

Unicoi Turnpike Trail

5. Tellico Plains



Then – Humans have inhabited the bottomlands of the Tellico River for at least 10,000 years. In 1886, a representative of the Smithsonian Institute described the remains of 15 Native American mounds here, stating that one mound in particular was the finest he had ever seen. Great Tellico, one of the largest and most powerful towns of the Cherokee Nation in the 18th century, stood about a mile from present-day Tellico Plains. An important crossroads for centuries, the Overhill (Unicoi) Trading Path and the Warriors' Path diverged at Tellico Plains. The Overhill Trading Path climbed over the mountains into North Carolina while the Warriors' Path ran southwestward to join the Cherokee settlements along the Hiwassee River. Modern roads have covered much of the old paths but Tellico Plains retains its position as a crossroads for travelers.

Located at the junction of Hwy 68/
Hwy 165 (Cherohala Skyway).
877-510-5765

Now – In 1996 the Cherohala Skyway was completed across the mountains between Tellico Plains, TN and Robbinsville, NC, making Tellico Plains the western gateway to this National Scenic Byway. Tellico Plains has seen many identities over time but the town has emerged in the 21st century as an inviting mountain village, where visitors can travel along the historic paths, climb to over 5,000 ft on the nation's newest national scenic byway, or browse through the downtown shops. The Charles Hall Museum offers an overview of the town's history along with an extensive collection of artifacts. The Skyway Visitor Center sits next door to the museum.