

Cherokee National Forest

For all our visitors looking for outdoor adventures, the Cherokee National Forest is the place to go. It is the only National Forest in Tennessee and provides spaces for just about every outdoor activity you can imagine including [fishing](#), [hiking](#), [biking](#), [stargazing](#), [birdwatching](#), and even [gold panning](#)! For a full guide of everything you need to know, we recommend visiting the [Cherokee National Forest](#) website. Also check out the [Tennessee Overhill](#) website for additional information.

Landmarks In The Forest

Bald River Falls is closed to the public due to reconstruction of the bridge. Please check the [Forest Service](#) Facebook account for updates.

Bald River Falls is one of the major landmarks in the forest. You can enjoy the ninety-foot tall cascades from the bridge on FS Road 210 or close up on hiking trails. The waterfall is beautiful year round even in the Winter when the falls freeze over.

Indian Boundary Lake is another popular spot for visitors. The lake and surrounding forest include campgrounds, hiking trails, a fishing pier, boat launch, and a beach! Please check the [Forest Service website](#) for information on how to go camping by the lake.

The best way to get scenic views of the forest is the [Cherohala Skyway](#). The 42 mile long road connects Tellico Plains, TN to Robbinsville, NC and features several overlooks of the mountains and forests.

Not to be missed is the Holder Cove waterfall. To reach the waterfall, go to the Holder Cove Campground, and walk down the trail near the restrooms on the west side of the campground.

Wildlife

The Cherokee National Forest is home to a wide variety of species including black bears, coyotes, foxes, river otters, raccoons, skunks, and white-tailed deer. You can also find several species of birds and reptiles. Please be mindful when around the animals as the forest is their home and their space must be respected.

Forest Service Office

The local Forest Service office is at 250 Ranger Station Road, Tellico Plains and is open Monday to Friday from 08:00 AM to 04:30 PM. For any information about the forest, you can visit the office in person or call at 423-253-8400.

History

People have lived in these forests for ten thousand years with the Cherokee being the main civilization in this region for much of that time. In the 1770s, as Europeans arrived, the process of colonization began, forcing the Cherokee out of their homes, with the Trail of Tears beginning in 1838. Mining and lumber companies from the north moved into the region in the 1880s; in this time, 40% of all lumber in America came from this land. They purchased as much of the land as they could, but as soon as they extracted all the resources without any regulations, they moved west, leaving the locals impoverished. The land that

would become Cherokee National Forest was purchased by the federal government from private landowners following the passage of the Weeks Act in 1911. In 1934, a portion of these forests were established as the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Two years later, Franklin Delano Roosevelt had the forests to the north and south of the national park turned into the Cherokee National Forest.