximately 20 miles of the MET, from Sly Park Road on the western Highway 50 end to the junction with Silver Fork Road, are open for wheeled motor vehicle over-the-snow travel. A snow berm will be placed on the MET at the Silver Fork junction so that vehicles cannot continue eastbound to Highway 88. From Highway 88, another snow berm will be constructed on the MET at the Iron Mountain Sno-Park to control westbound travel during the winter. Appropriate signing will also be installed.

For further information contact the Amador Ranger District at (209) 295-4251 or the Placerville Ranger District at (530) 644-2324.

END