



## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Rock Bottom Ranch Section of Rio Grande Trail Closes for Season**

The Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA) is closing the Rock Bottom Ranch section of the Rio Grande Trail (RGT) from Catherine Bridge trailhead to Rock Bottom Ranch from December 1, 2009 until May 1, 2010. This closure applies to all public uses including hunting, angling and access to adjacent public lands. RFTA closes the trail annually as part of the wildlife management plan for this section of the trail corridor, in the winter months to protect elk and deer habitat, as well as the blue heron nesting areas in the spring. The plan was drafted by a wildlife consultant in collaboration with RFTA staff, and involved the input of wildlife experts and neighboring stakeholder groups.

The goal of the wildlife management plan is to maintain a high quality recreational trail that minimizes impacts to sensitive environmental resources. Incorporating a wildlife management plan into the management of the trail is an important component of the overall trail management plan. “The preservation of the valley’s wildlife habitat is important to the citizens of the Roaring Fork Valley and we hope they will help us accomplish this by honoring these seasonal closures.” says Michael Hermes, director of properties and trails for RFTA. This plan provides RFTA with management options and implementation strategies that result in a recreational trail that is sensitive to the ecological landscape in which it is embedded.

The Rock Bottom Ranch section consists of 2¾ miles of riparian and upland areas extending from the end of Hooks Spur Road, south of the Roaring Fork River to Catherine Store Road (CR-100) at the Catherine Bridge trailhead.

Other RGT winter notes:

- The RGT will be plowed from Glenwood Springs to Main Street in Carbondale following a snowfall of 3” or more. Expect more frequent plowing of snow in Glenwood Springs and Carbondale proper.
- The trail will be groomed for XC skiing and snowshoeing (no bikes, please) between Main St. in Carbondale and the Catherine Bridge trailhead. Grooming is generally done twice a week in the evenings.
- A signed bike detour is provided between Main St. and Snowmass Drive in Carbondale to the Hooks Lane trailhead in Basalt which utilizes paved county roads.
- There is no winter maintenance of the trail between Rock Bottom Ranch and the Emma schoolhouse.
- For information on winter trail conditions and grooming of the RGT in Pitkin County, call the Aspen Snowmass Nordic hotline at (970) 429-2039, or visit:

<http://www.aspenpitkin.com/Departments/Parks-Trails-Open-Space/Cross-Country-Skiing/>

For more information on the seasonal trail closure, or to see the complete wildlife management plan, go to [www.rfta.com](http://www.rfta.com) Please direct trail questions to the RG Trail and Corridor Manager at (970) 384-4975. For information on transit routes, call 925-8484.