



# Press Release

## USDA FOREST SERVICE

### Rocky Mountain Region

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### **Forest Service Cautions Forest Visitors to Be Aware of Falling Trees**

**DENVER, Dec. 16, 2009** — The US Forest Service urges forest visitors to be aware of falling, dead trees and other hazards during this winter season. While forests offer a wonderful variety of winter recreational opportunities during the holiday season – snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, hiking, and snowshoeing – the mountain pine beetle epidemic increases the risk of falling trees.

“The beetle epidemic has resulted in millions of acres of dead trees. Dead trees appear red or have no needles. They are also known as hazard trees because they can, and do, fall without warning,” said Steve Sherwood, Director of Recreation for the Rocky Mountain Region of the Forest Service. “We have had several close calls and our highest priority is for folks to be safe while enjoying their public lands. Everyone needs to remain very aware of their surroundings – look up, look down, look around. Do not forget fallen trees, rocks or other hazards that can be hidden under the snow,” Sherwood said.

Danger is high in groups of beetle-killed trees, especially during windy conditions. Tips for avoiding danger include never recreating alone, and always letting someone know where you are going and when you plan to return. Occasional closures may occur as the Forest Service clears hazard trees. Check with the local Forest Service District Office, carry a map and plan an open and safe route.

For general information about the mountain pine beetle epidemic go to [www.fs.fed.us/r2/bark-beetle](http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/bark-beetle).

Land management agencies have developed a site devoted to the bark beetle happenings on the Front Range; [www.frontrangepinebeetle.org](http://www.frontrangepinebeetle.org).

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