

The park's ozone, nitrogen, and sulfur levels are among the nation's highest and often remain high longer than in nearby urban communities.

Shelter Policy—Park regulations require that you stay in a shelter. While other backpackers must make reservations to use backcountry shelters, thru-hikers are exempt from this shelter-specific regulation from Mar 15 to Jun 15. If the shelter is occupied by reservation, thru-hikers should tent close by and use the bear cables. Because only thru-hikers are permitted to tent-camp at shelters, the burden is on them to make room inside shelters for others who have reserved space; that is also the regulation.

Shelters South of Newfound Gap—Seven shelters and a campsite are located between the Little Tennessee River (Fontana Dam) and Newfound Gap.

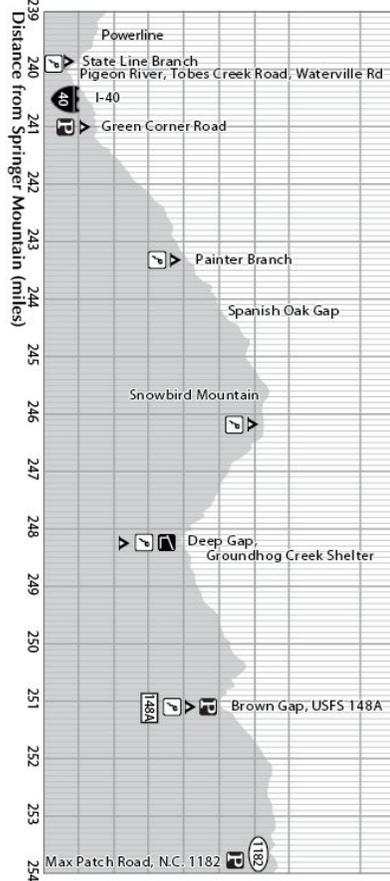
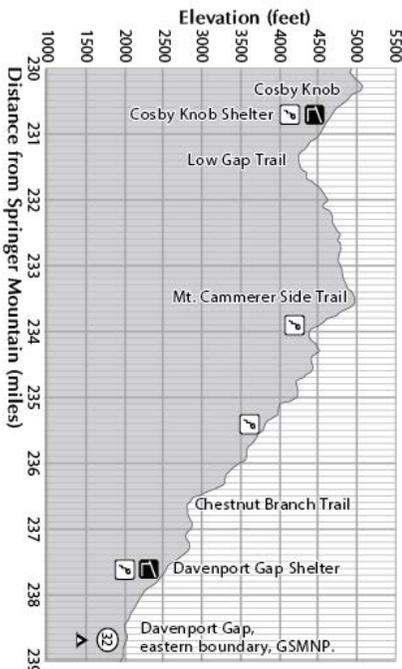
Birch Spring Campsite—Spring water, bear cables, and tentpads.

Mollies Ridge Shelter (1961/2003)—Sleeps 12. No privy. Bear cables. Legend says the area was named for a Cherokee maiden who froze to death looking for a lost hunter and that her ghost still haunts the ridge. Water source is a somewhat reliable spring 200 yards to the right of the shelter.

Russell Field Shelter (1961)—Sleeps 14. No privy. Bear cables. This section of Trail is popular with riders. Water source is a spring 150 yards down the Russell Field Trail toward Cades Cove. A short walk beyond the spring is an open, grassy area with views into Cades Cove; the Russell Gregory family grazed stock here in the 1800s.

Spence Field Shelter (1963/2005)—Sleeps 12. Privy. Bear cables. Shelter is located 0.2 mile east on the Eagle Creek Trail. This section of Trail is popular with riders and bears. Spence Field, to the north of the shelter, offers azaleas, blueberries, and open views into North Carolina and Tennessee from the largest grassy bald in the Smokies. Water source is a reliable spring 150 yards down the Eagle Creek Trail.

Derrick Knob Shelter (1961)—Sleeps 12. No privy. Bear cables. Water source is a reliable spring near the shelter.



Silers Bald Shelter (1961/2001)—Sleeps 12. No privy. Bear cables. The increasingly overgrown bald 0.3 mile north of the shelter offers views of Clingmans Dome and sunsets over Cove Mountain. Water source is to the right; a trail leads 75 yards to a reliable spring.

Double Spring Gap Shelter (1963)—Sleeps 12. Privy. Bear cables. Gap was named to indicate the existence of two springs, one on each side of the state line and both now unreliable. The better water source is on the North Carolina side, 15 yards from the crest; second source is on the Tennessee side, 35 yards from the crest.

Clingmans Dome—At 6,643 feet, this is the highest point on the A.T. There are no feet-on-the-ground views from the tree-clad summit, but the observation tower provides 360-degree views. The summit is usually busy; a park road leads to within 0.5 mile of the tower. From here to the northern end of the park, Fraser firs and red spruce are now dying *en masse*—a dramatic change from the southernmost 30 miles of the park.

Mt. Collins Shelter (1960)—Sleeps 12. Privy. Bear cables. Nestled in spruce thicket. Water source is a small spring 200 yards beyond the shelter on the Sugarland Mountain Trail.



U.S. 441/Newfound Gap—The only road crossing along the Trail in the Smokies. Plenty of traffic goes through