

Cherokee Hiking Club Trail Blurb

Falls Branch Falls Trail #87

Tellico Ranger District - Cherokee National Forest

Distance: 1.3 miles

Elevation Change: 523 feet

High Point: 3977 feet (Cherohala Skyway)

Low Point: 3454 feet (Falls Branch Crossing)

Trail Rating: Moderate (please refer to our trail difficulty rating system on our website)

Parking: Parking is available along the Cherohala Skyway between mile post 22 and 23 on the Tennessee Side. The trail exits the parking area at the lower left corner.

Driving Directions to the Rattlesnake Rock Parking Lot along the Cherohala Skyway: Follow the Cherohala Skyway from Tellico Plains to about a half mile past mile post 22. The parking area is a stone walled paved parking lot on the left side of the Skyway and can hold about a dozen cars.

Trail Description: From the Rattlesnake Rock Parking Area, head down the trail at the lower left end of the parking area. Hike just a 100 feet or so to a split in the trail. The Falls Branch Trail #87 turns left at this intersection. The Jeffrey Hell Trail #196 is to the right. Take the left branch, which follows an old closed forest road, for 0.9 miles. The trail along this old road gradually loses elevation and crosses Laurel Branch at about mile 0.7. Also make note of the huge hollowed out knobby tree along the left side of the trail at about mile 0.5. This makes a great photo op with your child inside the tree trunk. Also, all along this trail are many huge trees which were never logged out. Some of the largest buckeye and yellowwood trees I have ever seen outside of the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest can be found along this trail. At mile 0.9, the trail leaves the old road bed at a sharp right turn. The trail goes up the right side of the old road cut, then steeply heads downhill dropping 225 feet in the next 0.3 miles where you cross Falls Branch. There are some easily negotiable but potentially slippery rocks which aid your crossing, and hopefully you will keep your feet dry. You can hear the roar of the falls upstream. Follow the trail through a rock crevice and up the creek for another tenth of a mile to reach the falls 1.3 miles from the parking lot. The falls are about 80 feet high, ending in a shallow plunge pool at the base. There are several cascades downstream of the falls which can be dangerous for children and pets. Keep your children and pets under control. This is a great place for lunch, a shower, and for just lazing around for an hour or so. After your visit, you must return the way you came, a 2.6 mile round trip.

The trail is almost entirely within the Citico Creek Wilderness of the Cherokee National Forest. Please limit your group size to 12 or less and use Leave No Trace principles.

Camping: No designated campsites are available along the trail. There is evidence of camping near the falls, but this campsite does not meet Leave No Trace guidelines since it is within 200 feet of the creek. Please do not camp here.

Water: Water is available at the point the trail crosses Laurel Branch about mile 0.8 and also from Falls Branch near the falls.

Leave No Trace: Please observe LNT ethics. Do not remove any plants or damage any trees. Be sure to pack out any trash. There are no established campsites. Do not start any campfires.

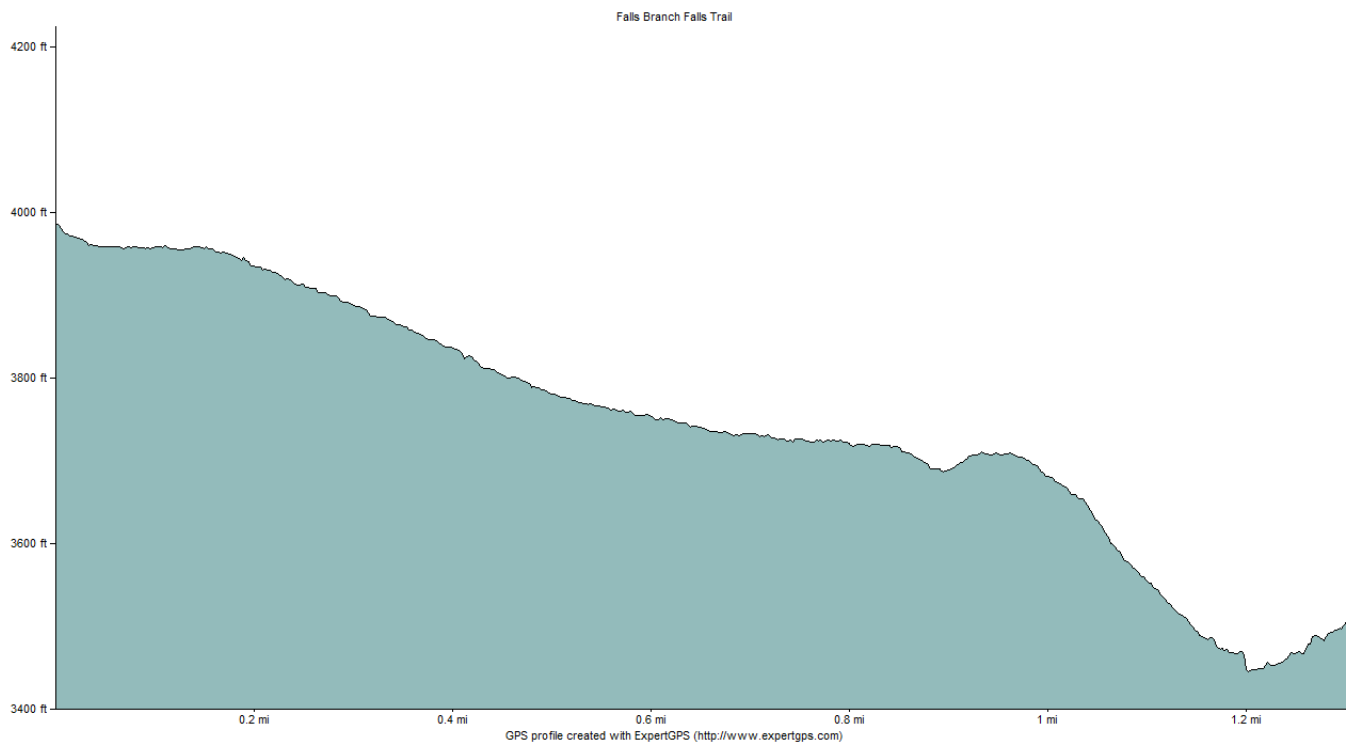
Cell phones: Cell phone service is spotty in the Tellico Ranger District of the Cherokee National Forest, but good service is available in Tellico Plains. Emergency is 9-1-1. You are unlikely to have cell phone service in the deep gorge down by the falls. So be careful. Calling for emergency help is not an option.

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). If you see something which needs the attention of the trail maintainers, please contact the ranger station.

Updated March 22, 2010

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

Trail Profile



This profile is from the parking area to the falls.

Cherokee Hiking Club Trail Blurb

Falls Branch Falls Trail #87

Tellico Ranger District – Cherokee National Forest

