

# Cherokee Hiking Club Trail Blurb

## Basin Lead Trail Tellico Ranger District Cherokee National Forest

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**Distance:** 6.1 miles

**Elevation Change:** 1509 feet

**High Point:** 2977 feet (near Gravelstand Top)

**Low Point:** 1468 feet (Basin Creek crossing)

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

**Parking:** Parking is available at Miller Cemetery for 10 or more cars and at Basin Gap for 6 or 7 cars. Miller Cemetery is reached by turning south off the Tellico River Road across from the Tellico Ranger Station onto Wildcat Road, immediately crossing the Tellico River, and traveling 3.2 miles, then turning left onto the Miller Cemetery Road. The cemetery is 2 miles down this road. Park by the forest service gated road. The trail goes down the gated road by the cemetery. It is not signed or blazed. Basin Gap is reached by continuing down Wildcat Road another 3 miles (6.3 miles from Tellico River Road), then turning left onto Bald River Road and following this road another 2.8 miles to the gap at the top. Park to the left or right side of the gap being sure not to block traffic. The trail goes up to the left (north) at the gap and is not signed or blazed.

**Trail Description:** This trail is not maintained, so expect downfalls and brambles. However, the trail stays fairly open and easy to follow because of the horse traffic it receives. This trail follows a ridgeline along the west boundary of the Bald River Gorge Wilderness. We recommend hiking this trail from Basin Gap to Miller Cemetery to avoid the 1500 foot climb going the opposite direction. From Basin Gap (N 35° 17.401 W 84° 12.366) directly across from where the Waucheesi Firetower Road intersects the Bald River Road, the trail first heads moderately uphill along the east flank of Gravelstand Top for about a half mile, then follows Basin Lead on the ridgeline for the most part gently downhill for another 3.2 miles. At mile 1.9 (N 35° 18.369 W 84° 11.122), the trail takes a sharp left. A faint old logging road continues straight, so be careful at this intersection. The trail becomes a true trail at this point for about a half mile rather than an old logging roadbed. The trail skirts around the west side of an impressive rock outcrop at mile 2.1, then intersects an old logging road at mile 2.3 (N 35° 18.544 W 84° 11.171). Turn right onto this old logging road and follow it for another 0.2 miles to another important intersection at mile 2.5 (N 35° 18.664 W 84° 11.181). The old road clearly turns sharp left, but a segment of the old trail went straight ahead on an old logging road which may not be very obvious unless you are really looking for it. Stay on the obvious logging road which goes to the left and continue around the west flank of the ridge. The trail leaves the ridgeline at mile 3.5, cutting down the west flank of the ridge and reaching a crossing of Basin Creek at mile 5.3. From here the trail goes gently uphill along the Basin Creek drainage, the steeply uphill for the last half mile up to Miller Cemetery (N 35° 18.956 W 84° 12.389).

**Camping:** Primitive leave no trace camping ([www.LNT.org](http://www.LNT.org)) is available most anywhere along the trail. There are no established campsites. A nice flat area in a gap north of Gravelstand Top but without any closeby water is a great place to camp (N 35° 18.153 W 84° 11.508).

**Water:** Water is available from Basin Creek and from a few seasonal springs on the trail heading southeast up the west flank of Basin Lead after crossing Basin Creek.

**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.

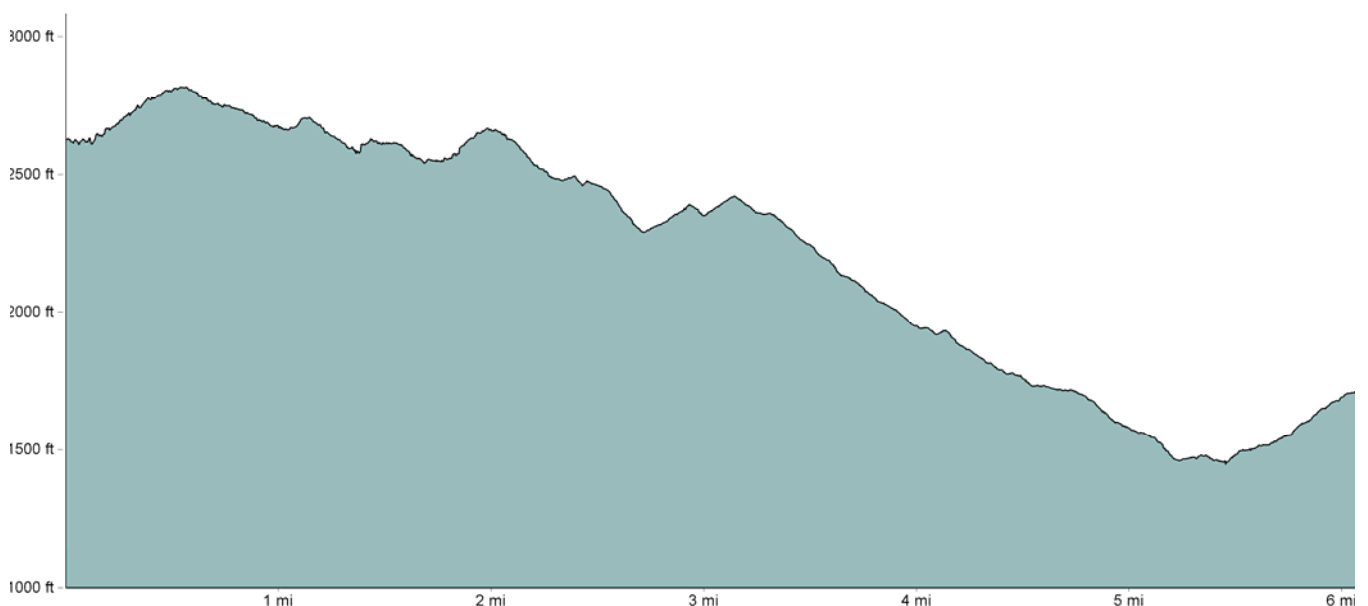
**Points of Interest:** This trail for the most part follows old logging roads. Directly across from the Basin Gap Trailhead is the Waucheesi Firetower Road which leads to the top of Waucheesi Bald with a great 360 degree view of the surrounding mountains. The firetower is now gone, replaced by communications towers. As you drive up the firetower road, you will pass by the trailhead for the Warriors Passage National Recreation Trail, a great closeby hiking trail. At the north end of the Basin Lead Trail is Miller Cemetery. There are several graves of many of the original settlers to this area.

**Trail Maintenance:** This is an unmaintained trail which was decommissioned a few years ago when the footbridge over the Tellico River was washed out. The trail will not be found on the current *Trails Illustrated* maps since it has been decommissioned. But the trail is generally easy to follow and remains fairly open and free of downfalls because of the horse traffic. The route shown on this map ends at Miller Cemetery rather than following the original route to the Tellico River crossing shown on old *Trails Illustrated* maps. There is discussion about possibly in the future rerouting the original trail near to Tellico River to follow the south bank upstream to the Tellico River Road bridge a short distance downstream from Bald River Falls, thus linking up close to the start of the Bald River Trail. For now, we recommend the route shown on this map.

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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)

## Basin Lead Trail Profile



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