Decoration Days:
From April through October, the National Park Service offers trips across the lake to the north shore for decoration days. These trips allow family members to visit the grave sites of their ancestors. They are a unique way to explore the beauty of this remote section of the National Park and to learn about the residents who helped to create it.

Helpful Hints:
If you plan to walk through the tunnel take along a flashlight. And be aware horseback riders use the tunnel as well.

Dogs, leashed or otherwise, are not allowed on any of the trails mentioned in this brochure.

Fishing is allowed in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park with a valid fishing license or permit from either North Carolina or Tennessee.

For more information, please visit the visitor center at 2 Everett Street.
History of Lakeview Drive

In the 1930’s and 40’s Swain County gave up the majority of its private land to the US government for the creation of Fontana Lake and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Hundreds of families were forced to leave the small mountain communities that had been their homes for generations. With the creation of the Park, not only were their homes gone, but also the roads leading to those communities.

The US government promised to create a new road to these communities. Lakeview Drive was to have stretched along the north shore of Fontana Lake, from Bryson City to Fontana, thirty miles to the west; providing access to the old family cemeteries where generations of ancestors remained.

Lakeview Drive fell victim to an environmental issue and construction was stopped, with the road ending at a tunnel about six miles into the park. Swain County citizens gave the unfinished Lakeview Drive its popular, but unofficial name, “The Road to Nowhere”.

On February 6, 2010, Swain County accepted a cash settlement from the US government in lieu of completing the road.

On weekends throughout the summer, the Park Service still ferries groups of Swain County residents across Fontana Lake to visit their old family cemeteries for Decoration Days and family reunions.

For more information on the history of Lakeview Drive, please visit the Swain County Heritage Museum located at 2 Everett Street in downtown Bryson City.

There are many ways to enjoy the unspoiled beauty of the north shore of Fontana Lake.

Scenic Drive:

From Bryson City, continue up Everett Street and don’t make any turns. The road eventually enters the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. There is a scenic overlook located 3.1 miles from the entrance to the park and, of course, the road ends at the tunnel.

Hiking:

Noland Creek Trail: Park in the lot adjacent to the bridge over Noland Creek and take the six mile trail from there.

From the tunnel at the end of the road you can access the three mile Goldmine Loop Trail and the forty-two mile Lakeshore Trail which crosses Forney Creek, Hazel Creek, and Eagle Creek on its way to Fontana Dam. On the far side of the tunnel there is a trail that leads down to Forney Creek.