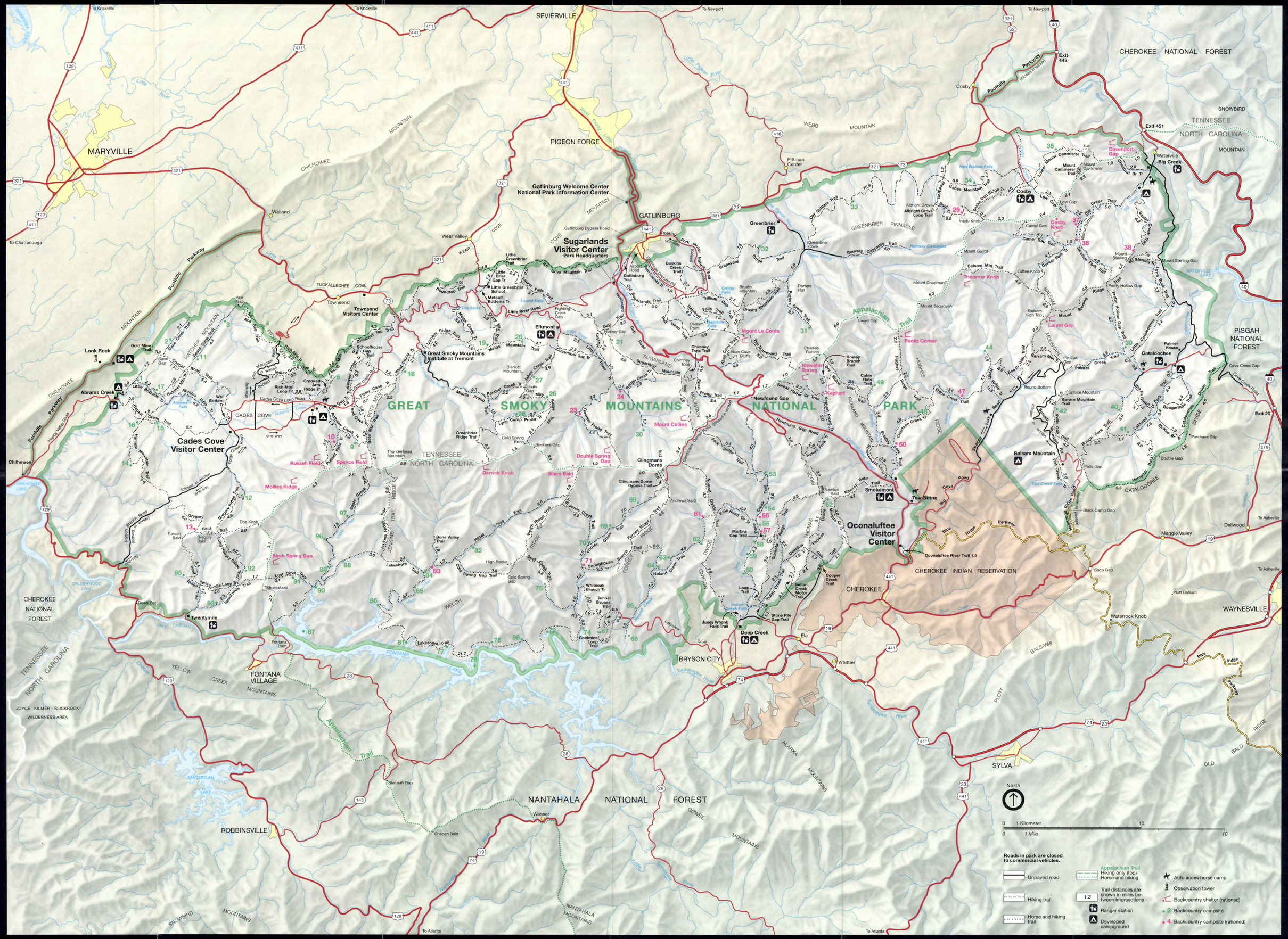
Great Smoky Mountains Trail Map

Great Smoky Mountains National Park
North Carolina/Tennessee

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Great Smoky Mountains Trail Map and Guide

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Your Guide to a Land of Many Trails

You park your car, lock it, and walk away—and you are in the wild. No matter that minutes ago you were in modest traffic. You are now in the backcountry. This map and guide will help you plan and enjoy your trip, under pack or on horseback. Things you need to know—from a philosophy of wilderness use to how to hang your pack—appear on this side. The map will help you decide which piece of Smokies wilderness is for you.

The National Park Service maintains more than 850 miles of walking and hiking trails in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. These trails thread the crests of the sweeping scenic vistas seen from parking lots and overlooks along the road. They also thread the whole of the Smokies' natural fabric—its waterfalls, coves, balds, and rushing streams. The trails cover every degree of difficulty, from paved walking paths to steep mountain trails. Each trail invites you to explore the subtlety and richness of this majestic climax of the wild Appalachian highlands. For more information about park trails and campsites, ask to see the "Trail and Campsite Notebooks" available at all visitor information stations.

Minimum Impact Hiking and Camping

The following regulations are designed to protect the backcountry and its denizens, but you can do more. Your sense of pride in using the backcountry so that the next person doesn't even realize you have been there is most important. As you comply with and promote sound backcountry use practices, you also actively perpetuate the wilderness qualities that you find so attractive. Here is a checklist of minimum-impact backcountry use practices:

☐ Abide by all backcountry-use regulations. They are designed for resource protection.
☐ Use a stove to minimize tramping and destruction of vegetation resulting from collecting firewood.
☐ Keep your group small to preserve a sense of solitude.
☐ Avoid cutting across switchbacks to prevent destructive trail erosion.
☐ Carry a sleeping pad. Do not use tree boughs.
☐ Help remove litter to clean up after thoughtless campers.

Questions are best resolved before you hit the trail. Please ask for help from park rangers if you need it. In summary, leave the backcountry as you would expect to find it.

If you would like to help the park with backcountry maintenance or resource monitoring, call our Volunteer Coordinator at (423) 436-1265 about how you can help.

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 6-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!

Kenneth McDonald

Kenneth McDonald

Visiting the Backcountry: Things Everyone Should Know

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.

The backwoods ethic says 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.

On Being Lost

Prevention is the best medicine! **Stay on the trail, don't travel alone, and keep your group together. Carry a good map and know how to use it. Let someone know beforehand your schedule and your route** so that they can notify park authorities if you are overdue. Follow these simple guidelines and you are not likely to become lost (or to remain lost for long). If you do get lost, stay calm and **do not** leave the trail. Search teams cover trails first. If lost late in the day, find a protected spot near the trail to stay the night—night travel is too dangerous. Keep warm and dry. If you wish to explore off trails, talk with a park ranger about extra precautions.

Hazards!

Information on some hazards is covered elsewhere in this folder, but the following information merits your attention:

Hypothermia. The lowering of body temperature beyond the point at which the body can maintain its own heat is called hypothermia. 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 raingear; storms arise quickly. You cannot imagine how rapidly hypothermia symptoms can appear, even in fairly mild weather, until you have experienced them. Then it may be too late, however.

The potential for hypothermia makes late fall through early spring the most dangerous time for backcountry travel. **Know these symptoms and treat them immediately:** uncontrolled shivering, slurred speech, memory lapse, stumbling, fumbling hands, drowsiness, and 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 far 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. Heavy rains—particularly in warm weather—cause swollen streams that may be unsafe to ford. Do not cross a stream unless you are sure you can make it. As an extra safety 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 loose your footing, float with your feet downstream to protect your head. Just walking near a stream, on moss- and spray-covered rocks, can be hazardous. In no case should you camp next to a stream swollen by high water. Waterfalls can be extremely hazardous; climbing on them has resulted in numerous fatalities.

Drinking water. All water obtained in the backcountry should be treated before drinking to protect you from health hazards. **The recommended treatment is boiling 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 the mountains. *Giardia lamblia,* a well-known cause of intestinal disorders, is but one of many harmful organisms that may be in park waters. **Do not drink untreated water!**

Bears and You!

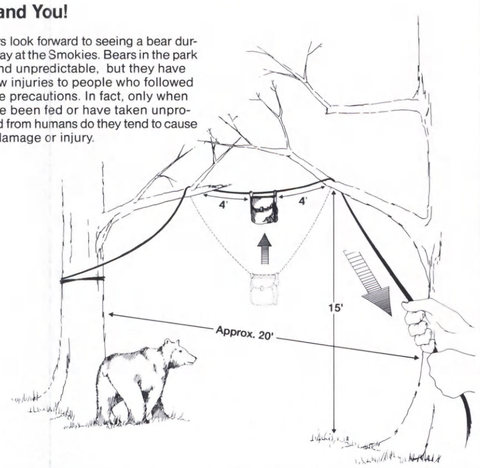
Most hikers look forward to seeing a bear during their stay at the Smokies. Bears in the park are wild and unpredictable, but they have caused few injuries to people who followed reasonable precautions. In fact, only when bears have been fed or have taken unprotected food from humans do they tend to cause property damage or injury.

Encounters along the Trail. Remain watchful. If you are lucky enough to spot a bear, observe it from a distance—do not throw food or leave food behind for it to eat. When you stop to picnic, keep your food **and** pack nearby and maintain a watchful eye in the adjacent woods. Bears familiar with human habits can be sneaky. If a bear approaches, quickly gather **all** your supplies and retreat along the trail; leaving food behind only encourages further problems. **Report all bear incidents to a park ranger.**

Encounters in Camp. The best way to avoid bears is not to attract them. Keep cooking and sleeping areas separate except in shelters. Keep tents and sleeping bags free of food odors; do not store food in them. A clean camp is essential for you and later campers; pack out **all** food and litter.

Proper food storage is required by regulation. Your cooperation benefits those who follow you. Where food storage devices are present, follow directions and make use of them. Otherwise follow the instructions below:

Place all food (including trash) in your pack. Select two trees, approximately 10-20 feet apart, with limbs about 15 feet high. Using a rock as weight, toss a rope over a limb on the first tree and tie one end to the pack. Repeat this process with the second tree. Raise the pack about 6 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 between the trees; it must be at least 4 feet from the nearest limb or tree trunk. Tie it off.



Trip Planning and Permits

Planning Your Trip

Taking a short walk or day hike or spending an overnight in the backcountry offers the opportunity for many people to see Great Smoky Mountains National Park. It provides many opportunities to learn about the natural and cultural history of this area. Though day hikers do not require a permit, other regulations and backcountry practices still apply.

Trip length (8 to 10 miles maximum per day recommended), group size, elevation gain, weather, and availability of good water are all factors that can affect the success of your trip. Give them some consideration as you plan. Know your physical and mental limitations. A smart and safe hiker is a prepared hiker. Your equipment list, for any kind of backcountry visit, should include the items listed below. With them you can prevent or mitigate most backcountry emergencies:
• comfortable walking shoes, • raingear,
• map and compass, • knife, • first aid kit,
• flashlight, • extra clothing, • matches,
• water and high energy food.

Park your car in designated areas at or near the trailhead. Lock the doors and store all valuables **in the trunk** or take them with you. Leave nothing in sight in the car. If you will be out several days, leave your vehicle tag number and location at the nearest ranger station.

Permits, How and Why

The backcountry use permit is free but is required for all overnight camping in the backcountry. If you intend to stay overnight in the backcountry, you will need a permit. Our backcountry permit system is designed to protect the park and its solitude, both the quality of the natural environment and the quality of your experience. The National Park Service is charged with protecting the Smokies for present and future generations to enjoy. The permit system is our attempt to enable you and others to love this wild place without loving it to death.

How to get your backcountry permit. You may self-register for a permit at any ranger station, campground, or visitor center by following posted instructions, but your itinerary may require access to a public pay telephone, as explained below:

Some sites are rationed—see chart at right—because of heavy use. Telephone our Backcountry Reservation Office for permission. Failure to do so invalidates your permit and may subject you to a fine.

If your itinerary includes at least one rationed site, we encourage you to make advance reservations up to a month ahead of the trip's start. To do so, you must plan your trip before your call and indicate exactly which site you intend to occupy for each night of your trip. If no rationed sites are involved, you may obtain your permit via self-registration upon your arrival in the park. The backcountry reservation office is open 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. The telephone number is (423) 436-1231.

The following rules relate to trip planning: **1.** Maximum party size is eight. **2.** You may stay no more than one consecutive night at a shelter; three consecutive nights at a campsite. **3.** You must stay in designated sites and follow your identified itinerary. In addition, certain courtesies help make the permit system work for all of us: **1. Do not** reserve more space than you intend to occupy; to do so prohibits use by other backpackers. **2.** Please call the reservations office to cancel any nights or spaces that become available because of changes in your plans.

Horse Use

Horses are permitted in the park, but they are restricted to trails specifically designated for horse use (see map). Off-trail or cross-country use is prohibited. Horse parties may use designated campsites located on trails open to their use but within capacities indicated. Horse parties are subject to all backcountry regulations.

Requirements: Horse parties must obtain a backcountry use 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 packed out.

In campsites with no hitchracks, horses must be cross-tied so that they are unable to 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 and sleeping areas of campsites. Manure must be scattered away from the campsite. Horses must not be tied closer than 100 feet to any stream or water source.

Auto Access Horse Camps

Limited drive-in horse camps provide ready access to backcountry trails April through October. Make reservations for these camps through the Backcountry Reservation Office.

Camp	Capacity
Anthony Creek	12
Big Creek	20
Cataloochee	28
Round Bottom	20
Tow String	20

A capacity of 12 means 12 people and 12 horses. Reservations may be made up to a month in advance; use may not exceed 7 consecutive nights. Unreserved spaces are first come, first served until full. Reservation abuse may result in permit cancellation. Parties on extended overnight backcountry horse trips should not use these limited sites but should park at appropriate trailheads.

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 rationed sites and shelters must be confirmed through the Backcountry Reservation Office.
4 You may stay up to 3 consecutive nights at a site. You may not stay 2 nights in a row at a shelter.
5 Maximum camping party size is 8 persons.
6 Open fires are prohibited except at designated sites. Use only wood that is dead and on the ground.
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 4 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 feet from a campsite or water source and out of sight of the trail. Human feces must be buried in a 6-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 cut, carve, or deface 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.

Maximum fine for each violation is $500 and/or 6 months in jail!

Using the Chart

Backcountry campsites and shelters are listed by map coordinates (7E, etc.) with elevations in feet. Backcountry campsites are numbered and grouped by major access areas. All sites and shelters are available to hikers; camping with horses is allowed only at those with a bold H. **Shelters and sites whose use is rationed appear in bold type.** Their allowable capacities show in parentheses: (12,6H) means 12 hikers, 6 horses; (12) means 12 hikers, no horses. See "Permits" for more information.

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Backcountry Campsites

Site No.		Rationed Capacity	Elev. (Feet)	Map Key
	Cades Cove Area			
1	Cooper Road **(H)**		1200	2D
2	Cane Creek		1320	2D
3	Hesse Creek **(H)**		1360	3D
4	Kelly Gap **(H)**		1930	3D
5	Rich Mountain **(H)**		3400	3D
6	Turkeypen Ridge		3400	4D
7	Ace Gap **(H)**		1680	3C
9	Anthony Creek **(H)**		3200	4E
10	**Ledbetter Ridge (8, 8H)**		3000	4E
11	Beard Cane **(H)**		1530	2D
12	Forge Creek		2600	3E
13	**Sheep Pen Gap (15, 8H)**		4640	2F
14	Flint Gap **(H)**		2050	2E
15	Rabbit Creek **(H)**		1550	2E
16	Scott Gap **(H)**		1700	2E
17	Little Bottoms		1240	2D
	Elkmont/Tremont Area			
18	West Prong **(H)**		1600	4D
19	Upper Henderson **(H)**		2880	5D
20	King Branch **(H)**		2520	5D
21	Medicine Br. Bluff		3780	6D
23	**Camp Rock (12)**		3200	6D
24	**Rough Creek (15)**		2860	6D
26	Dripping Spring Mt.		4400	6D
27	Lower Jakes Gap **(H)**		3520	5D
28	Marks Cove **(H)**		3490	5D
30	Three Forks		3400	6E
	Greenbrier/Cosby Area			
29	**Otter Creek (10)**		4560	9C
31	Porters Flat		3400	8D
32	Injun Creek		2280	8C
33	Settlers Camp		1960	9B
34	Sugar Cove		3240	10B
35	Gilliland Creek **(H)**		2680	10B
	Cataloochee/Big Creek Area			
36	**Upper Walnut Bottom (20, 20H)**		3040	11C
37	**Lower Walnut Bottom (20)**		3000	11C
38	**Mount Sterling (12)**		5820	11C
39	Pretty Hollow **(H)**		3040	11D
40	Big Hemlock		3100	11D
41	Caldwell Fork **(H)**		3360	11E
42	Spruce Mountain **(H)**		5480	10D
	Oconaluftee Area			
44	McGee Spring **(H)**		5040	10D
47	**Enloe Creek (8)**		3620	10D
48	Upper Chasteen		3320	9D
49	Cabin Flats **(H)**		3060	9D
50	**Lower Chasteen Creek (15, 15H)**		2360	9E
	Deep Creek Area			
52	Newton Bald **(H)**		5000	8E
53	Poke Patch		3000	8E
54	Nettle Creek		2600	8E
55	**Pole Road (15, 15H)**		2410	8E
56	Burnt Spruce		2405	8F
57	**Bryson Place (20, 12H)**		2360	8F
58	Nicks Nest Branch		2360	8F
59	McCracken Branch		2320	7F
60	Bumgardner Branch **(H)**		2120	7F
	Noland Creek Area			
61	**Bald Creek (12, 6H)**		3560	7E
62	Upper Ripshin **(H)**		3160	7F
63	Jerry Flats **(H)**		2920	7F
64	Mill Creek **(H)**		2540	7F
65	Bear Pen Branch **(H)**		2040	6F
66	Lower Noland Creek		1720	6G
67	Goldmine Branch **(H)**		1840	6G
	Forney Creek Area			
68	Steeltrap		3960	6E
69	Huggins		2800	6F
70	Jonas Creek **(H)**		2400	6F
71	**CCC (12, 12H)**		2180	6F
74	Lower Forney		1720	6G
75	Poplar Flats		2800	5F
	Hazel Creek Area			
82	Calhoun **(H)**		2720	5F
83	**Bone Valley (20, 10H)**		2280	5F
84	Sugar Fork		2160	4F
85	Sawdust Pile **(H)**		2000	4F
86	Proctor **(H)**		1680	4F
	Twentymile Area			
87	Jerry Hollow (Boats only)		1720	3G
88	Pinnacle Creek **(H)**		2200	4F
89	Lower Ekaneetlee		1880	4F
90	Lost Cove **(H)**		1760	3F
91	Upper Lost Cove **(H)**		2040	3F
92	Upper Flats **(H)**		2520	3F
93	Twentymile Creek		1880	3F
95	Dalton Branch **(H)**		2360	2F
96	Eagle Creek Island		2880	4F
97	Big Walnut		2400	4E
	Lakeshore Area			
72	Gunter Branch (Boats only)		1720	5G
76	Kirkland Creek **(H)**		1770	5G
77	Pilkey Creek **(H)**		1800	5G
78	Double Island (Boats only)		1720	5G
81	North Shore **(H)**		1800	4G
98	Chambers Creek **(H)**		1720	5G

Shelters

Davenport Gap (12, 12H)		2600	11B
Cosby Knob (12, 12H)		4700	10C
Tricorner Knob (12, 12H)		5920	10C
Pecks Corner (12, 12H)		5280	9D
Icewater Spring (12)		5920	8D
Mt. Collins (12)		5870	7E
Double Spring Gap (12)		5507	6E
Silers Bald (12, 12H)		5460	6E
Derrick Knob (12)		4890	5E
Spence Field (12, 12H)		4900	4E
Russell Field (14, 14H)		4360	4E
Mollies Ridge (12, 12H)		4570	3E
Birch Spring Gap (12, 12H)		3680	3F
Mount Le Conte (12)		6440	7D
Kephart (14, 14H)		3900	8D
Laurel Gap (14, 14H)		5600	10D