

**Southern Region
Cherokee National Forest
October 3, 2011**

Color (or Expectation):



Cherohala Skyway

October 10, 2010

Currently there are very few colors scattered throughout the Forest. There is a slight hint of color change at elevations above 3,500'

The northern portion of the Forest and elevations above 3,500' usually reach the peak of color viewing during the last two weeks of October.

Recommended Viewing Routes:

Northeast Tennessee:

Greeneville - Newport: From Greeneville take State Route 70/107 southeast to where the road splits. Follow State Rt 107 south through Houston Valley and across Brush Creek Mountain to the French Broad River where Rt 107 ends at U.S. Highway 25/70. Turn west (right) and head toward Newport on Hwy 25/70 along the French Broad River.

Elizabethton - Roan Mountain: Traveling from Elizabethton take U.S. Highway 19E/321 east toward Roan Mountain and the North Carolina border. When you get to Hampton you have the option of turning NE on 321 toward Watauga Lake and on to Mountain City via State Route 67; or travel east on Hwy 19E to Roan Mountain. (Hwy 19E is a popular route and traffic could be heavy on weekends during the fall.)

Bristol - Mountain City: From Bristol take U.S. Highway 421 east across South Holston Lake and through Shady Valley toward Mountain City. If you want to extend your trip when you arrive in Mountain City take State Route 67 through Pandora and across Watauga Lake to the intersection of U.S. Hwy 321. From this intersection travel west adjacent to Watauga Lake on Hwy 321 toward Hampton and on to Elizabethton.

A hint of color in the Unaka Ranger District.



FS File Photo: October 12, 2010

Southeast Tennessee:

Ocoee Scenic Byway: The first National Forest Scenic Byway in the nation lives up to its name in the fall of the year. The Byway is located in Polk County, and consists of segments of two roads. Seven miles of the Byway travel up Forest Service Road 77 to Chilhowee Mountain. The remaining 19 miles of the Byway follow U.S. Highway 64 through the Ocoee River Gorge and past the site of the 1996 Olympic Canoe & Kayak events.

Cherohala Skyway: The Skyway travels along U.S. Highway 165 from Tellico Plains, TN to Robbinsville, NC. This route offers spectacular views with elevations reaching over 5,000 feet.

Hiwassee River - Mecca Pike: From U.S. Highway 411 north of Benton take State Route 30 east to Reliance. This route follows the beautiful Hiwassee River. At Reliance take State Route 315 across the River and head north. At the intersection of Mecca Pike (State Rt 310/39) near Jalapa you will have two options. Turn west (left - Route 310) and head toward Etowah and Hwy 411. Or, turn east (right - Route 39) and go toward Tellico Plains.

Estimated Peak Period:

The average peak period of fall color in east Tennessee ranges from the last week in October through the first week in 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.

Temperature:

Weather remains mild in the day and cool in the evening throughout the Forest.

Remarks:



National Fire Prevention Week



October 9-15

Peak periods for the best fall color viewing can vary greatly from year to year.

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 difficult.

Remember, only You can prevent wildfires.

October 9-15 is National Fire Prevention Week. October marks the beginning of the fall wildfire season in east Tennessee. Conditions in the forest this time of year are generally dry and windy. The vast majority of wildfires in the Cherokee National Forest are caused by humans.

Please remember to be safe with fire and never leave your campfire unattended.