



## **NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

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### **Follow public health guidelines regarding social distancing while you recreate in National Forests**

Western Wyo., March 25, 2020 - The U.S. Forest Service Bridger-Teton National Forest remains open, and offers many opportunities for dispersed recreation, which comply with Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon's Statewide Public Health Order.

Although campgrounds, day-use developed sites, restrooms and other developed recreation facilities on the Bridger-Teton remain closed due to snow and seasonal conditions until mid-May, the vast majority of the Forest is still available to visitors. While reducing the spread of the virus and not straining the health care system is our clear collective priority, we recognize that spending time outdoors can help sustain us – both mentally and physically – in these challenging times. At this time, recreation opportunities on the Forest that support social distancing and small groups include hiking, biking, snowmobiling, skiing and other similar dispersed activities.

The Bridger-Teton National Forest asks members of the public to recreate responsibly by staying local, exploring less popular areas, maintaining 6' social distance, and making conservative decisions. Now it not the time to be taking risks that increase the chance of injury. Search and rescue operational capacity is limited due to COVID-19. In addition, we ask visitors to continue to comply with winter wildlife closures and bring home their trash (pack it in, pack it out). The Forest is keeping trailheads open and has opened the Astoria boat ramp on the Snake River to allow for additional dispersed recreation opportunities. Visit the Interactive Visitor Map at <https://www.fs.fed.us/ivm/> for more information on available activities.

"We don't want to be in a position to have to consider closing the Forest," said Bridger-Teton National Forest Supervisor Tricia O'Connor. "However, given the current circumstances, I feel it critical to emphasize the importance of all recreationists to avoid

locations on the Forest that draw large numbers of people into close proximity with each other. Thank you for your patience and support while we work to protect the access while providing for the safety of the public and our employees.”

All Bridger-Teton National Forest offices are conducting business and providing services virtually as well as continuing field patrols. The Bridger-Teton National Forest will continue to coordinate its COVID-19 response in alignment with all federal, state and local guidance. Visitors to Bridger-Teton are urged to take the precautions recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and to follow guidelines set forth by state officials. For tips from the CDC on preventing illnesses like the coronavirus, go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html>.

To receive news from the Bridger-Teton National Forest, you can self-subscribe to our mailing list by following this link <https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/btnf/home> In the center of the page enter your email address and then submit the request. You will then be able to choose what news release topics you wish to receive.

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