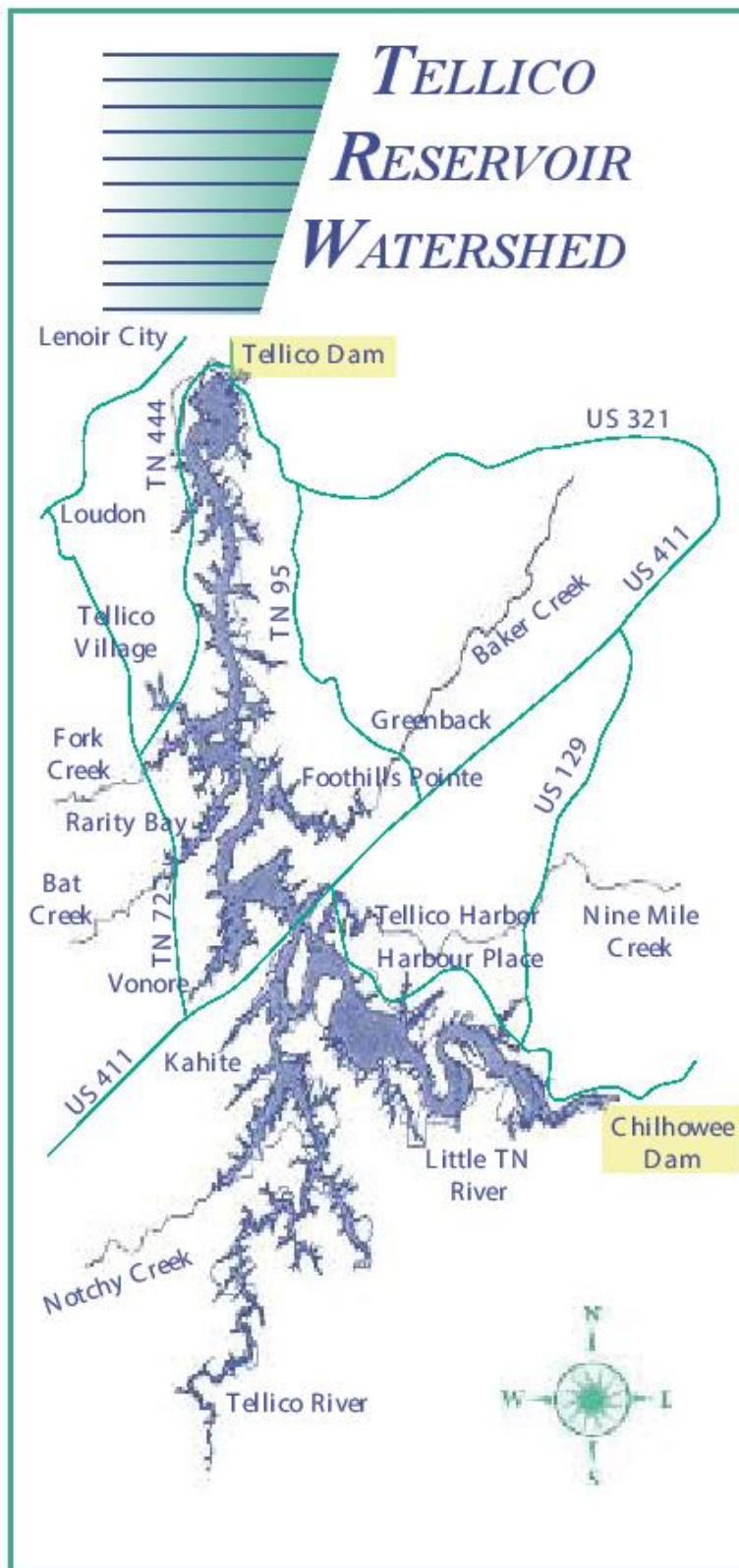


How many names are right for Tellico Lake?

Marilyn Hawkey – published 3/11/20 in The Connection



Hundreds of people move into Loudon, Monroe and Blount Counties each year. Most know the Tennessee River is the major waterway and that there is a dam in Lenoir City. As they move about the community, they hear people using different names for what they think is the same body of water. Tellico Reservoir, the Little Tennessee River, Tellico Lake and Tellico Watershed are the four names used. Confusion is a positive when it stimulates questions for clarification. All four names are correct. So, let's look at the big picture which is the Tellico Watershed.

A watershed is all of the land that catches rain or snow and drains into a common stream, river, or lake. It's all one, big, glorious system! The Tellico Watershed starts at Chilhowee Dam about 33 miles south of here on Highway 29 where you turn left to go onto the Foothills Parkway, and it ends at the Tellico Dam in Lenoir City. Within this watershed are creeks, rivers, a lake and a reservoir.

A reservoir is a lake created by building a dam across a river. The Tellico Dam in Lenoir City creates Tellico Reservoir and Tellico Lake. The Fort Loudon Dam, also in Lenoir City, receives the water of the Tennessee River.

There are two major and one minor rivers. The Little Tennessee River - Little T - starts near the Georgia and North Carolina border and flows down through Chilhowee Dam. The Tennessee River - not part of the watershed - begins east of Knoxville and flows through Fort Loudon Dam. The Little T flows into and ends at Tellico Dam where it merges into the Tennessee River. The Tellico Dam creates the Tellico Reservoir also called Tellico Lake. From the Tellico Plains area - where the Tellico Grains Bakery is - comes the third river: the Tellico River which flows into the Little Tennessee River.

We live in very hilly country and the rain water and snow melt run down through creeks into Tellico Lake. Feeding the Little T and Tellico Lake are a number of creeks. There's the Notchy Creek flowing SW of Kahite and, closer to us, Nine Mile Creek, Bat Creek, Baker Creek, and Fork Creek. Adjacent to these creeks are a number of agricultural farms. Farm animals impact the creek and the lake but that is another story.

We live in a water-rich community. Moving here to live near this pristine body of water and enjoy the flora and fauna was a major life change. We all want to protect this water. WATeR is a group of people from different communities in the watershed and their mission is to protect the water quality of the watershed, lake, and creeks. WATeR has brochures in various locations that describe their work in the watershed. Or, go to their web site at www.tellicowater.org. You'll find a lot of material on the topics and issues they're concerned about. You can also request a speaker, at no cost, to discuss these and other issues. Send an email to: tellicowater@aol.com.