



## BASE CAMP FACT SHEET

**Bryson City Population** 1,400; Swain County Population: 15,000

Roughly 40% of the **Great Smoky Mountains National Park** (GSMNP) is in Swain County.

Out of 100 counties in the state of North Carolina, Swain ranks 89th in **population density**.

The GSMNP is the nation's **most-visited national park**.

Less than two miles from downtown Bryson City, the **Deep Creek** recreational area of the Park offers activities for the entire family, including camping, hiking, trout fishing and the area's best whitewater tubing.

Deep Creek is probably best known for its three **waterfalls** – Juney Whank, Toms Branch and Indian Creek falls.

At 6,643 feet, **Clingmans Dome** is the highest peak in the Smokies and the second highest east of the Mississippi (North Carolina's Mount Mitchell is 41 feet higher).

Highway 19/74 west out of Bryson City takes you through the **Nantahala Gorge**, home to premier whitewater rafting and kayaking.

The **Appalachian Trail**, which extends more than 2,000 miles from Georgia to Maine, crosses the top of Fontana Dam.

Construction of **Fontana Dam** began in 1942 and was completed in 1944.

**Fontana Lake** provides 238 miles of shoreline and 10,230 acres of water surface for recreation activities.

Fontana Dam, the **highest dam east of the Rockies**, is 480 feet high and stretches 2,365 feet across the Little Tennessee River.

Swain County has **four distinct seasons**. January has an average high of 48° and low of 6°. July's average high is 84° and the low is 62°. Winter usually brings some snow to the mountains with an average of 11 inches yearly. Annual precipitation averages approximately 47 inches. The average relative humidity is around 70% in the summer and 66% during winter.

There are **many trails along the shores of Fontana Lake**, land owned by either the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), the National Park Service or the U.S. Forest Service. The multi-use trail system at Tsali, famous among mountain bikers, is but one example.



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Each year, Swain County attracts thousands of mountain bikers to the world-famous **Tsali Recreation Area** trail system, 15 miles west of Bryson City. The 42-mile network of multi-use trails is consistently rated one of the top ten riding destinations in the United States.

**"The Nation's Best Place to Cool Off With a Splash"** – *National Geographic Adventure*

ABC's *Good Morning America's* "Vacationland" series named the **Nantahala River** the number one place to spend a wet and wild vacation in the U.S. (June 29, 2006, GMA)

*Blue Ridge Country* awarded the Nantahala River **"Best of the Blue Ridge"** for whitewater rafting (platinum) and canoeing river (silver). (July/August 2008, BRC)

The book **"101 Best Outdoor Towns"** named Bryson City the nation's third best whitewater paddling town. "If you can't find something exciting to do in Bryson City, you're not breathing," it says.

**Quality of Life.** People choose to live in Swain County because of beautiful surroundings, recreational opportunities, pleasant climate, excellent schools, up-to-date health care and close-knit communities that emphasize family life. Residents have access to wilderness areas, while living within easy driving distance of major urban areas.

**Air quality** shown to be consistently superior to all other locations throughout the state. (NCDAQ)

**Soil quality** found to be superior to much of the state. (USDA)

The entire area lies within the Little Tennessee River basin which was identified by the North Carolina Division of Water Quality as "...containing some of the most pristine and some of the **highest quality waters** in the State." (NCDWQ, 2006)

Southern entrance to **Blue Ridge Parkway**.

87% of Swain County belongs to either a **national park or forest**.

### Driving Distances

Atlanta, GA	165 miles	Greenville, SC	113 miles
Asheville, NC	70 miles	Knoxville, TN	80 miles
Charlotte, NC	185 miles	Raleigh, NC	309 miles