

## Your Guide to the Wondrous Diversity of the Smokies

One hundred and fifty trails extend for approximately 800 miles, crossing the ridges, peaks, and valleys of America's most visited national park.

In emergencies call: Park headquarters, 865-436-9171; Cherokee (NC) police, 828-497-4131; or Gatlinburg (TN) police, 865-436-5181.

Do not leave valuables in sight inside your car. Do not leave a note on your car indicating how long you will be hiking. Protect your valuables by taking them with you or hiding them in your car.

### Leave No Trace

Your personal commitment to ethical backcountry use is the most important factor in maintaining the park's wilderness character. Take pride in leaving no trace of your presence here.

- Abide by all backcountry use regulations. They are designed for resource protection.
- Use a stove and candle lantern to minimize the trampling and destruction of vegetation that result from collecting firewood.
- Never cook or burn food in a campfire. A residue and odor will remain and will attract wildlife that will become a problem for future campers.
- Keep your group small to preserve a sense of solitude.
- Camp where your campsite already shows impacts. Don't establish new tent sites.
- Pack out all leftover food and trash.
- Avoid cutting across switchbacks, to prevent destructive trail erosion.

### If You Get Lost

Stay calm, do not leave the trail and do not travel at night. Prevent getting lost by keeping your group together, staying on the trail, and using a map. Let someone know your schedule and travel plans, so they can notify park authorities if you are overdue.

### Toilet Use

Improper human waste disposal creates one of the most disgusting conditions in the backcountry. Regulations require that human feces be deposited in a six-inch-deep hole and covered with soil and that no toilet use occur within 100 feet of a camp or water source or within sight of a trail. Defecating behind a shelter or near a spring creates very unhealthy conditions and is clearly bad manners. All sanitary napkins and tampons must be packed out. Do not bury them. Please, take a little extra care!



BILL LEA PHOTOGRAPH



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## Using the Chart at Right

Backcountry campsites and shelters are listed by map coordinates (7E, etc.), with their elevations in feet. Backcountry campsites are numbered and grouped by the major access areas. All sites and shelters are available to hikers, but camping with horses is allowed

only at those with a bold H. Shelters and sites whose use is by reservation appear in bold type. Their allowable capacities are shown in parentheses. For example, (12, 6H) means 12 hikers, 6 horses; (12) means 12 hikers, no horses. See "Permits" for more information.



NEP PHOTOGRAPH

## Into the Wild: Visiting the Smokies Backcountry

### If Someone Gets Injured

If someone is injured and can't be moved to a trailhead, do the following: Provide warmth and comfort; leave someone with the injured person; note the exact location and circumstances; and hike out and let rescuers know where to go and what to prepare for. Backwoods ethics say it is your responsibility to make sure you don't get injured. Be careful and use common sense. Getting accident victims to safety or medical facilities is difficult and often dangerous for all involved.

### Hazards!

**Wind.** High winds associated with approaching weather fronts can bring down trees and limbs on the heavily forested trails. Plan accordingly.

**Hypothermia.** Hypothermia is the point at which the body can maintain its own heat. It is an all-season killer and results from exposure to a combination of wind, rain, and cold. A wet hiker can succumb to hypothermia in mid-summer at higher elevations! Be prepared for sudden weather changes—and learn how to take care of yourself in extremes of cold, heat, and wetness. Always carry rain gear; storms arise quickly. Hypothermia symptoms can appear very rapidly, even in fairly mild weather.

**Know its symptoms and treat them immediately:** uncontrolled shivering, slurred speech, memory lapses, stumbling, fumbling hands, drowsiness, and the inability to get up after a nap. Victims need dry clothing, warm fluids if conscious, and shelter from the elements. To prevent hypothermia, drink before thirsty, eat before hungry, rest before tired, and stay dry. Travel and stay with a companion. Two people can look after each other better than one can look after oneself! Clothing should be worn in layers, an outer layer to ward off wind and precipitation and inner layers to insulate. Keep your head warm and dry with a good hat. Other cold weather hazards include frostbite, icy trails, and deep snow.

**Stream crossings and waterfalls.** Rain swollen streams can be unsafe to ford. Don't cross a stream unless you are sure you can make it. For added precaution make sure your pack can be discarded quickly, wear shoes to protect your feet, use a stout stick for extra support, and, if you lose your footing, float with your feet downstream to protect your head. Walking near a stream on moss- and spray-covered rocks can be hazardous. Never camp next to a stream swollen by high water. Waterfalls can be extremely hazardous; climbing on them has resulted in many fatalities.

**Drinking water.** All water obtained in the backcountry should be treated before drinking to protect you from health hazards. The recommended treatment is to boil it for one minute. Many park waters are clear, cold, and free-running. Nevertheless, they may not be safe to drink unless boiled. Filters may not remove certain bacteria or viruses, and chemical disinfectants require very long contact times for the water temperatures found in these mountains. Do not drink untreated water!

### Bears and You!

Bears in the park are wild, and their behavior is sometimes unpredictable. Attacks on humans are extremely rare, but they have happened, inflicting serious injuries and death. Treat bear encounters with extreme caution and follow the guidelines below.

**Encounters along the trail.** Stay alert. If you see a bear at a distance, do not approach it. If your presence causes the bear to change its behavior (it stops feeding, changes travel direction, watches you, etc.)—YOU'RE TOO CLOSE. Being too close may also promote aggressive behavior from the bear, like running toward you, making loud noises, or swatting the ground. The bear is demanding more space. Don't run but slowly back away, watching the bear. Try to increase the distance between you and the bear, and the bear will probably do the same. If a bear persistently follows or approaches you, typically without vocalizing or paw swatting, try changing your direction. If the bear continues to follow you, stand your ground. If the bear gets closer, talk loudly or shout at it. Act aggressively and try to intimidate the bear. Act together as a group if you have companions. Make yourselves look as large as possible (for example, move to higher

ground). Throw non-food items like rocks at the bear. Use a deterrent like a stout stick. Don't run and don't turn away from the bear. Don't leave food for the bear; this only encourages further problems.

Most injuries from black bear attacks are minor and result from the bear trying to get at people's food. If the behavior of the bear shows that it is after your food, and you are physically attacked, separate yourself from the food and slowly back away. If the bear shows no interest in your food, and you are physically attacked, fight back aggressively with any available object—the bear may consider you as prey! Help protect others: report all bear incidents to a park ranger immediately. Above all, keep your distance from bears!

**Encounters in camp.** The best way to avoid bears is not to attract them. Keep your cooking and sleeping areas separate. Keep tents and sleeping bags free of food odors; do not store food, garbage, or other attractants (like toothpaste, soap, etc.) in them. A clean camp is essential to reducing problems. Pack out all food and litter; don't bury it or try to burn anything.

Regulations require proper food storage. Secure all food and other attractants at night or when not in use. Where food storage devices are present, use them. Otherwise: place all odorless items in your pack. Select two trees, 10-20 feet apart, with limbs 15 feet high. Using a rock for a weight, toss a rope over a limb on the first tree; tie one end to the pack. Repeat this process with the second tree. Raise the pack about six feet via the first rope and tie it off. Then pull the second rope until the pack is suspended at least 10 feet high and evenly spaced; it must be four feet or more from the nearest limb.

### Camping Permits

Permits are required when camping in the backcountry. Camping is permitted only at designated sites. These backcountry sites require reservations: 9, 10, 13, 17, 20, 21, 23, 24, 29, 36, 37, 38, 46, 47, 50, 55, 57, 60, 61, 71, 83, 86, 90, and 113, and all shelters require reservations. (See the chart at right.) Reservations may be made up to one month prior to the first day of the trip. For example, if you wish to backpack on August 8-12, you may call for reservations on July 8 to reserve space for the entire length of your trip.

Plan your trip and determine what sites you will occupy. If your itinerary includes a reserved site or any shelter, you must call the Backcountry Reservations Office (see below) to reserve that site. Be prepared to give your complete trip plan. When you arrive in the park you must complete a permit at one of the 15 self-registration stations listed below. Keep the permit with you and drop the top copy in the registration box. If your itinerary does not include any reserved site or shelter, you need only to complete a permit; you do not need a reservation.

You cannot stay two nights in a row in the same shelter. The maximum stay at a campsite is three consecutive nights. Using a tent at any shelter is prohibited. The maximum group size is eight persons, except at the following campsites where a party of twelve is permitted by reservation only: 17, 20, 46, 60, 86, and 90. Pets are prohibited in the backcountry.

Please call the Backcountry Reservations Office at 865-436-1231 to cancel any nights or spaces that become available because of changes in your plans. The office is open daily from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

**Failure to abide by park regulations may subject you to a fine under Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations.**

- Self-registration stations are located at:
- Oconalufee Visitor Center
  - Sugarlands Visitor Center
  - Twentymile Ranger Station
  - Fontana Dam Visitor Center
  - Fontana Marina
  - Deep Creek Campground Office
  - Smokemont Campground Office
  - Cataloochee Valley near campground
  - Big Creek Ranger Station
  - Cosby Campground Office
  - Greenbrier Ranger Station
  - Elkmont Campground
  - Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont
  - Cades Cove Campground Office
  - Abrams Creek Ranger Station

### Planning Your Trip

For help planning a backpacking trip,

call the Backcountry Information Office at 865-436-1297. The office is staffed by volunteers and is open daily from 9 a.m. until noon.

For a safe and enjoyable backpacking experience, know your limitations. A maximum trip length of eight to 10 miles a day is recommended. Group size, elevation gain, weather, and availability of good water may also affect the success of your trip.

The following equipment is considered essential for a safe backpacking trip: two flashlights, water, rain gear, comfortable ankle-supporting shoes, high-energy food, and extra clothing. Always carry a map and know how to use it.

### Rules and Regulations

- 1 You must possess a backcountry permit while camping in the backcountry.
- 2 Camping is permitted only at designated sites and shelters.
- 3 Use of reserved sites and shelters must be confirmed through the Backcountry Reservation Office.
- 4 You may stay up to three consecutive nights at a site. You may not stay two nights in a row at a shelter.
- 5 Maximum camping party size is eight persons. Exceptions at selected campsites are mentioned above.
- 6 Open fires are prohibited except at designated sites. Use only wood that is dead and on the ground. Use only established fire rings.
- 7 Use of tents at shelters is prohibited.
- 8 Food storage: When not being consumed or transported, all food and trash must be suspended at least 10 feet off the ground and four feet from the nearest limb or trunk or shall be stored as otherwise designated. See Bears and You.
- 9 Toilet use must be at least 100 yards from a campsite or water source and out of sight of the trail. Human feces must be buried in a six-inch-deep hole. See Toilet Use.
- 10 All trash must be carried out.
- 11 All plants, wildlife, and natural and historic features are protected by law. Do not carve, deface, or cut any trees or shrubs.
- 12 Polluting park waters is prohibited; do not wash dishes or bathe with soap in a stream.
- 13 Pets, motorized vehicles, and bicycles are not permitted in the backcountry.
- 14 Firearms and hunting are prohibited.
- 15 Feeding or harassing any wildlife is prohibited.

### Auto-access Horse Camps

Limited auto-access horse camps provide ready access to backcountry trails from April through October. Reservations are required and may be made up to five months in advance. For reservations call 1-877-444-6777 between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. eastern time or visit [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov).

Auto-access Horse Camp	No. of Campsites
Anthony Creek	3
Big Creek	5
Cataloochee	5
Round Bottom	2
Tow String	2

### Horse Use

Horses are permitted in the park, but they are restricted to trails specifically

designated for horse use (see map on other side). Many horse trails are very steep and narrow—a challenge for even the most experienced horse and rider. Remoteness and difficulty of access often make continual trail clearing and care impractical. Expect to encounter rugged conditions. Please report down trees or landslides to a ranger. Off-trail or cross-country use is prohibited. Horse parties may use designated campsites open to their use (see chart). Horse parties are subject to all backcountry regulations.

Requirements: Horse parties must obtain a backcountry camping permit for any overnight backcountry camping. Horses must be under physical control at all times; they may not be left to water unattended; grazing is prohibited. All food for stock must be packed in, and unused food must be packed out. At designated backcountry sites where stock are permitted, the number of animals in any one party is limited to one per person plus one pack animal per person, but shall not exceed a total of ten (10) animals for the same group.

In campsites with no hitchhacks, horses must be cross-tied so that they cannot chew on or otherwise damage trees or other vegetation. Tying horses directly to trees is prohibited.

Horses are not permitted within 100 feet of trail shelters or in cooking or sleeping areas of campsites. Their manure must be scattered away from the campsite. Horses must not be tied closer than 100 feet to any stream or water source.

• Carry a use a collapsible bucket to water your horse—keep horses away from springs. • Never leave feed where wildlife can get to it—wildlife attracted to feed can come into conflict with people. • Use processed feed to eliminate introducing weed seeds into the park—hay may contain seeds of exotic plants, and some non-native plants can take over the habitat of native plants.

### Lakeshore Area

87 Jerry Wallies (Beats only) (6)	1720	3G
88 Gunter Branch (Beats only) (6)	1720	6G
89 Long Pine (Beats only) (6)	1720	6G
90 Kiskadee (6)	1720	5G
91 Upper Flats (10, 6H)	1800	5G
92 Twentymile Creek (8)	1880	3P
93 Dalton Branch (12, 6H)	1920	2F
94 Eagle Creek Island (8)	2880	4F
95 Walnut (8)	3160	4F
96 Birch Spring Gap (12, 6H)	3680	3P

### Auto-access Horse Camps

Auto-access Horse Camp	No. of Campsites	
Davenport Gap (12, 12H)	2600	11B
Cosby Knob (12, 12H)	4700	10C
Fritchey Knob (12, 12H)	5200	10C
Packs Cove (12, 12H)	5280	9D
DeWaters Spring (12)	5920	8D
Mount Collins (12)	5870	7E
Lowell Spring Gap (12)	5507	6E
Silers Bald (12, 12H)	5460	6E
Spencer Field (12, 12H)	4900	4E
Russell Field (14, 12H)	4360	4E
Mollies Ridge (12, 12H)	4570	3E
Mount Le Conte (12)	4440	2D
Knobart (14, 12H)	3900	8D
Laurel Gap (14, 12H)	5600	10D

## Backcountry Campsites

Site No.	Capacity	Elev. (Feet)	Map Key
<b>Cades Cove Area</b>			
1 Cooper Road (12)		1200	2D
2 Cane Creek (4)		1320	2D
3 Hesse Creek (8, 2H)		1360	3D
4 Rich Mountain (8, 2H)		1490	3D
5 Turkeypen Ridge (8)		3400	4D
6 Anthony Creek (12)		3200	4E
10 Ledbetter Ridge (8)		3000	4E
11 Beard Cane (6)		3520	2D
12 Foyce Creek (12)		2600	3E
20 Sheep Pen Gap (15, 8H)		4440	2D
16 Hunt Gap (10)		1950	2E
15 Rabbit Creek (12)		1950	2E
16 Scott Gap (10)		1760	2E
17 Little Beltrams (14)		1240	2D

<b>Elkmont/Tremont Area</b>			
18 West Prong (12)		1600	4D
19 Upper Henderson (8, 2H)		2880	5D
20 King Branch (12, 4H)		2520	5D
21 Mile 92 (12)		2640	6D
23 Camp Creek (12)		3000	6D
24 Rough Creek (15)		2860	6D
26 Dripstone Spring Mountain (10)		4440	6D
27 Lower Jakes Gap (12, 2H)		3520	5D
28 Marks Cove (12, 6H)		3450	5D
30 Three Forks (12)		3400	6E

<b>Greenbrier/Cosby Area</b>			
29 Ottercreek (8)		4550	10B
31 Porters Hut (8)		4400	8D
32 Injun Creek (8)		2280	8C
33 Settlers Camp (8)		1860	9B
34 Sugar Cove (10)		1340	10B
35 Gilliland Creek (12, 4H)		2680	10B

<b>Cataloochee/Big Creek Area</b>			
36 Upper Walnut Bottom (20, 20H)		3040	11C
37 Lower Walnut Bottom (20)		3000	11C
38 Mount Sterling (12)		2600	11C
39 Pretty Hollow (20, 10H)		3040	11D
40 Big Hemlock (8)		3100	11D
41 Cataloochee Branch (10, 6H)		3360	11E
42 Spruce Mountain (4)		5480	10D

<b>Oconalufee Area</b>			
44 McGee Spring (12, 4H)		5040	10D
47 Enloe Creek (8)		3620	10D
48 Upper Chastain (8)		3230	9D
49 Cabin Flats (12, 8H)		3050	9D
50 Lower Chastain Creek (15, 6H)		2360	9E

<b>Deep Creek Area</b>			
46 Estes Branch (12)		2870	8F
51 Georges Branch (12)		2800	8F
52 Newton Bald (12)		2500	8E
53 Poke Patch (6)		3000	8E
54 Nettie Creek (6)		2600	8E
55 Pole Road (15, 15H)		2600	8E
56 Burnt Spruce (6)		2405	8F
57 Brylans Peak (10, 10H)		3360	8F
58 Nick's Nest Branch (6)		2360	8F
59 McCracken Branch (10)		2320	7F
60 Bumpard Branch (20, 4H)		2120	7F

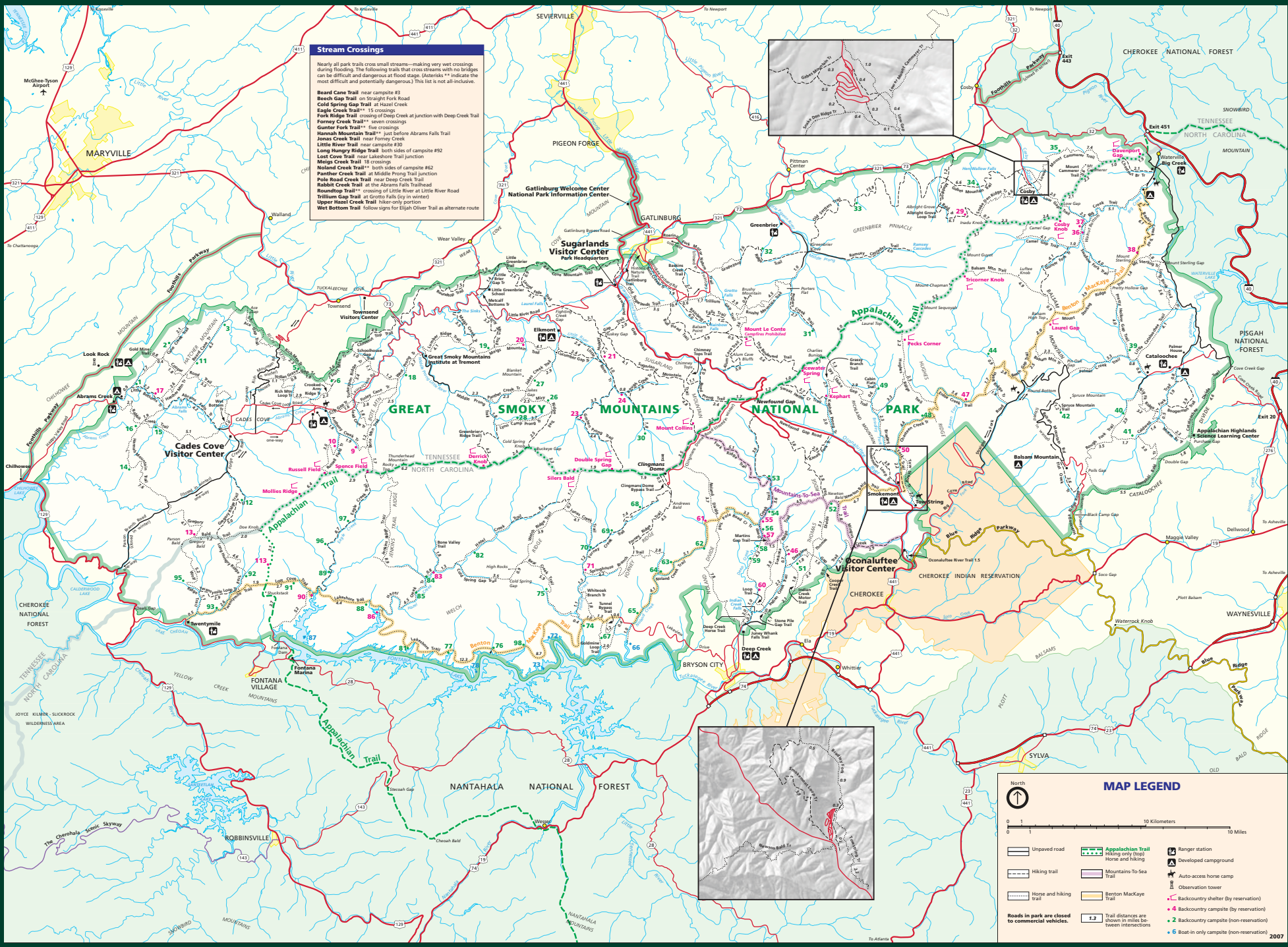
<b>Noland Creek Area</b>			
61 Bald Creek (10, 8H)		3550	7E
62 Upper Bashaw (8, 8H)		3160	7F
63 Jerry Flats (8, 8H)		2920	7F
64 Mill Creek (10, 8H)		2920	7F
65 Bear Pen Branch (8)		2040	6F
66 Lower Noland Creek (Beats Only) (4)		1720	6G
67 Goldmine Branch (6)		1840	6E

<b>Forney Creek Area</b>			
68 Steamboat (8)		3960	6E
69 Huggins (8)		2800	6F
70 Jones Creek (12, 8H)		2400	6F
71 CCC (12, 8H)		2180	6F
74 Lower Forney (12)		1720	6E
75 Poplar Flats (8)		2800	5F

<b>Hazel Creek Area</b>			
82 Calhoun (8, 4H)		2720	5F
83 Bone Valley (20, 10H)		2280	5F
84 Sugar Fork (6)		2160	4F
85 Sawdust Pine (10, 6H)		2000	4F
86 Prester (10, 8H)		1880	4F
88 Pessum Hollow (12)		1860	4F

<b>Twentymile Area</b>			
89 Lower Ekaneetlee (8)		1880	4F
90 Lost Cove (12, 6H)		1760	3F
91 Upper Lost Cove (6)		2040	3F
92 Upper Flats (10, 6H)		2520	3F
93 Twentymile Creek (8)		1880	3F
94 Dalton Branch (12, 6H)		1920	2F
95 Eagle Creek Island (8)		2880	4F
96 Walnut (8)		3160	4F
97 Birch Spring Gap (12, 6H)		3680	3F

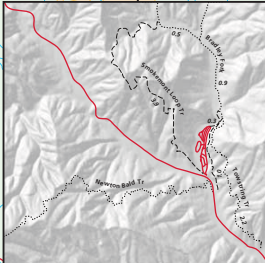
<b>Lakeshore Area</b>			
87 Jerry Wallies (Beats only) (6)		1720	3G
88 Gunter Branch (Beats only) (6)		1720	6G
89 Long Pine (Beats only) (6)		1720	6G
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**Stream Crossings**

Nearly all park trails cross small streams—making very wet crossings during flooding. The following trails that cross streams with no bridges can be difficult and dangerous at flood stage. (Asterisks \*\* indicate the most difficult and potentially dangerous.) This list is not all inclusive.

Beard Cane Trail near campsite #3  
Beech Gap Trail on Straight Fork Road  
Cold Spring Gap Trail at Hazel Creek  
Eagle Creek Trail\*\* 15 crossings  
Fork Ridge Trail crossing of Deep Creek at junction with Deep Creek Trail  
Forney Creek Trail\*\* seven crossings  
Gunter Fork Trail\*\* five crossings  
Hannah Mountain Trail\*\* just before Abrams Falls Trail  
Jones Creek Trail near Forney Creek  
Little River Trail near campsite #30  
Long Hungry Ridge Trail both sides of campsite #92  
Lost Cove Trail near Lakeshore Trail junction  
Meigs Creek Trail 18 crossings  
Noland Creek Trail\*\* both sides of campsite #62  
Panther Creek Trail at Middle Prong Trail junction  
Pole Road Creek Trail near Deep Creek Trail  
Rabbit Creek Trail at the Abrams Falls Trailhead  
Roundtop Trail\*\* crossing of Little River at Little River Road  
Trillium Gap Trail at Grove Falls (p in winter)  
Upper Hazel Creek Trail hiker-only portion  
West Bottom Trail follow signs for Bligh Oliver Trail at alternate route



**MAP LEGEND**

North ↑

0 1 10 Kilometers / 0 1 10 Miles


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