

Wesser Bald Hike Lookout Tower & Fire Station



Wesser Bald is located north of Franklin and south of the popular rafting area along the Nantahala River. We took a short 1.5 mile hike to the tower atop Wesser Bald, North Carolina, on the Appalachian Trail! You will see 360-degree mountain views of the Nantahala National Forest and the Great Smoky Mountains. The original tower was built 1936 by the Civilian Conservation Corps as a fire lookout. The live-in cabin was destroyed by arson in 1979 and replaced in the early 1990s by the USFS with the current observation deck for hikers. The hike to the summit is a gradual and steady climb. Park at Tellico Gap and head north. The trail winds through dense forests until you reach the top (trees have overtaken the once bald summit).

At the summit, there is a short (100 ft.) but not completely obvious side-trail on the Appalachian that takes you to a cool shelter.



To the North, you see the Smoky Mountains across a portion of Fontana Lake and the Balsam Mountains. East is the Tellico Valley, and the Little Tennessee River valley. South there is the Nantahala Ridge, hiding nearby Wayah Bald, but Winespring Bald shows it's towers. To the West are the Valley River Mountains, the Snowbirds, and the Slickrock Range.

Directions from Franklin: To reach the trailhead in Tellico Gap, follow route 28 North 12 miles out of Franklin. Turn left across the concrete bridge onto Tellico Road taking notice of the river flowing under you to your right while you bear right to follow this road as it climbs 8.3 miles through scenic Tellico valley, passes Tellico Trout farm where you'll see some amazing rock work, and finally you'll climb steeply up to the gap atop the ridge. It's paved the first 3.8 miles. You'll see the AT sign and parking spaces. Follow the Appalachian Trail North - (away from the power-line starting next to the fire-road). For a faster, simpler route take the old jeep road by foot rather than the winding trail, or take the AT trail up and the Jeep road down for a very nice loop!