



Tsali Recreation Area



Getting Here:

From Bryson City, take US 74 west to NC 28 west. Turn right and go five miles, look for sign on right. The recreation area is approximately two miles north on Forest Road (FR) 1286.

From Robbinsville, take NC 143 to NC 28. Turn right and travel east on NC 28 for approximately nine miles and look for the Tsali Recreation Area sign. The recreation area is about two miles north on FR 1286.

Contact Us:

Cheoah Ranger District
 Nantahala National Forest
 1070 Massey Branch Road
 Robbinsville, NC 28771
 (828) 479-6431
 Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-
 4:30 p.m.
 cheoahrd@fs.fed.us
www.fs.usda.gov/nfsnc



Enjoy mountain biking, horseback riding, fishing, motorized boating, kayaking or camping at Tsali Recreation Area, all located within steps of Fontana Lake.



Follow the Trail. The Tsali (pronounced “SAH-lee”) Recreation Area’s four-loop trail system has become a popular destination for mountain bikers and horseback riders. It is best known as a challenging mountain bike course. Hikers may travel the trails on any day, but mountain bikers and equestrians—the primary users—are kept separated by alternating days on the trails. Be sure to check the trail schedule posted at the trailhead. See page 2 for Trail Tips and a map.

- The **Right Loop**, rated easy, offers 13.9 miles of single track, with shorter 4- and 8-mile loops possible.
- The **Left Loop**, rated moderately difficult, is 11.9 miles of single track with views toward the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Fontana Lake.
- The **Mouse Branch Trail**, rated moderately difficult, is 8.7 miles of single track and includes old logging roads.
- The **Thompson Loop**, rated moderately difficult, is 7.3 miles of single track.

There is a per-person day use fee for trail use. Fees can be paid at either the Tsali Bike or Horse Trailheads.



Sleep under the Stars. Open early April through October, Tsali Campground offers 42 campsites on a first-come, first-served basis. Many sites accommodate small RVs, but no hookups are available. Each campsite has a picnic table, fire ring and lantern post. Accessible flush toilets, hot showers and drinking water are available. Campers pay fees at the campground fee station.

Get in the Water. Fontana Lake offers flatwater paddling and motor boating. One boat launch is located at Tsali, while another is located nearby on FR 2553 at Lemmons Branch. Ample parking is available at either launch. Fishing is permitted year-round, and anglers will find some of the best fishing for walleye in the state. Anglers can also catch black bass, crappie, catfish and white bass.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Trail Tips:

- Please stay on designated trails; stay out of areas closed by signs.
- Keep 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.
- Bring a compass and map.
- Wear safety gear, such as a riding helmet. Bikers should wear eye protection and gloves.
- Communicate when passing other trail users.
- Hikers and mountain bikers should yield to horses.
- “Tread lightly” to avoid erosion and stay on the trails.
- During wet weather, choose a forest road instead of the Tsali trails.
- 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.
- To protect water quality, keep horses at least 100 feet from water.

