

Pigeon River Recreation Zone



Nolichucky-Unaka Ranger Station



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Lying between French Broad and Pigeon Rivers, are pockets of backcountry nestled among the rural communities of Cocke County, TN. This area is home to Rocky Top and Catherine Marshall's novel Christy. The vicinity also includes the Martha Sundquist State Forest and a portion of the Foothills Parkway. Major access includes I-40, US 25/70, TN 73 and numerous County roads. The nearest towns are Del Rio, Newport and Cosby, TN and Waynesville, NC. The Tennessee Welcome Center on I-40 near Hartford offers visitor information and picnic facilities.

Get in the Water! A favorite pastime is whitewater rafting on Pigeon River, where local outfitters can help guide your adventure. Canoeing and fishing are popular on French Broad River.

Follow the Trail! Hike across Snowbird Mountain between Max Patch and the Pigeon River on the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (A.T.). A five mile multi-use loop option for equestrians, bikers and hikers includes Mill Creek Road and Stone Mountain Trail #9. Trails in Great Smoky Mountain National Park are nearby.

Go Sightseeing! View what's been called "the best sunrise anywhere" atop Rocky Top Mountain. To get there, you'll need a high clearance vehicle to travel along scenic Forest Road 402. Overlooks along winding Foothills Parkway provide pastoral views. You'll find water-loving birds like herons and kingfishers in the area of Pigeon River known as Pebble Beach. Fish for trout in Gulf Fork and Brown Gap Creek, and view prairie warblers and yellow-breasted chats along the area's dry piney ridges.

Sleep under the Stars! A few miles away, in the Wolf Creek vicinity, is Round Mountain Recreation Area, one of the highest elevation campgrounds in Cherokee National Forest. The altitude, dense rhododendrons and hardwoods, and a small mountain stream, create a cool climate during the hot summer months. Sixteen campsites include picnic tables, fire rings, lantern posts, with potable water and a vault toilet. Remote access along winding, gravel roads might discourage anything besides tent camping and small camping trailers. Big Creek in nearby Great Smoky Mountain National Park offers camping and equestrian facilities.

