

September 1, 2008

Park Operations Team,

As of 3:00 p.m. today September 1, 2008, State Park Cabins 11-15 have been evacuated due to the loss of Cabin Road. This road suffered major loss last night starting at about 9:30 p.m. at approximately 10:00 p.m. I made a trip to Cabin Road and found the road to be impassable due to water and erosion. I contacted Chief Stevens at this time to make him aware of the situation, and that we needed to plan for an evacuation of the cabins today. It was completely dark and raining, so an overall comprehensive look was not an option at the time, but based on the area of the road in front of Cabin 8, I knew this is what we had to do.

I then contacted Asst. Park Manager Kenny Heater and had him prepare to meet me to do a door to door check with all cabins (Park operated and Leaseholders cabin occupants) to let them, know what was going on. Ranger Carl Berube placed road barricades for safety and stopped any incoming traffic. From 11:00 p.m. to 12:30 a.m., Kenny and I went door to door using ATV's since this is the only vehicle we could access the area with. We told all occupants not to try to drive out of the area until we contacted them. Since high tide was at 10:00 a.m. this morning, we did not know if we would be able to get them out before then since the water would make it impassable again. All cabins were instructed to try to have everything packed and ready to go by 8:00 a.m. in the event that we got the road open, but they also were told about the tide situation, and that it could be after noon before they could leave. Either way, we would come get them when it was time to go.

This morning when it got daylight at 7:00 a.m. Regional Chief Stevens and I evaluated the road conditions and how far the tide was coming up. Along with the Park Maintenance staff, we cleared some of the road, but the tide continued to rise and by 7:30 am. The water was already rising fast and starting to touch the road. This was 2 hours before full high tide. We decided to wait until the high tide cycle was completely through. At 9:00 a.m. we sent Senior Ranger Jeff Cucinella around to cabins to let them know that it would be closer to noon before they could leave. At approximately 11:30 a.m. the tides lowered enough to allow us to begin work stabilizing the road. At 12:10 p.m. we had the road cleared and began escorting cars across the road. We then closed the road off for all vehicular traffic.

We began trying to contact all state park cabin users of cabins 11, 13, and 15 at 7:30 a.m. to let them know that they would not be able to use the cabins. We were able to contact Cabin 11 which was due to check in today to have them cancel. We voided their reservation. We were not able to make contact with cabins 13 and 15 earlier today. We checked with local hotels in the area for vacancies to offer the guest options when they arrived. We contacted Santee State Park and they had 2 cabins available for 9/01/08 for four nights to offer them. The occupants declined. We have voided their reservation, and are assisting them to try to find another local place to stay.

We also began notifying the guest due to check in to Cabins 8, 12, and 14 on Friday 9/5/08 that we would have to cancel their reservations. Park Manager Maiwald set aside 6 cabins for Friday night. We made contact with Cabins 12 and 14. They chose to have a refund. Cabin 12 had no valid phone number, therefore we emailed them.

Cabins 11, 13, and 15 which were due to check out today, was not given any money back at this time since they were able to check out on their departure date.

Cabin 8 which was due to check out Friday 9/5/08 has chosen to take an early check out. We have refunded the remainder of their stay.

Cabins 3 – 7 are still occupied along with all leased cabins north of Cabin 8. We are notifying all check-ins that the possibility of an evacuation may occur this weekend as Hurricane Hannah poses a possible threat.

We are putting closers on all cabins as we cancel their reservations to make sure they are not booked again.

We are also beginning to contact cabins 11-15 due to check in next Monday 9/08/08 and cancelling their reservations as we will not have an alternative in place by then.

We will keep you posted if there are any further developments.

***Jeff Atkins***  
***Manager, Hunting Island State Park***

***SC Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism***

***2555 Sea Island Pkwy***

***Hunting Island, SC 29920***

***Phone: (843) 838-4868***



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