

# *Furs* to FACTORIES

## 5. Coker Creek Welcome Center



This mountain community was the site of a major gold strike in the 1820's. It was also a stop along the Unicoi Turnpike where Meroney's Stock Stand hosted livestock drovers and travelers in the early 1800's. After the gold discovery, whites poured into the area, prompting the United States government to establish Fort Armistead to deter gold diggers from intruding onto Cherokee lands. The fort was later converted into a stock stand for the Unicoi Turnpike, a toll road that connected this part of East Tennessee to towns and coastal ports in the Carolinas and Georgia. During the Trail of Tears the fort was reactivated by the federal government as an encampment for Cherokees who were forced west on the Trail of Tears. Gold can still be panned here and a restored section of the Unicoi Turnpike is open to the public for hiking. Visitors should stop off at the Coker Creek Welcome Center for maps and information.

Junction of Hwy 68/Joe Brown  
Hwy  
Coker Creek, TN  
423-261-2286  
[www.cokercreek.org](http://www.cokercreek.org)  
*Hours: Tues-Sat, 9:00-4:00*