

# Cherokee Hiking Club Trail Blurb

## Warrior's Passage National Recreation Trail Cherokee National Forest Trail #164

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Distance: 6.2 miles

**Elevation Change:** 2280 feet

**High Point:** 3692 feet (Waucheesi Mountain)

**Low Point:** 1412 feet (Wildcat Creek)

**Trail Rating:** Moderately Strenuous (NW to SE) or Moderate (SE to NW) (please refer to our trail difficulty rating system on our website)

**Parking:** A shuttle is recommended. Leave one car on Lyons Creek Road (AKA Old Furnace Road) at the west end of the trail and then drive to the top of Waucheesi Mountain and park on the bald with the radio tower near the primitive campsite.

**Driving Directions to the Lyon's Creek Road (Old Furnace Road) Trailhead:** From the Tellico Ranger Station, drive west toward Tellico Plains on the Tellico River Road 0.5 miles to the Cherohala Skyway, then follow the Skyway west for 3.0 miles, then turn left onto Lyons Creek Road (FS 76) (AKA Old Furnace Road) across the Cherohala Skyway from the Tellico Beach Drive-In. On some maps this road is labeled as Old Furnace Road and the sign along the Skyway is labeled Old Furnace Road as well. From TN 68, this intersection is 2.2 miles east up the Skyway (TN 165). Follow FS 76 for 3.0 miles to a sign which marks the start of the trail. There is not much parking available at the Lyons Creek Road Trailhead, but there are some good pullovers a short way down the road past the trailhead. Just find a suitable spot which allows other cars to easily pass.

**Driving Directions to Waucheesi Bald Trailhead:** From the Tellico Ranger Station, drive directly across the Tellico River Road over the bridge onto Wildcat Creek Road (FS 384) for 6.1 miles to a left turn onto the Bald River Road (FS 126). Follow Bald River Road 2.8 miles to Basin Gap. Make a sharp right onto the Waucheesi Mountain Road (FS 126C) and follow this road 1.7 miles to the top of the mountain. This is a narrow steep gravel road with sharp turns. Parking at the top is ample in the open bald near the site of the old firetower. On the site of the firetower is now a microwave repeater tower. This area is often used by campers or hikers on the Benton MacKaye Trail which is accessed a half mile south of the bald down the south slope of the mountain. The BMT is a 300 mile long distance hiking trail from Springer Mountain in Georgia (the start of the Appalachian Trail) to the north end of the Smokies and is maintained by the Benton MacKaye Trail Association ([www.bmta.org](http://www.bmta.org)). While driving from the ranger station to Waucheesi Bald, you cross the Warrior's Passage Trail twice, on Wildcat Road 5.6 miles from the Tellico River, and on the Bald River Road 0.2 miles from the left turn off Wildcat Road onto Bald River Road. Also, the trail intersects the Waucheesi Mountain Road 0.9 miles from Basin Gap, just 0.8 miles from the bald. There is no good parking where the trail meets this road. Thus we recommend you start your hike at the top of the bald and hike the 0.8 miles down the road to where the trail leaves the road. This also affords you excellent views off the side of Waucheesi Mountain from the bald and along the road down to the trail intersection.

**Trail Description:** From the bald, hike 0.8 miles down the Waucheese Mountain Road to where the trail leaves the road. The bald itself and the hike down the road offers majestic views of the surrounding mountain ridges, many of which exceed 5000 feet in elevation. At mile 0.8, leave the road down a steep slope off the edge of the road to the left. A post with the Warrior's Passage symbol marks the start of the trail. The trail quickly levels out and descends the steep slope of the mountain in a series of switchbacks in mature hardwoods. At mile 1.5, the trail enters an area of pine recovery after a forest fire in the late 1990s; thus the trees recovering are over 10 years old and are growing very densely. The trail forms a tunnel through this dense pine foliage. Many old dead pine trees are still standing and you may have to cross over some of these trees if high winds have knocked them down since the last trail maintenance. At mile 1.8, you again enter a mixed pine and hardwood forest down a steep ridgeline between Tobe Creek on your right and Rocky Branch on your left. At mile 2.1, you reach Mule Pen Gap and cross a gated forest service road right by the gate. From here you skirt along the north side of a ridge then travel down the ridgeline to a crossing over Tobe Creek at mile 3.3. At mile 3.6 you cross Bald River Road and head uphill through another heavily burned over area of more recent vintage. These areas of forest were burned over in the late 90's. These areas afford great views and an opportunity to see a forest recovering after a fire. These fires caused closure of the trail until 2008 when the trail was reopened after many hours of labor by volunteers. After crossing the ridgeline, the unburned forest returns and the trail heads downhill to cross over Wildcat Creek Road at mile 4.0. The trail heads more or less north for a ways, somewhat paralleling the road, then leaves the road and heads downhill to Wildcat Creek. Cross Wildcat Creek at mile 5.3. In high water this crossing may be difficult and dangerous since this is a fairly large but beautiful creek. Expect to get your feet wet even at times of low water. There is an excellent campsite on the west side of the creek. Follow the trail to its end uphill to the Lyons Creek (Old Furnace) Road at mile 6.3.

**Camping:** Three excellent campsites are along the trail. The first is on top of Waucheese Mountain. This is an open grassy field with a 360 degree view of the surrounding mountains. No water is available. In times of inclement weather, care should be exercised due to the exposure of the site. High winds and lightning are possible. The second is Twin Springs Campsite a short ways down the Waucheese Mountain Road from the bald at the first switchback. This site is wooded with an excellent spring just to the east of the campsite. The third is on the west side of Wildcat Creek. Water is readily available from the creek. Camping is also possible along Tobe Creek, but there is no established campsite. Pack out your trash. Please pick up trash left by others as well. Wash dishes at least 100 feet away from running water. No soap in the creek. Use cat holes. Be sure fires are completely out before leaving the site.

**Water:** Water is available at Tobe Creek and Wildcat Creek as well as the spring at Twin Springs Campsite. Water should be sterilized.

**Cell phones:** Cell phone service is spotty in the Tellico Ranger District of the Cherokee National Forest, but good service is available in Tellico Plains. Emergency is 9-1-1.

**History of the Trail:** This trail was first designed and constructed by Boy Scouts and Scouters from the Great Smoky Mountain Council, BSA (Knoxville, TN) in 1966. The trail fell into disuse in the late 1990s after fires destroyed much of the trail corridor. The trail was reopened back up in 2008 and is now maintained by CNF volunteers. The trail follows what is believed to be one of the routes used by the Cherokee to cross the mountains. There were many Warrior's Passages across the Appalachian Mountains and several became pioneer routes, then later became established roads and trail corridors.

**Trail Maintenance:** This and other trails in the Tellico Ranger District of the Cherokee National Forest are maintained by volunteers. If you would like to volunteer, contact the Tellico Ranger Station at 423-253-8400 (250 Ranger Station Road, Tellico Plains, TN 37385, [lesliemsmith@fs.fed.us](mailto:lesliemsmith@fs.fed.us)). If you see something which needs the attention of the trail maintainers, please contact the ranger station.

Updated January 8, 2009

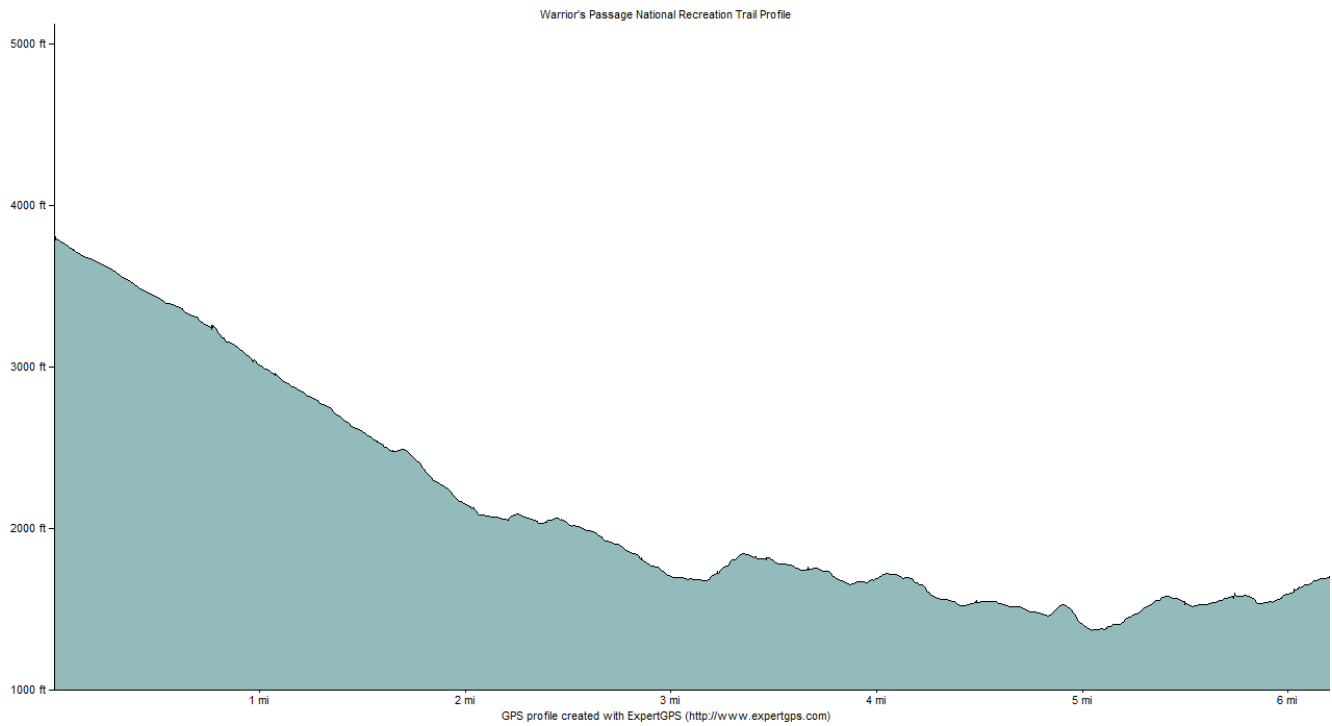
This trail blurb was developed by the Cherokee Hiking Club, 2359 Varnell Road, Cleveland, TN 37311. For more information, check out our website at [www.CherokeeHikingClub.org](http://www.CherokeeHikingClub.org)



# Cherokee Hiking Club Trail Blurb

## Warrior's Passage National Recreation Trail Profile

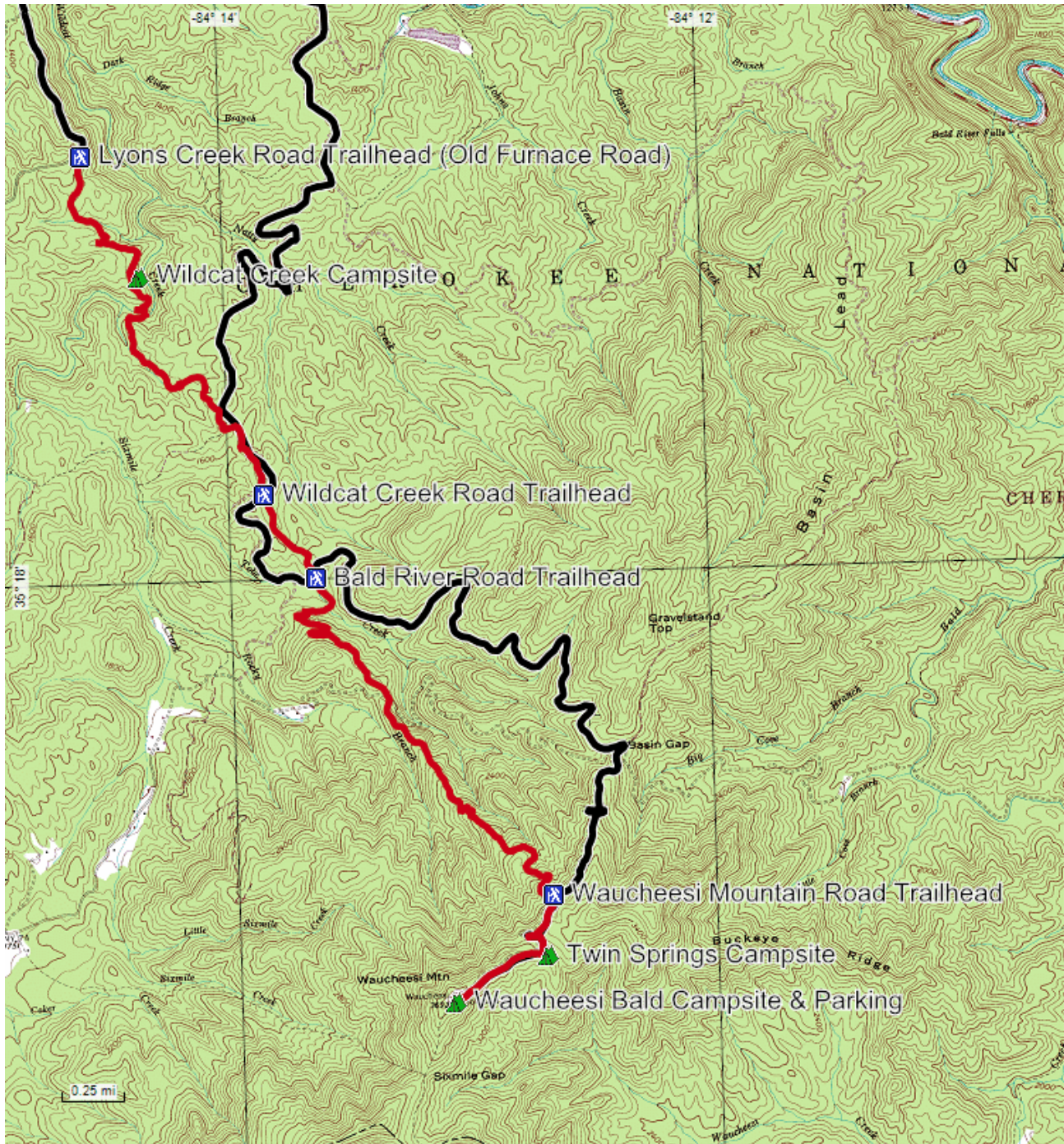
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## Warrior's Passage National Recreation Trail





# Cherokee Hiking Club Trail Blurb

## Warrior's Passage National Recreation Trail Road Access Map

