



August 14, 2003

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BILLINGS -- Three Bureau of Land Management areas popular with off highway vehicle enthusiasts are being closed due to extreme fire danger.

The affected public lands are generally known as the South Hills near Billings, the Shepard Ah-Nei area north of Shepard, and the Acton area northeast of Billings.

The closure takes effect Friday, August 15, and will continue until further notice. Exemptions to the closure include any federal, state or local officer or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force performing an official duty; persons with written permits or specific authorization; private landowners requiring access to their property through closed public lands; and grazing permittees performing activities directly related to the management of their livestock.

Even for those meeting one of the exemptions, driving will only be allowed on existing roads void of vegetation. All other travel will be by foot or horseback.

Fire danger is high across the state, and forecasts call for continued hot, dry weather. For the latest information on closures and restrictions, contact a local BLM office.

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