



Winter Road Closures Western Divide (M107 & M50)



Reasons Tulare County closes M107 and M50

Heavy snowfall - Snow accumulation of 15 feet or more in height is not uncommon during the winter season.

Safety concerns & hazardous conditions - Potential occurrences of mud and rockslides, black ice conditions, falling trees, road damage, and gutter conditions.

Other reasons - Planned prescribed burns in area, or road maintenance.

When Tulare County Manages Road Closures

Close: After heavy snowfall with a full winter pattern in the 10-day forecast, typically in November.

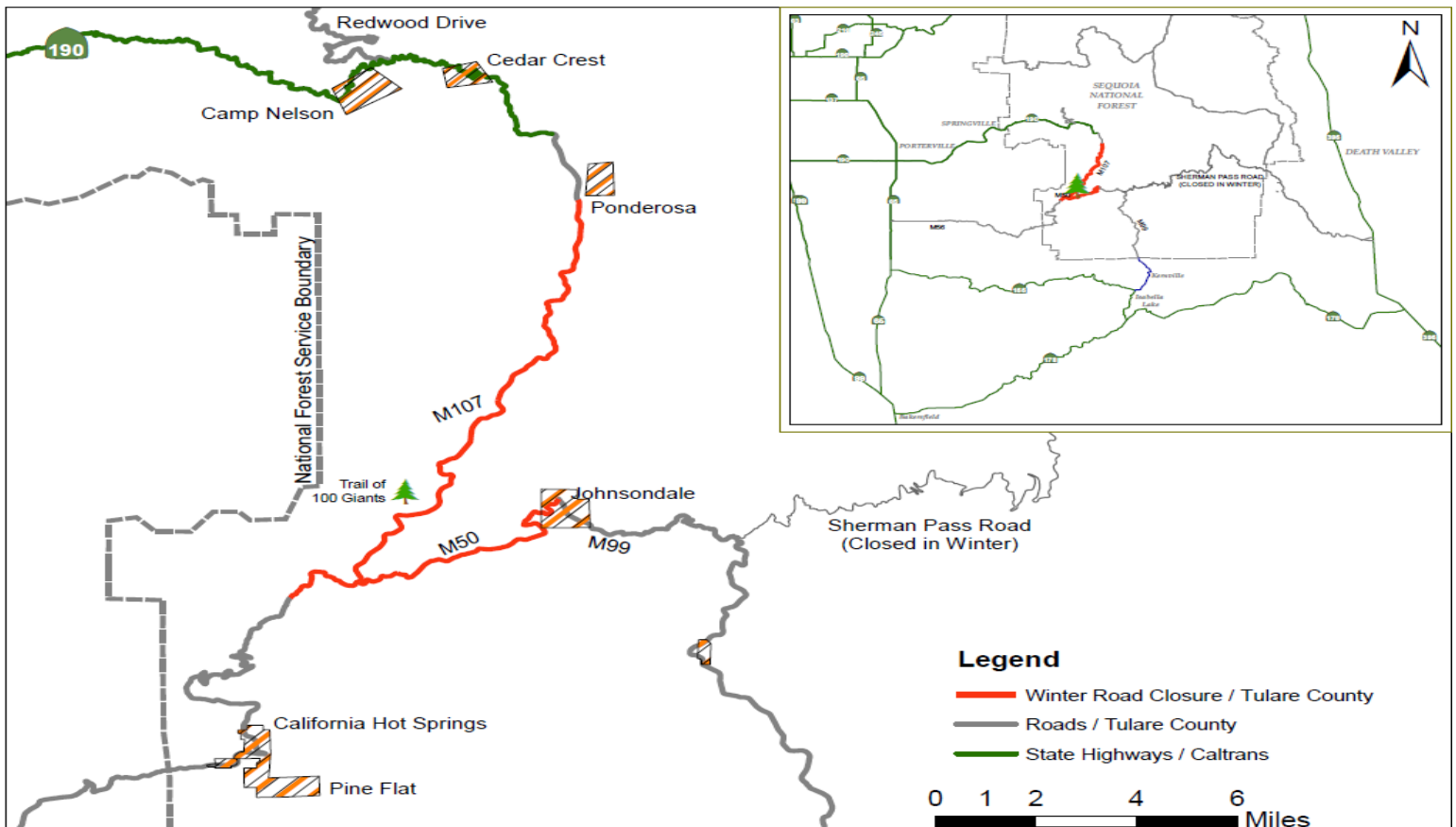
Open: Opening the roads requires about 2 weeks of good weather and above freezing temperatures to clear debris and resolve hazards i.e. plowing remaining snow and allowing ice to melt, removing fallen trees, clearing rock slides, repairing road damage, and restoring gutters and shoulders. This could take longer depending on the severity of the damages and repairs needed. Recently the roads have been cleared and opened by March or early April.



Facts & Winter Road Closure Information

- ⇒ Due to the prolonged drought, these roads have been opened earlier than past years.
- ⇒ While snow may not be present on the roadway at lower elevations, certain areas may still be prone to icy road conditions that are not apparent to motorists, thereby creating hazardous road conditions.
- ⇒ After fire ravaged State Route 190, the county plowed all of M107 and part of M50 behind closed gates to manageable snow depths to be used as an alternate route in the event 190 was closed due to mudslide, washout, etc. The cost to keep these two roads plowed was approximately \$190,000.
- ⇒ There is a misconception that Tulare County closes and opens roadway on a predetermined date - This is not true, The County doesn't have predetermined closure dates.
- ⇒ There is primarily no cell reception along M107. Stranded motorist may be without communication to call for assistance or help.
- ⇒ Snowmobiling and other recreational activities are enjoyed on the closed roads during the winter.
- ⇒ During a typical winter it could cost up to \$200,000 to keep the Western Divide routes open.
- ⇒ Pre-fire traffic volumes on M107 peaked at 1,000 vehicles per day during the busiest days of the summer and average less than 350 trips per day during the summer. Less than 300 vehicles use M50 on an average summer day. Traffic volumes are much lower on these roads during the spring and late fall and on weekdays.

Map of Western Divide



For current road closure status and conditions, please contact us at: 559-624-7000 or www.tularecounty.ca.gov/rma.