

Great Smoky Mountains

National Park
North Carolina/Tennessee

U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service



A Wildlands Sanctuary

The Great Smoky Mountains, the majestic climax of the Appalachian Highlands, are a wildlands sanctuary preserving the world's finest examples of temperate deciduous forest. The name *Smoky* comes from the smoke-like haze enveloping the mountains, which stretch in sweeping troughs and mighty billows to the horizon. The park boasts unspoiled forests similar to those early pioneers found. Restored log cabins and barns stand as reminders of those who carved a living from this

wilderness. Fertile soils and abundant rain have encouraged the development of a world-renowned variety of flora, including more than 1,500 kinds of flowering plants. In the coves, broadleaf trees predominate. Along the crest—at more than 6,000 feet elevation—are conifer forests like those of central Canada. Wildflowers and migrating birds abound in late April and early May. During June and July rhododendrons bloom in spectacular profusion. Autumn's pageantry of color usually peaks in

mid-October. For many, this is the finest time of year, with cool, clear days ideal for hiking. In winter, an unpredictable season, a peace pervades the park. Fog rolling over the mountains may blanket the conifers in frost.

A scenic, high mountain road winds up through Newfound Gap, with a spur out to Clingmans Dome and its observation tower. Along the road are superb views, and those from the tower are truly panoramic. But roads offer

only an introduction to the Smokies. Some 900 miles of trails thread the whole of the Smokies' natural fabric—its waterfalls, coves, balds, and rushing streams. Each trail invites you into the intimacy and richness of these highlands. The Smokies, a wild landscape rich with traces of its human past, calls people back year after year.

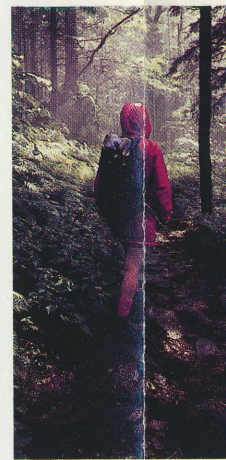


Richly forested, the park is now an International Biosphere Reserve area and a World Heritage Site.

Viewed from high in the park, ridges seem to roll like waves to far horizons.



Bicyclists fall in love with the level-to-rolling grandeur of Cades Cove.



Trails abound, from the Appalachian Trail to quiet nature walks.



Restored historic structures punctuate the park's wild qualities.

Enjoying the Park

The park is a delightful mix of forest wildlands and outdoor museum of pioneer life. Try to experience both aspects, by hiking and by visiting its restored structures.

Naturalist Activities. From mid-June through August evening programs and nature walks are offered at most developed campgrounds. Spring and fall activities are limited. Check schedules at a visitor center or ranger station.

Trails and Hiking. Horse and foot trails wind along streams and through forests into the wild stillness of the Smokies. For "do-it-yourself" naturalists there are short, self-guiding nature trails. Pick up a leaflet at the start of each trail. A backcountry use permit, required for all overnight hiking parties, can be obtained free at ranger stations or visitor centers (except Cades

Cove Visitor Center). Overnight use of some shelters and backcountry campsites is rationed. Write or call the Backcountry Office, (615) 436-1231, Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Camping. There are ten developed campgrounds in the park. Fees are charged at each. Reservations are recommended at Cades Cove, Elkmont, and Smokemont from May 15 to October 31; they can be made at most Ticketron sales outlets. Campgrounds have tent sites, limited trailer space, water, fireplaces, tables, and comfort stations. No shelters are provided. There are no showers or hookups for trailers. The camping limit is 7 days between May 1 and October 31, 14 days between November 1 and April 30. Sewage disposal stations are located at Smokemont, Cades Cove, and Cosby campgrounds, and across the road from Sugarlands

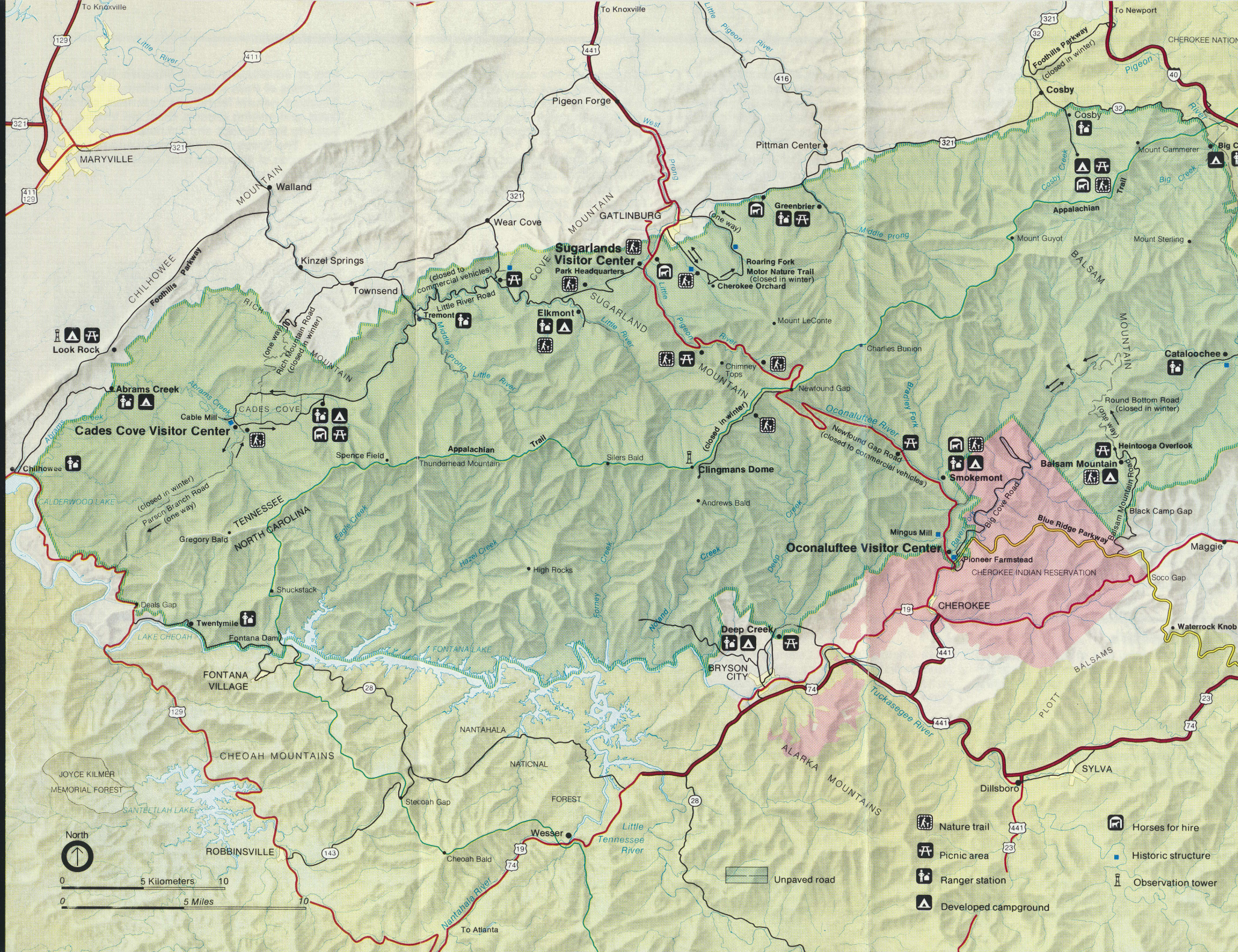
Visitor Center. They are not available for use in the winter.

Fishing. Many park streams provide fishing for rainbow and brown trout all year long. Tennessee or North Carolina fishing licenses are required, but not trout stamps. Check park regulations at a ranger station or visitor center before you fish. Possession of any brook trout is prohibited.

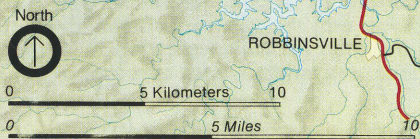
Accommodations and Services. Most neighboring towns have gasoline, food, lodging, showers, and camping supplies. Many private campgrounds operate outside the park. For information write the chambers of commerce of nearby North Carolina and Tennessee towns. LeConte Lodge, accessible only by trail, offers accommodations in the park from mid-March to mid-

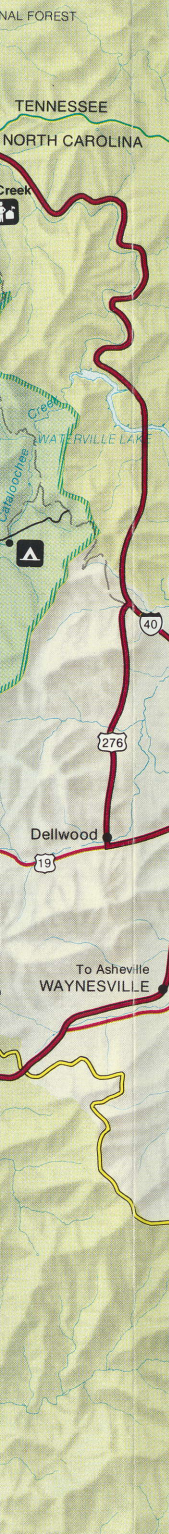
November. Allow a half day for hiking up a mountain trail to reach this secluded retreat. Reservations are necessary; call or write LeConte Lodge, Gatlinburg, TN 37738. Rustic hotel accommodations and food service are provided at Wonderland Hotel, at Elkmont, June 1 to October 31. Saddle horses are available from about April 1 to October 31 at Cades Cove, Smokemont, Cosby, near Greenbrier on U.S. 321, and near park headquarters.

A Word about Bears. Bears are wild and potentially dangerous. If one approaches your car, stay inside with the windows closed. Feeding bears and other wildlife encourages the animals to behave unnaturally and violates regulations.



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|--|----------------------|--|--------------------|
| | Nature trail | | Horses for hire |
| | Picnic area | | Historic structure |
| | Ranger station | | Observation tower |
| | Developed campground | | |





Park Visitor Centers

From the Tennessee side make your first stop the Sugarlands Visitor Center. Publications, information, exhibits, and a film are offered here at the intersection of the Newfound Gap and Little River Roads. The Sugarlands Visitor Center is open all year. At Cades Cove you will find another visitor center, which is open from mid-April through October, and an 11-mile loop drive through a pastoral Smokies scene with restored buildings and an old mill.

From the North Carolina side make your first stop the Oconaluftee Visitor Center. This center, which is open all year, has publications, information, and exhibits. Adjacent to the visitor center the Pioneer Farmstead lets you see how the early mountain people lived. Just up the road into the park is Mingus Mill, a large water-powered mill for grinding corn that can be seen in operation from mid-April through October.

Sugarlands and Oconaluftee are connected by the Newfound Gap Road, a scenic drive across the Smokies crest that is closed to commercial vehicles. Numerous scenic pullouts are provided. You can park at the crest at Newfound Gap, where the Appalachian Trail crosses the road. Or you can drive the spur road out to Clingmans Dome, highest point in the park, and its observation tower, which can be reached via a strenuous $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile hike from the parking lot.

Regulations and Safety

The park is managed as a natural and wild environment. Motorists must drive defensively. Hikers must meet nature on its own terms. If you hike alone, let someone know your plans and schedule, and have proper clothing and gear. In winter, gear and clothing should be suitable for survival in deep snow and extreme cold not characteristic of the mid-south. To prevent accidents please stay on trails, stay off cliff faces, be careful around water, and watch and control children. Pets, permitted in the park if on a leash or under other constant physical control, are *prohibited* on trails or cross-country hikes.

For more information call or write: Superintendent, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Gatlinburg, Tennessee 37738. Telephone 615-436-1200.