

November was chilly in Sisters

According to preliminary data received by NOAA's National Weather Service in Pendleton, temperatures at Sisters averaged slightly colder than normal during the month of November.

The average temperature was 36.1 degrees, which was 0.9 degrees below normal. High temperatures averaged 49.9 degrees, which was 2.5 degrees above normal. The highest was 66 degrees on November 2. Low temperatures averaged 22.3 degrees, which was 4.2 degrees below normal. The lowest was 10 degrees, on November 9.

There were 25 days with the low temperature below 32 degrees.

Precipitation totaled 1.08 inches during November, which was 0.78 inches below normal. Measurable precipitation — at least .01 inch — was

received on 5 days with the heaviest, 0.36 inches, reported on November 28.

Precipitation this year has reached 3.67 inches, which is 7.89 inches below normal. Since October, the water year precipitation at Sisters has been 1.47 inches, which is 1.44 inches below normal.

The outlook for December from NOAA's Climate Prediction Center calls for above-normal temperatures and near- to above-normal precipitation. Normal highs for Sisters fall from 41.0 degrees at the start of December to 39.0 degrees at the end of December. Normal lows fall from 23.0 degrees to 22.0 degrees. The 30-year normal precipitation is 1.97 inches.

Closures on Sisters winter range

The Deschutes National Forest has instituted several seasonal closures — and reminds the public to heed wildlife closures to protect critical deer and elk winter range in the coming months.

On Monday, December 3, the gate was closed on Forest Road 16 near Three Creek Sno-Park on the Sisters Ranger District. The gate accessing Tumalo Falls on the Bend-Fort Rock Ranger District is also now closed for the season.

December 1 also marks the beginning of critical habitat closures for deer and elk winter range across the forest. This closure includes all motorized vehicles (including snowmobiles and electric bicycles) and have been put in place to protect deer and elk during the winter.

Winter range is habitat deer and elk migrate to in order to find more favorable living conditions during the winter. Winter range is found predominantly in lower elevations of Central Oregon and is extremely important to mule deer survival. Winter ranges usually have minimal amounts of snow cover and provide vegetation for forage, hiding cover, and protection from the weather. In Oregon, mule deer migrate, often long distances, to lower elevations to escape or minimize exposure to snow cover.

There are four of these closure areas on the Deschutes National Forest: Metolius Winter Range, Opine Travel Management Area, Tumalo Winter Range, and Cabin/Silver Lake.

For more information

including maps of these areas, visit the "What is winter range?" section at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/deschutes/learning/nature-science>.

The public is reminded to be cautious when driving on all forest roads in the winter months. Not all roads will be gated, and those that are blocked by snow or water should be considered impassable.

The public needs to be prepared at all times, whether it is a short or long journey into the forest. Be prepared for winter driving, limited sight distance and bumpy driving on all Forest Service roads. Bring extra clothing, food, water, blankets, first aid kit, shovel, tire chains and let someone know your destination and expected day/time of return.

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