



Emerald Mountain Set to Reopen After NTSB Investigation *Recreation Closure Likely to Return in Late Spring/Early Summer*

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, COLORADO-January 10, 2022-The closed areas of Emerald Mountain due to the December plane crash are set to reopen to recreational activities starting tomorrow, Tuesday, January 11, 2022. The area remains under continued observation because of remaining metal debris and an accompanying fuel spill.

“This has been a devastating event for many across the community,” said City of Steamboat Springs’ Parks, Open Space & Trails Manager Craig Robinson. “We’re working with investigators to reopen recreation but ask trail users to be sensitive and mindful when traveling through the affected area.”

Both Lane of Pain and Root Canal trails cross the approximate one-acre site. When the area reopens, users are required to always stay on the trail and recreation will be confined to system trails.

Routt County Search & Rescue and the Sheriff’s Office conducted initial response to the downed aircraft on 12/10. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) was on site on 12/11 to investigate and coordinate aircraft removal, which took place during the third week of December.

According to the NTSB, there are still metal fragments under the snowpack that the public should be aware and cautious of. The NTSB has requested that Routt County Environmental Health, Parks & Recreation, or NTSB (eyewitness@ntsb.gov) be contacted if debris is seen (do not touch or retrieve) so that it can be collected and stored with the other wreckage.

Site monitoring is ongoing, and an increased effort will resume in the spring, ideally just before the snowpack has melted. The public should anticipate this area will likely see a closure again in late spring/early summer for a site clean-up and possible remediation if deemed necessary.

City and county staff visited the area near the summit of Emerald Mountain in late December to assess potential human and environmental health risks due to the reported spill, approximately 120 gallons of Jet A fuel. The team has developed a plan for short-term recreational use and requirements for any needed remediation resulting from the release and remaining debris.

“Risks to human health resulting from the spill appears minimal because of the large area of disbursement and separation created by new layers of snow,” commented Routt County Environmental Health Director Scott Cowman. “It is anticipated there may be some contaminated soil in the spring and residual fuel could migrate down the slope but dilution and degradation from naturally occurring microbes should minimize impacts.”

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