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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **STEEL BRIGE CAMPGROUND CONVERTED TO GROUP CAMPING AREA**

**BLACKSBURG, VA** – The Forest Service U.S. Department of Agriculture recently completed modifications to the Steel Bridge Campground near Paint Bank in Craig County, VA. The recreation area, which re-opened August 9, now features two group campsites which can accommodate up to 25 people each and one single-unit campsite for up to 10 people. Its location adjacent to Potts Creek makes it a beautiful setting to camp and a fun place to spend the day swimming, fishing, or picnicking.

Other changes include the implementation of a reservation system and a pack-out-your-own-trash policy. Cindy Schiffer, Eastern Divide District Ranger states these changes were needed to address several issues at the campground. “In recent years, people were living at the campground, leaving many campers without a place to camp. We’ve also seen an increase in law enforcement issues.” The new reservation policy will ensure that people have a campsite when they arrive. Since the campsites are gated, only registered campers will be admitted, reducing law enforcement problems.

For the past several years, large amounts of household trash such as old carpet, car parts, and discarded camping equipment have been left at the campground, often overflowing the trash cans. Ranger Schiffer said that it not only looked a mess, but employees were spending a great deal of time cleaning up and making trips to the dump. “Since Steel Bridge is a free campground, this was not a sustainable situation” she explained. Schiffer hopes these changes will bring people back to this special area to enjoy the national forest.

For more information or to make camping reservations, please call the Eastern Divide Ranger District at 540-552-4641 or 888-241-6669.

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