



September 7, 2001

*** NEWS RELEASE ***

For Immediate Release
Contact: Linda Randolph
Acting District Ranger
Appalachian Ranger District
828-682-6246 or 828-622-3202

***Big Creek Road and Jerry Miller, Fork Ridge, Laurel River and Green Ridge Trails Reopen
Hickey Fork Road and Hickey Fork, White Oak and The Upper portion of Pounding Mill
Trails Remain Closed Due to Storm Damage***

Some roads and trails damaged during the July and August rain storms in the Shelton Laurel area of the Appalachian Ranger District have been repaired. Big Creek Road has reopened, while Hickey Fork Road remains closed due to severe flood damage. The Big Creek Road provides access to the Jerry Miller, Green Ridge, and Fork Ridge trails. These three trails have been reopened thanks to the hard work of the Carolina Mountain Club, an organization that performs volunteer trail maintenance. As a temporary measure stepping stones have been placed at the creek crossing at the trailhead of the Jerry Miller Trail. The log bridge was washed away during the flood.

Laurel River Trail has also reopened after trail repair work done by a group of Mars Hill College students.

The trails accessed by Hickey Fork Road and the Appalachian Trail—Hickey Fork, White Oak, and the upper portion of Pounding Mill trails—remain closed. The Hickey Fork Road is completely washed away in places. Warning signs have been posted on the road, and the Forest Service is requesting that the public not use the road until repairs can be made. Some areas of the road are undercut with unstable edges.



The Forest Service will be soliciting public comment to decide how to address the damage to the Hickey Fork Road. “We’re looking at cost of the repair, recreational impacts, and resource damage,” said Linda Randolph, acting Appalachian District Ranger.

Anyone not currently on the district mailing list who would like to receive a scoping letter can call the Appalachian Ranger District at 828-682-6146 or write to P.O. Box 128, Burnsville, NC 28714-0128. The letter is expected to be mailed by mid to late September.

For additional information, the public may contact the Ranger Station in Hot Springs between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM at 828/622-3202.