

# NEWS Release

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

28910 Hwy 20 West • Hines, Oregon 97738 • <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/burns>  
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## EARLY SNOWFALL CATCHES STEENS MOUNTAIN TRAVELERS OFF GUARD

**HINES, Oregon** – Recent storms in southern Harney County caught several higher elevation travelers off guard this past week, leaving some stuck and others stranded for short periods. On Steens Mountain, nearly half a dozen motorists were reported having difficulties. Most became stuck after trying to pass through 2-3 foot snow drifts on the Steens Mountain Loop Road near the summit. Others were snowed in behind the drifts after a storm came through.

Although the 6 inches of snow already accumulated at Fish Lake isn't uncommon for early October, many travelers seem surprised by the conditions. Remember - when recreating this time of year, your chance of finding someone in trouble or having trouble yourself is an ever present danger. For your safety:

- check weather reports *before* starting your trip;
- stay on designated, maintained roads and avoid wet and muddy areas;
- be prepared for sudden changes in weather conditions, especially on Steens Mountain where snow can fall year round and blustery winds can create impassable snow drifts within minutes;
- always start your trip with a full tank of fuel;
- let someone at home know where you plan to go and when expect your return;
- do not rely on phone service for emergency communication; and
- pack survival gear in your vehicle or on your person.

Despite the current conditions, the Steens Mountain Loop Road and other high elevation roads in the area remain open until further notice. Additional storms are predicted through the weekend and will be frequent throughout the fall and winter, eventually resulting in the closure of these roads until spring. Again, take special care and precaution when traveling this time of year – plan ahead and be prepared.

For current road and access conditions on Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-administered lands in Harney County, call the Burns District BLM Office at (541) 573-4400.

