

# NEWSRelease

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

28910 Hwy 20 West • Hines, Oregon 97738 • <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/burns>

Contact: Tara Martinak (541) 573-4400 • Release No. OR-020-09-003 • November 13, 2009

## WINTER WEATHER CLOSES UPPER SECTION OF STEENS MOUNTAIN LOOP ROAD

**HINES, Ore.** – Changing weather patterns, recent snowfall and heavy drifting closed the upper section of the Steens Mountain Loop Road for the winter season. Effective November 13, the gates just below Jackman Park Campground and Big Indian Overlook were closed, preventing vehicular travel around the entire Loop Road until next spring.

Despite the closure, all Steens Mountain area campgrounds except Jackman Park remain open. Deep snow may prevent some travelers from reaching Fish Lake Campground at times. South Steens and Page Springs Campgrounds are still fully accessible, but have been winterized. Page Springs will be the only campground open throughout the winter season, with reduced fees of \$4 per vehicle per night.

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 and find out about road and access conditions before starting your trip;
- stay on designated, maintained roads and avoid wet, muddy or snow-drifted areas;
- be prepared for sudden changes in weather conditions;
- always start your trip with a full tank of fuel;
- let someone at home know where you plan to go and when to expect your return;
- do not rely on phone service for emergency communication; and
- pack survival gear in your vehicle or on your person.

In the coming weeks, snow levels are expected to drop into the lower elevations, eventually resulting in closure of the remaining portions of the Loop Road for the winter. As snow accumulation increases, winter recreation opportunities including cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and limited snowmobiling on Steens Mountain will be available by permit from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

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

### About the BLM:

The BLM manages more land – 256 million acres – than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

