



Forest Service

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News Release

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Little Citico Creek Road storm damage

TELLICO PLAINS, TENN, October 2, 2020 – USDA Forest Service officials at the Cherokee National Forest say the Little Citico Creek Road–NFSR 2403, in the Tellico Ranger District, will remain closed to vehicular traffic. Visitors can still access the area by foot. The road is normally closed to motorized vehicle traffic for most of the year but is open during hunting season.

A severe winter storm impacted several roads and trails throughout the Cherokee National Forest. A box culvert on Little Citico Creek Road that provides vehicular traffic access across the creek was destroyed.

Little Citico Creek does not have critical habitat, but it flows into Citico Creek which has critical habitat for several aquatic Threatened and Endangered (T&E) species. Siltation into Citico Creek is a major concern. After the box culvert was destroyed by the storm, work was done to prevent significant siltation from occurring and washing into Citico Creek. The remains of the box culvert were removed, and the stream bank was repaired – the culvert was not replaced.

Protection of the T&E critical habitat in Citico Creek, a short distance downstream, is of the utmost concern. A stream survey will need to be conducted to determine future resource management needs in that area, including whether replacing the culvert would be in the best interest of protecting the critical habitat in Citico Creek.

If it is determined that the culvert be replaced it is estimated that the minimum cost for a replacement would be approximately \$150,000, depending on what type of structure is needed to ensure protection of the natural resources.

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Tellico District Ranger Stephanie Bland said, “We recognize the importance of providing public access to the national forest. That is why we seasonally open the Little Citico Creek Road in the fall. Because of the storm damage to the box culvert, and the concern for impacts to Threatened & Endangered species a short distance downstream we will not be opening the road for this hunting season. The road and area is still accessible by foot.”

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