

CHEROKEE NATIONAL FOREST



Report: 3—October 9, 2015

* FALL COLOR REPORT

Why Leaves Change Color

The factors that influence autumn leaf color are shorter day lengths, weather (primarily cooler temperatures and less moisture) and changing levels of leaf pigments. The only constant factor from year to year is the shortening day length.

As days become shorter and nights grow longer, biochemical processes in the leaf initiate changing leaf color. All the other factors vary annually, making the prediction of autumn color peak difficult.

Estimated Peak Period

The average peak period of fall color in Cherokee National Forest ranges from mid-late October through early November.

Northern Ranger Districts (Watauga & Unaka) - last two weeks of October.

Southern Ranger Districts (Tellico, Ocoee) – Last week of October and first week of November.



Current Conditions

North Cherokee NF

Unaka & Watauga Districts: A few colors are beginning to show throughout the area. Higher elevations are at approximately 20% of color peak.

South Cherokee NF

Ocoee & Tellico Districts: A hint of color is starting to show throughout the area. Higher elevations are at approximately 15% of color peak.

For more information call:

Forest Supervisor's Office	423-476-9700
Ocoee Ranger District	423-338-3300
Tellico Ranger District	423-253-8400
Unaka Ranger District	423-638-4109
Watauga Ranger District	423-735-1500
Ocoee Whitewater Center	423-496-0100



All photos from 2013 & 2014



Recommended Scenic Viewing Routes

Northeast Tennessee

Paint Creek Corridor – Unaka RD, Greene County, TN

Latitude: 35.977583 - Longitude:-82.843763— Meander along 5-mile Paint Creek Corridor to historic paint Rock. Picnicking and many other recreation opportunities are available along scenic Paint Creek Corridor.



Unaka Mountain Scenic Drive – Unaka RD, Unicoi County, TN

Latitude: 36.117632 - Longitude:-82.333151—From Erwin, this drive makes a circle connecting TN 395, graveled Forest Road 230 and TN 107, a state scenic parkway, past Limestone Cove. The route winds from the valley floor in Unicoi County, TN to high-elevation spruce forests and balds atop Unaka Mountain.

TN State Route 143 to Carver's Gap – Watauga RD, Carter County, TN

Latitude: 36.106911 - Longitude:-82.111158. - This state scenic parkway climbs through Roan Mountain State Park to Carvers Gap, with numerous long-distance mountain vistas, picnic spots, rhododendrons and spruce-fir forests spectacular.

Brush Creek Mountain Loop – Unaka RD, Cocke County, TN

Latitude: 35.964287 - Longitude: -82.943475— Travel along TN 107, Forest Road 209 (some portions are gravel) and US 25/70. FR 209 meanders through a narrow canyon with rhododendron-covered bluffs.

Southeast Tennessee

Ocoee Scenic Byway – Ocoee RD, Polk County TN

Latitude: 35.102244 - Longitude:-84.557121—The first designated national forest scenic byway in the nation includes 26 miles of US 64 and Forest Road 77. The two-lane route winds past Parksville Lake, through the scenic rocky bluffs of Ocoee River Gorge and past the Ocoee Whitewater Center. Take a side trip up the 7-mile Chilhowee Scenic Spur, Forest Road 77, to Chilhowee Recreation Area.



Hiwassee River Road – Ocoee RD, Polk County, TN

Latitude: 35.198842 - Longitude: -84.473566—State Route 30 follows Hiwassee State Scenic River to the historic community of Reliance. Cross the bridge and turn east to Forest Road 108. Climb the mountain to Big Bend and Apalachia Powerhouse. Enjoy the views from Hood Mountain overlook and other spectacular sites along the corridor.

Tellico River Road – Tellico RD, Monroe County, TN

Latitude: 35.323117- Longitude:-84.175768—Take State Route 165 from Tellico Plains to Forest Road 210. The route follows Tellico River past Bald River Falls, where you can pull off to view the magnificent falls. A few miles farther, stop to view pools of teeming trout at historic Pheasant Fields Fish Rearing Pools.

Cherochala Skyway – Tellico RD, Monroe County, TN

Latitude: 35.324505 - Longitude:-84.177268—View some of the best mountain scenery in the world from this 43-mile National Scenic Byway through the Cherokee and Nantahala national forests. Drive along the sparkling rush of the Tellico River, stop at overlooks to take in expansive views of the Tennessee Valley and waves of mountain peaks, hike to high elevation mountain balds or nearby Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest. Stop for a picnic at Indian Boundary Recreation Area.





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National Weather Service Information:

<http://forecast.weather.gov/MapClick.php?lat=36.21&lon=-83.3#.VhURqJiFN9M>

Extended Forecast for Morristown TN (Oct 9 – Oct 12 , 2015)

Friday: A chance of showers before noon, then a chance of showers and thunderstorms between noon and 4pm, then showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm after 4pm. Cloudy, with a high near 76. Light south wind becoming southwest 5 to 10 mph in the morning. Chance of precipitation is 60%.

Friday Night: Showers and possibly a thunderstorm, mainly before 5am, then a chance of showers and thunderstorms after 5am. Low around 57. West wind around 5 mph becoming calm in the evening. Chance of precipitation is 90%.

Saturday: A 30 % chance of showers, mainly before 8am. Cloudy, then gradually becoming mostly sunny, with a high near 66. North wind around 5 mph.

Saturday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 47. Northeast wind around 5 mph.

Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 69.

Sunday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 51.

Columbus Day: Sunny, with a high near 73.

Monday Night: A 40 % chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 55.

When visiting the national forest always be prepared for the unexpected. Don't hesitate to postpone a visit if weather forecasts aren't favorable —be safe and enjoy the outdoors!

For outdoor safety tips visit: http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprd3821151.pdf



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