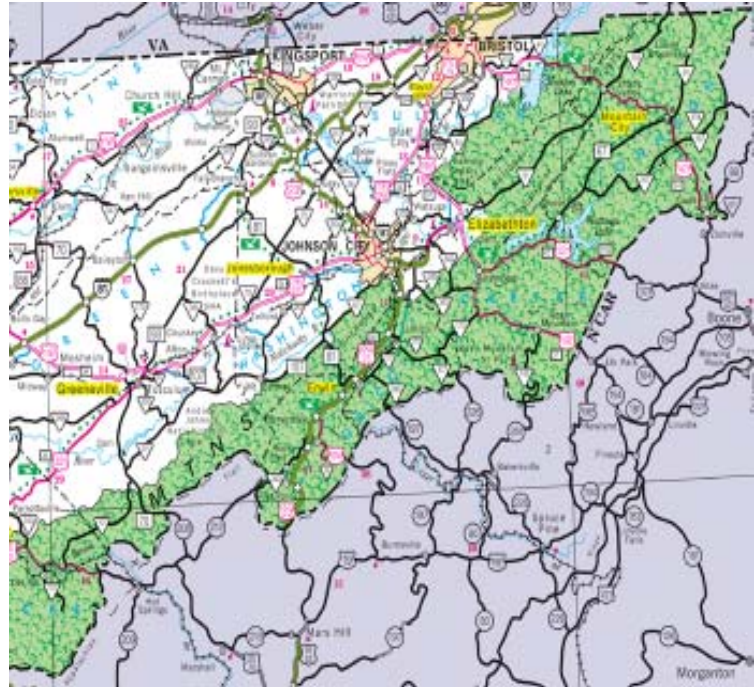


Cherokee National Forest



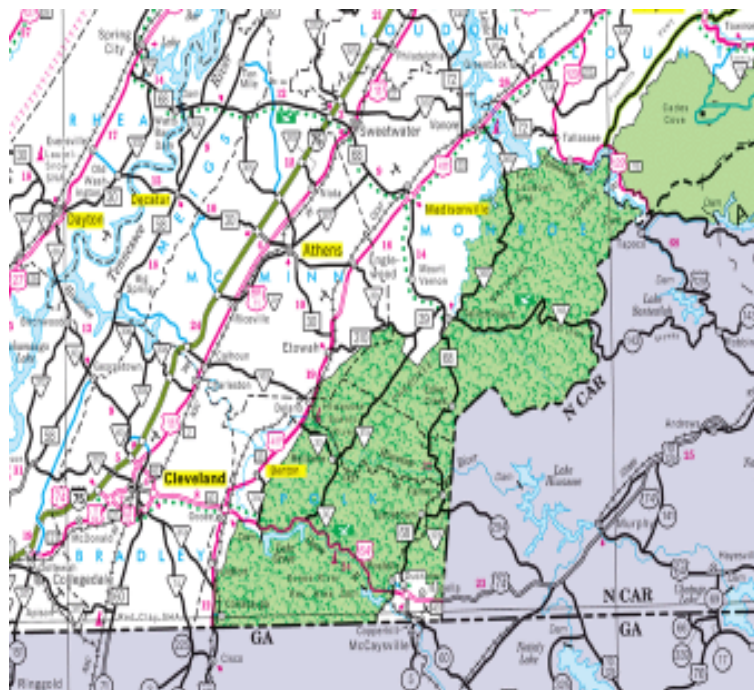
Northern Districts



Background

The Cherokee National Forest was established under the Weeks Act in the early 1900's. This forest encompasses 633,000 acres of wild lands, and ten percent of the forest has been designated as wilderness by the federal government. This allows for excellent recreation opportunities such as backpacking, hiking, canoeing, whitewater rafting, and mountain biking. The Cherokee National Forest is different from most national forests and parks because it is not continuous; rather, it is interrupted by the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The Cherokee National Forest's location in the Appalachian Mountains provides visitors with an excellent wilderness experience.

Southern Districts



Cherokee National Forest

Forest Supervisor's Office
2800 North Ocoee Street
P.O. Box 2010
Cleveland, TN 37320

Hiking

There are numerous trails in Cherokee National Forest that are over four miles long. These trails provide hikers with pine and hardwood forests, overlooks, streams and waterfalls. Most of the trails are moderate to difficult. Some of them have very steep gradients while others are fairly flat. Many of the trails have stream crossings and provide access to beautiful waterfalls.

The Appalachian Trail runs through the Cherokee National Forest along the ridge of the Appalachian Mountains. Hiking the section of the Appalachian Trail that runs through the Cherokee National Forest is a great way to see a large portion of the forest as well as the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Hikers should take pepper spray, tie bells to their walking sticks, and use bear bags to help keep peace between the bears and the hikers.

The John Muir Trail is another popular trail. This 19.9-mile trail follows the Hiawassee River as it follows John Muir's 1,000 mile walk to the Gulf of Mexico in 1867. Hikers are sure to encounter beautiful forests, wildflowers, and people paddling the river.



Activities

The Cherokee National Forest provides access to many wilderness recreation opportunities. There are several rivers in the Cherokee national Forest that are very popular paddling destinations. Whitewater rafting is very popular on the Ocoee and the Nolichucky, and whitewater canoeing is popular on the French Broad, and the Hiawassee. Waterfalls are another major attraction in the Cherokee National Forest. 150-foot Wildcat Falls, located in the Tellico Ranger District, and 475-foot Buckeye Falls, located in the Unaka Ranger District, are simply incredible to behold. In the Ocoee Ranger District, the slow Conasauga River forms numerous deep pools that are great for snorkeling. Snorkelers can see several varieties of local fish and check out the clear underwater landscape. Every ranger district has several biking and horseback riding trails. Cherokee National Forest has bluffs and cliffs that are perfect for rock climbing and rappelling. The Cherokee National Forest provides visitors with an enormous range of outdoor activities, and the size of the Cherokee National Forest means that visitors will have to make countless trips in order to see the entire forest.



Camping

Fee based campgrounds are located throughout the forest. Most campgrounds are first come first serve; however, a few campgrounds, such as Chilhowee, Indian Boundary, accept reservations. The campsites have tent space, fireplace, table, and lantern post. Developed campgrounds have several water spigots as well as sanitation facilities. Primitive camping is allowed throughout Cherokee National Forest unless posted.

