



# Recreation Guide

## Uwharrie National Forest

### Home of the Uwharrie National Recreation Trail



Discover the Uwharrie National Forest, one of four national forests in North Carolina. The forest is named for the Uwharrie Mountains, known as the oldest range in North America. The prevalence of metavolcanic rocks has led geologists to surmise that a chain of volcanoes created the area's mountains, once much higher but eroded over time into 1,000-foot peaks.

Archeologists have found human habitation in the Uwharrie Mountains spanning more than 10,000 years. In 1790-1791, explorer John Lawson chronicled Native American tribes, plants, animals and geology in his journals, later published as *A New Voyage to Carolina*. He called the river "Heighwaree," and later explorers called it "Uharie."

In 1931, the federal government began purchasing lands for the Uwharrie Purchase Unit. These parcels operated as a state wildlife management area until 1961. That year, President John F. Kennedy proclaimed these federal lands in Montgomery, Randolph and Davidson counties the Uwharrie National Forest. It is one of the most recently designated units in the National Forest System.

Though relatively small at nearly 51,000 acres, the Uwharrie National Forest provides a wide range of natural resources: clean rivers and streams, diverse scenery, wildlife habitat and wood products. The Forest Service is restoring longleaf pine stands in hopes of re-establishing the pine savannahs and supporting wildlife species that once lived here. The agency is also restoring indigenous oak-hickory forests, an ecosystem that benefits the endangered Schweinitz's sunflower.

Outdoor opportunities abound, especially in the Badin Lake Recreation Area where off-highway vehicle riding, camping, picnicking, hiking, horseback riding, boating, mountain biking and fishing are available.

### About Uwharrie National Forest

- The only national forest in North Carolina's Piedmont region
- The 5,350-acre Badin Lake, built in 1917 by ALCOA (Aluminum Company of America), forms part of the forest's western boundary
- One wilderness area, 5,160-acre Birkhead Mountains, designated in 1984
- One ranger district, Uwharrie, with headquarters in Troy, N.C.
- One site, Thornburg Farm, listed on the National Register of Historic Places
- The center of the "Carolina Gold Rush" in the early 1800s, which led to the opening of the Charlotte Mint that used local gold for the nation's coins between 1835 and 1861

Hike short or long sections of the 20-mile Uwharrie National Recreation Trail (UNRT) to experience Uwharrie's interior forest. The heavily wooded trail is marked with white blazes. It is open all year, and the difficulty level is rated from easy to moderate.

The trail crosses several access points. From south to north, look for trailhead parking at:

- NC Highway 24/27 Trailhead, 10 miles west of Troy
- Yates Place Camp on Dusty Level Road (State Route (SR) 1146)
- NC Highway 109 Trailhead, eight miles northwest of Troy
- Jumping-Off-Rock Trailhead on Flint Hill Road (SR 1306), two miles east of Ophir

Dutchman's Creek Trail provides loop options with the southern portion of the Uwharrie Trail. Begin hiking Dutchman's Creek Trail at the Hwy 24/27 Trailhead; the trail is marked with yellow blazes. Connect to UNRT to loop back to the NC 24/27 Trailhead.

The occasional old home sites, cemeteries and mines are evidence of past use. Dark Mountain, on the northern portion of the trail, offers an excellent western view.

Hiking enthusiasts and Boy Scout troops from local communities began constructing the Uwharrie Trail in the late 1960s. They completed the now well-known path in 1975, and in an effort to provide long-term stewardship and volunteer support, founded the Uwharrie Trail Club. The trail received its "national recreation" status in 1979. The Uwharrie National Forest is working to

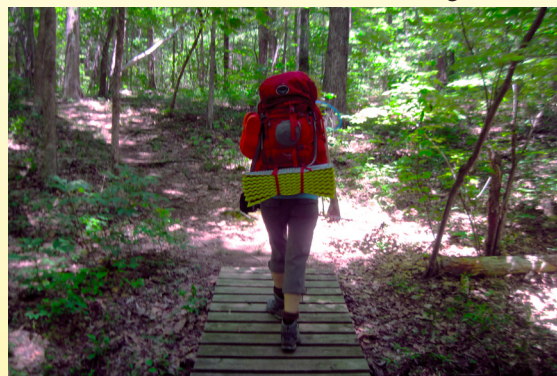


PHOTO COURTESY OF TOM TAYLOR  
Hikers can enjoy a variety of recreational activities year round on the Uwharrie National Recreation Trail.

purchase property to re-establish UNRT to its original length of 50 miles.

### Camping

There are several dispersed sites along the route. Groups and individuals can camp at Yates Place. There is a 0.25-mile connector trail to the UNRT. Visitors looking for a campground can try West Morris Mountain Campground, which has individual tenting or camper sites, with picnic tables, lantern posts and fire rings. This campground has two vault toilets, trash cans and about a 0.5-mile connector trail to the UNRT. Both of these campgrounds are very popular with Boy Scouts and hunters.

### Hiking Safety

There are plenty of streams in the forest, but all visitors should treat water with a purification kit before drinking. Ticks and chiggers are prevalent. Keep them at bay with repellent. Visitors may see snakes during warm months. Watch out for venomous snakes including copperheads and rattlesnakes that live in the Uwharrie National Forest, and give them a wide berth.

Practice these safety tips when hiking:

- Be prepared by carrying a map and compass.
- Dress appropriately for the weather conditions.
- Carry plenty of water, food and insect repellent.
- Don't hike alone.
- Give trip plans to a friend or relative.
- Know whether the trail is for hiking only or if equestrians or mountain bikers use the trail too.

### Hunting

Hunting is allowed throughout the Uwharrie National Forest, and hunters sometimes walk the UNRT. Hunters should have a valid license and follow safe hunting practices. Ensure safety during hunting seasons by wearing a bright orange hat or vest. Bright orange vests also help protect dogs during hunting season.



The Uwharrie Ranger District office is a great source for recreation ideas, safety tips and seasonal weather announcements

**Uwharrie Ranger District**  
789 NC 24/27 East  
Troy, NC 27371  
910-576-6391 uwharrie@fs.fed.us



# Recreation Sites and Activities

**Dispersed Camping**—unless areas have “No Camping” signs, camping is allowed in undeveloped, non-fee areas in the Uwharrie National Forest. No dispersed camping is allowed within the boundaries of day-use sites, campgrounds or most wildlife openings. Call the ranger station for more information.

# of campsites  
reservations\*  
fee (\$)  
picnic area  
restrooms  
F-flush, V-vault  
showers  
drinking water  
boat ramp  
dump station  
fishing/wading  
trails

## UWHARRIE NATIONAL FOREST

### comments

Site Name	# of campsites	reservations*	fee (\$)	picnic area	restrooms	showers	drinking water	boat ramp	dump station	fishing/wading	trails	comments
<b>ARROWHEAD CAMPGROUND</b> Open all year. From Troy, take NC 109-N for 11 miles. Turn left on Mullinix Rd. (SR 1154). Go 2 miles to “T” intersection, turn right. Go 2 more miles to “T,” follow signs.	50	*	\$	Y	F, V		W		D	F	T	Electrical surcharge at single and double sites. 33 sites with electricity. Bike, horse, OHV trails, fishing and boat launch nearby.
<b>BADIN LAKE CAMPGROUND</b> Open all year. Same directions as Arrowhead Campground.	35	*	\$	Y	F, V		W		D	F	T	Some lakeshore sites. Single and double sites available. Bike, horse, OHV trails and fishing nearby.
<b>BADIN LAKE GROUP CAMP</b> Open all year. Same directions as Arrowhead Campground.	3	*	\$	Y	F, V		W		D	F	T	Group size limited to 50 per site. Bike, horse, OHV trails and fishing nearby. <b>By reservation only.</b>
<b>BADIN LAKE OHV TRAIL COMPLEX</b> Open April-Dec. Same directions as Arrowhead Campground.			\$	Y	F, V		W		D	F	T	Permits available at local stores; 6 trailheads; trails open all day.
<b>CANEBRAKE HORSE CAMP</b> Open all year. From Troy, take NC 109N for 11 miles. Turn left on Mullinix Rd. (SR 1154). Go 2 miles to “T” intersection and turn right. Campground is 0.4 mile on the right.	29	*	\$	Y	F, V		W		D	F	T	Tethering posts and tack tables, direct access to trails. Electrical hookups at all sites with additional surcharge.
<b>COVE BOAT LAUNCH</b> Open all year. Same directions as Arrowhead Campground.				Y	F, V		W		D	F	T	On Badin Lake.
<b>FLINTLOCK VALLEY SHOOTING RANGE</b> Open Tuesday - Saturday, all year. From Troy, take NC 109-N for 11 miles. Turn left on SR 1154. Go 2 miles to “T” intersection, turn right. Go 2 more miles to a “T,” and turn left. Go 1 mile to another “T,” turn right onto FR 576. Shooting range is ¼ mile on the left.			\$	Y	F, V		W		D	F	T	Seven rifle benches and four pistol benches, all covered. Permit for use available at local stores.
<b>HOLT’S PICNIC AREA</b> Open April - Dec. From Troy, take NC 109N for 11 miles. Turn left on Mullinix Rd. (SR 1154) and go 2 miles to a “T” intersection. Turn right & go 2 miles to “T,” turn right on FR 597, go 4 miles to site.				Y	F, V		W		D	F	T	On Badin Lake.
<b>KING’S MOUNTAIN POINT RECREATION AREA</b> Open 6am to 10pm, all year. From Troy, take NC 109N for 11 miles. Turn left on Mullinix Rd. (SR 1154) and go 2 miles to a “T” intersection. Turn right and go 2 miles to “T.” Turn right on FR 597, left on FR 597A, go about 2 miles to site.		*		Y	F, V		W		D	F	T	On Badin Lake. Accessible fishing piers. Paved trail circles site. Picnic shelter can be reserved for a fee. Access to Badin Lake Hiking Trail.
<b>UWHARRIE HUNT CAMP</b> Open all year. From Troy, take NC 109N for 10 miles. Cross Uwharrie River, turn left at Badin Lake sign onto SR 1153. Go 0.5 mile to campground on the right.	8		\$	Y	F, V		W		D	F	T	Walk-in tent sites only.
<b>WEST MORRIS MOUNTAIN CAMPGROUND</b> Open all year. From Troy, take NC 109N for 8 miles. Turn right on SR 1303, Ophir Road. Go 1.5 miles. Camp is on the right.	16		\$	Y	F, V		W		D	F	T	Trailhead for Uwharrie National Recreation Trail.
<b>YATES PLACE CAMP</b> Open all year. From Troy, take NC 109-N for 5 miles, turn left on Correlle Road (SR 1147); go 1.5 miles to T intersection. Turn right onto Dusty Level Road (SR 1146) and travel 0.5 mile. Campground is on the left.				Y	F, V		W		D	F	T	Primitive dispersed camping. Uwharrie National Recreation Trail nearby.

\* Note: To make reservations, call 877-444-6777, TDD: 877-833-6777 or [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov)

Unless noted as “by reservation only,” all areas are available on a first-come first-served basis by default.

## Badin Lake Recreation Area

Nestled along Badin Lake’s eastern shore, the Badin Lake Recreation Area is one of the most popular sections of the Uwharrie National Forest. Every year, thousands of visitors enjoy water activities including fishing, canoeing, kayaking, jet skiing and water skiing. Motor boats fill the lake on spring and summer weekends. Well-attended bass tournaments are held most weekends from March through October. Cove Boat Ramp near Arrowhead Campground provides launching and parking facilities.

Situated on a peninsula in Badin Lake, King’s Mountain Point Day-Use Area offers four accessible fishing piers and a paved trail that wraps around 34 picnic sites. Each picnic site is equipped with a grill and table. Drinking water and restrooms are also available. The Badin Lake Hiking Trail can be accessed from this area. The large picnic pavilion can be reserved for the day at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) or by calling 877-444-6777.

The Badin Lake Recreation Area also offers many miles of hiking, horse and off-highway vehicle trails, as well as a target shooting range. Four campgrounds provide overnight accommodations in the Badin Lake area. Sites can be reserved through [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) or by calling 877-444-6777.

Shady sites at Arrowhead Campground are suited for tent and RV camping. Each of the 50 sites is equipped with a picnic table, grill, lantern

post and fire ring; many have electrical hookups. The campground provides drinking water, a trailer dump station and a central bathhouse with flush toilets and showers. Arrowhead Campground is served by an on-site host.

Bordering the lakeshore and shaded by pines and hardwoods, Badin Lake Campground offers more than 30 sites for tent or RV camping. Each site includes a picnic table, grill, fire ring and lantern post. Electric hook-ups are not available. The campground offers showers, flush toilets and drinking water, and is served by an on-site host.

Adjacent to horse trails offering many miles of riding, Canebrake Horse Camp features 29 campsites, including five double sites. Electrical hookups are provided at each site, equipped with a picnic table, grill, fire ring, lantern and

highline posts and tack tables. Canebrake Horse Camp also offers manure bins, a horse wash station and a trailer dump station. Alcohol is prohibited at Arrowhead, Badin Lake and Canebrake campgrounds.

Looking for a group camping option? Try Badin Lake Group Camp. Each of the three group sites accommodates up to 50 visitors. All are equipped with fire rings, tables, drinking water and tent pads. The bathhouse is centrally located and provides flush toilets, vault toilets and showers. These group sites are only available by reservation; contact [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) or call 877-444-6777.

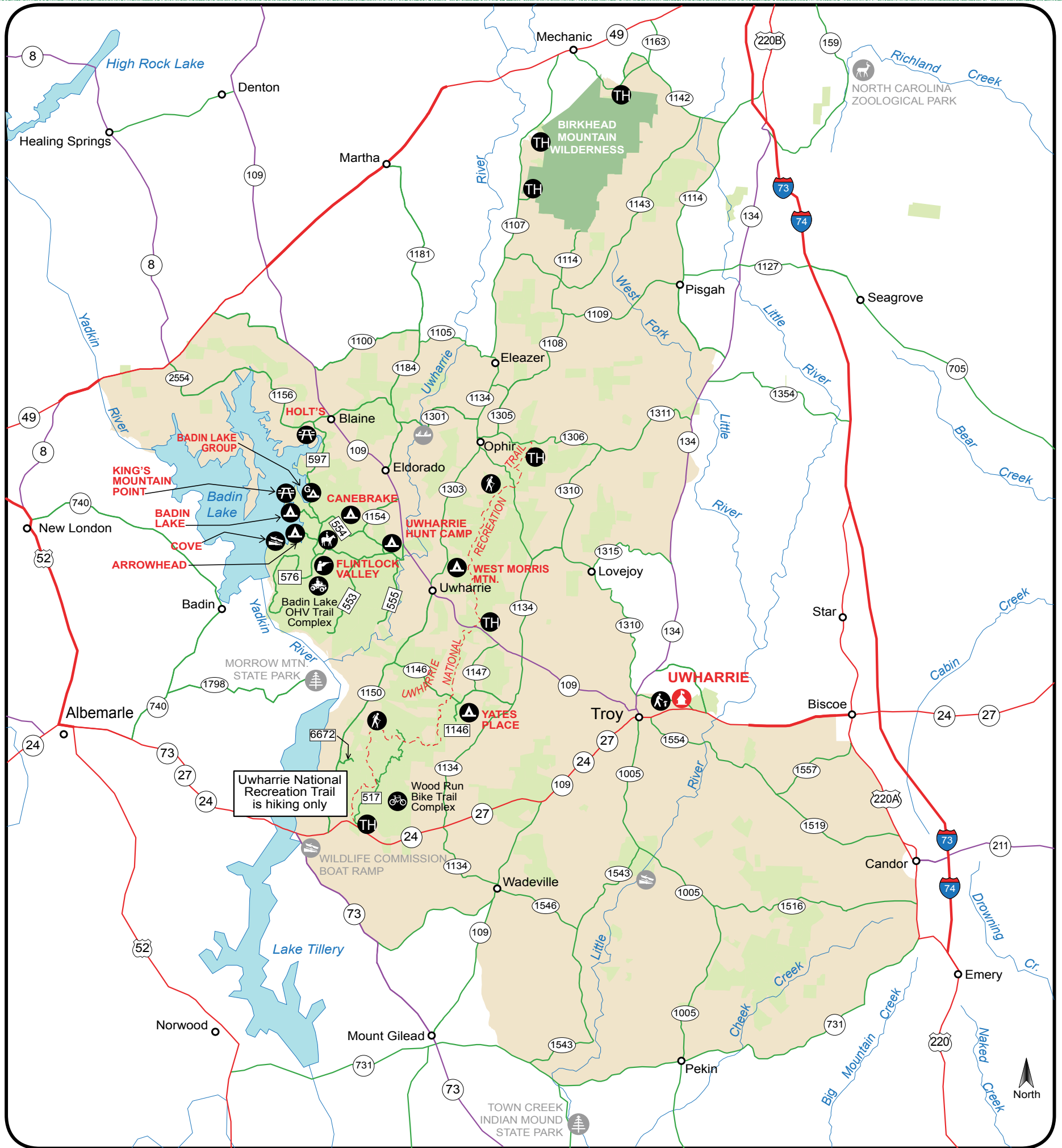
The Badin Lake Trail and other hiking opportunities are near all of these campgrounds. Remember to keep pets on leashes and controlled at all sites while visiting the Uwharrie National Forest.



Camping at Badin Lake gives visitors easy access to a spectrum of recreational opportunities.



# Forest Map



## Uwharrie National Forest

- National Forest
- Wilderness
- Proclamation Area
- District Ranger Office
- FS Campground, Group Campground
- Boat Ramp, Canoe Launch
- Picnic Area, Trailhead
- Fishing Area, Fishing Pier

- Hiking, Interpretive Trail, Bike Trail
- Off-Highway Vehicle Area
- Horse Trail
- Shooting Range
- Boat Ramp (Non-FS)
- Canoe Launch (Non-FS)
- State Park (Non-FS)
- Zoological Park (Non-FS)
- Interstate Highway

- 5.0 2.5 0 5.0 miles
- US Highway
- State Route
- Forest Service Road
- Primary Highway, Multi-Lane
- Primary Highway
- Secondary Paved Road
- Improved Road, May Be Paved or Gravel
- National Recreation Trail

*A waterside retreat, the accessible fishing pier at King's Mountain Point gives anglers of all ages the chance to catch a fish and create memories that can last a lifetime.*



# Enjoying the Great Outdoors

The Uwharrie National Forest offers a wide variety of recreational opportunities that visitors can experience throughout the year. Whether hiking, biking, hunting, horseback riding or nature viewing, visitors will find numerous special places to enjoy the great outdoors.

## Hiking

Hiking is a popular activity in the Uwharrie National Forest. Here are some places where hikers can take in the natural world:

- Uwharrie National Recreation Trail – 20 miles
- Dutchman's Creek Trail – 11 miles, forming loop opportunities with the southern section of Uwharrie National Recreation Trail
- Badin Lake Trail – 5.6 miles
- Denson's Creek Trail, located at the Uwharrie District Office, offers an interpretive experience using the trail brochure – 1 mile loop and 2.2 mile loop
- Hikers can also use trails that are designated for mountain biking, OHV and/or equestrian use.

## Mountain Biking

The Wood Run area offers 22 miles of mountain bike trails that run over rolling hills and meander through pine and hardwood forests. These easy-to-challenging trails are located off NC Hwy 24/27 between Albemarle and Troy in the Uwharrie National Forest. Wood Run is two miles east of the bridge over Lake Tillery and the Pee Dee River at the same trailhead as the southern section of the Uwharrie National Recreation Trail. Vault toilet located at trailhead.

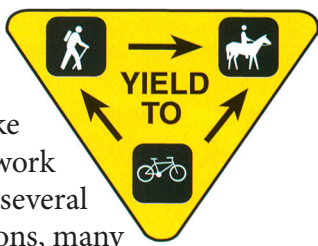
Practice these safety tips when mountain biking:

- Wear a helmet, eye protection and gloves.
- Maintain control of your speed at all times and approach turns in anticipation of someone coming around the bend.
- Be courteous when approaching other trail users. When approaching a horseback rider on the Badin Lake Area Trails, dismount and yield.
- "Tread lightly" to avoid erosion. Stay on the trail, and do not take shortcuts around fallen trees.
- During wet weather, choose a forest road instead of trails.

## Horse Riding

Explore the Badin Lake area on an extensive network of horse trails. There are several long and short loop options, many leading from Canebrake Horse Camp. Horses are required to have a negative Coggins test within the last year. The trails are very challenging, especially for out-of-shape horses. Before riding the trails, prepare a horse using electrolytes, hydration and trail conditioning, especially in hot weather. Here are some tips to remember:

- To protect water quality, keep horses at least 100 feet from water, except when watering.
- Stay on designated horse trails. To prevent erosion, don't shortcut trails.
- Tether horses using a tree-saver strap tied between two trees. If no trees are nearby, picket or hobble horses.
- Scatter manure, pick up trash and fill in pawed holes.
- Share the trail. Riders should yield to



motorized vehicles, but hikers and bikers should yield to equestrians. Say hello, and give them instructions about where to wait while the horse passes.

- Before leaving, clean campsites and highline post areas, pack out all trash or throw it away in provided receptacles and make sure any fire is dead out.

## Rockhounding

Some visitors to the national forest enjoy finding minerals or panning for gold. Visitors are asked to follow these guidelines when rockhounding or gold panning in the Uwharrie National Forest. Contact the ranger station for more information.

- Rockhounding and gold panning may take place on most national forest lands – provided only small quantities of material are removed for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- Recreational rockhounding and gold panning are not allowed in forest areas where mineral rights are owned by a private party, or in an area that is under mineral lease to a private party.
- Permits are required for removal of mineral materials for scientific and research purposes.
- Commercial removal of minerals requires a prospecting permit from the Bureau of Land Management and approval of operating plan from the U.S. Forest Service.
- Materials must be removed using small hand tools without mechanical or motorized equipment. Removing mineral materials with a pick, shovel or sluice box is allowed within the stream channel.
- Suction dredges and metal detectors are prohibited.
- Gold pans may be used in stream beds, but the banks of streams cannot be disturbed by digging or removing materials.
- Any disturbance to or removal of historical or archeological artifacts is prohibited by federal law. This includes arrowheads, stone tools, objects from old home sites, relics from the civil war and mining artifacts.

## Target Shooting

Flintlock Valley Shooting Range is located on FR 576. Daily and annual permits are available at the ranger station and from local vendors. Contact the ranger station for hours of operation.

## Hunting and Fishing

The Uwharrie National Forest is open to hunting and fishing. In addition to the appropriate annual license, a Game Lands Privilege license must be obtained to hunt on the Uwharrie National Forest. Information concerning seasons, bag limits and special Game Lands Restrictions is found in the annual N.C. Inlands Fishing, Hunting and Trapping Regulations Digest, available where licenses are sold. For details on hunting and fishing regulations, visit the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission website at [www.ncwildlife.org](http://www.ncwildlife.org) or call 888-248-6834.

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## Boating

Badin Lake occupies 5,350 acres and has 115 miles of shoreline. It offers a wealth of water recreation, including motor boating, canoeing, kayaking, jet skiing and water skiing. The lake is crowded with motor boats on spring and summer weekends.

Here are some tips to keep in mind when enjoying the water:

- Wear a life jacket.
- Never go boating under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Supervise children in or near water.
- Learn to swim and always swim with a buddy.
- Learn CPR.
- Check water depth before diving and only dive into familiar waters.
- Learn safe boating practices.
- Watch for swimmers along the shoreline.
- Observe no wake zones.

## Off-Highway Vehicle Riding

The Badin Lake Recreation Area offers 17 miles of off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails available for dirt bikes, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), side-by-sides, and full-sized 4-WD vehicles. A special recreation permit is required and available at the ranger district office or at local vendors near the trails. Several trailheads provide easy access to the system: Dutch John, Falls Dam/Art Lilley, Flatwoods, Cotton Place, and Wolf Den. Dispersed camping is allowed along the trails, or drive a street-legal vehicle from developed campgrounds in the Badin Lake area. These trails are open all day but not year round. Contact the ranger station to make sure the trails are open before riding. Practice these safety tips when riding OHVs:

- ATVs and motorcycle operators must wear DOT-approved helmets and eye protection.
- Children under 8 may not operate ATVs or motorcycles.
- An operator under 16 must have constant supervision by an adult over the age of 18.
- No passengers are allowed on ATVs, unless vehicles are manufactured to carry passengers.
- Unlicensed vehicles are not allowed on designated Forest Service roads.
- Spark arresters, mufflers and brakes are required for motorized vehicles.
- Travel only on OHV-designated routes marked with orange diamonds.
- Cross-country travel is prohibited.
- Pack out your trash.
- Vehicles must have working headlights and tail lights to ride the trails in the dark.
- Alcohol is prohibited on trails.

## National Forests in North Carolina

Supervisor's Office  
160A Zillicoa St.  
Asheville, NC 28801

828-257-4200  
[www.fs.usda.gov/nfsnc](http://www.fs.usda.gov/nfsnc)