



News Release

Monongahela National Forest

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Williams River Road Improvements Continue

The second phase of paving of the popular Williams River Road will commence in mid-May. The contractor will be working on both sides of the Tea Creek area, which will necessitate closures of portions of the road as they are being worked on. While there will be sections closed to through traffic, access will be maintained to the Tea Creek Campground from at least one direction at all times.

“We are excited to be able to continue to repair and upgrade this heavily-used road,” said Marlinton District Ranger Rondi Fischer. “Unfortunately because of the nature of the work we cannot have the contractor working and people travelling the entire road at the same time. Work has to take place when the weather is warm, which is usually the same time people would like to be out and about on the road and along the river. In the short term this will undoubtedly be an inconvenience to people who like to travel and fish in the area, but in the long run we’ll have a much better road surface.”

Forest Service officials have long wanted to be able to control both the dust arising from traffic and sediment washing off the road in to the adjacent river. Because there are camping sites along the road, and the area is popular with anglers, the dust was a major nuisance to users, while also reducing visibility for drivers. Due to the proximity of the river to the road, sediment washing off the road was a concern for fish habitat and aquatic health. “We rarely pave Forest Service roads because it is expensive to do so,” said Fischer. “In this case we think it will really improve both the visitor experience and do a much better job of protecting the river.”

The first section to be closed will be southwest of the Highland Scenic Highway to the intersection of FR 216. Once that work is completed this section will be re-opened to traffic. The next area to be temporarily closed will be to the northwest of the Highland Scenic Highway to the entrance of the Tea Creek Campground. Access to the campground will still be available from the west. Once this section is re-opened work will continue westward, with the only available access to the campground being off the Highland Scenic Highway

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There will be standard “road closed ahead” signs posted in the area, but people planning trips along the road are encouraged to call the Marlinton Ranger District office of the Monongahela National Forest to obtain the most current information about which sections are being worked on at any given time. District staff can be reached at 304-799-4334 during normal business hours.

This year’s work will be the second of three phases planned to complete paving the entire 18 miles of road between FR 216 and Dyer. The project has been broken up in order to be able to obtain funding. It is hoped that the remaining portion can be paved in 2005.

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