



**Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service, Southern Region
4931 Broad River Road Columbia, SC 29212**

**Contact: Mike Crane
864-638-9568**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. FOREST SERVICE TEMPORARILY CLOSES HELL HOLE CAMPGROUND

(Mountain Rest, S.C.) - The USDA Forest Service has temporarily closed overnight camping and vehicle access to the Hell Hole campground on the Andrew Pickens Ranger District (Oconee County) due to the lack of functional sanitation facilities and recent resource damage.

“As much as I hate to close a campground, visitor safety is our priority,” said District Ranger Mike Crane.

“Because the toilet isn’t working, people are using the bathroom and leaving human waste both inside and outside the building that houses the toilet as well as throughout the campground. It’s just not sanitary for campers and we believe it could be causing some resource damage as well.”

The agency suspects that the single pit toilet at the site may have a failure in the vault itself as it fills much sooner than human use would cause. As a result, people have misused and vandalized it. Until the agency can determine whether the existing toilet can be repaired, the area is closed to vehicle traffic and to overnight camping. Day use is still allowed. Vehicles will no longer be allowed in the campground area. Day-use visitors can park on the cul-de-sac at the end of Forest Service Road 738A.

The agency is using large boulders temporarily to block the short access road to vehicles. In the near future, the district hopes to install a gate so the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources will be able to continue to stock the Chauga River. Although this closure is temporary, the U.S. Forest Service may consider whether overnight camping should continue at Hell Hole campground. The agency will notify and involve the public before it makes any long-term decisions regarding the area.

For more information on South Carolina’s national forests, please visit <http://www.fs.usda.gov/scnfs>.

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*South Carolina’s National Forests
Celebrating 75 Years of Restoring Forests, Protecting Water and Reducing Catastrophic Wildfires.*