

Moose-Wilson remains closed by grizzly bear

By Mark Huffman

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One hungry grizzly bear continues to keep Moose-Wilson Road closed to through traffic.

The popular scenic route that connects the Teton Village area to Moose and the bulk of Grand Teton National Park has been closed since the griz was spotted last Wednesday.

The area is thick with berries, a favorite bear treat during the autumn bulking-up time before winter. National Park Service officials would love to have the popular road open but say grizzly bears get precedence.

“Every time we think he’s moved off he makes a reappearance,” said Jackie Skaggs, spokeswoman for Teton park. After a week “he’s still there, in the same general area.”

Grizzlies didn’t show up along the road until 2011, having been killed or driven away from Jackson during settler days. Into the 1990s they were rarely seen any farther south than Spread Creek, almost as far north as Moran.

The road, now the object of a major study of its future use, remains open from the south as far as the Death Canyon junction, Skaggs said. That allows tourists to get to the hiking trails around Death Canyon and White Grass Ranch. Motorists can also reach the Laurance S. Rockefeller Preserve from the south.

Two black bears caused a traffic jam north of the grizzly closure Sunday, Skaggs said, but didn’t warrant their own closure because they are “not as major a safety risk.”

Moose-Wilson Road will remain closed as long as the grizzly stays in the area, Skaggs said. Managers would begin to feel the bear had moved on if they didn’t see him for 48 hours, though 72 hours would be even more reassuring, she said.