

# **Update on Emory River Valley Lands Addition to Frozen Head State Park and Natural Area**

Welcome to Frozen Head State Park and Natural Area. We are pleased to have been able to expand the borders of the park to include the 8,000-acre Emory River Valley area as part of the successful “Connecting the Cumberlands” conservation initiative.

Tennessee State Parks has worked with local community officials and stakeholder groups to answer a variety of questions about the appropriate use of this area. This group continues to meet to finalize an interim management agreement focused on the safety of park visitors and stewardship of this special part of Tennessee. Once complete, the interim management agreement will be posted on the Tennessee State Parks Web site. In the meantime, visitors can find basic information about the activities available in the Emory River Valley area in the frequently asked questions section below.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Where is the Emory River land?**

Tennessee State Parks acquired approximately 8,000 acres of the Emory River Valley in Morgan County in October 2007. This property was added to the existing Frozen Head State Park and Natural Area as part of the “Connecting the Cumberlands” land initiative, which protects a total of 127,000 acres in a unique public-private partnership between the state of Tennessee, The Nature Conservancy and two conservation-minded timber companies, Conservation Forestry and Lyme Timber. The priorities for this acquisition include resource protection, preventing further fragmentation of the forest communities and preserving the precious water resources.

Locally known as “Gobey,” the Emory River Valley provides an opportunity for various land management groups to work together. The Emory River serves as a “divide” between land management practices. Lands east of the Emory River will be managed as state park. All lands to the west of the Emory River are protected by conservation easement which allows sustainable timber harvesting, as well as gas and oil exploration to continue. This helps protect both the land and the local economies that rely on taxes collected from these businesses.

### **When is the public allowed to enter the Emory River area?**

In general, the Emory River area offers year around visitor access. For safety reasons it is recommended that visitors use the designated areas during daylight hours; however, camping and other over-night activities are not prohibited at this time.

From time to time public access may be restricted or limited in certain areas if cultural, environmental or biological features must be protected. Additionally, the staff of Frozen Head State Park and Natural Area shall have the right to close an entire area or sections of an area if conditions are not safe for the general public (i.e., unsafe road or trail conditions, tree hazard removal, etc.). Staff will give public notice in advance and closures will be well marked.

## **Can I drive my vehicle on the roads in the Emory River Area?**

Yes, but motorized vehicle access is not year-around. Motorized vehicles are allowed on existing roads in the Emory River Area for hunting and hunting-related activities. Points beyond which the roads become suitable for only ATVs and OHV travel will be well marked with signs. In the future, a map of the Emory River Area will be available, showing roads and the types of vehicle access allowed on each road.

Motorized vehicle traffic will be restricted during certain times of the year. Currently, the Emory River Area will close to all forms of motorized traffic (including trucks, cars, ATVs, OHVs and any other street legal vehicles) from March 1<sup>st</sup> until seven days prior to the opening of the state's official turkey season and again from the day after the close of the state's turkey season to August 1<sup>st</sup>. During closures, visitors will still be allowed to enter the area on foot and on horseback.

## **Is hunting allowed?**

Yes. Hunting is allowed on the Emory River property during statewide game seasons. Visitors who choose to hunt within the Emory River Area must comply with all State of Tennessee hunting rules and regulations. To view a list of the statewide game seasons and regulations, please visit Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency's Web site at [www.tn.gov/twra](http://www.tn.gov/twra). Hunting is still prohibited within the areas designated as Class II Natural Area and within the boundaries of Frozen Head State Park and Natural Area. This includes the newly acquired areas of Love and Bird Mountains. No Hunting Zones will be clearly marked.

## **Are there safety zones?**

Yes. It is the goal of Tennessee State Parks for all visitors to have an enjoyable outdoor experience. Safety zones have been created to ensure that all visitors can have a safe, pleasant experience. All safety zones are clearly marked with signs.

## **Are ATVs and OHVs allowed?**

ATVs and OHVs (all-terrain vehicles and off-highway vehicles) are defined as any number of small, open motorized buggies and tricycles designed for off-road use. The American National Standards Institute defines an ATV/OHV as a vehicle that travels on lower pressure tires, with a seat that is straddled by the operator, with handlebars for steering control. By current standards, the ATV is intended for use by a single operator but a change to include 2-seaters has been adopted.

**ATV /OHV use is only allowed for hunting and hunting-related activities on existing roads and trails within the Emory River property. Recreational use of ATVs and OHVs is prohibited.**

### **What are the rules for off-highway motorcycles?**

The Emory River Planning Team has not developed a strategy for recreational, off-highway use of motorcycles. Under the current plan, motorcycles should remain on existing roads and adhere to the regulations for other highway vehicles.

### **Is Hunting from Horse Back Allowed?**

Yes, hunting from horseback is allowed on all existing roads within the Emory River Area.

### **Is Recreational Horseback Riding Allowed?**

Recreational horseback riding is permitted on road number five (5) also known as the “Old Tipple Site” road. This road offers a large, open trailhead area with parking for horse trailers.

### **Is fishing allowed?**

Yes. Fishing is allowed in the Emory River. Visitors must comply with all State of Tennessee fishing regulations. For more information on fishing regulations, visit Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency’s Web site at [www.tn.gov/twra](http://www.tn.gov/twra).

### **Is Camping Allowed in the Emory River Area?**

Visitors are allowed to camp in the Emory River area. At present, there are no designated camp sites or modern convenience facilities available. Camping is primitive. Visitors who choose to camp in the Emory River area are encouraged to practice “leave no trace” habits such as not burning plastic or cardboard in campfires, only collecting dead wood for camp fires and not cutting trees, and removing all garbage from the area.

### **Do I need a permit to backpack or camp?**

Currently there is not a permit system in place for the Emory River Area. Tennessee State Parks is considering implementing a permit system for this area in the future. In the meantime, visitors are encouraged to check in at the Frozen Head State Park and Natural Area visitor center and leave contact information, vehicle information and expected return dates with the park staff. For more information, contact the visitor center at 423-346-3318.

### **Are pets allowed on the roads and trails?**

Yes. In keeping with state parks policies visitors are asked to please keep pets on a leash at all times. Visitors are also encouraged to pick up after pets and dispose of pet waste in proper trash receptacles.

### **Are there plans for restroom facilities?**

At this time there are no plans to build restroom facilities in the Emory River area. Restrooms are available for public use at several locations in Frozen Head State Park and Natural Area. For more information contact the park office at 423-346-3318.

### **What if I need help?**

The Emory River area is a beautiful, vast wilderness. The qualities that make it so appealing to park visitors also contribute to the inherent risks and danger associated with any backcountry activities. Visitors should be aware that due to the location and terrain, cellular phone service may not always be a reliable means of communication. Visitors are encouraged to check in and out with Frozen Head State Park and Natural Area staff. Tennessee State Park Rangers are on duty and can be reached by contacting the Frozen Head State Park and Natural area office at 423-346-3318, the Morgan County Sheriff's Office at 423-346-6262, 423-346-7142 or by dialing 911.