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November 16, 2001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SNOWS CLOSE UPPER STEENS MOUNTAIN ROAD FOR WINTER

Recent snowstorms at the higher elevations have closed the upper sections of the Steens Mountain Road, reports Tim Smith, U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Acting Andrews Resource Area Field Manager. Smith says, "Recreation maintenance personnel have closed the gate just below the Jackman Park Campground on the north segment of the road and the gate at the top of the Rooster Comb area on the south segment."

A check on conditions on the mountain on Tuesday, November 13, and forecasts for continued snowstorms over the next week have prompted the closure. "Snow levels are expected to drop to the lower elevations as winter approaches, eventually resulting in the closure of the remaining portions of the Road," says Smith.

Recent rains at the lower parts of the mountain have caused muddy conditions so BLM managers caution visitors to refrain from driving on routes that are susceptible to damage by motorized travel.

All BLM Steens Mountain Area campgrounds except Jackman Park remain open and accessible at this time, although customary services will be terminated as winterization work is completed.

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Overnight camping fees will not be collected after services are shut down. People interested in camping at any of the facilities are urged to call the Burns District Office at the number listed below, since winter snowstorms may result in additional campground and gate closures at any time.

Smith encourages visitors to the area to travel with caution and be prepared for sudden winter storms which can make roads in the area impassable and reduce visibility to near zero in a matter of hours.

People wanting to travel to Steens Mountain or to any other public land areas in the Burns District should contact the BLM office at (541) 573-4400 weekdays between 7:45 a.m and 4:30 p.m. to get current information on campgrounds and road conditions.

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