

An abundance of natural beauty and outdoor activities have earned Bryson City a reputation as an "adventure capital". If you visit, make sure you bring your walking shoes and wetsuit.

**Art Abounds:** The mountains of North Carolina are well known for the inspiration they afford to artisans of all types and the Bryson City area is no exception.



Try your hand at pottery or other artisans' trades.

Take a walking or driving tour of the many galleries and shops ([www.greatsmokies.com/shopping](http://www.greatsmokies.com/shopping)). Enjoy a multi-cultural event or take a class sponsored by the NC Arts Council at the Swain County Center for the Arts ([www.swain.k12.nc.us/cfta](http://www.swain.k12.nc.us/cfta)). Learn a craft in tandem with how to start a business with it at the Heritage Arts Institute at Southwestern Community College ([www.southwesterncc.edu/heritagearts](http://www.southwesterncc.edu/heritagearts)). Become a potter at Pincu Pottery ([www.pincupottery.com](http://www.pincupottery.com)). Visit nearby Stecoah Valley Cultural Arts Center ([www.stecoahvalleycenter.com](http://www.stecoahvalleycenter.com)) or the Mountain Heritage Center in Cullowhee ([www.wcu.edu](http://www.wcu.edu)) to observe or partake in traditional Appalachian crafts and music. Treat yourself to a workshop retreat offering a variety of multi-day classes at Spiral Creek ([www.spiralcreek.com](http://www.spiralcreek.com)).

**DeepCreek Recreational Area:** gateway to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Outside the Park: tubing on the creek. Inside the Park: waterfalls, hiking and mountain biking trails.

**Nantabala Gorge Canopy Tours:** Zipline canopy tours through the treetops.

A new addition to the variety of outdoor activities in Bryson City is Zip Lining. Lose your breath on this exhilarating outdoor adventure through the treetops of the Nantabala Gorge



Whitewater rafting on the Nantabala is one of the most popular activities in Bryson City.

**Nantabala Outdoor Center:** whitewater rafting, kayak and canoe instruction, outdoor school, and adventure travel. Rafting and railroad combo trips.

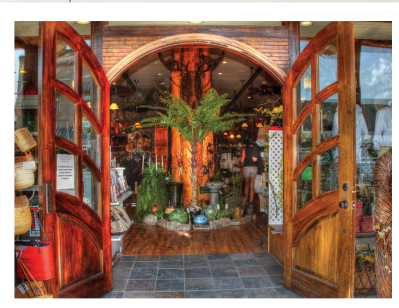
**Fontana Lake:**

fishing, boating and water skiing. Access to remote areas of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.



The Fontana Lake provides access to some of the remote areas of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. A wide range of fish can also be caught on Fontana Lake.

**Shopping:** an array of interesting shops and eateries on Everett Street, plus nearby antiques, art galleries and craft shops.



Bryson City has shops for everyone. The Bryson City General Store (left) is just one of the many diverse merchants in Swain County.

**Great Smoky Mountains Railroad:** scenic railroad trips through the Nantahala Gorge or along the Tuckasegee River to Dillsboro.



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1889

# BRYSON CITY

LAND OF WATER AND  
*Mountains*

**BRYSON CITY**  
at a Glance

Population (July, 2009):  
1,353  
(-4.1% since 2000)

Median Age:  
43 years

Median Household  
Income (2009):  
\$32,034

Median House/Condo  
Value (2009):  
\$143,704

Cost of Living Index (Dec. 2009):  
82  
(U.S. average is 100)

Zip Code: 28713



Blue mountains rising like sentinels through shrouds of mist, encased in mystical forests and accompanied by cold, clear rushing mountain waters draw you ever deeper. Those waters may be forced to slow down just a bit when converging upon the mighty Tuckasegee River that runs through the middle of Bryson City, giving you a moment to catch your breath and collect your thoughts, but it's already too late. Transfixed by the natural beauty that embraces you, you are compelled to stay awhile.

### A Rich History

Bryson City, seat of Swain County, was built on the site of the Cherokee Indian village known as Younaahqua, or



A popular local meeting place, the Cork and Bean is a wine bar and coffee house, located in a 1905 building which originally housed a bank.

Big Bear Springs. So named, explains Luke Hyde, owner of the Calhoun Inn, and local historian, “because bears gathered there. The Cherokee hunted them, but due to their reverence for nature, they prayed first, and afterward held a ceremony to thank the bear for giving its life to sustain them.” Today’s town, named after Colonel Bryson, the first man to represent Swain County in the state legislature,

*“This beautification sparked businesses to move in and now we have an attractive mix of shops, eateries, and service businesses”*

- Brad Walker  
Mayor of Bryson City

began on the small square on the north bank of the Tuckasegee River where its Neo-Classic Revival style Courthouse, constructed in 1908 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, still stands. Horace Kephart, author of the iconic ‘Our Southern Highlanders’, came to the Smoky Mountains in 1904, where his experiences prompted him to advocate for the formation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, which became a reality in 1934. A living laboratory of natural diversity, it’s become the most visited National Park in the country.

### Outdoor Enthusiast's Shangri-La

Two National Park entrances, Deep Creek and the ‘Road to Nowhere’ along the north shore of Fontana Lake, are just minutes from town. Several outfitters who offer a mile of whitewater tubing can be found along the way to the Deep Creek entrance. Within the Park, hikers choose from several loop hikes leading to the waterfalls and mountain bikers take advantage of one of the few park trails where bicycles are permitted. Fishermen and picnickers have options here as well. Nearby Fontana Lake provides the only access, other than a multi-day hike,



Cycle enthusiasts of all ages and skill sets flock to Bryson City for it's amazing scenery and trails of varying difficulty.

to the most remote parts of the Park, such as Hazel Creek, where Horace Kephart made his home. ( www.nps.gov/grsm) Whitewater rafting and kayaking enthusiasts flock to the nearby Nantahala Gorge. Attesting to its status as a paddling destination are the national slalom championships it has been home to, as well as the Junior World Cup Freestyle and the prestigious World Freestyle Kayaking Championships to be hosted here in 2012 and 2013. In fact, there’s so much to do that the only way to make sense of it



### Accomplishments: Bryson City renewal since 1998

#### Building Renovations:

2 buildings renovated and 4 facades redone

#### New Businesses:

15 New Businesses and 49 Jobs Created

#### Investments:

\$1,670,220 in public investments and \$245,735 in private investments

#### For further information:

For more information:  
www.greatsmokies.com

#### Public Areas & Facilities:

- Streetscape improvements
- New crosswalks
- Sidewalk repair
- Waste water improvements



Everett Street: New Sidewalks lampposts, benches, trees and pavement were installed. Photo by lumiereUflickr

is to stop in at the Chamber of Commerce, and pick up the brochures that organize it all by subject: Deep Creek Guide and Map, Shopping Guide, Fishing Guide, Lakeview Drive, Water Activities, Restaurant Guide, Waterfalls Day Trip Guide. Inclement weather? No problem, even rainy days are covered by their Rainy Day Activities Guide.

### Mountain Trains

“People come in here as adults, and go out as children”, reflects founder Tim Cooper when talking about the Smoky Mountain Museum and Retail Shop. No wonder, since it’s the largest indoor collection of Lionel trains in the Southeast, exhibiting mesmerizing miniature trains in life-like settings. Just



The Great Smoky Mountains Railway takes passengers on a picturesque journey through the Nantahala Gorge. Photo by Susan Knodle

steps from the museum is the Great Smoky Mountains Railway station, where passengers depart for rail excursions along the southern exposure of the Blue Ridge Mountains, through the Nantahala Gorge to the Nantahala Outdoor Center, or to Dillsboro alongside the Tuckasegee River. Several special excursions each season, like ‘Day Out With Thomas’, ‘Photo Special’, and the holiday themed such as ‘Polar Express’ add to the magic of traveling this historic and scenic railroad. (www.gsmr.com)

### Partnership with HandMade Sparks a Business Renaissance

Kate Welch, native, long-time civic volunteer, and a member of the Town Board in the 1990’s, was there when Bryson City joined HandMade’s Small Towns program. “HandMade gave us the vision that we needed, pointing out the possibilities, and encouraging us to take advantage of the assets we already had and helping us to obtain funding for facade renovation.” Adds Mayor Brad Walker, “HandMade assisted us in obtaining ‘enhancement funds’ from the North Carolina DOT that were used to beautify Everett Street: new sidewalks, lampposts, benches, trees and pavement were installed. This beautification sparked businesses to move in and now we have an attractive mix of shops, eateries and service businesses.” Ken Mills, Swain County Economic Development Director, explains, “HandMade’s regional marketing and networking, combined with the many cabin rentals and lodging avenues we now have, has helped us to broaden our ‘seasonality’. We can accommodate year round visitors, and we have found that predictions of snow actually increase the number of inquiries and visitors during the winter months.”