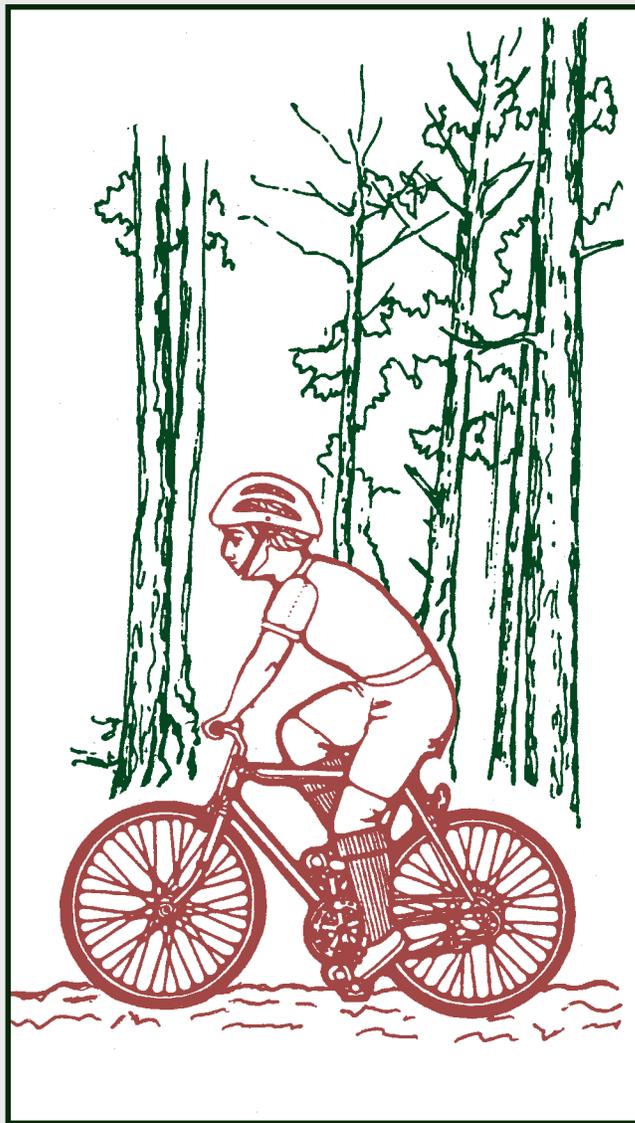


TSALI Recreation Area:

————— mecca for —————
mountain bikers & horseback riders



**USDA Forest Service
National Forests in NC
Nantahala National Forest
Cheoah Ranger District**

Face the challenge of Tsali

Challenging—that's the best word to describe the 42 miles of Tsali Trails, rated as "more difficult."

Suited for hikers, mountain bikers, and horseback riders, the 4-loop system offers a variety of landscapes. You can climb 1-foot wide rugged paths or travel flat, well-beaten roads. The four trails—Right, Left, Mouse Branch, and Thompson Loops—meander through mixed pine and hardwoods on a peninsula stretching into Fontana Lake.

Hikers may travel the trails on any day, but mountain bikers and equestrians, the primary users, are kept separated by alternating use of the trails. A schedule is posted at all trailheads.

Fees are charged and used for trail improvements at Tsali Recreation Area.

Right Loop

Length: 11 miles

Highlights: Single track, views of Lake Fontana, creek crossings, shorter 4- and 8-mile loops possible.

Left Loop

Length: 11.9 miles

Highlights: Longest Tsali trail, single track, creek crossings, views of the Smokies and Lake Fontana at the overlook.

Mouse Branch

Length: 9 miles

Highlights: Single track and old logging roads, potential views of wild turkey, deer, and grouse in forest wildlife openings, old home sites.

Thompson Loop

Length: 7.7 miles

Highlights: Single track, potential views of wildlife, overlooks, stream crossings, old logging roads, old home sites.



A look back in time

The Tsali Recreation Area is named for a Cherokee man who hid in this area in 1838. The U.S. Government had ordered the Cherokees to move to Oklahoma—a tragic removal that's known as "The Trail of Tears". Exasperated by the brutality to his family, Tsali and others escaped to these mountains.

Tsali was coaxed to surrender by a promise to allow the others to remain in the area. Tsali voluntarily came forward as a sacrifice for his people. As a result, he, his brother, and two older sons were shot and killed.

Today the Eastern Band of the Cherokee live on ancestral Cherokee land about 12 airmiles east of the Tsali Recreation Area.

Forest management in the works

National forests are managed for many uses, including outstanding recreation, wildlife habitat, wood products, and clean water. Watch for signs of forest management.

The pine forest here is threatened by southern pine beetles. To control the beetles, infested trees are cut and removed. A ring of healthy pines around the infestation are also removed to create a buffer.

You will discover many grassy openings created for wildlife on the Tsali peninsula. These small plots were cleared and seeded with orchard grass and clover. Some animals benefiting from these openings are wild turkeys, white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, rabbits, songbirds, and butterflies.

What's offered?

TSALI CAMPGROUND: Showers, flush toilets, and 42 campsites are offered at this campground. Bikers can head straight from the tent door to the trails. A separate camping fee is charged.

DISPERSED CAMPING: You may camp anywhere on forest land, except in designated wildlife fields and in trailhead parking lots. Along entrance road (FR 1286), camp only at designated sites. Please leave your campsite clean by packing out all trash when you go. Campfires are permitted, but a stove is recommended. Live trees may not be cut; use dead or downed wood. Be sure your fire is dead out when you leave. Bury all human waste and toilet paper.

ACCESSIBLE FACILITIES: Restrooms located in the lower loop and nearby camping units are accessible.

PARKING: The trailhead parking lot is for day trail use. Facilities include a restroom, bike-washing station, picnic tables, and information board. Information boards provide the most up-to-date information. The upper parking lot is reserved for horse trailers.

HUNTING: The Tsali area is known for its deer, grouse, small game, and turkey. Hunting seasons begin in September and end in February. Turkey season opens the second Saturday in April and runs for 4 weeks. Check with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) at 919-662-4381 for information on regulations. While on the trails during gun deer season, mid-November to early December, please wear hunter orange for safety.

BOATING & FISHING: No fee is charged to use the boat launch and ample parking is available. Lake fishing is permitted year-round. For information about fishing licenses, contact the NCWRC at 919-662-4370.

TRAIL TIPS

- Please stay on designated trail; stay off roads closed by signs.
- Always travel with others in remote areas and leave word of your travel plans with someone.
- Carry a first aid kit and know how to use it.

MOUNTAIN BIKING TIPS

- Wear a helmet, eye protection, and gloves.
- Maintain control of your speed at all times and approach turns in anticipation of someone coming around the bend.
- Be courteous when approaching other trail users. In case you approach a horseback rider, dismount and yield.
- "Tread lightly" to avoid erosion. Stay on the trail, and do not take shortcuts around fallen trees. During wet weather, choose a forest road instead of the Tsali trails.

HORSEBACK RIDING HINTS

- Wear safety gear, such as a riding helmet.
- Communicate when passing other trail users. Hikers and mountain bikers should yield to horses, unless riders have a better place to pull off.
- Avoid tying horses to trees, even temporarily. Use a highline with tree-saver straps to tether your horse. Break up and scatter manure and fill in pawed holes.

DIRECTIONS:

From Asheville, NC: Take U.S. 40 W. Take exit 27 onto 19/74. Stay on 19/74 and go past Bryson City. After 5 miles, look for sign on right.

Knoxville, TN: Take TN 411 to Merryville, TN and take NC 129 south to Deals Gap. Take left onto NC 28 south. Sign is 25 miles on left.

From Murphy, NC: Take 19/74 east to Almond, NC. Take NC 28 north. Area is 5 miles on right.

MAP LEGEND

BlueRight Loop

GreenLeft Loop

YellowMouse Branch Loop

RedThompson Loop

OrangeConnector Trails

BlackRoads



Parking



Boat Ramp



Developed Campground



Horse Trailer Parking



Overlook

For more information:

Contact the Cheoah Ranger District, Route 1, Box 16-A, Robbinsville, NC 28721 or 828-479-6431.

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Recreation guide R8-RG207

(Reprint) July 1999

TSALI RECREATION AREA MAP

