

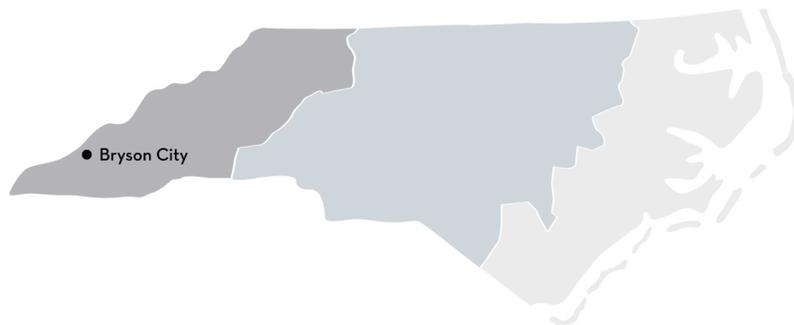
The Road to Nowhere and Waterfall Trails in the Great Smoky Mountains

The Road to Nowhere gets lots of attention simply for its name. It's a real road in Bryson City that ends at a tunnel inside the bounds of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. But that's the end of the road. If you want to venture further you'd have to do it by foot.

1-Day Itinerary

Day 1

A road that goes nowhere, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and a taste of mountain small town life



With so much to see and do in the area, we recommend the following 1-day itinerary. Enjoy your visit by mixing and matching events to your particular interest. Be sure to check days and hours of operation for each venue.

Day One

Bryson City:

The Road to Nowhere is just eight miles outside of Bryson City so it's a quick drive. Before you go, have breakfast and coffee with the locals, either at the **Everett Street Diner** or at **Mountain Perks**, both on the way to Nowhere. After breakfast head straight up Everett Street out of Bryson City and don't make any turns. On the map it's called Lakeview Drive, but the road signs are marked Fontana Road. You'll pass Swain County High School and eventually see a sign that says you have entered the **Great Smoky Mountains National Park**. You will also see a sign that says "The Road to Nowhere – A Promise Broken." The road ends at a barrier with the tunnel in sight beyond.

The road got its name from a dispute stemming from the 1930s and 40s when Swain County gave up the majority of its private land to the

federal government for the creation of Fontana Lake and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Hundreds of people were forced to leave the small communities that had been their homes for generations. The road that led to the area was buried beneath the waters of the lake, cutting off access to a number of family cemeteries. The federal government made an agreement with Swain County to replace the road with a new one along the lake's north shore.

Construction on the road began in the 1960s but was halted because of an environmental issue, leaving the tunnel completed but nothing else. The debate continues – whether to build the road or secure a monetary settlement for Swain County from the National Park Service. Politics aside, the Road to Nowhere, as it has been named by locals, remains a point of curiosity for visitors from near and far.

The serenity of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park may have you yearning for more nature so turn around and head to **Deep Creek** to see the waterfalls. From the Road to Nowhere, make your way back to town and take a left on Depot Street. Follow the signs to Deep Creek Campground, making sure to follow West Deep Creek Road. This will put you at the Deep Creek entrance to the park. It's only three miles from the center of town. Trail signs for the waterfalls are well-marked. The trails lead to three different falls – **Juney Whank**, **Indian Creek** and **Toms Branch**. The Juney Whank and Indian Creek trails have moderate slopes, while Toms Branch is the closest to the trailhead.

After your hike, park in town and walk to any one of Bryson City's great lunch spots like **Jimmy Mac's** on Main Street, **Papa's Pizza** and **The Filling Station** on Everett Street, or **Anthony's** and **Across the Trax** near the train depot. After lunch spend the afternoon browsing the shops and galleries of Everett and Main Street and in the depot area. You'll find stores chocked with antiques, artwork and crafts. To tour working artists' studios, don't miss **Elizabeth Ellison Watercolors** on Main Street and **Heath Creations Studio and Gallery** on Depot Street. **The Cottage Craftsman** in the depot area showcases work from mountain artisans. At nearby **Gil's Book Sale** you'll find the popular **Walt Larrimore** books about a young doctor's impressions of Bryson City as well as copies of **Horace Kephart's "Our Southern Highlanders"** detailing the history of the region.

Finish off your in-town day with dinner at **Pasqualino's Italian Restaurant** or **The Station Restaurant**, both on Everett Street.

If it's summertime, stop in at **Soda Pops** and eat your ice cream along Everett Street just like the locals do. If you're in town on a Saturday June through October catch the weekly "**Music in the Mountains**" concert at the train depot. It's free and starts at 6:30 p.m.

For more information:

Swain County Chamber of Commerce
www.greatsmokies.com

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