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NEWS RELEASE

Park Restores Limited Campground and Visitor Center Services

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NPS Photo

News Release Date: June 5, 2020

Beginning on Monday, June 8, the following areas will be accessible:

- Cades Cove and Smokemont Campgrounds
- Anthony Creek Horse Camp
- Sugarlands, Oconaluftee, Cades Cove, and Clingmans Dome Visitor Centers and Great Smoky Mountains Association Bookstores
- Backcountry Information Office at Sugarlands Visitor Center
- Cable Mill and Mingus Mill
- Abrams Creek Road
- Cataloochee Road (to Palmer Chapel only due to road washout)
- Forge Creek Road
- Rich Mountain Road

Beginning on Monday, June 15, the following areas will be accessible:

- Elkmont Road
- Elkmont Campground
- Spence Cabin

The park continues to increase recreational access and services across the park in alignment with guidance provided by the states of Tennessee and

North Carolina, White House, Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and public health authorities. The health and safety of our visitors, employees, volunteers, and partners continues to be paramount. Each facility function and service provided is examined to ensure the operations comply with current public health guidance. Park officials continue to work closely with the NPS Office of Public Health using CDC guidance to ensure public and workspaces are safe and clean for visitors, employees, partners, and volunteers.

The park has developed a range of mitigation to support these additional services including installation of protective barriers between staff and visitors; capacity limits for visitor centers; installation of social distancing floor decal reminders; and closure of theater and museum spaces in visitor centers. At campgrounds, services are limited to online reservations only; restroom facilities are appropriately disinfected and cleaned; and group campsites remain closed. While these areas are accessible for visitors to enjoy, a return to full operations will continue to be phased.

The park provides ample opportunities for outdoor recreation with over 800 miles of trails, quiet walkways, and self-guiding nature trails where visitors can disperse for a safe hiking experience. By restoring these additional services and access, the Smokies offers even more opportunities for visitors to spread out and responsibly recreate across the park. Park managers urge visitors to follow public health guidance for a safe and responsible visit by choosing trails and overlooks without congested parking areas; visiting early in the morning; staying in vehicles while viewing wildlife to avoid crowded conditions; maintaining social distance from other visitors; and wearing face coverings where social distancing is not possible.

For the most up to date information about facility openings, service hours, and access, please visit the park website at www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/conditions.htm. Park rangers remain available to answer questions and help with trip planning via email or phone during business hours at (865) 436-1291, (828) 506-8620, or GRSM_Smokies_Information@nps.gov.

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