BLACK BEARS

During fall, bears depend heavily on acorns, hickory nuts, and other types of hard “mast” to gain weight for winter. If the trees provide plentiful mast, bears will not need to wander far and wide in search of food and females will give birth to plentiful tiny bear cubs over the winter.

This Fox is Perfectly Suited for the Forest

Of all the canids that live (or once lived) in the Great Smoky Mountains, including the coyote, red fox, gray wolf, and red wolf, none is better adapted for life in the woods than the gray fox. Not only does the gray fox hunt for a dizzying array of foods that abound in a forest environment, this fox also has the special ability to climb a tree to reach some of them.

One example is an observation made in Cades Cove by field biologists of a gray fox climbing into a persimmon tree to eat the fruit. Other foods the gray fox might seek out include apples, wild grapes, hickory nuts and cherries. Tree climbing, made possible by the fox’s curved claws and pivoting paws, has other advantages as well, namely eluding predators.

Several animals prey on gray fox, including coyotes and bobcats. Many are also killed by automobiles.

When gray fox aren’t climbing trees to find fruit, they might be seen prowling the forest floor in search of rabbits, mice, voles, and insects.

The best times to see gray fox are dawn, dusk, and at night. They are found from the lowest elevations in the park up to about 4,000 feet. In recent years their populations have been pressured by the natural migration of coyotes from the West to the Smokies. Coyotes were first observed in Great Smoky Mountains National Park in the 1980s and their population has grown substantially since.

Gray fox often den in groundhog burrows they have taken over and modified. Females give birth to 3-4 pups in early spring.

Autumn Was Time of Plenty & Plenty to Do

Fall was a busy, but hopefully bountiful time on a mountain farm. Families depended on their large, labor-intensive gardens for nearly all their year-round produce. They cultivated an impressive array of vegetables and other foods, including cabbage, peppers, cucumbers, beets, onions, sunflowers, turnips, peas, carrots, tomatoes, beans, squash, melons, and pumpkins.

In the fields, corn was king, especially tall sturdy varieties like Hickory Cane, which is still grown at the Mountain Farm Museum at Oconaluftee. A few farmers grew other grains as well, including wheat, oats, rye, and sorghum cane.

Apples and other fruits were also ripening around this time of year. Families nurtured a variety of apples, including Cullasaga, Brushy Mountain Limbertwig, Buff, and Early Harvest. They also grew peaches and plums.

Autumn was not only harvest time, it was the crucial time for putting food by, as well. Without refrigeration (other than the springhouse) farmers had to rely on other means of preserving their food for future consumption. Some foods, such as potatoes, cabbage, and onions would keep for a time just by dry storage or burying with straw. Beans could be dried.

Other vegetables might be pickled or preserved in crocks as slaw or chowchow. When store-bought jars became widely available in the 1860s, home canning became an option.

Sorghum making was an autumnal ritual of turning sorghum cane into delicious sorghum molasses. This historic practice is kept alive in the national park today through demonstrations at Cades Cove Visitor Center and the Mountain Farm Museum (see pages 12-13 for a schedule). Visitors can watch cane being squeezed through the horse-powered mill and the juice carefully cooked down to molasses.

If you would like to learn more about life on a mountain farm, an audio tour called “From Field to Fork” is now available for a small fee at the Mountain Farm Museum.
smokies trip planner

to order maps and guides: www.SmokiesInformation.org

smokies guide

Smokies Guide is produced four times per year by Great Smoky Mountains Association and Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Publication dates are roughly as follows:

SPRING: March 15
SUMMER: June 1
AUTUMN: September 15
WINTER: December 1

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GSMA
P.O. Box 130
Gatlinburg, TN 37738

printed on recycled paper

Nine campgrounds will be open in the national park this fall.

The list below shows number of sites, elevations, fees, approximate 2016 operation dates, and maximum RV lengths. Dates are subject to change. Visit www.nps.gov/grsm for current information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Num. Sites</th>
<th>Elevations</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Max. RV Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abrams Creek</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1,125'</td>
<td>Apr. 8-Oct. 31</td>
<td>35'-40' RVs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cataloochee Canyon</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1,700'</td>
<td>Apr. 8-Oct. 31</td>
<td>35'-40' RVs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosby</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>2,459'</td>
<td>Apr. 8-Oct. 31</td>
<td>25' RVs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep Creek</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>1,800'</td>
<td>May 27-Oct. 26</td>
<td>26' RVs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elkmont</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>2,150'</td>
<td>May 27-Oct. 31</td>
<td>12' trailers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Smoky</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>1,800'</td>
<td>Apr. 8-Oct. 31</td>
<td>35'-40' RVs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LeConte Lodge</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5,310'</td>
<td>May 27-Oct. 10</td>
<td>12' trailers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oconaluftee Visitor Center</td>
<td>12 sites</td>
<td>1,125'</td>
<td>May 27-Oct. 26</td>
<td>15' RVs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsend</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1,700'</td>
<td>Apr. 8-Oct. 31</td>
<td>35'-40' RVs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pets in the park

Pets are allowed in frontcountry campgrounds and beside roads as long as they are restrained at all times. Pets are not allowed on park trails, except for the Gatlinburg and Oconaluftee River trails. Dogs on these trails must be leashed.

opportunities

Youth & adult programs at Tremont: gsmit.org; (865) 448-6709.

Educational programs from the Smoky Mountain Field School: smfs.utk.edu; (865) 974-0150.

Join Great Smoky Mountains Association at SmokiesInformation.org: 1-888-898-9102

Support the park with Friends of the Smokies: friendsofthesmokies.org; 1-800-845-5665.

special events

September 17
Mountains Celebration

December 10
Mountain Life Festival

December 17
Holiday Homecoming

Oconaluftee Visitor Center

picnic areas

Please see pages 8-9 for locations of picnic areas. All have charcoal grills for cooking. Look Rock picnic area will not open this year.

visitor centers

Fall hours of operation for park visitor centers are: Oconaluftee & Sugarlands, 8-6:30. Cades Cove, 9-6:30. Clingmans Dome, 10-6.

other services

There are no gas stations, showers, or restaurants in the national park. Mt. LeConte Lodge is the only lodging.

Bicycle and pedestrian morning on Cades Cove Loop Road.

Bicycling

Most park roads are too narrow and heavily traveled by automobiles for safe or enjoyable bicycling. However, Cades Cove Loop Road is an exception. This 11-mile, one-way, paved road provides bicyclists with excellent opportunities for viewing wildlife and historic sites.

Helmets are required for persons age 16 and under and are strongly recommended for all bicyclists.

From mid-May through mid-Sept., on Wednesday and Saturday mornings, only bicycles and pedestrians are allowed on Cades Cove Loop Road. Bicycles may be rented at the Cades Cove Campground store next to Cades Cove Campground.

LeConte Lodge (accessible by trail only) provides the only lodging in the park. Call (865) 429-5704.

For information on lodging outside the park:
Bryson City 1-800-867-9246
Cherokee 1-828-788-0034
Fontana 1-800-849-2258
Gatlinburg 1-800-588-1817
Maggie Valley 1-800-624-4431
Pigeon Forge 1-855-716-6199
Sevierville 1-866-889-7415
Townsend 1-800-525-6834

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### Driving Distances & Estimated Times

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park</th>
<th>Distances</th>
<th>Estimation Times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cherokee</td>
<td>34 miles (1 hour)</td>
<td>1½ hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gatlinburg</td>
<td>37 miles (2 hours)</td>
<td>1½ hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newfound Gap</td>
<td>18 miles (½ hour)</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clingmans Dome</td>
<td>25 miles (¾ hour)</td>
<td>1½ hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cataloochee</td>
<td>39 miles (1½ hours)</td>
<td>1½ hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep Creek</td>
<td>14 miles (½ hour)</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Backcountry Camping in the Smokies

Camping at a backcountry campsite or shelter can be an exciting adventure for persons properly equipped and informed. To facilitate this activity, the National Park Service maintains over 800 miles of trails and more than 100 backcountry campsites and shelters throughout the park. One of the greatest challenges for backcountry campers is deciding where to go. Here are some tools to help.

1. Go online to view the park’s official trail map (www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/maps.htm), which shows all park trails, campsites, and shelters. Park rules and regulations are also listed here. If you wish, you can purchase the printed version here. If you wish, you can purchase the printed trail map for $1 by stopping at any park visitor center or calling (865) 436-7318 x226 or shopping online at www.smokiesinformation.org.

2. Call or stop by the backcountry information office (open every day from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.). The office is located in Sugarlands Visitor Center, two miles south of Gatlinburg on Newfound Gap Road (U.S. 441). (865) 436-1297.

3. Make your reservation through the backcountry office at Sugarlands Visitor Center (by phone or in person) or online at www.smokiespermits.nps.gov.

Reservations and permits are required for all overnight stays in the backcountry. The cost is $4 per person per night. Reservations may be made up to 30 days in advance.

Rangers will need to rescue over 100 people in the backcountry this year. If you don’t want to be one of them:

- **Ditch the sandals.** Sturdy hiking boots are the best way to prevent a lower leg injury.
- **Know when the sun sets.** Many hikes turn into rescues because people get caught out on trails after dark without flashlights or headlamps.
- **Know your limits.** Don’t plan a 15-mile hike unless you are in spectacular physical condition and have done such hikes in mountain terrain recently.
- **Prepare for the weather.** These mountains are green because it rains a whole lot here. Always carry rain gear. Stay dry.

---

horse riding

Horseback riding is generally available from early March into November. Rates are $30 per hour. Most stables have maximum rider weight limits of 225 or 250 pounds and age restrictions for children. Please call the stables below or stop at a visitor center for detailed information.

- **CADES COVE** (865) 448-9009
cadescovestables.com
- **SMOKEMOUNT** (828) 497-2373
smokemontridingstable.com
- **SMOKEMONT** (828) 497-2373
smokymountainridingstables.com
- **RIVER RUN** (865) 436-3535
sugarlandsridingstables.com
- **GATLINBURG** (865) 436-3535
sugarlandsridingstables.com
- **TOWNSEND** (865) 436-3535
sugarlandsridingstables.com

Hayrides and carriage rides ($12 per person) are available from Cades Cove Riding Stable. Wagon rides ($10 per person) are offered at Smokemont. Souvenir photos, tee-shirts, hats, and ice may be available. Soft drink vending is available.

The Park Service operates horse camps at Cades Cove, Big Creek, Cataloochee, and Round Bottom. Call 877-444-6777 or visit www.Recreation.gov for reservations.

fishing

Fishing is permitted year-round in the park, but a Tennessee or North Carolina fishing license is required. Either state license is valid throughout the park and no trout stamp is required. A special permit is required for the Cherokee Reservation and Gatlinburg. Licenses are available in nearby towns. Fishing with bait is prohibited.

A free fishing map with information about park streams and a complete list of all park fishing regulations is available at park visitor centers.

The above temperature and precipitation averages are based on data for the last 20 years. Temperatures are in degrees fahrenheit. An average of over 84” (7 feet) of precipitation falls on the higher elevations of the Smokies. On Mt. Le Conte, an average of 82.8” of snow falls per year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>49°</td>
<td>27°</td>
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<td>36°</td>
<td>18°</td>
<td>6.7”</td>
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<tr>
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<td>28°</td>
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<td>37°</td>
<td>19°</td>
<td>5.6”</td>
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<tr>
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<td>35°</td>
<td>5.5”</td>
<td>44°</td>
<td>25°</td>
<td>7.0”</td>
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<tr>
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<td>42°</td>
<td>4.5”</td>
<td>52°</td>
<td>31°</td>
<td>6.7”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>77°</td>
<td>50°</td>
<td>5.7”</td>
<td>58°</td>
<td>39°</td>
<td>8.0”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>82°</td>
<td>58°</td>
<td>5.8”</td>
<td>64°</td>
<td>47°</td>
<td>8.7”</td>
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<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>85°</td>
<td>62°</td>
<td>6.3”</td>
<td>67°</td>
<td>50°</td>
<td>9.0”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug.</td>
<td>85°</td>
<td>61°</td>
<td>5.3”</td>
<td>67°</td>
<td>49°</td>
<td>7.6”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept.</td>
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<td>62°</td>
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<td>35°</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>60°</td>
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<td>3.4”</td>
<td>46°</td>
<td>27°</td>
<td>6.8”</td>
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<td>Dec.</td>
<td>51°</td>
<td>28°</td>
<td>4.6”</td>
<td>38°</td>
<td>20°</td>
<td>6.4”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**park information**

*for additional information, visit www.nps.gov/grsm*
The observation tower at the Smokies highest peak, 6,643’.

1. clingmans dome
A paved, but very steep, 0.5 mile trail leads to an observation tower that offers 360° views of the Great Smoky Mountains and beyond. To get there: turn off Newfound Gap Road 0.1 mile south of Newfound Gap and follow the 7-mile-long Clingmans Dome Road to the large parking area at the end. A visitor center is located along the trail to the tower.

The road to Clingmans Dome is closed from December 1 through March 31 due to weather.

2. andrews bald
“Balds” are mountaintop meadows of mysterious origin. Andrews offers panoramic mountain views in favorable weather. The 3.6 mile round trip hike to Andrews Bald is along Forney Ridge Trail and starts from the end of Clingmans Dome parking area. The trail leads through high elevation spruce-fir forest with evergreen trees and unusual flora and fauna.

3. sugarlands visitor center
It’s fun, it’s free, and it’s easy to find. Sugarlands Visitor Center is located 2 miles south of Gatlinburg, TN on U.S. 441. Highlights include flora and fauna exhibits, a 20-minute film in the surround-sound theater, an information desk, and bookstore. Several short nature trails also begin at the center, as do ranger-led walks and talks. Open every day except Christmas.

4. water-powered grist mills
Two historic, water-powered grist mills operate from 9-5 daily, grinding corn into corn meal. Cable Mill sits in Cades Cove (halfway around the one-way loop road). Mingus Mill is 2 miles north of Cherokee, NC on U.S. 441 (Newfound Gap Road). Corn meal is available for purchase.

5. newfound gap
This gap is a low point in the mountain range and straddles the boundary of North Carolina and Tennessee. From here one can enjoy spectacular views into both states and take a short stroll along the famous Appalachian Trail. There are also restrooms and the historic Rockefeller Memorial.

6. oconaluftee history museums
This history buff’s paradise now offers free indoor and outdoor museums. It also features old-time breeds of livestock (seasonally) an heirloom garden and row crops and occasional historic demonstrations. The new visitor center and mountain farm museum are located on U.S. 441 (Newfound Gap Road), 2 miles north of Cherokee, NC. A new audio tour of the farm can be rented at the visitor center for a small fee. Open every day except Christmas.

7. deep creek waterfalls
Around 2 miles of walking will acquaint you with beautiful Deep Creek and three pretty waterfalls (Juney Whank, Tom Branch, and Indian Creek). The trails to the waterfalls start from the large parking area at the end of Deep Creek Road (across the creek from Deep Creek Campground). Deep Creek also features a picnic area.

8. mt. le conte
The Alum Cave Trail to Mt. Le Conte and LeConte Lodge will be closed Mondays-Thursdays for trail repairs through late November. However, there are plenty of alternatives for hikers to this popular peak. The Boulevard Trail starts from Newfound Gap and runs 8.1 miles to LeConte Lodge. Bull Head and Rainbow Falls trails begin from Cherokee Orchard (near downtown Gatlinburg) and are 6.9 and 6.7 miles respectively. From the Great Smoky Mountains and beyond. To get there: turn off Newfound Gap Road 0.1 mile south of Newfound Gap and follow the 7-mile-long Clingmans Dome Road to the large parking area at the end. A visitor center is located along the trail to the tower.

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WHERE TO BEAT THE CROWDS
If you want to beat the October crowds, try some of these off-the-beaten-path destinations.

9. Look Rock walking trail
This remote area is accessible only by narrow, winding secondary roads. But when you arrive, there are elk to watch, historic buildings to explore, and plenty of trails to walk. 39 miles from Cherokee; 65 miles from Gatlinburg.

10. Cataloochee Valley
This remote area is accessible only by narrow, winding secondary roads. But when you arrive, there are elk to watch, historic buildings to explore, and plenty of trails to walk. 39 miles from Cherokee; 65 miles from Gatlinburg.

11. Cosby Campground, Picnic Area, and hiking trails
The campground rarely fills, and there are short and long trails to waterfalls, views, and Mt. Cammerer fire tower. The campground is 20 miles from Gatlinburg, TN.

12. Fontana Dam and Lake
A TVA visitor center and tours highlight the highest dam in the East. Fontana Marina offers boat rentals and shuttles for access to remote, historic areas like Hazel Creek and Eagle Creek. 33 miles from Bryson City.

Great sights to see
A dozen must-see places in the Great Smoky Mountains

KENT CAVE PHOTO

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National Park Service New Briefs

Crews Use Fire to Help Native Plants, Wildlife, and Park History

Although most people think of the Great Smoky Mountains as a rainy place replete with waterfalls and rushing mountain streams, some 30-40% of the park is actually dry pine and oak covered ridges that depend on fire for health and regeneration.

Since 1996, Great Smoky Mountains National Park has been using prescribed fire, also called controlled burns, to help restore pine and oak forest, maintain grassy meadows and historic landscapes in Cades Cove, and protect life and property. Prescribed fires are only conducted under specific weather conditions when favorable fire behavior and personnel and public safety goals can be achieved.

Many Great Smoky Mountains species depend on fire or use fire for their benefit. Table Mountain pine, only found in the Appalachian Mountains, would not reproduce without fire. Fire melts the resin on Table Mountain pine cones to release the seeds in nutrient-rich beds of ash where seeds will then germinate and grow.

Fire consumes decaying vegetation and releases nutrients that promote new growth, improves habitat, and increases food sources. By burning intensely in some areas and cooler in others, prescribed fire can create a puzzle-like mosaic of diverse habitats for plants and animals.

Hawks and other birds of prey hunt along the edges of burns and find cover in unburned areas. Deer feed on nutritious, succulent new shoots of grasses and shrubs that appear after fire. Fire reduces shade tolerant trees and shrubs, like maples, which encroach on oak forests. Fire reduces maples, allowing young oaks to survive. The oaks in turn produce acorns which sustain elk, black bear, turkey, and other wildlife that depend upon acorns for food.

Regular, low-intensity prescribed fires protect the landscape from out-of-control wildfires that can wreak havoc on people and property. Regular fires keep forests and grasslands open and healthy. Over the past two decades, over 20,000 acres have been burned to maintain Smokies health and diversity.

Fires Planned for 2016

Over 3,800 acres in Great Smoky Mountains National Park are planned to be treated with prescribed fire this fall. In Cades Cove the goals are to maintain open meadows and improve critical habitat for wildlife. In addition, the fires will maintain the historic landscape of Cades Cove, and reduce woody intrusion and non-native plants in grassy meadows. Resource managers plan to burn 1,200 acres in Cades Cove in September and October 2016.

Cataloochee Plans

In Cataloochee, crews use fire to invigorate the remaining fire-adapted oak and pine forests and improve oak woodland habitat to sustain numerous diverse plant and animal species (including elk). The fires should also reduce the density of shade tolerant trees and shrubs which threaten natural communities and lower the risk of wildfires by reducing burnable vegetation. Resource managers plan to burn approximately 2,600 acres in the Cataloochee area in November 2016, weather permitting.

Visitors Can Become Field Scientists This Fall

VISITORS TO THE SMOKIES can now help scientists learn how plants respond to changes in climate locally, regionally, and nationally. Scientists are looking for information on things like when tree leaves change color, when they fall off, and when they unfurl in the spring. Visitors can help by sending in observations on any plant they see here, or by reporting on 10 species of common trees found in the Smokies.

To get started, simply pick up observation forms at Sugarlands or Oconaluftee visitor centers or download the app called Mobile Budburst (app.budburst.org). Then you just need to observe, record, and report to budburst.org.

Tree Hazards Close Parson Branch Road

PARSON BRANCH ROAD, A NARROW, ONE-WAY graveled roadway which connects Cades Cove Loop Road and highway 129, has been temporarily closed due to the large number of dead eastern hemlock trees along the roadside. Most of the trees were killed by the hemlock woolly adelgid, a non-native pest which has wiped out more than half the park's hemlocks.

Please Leave Your Firewood at Home

WOOD-BORING INSECTS FROM EUROPE and Asia have the potential to devastate over 40 species of hardwood trees in the Great Smoky Mountains. To help prevent this catastrophe from ever happening, the National Park Service has imposed restrictions on the type of firewood that can be brought into the national park. Only certified, heat-treated firewood may now be brought into the park, though dead and down wood may still be collected inside the park for campfires here. Certified wood is now available for sale both inside and outside the park. For more information visit www.nps.gov/grsm.

IT LOOKS LIKE THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, Federal Highways Administration, and state of Tennessee at long last have the funding in place to complete the 33-mile long section of the Foothills Parkway west between Walland, TN and Wears Valley. The parkway runs outside the main boundaries of Great Smoky Mountains National Park and offers spectacular views of the Smokies. In July the Park Service and other agencies received word they would receive a special $10 million federal grant, which when combined with state and Park Service funds, will be enough to finish the project in 2018.

Park Garners $10 Million for Road

Great Smoky Mountains National Park protects over 800 square miles of land

Park news

smokies guide, Fall 2016 – 5
Stories of the women who worked and lived in the Great Smoky Mountains have often been short ones or have gone untold entirely. Fortunately, with the publication of No Place for the Weary Kind: Women of the Great Smoky Mountains, the national park and human-kind have taken a step forward to rebalance this bias.

Written by Courtney Lix and published by Great Smoky Mountains Association, Women of the Smokies recounts the life stories of 19 women from the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries who shaped and were shaped by the Smoky Mountains. The chapters are divided into three sections: “No Place for a Weary Woman—Making a Life in the Smokies,” “Mountains as Muse—Craftswomen, Artists, and Writers,” and “Boots in the Wilderness—Women in Great Smoky Mountains National Park.”

The chapter on Phyllis Higginbotham and Marjorie Chalmers tells the story of two community health nurses who were lured to the Gatlinburg area on behalf of the Pi Beta Phi fraternity for women, and quickly became the primary health care providers for hundreds of rural farm families.

“In the many months without a doctor in the area,” Higginbotham wrote, “we were dependent on our own resources. We improvised splints, applied pressure bandages, used suction for snake bites, and took care of axe cuts, gunshot wounds, convulsions, and bear scratches.”

In fact, during their early years, both women averaged over 1,000 house calls per year. It was not unusual for one of the nurses to be called out in the middle of the night to ride and hike deep into the mountains to administer antitoxin to a baby with diptheria. “The child couldn’t have lived until morning, so there was no waiting to get a doctor...” she recalled.

As demanding as the job was, both Chalmers and Higginbotham found the work more rewarding than difficult. “…with the hill folk I have found a wealth of good things—faith and courage, wit and wisdom, and a kindness that shames even ‘the widow’s mite.’”

The chapter on hikers Margaret Stevenson and Gracie McNicol is another highlight of the book. Both women started hiking as treatment for their different ailments and became Smoky Mountain legends, especially on the trails leading to the summit of Mt. Le Conte.

Stevenson overcame severe back pain by hiking rugged mountain trails. She was 52 years old when she started hiking in the Smokies. Author Lix reports “The more she hiked, the happier she was. In 1976, she became the first woman to hike all 150 trails in the park.”

On her 80th birthday Stevenson made her 602nd hike to the top of Le Conte. It was nowhere near her last. McNicol was not as young as Stevenson when she became an avid Le Conte hiker. She was 62 and had spent a decade or more of her life as a near invalid. As her number of ascents to the lodge atop the mountain grew into the hundreds, she endured still more physical challenges, including a broken back and stroke.

Undeterred, McNicol continued hiking Le Conte into her 90s.

No doubt the most famous woman featured in Women of the Smokies is Dolly Parton. Dolly’s origins were humble. Many of her relatives grew up on farms that later became part of the national park. Dolly and her ten siblings were raised in a one-room cabin about ten miles from the park. Dolly’s origins are still apparent in her music, speech, and attitudes. In albums like Heartsong, The Grass is Blue, and Little Sparrow she returns to the ballads of her childhood, many with origins that run straight through the Smokies. As her biographer Alanna Nash wrote, “…her songs with the greatest depth have for the most part been those culled from her storehouse of memories of her native region.”
Q: When do fall colors in the park reach their peak?

A: That depends. THE grand finale of fall colors in the Smokies is usually during the last week of October or the first week of November. Remember though, it’s better to be a little early than a little late to the show. The absolute peak of colors is often followed by a cold front and accompanying high winds that strip many leaves from the trees.

Also, trees like dogwood and backgum start showing good color in mid September. And at the park’s highest elevations, where temperatures are 10-20 degrees F cooler, the peak of colors happens in early or mid October.

Q: What trees display the best fall colors?

A: In the Smokies, the all-stars include maples, birches, oaks, hickories, ash, tuliptree, sourwood, sweetgum, dogwood, and blackgum. The hemlock, pines, and other evergreens provide the dramatic dark green backdrop. Because there are 100 different species of native trees in the park, plus more than 100 shrubs, the fall color display is diverse and dynamic.

Q: Who rakes all the leaves?

A: Because the Smokies are preserved as a national park, the National Park Service lets nature take its course when it comes to leaves. The approximately 13 trillion leaves that fall from trees here every year provide food for mushrooms (please see page 15), slime molds, beetles, snails, millipedes, springtails, and worms. These organisms recycle the leaves into nutrients that can then be used by other plants and animals. By next summer, there will be nary a trace of all those leaves.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SUGARLANDS/ELKMONT AREA</strong></th>
<th><strong>MEETING LOCATION</strong></th>
<th><strong>DURATION</strong></th>
<th><strong>DIFFICULTY</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Autumn Amble:</strong> Join a ranger to discover the wondrous world of the Smokies in fall. Locations will vary as the leaf color peaks at different elevations.</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>2.5 hours</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hike to Andrews Bald:</strong> Toss your day pack in the car and join a ranger on a 3.6 mile round trip stroll through one of the Smoky Mountains’ most interesting ecosystems. This moderate hike will take you out to Andrews Bald, a beautiful meadow on a mountaintop. You can hike leisurely back to the parking lot on your own after reaching the bald or return with the ranger.</td>
<td>Forney Ridge Trailhead</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A Walk in the Woods:</strong> Do you have a few minutes? Get away from the hustle and bustle by taking an easy stroll and discover stories of history and nature along this scenic, wooded trail.</td>
<td>Sugarlands Visitor Center</td>
<td>1.5 hours</td>
<td>Easy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Creation of a Park:</strong> Drop in anytime between 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. to chat with a ranger about how the Smokies was created. This unique story is sure to intrigue the whole family.</td>
<td>Newfound Gap</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>Easy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Geology Rocks!</strong> Amaze your friends with newfound knowledge about how these mountains were born and how they have changed over time</td>
<td>Clingmans Dome Visitor Center</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>Easy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Highland Homeland:</strong> Sit a spell on the front porch of the Ogle cabin and learn about the families who once lived here. Demonstrations and activities will vary throughout the season.</td>
<td>Noah Bud Ogle Cabin</td>
<td>1.5 hours</td>
<td>Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Slimy Salamanders:</strong> Join a Ranger to explore the damp, dark world of the park’s most popular amphibian. Be prepared to get a little wet and even a little dirty as we search for this slimy creature. Closed-toed shoes recommended.</td>
<td>Chimneys Picnic Area near Cove Hardwood Nature Trail</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Junior Ranger: Creature Feature:</strong> Did you know that thousands and thousands of different kinds of plants and animals live in the Smokies? Join a ranger to learn about some of the creatures that live here during this “Ranger’s Choice” style program.</td>
<td>Sugarlands Visitor Center</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evening Campfire:</strong> Join a ranger for a National Park tradition—the evening campfire program. Topics vary, but you’re guaranteed to learn something new about the Great Smoky Mountains.</td>
<td>Elkmont Campground</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>Easy</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>METCALF BOTTOMS AREA</strong></th>
<th><strong>MEETING LOCATION</strong></th>
<th><strong>DURATION</strong></th>
<th><strong>DIFFICULTY</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Junior Ranger: School Days at Little Greenbrier:</strong> Go back in time to discover what it was like to live in a mountain community and go to school in a one-room schoolhouse. Fun for all ages, and great for Junior Rangers. Please arrive 15 minutes before program start; space is limited.</td>
<td>Little Greenbrier School</td>
<td>1.5 hours</td>
<td>Easy</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>CADES COVE AREA</strong></th>
<th><strong>MEETING LOCATION</strong></th>
<th><strong>DURATION</strong></th>
<th><strong>DIFFICULTY</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cades Cove Evening Hayride:</strong> Enjoy a ranger-led open air hayride viewing wildlife and discovering the diversity of Cades Cove.</td>
<td>Cades Cove Riding Stables</td>
<td>1 ½ - 2 hours</td>
<td>Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cades Cove Night Hike:</strong> Join a park ranger for an evening walk discovering the night creatures of the Cove. Children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult. Bring a flashlight.</td>
<td>Cades Cove Orientation Shelter at the Entrance to the Loop Road</td>
<td>1.5 hours</td>
<td>Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Junior Ranger Program:</strong> Join a park ranger for a hands-on exploration of the Smokies. Participation counts towards earning a Junior Ranger badge and certificate.</td>
<td>Cades Cove Visitor Center</td>
<td>30 - 45 minutes</td>
<td>Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WILD by Design:</strong> A short talk and demonstration about the wild things in the Smokies.</td>
<td>Cades Cove Visitor Center / Cable Mill Area</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>Easy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Programs and Activities in Great Smoky Mountains National Park—September 18–October 29, 2016 Only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCESSIBLE</th>
<th>MON.</th>
<th>TUES.</th>
<th>WED.</th>
<th>THURS.</th>
<th>FRI.</th>
<th>SAT.</th>
<th>SUN.</th>
<th>SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9:00 A.M.</td>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
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<td>Limited to 20 participants. Call (865) 436-1291 up to 4 days in advance to make reservations. Sturdy footwear, snacks, and water recommended.</td>
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<td>Sturdy footwear, a lunch, and water recommended.</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>12:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M.</td>
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<td>Limited to 25 participants. Call (865) 436-1291 up to 4 days in advance to make reservations.</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>2:00 P.M.</td>
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<td>*Check at Sugarlands VC or Campground Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>11:00 A.M. &amp; 2:00 P.M.</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>4:00 P.M.</td>
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<td>Hayride Fee: $14.00/person</td>
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<td>7:30 P.M.</td>
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<td>2:30 P.M.</td>
<td>2:30 P.M.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Porch Talk: Salamanders of the Smokies:
Discover why the Smokies is considered the Salamander Capital of the World.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Difficulty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>Easy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Smokemont History Walk:
Join a Ranger for a short history walk exploring the local Smokemont area in the early 1900s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Difficulty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smokemont Nature Trail in the Smokemont Campground</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>Easy to Moderate</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Logging in the Smokies:
Join a ranger to enjoy a short nature walk and uncover Smokemont’s logging history. Half mile walk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Difficulty</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smokemont Nature Trail in the Smokemont Campground</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>Easy to Moderate</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Junior Ranger: River Ramble:
Relax and cool off along a mountain stream. This easy walk with a ranger offers you an amazing opportunity to explore the Smokies only minutes from your car.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Difficulty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oconaluftee River Trailhead</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>Easy</td>
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</table>

## Junior Ranger: Porch Program:
Join a Ranger on the porch of the Oconaluftee Visitor Center to discover what makes Great Smoky Mountains National Park so special. Topics vary so feel free to come more than once!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Difficulty</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>Easy</td>
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</table>

## Longing for the “Good Ol’ Days”:
You’ve heard it before but was it really the “good ol’ days?” Join a ranger for a walk on the Mountain Farm Museum and learn about the “new comers” who settled here and farmed this land.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Difficulty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Farm Museum</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
<td>Easy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Junior Ranger: Smoky Mountain Elk:
It’s all about connection and balance in nature to ensure survival for elk and other species living together in an ecosystem. Learn about the history of the elk through “show and tell” activities. Then stay and watch the elk come into in the fields!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Difficulty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palmer House, Cataloochee Valley</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
<td>Easy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## SPECIAL PROGRAMS

### Hike Bradleytown to Campground:
Join Park Volunteer Dick Sellers for an easy 2 hour stroll through time from early Bradleytown to the present campground. Learn how this area transformed from a forested haven to a barren wasteland and back again. Afterwards visitors may choose to hike to the Bradley Fork Cemetery with Dick.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Difficulty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smokemont Baptist Church (near Smokemont Campground entrance)</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>Easy to Moderate</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Blacksmith Demonstration:
Learn the art of blacksmithing and why it was important in the Cades Cove community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Difficulty</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cades Cove Visitor Center</td>
<td>Ongoing 6 hours</td>
<td>Easy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Science Friday:
Join a scientist on the 3rd Friday of the month to learn about and engage in ongoing scientific research happening inside Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Topics vary each month.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Difficulty</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugarlands Visitor Center</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>Easy</td>
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</table>

### Back Porch Old-Time Music Jam:
Bring an acoustic instrument and join in on this old-time jam. Or just sit back and enjoy the sights and sounds as others play traditional Appalachian music.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Difficulty</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>Easy</td>
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</table>

### Sorghum Making Demonstration:
Watch horses and humans combine their efforts to transform sorghum cane into delicious sorghum molasses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Difficulty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cades Cove Visitor Center</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>Easy</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACCESSIBLE</td>
<td>MON.</td>
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<td>2:00 P.M.</td>
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<td>11:00 A.M.</td>
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**NATIONAL PARK—SEPTEMBER 18–OCTOBER 29, 2016**
top five fall hikes

Hike the Smokies!

SUTTON RIDGE OVERLOOK
Roundtrip distance: 2.9 miles
Difficulty: Moderate
Trailhead: The Lower Mt. Cammerer Trail starts from the Cosby Picnic Area near Cosby Campground.
Highlight: Late fall view from Overlook

MT. CAMMERER
Roundtrip distance: 11.2 miles
Difficulty: Strenuous
Trailhead: Low Gap Trail starts from the Cosby Picnic Area near Cosby Campground. Follow it to the Appalachian Trail and the A.T. to the Mt. Cammerer Trail.
Highlight: Views from the historic firetower

LOOK ROCK TOWER
Roundtrip distance: 1.0 mile
Difficulty: Easy
Trailhead: Foothills Parkway West between Chilhowee Lake and Walland.
Highlight: Late fall views from the observation tower

CLINGMANS DOME TOWER
Roundtrip distance: 1.0 mile
Difficulty: Strenuous
Trailhead: The parking area at the end of Clingmans Dome Road.
Highlight: Views from the observation tower

THOMAS DIVIDE TRAIL
Roundtrip distance: 3.6 miles
Difficulty: Moderate
Trailhead: Thomas Divide Trail starts 3 miles south of Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road. Hike 1.8 miles to jct. with Kanati Fork Trail and return the way you came.
Highlight: Early fall views from ridgetop

PACK YOUR PACK
Going for a day hike in the park this fall? Your pack should include the following items:
- Drinking water (at least two quarts if you’ll be hiking all day).
- Trail map
- Rain gear
- Snacks (high energy foods like nuts and trail bars)
- Jacket

Remember, your cell phone will not find service at most locations in the park.

HIKE 100 IN THE SMOKIES
There’s still time to earn your Hike 100 pin. All you need to do is hike 100 miles in the Smokies between January 1, 2016 and December 6, 2016 as a way of celebrating the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service. The 100 miles can be logged on any officially maintained park trail. All trail miles count, whether they’re on the same trail over and over or on 50 different trails.

Successful 100-milers will be rewarded with a commemorative Hike 100 pin and be recognized at a special ceremony with the park superintendent on December 8. Hikers will also have the opportunity to hike four miles with Superintendent Cassius Cash on the Oconaluftee River Trail on December 3.

For more information on the Challenge, and to download a free Hike 100 log sheet, please visit www.nps.gov/grsm. Those who have already reached the 100 mile mark should send an email to: gsmnp_hike_100@nps.gov.
Mushrooms like places with lots of rain and lots of trees. Doesn’t that sound like the Great Smoky Mountains? According to Discover Life in America, the organization that coordinates the park’s inventories of flora and fauna, there are at least 2,798 species of mushrooms and other fungi in the national park. In fact, researchers have counted over 30 species of fungi on the bark of a single tree in the Smokies!

Of the thousands of mushrooms that flourish here, some of the most interesting are those with bioluminescence (they glow in the dark). Nobody knows for sure why mushrooms glow, but one interesting theory is that the light attracts insects that help spread the species around.

Honey agaric mushrooms (Armillaria mellea) can be found from August through October at places like Rainbow Falls Trail and Cades Cove. Its mycelium (root-like strands) infiltrate rotting wood and makes it glow with a yellow, green or bluish light. This glow can be quite bright in some cases. An ancient term for this phenomenon is “fox fire.”

The jack-o-lantern (Clitocybe illudens) is an attractive orangish-red mushroom that appears in the park in summer and fall. It often grows from oak or chestnut stumps. The jack-o-lantern has ridges (called gills) beneath the cap that emit a soft, dim light.

Several parts of the Astringent panus (Panus stypticus) mushroom glow, including the cap, gills, and mycelium. This small species grows on wood in such places as Elkmont and Cades Cove.
visitor information

for more information, www.nps.gov/grsm

information

General park information:
(865) 436-1200
www.nps.gov/grsm

Backcountry information
(865) 436-1297
www.smokiespermits.nps.gov

To order maps and guides
(865) 436-7318 x226
www.smokiesinformation.org

emergencies

Listed below are some numbers to call for emergencies that arise after hours.

Park Headquarters
(865) 436-9171

Cherokee Police
(828) 497-4131

Gatlinburg Police
(865) 436-5181

hospitals

Le Conte/Sevier County
(865) 446-7000, Middle Creek Rd., Sevierville, TN.

Blount Memorial (865) 983-7211, U.S. 321, Maryville, TN.

Haywood County (828) 456-7311, Waynesville, NC.

Swain County (828) 488-2155, Bryson City, NC.

regulations

• Picking or digging plants is prohibited.
• Persons feeding wildlife are subject to a $5,000 fine.
• Pets are not permitted on most park trails. Only the Gatlinburg and Oconaluftee River trails allow dogs on a leash.

accessibility

Restrooms at all park visitor centers (Cades Cove, Clingmans Dome, Oconaluftee, and Sugarlands) are fully accessible. The Sugarlands Valley all-access nature trail is located on Newfound Gap Road just south of Sugarlands Visitor Center.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Vicinity

Visitor Center
Lookout Tower
Ranger Station
Horse Stables
Picnic Area
Camping
Nature Trail

Paved Rd.
Unpaved Rd.

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