

Cherokee National Forest Journal

Third Edition

A Journal of Scenic Beauty and Recreation Opportunities



The Cherokee National Forest ...

- Is the second most visited tourist attraction in Tennessee
- Has more than 30 developed campgrounds and 45 day use sites
- Is the site of the world's only Olympic whitewater venue on a natural river
- Contains a portion of one of the nation's oldest travelways
- Home to 11 designated Wildernesses, totaling nearly 67,000 acres
- Has more than 500 miles of cold-water streams
- Lies along three large lakes managed by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
- Provides habitat for 43 species of mammals, 154 species of fish, 55 species of amphibians and 262 species of birds
- Has more than 600 miles of trail including more than 150 miles of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail



Come explore the natural beauty of the Cherokee National Forest, located in the Southern Appalachian Mountains of east Tennessee. Take special note of the forest's 15 recreation zones, each brimming with sites and activities that are as unique as the mountains or waters that define it.

The Cherokee National Forest is the perfect place for a scenic drive through the mountains, solitude on a backcountry trail, the thrill of whitewater, a night under the stars or an opportunity to catch wild trout.

Plan your visit by activities or locations using the recreation zones referenced throughout the Journal ... Big Frog Mountain, Ocoee River, Hiwassee River, Starr Mountain, Coker Creek, Tellico River, Citico Creek, Pigeon River, French Broad River, Bald Mountain, Unaka Mountain, Roan Mountain, Watauga Lake, Iron Mountain and Holston Mountain.

Enjoy your visit. Please do your part to conserve these exceptional places.

Layers and layers of blue mountains, blending into the sky ... Thundering cascades of water rushing over ancient boulders ... Hoot of an owl on a starlit night ... Crunch of frost on a winter day ... Twitter of a songbird, high in the treetops ... Splendor of a jewel-colored mountainside in autumn sunlight ... Heady aroma of evergreens, wafting through the air.

These are a few of the wild sensations you can experience in the Cherokee National Forest.

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Cherokee National Forest in Tennessee



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U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Southern Region

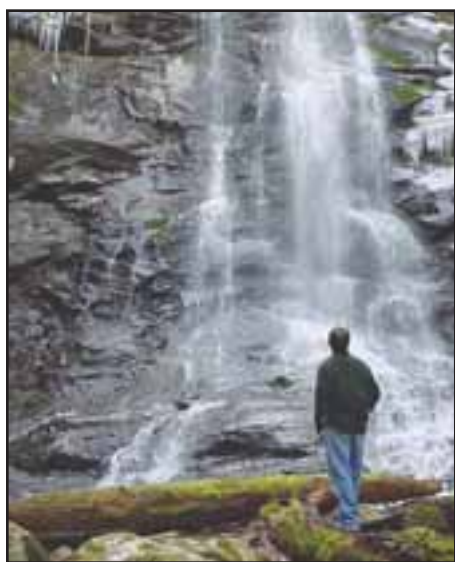
Waterfalls

Tennessee's Cherokee National Forest stretches from Chattanooga to Bristol along the North Carolina border. The 640,000-acre federal forest is the largest tract of public land in Tennessee.

National forests are lands of many uses. Their original purpose was to protect water quality and provide a continuous supply of timber. Today, national forests are managed to provide outdoor recreation, wildlife and fish habitat, wilderness, water, minerals, wood products and much more.

The Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, is the federal agency that manages our nation's national forests and grasslands.

Because of the Cherokee's majestic mountains, tumbling streams and diverse vegetation; recreation opportunities are plentiful. Visitors come to explore the 600 miles of trails, hundreds of miles of cold water streams, seven whitewater rivers, 30 developed campgrounds, 45 day-use sites and the abundant populations of wildlife that live here.



Sill Branch Falls

Falls in the Wilderness


Some of the forest's waterfalls are hidden inside a Congressionally designated Wilderness:


- Falls Branch Falls in Citico Creek Wilderness
- Squibb Creek Falls in Sampson Mountain Wilderness
- Rock Creek Falls in Unaka Mountain Wilderness
- Laurel Fork Falls in Pond Mountain Wilderness

If you are seeking a primitive recreation experience, check with the nearest Forest Service office for directions to these falls. Be familiar with Wilderness regulations including group size limitations.

There is a falling cascade of water on almost every stream in the forest. A single cascade may be only a few feet in height, but it might be combined in a series of drops that travel a distance of several hundred feet. A waterfall, by comparison, flows freely in a vertical drop along a cliff face. The quantity of water in a fall or cascade depends on the amount of rainfall, which will vary from season to season and from year to year.


The word "waterfall" inspires thoughts of beauty and power. There are several waterfalls in the Cherokee National Forest and visitors often inquire how to find them. Because exact locations of the cascades are difficult to describe, the following directions are very general. When hiking distances are noted, they refer to one-way travel. Most of the trails are linear, so double the distance to include the return trip. You may want to take along a topographic or other map, available for purchase at your nearest Forest Service office.


 **Benton Falls:** Take Forest Road 77 to Chilhowee Recreation Area. Hike an easy 1.5 miles on Benton Falls Trail #131 to a series of steps that lead to the base of the 65-foot cascade. (Ocoee River Zone)

 **Turtletown Falls:** Take TN 68 to County Road 2317 to Turtletown Falls Trail #185. The 3.8-mile trail overlooks two major waterfalls and Hiwassee River. 30-foot falls. (Hiwassee River Zone)





Coker Creek Falls

 **Coker Creek Falls:** Take TN 68 to County Road 628 to County Road #2 to Forest Road 2138 to Coker Creek Falls Trail #183. Within 0.2 miles you'll view two cascades, both spanning the breadth of the creek, the first 8 feet high and the next 20 feet high. A longer hike offers views of additional cascades, rapids and clear pools. (Coker Creek Zone)

 **Bald River Falls:** View from Tellico River Road (Forest Road 210) off Cherohala Skyway. 90-foot fall. (Tellico River Zone)


 **Wolf Creek Falls:** Take County Road 107 to Forest Road 96 to Forest Road 96D. Hike 0.5 mile along an old roadbed. 25-foot fall. (French Broad River Zone)


 **Kelly, Dudley and Ricker Falls:** View from Forest Road 41 along Paint Creek. Cascades: 15 feet each. (French Broad River Zone)


 **Margarette Falls:** Take Shelton Mission Road to trailhead on Forest Road 5099. Go 0.5 mile along closed road, then 0.7 mile on Margarette Falls Trail #189, a rough, boulder-filled trail with several stream crossings. 50-foot fall. (Bald Mountain Zone)





Blue Hole Falls


 **Pete's Branch Falls:** Take Forest Road 94 in Horse Creek Recreation Area to Forest Road 94B to Pete's Branch Trail #12. Walk 1.2 miles (or drive in 4WD, high-clearance vehicle) along forest roads, then 0.6 mile on Pete's Branch Trail. Hike requires four creek crossings. 45-foot fall; best during wet seasons. (Bald Mountain Zone)

 **Sill Branch Falls:** Take TN 107 to Clark Creek Road (Forest Road 25) to Sill Branch Falls Trail #115. The 0.5-mile trail ends at 20-foot fall. (Bald Mountain Zone)

 **Coon Den Falls:** Take County Road 50 to Coon Den Falls Trail #37. Begin a 0.5-mile steep, rocky hike. 15-foot cascade. (Watauga Lake Zone)

 **Blue Hole Falls:** Take TN 91 to Forest Road 56. Hike a short, steep 0.1-mile trail with steep stairs. 70-foot fall in two tiers. (Holston Mountain Zone)

 **Gentry Creek Falls:** Take TN 91 to Laurel Bloomery; turn east on Gentry Creek Road; follow Forest Road 123 to Gentry Creek Trail #51. Hike 2.3 miles along an abandoned railroad grade with several creek crossings. 80-foot fall in two tiers. (Iron Mountain Zone)

 **Backbone Falls:** Take TN 133 near Damascus, Va., to Backbone Rock Recreation Area. Use Backbone Falls Trail #198, a 0.4-mile loop that includes several long flights of steps with steep drop-offs. 45-foot fall. (Iron Mountain Zone)




Bald River Falls


Waterfall Safety

Although beautiful to see, waterfalls and cascades can be very dangerous. Remember that wet, moss-covered rocks are slick and hazardous, no matter which season of the year. It is also easy to underestimate the strong flow of water. Use common sense.

- Never swim, wade or play in the water above a waterfall.
- View the falls looking up from the bottom or side rather than trying to look over brink of the falls.
- Supervise children and keep pets leashed.
- Stay on the developed trails.


Scenic Drives

 **Ocoee Scenic Byway:** The first designated national forest scenic byway in the nation includes 26 miles of US 64 and Forest Road 77. The two-lane route winds past Parksville Lake, through the scenic rocky bluffs of Ocoee River Gorge and past the Ocoee Whitewater Center. Take a side trip up the 7-mile Chilhowee Scenic Spur, Forest Road 77, to Chilhowee Recreation Area. Take in long-range views of the Tennessee Valley, Cumberland Mountains and into the mountains of Georgia. From several overlooks you can spread a picnic or take a short hike. (Ocoee River Zone)

 **Hiwassee River Road:** Sun-dappled forests surround TN 30 and Forest Road 108 as they follow Hiwassee State Scenic River. Leave TN 30 to cross the bridge to the historic community of Reliance and turn east to Forest Road 108. Climb the mountain toward Big Bend and Apalachia Powerhouse. Pack a picnic and enjoy the views from Hood Mountain overlook and other spectacular sites along the corridor. From Reliance, TN 30 continues through the community of Greasy Creek to US 64, Ocoee Scenic Byway. (Hiwassee River Zone)




View shoals in the Hiwassee River from Hood Mountain Overlook.

 **Tellico River Road:** Take TN 165 from Tellico Plains to Forest Road 210. The route follows Tellico River past Bald River Falls, where you can pull off to view the magnificent falls. A few miles farther, stop to view pools of teeming trout at historic Pheasant Fields Fish Rearing Pools. Small campgrounds, picnic areas and trailheads flank this scenic route. (Tellico River Zone)




A drive through Tellico River corridor provides interesting river views.


 **Cherohala Skyway:** View some of the best mountain scenery in the world from this 43-mile National Scenic Byway through the Cherokee and Nantahala national forests. Drive along the sparkling rush of the Tellico River, stop at overlooks to take in expansive views of the Tennessee Valley and waves of mountain peaks, hike to high elevation mountain balds or nearby Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest. Stop for a picnic at Indian Boundary Recreation Area. (Tellico River Zone)

Take a long, scenic loop that connects Cherohala Skyway and Ocoee Scenic Byway. At Tellico Plains, travel TN 68 north to County Road 39 and County Road 310 to Etowah and US 411. A southern turn on US 411 leads to US 64 (Ocoee Scenic Byway). Travel the byway to Ducktown, turn north onto TN 68 that leads you back to Tellico Plains. (This route travels through most of the southern recreation zones.)




Meander along scenic Brush Creek on Forest Road 209.

 **Brush Creek Mountain Loop:** Travel along TN 107, Forest Road 209 and US 25/70. Gravelled FR 209 meanders through a narrow canyon with rhododendron-covered sandstone bluffs. Stretch and enjoy the short, accessible trail at Allen Branch Pond. French Broad Boat Launch offers access to the river. Stop for a picnic at Houston Valley Recreation Area off TN 107. (French Broad River Zone)

 **Paint Creek Corridor with Hot Springs' Loops:** Meander along 5-mile Paint Creek Corridor to historic Paint Rock. Stop for a picnic, check out scenic waterfalls or splash in the ripples along the way. Extend your trip by travelling along French Broad River via River Road to the community of Hot Springs, North Carolina. Two overmountain routes will bring you back to Paint Creek:


- From Hot Springs, take US 25/70 west to TN 107 to Forest Road 54. Catch scenic mountain vistas along this winding gravel road that intersects Forest Road 41 near Paint Rock.
- From Hot Springs, take US 25/70 east to Forest Road 467 and wind through Pisgah National Forest to Hurricane Gap. Forest Road 31 brings you back to Paint Creek at Moses Turn trailhead. Take a side trip at Hurricane Gap to Pisgah National Forest's Rich Mountain Firetower or catch the Appalachian National Scenic Trail #1. (French Broad River Zone)


 **Unaka Mountain Scenic Drive:** From Erwin, this drive makes a circle connecting TN 395, gravelled Forest Road 230 and TN 107, a state scenic parkway, past Limestone Cove. The route winds from the


valley floor of Unicoi County to high-elevation spruce forests and balds atop Unaka Mountain. Rock Creek Recreation Area, with facilities for day and overnight use, and Limestone Cove Picnic Area are along the way. High-clearance 4WD vehicles are recommended on Forest Road 230, closed between mid-December to mid-March. (Unaka Mountain Zone)



Enjoy views of the mountains and Shady Valley from TN 91 and TN 133.

 **TN 143:** This state scenic parkway climbs through Roan Mountain State Park to Carvers Gap, with numerous long-distance mountain vistas, picnic spots, rhododendrons and spruce-fir forests. In the spring, check out the wildflowers at Twin Springs Picnic Area. (Roan Mountain Zone)

 **US 321/TN 67:** These state scenic parkways follow the shoreline of Watauga Lake, accessing several national forest recreation areas and providing scenic views of the lake and forest lands on Iron Mountain. The highways split east of the lake, where both individual routes pass through farmlands, rural communities and scenic mountain views toward Boone, N.C. and Mountain City, Tenn. (Watauga Lake/Iron Mountain Zones)

 **TN 91:** Wind along Stony Creek through farmlands framed by Holston and Iron Mountains to the top of Cross Mountain. Cross Mountain Trailhead offers area information, as well as parking for Appalachian National Scenic Trail #1 and the Osborne Farm. TN 91 drops spectacularly into Shady Valley, a rural farming community known for its extant cranberry bogs. North of Shady Valley, TN 133 follows portions of an old rail line along Beaverdam Creek through the Shortest Tunnel in the World at Backbone Rock Recreation Area. (Iron Mountain Zone)



Forest roads offer spectacular scenery throughout the year.

Mountain Lakes and Ponds



Do you like to fish for bass or bluegill in a warm-water pond in a wooded setting? Or just like to relax near water and watch damselflies and other aquatic wildlife?

Allen Branch Pond: Try your luck at fishing for bass, bluegill and catfish from the shoreline or from one of the fishing piers. Walk the accessible quarter-mile trail ringing the pond and enjoy the sights and sounds of a warm-water ecosystem. Water from this 2.5-acre pond is sometimes used to help put out wildfires. (French Broad River Zone)

Dillard Ponds: Grassy meadows and wooded hillsides surround a string of four small ponds, fed by the cold waters of Paint Creek. Just off Upper Paint Creek Road, this area is a great place for the whole family to explore. (Bald Mountain Zone)

Paint Creek Pond: Among the cattails and other aquatic plants, watch for beavers and listen for frog calls. In the early morning, watch mist rise from the placid surface of the pond. The pond is an easy drive or bicycle ride from Paint Creek Campground. (French Broad River Zone)

Scott-Booher Pond: On the site of an historic homestead dating to the mid 1800s, the Scott-Booher Pond was enlarged in 1991 and is managed for bass and bluegill. Bring a blanket for a picnic near the pond or in the historic apple orchard. The Appalachian National Scenic Trail is nearby. (Iron Mountain Zone)



Paint Creek Pond

Visit any one of six lakes in the Cherokee National Forest for water recreation, fishing or just to enjoy the scenic shorelines.

Parksville Lake: The oldest lake in the Cherokee National Forest was created by Tennessee Rural Electric Company in 1910-11. Sometimes known as Lake Ocoee, this lake is controlled by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). Scenic views of the 1,930-acre lake are highlights along the Ocoee Scenic Byway. The lake is popular for motor-boating against the backdrop of forested rolling hills; two public boat launches are located along US 64. Swim and picnic at Mac Point and Parksville Beach. Just below the dam is Sugarloaf Park, operated by the state of Tennessee, where visitors can picnic and view a scale model of the Olympic canoe and kayak course. Scan the shoreline for the gleaming white heads of bald eagles. Camp nearby at Parksville Campground, just off US 64 on TN 30. (Ocoee River Zone)

Watauga Lake: In 1942, TVA impounded Elk River, Roan Creek and Watauga River to create this 6,430-acre lake. Nestled between Big Laurel and Pond Mountain wildernesses, the deep blue waters and beautiful mountain vistas set the stage for fishing, boating and water skiing. A network of developed sites including boat launches, picnic areas and a campground are provided by the Forest Service. Hike the Appalachian National Scenic Trail #1 to follow the west and north sides of the lake. In late spring, listen for yellow-throated warblers and vireos at Rat Branch Boat Launch and Watauga Point Picnic Area. (Watauga Lake Zone)

South Holston Lake: Boat, kayak, water-ski and fish the meandering shoreline of this TVA lake. Launch your watercraft from Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency's ramp on US 421 or from Little Oak Campground off Forest Road #87. You can camp near the water at Little Oak and Jacobs Creek Campgrounds.

Observation Knob at TVA's South Holston Dam is a great place to view the lake against the backdrop of Holston Mountain. Look for bald eagles, reintroduced in the 1990s. Loons, buffleheads, mallards and ring-billed gulls are among the area's waterfowl species. (Holston Mountain Zone)



Photo by Larry Mashburn

Ocoee #3 Lake

If you're looking for a quieter experience, try one of the forest's smaller lakes.

Ocoee #3 Lake: With just 24 miles of shoreline, 360 acres of water surface and few developed facilities, this small TVA lake provides a rustic setting for fishing, nature study or a quiet smooth-water canoe trek. Ride your mountain bike or hike along Brush Creek and Boyd Gap trails for views to the lake. Tumbling Creek Campground offers primitive camping facilities. (Ocoee River Zone)

McKamy Lake: Visitors to Chilhowee Recreation Area are drawn to McKamy Lake for swimming, fishing picnicking, sunbathing and canoeing. The seven-acre lake was built in the late 1930s to early 1940s by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Chilhowee Lake Trail skirts the banks of the lake and connects to picnic, bathhouse and campground facilities. (Ocoee River Zone)



McKamy Lake, summer 1942

Indian Boundary Lake: This 96-acre lake provides a scenic backdrop for camping, fishing, picnicking and boating from the hub at Indian Boundary Recreation Area. The lake features a sandy swim beach, boat launch and accessible fishing pier. From the 3.1-mile lakeshore trail, you can watch beaver that inhabit a pond above the lake, identify several species of ducks and other waterfowl or try your luck at catching bass, catfish and bluegill. (Tellico River Zone)



South Holston Lake

Ocoee Whitewater Center

Cherokee Indians called the Ocoee River the place of the people of the river. In 1996 the Ocoee hosted the world's first Olympic whitewater event on a natural river. Today the Ocoee Whitewater Center offers something for everyone, continuing the tradition as the place of the people of the river.

- Explore a historic trail built by Cherokee Indians, where 19th century miners transported copper ore by mules and wagons.
- Stroll through native gardens honoring Olympic athletes, Cherokee Indians and others.
- Study rock formations deposited more than 750 million years ago.



The Tennessee Valley Authority releases the river's flow on a scheduled basis. With this rush of whitewater, local outfitters lead trips through the same giant rocks and rapids that challenged the Olympic champions

during the 1996 canoe and kayak slalom competition.

The Tanasi Trail System offers more than 30 miles of hiking and biking trails. Choose leisurely walks or bike rides on shady riverside trails or a blistering, high energy trek down the Thunder Rock Express.

On-site naturalists lead conservation education programs, with hands on opportunities for both youths and adults to interact with the environment. Throughout the year, special events include national and international whitewater competitions, championship mountain bike and adventure races and regional festivals.

Nestled on a ledge just above the river, the Ocoee Whitewater Center makes an impressive architectural statement with massive beams, native rockwork and grand river views. The stage is set for private gatherings, weddings, conferences and corporate retreats. For more information: (423) 496-0100; or (877) 692-6050 toll-free.



- Enjoy the views from the Oswald Dome Fire Tower.
- Spread a picnic under shade trees beside the river.
- Gather information about the Ocoee Region's Tennessee Overhill.
- Browse through a selection of local artists' creations, nature oriented souvenirs and outdoor wear in the gift shop.



Capture the splendor and excitement of canoeing, kayaking or rafting whitewater rivers in the Cherokee National Forest. Each river has its own personality, with diverse paddling challenges and outstanding scenery.

- **Ocoee River:** Class III-IV rapids. This river was home of the 1996 Olympic canoe and kayak slalom events. Outfitters provide rafting services on both the upper and lower sections. (Ocoee River Zone)
- **Hiwassee River:** Class I-III rapids. Local outfitters rent rafts and tubes. (Hiwassee River Zone)
- **Tellico River:** Class II-IV rapids, best paddled in the spring or times of the year when there is adequate rainfall. (Tellico River Zone)
- **Pigeon River:** Class I-IV rapids. Local outfitters provide rafting services. (Pigeon River Zone)
- **French Broad River:** Class I-III rapids. A popular commercial section runs 13 miles from Hot Springs, North Carolina, to Del Rio, Tennessee, with local rafting services. (French Broad River Zone)
- **Nolichucky River:** Class II-V rapids through remote backcountry in the Pisgah and Cherokee national forests and Class I-II rapids between Erwin, Tennessee, and Davy Crockett Lake near Greeneville, Tenn. Commercial rafting is available on the challenging 8.5-mile section between Poplar, N.C. and Erwin. (Unaka Mountain Zone, Bald Mountain Zone)
- **Watauga River:** Class I-II rapids between Wilbur Dam and Elizabethton, Tenn. Commercial rafting is available. (Watauga Lake Zone)

For information about these rivers and their difficulty levels, see www.americanwhitewater.org.

The water flow of some of these rivers is controlled by the Tennessee Valley Authority. Check TVA's water release schedules at www.tva.gov.

To make your trip more enjoyable and safe, remember these tips. If you are planning a guided trip or renting equipment, call ahead for reservations. Heaviest recreation use occurs late spring through mid summer.

On the day of your trip, let someone know your itinerary. Wear appropriate safety gear, including flotation device and helmet. If you are a novice, paddle with experienced boaters or guides who know the river and are trained in whitewater safety.



Explore the natural wonders of the Cherokee National Forest. Leave the sound of traffic far behind, walk along a rushing stream or climb a mountain to reach new horizons. The forest has more than 600 miles of trails ready to connect you with a world that will rock your senses.

Want to hike across the forest? Follow the white blazes of Benton MacKaye Trail and Appalachian National Scenic Trail from one end of the forest to the other. Together these trails traverse the southern and northern districts of the forest and Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Looking for something even longer? Explore the entire Appalachian Mountain Chain on these trails by following the blazes north to Maine or south to Georgia.



Bike or hike alongside the Ocoee River on Rhododendron Trail #332.

Looking for an easy trail? Rhododendron Trail #332: A 1.6-mile, one-way hiking and biking trail travels along the world famous Ocoee River. (Ocoee River Zone)

Indian Boundary Lake Trail #129: A 3.1-mile loop trail for hiking and biking leads you around the scenic lake with views of the mountains. (Tellico River Zone)

Appalachian National Scenic Trail #1 at Osborne Farm: This half-mile slice of A.T. provides everyone an opportunity to enjoy green pastures and long-distance views of Holston and Iron mountains. (Iron Mountain Zone)

Appalachian National Scenic Trail #1 on Roan Mountain: Hike less than a mile from Carvers Gap and find yourself on top of the world with incredible panoramic views and a series of grassy balds. (Roan Mountain Zone)

Got a horse? Ride networks of designated horse trails and backcountry roads in the Starr Mountain, Citico Creek, French Broad River and Holston Mountain recreation zones. Set up a base camp at Lost Corral Horse Camp near Hiwassee River (Starr Mountain Zone) or Young Branch Horse Camp off Citico Creek Road #35-1. (Citico Creek Zone)

Want a mountain bike adventure? Tanasi Mountain Bike Trail Complex based at Ocoee Whitewater Center offers more than 30 miles of trails for beginners to advanced riders. Camp nearby so you have another day to tackle Chilhowee Mountain Bike Trail Complex. (Ocoee River Zone)

Nationally Designated Trails

Trails have always been a part of the American landscape, providing connections between people, land, history and culture. The five nationally designated trails in the Cherokee National Forest commemorate the visions of forward-thinking planners and naturalists. They provide the chance to walk on narrow footpaths in remote mountain regions and give glimpses into sites steeped in the history of a developing frontier.

Appalachian National Scenic Trail: Known as the A.T., this trail is the most famous of Cherokee National Forest's five nationally designated trails. It began as a grand vision in 1921, proposed by planner-forester Benton McKaye as "an experiment in regional planning."

Today it is an internationally renowned footpath that extends 2,167 miles from Maine to Georgia. With the passage of the National Trails System Act in 1968, the A.T. became the nation's first National Scenic Trail. In 1999, it was named one of 16 National Millennium Trails.

This long distance hiking trail is managed cooperatively between the Forest Service, National Park Service, Appalachian Trail Conservancy and local trail maintaining clubs. Two clubs, Carolina Mountain Club and Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoe Club, maintain more than 150 miles that traverse the Cherokee National Forest's northern districts along the border of Tennessee and North Carolina. (Northern Districts) For additional information, see www.nps.gov/appa/; www.appalachiantrail.org; www.tehcc.org/; www.carolinamtnclub.com/.

Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail: This trail commemorates the military successes of the Overmountain Men during America's Revolutionary War. On September 25, 1780, more than 1,000 citizen soldiers mustered at Sycamore Shoals near present-day Elizabethton, Tennessee. The trail traces the route of the patriot militia as they traveled south to defeat the British army at Kings Mountain in 1780. Two hundred years after the decisive battle, the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail was designated the first National Historic Trail in the eastern United States. Visitors can hike portions of the historic route or follow the motor route through scenic countryside. (Roan Mountain Zone) For

additional information, see www.ovta.org or www.nps.gov/ovvi.

John Muir National Recreation Trail: This trail is named after the noted conservationist and naturalist who tramped through Tennessee and Kentucky on a thousand-mile walk to the Gulf of Mexico. In 1867, he rambled through southeast Tennessee and later recorded his thoughts about the Unaka Mountains and Hiwassee River. Most of the 20-mile trail follows Hiwassee State Scenic River between Reliance and Farner, Tenn. It was designated as a National Recreation Trail in 1979. (Hiwassee River Zone)

Warriors Passage National Recreation Trail: This trail overlays part of an historic route used by British soldiers and Cherokee Indians during the 18th and 19th centuries. Surveyor George Hunter mapped locations of Cherokee Indian towns along the travelway in 1730. Two decades later, British soldiers traveled the route to construct and occupy Fort Loudoun. In 1797, surveyors marking the boundary between the Cherokee Nation and the new state of Tennessee documented the historic route. Warriors Passage Trail was recognized as a National Recreation Trail in 1979. Woodlands surrounding the trail were infested by the Southern Pine Beetle in the late 1990s and downed trees have caused the trail to slip into obscurity. However, there is interest in linking this historic route with Unicoi Turnpike National Millennium Trail. (Coker Creek Zone, Tellico River Zone)

Unicoi Turnpike National Millennium Trail: This trail has existed for more than a thousand years. Used by Native Americans to hunt, trade and settle the territory, the travelway became an important trading route between seaports on the Carolina coast and Cherokee lands in eastern Tennessee. In the late 1830s, the turnpike became the first leg of the 1,100-mile Trail of Tears, relocating Cherokees from their eastern lands to reservations in Oklahoma. The historic route with segments on four national forests became one of 16 trails designated as National Millennium Trails in 1999. (Coker Creek Zone) For additional information, see www.tennesseeoverhill.com/.



Photo by Murray Lee

Trails to the Future

The vision for Cherokee National Forest trails is to develop a public trail system where all trails work together to provide a diverse range of popular and sustainable recreation opportunities.

This vision includes you and trail users of tomorrow. Get involved. Volunteer with groups that support trails on national forests: the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Benton MacKaye Trail Association, Back Country Horsemen of East Tennessee, Carolina Mountain Club, International Mountain Bicycling Association, Southern Appalachian Back Country Horsemen, Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoe Club and dedicated local trail clubs.






Forest Recreation Zones










Wondering where to go in the forest? To plan your trip, check out the featured activities and unique settings in each of the 15 recreation zones described below and arranged geographically from south to north. Also check the maps on pages 8-10 for orientation.





Southern Districts




   **Big Frog Mountain Zone:** This zone is known for solitude and backcountry adventure. Managed as a black bear reserve, Big Frog Mountain is a destination for hiking and hunting. Try snorkeling at Conasauga River, renowned for remarkable fish viewing. Pitch a tent at Tumbling Creek and Sylco Campgrounds.





    **Ocoee River Zone:** Local outfitters offer rafting excursions in Ocoee River's world class whitewater. Ocoee Whitewater Center is a hub for outdoor adventure and offers regional information, environmental education, trails and picnic sites. Bike the 30-mile Tanasi Trail complex and trails at Chilhowee Recreation Area or take a scenic drive along the Ocoee Scenic Byway (US 64 and Forest Road 77). Camp at Parksville and Thunder Rock Campgrounds and Chilhowee Recreation Area.




   **Hiwassee River Zone:** Forested hillsides and pastoral river bottoms complement the beauty of Hiwassee River Gorge. Fishing, rafting, canoeing and hiking are popular activities. A three-mile section of the river, between Big Bend and

the L&N railroad bridge, is designated as a quality trout fishing area. The 21-mile John Muir National Recreation Trail #152, a section of the longer distance Benton MacKaye Trail, meanders along the river. Camp at Quinn Springs Campground, located near the river on TN 30 or the nearby state campground at Gee Creek.



  **Starr Mountain Zone:** Along the extensive system of backcountry roads and trails, view this zone's scenic mountain streams and Gee Creek Wilderness. Camp with your horse at Lost Corral Campground, located on the edge of the 30-mile horse-trail complex. Sight your firearm at Spring Creek Shooting Range.





   **Coker Creek Zone:** Looking for a cultural heritage excursion? Pan for gold in the community of Coker Creek. Hike a portion of the Unicoi Turnpike, an ancient travel route once part of the Trail of Tears and now a nationally designated Flagship Millennium Trail. Visit the waterfalls in Coker Creek Scenic Area and drive along Hiwassee Scenic River on TN 68. Camp at Indian Boundary Recreation Area located off Cherohala Skyway, TN 165/NC 143.





    **Tellico River Zone:** Nearly 30,000 acres of remote backcountry surround three rivers and their tributaries, where fishing for brown, rainbow and brook trout is excellent. Cherohala Skyway (TN 165/NC143), a 43-mile National Scenic Byway, winds between Tellico Plains, Tenn. and Robbinsville, N.C. Tellico River Road (FR 210) offers intimate views of the river and 90-foot Bald River Falls. Spend the night at the historic Donley Cabin and check out CCC structures at Tellico Ranger Station and Dam Creek Picnic Area. Hike across the zone on Benton MacKaye Trail. Camp at sites along Tellico River or in Indian Boundary Recreation Area just off Cherohala Skyway.

   **Citico Creek Zone:** With more than 20,000 acres of Wilderness in Citico Creek and Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock areas, this zone provides ample opportunities for solitude and backcountry experiences. Catch both native and stocked trout in Citico Creek and its rugged tributaries, and fish for small-mouth bass and catfish in the creek's lower reaches. Young Branch Horse Camp is the hub for Little Citico Horse Trail Complex.





Northern Districts





  **Pigeon River Zone:** Lying between the French Broad and Pigeon Rivers, this zone is the setting for Catherine Marshall's novel "Christy" and home to "Rocky Top." Drive along scenic Foothills Parkway to Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Take a whitewater rafting adventure with local outfitters or hike the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (A.T.). The nearest campgrounds are Round Mountain, a primitive, high elevation campground located on TN 107 near Max Patch and Big Creek in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.





    **French Broad River Zone:** Forest roads and the 40-mile Brush Creek Mountain/Meadow Creek Mountain horse trail complex link wooded mountainsides and creek gorges and the namesake river winds boldly along the zone's southern edge. Enjoy the scenery at Allen Branch and Paint Creek Ponds, Weaver's Bend and along Brush Creek. Trek to Paint Creek for fishing, wading and picnicking. Camp at Paint Creek Campground nestled in the bend of the creek.

    **Bald Mountain Zone:** A study in contrasts, the geography in this zone ranges from gently rolling valleys to steep, rugged slopes and high elevation balds. Look for wildflowers and waterfalls, including Margarette Falls and Sill Branch Falls. Try fishing Nolichucky River, Horse Creek, Dry




Creek and Clark Creek. Most of the zone is remote backcountry; roads are limited, but more than 40 miles of trail access the forest interior. Horse Creek and Old Forge Recreation Areas offer picnicking, water play, and camping.




    **Unaka Mountain Zone:** Hike the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, take a scenic drive, or raft the Nolichucky River for intimate views of the zone's tall mountains, high elevation balds and scenic waters. Look for Pinnacle Mountain fire tower located on the crest of Buffalo Mountain. The zone is rich with Civilian Conservation Corps history: view their legacy at Laurels, Rock Creek and Unaka Mountain Road. Picnic at Laurels, Limestone Cove, Rock Creek and Chestoa and camp at Rock Creek.

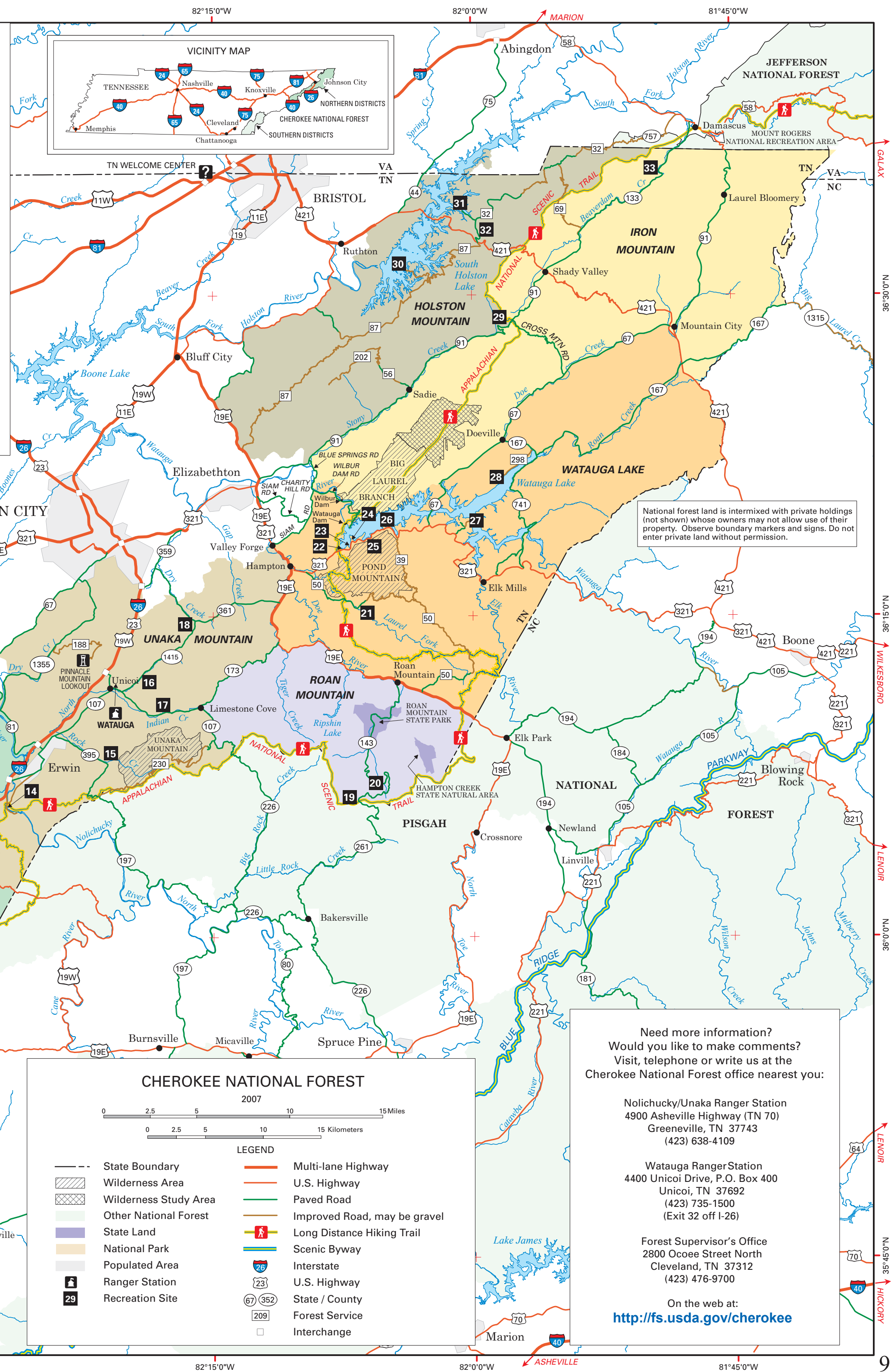
    **Roan Mountain Zone:** The zone's steep rugged mountainsides and hollows are richly diverse, home to plants and animals not found anywhere else in the world. Look for rock outcrops, lush wildflower displays and high-elevation mountain balds and spruce-fir forests. Hike for one day or several on the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. The nearest campground is at Roan Mountain State Park.

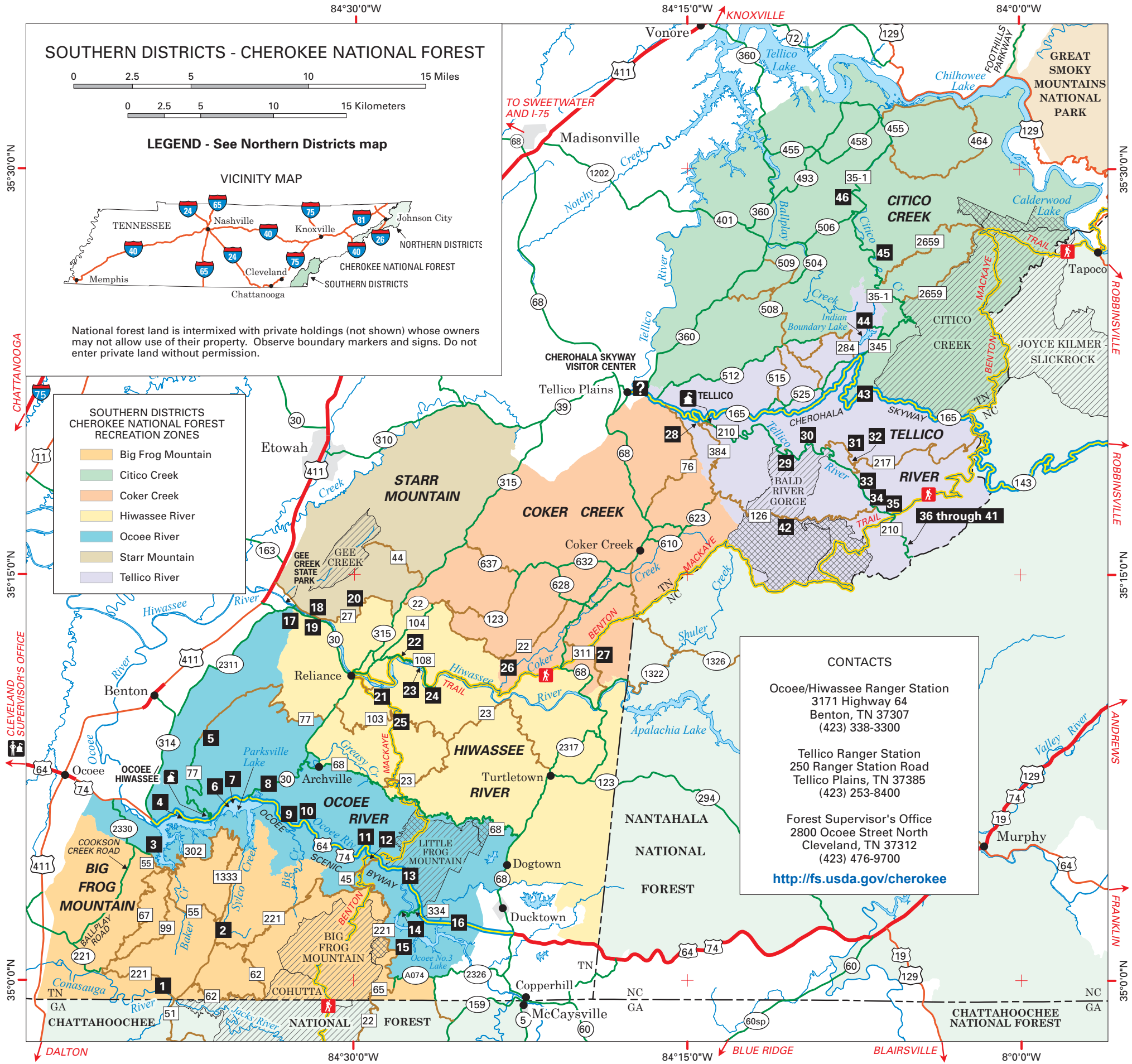
    **Watauga Lake Zone:** Water is abundant in this zone that features Watauga Lake; the Doe, Elk and

Watauga rivers; several streams and seven waterfalls. Highly developed recreation areas along Watauga Lake provide facilities for fishing, picnicking, swimming, and boat launching. The Appalachian National Scenic Trail runs through the zone's backcountry. Camp on the lake shore at Cardens Bluff or in the backcountry along Laurel Fork Creek at Dennis Cove.

   **Iron Mountain Zone:** Rugged mountain solitude is featured throughout this zone. The Osborne Farm offers a panoramic view of the surrounding mountains from the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (A.T.). From there, take a multi-day backpack trip along the A.T. and Iron Mountain Trail #54. Try your hand at trout fishing in Beaverdam and Laurel creeks. Camp at Backbone Rock Recreation Area and explore what is known locally as the shortest tunnel in the world.

   **Holston Mountain Zone:** The namesake mountain provides a scenic backdrop for South Holston Lake, venue for boating, water skiing, swimming and fishing. A horse trail complex winds for more than 30 miles along both sides of Holston Mountain. Look for scenic Blue Hole waterfall off TN 91. Camp on the lake shore at Jacobs Creek and Little Oak recreation areas.





SOUTHERN DISTRICTS - CHEROKEE NATIONAL FOREST		
SITE NUMBER AND NAME		FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES
1	Conasauga River Corridor	
2	Sylco	
3	Kings Slough Launch	
4	Parkville Beach	
5	Chilhowee	
6	Parkville Launches	
7	Mac Point Beach	
8	Parkville Lake	
9	Big Creek Launch	
10	Caney Creek Launch	
11	Rogers Branch Launch	
12	Thunder Rock	
13	Ocoee Whitewater Center	
14	Upper Put-In	
15	Tumbling Creek	
16	Ocoee Scenic Byway	
17	Quinn Springs	
18	Lost Corral	
19	Hiwassee River	
20	Spring Creek Range	
21	Reliance Launch (State)	
22	Hiwassee River Gorge	
23	Towee Creek Launch	

SITE NUMBER AND NAME		FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES
24	Apalachia Powerhouse Launch	
25	Lost Creek	
26	Coker Creek Falls	
27	Buck Bald	
28	Oosterneck	
29	Bald River Falls	
30	Tellico River Corridor	
31	McNabb Creek	Reservations required
32	North River	
33	Sourwood	
34	Spivey Cove	
35	Pheasant Field & Fish Hatchery	
36	Birch Branch	
37	Davis Branch	
38	Holder Cove	
39	Big Oak Cove	
40	Rough Ridge	
41	State Line	
42	Holly Flats	
43	Cherohala Skyway	
44	Indian Boundary	
45	Jake Best	
46	Young Branch	Reservations required

Camping

Sleep under the stars. Create memories that last a lifetime. Gather your friends and family around a campfire, feast on toasted marshmallows, gaze into a starlit sky, be lulled to sleep by a babbling creek. You will never forget the experience of camping in the Cherokee National Forest.

More than 30 developed campgrounds in the Cherokee National Forest offer a wide range of outdoor settings and site amenities. If you prefer more amenities, try camping in one of the larger developed recreation areas.

Chilhowee Recreation Area: This large campground is located off Ocoee Scenic Byway, 7 miles from US 64. The campground offers more than 80 campsites, electric hook-ups, RV sites, tent only sites, multiple bathhouses, a 7-acre lake for swimming and fishing, a hiking trail to Benton Falls and miles of mountain bike trails. (Ocoee River Zone)



Indian Boundary Recreation Area: This large campground is located off Cherohala Skyway. The campground offers more than 90 campsites; electric hook-ups; RV sites; multiple bathhouses; a seasonal camp store; a 96-acre lake for swimming, boating and fishing and a 3-mile lakeside trail for hiking and biking. Reservations are recommended. (Tellico River Zone)

Rock Creek Recreation Area: This campground is located near Erwin, Tenn., off Interstate 26. The campground offers more than 30 campsites, electric hook-ups, RV sites, double sites, walk-in tent sites, multiple bathhouses, a creek-fed swimming pool, seasonal campfire programs and a rugged hiking trail into Unaka

Mountain Wilderness and Rock Creek Falls. (Unaka Mountain Zone)

Cardens Bluff Campground and Little Oak Recreation Area: Do you prefer a campsite near a large lake? Pitch a tent at Cardens Bluff Campground on Watauga Lake (Watauga Lake Zone) or Little Oak Recreation Area on the banks of South Holston Lake (Holston Mountain Zone). Both campgrounds offer developed lakeside campsites and bathhouse facilities. Boat ramps are located at Rat Branch near Cardens Bluff and at Little Oak.



Lost Corral and Young Branch Campgrounds: Try these two small campgrounds if you are looking for a place to camp with your horse. (Starr Mountain Zone, Citico Creek Zone)

Paint Creek and Tellico River Campgrounds: Want to start catching trout at the crack of dawn? Set up camp at Paint Creek (French Broad River Zone) or one of the several developed campgrounds along the banks of Tellico River and its tributaries. (Tellico River Zone)

For visitors wanting to get away from it all, dispersed camping outside of developed campgrounds is allowed throughout Cherokee National Forest unless posted otherwise. Camping is not allowed within 100 feet of water, trails, trailhead parking lots and developed recreation areas. Dispersed camping is free and no permits are required.

Planning Ahead

- At most campgrounds, sites are available on a first come, first served basis. Reservations for Indian Boundary Campground and others are available at www.recreation.gov or by calling (877) 444-6777.
- You must occupy your campsite the first night.
- Stays are limited to 14 days.
- Quiet hours are between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. Entrance gates to many campgrounds are locked during these hours.
- Single campsites generally accommodate up to 5 people and 2 vehicles (including your camping unit). Campsites that accommodate more people are available in some campgrounds.
- Pets must be leashed, under control and inside the designated campsite.
- Most campgrounds in the Cherokee National Forest follow a policy of no alcoholic beverages.
- Select a place to camp away from overhanging branches.
- Keep it natural ... leave natural areas the way you find them. Don't carve, chop, cut or damage live trees.
- Control your campfire and make sure it is dead out when you leave.
- Leave your campsite a little cleaner than you found it. The next visitor will thank you.



Bear Awareness

- Never leave food or coolers unattended. Store food in your locked vehicle or hard-sided camper. Never store food or scented items in your tent.
- Clean up cooking and eating areas as soon as you have finished. Don't leave food out or leave scraps around your site.
- Don't burn garbage or food scraps or pour cooking grease in the grill or fire ring.
- Don't let trash accumulate at your site.
- Use the area's trash cans or store trash in your locked vehicle or hard-sided camper.
- Clean your site before you leave the picnic area or campground; wipe off your table, clean out the fire ring and take away your trash.

If a bear approaches your site:

- Pack up food and trash.

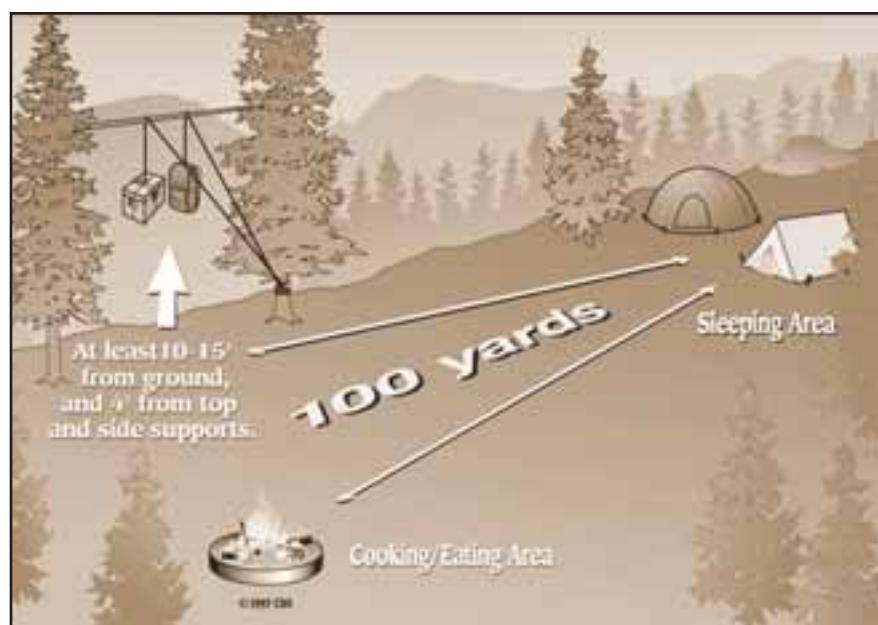
- Scare the animal away with loud shouts, by banging pots and pans together or throwing sticks or rocks at it.
- If the bear is persistent, move away slowly, facing the bear.

• Head for your vehicle or another secure area.

While camping in the backcountry:

- Avoid camping near berry patches and animal trails.
- Always separate your sleeping area from food preparation, storage and eating areas. Maintain a clear view of food storage and preparation areas from your tent so you can monitor for bears attracted to your meals.

- One hundred yards is a guideline. This recommended distance is more easily applied in open fields and forest than in terrain with thick rhododendron cover.





Viewing Tips

- Dusk and dawn are usually good bets for wildlife viewing.
- Wear natural colors and unscented lotions.
- Make yourself as small and unassuming as possible, move slow and steady, and avert your gaze.
- Use binoculars or zoom lenses to catch a close-up view.
- Make “mule” ears, cupping your hands around the backs of your ears to amplify sounds.
- Look above and below you. Animals occupy niches in all the layers of a habitat.

Safety Tips

Personal Safety

- Always let someone know where you’re going.
- Dress for changing weather conditions; dress in layers and bring rain gear.
- Plan your route and take a map and compass.
- Bring drinking water and a snack.
- Observe your surroundings and the people you meet on the trail.

Hazardous Trees

- Beware of limbs and damaged trees that may fall at any time especially when it’s windy.
- Select a place to picnic or rest away from overhanging branches.

Woodland Hazards

- Poison Ivy. Remember, “leaves of three, let it be.”
- Ticks. Wear light colors, long sleeve shirt and pants tucked into your socks. Use insect repellent. Check for ticks after every trip in the woods.

Bear Awareness

- Travel during daylight hours and stay on the trail.
- Watch for bear signs, including claw marks on trees, tracks and droppings.
- Travel in a group, stay close together and keep children close at hand.
- Teach your children and other companions what to do if they encounter a bear.
- Make your presence known – for example, call out – to avoid a surprise encounter.
- Leave your pet at home or keep it on a leash and under control. Pets can agitate bears and attract them to you.

Nature Viewing

Conasauga River Fish Viewing: For an unusual viewing experience, try viewing fish in the Conasauga River. Slip on a mask and snorkel and swim slowly in the still, deep pools or scan the shallows. You’ll find a variety of fish and maybe a turtle in their natural habitat along this stretch of Conasauga State Scenic River. Always wear a personal floatation device and snorkel with a partner. Conasauga Trail #61 parallels the river. (Big Frog Mountain Zone)

Hiwassee State Scenic River and John Muir National Recreation Trail #152 (Benton McKaye Trail #2): To view wading birds as they search for food in pools along the river’s edge, float this scenic river or hike the John Muir Trail. Look for hummingbirds feasting on jewelweed and other summer-blooming flowers. (Hiwassee River Zone)

Tellico Auto Loop: Climb from 1,000 to 5,000 feet on TN 165 (Cherochala Skyway) and forest roads 210 and 217 past Wilderness, managed forests and a black bear sanctuary. Look for red-breasted nuthatch, rose-breasted grosbeak, Blackburnian warbler, veery, winter wren and other birds. You may spot an occasional bear, boar, red squirrel, eastern chipmunk or a red or gray fox. (Tellico River Zone)

Roan’s Highlands: Wind-blown grassy balds, misty forests and rhododendron gardens provide unique high-elevation habitats for plants and animals. Look for more than 150 species of birds including chestnut sided warblers, saw-whet owls, pine siskins and alder flycatchers. Try to spot a cottontail rabbit or Northern flying squirrel and listen for the red squirrel’s scolding trill. Hike on Appalachian National Scenic Trail #1 or take Forest



Road 130 to Rhododendron Gardens in the Pisgah National Forest. (Roan Mountain Zone)

Berry Fields: Interested in wildflowers and butterflies or maybe a bog? Hike a mile on Appalachian National Scenic Trail #1 south of US 421 near Shady Valley to Berry Fields. In late summer the area is filled with Queen Anne’s lace, milkweed, and ironweed, along with butterflies like Aphrodite fritillaries and Monarchs. All summer you can catch glimpses of Indigo buntings and goldfinches; other times you might view Chipping and Field Sparrows, wild turkey and grouse. The half-acre bog is filled with large ferns. (Holston Mountain Zone)

Fall Bird Banding Projects: Each September, volunteers with the Tennessee Ornithological Society set up special nets on high mountain peaks to examine birds travelling south to Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America for the winter. Banding projects are open to the public at Roan Mountain (Roan Mountain Zone), Big Bald (Unaka Mountain Zone) and Haw Knob (Tellico River Zone). For more information, contact the Eastern Tennessee chapters of the Tennessee Ornithological Society.

Hunting and Fishing

The rugged mountains, limited development and diverse habitats along Tennessee’s eastern border make an ideal home for a variety of wildlife. Wild turkey, ruffed grouse, white-tailed deer, black bear, wild boar, squirrel and raccoon can be found throughout the Cherokee National Forest. As a Wildlife Management Area, cooperatively managed, the Forest Service is responsible for wildlife habitat and Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) sets game and fish seasons, bag limits and license and permit requirements.

- A valid Tennessee hunting license is required; other permits may be required depending on game species.
- Most of the Cherokee National Forest is open for hunting within legal seasons.
- Bear reserves are closed to bear hunting and to hunting wild boar with dogs.
- Recreation areas and administrative sites are closed to hunting.
- It is illegal to shoot any firearm across or from roads or vehicles.
- Pay close attention to property boundaries.

Sight your firearm:

- Spring Creek Shooting Range (Starr Mountain Zone)
- Bubbling Springs Shooting Range (French Broad River Zone)
- Sciota Shooting Range (Unaka Mountain Zone)
- Pond Mountain Shooting Range (Watauga Lake Zone)
- Jacobs Creek Shooting Range (Holston Mountain Zone)

Anglers interested in boat fishing for bass, stripers and other warm-water fish will find the many Tennessee Valley Authority reservoirs excellent. Cold-water trout fisheries are managed below many of the reservoirs.



Stocked trout streams provide opportunities for anglers who catch and release as well as those who wish to harvest trout for consumption. Rainbow trout averaging 8 to 12 inches are stocked in many streams, typically between March and September. The most popular stocked trout streams include Tellico River, Citico Creek, Paint Creek and Beaverdam Creek. Wild trout, rainbow, brown and native brookies are present in most of the mountain streams above 1000 feet in elevation.

Tennessee Hunting and Trapping Guide provides complete information and details regarding seasons, limits, licenses and permits. These guides are available at TWRA offices, Forest Service offices and many sporting goods outlets.

Contact TWRA:

- Polk, McMinn and Monroe counties: Region III in Crossville, (800) 262-6704
- All other Cherokee National Forest counties: Region IV in Morristown, (800) 332-0900

Report game violations:

- Polk, McMinn and Monroe counties: Region III, (800) 241-0767
- All other Cherokee National Forest counties: Region IV, (800) 831-1174

The Southern Appalachian Frontier

Up until the time of the Revolutionary War, most of the continent's Euro-American population lived within 100 miles of the Atlantic or Gulf coasts. The Appalachian Mountains created a challenging barrier that, for many years, delayed expansion into the nation's interior. Well before any European ever set foot on the North American continent, the primary path across the Southern Appalachians was the route known today as the Unicoi Turnpike.



Timberlake's map of 1762

Winding through the mountains' lowest gaps and passes, this travelway connected the principal Cherokee settlements located between the Savannah River Valley in South Carolina and southeast Tennessee. This passageway was the main route used by early explorers, beginning with the conquistadors led by De Soto in 1540. Later Spanish, French and English traders followed the same path to barter with the Indians for deer skins and furs. Before the Revolutionary War, the Cherokee and colonists used this overmountain trail as a diplomatic and military link between Cherokee settlements and the British headquarters in Charleston, S.C.

By 1775, settlers began to infiltrate the heartland of the Cherokee people. The first significant non-military settlements on the western side of the Appalachians were Sycamore Shoals and Carter's Valley in northeast Tennessee. With the influx of people, territorial wars between the Cherokee and settlers began in earnest and continued throughout the Great Valley of Tennessee until the mid 1790s. The Cherokee's lands began to shrink as they were pushed south down the Tennessee Valley. At the same time, the young United States government established "federal roads" for access into frontier settlements.

Accompanying these settlements were protective fortifications called blockhouses or stations. The blockhouse at the mouth of Paint Creek on the French Broad River protected settlers who took the Greenville Road between Warm Springs (now Hot Springs, North Carolina) and Greenville, Tennessee. The fortification also prevented settlers from fording the river into the lands of the Cherokee Nation. Another blockhouse, Camp Armistead, was located on the Unicoi Turnpike near Coker Creek. It was established in the early 1830s to keep gold-seekers out of the Cherokee Nation. A few years later, it was used as a military base during the Cherokee removal along the Trail of Tears.



Chilhowee Mountain gazebo, summer, 1942

The Spirit of the CCC

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was created during the Great Depression of the 1930s to restore natural resources and improve public lands while providing work for the unemployed.

Sometimes called Roosevelt's Tree Army, the CCC revitalized land suffering from poor farming practices and overlogging. In Tennessee and many other states, the CCC built the first state parks. In the Cherokee National Forest, they built recreation areas, fire roads, ranger stations and other facilities and assisted with fire control.

The CCC's work is dispersed throughout the forest. Here are some places where you can view the products of their labors:

- Backbone Rock picnic pavilions and trail rockwork (Iron Mountain Zone)
- The Laurels picnic pavilions and Rock Creek bathhouse and pool (Unaka Mountain Zone)
- Horse Creek picnic pavilion (Bald Mountain Zone)
- Dam Creek picnic area (Tellico River Zone)
- Tellico Ranger Station complex (Tellico River Zone)
- Chilhowee Mountain Gazebo, Forest Road 77 on Ocoee Scenic Byway (Ocoee River Zone)

Donley Cabin

The year was 1861. Jack Donley was trying to evade serving in the Confederate Army, so he constructed a small cabin deep in the mountains of southeast Tennessee. Like many Southern mountaineers during the 19th century, he squatted on property that suited him, built a dwelling and grew corn and other crops.

Sometime after the War, Donley moved to Montana where he met and married an Indian woman. He later moved back to the upper Tellico River area with his bride. Donley died in the 1940s, asking in his final days to "be carried back across the river" to his old homestead. He is buried in the Coppinger Cemetery in Tellico Plains.

In 1916, 50,000 acres in the North, Bald and Tellico River drainages were purchased by the Babcock Lumber Company and aggressively logged for several years. Seven years later, this entire acreage, including Donley's log cabin, was purchased by the Forest Service. During most of the 20th century, a family was permitted to use the cabin as a summer residence and apiary for producing honey.

Donley's classic double pen cabin uniquely combines English, Germanic and Swiss chalet-type architectural influences. These are types of log construction found in the Southern Appalachians, but not often combined. The historic hand-hewn log cabin was rehabilitated by the Forest Service in 1993.



Looking for a unique place to stay? The Donley cabin is still primitive, with no running water or electricity. Visits from mice and other wildlife are not uncommon. Inside there is a full size metal bed (with plywood as a base for visitor's bedding), two bunk beds and kitchen table with chairs. Rocking chairs on the front porch provide the perfect stage to enjoy the secluded setting. The outhouse is just steps away. Wood for the fireplace and outside grill can be gathered in the nearby forest. The parking area is a quarter-mile walk from the cabin and includes a log foot bridge across North River.

Donley Cabin can be reserved for \$35 per night through www.recreation.gov or by calling (877) 444-6777. There is a six-person limit for up to three consecutive nights. The cabin is available year round, but fall months are the most popular. (Tellico River Zone)



1940s picnic site at Rock Creek

Bear Awareness

The black bear is a symbol of invaluable wild qualities in the Southern Appalachian Mountains. About 1,500 black bears call the Cherokee National Forest home. Numbers of bears have increased dramatically over the past 30 years due to extensive management of their habitat. At the same time, forest visitations have increased to 2.5 million annually. With more bears and more people, the chances of encountering a bear during your forest visit are increasing.

By following these steps, you can promote bear conservation and help ensure your safety. Tell others so they, too, can become bear aware.

If you see a black bear:

- Never approach, surround, corner or feed it.
- Stay back; maintain a responsible distance.
- Group together; keep children and pets close at hand.
- Pick up small children.

If a black bear approaches or follows you:

- Try altering your route.
- Do not run. Face and watch the animal and back away slowly.
- If the animal continues to approach, stand your ground.
- Try to scare the bear away by shouting and acting aggressively.
- Make yourself look as large as possible. Raise your arms, hold equipment over your head or slowly move to higher ground.

In the very unlikely event that a black bear attacks:

- Fight back with anything available, using everything in your power.
- "Playing dead" is not appropriate.

Promptly report bears that are injured, appear unafraid of people, feed on trash or cause property damage to TWRA.



- In Polk, McMinn and Monroe counties (generally, Southern Districts): Region III, Crossville, call (800) 262-6704.
- In all other Cherokee National Forest counties: Region IV, Morristown, call (800) 332-0900.

Be alert for bears, respect them and expect the unexpected.

Forest Monitoring

What lives in the forest? What effect does forest management have on its inhabitants? To answer these questions, resource managers are constantly checking up on nature, inventorying and monitoring the forest's populations of fish, wildlife and plants.

Botanists roam through the forests identifying all the plants from the tiniest mosses to the tallest trees. Biologists and technicians work all sorts of odd hours combing the woods looking for critters. During the spring, they head out before dawn to listen for the songs of breeding birds. In the summer, they set up nets in the dark of night to catch bats feeding in an area. They can be found digging in leaves, turning over logs, looking for snails and salamanders. Occasionally they set live traps to learn about rodents that scurry through the forest. They strap on waders or don masks and snorkels to explore streams and rivers to get up-close views of the underwater world, search for mussels and check for water quality.



While inventorying plants and animals, resource managers also catalog the habitats where they are found. These habitats include aspects of elevation, moisture, sunlight, and shelter like rocks and logs. These features, along with all the associated plants and animals, make up communities. Identifying all the species and communities, especially rare ones, helps ensure that their viability is maintained when forest management activities occur.

Biologists and botanists return to some sites year after year to monitor species' populations, often working with other agencies and universities. The information gathered from these check-ups helps them learn about the forces that influence those populations. The on-site research, checking up on nature, helps to better manage and protect the forest's species and communities.



Wilderness Areas

- A place to find solitude and a primitive unconfined experience away from sight and sound of other humans
- A place to face the challenge of being entirely self-sufficient in a primitive environment
- A place to rely on primitive transportation, generally foot travel
- A place where map and compass skills are necessary

The 1964 National Wilderness Preservation Act designated portions of federally owned land as Wilderness. By law, these lands are affected primarily by the forces of nature, where natural biological and physical processes are allowed to proceed with little or no human intervention and humans are considered "visitors." Ten percent of the Cherokee National Forest's land base – more than 66,000 acres – is Congressionally designated Wilderness, including:

Name	Acres	Recreation Zone
Bald River Gorge	3,721	(Tellico River)
Big Frog	7,993	(Big Frog Mountain)
Big Laurel Branch	6,332	(Iron Mountain)
Citico Creek	16,226	(Citico Creek)
Cohutta*	1,709	(Big Frog Mountain)
Gee Creek	2,493	(Starr Mountain)
Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock*	3,832	(Citico Creek)
Little Frog Mtn.	4,666	(Ocoee River)
Pond Mountain	6,929	(Watauga Lake)
Sampson Mountain	7,992	(Bald Mountain)
Unaka Mountain	4,496	(Unaka Mountain)
*Cherokee section		



In the Cherokee National Forest, an additional 20,537 acres are managed to protect primitive wilderness characteristics. These Wilderness Study Areas include additions to Big Frog (365 acres), Big Laurel Branch (5,589 acres), Joyce Kilmer/Slickrock (1,425 acres), Little Frog (977 acres), Sampson Mountain (3,069 acres) and a free-standing portion called Upper Bald River (9,112 acres).

No motorized equipment or wheeled vehicles except wheelchairs are allowed in Wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas. Visiting a Wilderness requires a high degree of self-reliance. Trails are minimally maintained with a limited number of signs, trail blazes and footbridges. Group sizes are limited – six or fewer is best for minimum impact. Leave No Trace practices preserve an area's primitive character. (Read about Leave No Trace practices on page 16.) In the Cherokee National Forest, horses are permitted on a limited number of designated trails in Unaka Mountain, Citico Creek, Gee Creek and Big Frog Wildernesses.

Managing for a Healthy Forest

Under the “multiple-use sustained-yield” principle, national forests are managed for more than forest products. Along with timber harvesting, this includes an emphasis on soil conservation, water and air quality, wildlife and fish habitat and scenery values. Keeping these elements in harmony requires balancing environmental, social and economic needs and constantly adjusting for changing conditions.

Forest ecosystem health is one of the primary components of sustainable forest management. The most prevalent health concerns are due to:

- Threat of wildfires
- Invasion of exotic pests
- Interface between wild and urban lands
- Loss of biodiversity
- Changing ecological conditions

The innovative use of forest vegetation management tools is essential to restore many forest ecosystems to healthy conditions. Some tools currently used in the Cherokee National Forest include:

Thinning: Trees are selectively removed to reduce environmental stress on targeted tree species. This increases sunlight, nutrients and water to the remaining stand of trees. Increasing the vigor of these trees helps them combat insects, diseases and other environmental stresses.

Midstory Treatment: Many animals depend on nut- and fruit-bearing trees for food. To promote oak, hickory, cherry and other trees that produce wildlife food, small trees of other species are eliminated with herbicides, prescribed fire and/or by cutting. This treatment increases sunlight to the forest floor to encourage the desirable food-bearing species.

Regeneration: Harvesting all or most of an older portion of the forest enables a healthy new generation of trees to grow in its place. Sometimes a diseased or infected stand of trees is salvaged using this management tool. Across the landscape, this tool is used to create a diversity of forest ages and wildlife habitats.

Pesticides, Biological Controls and Herbicides: Chemicals and natural enemies can be used to help control or eliminate the spread of diseases and insects. Chemical herbicides are used to control competing or unwanted plants such as kudzu.

Prescribed Fire: Management ignited fire is used to achieve many objectives. This tool is sometimes used to “thin” the forest, providing more sunlight, water and nutrients to remaining trees. It is used to reduce the quantity of fallen trees, leaves or other materials that may fuel wildfires. Some species such as Table Mountain Pine even depend on fire to reproduce.



American Chestnut Tree Hybrids: The Forest Service is collaborating with The American Chestnut Foundation, University of Tennessee’s Tree Improvement Program and other partners to restore the American chestnut tree to Southern forest ecosystems. American chestnut hybrids have been planted in three national forests in the Southeast. The condition and growth of the trees are being closely monitored. The plantings represent a success story in the field of ecological restoration and reflect the power that partnerships can have in bringing a “mighty giant” back to its native region.

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA): This tiny insect from Asia attacks Eastern and Carolina Hemlock by piercing new growth, robbing the tree of vital nutrients and eventually killing it. You may witness these evergreen trees fading from the forest as this pest spreads throughout the Appalachian Mountains. To combat the infestation, chemical pesticides are being used. The photo below shows the injection of a pesticide into the soil around a hemlock tree.



The Cherokee National Forest has established conservation areas across the forest where small populations of hemlock will be treated and protected. Biological control methods (Asian predator beetles that feed on HWA) are being used experimentally but it is too early to know whether this treatment is effective.

Oak Decline: Drought, insects, old age and other factors lead to the slow decline and death of oaks. Individually these factors may not kill trees but together they are contributing to the decline of an important wildlife species. Thinning, regenerating stands, midstory treatments and prescribed fire are effective treatments to reduce understory competition and promote healthy oak trees.

Southern Pine Beetle: A severe outbreak of these pests between 1997 and 2003 affected 40,000 to 60,000 acres of the Cherokee National Forest. The impacts of this infestation are still noticeable. Prescribed fire and tree planting helps regenerate pine and hardwood stands and improve the health of remaining mature pine stands.

Invasive Plant and Animal Species: Invasives can spread at alarming rates, threatening the survival of native species. Invasives contribute to the decline of up to half of all endangered plants and animals and they are the single greatest cause of loss of biodiversity in the U.S. In the Cherokee National Forest, the gypsy moth, emerald ash borer, dogwood anthracnose, chestnut blight, kudzu, multiflora rose, autumn olive, tree-of-heaven and paulownia are major threats.

Each year millions of people visit the Cherokee National Forest, Tennessee’s largest tract of public land and only national forest. The 640,000-acre forest stretches from Chattanooga to Bristol. It is bisected by Great Smoky Mountains National Park and adjoins other national forests in Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia. It lies in the heart of the Southern Appalachian mountain range, one of the world’s most diverse areas.

Beginning in 1900 unregulated broad-scale timber harvesting ravaged the Southern Appalachians. In the 1920s almost 65 percent of the nation’s timber supply was harvested from these southern mountains. The National Forest System was created in the early 1900s as a conservation organization to restore the devastated watersheds. Within a few years, Congress passed two public acts, Weeks and Clarke-McNary, authorizing the federal government to purchase “forested, cut-over or denuded land.” The Cherokee and Unaka National Forests were chartered in 1920 from lands acquired as early as 1911 through these acts. The two were consolidated along state boundaries in 1936 forming the northern and southern districts of Cherokee National Forest.

Eight decades of sustainable forest management have resulted in healthy diverse forests. Today, the Cherokee National Forest provides outdoor recreation, wildlife and fish habitat, rugged backcountry, clean water, minerals, wood products and more.

The Forest Service motto, “caring for the land and serving people,” continues to require the dedication and hard work of a diverse and highly-skilled workforce. Cooperating agencies, partner groups, communities and individuals all work with the Forest Service to ensure resources are managed so future generations can enjoy their national forests.



...to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

Mission of the Forest Service

Q *Where can I get a hunting and fishing license?*

A Appropriate licenses and permits are required for hunting and fishing in the Cherokee National Forest. The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) issues hunting, fishing, sportsmen's and boat licenses. Licenses can be purchased from most sporting goods stores, boat docks, bait and tackle shops and convenience markets. Licenses can also be purchased online at <http://www.wildlifelicense.com/tn/>. Contact TWRA at (800) 332-0900 or (800) 262-6704.

Q *How do I get a permit to burn outdoors on my property?*

A From October 15 through May 15, the state of Tennessee requires burning permits for all open burning on private land. These permits are obtained from local Tennessee Division of Forestry offices at no cost to the landowner. Permits are usually valid for only one day. During times of high fire danger, permits are not issued and previously issued permits are temporarily suspended.

Q *How can I get a job with the Forest Service?*

A Vacancies for all federal jobs are listed online at www.usajobs.opm.gov by agency. Jobs with the Forest Service are listed under Department of Agriculture. The Forest Service employs people with a variety of skills and professions, including fire fighters, engineers, office managers, biologists, foresters, visitor information specialists, accountants, law enforcement officers, landscape architects and forestry technicians.

Q *Why are some forest roads gated?*

A All forest roads are open for horses, bicycles and foot travel unless otherwise posted. However, some forest roads are gated seasonally or permanently for resource protection. Seasonal closures usually occur during winter months. Roads may be temporarily closed without advance notice due to prescribed burning or emergencies such as floods, landslides or extreme fire danger. Some roads have been closed and seeded to provide forage and habitat for wildlife. Contact your nearest Forest Service office for specific road information.

Q *Where can I get a map or more information?*

A Maps, interpretive literature and nature-inspired items are available at Forest Service offices. See pages 8-10 for office locations and contact information.

Recreation Fees and Passes

More and more people recreate on national forests every year creating new challenges to provide quality recreation opportunities, meet visitor needs and protect natural resources. To help address these issues, the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act permits federal land management agencies to charge modest fees at developed recreation areas that meet specific criteria.

In the Cherokee National Forest, fees are collected at developed campgrounds, boat launches, swim areas, shooting ranges and the Ocoee Whitewater Center. Through this program 95 percent of your fees remain at the Cherokee National Forest to help repair, maintain and enhance recreation facilities, provide visitor services and conserve natural resources.

You can help determine how your fees are spent. What improvements would you like to see in your favorite area? Fill in the comment section of a fee envelope or notify the nearest Forest Service office.

Several recreation passes are honored at the Cherokee National Forest, as authorized by the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.

Cherokee National Forest Annual Pass for Day-Use Fee Areas: If you plan to visit these areas

frequently throughout the year, this pass can save you money and simplify fee payment. The pass entitles the holder to unlimited visits to day-use fee areas and expires December 31 of each year.

Golden Age and Golden Access Passports:

These passports are no longer issued, but will continue to be honored for the lifetime of the pass holder. These have been replaced by the passes described below:

America the Beautiful – The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass and Interagency Lifetime Passes (Senior or Access):

Like Golden Passports, these passes typically provide a cardholder with a 50 percent discount for overnight and day-use fees. There are exceptions in the Cherokee National Forest where the discount does not apply.

Interagency Annual Pass: If you plan to recreate in many different spots across the nation, this pass is worth considering. On the Cherokee National Forest, its use is limited to the Ocoee Whitewater Center.

Additional information is available and most passes are for sale at your nearest Forest Service office.



In early 2002 concerned citizens came together to form a coalition to support the Cherokee National Forest. This non-profit organization supports the Forest Service's efforts to promote resource management projects and activities that are designed to benefit both the public and our natural resources.

Some of the exciting things the partners are involved with include conservation education, natural resource interpretation, resource enhancement work and more.

The Partners of Cherokee National Forest mission is four-fold:

- To promote, conserve and enhance the ecological systems and the natural and cultural resources of the Cherokee National Forest
- To support educational, interpretive and research opportunities that increase public awareness and appreciation of the Cherokee National Forest
- To promote the mission of the Forest Service in caring for the land and serving people
- To assist the Forest Service in establishing and/or improving facilities and resources in the Cherokee National Forest

For more information about the partners, visit: www.partnersofthecherokee.org.

Leave No Trace

Enjoy your visit to the great outdoors, but travel and camp with care. Practice these Leave No Trace ethics:

- Plan ahead and prepare.
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
- Dispose of waste properly.
- Leave what you find.
- Minimize campfire impacts.
- Respect wildlife.
- Be considerate of other visitors.

For more on Leave No Trace, call (800) 332-4100 or visit the LNT website at www.lnt.org/.



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