

More areas of parkway are open for visits

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

LINVILLE FALLS — A road from the Blue Ridge Parkway to the Linville Falls visitor's center parking lot has reopened and trails to two of three overlooks are reopened. The visitor's center, heavily damaged by last month's flooding, remains closed.

The Chimney View and Erwins View trails are available for hiking. The short trail to the upper falls overlook remains closed. The Linville Falls campground had reopened shortly after the hurricane-related damage. One loop of the picnic area is reopened.

The parkway's only road closings are from N.C. 221, just south of Linville Falls, to just north of N.C. 226 near Spruce Pine (mileposts 317-325), and from N.C. 80 to Mount Mitchell State Park (mileposts 344-355).

After geological and engineering analysis by the Federal Highway Administration, officials now believe that the section between N.C. 80 and Mount Mitchell can be repaired over the winter, weather permitting, and reopened by spring. The section near Linville Falls could be fixed by mid-summer 2005.

With the exceptions of the Price Lake trail near Blowing Rock and the Linville Falls visitor's center, all Blue Ridge Parkway campgrounds, picnic areas, visitor centers and concessioner-operated lodges, restaurants and gift shops are open.

The parkway information line has daily road updates, weekly autumn color reports and other news at (828) 298-0398 or visit www.nps.gov/blri