

Tips for fun on USFS lands during long weekend

By Lisa Herron

Here's some important information for residents and visitors to keep in mind this Memorial Day weekend at Lake Tahoe.

Warm temperatures have accelerated melting of our tremendous snowpack, streams and rivers will be cold, swift and high. Snowmelt water is extremely cold and exposure for even for a few minutes can cause hypothermia. Avoid crossing flooded areas and keep in mind stream and river levels can fluctuate rapidly. A stream crossed early in the day, may not be able to be crossed later in the day as temperatures warm.

Hikers are advised that 2 to 20-plus feet of snow remains in the back country. Trails may not be visible, a map and compass are essential, along with proper footwear, clothing and gear. In addition, your mobile device may not work in some areas, develop an emergency plan in case you cannot call for help.

Expect Lake Tahoe beaches to be much narrower than in previous years, some beaches with vegetation or rocky shoreline may be inaccessible. Arrive early to beat the crowds and use this opportunity to explore new areas.

Due to the large amount of snow remaining in some areas, many trails, roads and some campgrounds are still closed. Check **online** for the latest closure information (dates are subject to change).

Campfires and portable charcoal grills are only allowed in designated campgrounds and are never allowed on the beach or in the general forest. A California campfire permit is required for gas stoves outside of designated areas. Think first and learn more about keeping Tahoe fire safe **online**.

Finally, remember to pack out all garbage and **leave no trace.**

Lisa Herron works for the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit.