U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Summer Motor Vehicle Limitations

Steese and White Mountains Travel Areas - Summer (May 1 – October 14)

Numerous and diverse opportunities for summer recreation exist on BLM-managed public lands in the Steese and White Mountains travel management areas. During the summer, May 1 – October 14, motorized vehicle use is limited to protect sensitive resources; however, the entire area is open to all forms of non-motorized use, including hiking, equestrian and bicycling use.

Keep in mind that you are responsible for knowing, understanding and complying with all public land use regulations. When riding the trails, please travel responsibly, wear a helmet and ride to reduce damage to the surrounding area and resources. Contact the BLM at (907) 474-2200 with questions.

Steese National Conservation Area & White Mountains National Recreation Area

New Area and Route Designations: Know Your Vehicle's Weight and Width

From May 1 – October 14, motor vehicles must remain on BLM routes designated for their use unless traveling in an area designated open to cross-country motorized travel. New Travel and Transportation Management Plans outline the BLM designations for routes and off-road, cross-country travel. Some designations include vehicle curb weight and width limitations. A vehicle's curb weight is the total weight of the vehicle unloaded with a full tank of fuel and all fluids. BLM designations with OHV limitations are depicted on updated BLM maps and on local signage. Learn more about Alaska Travel and Transportation management here: *https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/recreation-programs/travel-and-transportation/alaska*

Please be aware that large OHVs, ARGOS, and four-door side-by-side UTVs are too large for use on most routes and cross-country travel on BLM-managed public lands. Motorized vehicles over 1,500 pounds curb weight or over 64 inches wide may only be ridden on roads and within designated areas in the Nome Creek tailings.

Summer Area Designations

- **Designated areas within the Nome Creek tailings:**
  - > ***Open to cross-country travel.*** No size limit for motor vehicles traveling offroad.
  - > ***Cross country travel allowed for street-legal vehicles 10,000 pounds or less and non-street-legal OHVs 1,500 pounds curb weight or less***. The 10,000-pound size limit generally allows for most light duty street legal vehicles but excludes most heavy-duty trucks, class A RVs and semitrucks.
- **Cross country travel allowed for OHVs 1,500 pounds or less curb weight and up to 64 inches wide**. These designated areas are found on general public lands outside the special management areas. Size limits exclude large OHVs and four-door side-by-sides.
- **Cross country travel allowed for OHVs 1,000 pounds or less curb weight and up to 50 inches wide**. Several designated areas allow for offroad travel for 4-wheelers and small side-by-sides within the boundaries of the Steese National Conservation Area and the White Mountain National Recreation Area.
- **No summer OHV cross-country travel allowed**. All motor vehicles, including e-bikes, must stay on routes designated for their use. This area designation is found in much of the Steese National Conservation Area and surrounding the Nome Creek Valley within White Mountains National Conservation Area.
- **No summer use of OHVs**. These areas are only open to snowmobile use during the winter (October 15 – April 30). This includes the Research Natural Areas, the Wild and Scenic River corridors, as well as the areas north and east of Beaver Creek Wild and Scenic River and south of Birch Creek Wild and Scenic River.

Summer Route Designations

- **Open to all modes of motorized travel**. Nome Creek Road, Fryingpan Creek Road and the Harrison-Portage Creek Road.
- **Open to licensed street-legal vehicles**. Managed by the Alaska Department of Transportation, open only to the use of licensed street-legal vehicles.
- **Open to OHVs weighing 1,000 pounds or less curb weight and up to 50 inches wide**. Size limits allow for the use of most 4-wheeler ATVs and few side-by-side UTVs.
- **Open to OHVs weighing 1,500 pounds or less curb weight and up to 64 inches wide**. Size limits allow for the use of most ATVs, including 6-wheeler ATVs, as well as many two-door side-by-side UTVs. Size limits exclude large OHVs and four-door side-by-side UTVs.
- **Open to class 1, 2 and 3 E-bikes**. E-bikes are allowed on motorized routes, the Summit Trail and the Table Top Mountain Trail.
- **Open to all forms of non-motorized use**. A few routes are designated for non-motorized use only: Pinnell Mountain National Recreation Trail and Ski Loop Trail.

Steese National Conservation Area

The Harrison Creek – Portage Creek Road and Fryingpan Creek Road are open to all modes of motorized travel, however these roads are unmaintained and suitable for use by high-clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicles, or off-highway vehicles.

The new Travel Management Plan changed summer access by no longer allowing cross-country motorized travel in much of the National Conservation Area. The summer route network was designated from the user-made routes that developed when the area was open to summer cross-country travel. Many of these newly designated routes may be in poor condition and can be challenging to locate. We appreciate your patience as we work on route improvements and signage. Some pre-existing routes are not part of the designated route network and are not open to motor vehicles in the summer.

Three cross-country travel areas for OHVs 1,000 pounds or less curb weight and a maximum width of 50 inches are in the south Steese unit. Larger vehicles must stay on roads and routes designated for their use.

Game Retrieval

Under certain conditions, the retrieval of legally harvested big game animals is allowed within designated game retrieval areas in the Steese National Conservation Area using up to 3 OHVs weighing up to 1,000 pounds curb weight or 1 OHV up to 1,500 pounds curb weight. Individuals must have a completed harvest ticket in possession. Searching to locate downed animals is not considered game retrieval. OHVs may not be more than one mile from the designated trail during retrieval of big game. Travel off the designated trails for game retrieval is allowed only within 24 hours of legal harvest. Game retrieval is not allowed in areas designated "No Summer Use of OHVs," including but not limited to Birch Creek National Wild and Scenic River corridor. Game retrieval areas include:

- The portion of the south Steese unit that lies north of the Birch Creek Wild and Scenic River Corridor and is accessed from the Fryingpan Creek Road and Harrison-Portage Creek Loop.
- The BLM routes along the boundary of the north Steese unit that repeatedly cross from state to federal land that are open to OHVs weighing up to 1500 pounds curb weight and up to 64 inches width. This does not include the non-motorized Pinnell Mountain National Recreation Trail.

White Mountains National Recreation Area

The U.S. Creek Road is open only to the use of licensed street-legal vehicles. The Nome Creek Road is open to all modes of motorized travel with no limitations. A new limitation on cross-country travel in the Nome Creek area is intended to concentrate motorized travel on the managed route network and prevent the proliferation of routes.

Most managed routes are open to OHVs weighing 1,000 pounds or less curb weight and a maximum width of 50 inches. A few routes are designated for larger motor vehicles weighing up to 1,500 pounds curb weight and up to 64 inches wide, including the Quartz Creek Trail and the Wickersham Creek Trail to Lee's Cabin from the Wickersham Dome Trailhead. E-bikes are allowed on all motorized routes and two designated trails: Summit Trail and Table Top Mountain Trail.

Cross-country travel by OHVs no greater than 1,000 pounds curb weight and up to 50 inches wide is allowed on over 350,000 acres. Portions of Nome Creek tailings are open to summer cross-country travel for motor vehicle with no size limitations, with a larger area of the tailings area open to street legal OHVs 10,000 pounds or less and non-street legal OHVs 1,500 pounds curb weight or less.

During the summer, motorized travel is not allowed in special and sensitive areas including Research Natural Areas, Beaver Creek National Wild and Scenic River corridor, the lands north and east of the river corridor and portions of the Wickersham Creek Trail.

There are no special designations for game retrieval in the White Mountains NRA.

Map Resources

Georeferenced PDF maps - Find information about recreation sites, access routes and cross-country travel areas, hunting areas and more. View maps online or download them to your smart phone for use in the field. Check for updates before you head to the field.

Interactive Alaska Travel Map - Select layers for winter or summer, scroll across Alaska and zoom in to get detailed information. You can even create custom georeferenced PDF maps for use in the field by selecting print PDF.

For more information

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