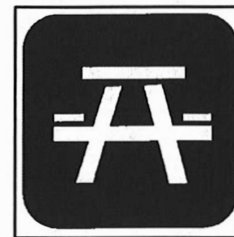


# Cherokee National Forest

## Tennessee



## The Laurels Picnic Area

Southern Region, USDA Forest Service

November 2019

### Overview

The Laurels has been a popular area since the early days in East Tennessee. It was a common evening stopover for farmers from North Carolina taking produce to markets in Johnson City. The site is named for the native *Rhododendron* that thrives in the area, locally called "laurel." The Civilian Conservation Corps helped construct the current facilities in the early 1930s. Today, it is a popular day-use area, providing a nice shady place for family picnics and group gatherings.

### Other Opportunities

The Laurels is close to Johnson City, Elizabethton, and the Unicoi-Erwin area. Picnicking at this historic and scenic destination has provided many people their first National Forest experience. Forest roads in the vicinity offer berry picking in season and other dispersed recreation opportunities.

### For More Information

Watauga Ranger District  
4400 Unicoi Drive  
Unicoi, TN 37692  
(423) 735-1500  
[www.fs.usda.gov/cherokee](http://www.fs.usda.gov/cherokee)  
(Recreation Tab)

(The Ranger Station is located at Exit 32 off I-26 in Unicoi.)

**Directions:** From Johnson City, take I-26 East to Okalona exit. Turn left, drive under I-26 to TN 359. Turn left, back toward Johnson City for 0.2 miles. Turn right onto TN 359. Travel 1.4 miles, then turn right onto TN 361 for 3.7 miles to The Laurels.

**LATITUDE:** N 36° 14' 54"

**LONGITUDE:** W 082° 16' 07"

**Site Information:** There are several picnic tables and two pavilions with two tables in each.

**Site Amenities:** Pedestal grills, trash cans and vault toilets are on site. A small stream runs through the area, and shade is provided by large hemlock and white pine trees.

**Fee Information:** There is no fee for general use. Pavilions may be reserved in advance for \$30.00/day, each. Go to [Recreation.gov](http://Recreation.gov) or call 1-877-444-6777 to make reservations.

**Requirements:** General picnicking is on a first-come, first-served basis. See information board on site for a complete list of regulations. Day-use only. No alcoholic beverages allowed.

**Safety:** Take care when turning into The Laurels and exiting back onto TN 361. Sight distances are short. Bluffs at back of picnic area are dangerous.

**Season:** Usually mid-March to mid-October. Call Ranger Station for current information.

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