



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Great Smoky Mountains
National Park

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Great Smoky Mountains Media Update

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Updated Guidance for Closures Related to Hurricane Irma

Closures announced on September 9 for Great Smoky Mountains National Park will remain in effect in anticipation of Hurricane Irma. To allow people the ability to enjoy the park throughout the day, further clarifications for Sunday closures include:

- Campgrounds will close after check-out beginning at 12:00 p.m. noon
- All other closures will go into effect at 6 p.m.

Employees are working diligently to close the areas as efficiently as possible while still allowing people to enjoy most of the park on Sunday. To help staff with the closure plan, people should leave the park as early as possible on Sunday after completing their hike. At this time, Newfound Gap Road, Hwy 441, will remain open until the park determines it is unsafe for travel. At this time, Oconaluftee Visitor Center and Sugarlands Visitor Center will remain open Sunday and will open as scheduled Monday morning. Alum Cave Trail is scheduled to close Monday morning.

Predictions from the National Weather Service continue to indicate Irma could reach tropical storm winds when she reaches the Smokies beginning as early as Monday afternoon. Officials anticipate sustained winds Monday night into Tuesday could exceed 40 mph with higher gusts likely. Mountain wave effects on the Tennessee side of the park are possible late Monday into Tuesday. Rainfall amounts of 2-6 inches Monday afternoon through Wednesday morning are predicted. Due to the potential for these conditions to cause downed trees, flooding, and landslides the following closures will be put into effect.

Closing Sunday, September 10, 2017

Picnic Areas- Closures begin at 6 p.m.

- Cades Cove, Chimneys, Cosby, Greenbrier, Metcalf, and Twin Creeks

Campgrounds-Closures begin at 12:00 p.m. noon

- Abrams Creek, Cades Cove, Cataloochee, Cosby, Elkmont, and Smokemont

Horse Campgrounds-Closures begin at 12:00 p.m. noon

- Anthony Creek, Cataloochee, and Tow-String

Roads-Closures begin at 6 p.m.

Tennessee

- Abrams Creek Road
- Cades Cove Loop Road

- Cherokee Orchard Road
- Cosby Access Road
- Elkmont Road
- Forge Creek Road
- Greenbrier Road
- Laurel Creek Road
- Little River Road
- Rich Mountain Road
- Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail
- Tremont Road
- Wear Cove Gap Road

North Carolina

- Cataloochee Road
- Lakeview Drive

Facilities-Closures begin at 6 p.m.

- Appalachian Clubhouse and Spence Cabin
- Cable Mill Visitor Center
- Cades Cove Stables
- Smoky Mountain Stables
- Smokemont Riding Stables

Closures Implemented on Saturday, September 10

Picnic Areas

- Big Creek, Collins Creek, Deep Creek, and Heintooga

Front Country Campgrounds

- Balsam Mountain, Big Creek, and Deep Creek

Horse Campgrounds

- Big Creek and Round Bottom

Roads

Tennessee

- Ramsey Cascade Road including Ramsey Cascade Trail
- Tremont Road (Upper) from Tremont Institute to Middle Prong Trailhead

North Carolina

- Balsam Mountain Road
- Clingmans Dome Road
- Deep Creek Access Road and Tom's Branch
- Heintooga Ridge Road/Round Bottom Road/ Straight Fork Road
- NC Hwy 284
- Twentymile

Facilities

- Appalachian Highlands Science Learning Center at Purchase Knob
- Clingmans Dome Information Center
- Leconte Lodge
- Sugarlands Riding Stables
- Tremont Institute

Scheduled closures will make most park trailheads inaccessible. Overnight backcountry use is not recommended beginning Sunday through Thursday due to the potential threat of downed trees and flooded stream crossings causing rivers and trails to become impassable. All backcountry reservation holders are encouraged to alter their trip plans. Refunds will be available to those who are unable to reschedule their trip for an alternative date.

Front country camping reservations canceled due to mandatory evacuations will also be eligible for refund.

Additional closures may become necessary as the storm progresses. Following the storm, roads, campgrounds and facilities will reopened as quickly as possible once staff evaluate the conditions and determine they are safe for opening.