

CHUGACH NATIONAL FOREST

Seward Ranger District

Order No. 10-04-30-23-07

FOREST ORDER

Devil's Creek Trailhead Area Special Closure

Pursuant to 36 C.F.R. § 261.50(a) and (b), and to provide for public health and safety, the following acts are prohibited within the Seward Ranger District of the Chugach National Forest. This Order is in effect from April 17, 2023 through May 21, 2023.

Going into or being upon the Devil's Creek Trailhead Public Safety Closure Area as shown on the attached map. (36 CFR § 261.53(e))

Being on the Devil's Creek Trailhead Road (#400070) within the closure area as shown on the attached map. (36CFR § 261.54(e))

Being on the Devil's Creek Trail within the closure area as shown on the attached map. (36CFR § 261.55(a))

The Closure Area Boundary begins 0.1 mile south of Devil's Creek Trailhead on the west edge of the Seward Highway then traveling due west for 0.1 mile to Johns Creek, then crossing Johns Creek and heading northwest for 0.05 miles to Devil's Creek Trail, then turning northeast and traveling 0.25 miles to the west side of the Devil's Creek Trailhead parking area, then turning north offset 100 feet west of the unnamed dirt road leading north for 0.15 miles, then turning due east for 0.05 miles and then turning northeasterly for 0.2 miles, then turning east to the western edge of the Seward Highway, then travelling south along the western edge of the Seward Highway for 0.55 miles until reaching the point 0.1 miles south of the Devil's Creek Trailhead, as shown on the attached map. The Closure Area Boundary includes the entire Devil's Creek Trailhead, the first 0.25 miles of the Devil's Creek Trail, and 0.15 miles of the unnamed road leading north from the horse trailer parking area of the Devil's Creek Trailhead.

Pursuant to Title 36 CFR § 261.50 (e) the following are exempt from this order:

1. Any person with a permit authorizing the otherwise prohibited act or omission.
2. Any Federal, State, or local officer, or member of any organized rescue or fire fighting force in the performance of an official duty.

These prohibitions are in addition to the general prohibitions in 36 CFR Part 261, Subpart A.

Executed in Anchorage, Alaska, this 4th day of April 2023.

/s/ Jeff Schramm
Jeff Schramm
Forest Supervisor
Chugach National Forest

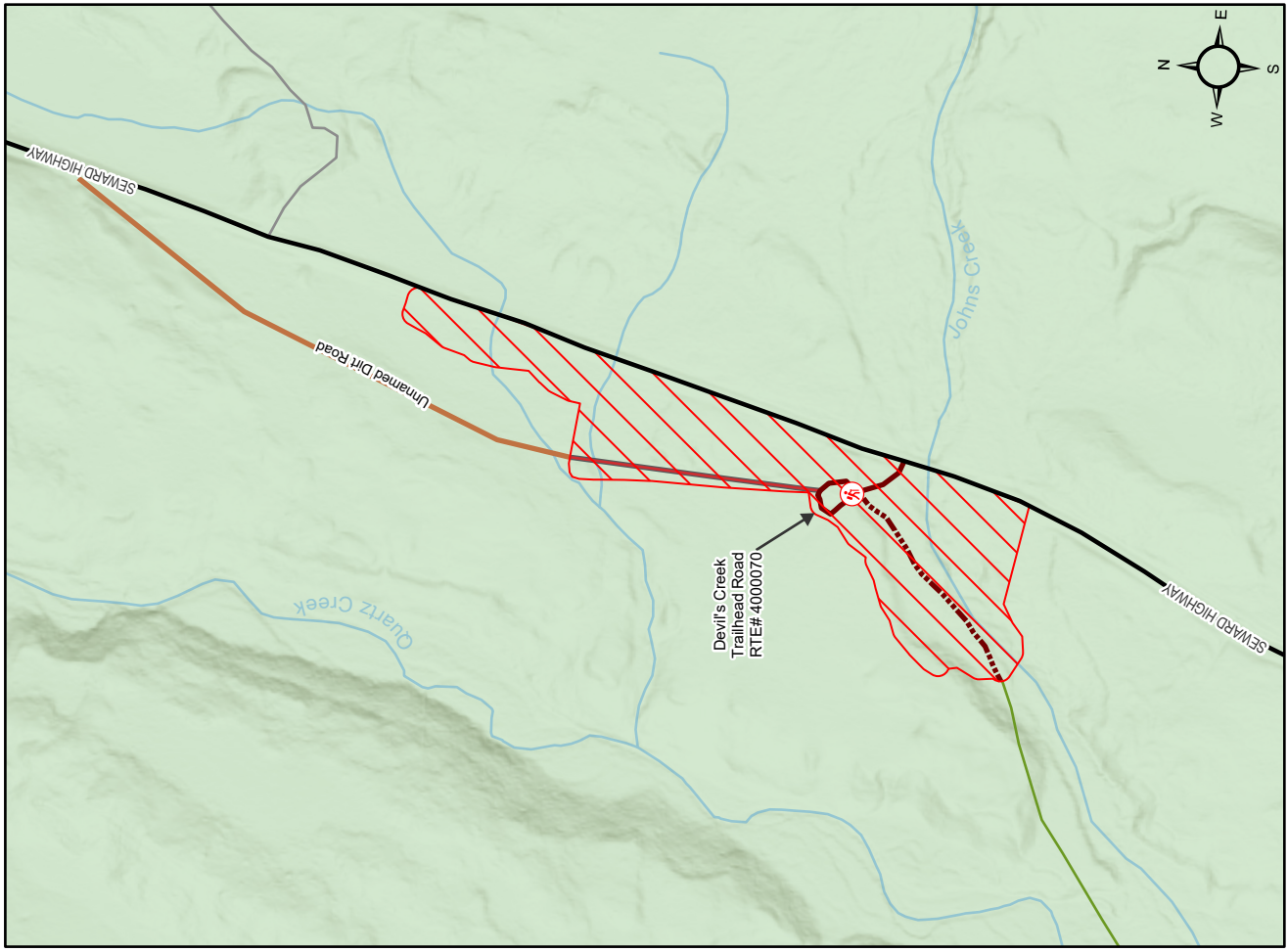
April 4, 2023
Date

A violation of these Prohibitions is punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000 per individual or \$10,000 for an organization, or imprisonment for not more than six months or both.
[16 U.S.C. § 551, and 18 U.S.C. §§ 3559, 3571, and 3581]

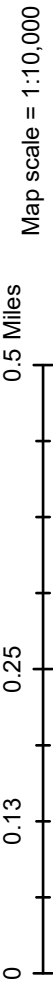
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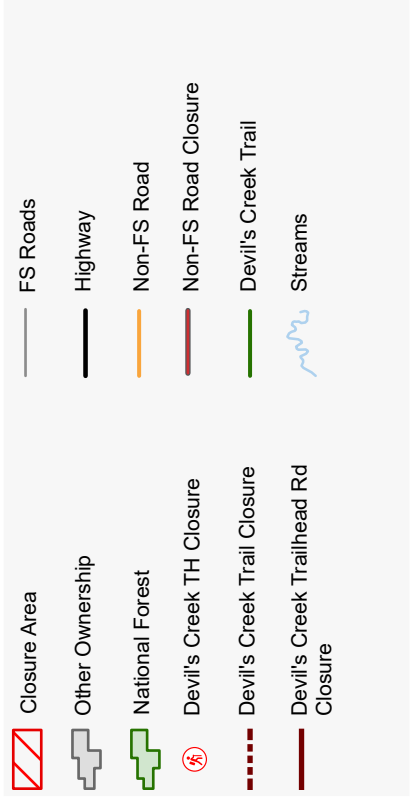
Attachment A



*This map is designed for determining closure areas and not intended for navigation.



Locator Map





File Code: 2610

Date: April 4, 2023

Route To: File

Subject: Forest Order – Devil’s Creek Trailhead Beetle Mitigation Closure
From: Jeff E. Schramm – Forest Supervisor

I have decided to close Devil’s Creek Trailhead and areas adjacent to the trailhead for the safety of work crews and the public. Wide-scale tree mortality is present in the area and poses an immediate hazard to the health and safety of forest users in the area. It is anticipated that tree removal will begin sometime after April 17th in and around Devil’s Creek Trailhead and will last for an estimated 5 weeks. Tree fallers and heavy equipment will be in use in areas north and south of the Devil’s Creek Trailhead and along the first 0.25 miles of the Devil’s Creek Trail as crews work to reduce overhead hazards from trees impacted by spruce beetle. The total area being treated is 17 acres. Non-motorized winter/spring recreation activities normally occur in an area west and north of the Devil’s Creek Trailhead and access and parking for this area is the Devil’s Creek Trailhead. We would like to minimize the time this area is closed to the public by closing the area only immediately prior to when the contractor is to start work in the area.

The Closure Area Boundary begins 0.1 mile south of Devil’s Creek Trailhead on the west edge of the Seward Highway then traveling due west for 0.1 mile to Johns Creek, then crossing Johns Creek and heading northwest for 0.05 miles to Devil’s Creek Trail, then turning northeast and traveling 0.25 miles to the west side of the Devil’s Creek Trailhead parking area, then turning north offset 100 feet west of the unnamed dirt road leading north for 0.15 miles, then turning due east for 0.05 miles and then turning northeasterly for 0.2 miles, then turning east to the western edge of the Seward Highway, then travelling south along the western edge of the Seward Highway for 0.55 miles until reaching the point 0.1 miles south of the Devil’s Creek Trailhead, as shown on the attached map. The Closure Area Boundary includes the entire Devil’s Creek Trailhead, the first 0.25 miles of the Devil’s Creek Trail, and 0.15 miles of the unnamed road leading north from the horse trailer parking area of the Devil’s Creek Trailhead.

I have concluded that this decision may be categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Impact Statement or Environmental Assessment under the National Environmental Policy Act. This action falls within the category identified in 36 CFR 220.6(d)(1) – prohibitions to provide short-term resource protect or to protect public health and safety – and does not require documentation in a decision memo, decision notice or record of decision. Scoping included reaching out to the local Nordic ski/hiking group in Cooper Landing and Moose Pass, emailing people who have reserved the Devil’s Pass Cabin (nearly all recreation users access this cabin from Cooper Landing or Hope and not from Devil’s Creek Trailhead in the winter/spring months), and to inform members of the public about our impacts to their winter/spring recreation season. No Civil Rights Impact Analysis is needed. I have determined that there are no extraordinary circumstances associated with this temporary closure. Implementation of the decision may begin immediately.



A spruce beetle outbreak on the Kenai Peninsula has led to a large number of dead or infested spruce trees in and around the Devil's Creek Trailhead area. Forest health surveys show over 85% of spruce trees in the area are impacted by the outbreak. These trees are susceptible to dropping limbs and falling, creating overhead hazards to people recreating in the nearby area. Spruce beetles are a naturally occurring pest that given the right environmental conditions can kill trees across a wide geographical area. As of now, the beetles are responsible for approximately 950,000 acres of dead and dying spruce in southcentral Alaska. Trees that have succumbed to beetle infestation can begin falling soon after mortality, creating overhead hazards for both people and infrastructure. The work being done in Devil's Creek Trailhead area helps reduce overall fire and safety hazards on the Forest. Heavy equipment operations and falling trees during treatment pose a risk to anyone recreating in the area. This closure serves to mitigate that risk.

/s/ Jeff Schramm

JEFF SCHRAMM
Forest Supervisor
Chugach National Forest