



U.S. Forest Service
Coconino National Forest
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News Release



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Snow play areas are open, rules are there for your safety

Flagstaff, Ariz., Jan. 12, 2017, For Immediate Release — When the snow flies in Northern Arizona, people from all over the state come and play in the Flagstaff area.

Three-day weekends, such as the one upcoming, are weekends when masses of people converge upon northern Arizona and Coconino National Forest to play in the snow. Drivers, visitors and residents will need to have extra patience and be courteous to each other.

Recent snows have brought many visitors to snow play areas along state Route 180, north of Flagstaff, which has caused dangerous conditions as people are parking illegally on the side of SR 180.

In addition to parking along the highway, drivers have bottlenecked the parking lot at Crowley Pit and other locations. This has proven to slow first responders who responded to an injury at Crowley Pit recently. The public is reminded to park in a courteous and orderly way so everyone can be safe and enjoy their visit.

An area currently closed to snow play and sledding is Cinch Hook Gravel Pit in the Mogollon Rim Ranger District near the intersection of highways 87 and 260. This area has been closed for several years because it is an active gravel pit. The area is not safe, and the snow hides a lot of rocks and obstacles that can cause serious injuries. Arizona Department of Transportation, county sheriff deputies and U.S. Forest Service recreation specialists and law enforcement officers are all enforcing the Cinch Hook closure and citing people for being in a closed area.

The best way to decide where to go for snow play, whether it is the Fort Tuthill snow play area south of Flagstaff, skiing at Arizona Snowbowl north of Flagstaff or checking out the Happy Jack Lodge near the Mogollon Rim, is to visit www.coconinonationalforest.us and navigate to the "Winter Recreation" link in the middle of the page.

Some snow play areas are closed because of melting conditions, so please check the status of your snow play destination before heading out. Have a plan, be safe, keep a survival kit in your vehicle during the winter months and have fun.

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