



**USDA Forest Service**  
**Cherokee National Forest**  
*The Land of Many Uses*



# Snorkeling in the Cherokee National Forest



# Snorkeling in the Cherokee National Forest

- **Groups and Individuals**
- Everyone is welcome to visit the Cherokee National Forest to enjoy the clear, clean waters and view the abundant aquatic animals
- Individuals and non-commercial groups may go to any stream to snorkel
- Groups wanting an organized snorkeling experience led by knowledgeable guides with lifeguards present should contact the Forest (see later slide for contact information)



# Snorkeling in the Cherokee National Forest

## What you will see

- Streams in the Cherokee National Forest have an extraordinarily diverse assemblage of fish. In the clear waters of the snorkeling sites, it is typical to see 15 to 20 species of fish on any given day. Over 45 species of fish have been documented at or near individual sites.
- Freshwater drum as large as 6 pounds swim in schools in the deep pools; sporting fish, such as bass and bream, are seen in their natural habitats. Colorful darters and shiners may be seen spawning and feeding.
- Several thousand fish will be present on any given day. The experience is like swimming in an aquarium full of fish. Turtles, tadpoles and salamanders are all usually present.



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## Where to go

- **Directions to the Conasauga River:** Take I-75 to Cleveland, TN exit #20 (Cleveland by-pass). Take the bypass 6.5 miles to US 64 east (towards Ocoee); follow US 64 8 miles to Hwy 411. Turn right (south) onto 411. Travel 6.7 miles on US 411 and turn left onto TN 313 at the Marathon gas station (Ladd Springs Road which becomes Willis Springs Rd.). Travel 4 miles until the pavement ends, then bear right on gravel Forest Service Road 221 (Pea Vine/Sheeds Creek Rd.). Continue for 4.7 miles as the road climbs and winds until you reach the Conasauga River Trail Head (#61) parking lot. Turn right into the parking area. Travel time from Chattanooga is approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes.
- **Directions to Citico Creek:** Take I-75 to Loudon, TN exit #72. Turn left onto TN-72 head east for 15.6 miles to US 411. Turn left onto US 411 toward Vonore and travel 2.4 miles to TN-360. Turn right onto TN-360 (Citico Road). After 7 miles the highway turns right and crosses an embayment. **Don't turn right;** go straight ahead on Citico Road. Follow Citico Road for 12.5 miles to Young Branch Horse Camp. Turn right into the camp ground. A use fee is required for individuals or groups not participating in a Forest Service sponsored event. Travel time from Knoxville is approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes.
- **Many other streams are available for trips on your own**



# Snorkeling in the Cherokee National Forest

## Outdoor Safety

Being in the great outdoors can be an enjoyable experience. While enjoying the outdoors keep in mind there are elements of nature that you need to be aware of. For information about outdoor safety visit this web site:

- <http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/outdoorsafety/>



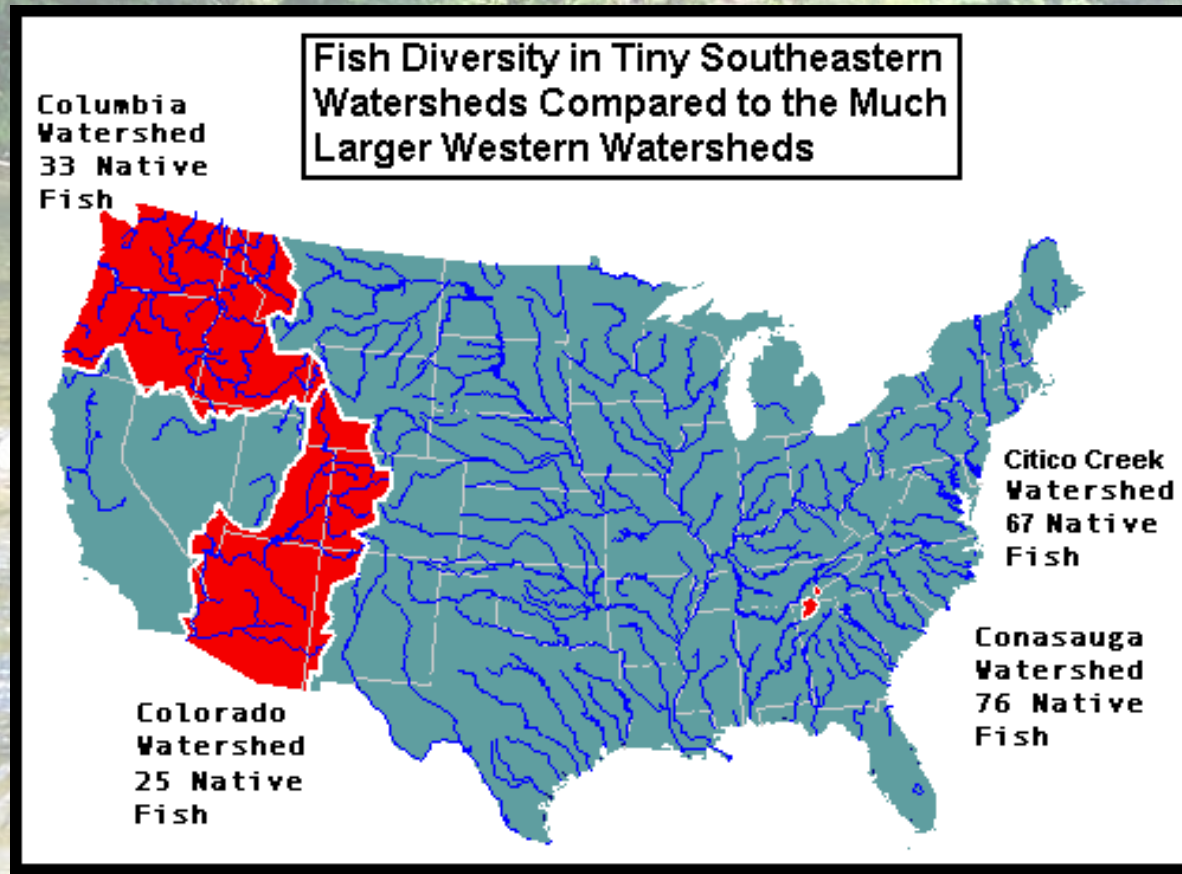
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## Guided Group Programs by the Forest Service

- Programs, for groups of 12 to 24 snorkelers, may be scheduled through the Ocoee Whitewater Center 423 496-0100
- Cost is \$20 per snorkeler
- A guide and lifeguard lead groups
- Wetsuits, masks and snorkels are provided
- Programs run from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- Participants need to provide their own transportation to the site; bring your own swimming suits, towels, wading shoes (flip-flops need an ankle strap), lunch and drinking water
- Picnic tables and restrooms are available at Conasauga River and Citico Creek sites
- Tents will be set up for changing rooms



# Aquatic Ecology



The ancient age of the Southern Appalachian Mountains has enabled aquatic species in small watersheds to attain extreme levels of diversity compared to the much larger western watersheds. Salamanders, mussels, snails, crayfish and other invertebrates show similar levels of diversity to fish.





# Aquatic Ecology



**In the single pool shown above 45 species of fish have been observed. On a warm summer day several thousand individual fish are present.**

# Aquatic Ecology



Environmental education is provided both streamside and in the water. Fish identification and habitat recognition are emphasized.



# Aquatic Ecology



Waterproof cards with individual and group pictures of similar fish are available for use in the water.



# Equipment



Provided equipment includes wetsuits, masks, snorkels, viewing scopes and changing tents.

# Picnic Tables and Restrooms



Enjoy your lunch between snorkeling sessions at a picnic table or streamside. Restrooms are available.



# Wetsuits



Wetsuits are hard to get on and off. Assistance and privacy are provided.



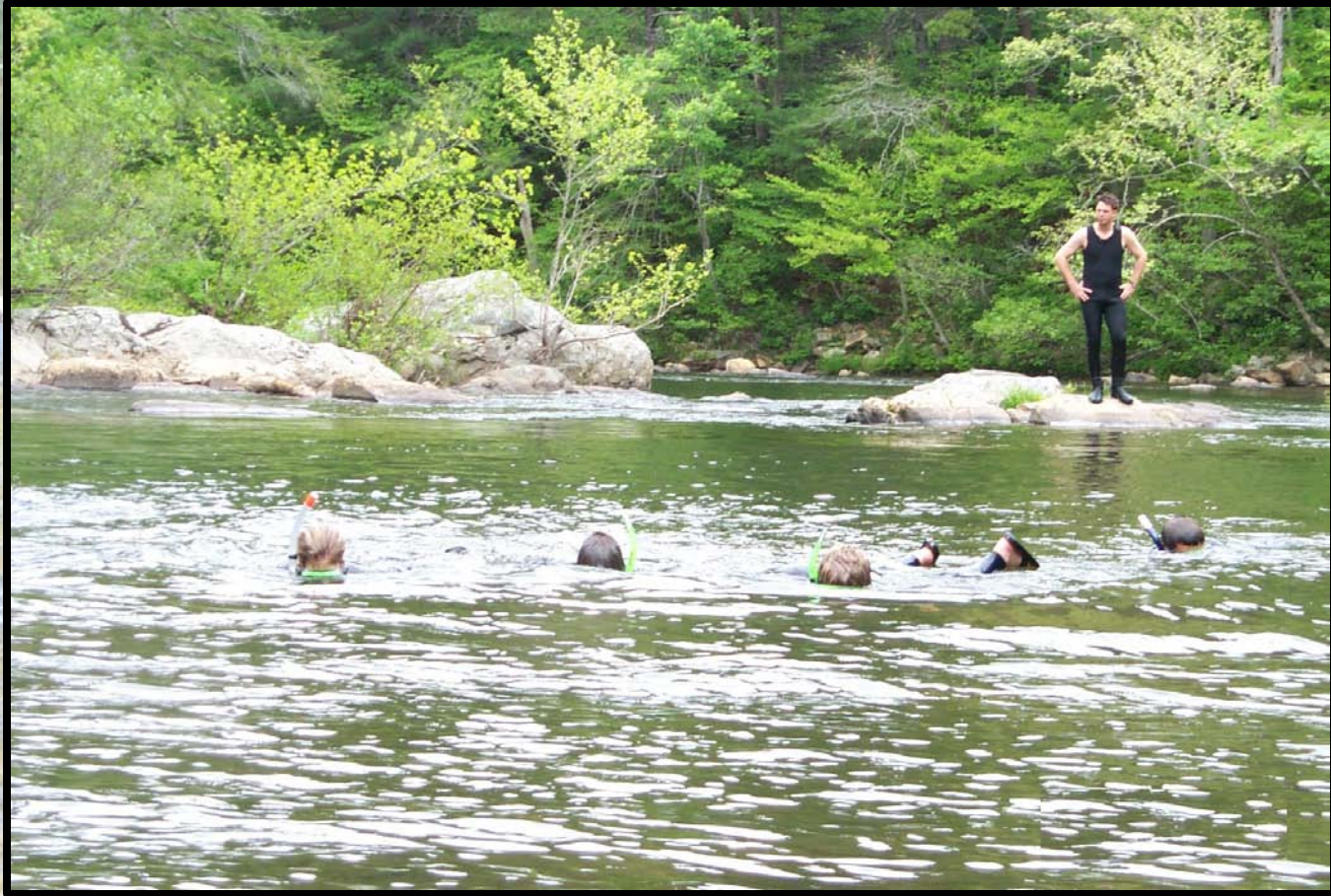
# Snorkeling Instruction



Guides and life guard work with individual snorkelers until they are comfortable with snorkeling.



# Safety Rules are Strictly Enforced



Boundaries for snorkeling are established and a vigilant life guard oversees the entire area.





# Underwater Viewing



Whether you snorkel shoulder to shoulder with your group or look through the viewing scopes, you are going to see lots of fish.



# Snorkelers observing spawning Alabama shiners



# Brightly colored Alabama shiner

Guarding his spawning site



# Darters



**Blueside darter**



**Citico darter**

**Gilt darter**



**Conasauga logperch**



# Darters



Coosa darter



Greenbreast darter

Tennessee darters



Wounded darter



# Bass and Bream



**Redeye bass**

**Longear sunfish**



**Redbreast sunfish**



# Big Fish

Freshwater drum



River  
Redhorse



Buffalo



# Minnows and Suckers



**Striped shiner with Lamprey**



**Tricolor shiner**

**Northern hogsucker**





# Other Aquatic Species



Tadpole



River Cooter



Hellbender

# Get close to the Aquatic Animals



In their realm



# Enjoy the Wildlife



**But do not harm them or take them home with you.**



# Check it out

For more information about guided group tours contact the Ocoee Whitewater Center at 423-496-0100.



# Thank You To Our Partners

