

# Tsali Recreation Area



## Getting Here:

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 approximately two miles north on FR 1286.

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 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.

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 (Sah-lee)

Recreation Area's four-loop trail system is 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 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 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 40 campsites on a first-come, first-served basis. Many can 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. Lake fishing is permitted year-round, offering some of the best fishing for walleye in the state. Anglers can also catch black bass, crappie, catfish and white bass.

- Please stay on designated trails; stay out of areas closed by signs.
- Keep pets on leashes no longer than 6 feet and keep them quiet.
- Wear hunter orange during hunting seasons, including orange on pets.
- Bring a compass and map and carry a first aid kit.
- 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.

**GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS  
NATIONAL PARK**

**FONTANA LAKE**

**MOOSE  
BRANCH  
LOOP**

**LEFT  
LOOP**

**RIGHT  
LOOP**

**THOMPSON  
LOOP**



Map by Ron Johnson©  
2000-2017  
[www.TailoftheDragon.com](http://www.TailoftheDragon.com)

**to Stecoah and  
Robbinsville**



**Tsali  
Recreation  
Area**