Cherokee National Forest announced recreation site schedule

CLEVELAND, TENN., Feb. 7, 2024 — Cherokee National Forest officials announced the annual operating dates for recreation sites across the forest. Highly developed campgrounds and swim areas are routinely closed and winterized from late-fall through mid-spring in response to low visitation, reduced seasonal workforce, and freezing temperatures that damage water and wastewater systems.

Most developed day-use recreation sites provide visitor access to trails, rivers, lakes, remote backcountry, and target shooting areas. Several campgrounds without developed water systems or entrance gates, remain open throughout the year.

Many campsites in developed campgrounds are available on a first come-first served basis, but some can be reserved. National Forest visitors can go online to the www.recreation.gov website and select the name of the facility they wish to reserve or call the reservation service at 1-877-444-6777.

As the Forest Service shifts to a more sustainable recreation program, it must meet the reality of increasing deferred maintenance (maintenance backlog) and operational costs. Visitors will see projects across the National Forest to reduce deferred maintenance, as well as investments to improve well-loved sites. Site operating schedules may change as projects move forward.

Following is the scheduled 2024 opening dates for Cherokee National Forest recreation sites. Shooting ranges and most boat launches are open year-round.

Due to unforeseen circumstances and conditions, the scheduled site openings and closings may change. To verify openings please contact the ranger district offices listed below.

OCOEE RANGER DISTRICT: (423) 338-330

Starr Mountain
Lost Corral Campground – Open year-round

Hiwassee River
Lost Creek Campground – Open year-round
Powerhouse Boat Launch – Open year-round
Towee Canoe Launch – Open year-round
Big Bend – Open year-round
Spring Creek Shooting Range – Open year-round
Quinn Spring Pavilion – Open year-round
Hiwassee Picnic – Open year-round

Ocoee River
Chilhowee Recreation Area:
  * Campground Loop – Apr. 15 – Nov. 12, 2024
  * Group Camp – Apr. 14 – Nov. 12, 2024
* Parksville RV Campground – Feb. 23, 2024 – Jan. 20, 2025
Parksville Group Campground – Apr. 22, 2024 – Nov. 12, 2024
Tumbling Creek Campground – Open year-round
Mac Point Beach Day Use – May 1, 2024 – Sept. 30, 2024
Parksville Beach Day Use – Open year-round
Parksville Boat Ramp – Open year-round
East Parksville Boat Ramp – Open year-round
Kings Slough Boat Ramp – Open year-round

Big Frog
Sylco Campground (No vehicle access) – Open year-round

*Indicates sites can be reserved on www.recreation.gov

TELLICO RANGER DISTRICT: (423) 397-8455

Citico Creek
Jake Best Campground – Mar. 6, 2024 – Nov. 19, 2024
Young Branch Campground – Open year-round

Tellico River
Big Oak Cove Campground – May 21, 2024 – Nov. 19, 2024
Birch Branch Campground – Open year-round
Dam Creek Campground – Open year-round
Davis Branch Campground – Open year-round
Donley Cabin – Closed – Closed until bridge is replaced
Holder Cove Campground – Open year-round
Holly Flats Campground – May 21, 2024 – Nov. 19, 2024
Indian Boundary Campground – Apr. 18, 2024 – Nov. 5, 2024
Indian Boundary Overflow Campground – Open year-round
McNabb Group Campground – Closed – No portable pumping service
North River Campground – Open year-round
Rough Ridge Campground – Open year-round
Spivey Cove Campground – May 21, 2024 – Nov. 19, 2024
Stateline Campground – Open year-round
Tellico River Checking Station – Mar. 27, 2024 – Jan. 9, 2025

UNAKA RANGER DISTRICT: (423) 638-4109

Unicoi County
Rock Creek Campground – May 1 – Oct. 24, 2024 – Reservations open Jan. 15, 2024
Rock Creek Day Use Area – Open year-round
Scioto Shooting Range – Open year-round
Chestoa Recreation Area – Open year-round
Limestone Cove Recreation Area – Mar. 15, 2024 – Dec. 15, 2024
Unaka Mountain Road
  • Beauty Spot – Mar. 15, 2024 – Dec. 15, 2024
  • Unaka Mountain Overlook – Mar. 15, 2024 – Dec. 15, 2024
Pinnacle Mountain Trailhead – Open year-round

Washington County
Buffalo Mountain ATV – Mar. 15, 2024 – Dec. 15, 2024

Greene County
Horse Creek Campground – May 1, 2024 – Oct. 24, 2024
Horse Creek Pavilion – Closed indefinitely
Old Forge Recreation Area – May 1, 2024 – Oct. 24, 2024
Paint Creek Campground – May 1, 2024 – Oct. 24, 2024 – Reservations open Jan. 15, 2024
Paint Creek Corridor – Open year-round
Margarette Falls Trailhead – Open year-round
Round Knob Pavillion – Open year-round

Cocke County
Bubbling Springs Shooting Range – Open year-round
Weaver’s Bend – Mar. 15, 2024 – Dec. 15, 2024
Sandbar River Access – Open year-round
French Broad Boat Launch – Open year-round
Round Mountain Recreation Area – May 1, 2024 – Oct. 24, 2024
Holston Mountain
Jacobs Creek
- Campground and Day Use – Apr. 29, 2024 – Oct. 15, 2024
- Shooting Range – Open year-round

Little Oak Campground
- Hemlock/Poplar Loops – Apr. 29, 2024 – Oct. 15, 2024
- Big Oak/Lone Pine Loops – Apr. 29, 2024 – Oct. 15, 2024
- **Big Oak/Lone Pine Loops (Primitive Camping only) – Apr. 1, 2024 – Apr. 29, 2024; Oct. 15, 2024 – Nov. 4, 2024

Iron Mountains
Backbone Rock
- *Day Use – Mar. 18, 2024 – Nov. 18, 2024
- Campground – Apr. 29, 2024 – Oct. 15, 2024

Watauga Lake
Cardens Bluff Campground – Apr. 29, 2024 – Oct. 15, 2024
Dennis Cove Campground – Apr. 29, 2024 – Oct. 15, 2024
Shook Branch Recreation Area – May 13, 2024 – Sept. 9, 2024
*Watauga Point Picnic Area – Apr. 1, 2024 – Oct. 15, 2024
Pond Mountain Shooting Range – Open year-round
Rat Branch Boat Ramp – Open year-round
Little Milligan Boat Ramp – Open year-round
Sink Mountain Boat Ramp – Closed

Roan Highlands
*Carvers Gap – Mar. 18, 2024 – Nov. 18, 2024

Unaka Mountains
Laurels Picnic Area – Mar. 18, 2024 – Oct. 15, 2024

*Pertains to dates that restroom facilities are available. Site operational year-round.
**Full-service restrooms closed during primitive camping season. Dry vault toilet facilities will remain open, and water will be available at outdoor hydrant locations if weather allows.

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