

A look back in time

The Tsali Recreation Area is named after a Cherokee Indian who once lived in this area. The U.S. Army captured Tsali and his family during the Cherokee Removal in 1838. Tsali and others escaped from their captors during the march along present day Fontana Lake. During the escape, two soldiers were killed, and Tsali and three family members were later executed for their deeds.

For some, Tsali is a symbol for country and home against the unjust Cherokee Removal. Today the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians resides in and around their ancestral lands, the Qualla Boundary, located 12 miles 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 southern pine beetle significantly impacted the pine forest at Tsali. Many trees were cut to prevent hazards to trail riders. Until new trees grow, many trail borders will be brushy and full of briars.

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. Animals benefiting from these openings are wild turkeys, white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, and rabbits.

TRAIL TIPS

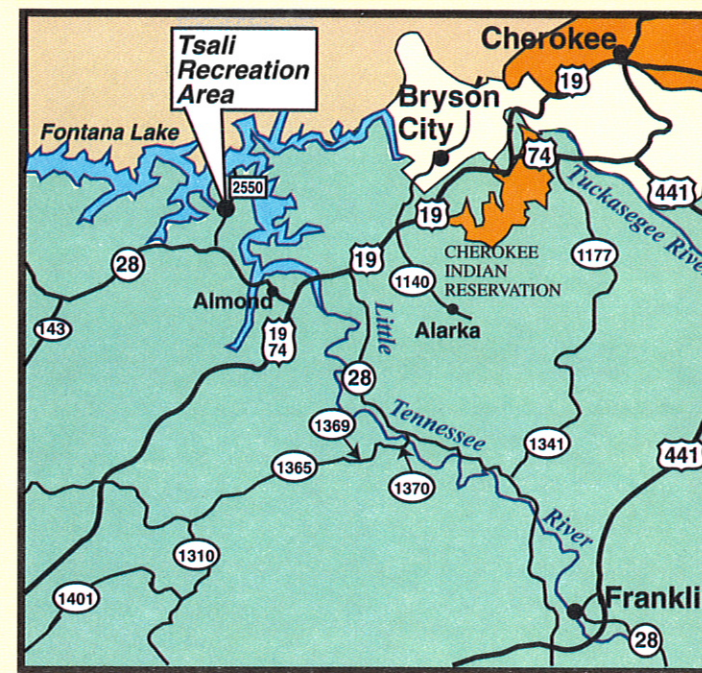
- Please stay on designated trails; stay out of areas closed by signs.
- Keep your pets on a leash that is no longer than 6 feet, and keep them quiet!
- Wear hunter orange during hunting seasons. Carry a first aid kit and know how to use it. Bring a compass and map.

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 to a tree.
- Break up and scatter manure; fill in pawed holes.
- Watch for approaching vehicles or bikes on Forest Service roads.
- To protect water quality, keep horses at least 100 feet from water.
- Equestrians should ride only on designated horse trails, which are noted at trailhead signs.



DIRECTIONS:

FROM ASHEVILLE, NC: Take I-40 west to exit 27 onto U.S. 19/74. Stay on U.S. 74 west to NC 28 west. Turn right and go 5 miles, look for sign on right.
FROM KNOXVILLE, TN: Take U.S. 129 south through Maryville. Stay on U.S. 129 to Deals Gap. Take left onto NC 28 east. Sign is 25 miles on left.
FROM BRYSON CITY: Take U.S. 19 south for 9 miles to NC 28 west. Turn right on NC 28. Go 5 miles and look for sign on right.

FOR MORE DETAILS:

CHEOAH RANGER DISTRICT

1133 Massey Branch Road

Robbinsville, NC 28721

Phone: 828-479-6431

Forest web site: www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc

NC WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION

Phone: 919-622-4370

Web site: www.wildlife.state.nc.us

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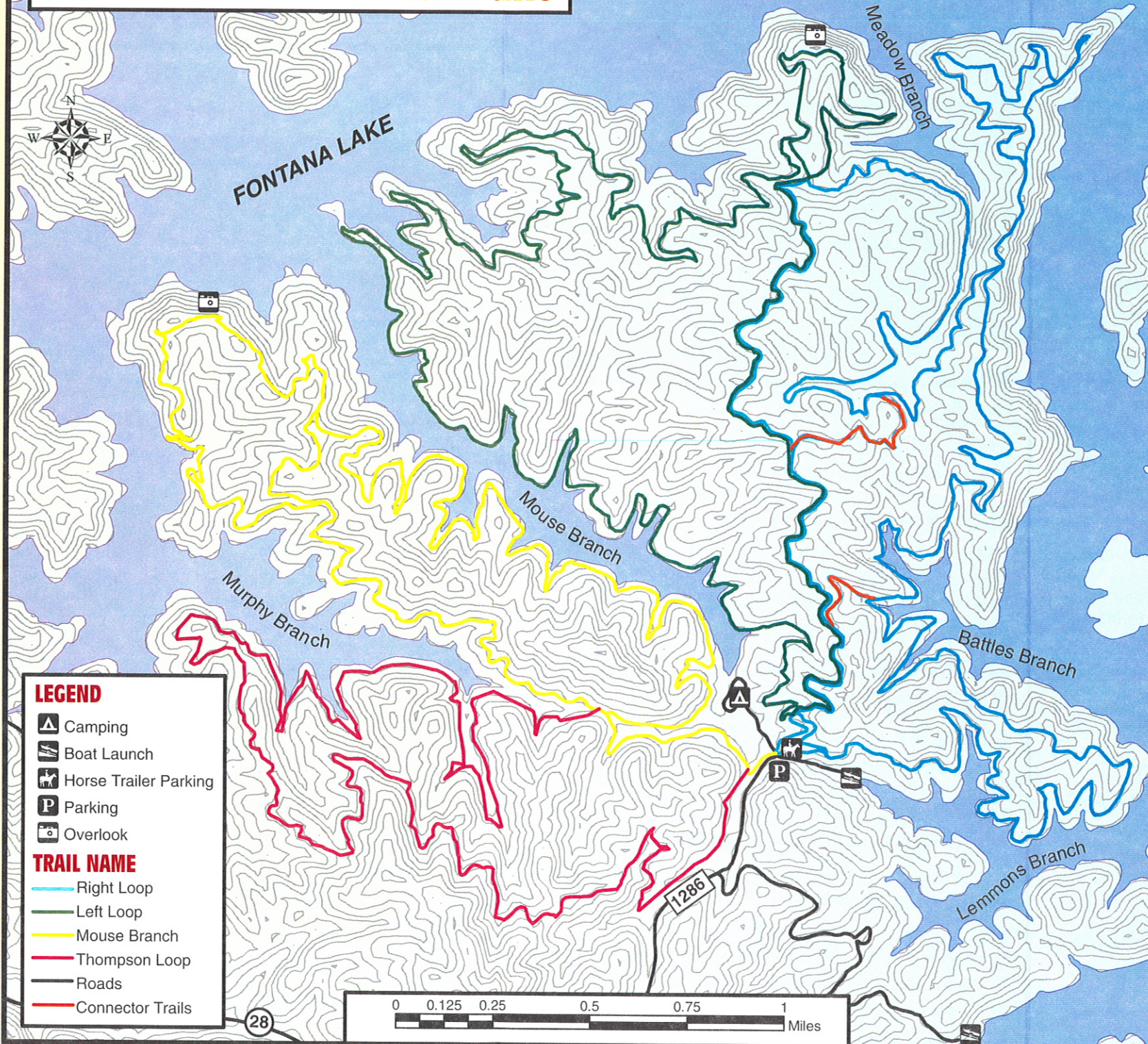
TSALI Recreation Area:

mecca for mountain bikers,
horseback riders



Nantahala National Forest
Cheoah Ranger District
NORTH CAROLINA

Tsali Recreation Area Trails



Tsali offers variety of recreation

Designed for hikers, mountain bikers, and horseback riders, Tsali (Sah-lee) Recreation Area's 4-loop system offers a variety of landscapes. You can climb 1-foot wide rugged paths or travel flat, wide roads. Tsali's trails 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 listed below.

Fees are paid at the trailhead and used for trail improvements at Tsali Recreation Area.

Right Loop

Length: 13.9 miles

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

Schedule: Open to mountain bikes on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and horses on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

Difficulty: Easy

Left Loop

Length: 11.9 miles

Highlights: Single track, creek crossings, views of Smokies and Lake Fontana.

Schedule: Open to mountain bikes on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and horses on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

Difficulty: Moderate

Mouse Branch

Length: 8.7 miles

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

Schedule: Mountain bikes on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday and horses on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Difficulty: Moderate

Thompson Loop

Length: 7.3 miles

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

Schedule: Mountain bikes on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday and horses on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Difficulty: Moderate

TSALI CAMPGROUND: Tsali offers 42 campsites on a first-come, first-served basis for tents, RV's, and trailers. No hookups are provided. A separate camping fee is charged. Showers and flush toilets are available April 15-October 31. Accessible restrooms and campsites are located in the lower loop. The campground is also open in winter at a reduced fee; no water is available.

PARKING & AMENITIES: The trailhead parking lot is for day trail use. Amenities include a restroom, bike-washing station, information board, and picnic tables. The upper parking lot is reserved for horse trailers.

BOATING: Fontana Lake offers flatwater paddling and motor boating. No fee is charged to use the two boat launches located near Lemmons Branch. Ample parking is available.

HUNTING & FISHING: 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. Lake fishing is permitted year-round at Fontana Lake, offering some of the best fishing for walleye in the state. Anglers can also catch black bass, crappie, catfish, and white bass.