

Federal Shut-Down Would Impact Parkway, Forests

Written by Steve Frank
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As negotiations continue in Washington on a spending plan to keep the federal government functioning, state officials are wondering how a government shutdown would impact various federal services in North Carolina. And the state budget is not prepared for the impact of taking on more tasks now covered by federal agencies.

Still, Margaret Metzger of the state Division of Tourism said contingency plans are being made regarding the operation of national parks in the Tar Heel State. "There is a possibility that the federal parks here in North Carolina like the Blue Ridge Parkway, Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the National Seashore at Cape Hatteras would have to close access to the public to trails and beaches," said Metzger. She added that whether parks stay open during a potential shutdown would be made on a case-by-case basis. Only sections of the Blue Ridge Parkway can be shut down, so just what would happen in the case of an accident on the Parkway—currently handled by federally-funded Parkway Police—remains to be seen. And federal forest lands in our area currently are protected by federal authorities—what would happen in the event of a fire or other emergency, a question not answered with the looming shut-down