

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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HAILEY ANNOUNCES SEASONAL CLOSURE OF HANGMANS GULCH AREA

(Hailey, Idaho) – The City of Hailey wishes to inform the public of the winter closure of the Hangmans Gulch area. As part of the approval process for the Old Cutters subdivision in the northeast section of Hailey, Idaho Fish & Game required additional protection for the deer that typically use and migrate through Hangmans Gulch, resulting in a December 1st closure of the area to hikers, equestrians and dogs. Signs have been posted which read, “Closed - Critical Wildlife Habitat.”

Several factors influence seasonal closures; most notable is the growing number of homes and increased human activity where deer, elk and other wildlife used to roam unimpeded. Local Fish & Game officers have identified migration corridors – where ungulates typically move in search of food – that bisect the ridges and gullies east of Hailey. Seasonal closures are expected to be part of any approval for development in Quigley Canyon, as well.

Seasonal closures of the public’s favorite summertime areas are likely to become more common as new homes are built in previously undeveloped areas. Thirty years ago, Hailey had a population of less than 2,500 people, which meant the impact of users in these areas was typically minimal. But now Hailey has grown to almost four times as many people, making the impacts substantially greater, and the visual reminders are everywhere – the ridgeline trails up Carbonate Mountain or Quigley Hill didn’t exist thirty years ago, for example. Deer and elk populations in the area continue to decline as well.

“Enforcement of seasonal closures depends on the honor system – if you see a sign that says closed, you should assume that it means everyone. Closures need to be respected,” said Becki Keefer, the Hailey Parks & Trails Project Coordinator and long-time trail user. Closures are enacted to protect wildlife, to protect areas reseeded from earlier misuse, and to protect users from hazardous conditions.

Other nearby areas remain open, such as the Toe of the Hill Trail (posted closed when avalanche hazards exist), Colorado Gulch (closed 12/1 to 4/1 to motorized vehicles), and the Big Wood River accesses, such as the Draper Preserve in southwest Hailey. The Blaine County Recreation District’s Wood River Trails is an easily accessed wintertime option.

Don’t lose heart, though – closed areas will open back up in the spring!

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