

## Camping area near Aspen closes after bear trouble

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ASPEN, CO COLORADO,

ASPEN — A camping area near Aspen is off limits to July Fourth campers after a black bear rummaged through two campsites.

No one was injured at the Castle Creek area in the White River National Forest, a remote area with undeveloped campsites. But the U.S. Forest Service closed it Friday to keep campers safe and help keep the bear — which has had no previous problems — from picking up more bad habits, spokesman Scott Snelson said.

The radio-collared bear entered a tent and feasted on granola, baked beans and chicken bones at a campsite on Wednesday and then visited Jeff Powell's site on Thursday, shredding his family's tent.

Powell, from Durango, said he had locked all his family's food, along with toothpaste and deodorant, in the car as a precaution following the earlier break in. The bear returned to the area while Powell was out for a bike ride and his wife and 2-year-old were hiking. A couple stopped by the side of the road later told him the bear was in and on his tent.

Even though there was no food there, state wildlife officer Kevin Wright said the bear entered the tent because in the hope of finding food in another tent.

Powell said his family plans to meet friends and camp in an established campground near Independence Pass through the weekend. He staked out the site with a tarp and then went to town to buy a new tent.

Powell said he hopes the bear won't have any more run-ins with humans.

"It's their home, not ours," he said.

See Saturday's Aspen Times for more on the incidents.

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