

Cherokee Hiking Club Trail Blurb



Trail to Nell's Cabin Site Cheoah Ranger District Nantahala National Forest

Distance: 1.9 miles each way, 3.8 miles round trip

Elevation Change: 240 feet

High Point: 2020 feet (about halfway along the old roadbed)

Low Point: 1780 feet (Nell's Cabin)

Trail Rating: Easy S>N, easy N>S (please refer to our trail difficulty rating system on our website)

Parking: Parking is available at the forest service gate at the start of the trail (N 35.42981 W 83.69538). Reach this site by following NC 28 from its intersection with NC 143 (the road to Robbinsville via Stecoah Gap) for about 3 miles west, about a mile past the Tuskegee Motel, to a right turn onto Lower Tuskegee Road. If you go past the Hike Inn, you have gone too far. Turn around and go back 0.3 miles. Follow this road to the end of the pavement, then go left and follow this gravel road to the top of a hill in a clearing. You will see a forest service gate to the left. Park near the gate but do not block it. The ungated road continues also up to the right to private property. Do not go this way. Park by the FS gate (N 35.42934 W 83.69562).

Trail Description: This trail is an old gated forest service road and is not maintained, so expect downfalls. However, the trail stays fairly open and easy to follow because it is totally in hardwoods on a north facing slope. The trail starts at the FS gate (N 35.42934 W 83.69562). Head gently up the road to a clearing at the ridgeline where an old road intersects from the left (N 35.42816 W 83.70056). Some of the filming was done at this site. Bear to the right and follow the road to another intersection of old roads (N 35.42775 W 83.70346). Follow the main road to the right. Follow this road gently downhill past the helicopter landing site (N 35.4372 W 83.70066) then on down to the clearing at the end of the road close to the lake. Follow the short trail toward the lake to the old cabin site (N 35.43679, W 83.7028). On the way down the trail, note the active spring where you can get clean water which still you should sterilize to avoid possible Giardia. If you are into Geocaching (www.geocaching.com) there is a geocache close to the cabin site.

Water: Water is available from Fontana Lake and the spring at the old cabin site. Please filter or otherwise sterilize.

Cell phones: Cell phone service is spotty in the Nantahala National Forest, but good service is available in Robbinsville. Emergency is 9-1-1.

Points of Interest: This trail follows an old dirt roadbed from the forest service gate down to the lakeshore in a secluded cove where Nell's Cabin used to be located (N 35.43679, W 83.7028). There are still some foundation stones at the site and some detritus from the filming done in 1994 or before for the making of the movie *Nell*, starring Jodie Foster ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nell_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nell_(film))). The cabin was destroyed by the forest service for safety reasons, since it was a shell building and not built to be very sturdy. The outside scenes were filmed at this site. The indoor scenes were filmed at a home just north of Robbinsville on NC 143 toward Stecoah Gap. The Robbinsville Visitor



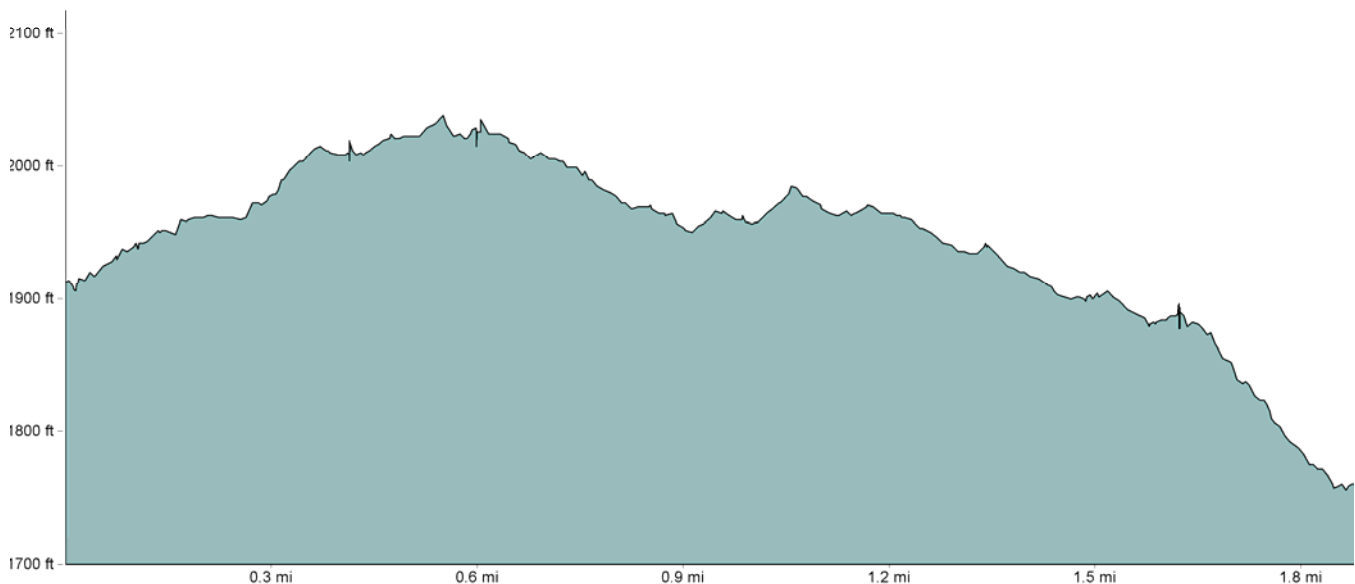
Center across from the county court house is the current occupant of the building used for the lawyer's office, and the bar in the movie is a block west from the visitor center, now a boarded up building. At the cabin site, on the road on the way down you can see the site of the motorcycle scenes and the site used for the helicopter landings. The crews mostly accessed the site by houseboat on Fontana Lake and moored their houseboat out of site around the point to the left. This houseboat is in several of the scenes in the movie. The rocks where Nell swam were fake rocks and are not visible, but were on the right bank about halfway toward the point. In the background you can see the Shuckstack Firetower in the backdrop of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Trail Maintenance: This is an unmaintained forest service road of the Nantahala National Forest often used by hunters, horses, 4-wheelers, and hikers. Thus the roadway stays fairly open without any true maintenance. If you would like to volunteer for trail maintenance in the Nantahala National Forest in the region, contact Scott Haas at the Cheoah Ranger District at 828-479-6431 x 4102.

Updated February 9, 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. Thanks to my son David Harris who came up with the idea of this trail blurb and geocache after watching the movie.

Nell's Cabin Trail Profile



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