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USDA FOREST SERVICE, 160A ZILICOA STREET, ASHEVILLE, NC 28801

## NEWS • RELEASE

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### **Joyce Kilmer Memorial Trail closes Nov. 28**

The entire Joyce Kilmer Memorial Trail will close Nov. 28 to Dec. 12 while USDA Forest Service employees replace a trail bridge that was damaged during September 2004 hurricanes.

After the hurricanes, two trail bridges, ranging from 20 to 45 feet in length, needed replacements. Hurricane floodwaters tore the old bridges from their mounts and left them in shreds. As key crossing points for the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Trail, the old bridges needed to be removed and replaced.

“With two bridges down, we were forced to shut the trail for two weeks,” said Frank Findley, Cheoah Ranger District recreation director. “We plan to have one bridge assembled and in place by Dec. 12, so we can open the trail again.”

The Forest Service will first replace the shorter bridge, which is closet to the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest parking lot. Hikers will only travel 500 feet to reach the new 20-foot long by 4-foot wide wooden bridge with log stringers that lay widthwise.

According to Findley, a Forest Service Engineer designed both bridges. During the two-period, five Forest Service employees will remove the old bridge, carry in the bridge’s parts, build abutments, and assemble them at the site.

The trail opening date could be postponed by factors, such as bad weather. Before visitors go to the trail, they should call the district at 828-479-6431 to make sure the trail is open.