

Cold in Alabama?

You can still go camping



Cold weather camping in the Tennessee Valley

Chilly weather is made for camping. Picture snuggling around the campfire in your boots and flannels, roasting marshmallows and watching for winter birds. This is an especially good time of year to look for bald eagles who build nests and lay their eggs in the cold winter months near lakes and reservoirs.

The Tennessee Valley Authority reports the campgrounds on its dam reservations are looking forward to a great 2019 after having another record-setting season. TVA operates six campgrounds on the reservations under concessionaire agreement with Recreation Resource Management, which reported at least a 17 percent increase in occupancy nights over the past year, with campers in several locations enjoying improvements like new camp stores and electrical upgrades.

Pickwick Campground, just over the Tennessee border from Alabama, is the largest of the six with more than 100 campsites. It had an especially good year, nearly doubling its estimated visitor nights.

Those campgrounds open for the season again on March 15. But fans of camping in the cold weather can still enjoy their hobby right now.

“TVA partners with campground operators all across the

Valley to provide additional campgrounds on TVA public lands—not associated with dam reservations—under long-term agreements. Some of them are open year-round, while others are seasonal,” explains Aurora Pulliam, TVA recreation representative.

“And if you love ‘roughing it,’ we have about 230,000 acres of public lands that are undeveloped and open all year, where you can do some primitive winter camping and really get back to nature. Check out the Undeveloped Recreation Map on TVA’s Recreation webpage to locate public lands near you.”

Be a cool camper

If you enjoy the quiet beauty of undeveloped land, where it’s just you and your tent, TVA recommends a few important things to keep in mind:

- Burn wood from local sources and avoid moving firewood across county lines to help prevent the spread of invasive insects.
- Use only existing fire rings. Don’t move shoreline rocks to create new ones.
- Don’t burn trash or food.
- Dispose of trash in secure containers, or practice pack-it-in, pack-it-out in primitive camping areas. Recycle or reuse as much material as possible.
- Never approach, feed or follow wildlife.
- Leave plants, rocks and historical items where you found them.
- Tread lightly. Use existing trails where possible, and only ride bikes in designated areas.

It’s important to remember that motorized vehicles (ATVs, ORVs) are prohibited on all TVA public lands, whether on developed campsites or on undeveloped land. ATVs are capable of causing enormous damage to terrain, plants and animal habitats.

Visit TVA.com/camping as your starting point for a wealth of information on camping facilities of all kinds. ■



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