



## Cherohala Skyway



The name for the Cherohala Skyway is derived from the names of the national forests through which it passes – the Cherokee and Nantahala (Chero ... hala).

Tellico Plains, Tennessee, residents yearned for a "real" highway that would take them over the rugged mountains to the towns of Western North Carolina. During a Tellico Plains Kiwanis meeting in 1958, Sam Williams remarked, "Why don't we have a wagon train? We only have 'wagon roads'!"

Six weeks later, the Kiwanis members had readied a group of 67 covered wagons and 325 riders on horseback that embarked on a trek from Tellico Plains, TN, to Murphy, NC. In 1962, the organizers changed the route, traveling from Tellico Plains to Robbinsville and Andrews, NC. The train now wound its way through the national forest lands of the Cherokee National Forest and Nantahala National Forest.

Thanks to the publicity of the wagon trains as well as local, state, and national support, in 1962 organizer Charles Hall received a telegram from then Tennessee Senator Estes Kefauver. Twenty-four million dollars had been approved for a roadway from Tellico Plains, TN, to Robbinsville, NC! Design and survey work began in the spring of 1963 -- construction started in 1965.

Tennessee Department of Transportation 2019-2020 statistics show well over two million "driving visitors" toured the scenic Skyway.

The 25th Anniversary of the popular Skyway will be celebrated at the Cherohala Skyway Festival set for October 23, 2021, at the Charles Hall Museum and Heritage Center in Tellico Plains.

--A History of Tellico Plains, TN by Charles Hall

--TN Department of Transportation Annual Average Daily Traffic



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