

CHEROKEE Skyway

CONNECTING WESTERN NORTH
CAROLINA TO EASTERN TENNESSEE



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GRAHAMCOUNTYTRAVEL.COM

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Graham County Travel & Tourism
 Your Western North Carolina Adventure Begins Here
 12 N. Main St.
 Robbinsville, NC 28771

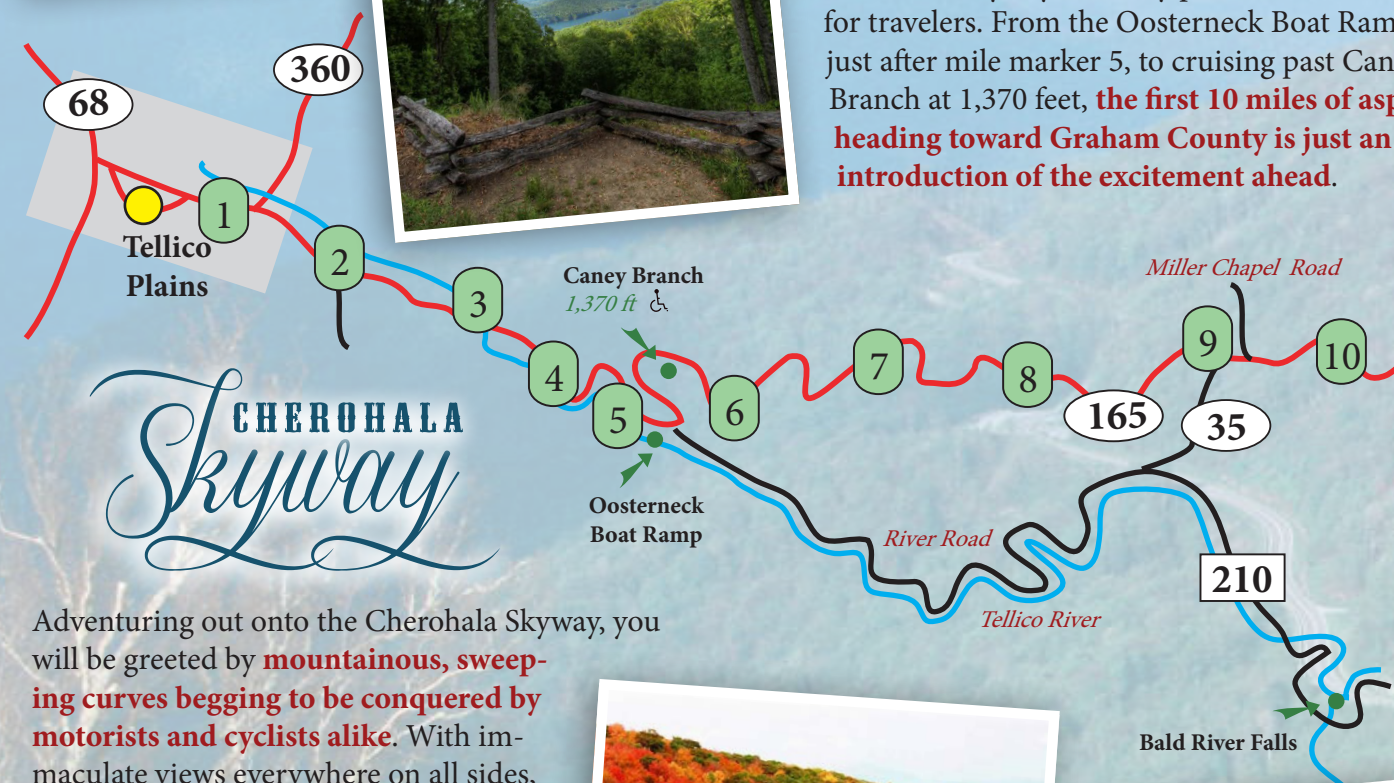
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First 10 Miles Of Your Skyway Adventure

The vintage, East Tennessee, mountain town of Tellico Plains acts as the gateway to the Cherohala Skyway. Beginning in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains and heading eastbound, the first 10 miles of the Cherohala Skyway offer key points for travelers. From the Oosterneck Boat Ramp just after mile marker 5, to cruising past Caney Branch at 1,370 feet, **the first 10 miles of asphalt heading toward Graham County is just an introduction of the excitement ahead.**



Adventuring out onto the Cherohala Skyway, you will be greeted by **mountainous, sweeping curves begging to be conquered by motorists and cyclists alike.** With immaculate views everywhere on all sides, whipping around the pavement becomes a treat for any traveller. Before beginning your journey onto the Cherohala, **be sure to gas up the car, get the kids to the bathroom, and pack a couple of snacks;** this remote drive does not have any gas stations to stop at. Just off the beginning of the Skyway on the Tennessee side sits the mountain tributary of the Little Tennessee known as the Tellico River. Renowned for the variety of trout flourishing in the waters, the river rises in the westernmost mountains of N.C.

Continuing the Skyway From Mile Marker 11 Until Mile Marker 20

Right after mile marker 16 on the Skyway sits a picnic and rest area at Turkey Creek. The overlooks have picnic tables and beautiful views from the Appalachians over the Tennessee River Valley. The **perfect stopping point for pictures above the clouds with cascading mountains in the background,** the Cherohala Skyway continues to climb east toward North Carolina. The last five miles of the Tennessee side of the road features various trailheads and hiking opportunities. From Eagle Gap to East Rattlesnake Rock, the last trailhead on the Tennessee side of the Cherohala Skyway, each stop promises to carry adventure and intrigue.

Last 10 Miles Before Entering N.C.

Crossing the state line, Stratton Ridge, sitting at 4,420 feet above sea level offers a great photo opportunity and the perfect place to stretch and enjoy a picnic. Various trailheads are scattered throughout the first 10 miles of the North Carolina side including Mud Gap, Huckleberry Knob and Hooper Bald. **A quarter-mile hike leads to Hooper Bald, near the site of the old hunting preserve where many exotic species, including the Russian boar, were imported by George Moore in 1908.** Just before mile marker 7 of the North Carolina road sits Santeetlah, which at 5,390 feet, is just over a mile-high and stands the highest overlook on the skyway.



The Road Less Traveled
If you're up for a challenge and have a 4-wheel drive that can handle it, following the banks of the Tellico River, **River Road (FR210)**, takes you away from the more traveled path of the Cherohala Skyway and into the unknown. This paved forest service road takes you to **North River Road (FR217)**, where the real journey begins. This gravel road takes sharp cutbacks as you make the rather steep climb toward the North Carolina state-line.

Passing under the Cherohala Skyway at 4,300 feet, FR217 turns into **FR81, or Santeetlah Creek Road**, also known to the locals as the old Wagon Train Road. This road enters North Carolina in Stratton Meadows. Named for one of the areas first inhabitants, the Stratton family's history is embedded along the skyway. Most notorious, legends say that upon his death, Absolum Stratton requested to be buried on the state-line because he loved both Tennessee and North Carolina equally. His family respected his wishes and buried him with his head in Carolina and his feet in Tennessee. His grave is one of the many landmarks along the skyway. Descending toward Graham County, FR81 meanders alongside Big Santeetlah Creek, home of pristine trout fishing spots waiting to challenge your skills. With side roads to adventure such as Wolf Laurel Road, an area seemingly frozen in time, this gravel road is rich in history. The road brushes back to reality at Santeetlah Gap bringing you just a short drive away from Robbinsville. **The Santeetlah Creek Road closes for the season from January 1 to March 31.**