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Chimney Rock State Park completely reopens Nov. 22

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(Photo: Courtesy of Chimney Rock State Park)

CHIMNEY ROCK - After missing out on most of the fall foliage show from some of the best vantage points in the Hickory Nut Gorge, visitors to Chimney Rock State Park will get to view the panoramas Thanksgiving weekend.

The upper portion of Chimney Rock, which includes access to the park's iconic Chimney, Outcroppings trail, Exclamation Point trail, and the Skyline Trail opened the morning of Nov. 22 to the public

The entire park was closed after a heavy rain Oct. 23 brought down the retaining wall in the upper parking lot. The park in Rutherford County 25 miles southeast of Asheville is more than 100 years old.

The lower portion of the park, including access to the Great Woodland Adventure trail, the Four Seasons trail and a portion of the Hickory Nut Falls trail was accessible to guests a couple of weeks ago.

State Park, Department of Transportation and contractors have been working on the park's upper parking lot to remove debris and stabilize the area.

The elevator is still out of service, so access to the top of Chimney Rock requires hiking the Outcroppings trail. Pets are welcome as long as they are leashed.

Things continue to be on the move in the park.

Crevice Pass, which serves as an alternative route to the Outcroppings Trail opened in May. In September, an expanded deck near Gneiss Cave, which provides additional space for programs and picnickers, and the new Skyline trail that leads hikers to a view of the upper cascades of Hickory Nut Falls and Hickory Nut Gorge were opened.



State DOT and engineers have fixed a retaining wall collapse to open Chimney Rock State Park for the weekend. (Photo: Courtesy of Chimney Rock at Chimney Rock State Park)

With Christmas approaching, visitors will also get to see Santa practice his chimney scaling moves as he rappels down the 315-foot Chimney Rock itself on Dec. 2 and 9. A fully Santa-clad rock climber will rappel at 11:30 a.m., 12:30 and 1:30 p.m. on both days.

"Santa could practice on any Chimney in the world, so we're honored that he keeps coming back to Chimney Rock year after year to prep for the holidays," said PR and Promotions Manager Lani Davis. "We look forward to his visit and to show the Park's event and all it offers."

Santa and Mrs. Claus will visit with children in front of Cliff Dwellers Gifts and get their photo taken with Santa during his break.

Free digital copies of Santa photos will be available for download after the event on the Park's Facebook page.

Want to visit Chimney Rock?

Chimney Rock at Chimney Rock State Park is on U.S. 64/74A in Chimney Rock. The Ticket Plaza is open 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. and 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. beginning Nov. 27. Gates close at 6 p.m. It is open daily through December except for Thanksgiving and Christmas Days. Visit www.chimneyrockpark.com (<http://www.chimneyrockpark.com>) or [facebook.com/chimneyrockparknc](https://www.facebook.com/chimneyrockparknc).

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