

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HAROLD L. ICKES, Secretary
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
ARNO B. CAMMERER, Director

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

Tennessee-North Carolina

Open All Year

Astride the Tennessee-North Carolina border, the Great Smoky Mountains, greatest mountain mass east of the Black Hills of South Dakota, cast a spell of mystery and enchantment. From the lush vegetation of their valleys and extending to the very tops of the lofty peaks, there rises a tenuous mist, a deep blue haze, from which the mountains get their name. Survivals of earliest geological times, they are a portion of the Appalachian Range and one of the oldest land areas on earth.

The Great Smokies, for 36 consecutive miles in the park, are more than 5,000 feet in altitude; 16 peaks are more than 6,000 feet high. The park is 54 miles long; its greatest width is 19 miles. The range meanders through the park for a distance of 71 miles. When acquisition of the land within the park area is completed, the park will comprise approximately 440,000 acres, an area of 687.5 square miles.

HISTORY OF THE PARK

Establishment of the park was authorized by act of Congress approved May 22, 1926. Three decades before that the area was little known to the outside world. De Soto, first white explorer on this continent, is believed to have viewed the mountains. They were the home of the Cherokees, many of whose descendants now occupy the Qualla Indian Reservation on the southern fringe of the park. The white settlers were colonists from England and Scotland, and they lived for generations shut off from the outside.

The move to create a national park was begun in 1899. Since 1926 the land for the park has been gradually acquired by the States of Tennessee and North Carolina, with some Federal aid, in addition to a contribution by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., through the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, in tribute to his mother. A plaque to be installed in the park reads "This park was given one-half by the people and States of North Carolina and Tennessee and by the United States of America and one-half in memory of Laura Spelman Rockefeller by the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial founded by her husband John D. Rockefeller."

FORESTS

The most extensive forest of virgin red spruce and unspoiled hardwoods in the United States is to be found in the park, with nearly half the area, or approximately 200,000 acres, in its original forested condition. Some 129 native tree species have been found in the park. In addition, 18 other varieties, not native, grow here. Listed among the native trees about 20 are

"shrubs" the size of trees. One specimen of mountain laurel is 82 inches in diameter at the base, with limbs 31 and 12 inches in diameter. There are giant chestnut, red maple, buckeye, cherry, silverbell, hemlock, spruce, yellow birch, and tulip poplar.

FLOWERS

The pageant of flowers is unsurpassed. Well over 1,000 plants, including trees and shrubs, have been listed — a larger variety than in any equal area in the temperate zone. From early spring until late fall they present a kaleidoscope of color. The most impressive floral display is in mid-June when the purple rhododendron is in bloom. Also in May, June, and July other rhododendrons, flame azaleas, and laurel glorify the Great Smokies. Innumerable wild flowers carpet the forest all spring and summer, with some varieties painting the landscape even after the gorgeous forest display of autumn.

WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Increasing numbers of bears, deer, smaller furred mammals and birds are returning to the Great Smokies. Wildlife suffered great depletion from unrestrained hunting prior to establishment of the park. Approximately 180 kinds of birds have been identified. Hunting and trapping, of course, are prohibited.

FISHING

There are 600 miles of ideal trout streams in the park. They are being restocked, and the National Park Service plans to make the park the best stream fishing spot in the East. Rainbow and brook trout and small-mouth bass lure the devotees of Izaak Walton. Persons desiring to fish must obtain licenses from Tennessee or North Carolina, or both. Catches are regulated by the National Park Service, and headwater streams may be found closed for restocking. The fishing season is from May 16 to August 31.

ROADS AND TRAILS

There are 56.5 miles of high standard roads in the park, including the trans-park highway from Gatlinburg, Tenn., to Bryson City, N. C., via Cherokee. Clingmans Dome Highway reaches an altitude of 6,311 feet, highest highway in the East. There are 25 miles of secondary roads, and 165 miles of truck trails not open to public motoring. Horse and foot trails total 510 miles.

ADMINISTRATION

Temporary headquarters, J. R. Eakin, Superintendent, are at Gatlinburg, Tenn. The Chief Ranger maintains secondary headquarters at Bryson City, N. C.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Modern campgrounds are provided at Smokemont, N. C. and Chimneys, Tenn., on the trans-park highway. They have water and sanitary facilities. Within the park, privately-owned accommodations now are operated under temporary permit atop Mount LeConte, accessible by foot or horseback only, and at Elkmont. Hotel and tourist camp facilities are available in all the cities and towns fringing on the park and in Knoxville and Asheville.

RULES TO BE OBSERVED

Please help to keep the park clean. Do not scatter papers, picnic remnants, etc.; throw all trash into receptacles in picnic areas and campgrounds.

It is unlawful to disturb flowers, shrubs or trees, to mar or deface signs or buildings, to carve initials on any object. Do not throw stones or other material over the banks or at trees, birds or other objects in the park.

Speed limit is 35 miles per hour on highways, 20 miles per hour on secondary roads. Drive carefully. Report all accidents in the park to a ranger.

Persons desiring to camp in remote sections of the park can secure permits from the office of the Superintendent or from rangers or wardens. Camping or building of fires except at designated camp or picnic grounds is prohibited. Auto camping is permitted only on campgrounds designated by signs, and camping permits are not needed. Camping at campgrounds is restricted to periods not in excess of two weeks. Individual camping sites are provided with fireplaces and free wood supply.

Extinguish fires completely before leaving. Be sure cigarettes and matches are extinguished before disposal. Lunches may be eaten along roadsides, but do not build fires there.

Cats are not permitted in the park. Dogs must be held on leash. Do not feed the bears.

HOW TO SEE THE PARK

By Automobile. The park highways offer exceptional opportunities to view the grandeur of the Great Smokies. The trans-park highway crosses the mountain range and there are spur roads to trails leading to many points of interest. Most popular and spectacular drive is from Gatlinburg or Smokemont to Newfound Gap, thence along Clingmans Dome Highway to Forney Ridge parking area. A paved trail one-half mile long leads to Clingmans Dome, where a complete panorama of 200 square miles is afforded from the tower atop the mountain. A one-day circle tour will give visitors a magnificent view of the park.

By Horseback or Hiking. The park is a paradise for hikers. The ascent of Mount LeConte is especially recommended. The Appalachian Trail, the old Indian trail from Maine to Georgia, runs atop the Great Smokies and all of its length within the park can be traveled by horseback, although with some difficulty in the western half. Some of the most popular hiking and horseback tours are: Cherokee Orchard Trail via Rainbow Falls or Bullhead Mountain to Mount LeConte; Newfound Gap Trail via The Boulevard to Mount LeConte; from Newfound Gap to Mount Kephart Jumpoff and Charles Bunion; hikes from Bryson City to Deep Creek, Andrews Bald and Clingmans Dome.

HOW TO REACH THE PARK

Paved highways from all States converge at Asheville, N. C., and Knoxville, Tenn. Bus lines maintain service to both cities. The Southern Railway and the Louisville and Nashville Railroad serve Knoxville. The Southern also serves Asheville. From Knoxville bus service is available to Gatlinburg, where local transportation may be secured. Bus service is available at Asheville to Waynesville and Bryson City.

GUIDE MAP

GREAT SMOKY
MOUNTAINS
NATIONAL PARK

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