

The Register-Guard

Closure continues for Terwilliger Hot Springs, stretch of Aufderheide Drive

By The Register-Guard

Posted May 1, 2019 at 6:00 AM

Updated May 1, 2019 at 5:55 PM

Earth, fire, ice and rain have combined for the continued closure of Aufderheide Drive near Cougar Lake and Terwilliger Hot Springs.

“We are still seeing landslides and hazard tree risk,” District Ranger Darren Cross said in a statement. “As soon as we are able to mitigate hazards and secure the integrity of Forest Service Road 19, we will rescind the closure order.”

The late February snowstorm that covered Eugene and Springfield also knocked trees onto Aufderheide Drive, also known as Forest Road 19, which leads from Highway 126 to the popular natural soaking pools. Locals often call the springs Cougar Hot Springs. Heavy rains in early April triggered landslides and toppled more trees.

As snow continues to melt, crews will clear fallen trees and landslides in order to open the road and springs as soon as possible, said Chiara Cipriano, Willamette National Forest spokesperson.

Members of the Scorpions trail crew, High Cascades Forest Volunteers and Northwest Youth Corps have removed trees and repaired parts of the trail to Terwilliger Hot Springs, she said. A new pit toilet is set to be installed in June.

A massive landslide in late 2017 and the Terwilliger Fire in 2018, which began near the hot springs, caused the U.S. Forest Service to close Aufderheide Drive near Cougar Lake for much of last year. The road has been closed since the fire started in late August. The human-caused blaze blackened steep slopes above the road and burned over the springs, destroying its wooden restroom.

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