
News Contact:
Cheryl Summers
423-638-4109



2800 Ocoee Street N.
Cleveland, TN 37312

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Heavy Rains Impact Portions of Cherokee National Forest

CLEVELAND, TENN – July 9, 2013... U.S. Forest Service officials report that the recent rain events in east Tennessee have impacted some roads and recreation sites throughout the Cherokee National Forest (Forest).

Due to heavy rain over a prolonged period the following areas were impacted:

Greene County:

- Paint Creek Road, FDR#41, is closed to through traffic until further notice. A section of the road near Kelly Falls has caved in and is impassable; limiting access to Paint Creek Corridor.
- Paint Creek Campground is open.

Carter County:

- Shook Branch Swim Area on Watauga Lake at Highway 321 near Hampton, TN. is temporarily closed due to high water. The picnic tables, grills and trash cans are completely submerged at this site.
- The lakeside loop road at Watauga Point Recreation Area is temporarily closed due to high water. The picnic tables, grills and trash cans are completely submerged at this site.
- The upper road and parking area at Watauga Point is open to picnicking.
- Rat Branch boat launch is flooded, though open. Use caution when using this site as the fishing pier is completely submerged and difficult to detect while boating in the area.

Although passable, many roads have been rutted from heavy rains and are rough in certain sections throughout the Cherokee National Forest.

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Forest Service officials say that with the recent heavy rains, visitors to the national forest are encouraged to use caution while outdoors. Saturated soils can cause instability for trees along trails and forest roads, blocking passage. Recreating along streams or rivers can be a risk during periods of rain. When visiting remote areas, be alert for heavy rains and sudden changes in the weather, especially overnight. Water can rise rapidly in mountainous areas. Always monitor weather forecasts prior to going to and while in back country areas.

A portion of the Paint Creek Road in Greene County is closed due to storm damage.



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