



SHERIFF **BEN WOLFINGER**

SHERIFF KOOTENAI COUNTY



UNDERSHERIFF **DAN MATTOS**

MEDIA RELEASE

May 24th, 2017

Even though summer like weather has finally arrived in the low areas of Kootenai County, there are still several feet of snow in the higher elevations. Travel on the backcountry roads in the higher elevations can be hazardous this time of year. Prior to the upcoming holiday week-end the Kootenai County Sheriff's Department would like to remind all the recreational users to take the necessary precautions when traveling in the mountainous areas to ensure their safe return.

When users decide to venture out into the woods they need to take some steps to help with their safety. Some of those steps are as simple as letting a relative or friend know where you are going, what route you will be taking and what time you will return. Equally important is for the users to follow their described route. Also, when you decide to go into the woods you should take some basic survival gear with you. This gear should include; food, water, extra warm clothing, sleeping bag, fire starting materials and something to build a shelter should you become stuck. Additionally, be sure to have a shovel and snow chains in your vehicle and don't depend on your cell phone to work when you need to call for help in most backcountry areas.

Another way to ensure you will have a safe return is to know your limitations. Do not venture into an area you are not familiar with, know what you are capable of doing and don't over-extend the ability of your vehicle when traveling through the snow. Recently there have been several people that haven't followed these precautions and had to spend some unexpected cold nights in the mountains.

The Kootenai County Sheriff's Department wants everyone to enjoy the backcountry and all the recreational activities it provides, but we also want everyone to have a safe return.

Sheriff Ben Wolfinger
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