Head Out to “Find Your Park” this Year

Ninety-nine years ago the National Park Service was created to defend Yellowstone and other sites against wildlife poachers and artifact collectors who were hauling away pieces of our national parks and monuments by the wagon load. Today the same Service protects over 400 parks, seashores, historic sites, battlefields, trails, lakeshores, and other national treasures in such a way as to “leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

In preparation for the 100th birthday of the National Park Service, the agency is encouraging everyone to “Find Your Park.” Public lands belong to everyone, and this is the perfect opportunity to explore new places, whether they are historic sites, forests, parkways, rivers, urban parks, or those “crown jewels” of the national park system like Grand Canyon, Mesa Verde, Everglades, Arches, Yosemite, Olympic, and Gettysburg.

You might be surprised how many beautiful places are preserved by the NPS, even in your own backyard. Here are just a few of the sites within 100 miles of the Smokies:
• Andrew Johnson National Historic Site
• Appalachian National Scenic Trail
• Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area
• Blue Ridge Parkway
• Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site
• Obed Wild & Scenic River

TURK’S CAP LILY
The bright orange blossoms of this exceptionally tall wildflower burst forth in August and September. It is most often seen at the higher elevations, especially at places like Clingmans Dome Road and along Thomas Divide Trail. An oversized member of the lily family, it can stand up to seven feet tall.

Smokies’ “Boomer” Lives Up to its Name

If you have ever encountered a red squirrel (aka “Boomer”) in the Great Smoky Mountains, you have probably been scolded by a red squirrel in the Great Smoky Mountains. The red squirrel is a highly vocal animal as well as a very territorial one. Perched on a tree limb just beyond your reach, a red squirrel will chatter at you incessantly, determined to make you aware of your trespass on its territory.

With 100 species of native trees and nearly 800 square miles of verdant forest, Great Smoky Mountains National Park is the perfect habitat for an arboreal species like the red squirrel. Almost everything a red squirrel needs can be found among the limbs and branches of a tree. Their preferred foods in this forest buffet include tree buds, hickory nuts, beech nuts, acorns, insects, and seeds from the cones of pine, hemlock, spruce, and fir trees. Red squirrels satisfy their sweet tooth by gnawing into the branch of a sugar maple tree and licking the sap.

A mushroom dangling from a tree limb is a sure sign that a red squirrel has chosen that branch for mushroom storage. This unusual behavior is actually good for forest health because it spreads beneficial fungi.

Red squirrels are found mostly at the park’s mid and higher elevations, especially in the Canadian Zone spruce-fir forest. Unlike gray squirrels, red squirrels are a northern species that reaches the southern edge of their range just south of the Smokies in the highlands of South Carolina.
camping in the national park

The National Park Service maintains developed campgrounds at nine locations in the park. There are no showers or hookups other than circuits for special medical uses at Cades Cove, Elkmont, and Smokemont.

Campsites at Elkmont, Smokemont, Cataloochee, Cosby, and Cades Cove may be reserved. For reservations call 1-877-444-6777 or contact www.recreation.gov. Sites may be reserved up to six months in advance. Reservations are required at Cataloochee Campground. Other park campgrounds are first-come, first-serve.

Site occupancy is limited to six people and two vehicles (a trailer = 1 vehicle). The maximum stay is 14 days.

Special camping sites for large groups are available seasonally at Big Creek, Cades Cove, Cataloochee, Cosby, Deep Creek, Elkmont, and Smokemont. Group sites must be reserved. Call 1-877-444-6777 or contact www.recreation.gov. Group sites may be reserved up to one year in advance.

The list below shows number of sites, elevations, fees, approximate 2015 operation dates, and maximum RV lengths. Dates are subject to change. Visit www.nps.gov/grsm for current information.

- Abrams Creek Campground
- Balsam Mountain Campground

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.

facilities rentals

The historic Appalachian Clubhouse and Spence Cabin at Elkmont are now accepting reservations for day-use rentals. Picnic pavilions are also available for $10-$20 per day at Collins Creek, Cosby, Deep Creek, Greenbrier, Metcalf Bottoms, and Twin Creeks.

To make a reservation, call 1-877-444-6777 or visit www.recreation.gov.

special events

September 5 (1-3 p.m.) Back Porch Music Jam at Oconaluftee Visitor Center

September 19 Mountain Life Festival at Oconaluftee Visitor Center

December 12 Festival of Christmas Past at Sugarlands Visitor Center

picnic areas

Please see pages 8-9 for locations of picnic areas. All picnic areas have charcoal grills for cooking.

visitor centers


other services

There are no gas stations, showers, or restaurants in the national park.
park information

for additional information, visit www.nps.gov/grsm

Gatlinburg, TN elev. 1,462’ Mt. Le Conte elev. 6,593’

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The above temperature and precipitation averages are based on data for the last 20 years. Temperatures are in degrees fahrenheit. An average of over 88” of precipitation falls on the higher elevations of the Smokies. On Mt. Le Conte, an average of 82.8” of snow falls per year.

horse riding

Horseback riding is generally available from early March through 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

Smokemont (828) 497-2373
smokemontridingstables.com

Smoky Mtn. (865) 436-5634
smokymountainridingstables.com

Sugarlands (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.

smokies guide, Late Summer 2015 * 3

DRIVING DISTANCES & ESTIMATED TIMES

Cherokee, NC to:
Gatlinburg: 34 miles (1 hour)
Cades Cove: 57 miles (2 hours)
Newfound Gap: 18 miles (½ hour)
Clingmans Dome: 25 miles (¼ hour)
Cataloochee: 39 miles (1 hour)
Cades Cove: 14 miles (½ hour)

Gatlinburg, TN to:
Cherokee: 34 miles (1 hour)
Cades Cove: 27 miles (1 hour)
Newfound Gap: 16 miles (½ hour)
Clingmans Dome: 23 miles (¼ hour)
Cataloochee: 65 miles (2 hours)
Greenbrier Cove: 6 miles (¼ hour)
Deep Creek: 48 miles (1½ hours)

Townsend, TN to:
Cades Cove: 9 miles (¼ hour)
Newfound Gap: 34 miles (1½ hours)
Cataloochee: 87 miles (2½ hours)

Backcountry Camping in the Great 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.html), 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 of the 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. 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.

3. Many hikes turn into rescues because people get caught out on trails after dark without flashlights or headlamps.

4. Prepare for the weather. These mountains are so green because it rains a whole lot here. Always carry rain gear.
great sights to see
A dozen must-see places in the Great Smoky Mountains

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 roundtrip 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 museums
This history buff’s paradise now offers free indoor and outdoor museums. It also features old-time breeds of livestock (seasonally) and an heirloom garden and row crops. The new visitor center and mountain farm museum are located on U.S. 441 (Newfound Gap Road), 2 miles north of Cherokee, NC. Open every day except Christmas.

7. deep creek waterfalls
The Deep Creek area features a campground, picnic area, mountain stream, and miles of hiking trails. 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). The area is located about 3 miles from downtown Bryson City, NC.

8. Mt. Le Conte
The Alum Cave Trail to Mt. Le Conte and LeConte Lodge will be closed Mondays-Thursdays for trail repairs much of this summer and fall. 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 Greenbrier area, Brushy Mountain and Trillium Gap trails lead 9.1 miles to the summit.

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 of the park like Hazel Creek and Eagle Creek.

WHERE TO BEAT THE CROWDS

If you want to beat the summer crowds, try some of these off-the-beaten-path destinations.

9. Look Rock walking trail and tower. Great views, just off the Foothills Parkway West, 18 miles from Townsend, TN.

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.

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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 of the park like Hazel Creek and Eagle Creek.
New Firewood Regulation Will Help Protect Forests from Alien Invaders

Great Smoky Mountains National Park officials have enacted regulations that will help protect park forests by restricting the type of firewood brought into the park. Beginning this spring, only heat-treated firewood that is bundled and displays a certification stamp by the USDA or a state department of agriculture will be allowed in park campgrounds.

Heat-treated firewood is now for sale from concessioners in many of the park campgrounds as well as from private businesses in the communities around the park. Certified heat-treated firewood is packaged in 0.75 cu-ft. bundles clearly displaying a certification stamp.

The wood is a high-quality hardwood product that has been heated for 60 minutes at 140 degrees Fahrenheit. The wood lights easily, burns well for campfires, is safe to cook over, and is already available at over 85 locations near the park that can be viewed on an interactive map at www.nature.org/firewoodmap. In addition, visitors may still collect dead and down wood in the park for campfires.

“The threat of these new pests coming into our forests, both in the park and regionally, compels us to do all we can to reduce the risk to our forests,” said Deputy Superintendent Clayton Jordan. “While a ban on the importation of non-treated firewood will not entirely halt the spread of forest pests and diseases, it will greatly slow it down. This allows us time to develop and implement new treatment strategies.”

Non-native, tree-killing insects and diseases can unknowingly be introduced through firewood transported from infested areas. A variety of destructive pests lay eggs or stowaway in firewood. These insects from Asia and Europe have the potential to devastate over 40 species of hardwood trees native to the Smokies.

These insects from Asia and Europe have the potential to devastate over 40 species of hardwood trees native to the park. New infestations threaten our forests with widespread tree mortality that could degrade wildlife habitat, biodiversity, and scenic views. Using firewood that has been heat treated eliminates the threat.

National parks throughout the Appalachian region have taken action to limit the importation of firewood. For the past three years the Smokies has prohibited the importation of firewood from areas quarantined by the USDA Inspection Service. Park rangers have been working over the past year with numerous partner organizations to mitigate the risks associated with movement of firewood, including a public education campaign with campground programs and billboards. The park also hosted public meetings and developed an informational handout that was provided to all Smokies campers inviting public comments.

For more information about firewood and forest pests in the park, please visit the park website at http://www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/firewood-alert.htm.
For at least a century before the Great Smokies became a national park, livestock were driven up onto the grassy balds every summer to fatten on the flavorful forage. Herders kept watch over cattle, sheep, hogs, and a few horses and mules, and in the fall they rounded up all the animals and brought them down to market.

This tradition of grazing goes back at least to the early 1800s, and possibly even earlier. Native Americans may have grazed animals on the balds—historians say the Cherokee held communal grazing lands, and leased pastures to farmers to range their cattle as well. And it’s certain that the earliest white settlers saw the value of that grazing land and put it to use. With their Scotch-Irish heritage, they found it fairly easy to adapt their old-country, upland grazing methods to the new environment of the Smokies. Because of the large number of livestock sent to the highlands, places like Spence Field, Andrews Bald, and Gregory Bald were kept grassy and free of trees.

Grazing livestock in the high country was a seasonal ritual. Come April or early May, word rippled through surrounding towns and valleys that it was time to ready the livestock for their journey. To tell one owner’s animals from another, they impressed tattoos into the ears. Most of the cattle and sheep also had bells around their necks. As many as 50 families mingled their livestock for the long migration. By the time all were assembled, there would be several hundred head of cattle—steers, heifers, cows, some blackface, whiteface, and good old mountain mixed-breeds. Add in sheep, hogs, horses and mules—and the usual noisy entourage of barking dogs and shouting and whistling drovers—and it was quite the procession.

Herds headed for Spence and Russell fields went up to the crest by way of the Bote Mountain Road. Those bound for Gregory or Parson took the Cooper and Rich Mountain roads into Cades Cove, and continued along Forge Creek or the Fork Ridge Trail. After reaching the top, the animals were let loose to wander at will, feeding on the native mountain oat grass and enjoying the pleasant breezes and lack of bugs at 5,000 feet elevation. It was heaven on earth for a cow.

Men hired on as herders and charged a nominal sum per head. Dan Myers, Fonze Cable, Granville Calhoun, George Tipton, and Tom Sparks were among the best-known. Some herders went back and forth to the balds to tend the animals, while others lived up there all summer in cabins they built beside springs. Spence Cabin and Hall Cabin were notable. All these structures are gone now, but photographs show them as small log cabins of one or two rooms, with a fireplace and simple furnishings. The herder would keep a loyal dog, and maybe a cat, for company. They had a few visitors too, as hunters and hikers stopped in along the way.

Some herders cleared a garden patch and grew potatoes and cabbages to supplement the standard fare of cornbread, fatback, and beans. And nearly every one of them hunted wild game, to vary the monotonous diet and probably to help pass the long hours. One nice fall day, Granville Calhoun and his father-in-law, Crate Hall, went out searching for some strays. Meeting some other men, they completely forgot about the cattle and commenced hunting. It was a good day’s harvest: nearly a dozen wild turkey, a buck deer, one bear, a groundhog, raccoons, several squirrels, and a grouse.

Seymour Calhoun helped his father herd. They ran their own cattle and those of others at the same time, he said, “anywhere from five to seven or eight hundred head” from Clingmans Dome west for about 16 miles to Spence Field.

Lightning was a real threat to animals standing out on the open balds. Randolph Shields said his family received word that lightning had killed most of their sheep at Ekaneetlee Gap. His grandmother took everyone up, and they pulled the wool off the carcasses because it was too valuable to waste.

Bears could be a problem, mostly for calves and sheep, but in pre-park days the bear population was much sparser than it is today. If a herder did hear of a marauding bear, though, he’d form a hunting party and go get it.

Poisonous plants, especially mountain laurel, or “ivy,” were to be avoided. The cattle wore muzzles of leather bark, or wire to prevent their nibbling laurel along the trail. “It’d kill them” if they ate it, said Uncle Jim Shelton, who started herding as a teenager with Granville Calhoun.

Come the first of September, it was time for “the gathering” or roundup—all the cattle and sheep had to be collected, counted, separated according to ownership, and readied for the trip back down the mountains. This was the only time the cattle and sheep were found in the balds. Randolph Shields said his family received word any animals in his charge were lost or missing. If any were unaccounted for, he had to go find them. Randolph Shields said he and Kermit Caughron combed the thick-wooded hollows of the Twenty-Mile area for three days just to find three missing cows.

But by the 1930s, people had begun to place a different value on the Great Smoky Mountains. The range was about to become a new national park. Grazing, and other uses considered incompatible with the park, would no longer be allowed. The last holdout was John Oliver, who took some of his cattle up on the balds above Cades Cove for the last time in 1936.

“In the days before park establishment, farmers took their cattle, sheep, hogs, and other livestock to the natural meadows in the Smokies high country to fatten and escape the heat.”

by Rose Houk
hit the trail
Day hiking in the Smokies is a fun way for families to escape the car and enjoy the great outdoors

Great Hikes for Families

Get Your Kids Hiking!

This summer, family hiking expert and author of Get Your Kids Hiking, Jeff Alt, teams up with Great Smoky Mountains National Park rangers to lead kids and accompanying adults on a short hike loaded with hands-on family hiking tips and ways to explore the outdoors. Learn how a few simple techniques and some basic equipment can turn any walk in the woods into a safe, fun-filled adventure. Come prepared for a 1 hour easy walk (less than one mile). Programs are open to children of all ages. Children must be accompanied by an adult/caregiver.

- Saturday, June 20, 10:30 a.m., Location: Sugarlands Visitor Center
- Saturday, July 18, 11:00 a.m. Location: Oconaluftee Visitor Center
- Saturday, October 10, 10:30 a.m. Location: Sugarlands Visitor Center

With over 800 miles of gorgeous hiking trails to choose from, Great Smoky Mountains National Park is a wonderland for families who want to escape from the car and busy roadways and experience the peace and beauty of the Smokies. Hiking is not only great for your health, it gives families the opportunity for bonding and shared adventures that will be remembered for a lifetime.

Perhaps the best way for families with younger children to hike the Smokies is on one of the park's self-guiding nature trails shown on the map above. Each offers an inexpensive brochure and numbered posts that help you learn about some of the things you see along the way. Many are loop trails. Mileages shown are round trip.

Quiet Walkways are another great way to stretch your legs and enjoy the Smokies backcountry. Look for signs along park roadways to find these short gems. A few are loop trails, but most are not, so you just walk a ways, then return the way you came.

Other family favorite day hikes include:

- **The Three Waterfalls Loop.** Starting at the trailhead past Deep Creek Campground and Picnic areas, this 2.4 mile moderate loop hike includes three impressive waterfalls you can enjoy and photograph.
- **Abrams Falls.** Beginning from the Cades Cove Loop Road, this 5 mile roundtrip moderate hike climbs up and down over ridges to reach beautiful Abrams Falls.
- **Oconaluftee River Trail.** This easy, 3-mile roundtrip hike starts at Oconaluftee Visitor Center and follows the river into the town of Cherokee. Exhibit signs along the way tell Cherokee Indian stories.

Don’t forget to pick up a Scavenger Hike Adventures log book to keep track of your hikes and earn cool stickers and pins for the miles you cover. Available for $1 at park visitor centers.

Scavenger Hike Adventures are 13 hikes especially for families who want to engage their kids in searching for clues and hidden wonders as they walk park trails. Your kids will look for such treasures as a wrecked steam engine, a tree marked by bear claws, remains of an old Model T, and historic log cabins. Available at park visitor centers or by visiting www.SmokiesInformation.org.
Clingmans Dome Road: 7-mile paved road leads to the Clingmans Dome trailhead. A very steep, half-mile walk takes you to Clingmans Dome tower and the highest point in the Smokies (6,643').

Newfound Gap Road: This paved road is the only route over the Great Smoky Mountains. It stretches for 31 miles between Gatlinburg and Cherokee and climbs from an elevation of 1,300' to 5,046' (at Newfound Gap).

Cataloochee Valley: 8 miles from I-40 (including 3 miles on a narrow gravel road). The short road through the valley offers wildlife viewing (including elk) and access to a historic church, school, and homes.

Heintooga Ridge/Balsam Mountain Roads: You can combine these roads with the Blue Ridge Parkway for a scenic 47 mile loop from Cataloochee Visitor Center that takes approximately 3-4 hours to complete.

Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail: Paved, narrow, 5.5 mile one-way road offers old-growth forest, waterfalls, and historic buildings.

Caledonie Cove Loop Road: One-way loop road offers wildlife viewing and access to a historic grist mill during summer.
The transition from late summer into fall is a busy time in nature.

**ACORNS** Twelve species of oaks are native to the Smoky Mountains, and in good “mast” years they produce a cornucopia of acorns. Many animals, including bears, squirrels, chipmunks, wild turkeys, and insects, depend on acorns to store up fat or food caches for winter.

**MONARCH BUTTERFLY** These bright orange butterflies are often seen in late summer, especially near meadows in places like Cades Cove. Because monarch caterpillars eat noxious milkweed plants, their adult forms are distasteful to birds and other would-be predators.

**CHIPMUNKS** These small mammals seem to be everywhere in fall. You have probably heard their warning “Chip!” when you hike past a boulder field. They store berries, seeds, nuts, and other foods in a variety of places: in hollow logs, under rocks, and in burrows.

**AMERICAN MOUNTAIN ASH** This small tree is a northern species that is found at the highest elevations in the park. It is quite common around Clingmans Dome. During fall it sports bright red berries that bears and songbirds like to eat.

**DOLL’S EYES** In spring, the white baneberry plant displays pretty white flowers. In fall, these flowers become glossy white fruits with purplish dots. Some people think the fruits resemble the eyes of an old-fashioned doll.
AUGUST 9 – SEPTEMBER 12, 2015

Park visitor centers are located at Cades Cove, Oconaluftee, Clingmans Dome, and Sugarlands. All offer information, exhibits, and publications related to the park and its resources.

Accessible to persons using wheelchairs.

Families who hike in the Smokies can now earn special stickers and collector pins as rewards. Pick up a “Hike the Smokies—For Families” booklet at any park visitor center to learn more.

CADES COVE
Because of slow moving traffic it may take over an hour to drive the six miles from the start of Cades Cove Loop Road to programs at the Cades Cove Visitor Center/Cable Mill Historic Area.

Sundays
Junior Ranger Program: Work & Play
Meet at the Cades Cove Visitor Center/Cable Mill area half way around the Loop Road
1:00 p.m.
Experience what it was like to work on a farm and work as a family to get chores done.
Duration: 1 hour
Difficulty: Easy

WILD by Design
Meet at the Cades Cove Visitor Center/Cable Mill area half way around the Loop Road
2:30 p.m.
A talk and hands-on demonstration about the wild things in the park.
Duration: 30 minutes
Difficulty: Easy

Mondays
Mill Tour
Meet at the Cades Cove Visitor Center/Cable Mill area half way around the Loop Road
11:30 a.m. & 12:30 p.m.
Join a ranger for a walk around the historic structures at this site and learn about their function in the Cades Cove community.
Duration: 30 minutes
Difficulty: Easy

Tuesdays
Cades Cove Evening Hayride
Meet at Cades Cove Riding Stables
4:30 p.m.
Join a ranger for an evening open air hayride viewing wildlife and discovering the diversity of life in the Cove. Hayrides can fill up quickly, first-come, first-serve for this program.
Duration: 2 hours
Fee: $14.00/person

Satudays
Junior Ranger: Explore Cades Cove
Meet at the Cades Cove Visitor Center/Cable Mill area halfway around the Cades Cove Loop Road
1:00 p.m.
This interactive fun program will cover wildlife, history, or other things that make Cades Cove awe-some.
Duration: 45 minutes
Difficulty: Easy

WILD by Design
Meet at the Cades Cove Visitor Center area half way around the Cades Cove Loop Road
2:30 p.m.
A talk and hands-on demonstration about the wild things in the park.
Duration: 30 minutes
Difficulty: Easy

GATLINBURG/ SUGARLANDS AREA

Daily
Cataract Falls
Meet at Sugarlands Visitor Center
11:30 a.m.
Join a ranger on a short walk to discover why the Smokies is special in the summer. Topics may include waterfalls, wildflowers, trees, history, salamanders, and birds.
Duration: 1 hour
Difficulty: Easy

Sundays
Junior Ranger: Bear-mania!
Sugarlands Visitor Center
2:00 p.m.
So you think you know a lot about bears, huh? Well join a ranger to test your knowledge and learn more about this “symbol of the Smokies.”
Duration: 45 minutes
**SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

**Cades Cove Full Moon Hike**  
Meet at the Orientation Shelter at the entrance to the Cades Cove Loop Road  
8:00 p.m. Saturday, August 29  
Wear comfortable walking shoes. Children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult.  
**Duration:** 2 hours  
**Difficulty:** Easy, 2 mile walk

**Back Porch Old-Time Music Jam**  
Porch of the Oconaluftee Visitor Center  
1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. August 15, September 5 & 19  
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.

**Mountain Life Festival**  
Mountain Farm Museum adjacent to Oconaluftee Visitor Center  
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Saturday, September 19  
Join park staff and volunteers as we celebrate the fall harvest. The Mountain Farm Museum will be alive with history as demonstrators provide visitors with a glimpse into the past as they make soap, apple cider, sorghum molasses, hominy, music and more.

**Mondays**  
**A Wondrous Diversity of Life**  
Meet at Sugarlands Visitor Center  
2:00 p.m.  
**Wednesdays**  
**A Wondrous Diversity of Life**  
Meet at Sugarlands Visitor Center  
2:00 p.m.

**Fridays**  
**A Wondrous Diversity of Life**  
Meet at Sugarlands Visitor Center  
2:00 p.m.

**Saturdays**  
**Junior Ranger: Bear-mania!**  
Sugarlands Visitor Center  
2:00 p.m.

**CLINGMANS DOME/NEWFOUND GAP AREA**

**Tuesdays**  
**Junior Ranger: School Days at Little Greenbrier**  
Little Greenbrier Schoolhouse  
11:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m.

**ELKMONT/LITTLE GREENBRIER/METCALF BOTTOMS AREA**

**Tuesdays**  
**Junior Ranger: School Days at Little Greenbrier**  
Little Greenbrier Schoolhouse  
11:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m.

**Fridays**  
**A Wondrous Diversity of Life**  
Meet at Sugarlands Visitor Center  
2:00 p.m.

**Saturdays**  
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Sugarlands Visitor Center  
2:00 p.m.
**Wednesdays**

**Islands in the Sky**

Viewing Area below Clingmans Dome Visitor Center

1:00 p.m.

The high elevation forest of the Smokies is one of the most interesting and endangered ecosystems in the Eastern U.S. Come learn more about what makes this beautiful area unique.

*Duration: 45 minutes*

**Thursdays**

**On Top of Old Smoky**

Clingmans Dome Visitor Center

10:00 a.m.

Join a Ranger on a hike to the highest peak in the park to take in 360° views and learn about the unique Canadian Zone environment. Discover some of the park’s most influential people, or hear stories behind the park’s place names. Topics vary, but you’re sure to be inspired by the stories behind the scenery.

*Duration: 1.5 hours*

*Difficulty: Moderate*

**Saturdays**

**On Top of Old Smoky**

Clingmans Dome Visitor Center

10:00 a.m.

Join a Ranger on a hike to the highest peak in the park to take in 360° views and learn about the unique Canadian Zone environment. Discover some of the park’s most influential people, or hear stories behind the park’s place names. Topics vary, but you’re sure to be inspired by the stories behind the scenery.

*Duration: 1.5 hours*

*Difficulty: Moderate*

**OCONALUFEETE/SMOKE MONTE AREA**

**Daily**

**Mingus Mill Demonstration**

Located a half-mile north of the Oconaluftee Visitor Center on US 441 (Newfound Gap Road)

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Chat with a miller and feel the rumble of this historic gristmill in action.

**Mountain Farm Museum**

Adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

Dawn to Dusk

Walk down to the farm for a glimpse into the past. Self-guiding brochures and audio tours are always available and some days you may find demonstrations such as blacksmithing, hearth cooking, or gardening taking place.

**Sundays**

**Old Time Mountain Religion**

Smokemont Baptist Church (near Smokemont Campground entrance)

11:00 a.m. (except August 9 & September 6)

Join a Ranger and discover how old-time mountain religion met spiritual, social, and community needs.

*Duration: 45 minutes*

**Cherokee Culture**

Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch Area

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. (except September 6)

Join Cherokee friends to learn about Cherokee culture and history through demonstrations and storytelling.

*Duration: 2 hours*

**Mondays**

**Eeek! Bats!**

Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch

2:00 p.m.

Do they really suck blood? Do they really get caught in your hair? Are they friend or foe? Let the ranger tell you the truth about these amazing creatures and the enemy among them.

*Duration: 45 minutes*

*Difficulty: Easy*

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Anyone between the ages 13-130 can now become a **[NOT-SO-JUNIOR] RANGER**

Pick up your card today at Sugarlands, Clingmans Dome, Oconaluftee, or Cades Cove visitor centers! Earn a very cool patch.
Tuesdays
Black Bears in the Smokies
Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch
2:00 p.m.
There’s danger everywhere, high and low but always close, especially if you’re an American ursis. Learn how we are the greatest danger to the American black bear.
Duration: 45 minutes

Wednesdays
Welcome Home!
Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch
Starting June 24 at 2:00 p.m.
After more than a century of absence, the elk have returned. Relax, have a seat on the visitor center porch and hear the story of the return of the largest mammal to the Great Smoky Mountains.
Duration: 45 minutes

Thursdays
Cherokee Culture
Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch Area
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
Join Cherokee friends to learn about Cherokee culture and history through demonstrations and storytelling.
Duration: 2 hours

Fridays
Junior Ranger: Feeding Time!
Mountain Farm Museum adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center
5:00 p.m.
Join park staff as they close up the Mountain Farm Museum for the evening. You’ll even be able to help feed the pigs and chickens!
Duration: 30 minutes

Saturdays
Smoky Mountain Elk
Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch Area
11:00 a.m.
Fall is a great time for viewing elk in rut and to listen as they bugle. Discover how elk stay warm in the winter. Feel the weight of the antlers they carry on their head. A ranger will be available to answer your questions about elk and let you know the best places in the park to see and hear the elk.
Duration: 30 minutes

CATA-LOOCHEE VALLEY

Sundays
Junior Ranger: Smoky Mountain Elk
Palmer House, Cataloochee Valley
5:30 p.m.
It’s all about connection and balance in nature to insure 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 the fields!
Duration: 45 minutes

TAKE THE TOUR!
MOUNTAIN FARM MUSEUM AUDIO TOUR
FROM FIELD TO FORK: THE JOYS AND HARDSHIPS OF FEEDING A FAMILY ON A MOUNTAIN FARM

The Mountain Farm Museum comes alive with this dramatic audio tour from the National Park Service and Great Smoky Mountains Association. 30 minutes long. Keyed to points of interest throughout the farm museum.

ONLY $2.99!
Great Smoky Mountains National Park is one of the few national parks without an entrance fee. Most large parks now charge $30 or more per vehicle. Without this supplemental income, it is difficult for the Smokies to adequately protect wildlife, preserve historic areas, and provide educational opportunities. You can help the Smokies by using some of the money you saved at the entrance to support the park partners on this page.

**gsma at tremont**

Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont provides residential environmental education programs in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Up to 5,000 students and adults annually attend workshops and school programs at the Institute. Tremont's adult workshops include birding, backpacking, environmental education, naturalist weekends, teacher escapes, and photography. Contact (865) 448-6709 or www.gsmit.org

**summer camps**

Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont offers a variety of summer youth camps in the national park. Camps last from 6-11 days and cost from $555. Fees include meals, lodging, and most equipment.

This year’s offerings include: Discovery Camp (ages 9-12), Wilderness Adventure Trek, Girls in Science (ages 12-15), and Teen High Adventure (ages 13-17).

Contact: (865) 448-6709, or www.gsmit.org

**support the friends**

Friends of Great Smoky Mountains National Park is a nonprofit organization that assists the National Park Service by raising funds and public awareness and providing volunteers for park projects.

Since 1993, Friends has raised over $34 million for park projects and programs. These donations help:

- protect elk, bear, brook trout, and other wildlife
- improve trails, campsites, and backcountry shelters
- support educational programs for school children
- improve visitor facilities
- fund special educational services like the park movie
- preserve log cabins and other historic structures

Your donation can help make these projects a reality. Put a few coins or a few dollars in one of the donation boxes located at visitor centers, roadsides, and other locations around the park.

Buy the Smokies license plate for your car (available in Tennessee and North Carolina). However you choose to give, your donation will really help protect the Great Smoky Mountains for many years to come!

Friends of the Smokies
P.O. Box 1660
Kodak, TN 37764
(865) 932-4794
1-800-845-5665
www.friendsofthesmokies.org

**gsma members**

**“Get Rooted in the Smokies”**

- Acorn (youth) Membership $15
- Buckeye Annual Membership $35
- Chestnut Annual Membership $100
- Dogwood Membership $200
- Hemlock Lifetime Membership $1,000 payable in 5 installments
- Annual Business Membership $250

**SIGN ME UP!**

Name(s) ____________________________
Address ____________________________________________

Email (for Cab Report) ____________________________
Telephone # ____________________________

Please include your check with this form. Mail to:
GSMA, P.O. Box 130, Gatlinburg, TN 37738, 1-888-898-9102

**smokies guide, Late Summer 2015**
information

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

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

To order maps & 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 in the park.

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.