



SMOKIES GUIDE



FREE RANGER-GUIDED WALKS & TALKS—PAGES 6-7

THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK & SPRING 2015



GARY WILSON PHOTO

Trilliums have three leaves, three petals, and three sepals (see page 10).

Wildflower Auto Tours

Several roads in the national park provide good spring wildflower viewing from your car. See the map on pages 8-9 for more information. Please be safe and courteous by using pullouts along roadways to view wildflowers and wildlife.

LATE MARCH TO EARLY MAY

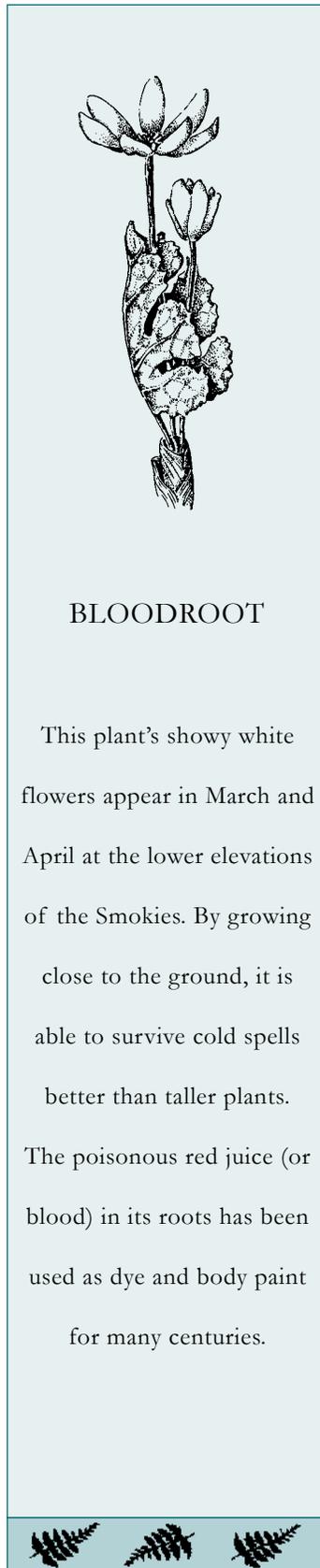
Little River Road—This paved, winding, and scenic 17 mile route runs between Sugarlands Visitor Center and the Townsend “Y” (near the Townsend entrance to the park). Plants in bloom include fringed phacelia, columbine, bloodroot, fire pink, red bud, flowering dogwood, wild geranium, yellow trillium, and white trillium.

Parson Branch Road (opens April 10)—This narrow, one-way, gravel road is not for everyone, but it does

offer some up close views of wildflowers, mountain streams, and other gorgeous scenery. To start the 8-mile long road, go halfway around the Cades Cove Loop Road and follow the signs from the visitor center intersection. One-way Parson Branch ends at highway 129. Turn right and go 10 winding miles to the Foothills Parkway and 25 more curvy miles back to Townsend, TN.

MID- TO LATE MAY

Clingmans Dome Road (opens April 1)—This seven-mile paved road runs through the Smoky Mountain high country from Newfound Gap to near the summit of Clingmans Dome. Plants in bloom include serviceberry, fire cherry, silverbell, fringed phacelia, trout-lily, thyme-leaved bluets, and spring-beauty.



BILL LEA PHOTO

BLOODROOT

This plant's showy white flowers appear in March and April at the lower elevations of the Smokies. By growing close to the ground, it is able to survive cold spells better than taller plants. The poisonous red juice (or blood) in its roots has been used as dye and body paint for many centuries.



Male elk weigh up to 700 pounds. They shed their antlers in March and immediately begin growing new ones for the “rut” in autumn.

Smokies Elk Herd Tops 150, and Still Growing

Park wildlife biologists are happy to report that at least 20 elk calves were born in the Smokies in 2014. Of these, five are known to have been killed by black bears. Biologist Joe Yarkovich considers such predation by native bears as normal and an important check on elk herd population growth.

At least three elk were killed by motor vehicles last year. Rangers remind motorists to drive defensively and follow posted speed limits to avoid such incidents. It is especially important to drive cautiously during mornings and evenings.

With the recent births and mortalities, the total elk population in the Great Smokies area is estimated to be more than 150.

Although most of the elk reside in Cataloochee Valley, small groups now live at

Balsam Mountain, Oconaluftee, the Mt. Sterling community, and the Cherokee Indian Reservation. Wandering elk have been reported in several far-flung locations including Cashiers, NC, Newport, TN, and the Greenbrier area (TN).

Late last year park staff conducted controlled burns on nearly 400 acres adjacent to Cataloochee Valley. The prescribed fires are designed to preserve natural oak and pine forests and, over time, improve forage for elk.

Elk viewing has become an increasingly popular activity for visitors to the park. However, rangers warn that visitors should never approach elk or bear closer than 50 yards.

The Smokies' elk reintroduction began in 2001 when 25 elk were brought to Cataloochee Valley from Land Between the Lakes.



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:

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SUMMER: June 1

AUTUMN: September 1

WINTER: December 1

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BILL LEA PHOTO

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

camping in the the national park

The National Park Service maintains developed campgrounds at seven 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-served.

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 16 sites, elev. 1,125', \$14, open May 22-Oct. 13, 12' trailers
BALSAM MOUNTAIN 46 sites, elev. 5,310', \$14, open May 22-Oct. 13, 30' RVs
BIG CREEK 12 sites, elev. 1,700', \$14, open April 10-Oct. 31, tents only
CADES COVE 159 sites, elev. 1,807', \$17-\$20, open year-round, 35'-40' RVs
CATALOOCHEE 27 sites, elev. 2,610', \$20, open April 3-Oct. 31, **reservations required**, 31' RVs
COSBY 157 sites, elev. 2,459', \$14, April 10-Oct. 31, 25' RVs
DEEP CREEK 92 sites, elev. 1,800', \$17, open April 10-Oct. 31, 26' RVs
ELKMONT 220 sites, elev. 2,150', \$17-\$23, open March 13-Nov. 28, 32'-35' RVs
LOOK ROCK *Closed*
SMOKEMONT 142 sites, elev. 2,198', \$17-\$20, open year-round, 35'-40' RVs

accommodations

Le Conte 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 1-800-438-1601
Fontana 1-800-849-2258
Gatlinburg 1-800-267-7088
Maggie Valley 1-800-624-4431
Pigeon Forge 1-800-251-9100
Sevierville 1-888-766-5948
Townsend 1-800-525-6834

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.

road openings

The following roads close for the winter. Listed below are the estimated 2015 opening dates.

Clingmans Dome—April 1
Balsam Mtn—May 22
Roaring Fork—May 1

special events

April 25
Music of the Mountains:
Sugarlands Visitor Center

April 21-April 25
Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage: parkwide

June 20
Womens Work at Oconaluftee

picnic areas

Please see pages 8-9 for locations of picnic areas. Chimneys opens March 14, Collins Creek opens April 3; Cosby and Big Creek open April 10. Heintooga opens May 22. Look Rock is closed. All other picnic areas are open year-round. All have charcoal grills for cooking.

visitor centers

Spring hours of operation are, Oconaluftee & Sugarlands: 8-5 in March; 8-6 in April & May. Cades Cove: 9-6:30 in March; 9-7 in April; 9-7:30 in May. 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.



BILL LEA PHOTO

Bicycle morning in Cades Cove.

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 May 6-Sept. 23, on Wednesday and Saturday mornings from sunrise to 10:00 a.m., only bicycles and pedestrians are allowed on Cades Cove Loop Road. Bicycles may be rented at the Cades Cove Campground store.

park information

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

Gatlinburg, TN elev. 1,462'			Mt. Le Conte elev. 6,593'			
AVG. HIGH	LOW	PRECIP.	AVG. HIGH	LOW	PRECIP.	
Jan.	49°	27°	4.0"	36°	18°	6.7"
Feb.	53°	28°	4.1"	37°	19°	5.6"
March	62°	35°	5.5"	44°	25°	7.0"
April	71°	42°	4.5"	52°	31°	6.7"
May	77°	50°	5.7"	58°	39°	8.0"
June	82°	58°	5.8"	64°	47°	8.7"
July	85°	62°	6.3"	67°	50°	9.0"
Aug.	84°	61°	5.3"	67°	49°	7.6"
Sept.	79°	55°	4.7"	62°	44°	7.2"
Oct.	70°	43°	2.9"	55°	35°	4.7"
Nov.	60°	34°	3.4"	46°	27°	6.8"
Dec.	51°	28°	4.6"	38°	20°	6.4"

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.

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.



MARY ANN KRESSIG PHOTO
 Fishing for brook trout is now allowed in park streams.

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 a complete list of all park fishing regulations is available at visitor centers.

DRIVING DISTANCES & ESTIMATED TIMES

Cherokee, NC to:

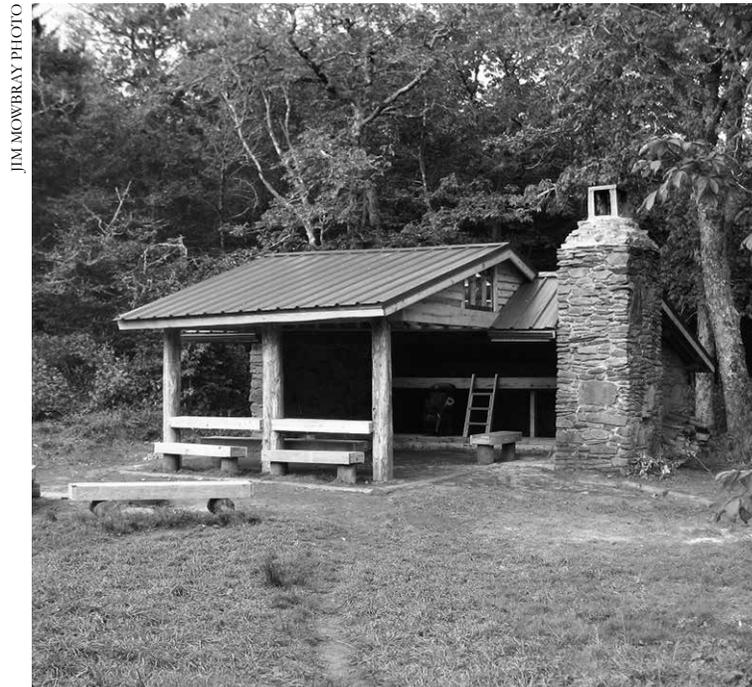
Gatlinburg: 34 miles (1 hour)
 Cades Cove: 57 miles (2 hours)
 Newfound Gap: 18 miles
 (½ hour)
 Clingmans Dome:
 25 miles (¾ hour)
 Cataloochee: 39 miles
 (1½ hours)
 Deep Creek: 14 miles (½ hour)

Gatlinburg, TN to:

Cherokee: 34 miles (1 hour)
 Cades Cove: 27 miles (1 hour)
 Newfound Gap: 16 miles
 (½ hour)
 Clingmans Dome:
 23 miles (¾ 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
 (1¼ hours)
 Gatlinburg: 22 miles (¾ hour)
 Cherokee: 52 miles (1½ hours)
 Look Rock: 18 miles (½ hour)
 Cataloochee:
 87 miles (2¼ hours)



JIM MOWBRAY PHOTO
 Primitive backcountry shelters like this one at Double Springs Gap are located along the Appalachian Trail and near the summit of Mt. Le Conte. Reservations are required for all campers in the backcountry.

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/plan-yourvisit/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 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. Call or stop by the park's backcountry office, which is 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.

Spring hikers should be especially aware of the danger of hypothermia—the lowering of body temperature. The combination of rain, cold, and wind is especially dangerous. At the park's higher elevations, hypothermia can be a threat even during summer.

To prevent hypothermia, carry good rain gear at all times. Layer clothing that provides warmth when wet (not cotton). Be prepared for sudden weather changes, especially at the high elevations.

enjoying the park

GSMNP is the most visited national park in the country

the national park service



NPS PHOTO BY BRENT EVERITT

America's most scenic and historic places are protected by the NPS for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.

Park Superintendent Cassius Cash asks the help of all Smokies' visitors in conserving park resources. Please don't litter, feed wildlife, or disturb plants. Help preserve the park's historic treasures by not carving or writing on cabin walls. Take a little time to view exhibits at park visitor centers, go on a ranger-led program, or take part in other activities that will help you learn more about the Great Smoky Mountains.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park is managed by the United States National Park Service. The agency manages the park in accordance with its mission "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein, and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

Most importantly, do your best to leave the park in better condition than when you arrived.

To learn more about America's national parks, visit www.nps.gov.

bears, bugs, and snakes

BEARS: If you see a bear, remain watchful. Do not approach it. Being too close may promote aggressive behavior from the bear such as running toward you, making loud noises, or swatting the ground. The bear is demanding more space. Don't run; slowly back away, watching the bear.

If a bear persistently follows or approaches you without vocalizing or paw swatting, try changing your direction. If the bear continues to follow you, stand your ground.

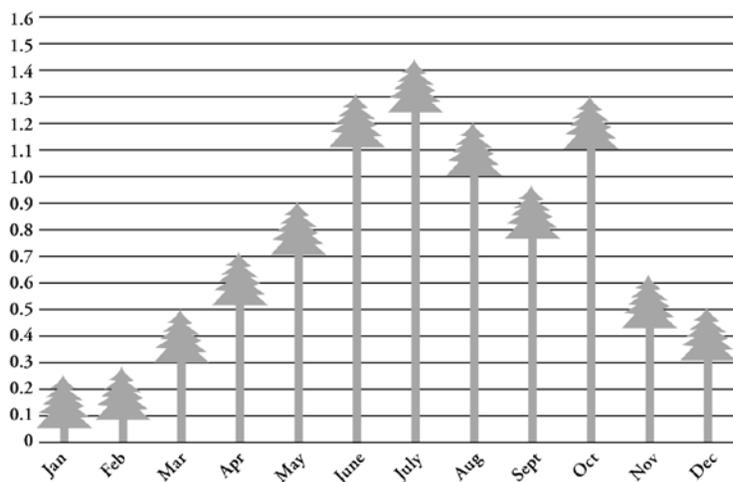
If the bear gets closer, talk loudly or shout at it. Act aggressively and try to intimidate the bear. Throw non-food objects such as rocks at the bear. Use a deterrent such as a stout stick. Don't run and don't turn away from the bear. Don't leave food; this encourages further problems.

If the bear shows no interest in your food and you're physically attacked, fight back aggressively with any available object—the bear may consider you to be prey!

SNAKES: Two species of venomous snakes live in the Smokies, the Northern Copperhead and Timber Rattlesnake. Be mindful of where you place your hands and feet, especially around stone walls and buildings.

INSECTS: Yellow jacket wasps are the insect of greatest concern. They build nests in the ground and are aggressive when disturbed. Stings cause local swelling and can lead to severe allergic reactions in a few sensitive individuals. Allergic persons should carry epinephrine kits. If stung on the hand, remove all rings immediately.

VISITS TO THE NATIONAL PARK PER MONTH (IN MILLIONS)



get ready, get set—go take a hike in the park!



Hike the Smokies and Hike the Smokies FOR FAMILIES!

Pick up a \$1 hiker's log booklet at any park visitor center and you will be on your way to earning cool pins and stickers (free of charge) every time you walk a certain number of miles on park trails. Rewards for distances from 10 miles to 500!



Unfortunately, crime happens in national parks, too. Don't let it spoil your vacation! "Car clouters" are thieves who break into vehicles at trailheads and other parking areas. They usually steal purses, cameras, phones, laptops, or other electronic equipment. They are often successful at breaking into locked vehicles.

To prevent theft, keep valuables on your person or at least lock them in your trunk before you get to the parking area. Be aware that thieves may be watching as you "hide" your purse, laptop, or camera under the blanket in the backseat.

junior rangers

Kids 5-12 can become official Junior Rangers in Great Smoky Mountains National Park this spring. Just stop by any park visitor center and purchase (for \$2.50) one of the four age-specific Junior Ranger activity booklets.

Next, go out into the national park and complete the required activities in the booklet, including matching problems, mazes, word searches, sketching, plant identification, and more.

The next requirement is to attend one ranger-led talk or walk. The spring programs are listed on pages 6-7 of this newspaper.

The final requirement is to pick up one grocery store sized bag of litter in the park. When you are finished, take your booklet and litter bag to a park visitor center and present them to the ranger. Then you can receive your free Junior Ranger badge and be sworn in with a special ceremony.

great sights to see

A dozen must-see sights in the Great Smoky Mountains



KENT CAVE PHOTO

The observation tower atop 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.

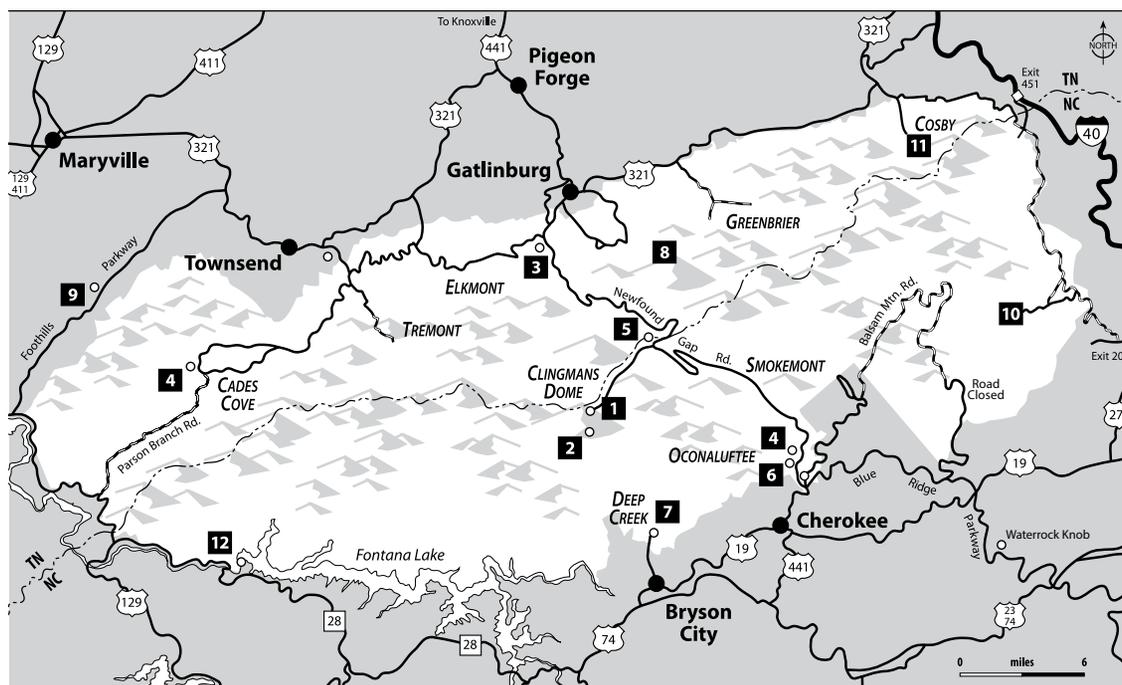
The road to Clingmans Dome is closed from December 1 through March 31 due to weather.

2. andrews bald

"Balds" are mountaintop meadows of mysterious origin. Andrews offers panoramic mountain views in favorable weather. The 3.6 mile 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 8-5 (March), 8-6 (April-May).

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) and opens March 20. Mingus Mill is 2 miles north of Cherokee, NC on U.S. 441 (Newfound Gap Road) and opens April 10.

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.



BILL LEA PHOTO

The Davis-Queen house at the Mountain Farm Museum.

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, two miles north of Cherokee, NC. Open 8-5 (March), 8-6 (April-May).

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 (June 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 spring, 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 and are 6.9 and 6.7 miles respectively. From the Greenbrier area, Brushy Mtn. & Trillium Gap trails lead 9.1 miles to the summit.

WHERE TO BEAT THE CROWDS

If you want to beat the weekend 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.

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.

free, fun guided hikes

Programs and activities in Great Smoky Mountains National Park



March 15 - May 9, 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.*

CADES COVE AREA

Please be aware that travel time to programs at Cades Cove Visitor Center/Cable Mill historic area could be an hour or more once you get into the Cove due to heavy traffic volume. Plan accordingly.

Sunday

WILD Program

Meet at the Cades Cove Visitor Center area half-way around the Loop Road

2:30 p.m.

A short talk and demonstration about the wild things in the Smokies.

Duration: 30 minutes

♿

Tuesday & Thursday

Precious Memories

Meet at the Cades Cove Primitive Baptist Church

11:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.

Discover the importance of this church in Cades Cove's everyday life.

Duration: 30 minutes

Saturday

WILD program

Meet at the Cades Cove Visitor Center area half-way around the Loop Road

2:30 p.m.

A short talk and demonstration about the wild things in the Smokies.

Duration: 30 minutes.

♿

Junior Ranger Program

Meet at the Cades Cove Visitor Center area half-way around the Loop Road

1:00 p.m.

Bring the kids for a hands-on exploration of the Smokies. Earn a badge and certificate.

Duration: 45 minutes-1 hour

♿

CLINGMANS DOME AREA

Thursday

Hike to Andrews Bald (begins April 2nd)

Meet at Forney Ridge Trailhead near the Clingmans Dome Parking Area

11:00 a.m.

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. Sturdy footwear, a lunch, and water recommended.

Duration: 3 hours

Difficulty: Moderate

GATLINBURG/ GREENBRIER AREA

Tuesday

In the Heart of Greenbrier

Meet at the Porters Creek Trailhead in Greenbrier

1:00 p.m.

Enjoy a beautiful walk through an emerald green forest to one of the Smokies' hidden gems. See a wonderful waterfall, a babbling brook and learn to identify some lovely wildflowers along the way.

Duration: 3 hours

Difficulty: Moderate

METCALF BOTTOMS AREA

Monday

Five Sisters Cove: The Walker Sisters of Little Greenbrier (begins April 13)

Meet at Little Greenbrier School, near Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area

11:00 a.m.

Join a ranger for a 2.2 mile roundtrip hike to learn about the famous Walker Sisters of Little Greenbrier. We'll talk about adaptation and the flexibility required of these strong-willed sisters to live in the old-fashioned way.

Duration: 2 1/2 hours

Level: Easy to Moderate

Tuesday

Little Greenbrier School (begins April 14th)

Little Greenbrier Schoolhouse near Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area

11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

Go back a hundred years to discover what education was like in a one-room mountain schoolhouse. This program is fun for all ages. Please arrive 15 minutes before program starts; space is limited.

Duration: 1 hour
Difficulty: Easy

OCONALUFTEE VISITOR CENTER 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.-5:00 p.m. Starting April 10
Chat with a miller and feel the rumble of this historic gristmill in action.
Accessibility: Two steps into mill

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 are always available and some days you may find demonstrations such as blacksmithing, hearth cooking, or gardening taking place.
♿

Sunday Mammal Mania! Oconaluftee Visitor Center, South Porch 2:00 p.m.

Opossums and elk and bears, oh my! Join a ranger for a hands-on discovery of mammals in the park.
Duration: 45 minutes
♿

Saturday Longing for the “Good Ol’ Days” Mountain Farm Museum adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center 10:30 a.m.

You’ve heard it before, but was it really the “good ol’ days?” Join a ranger on this walk at the Mountain Farm Museum to learn what life was like on an Appalachian mountain farm.

Duration: 45 minutes
♿

SUGARLANDS/ELKMONT

Daily Cataract Falls Walk Sugarlands Visitor Center 11:00 a.m.

Do you have a few minutes to learn some fascinating facts about the Smokies? If so, let’s get away from the hustle and bustle and take an easy stroll to beautiful Cataract Falls.
Duration: 1 hour
Difficulty: Easy

Sunday So You Wanna Take a Hike? Sugarlands Visitor Center Patio 1:00 p.m.

How should you prepare for day hike or overnight trip in the Smokies? Learn the do’s and don’ts in this fact-filled program for all ages and experience levels.
Duration: 45 min
Level: Easy

Wednesday Old Elkmont Elkmont Campground Entrance Station 1:00 p.m.

Take an afternoon stroll with a ranger to find out what life was like in the early 20th century logging and resort town of Elkmont.
Duration: 1 ½ hours
Difficulty: Easy

Thursday The Stories that Flowers Tell Meet at Sugarlands Visitor Center for a Walk along Ash Hopper Branch 1:00 p.m.

If flowers could talk what stories would they tell? Take a walk to hear some interesting folklore about the flowers the Smokies are famous for, and get to know your favorites a little bit better.
Duration: 1 ½ hours
Difficulty: Easy

Friday Forks of the River Meet on the Sugarlands Visitor Center Patio 1:00 p.m.

The site of the present Sugarlands Visitor Center and Park Headquarters was once known as “Forks of the River.” Take a walk with a ranger to learn about the once vibrant communities of Sugarlands, Fighting Creek, and Forks of the River.
Duration: 1 ½ hours
Level: Easy

Saturday Junior Ranger: Flowers, Flowers Everywhere Meet on the Sugarlands Visitor Center Patio 1:00 p.m.

Join a ranger to try out your wildflower identification skills, or maybe discover some skills you didn’t even know you had. A great program for families and beginning wildflower enthusiasts.
Duration: 1 ½ hours
Level: Easy



SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Back Porch Old-Time Music Jam Porch of the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Saturdays, April 4 & 18, May 2 & 16
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.
♿

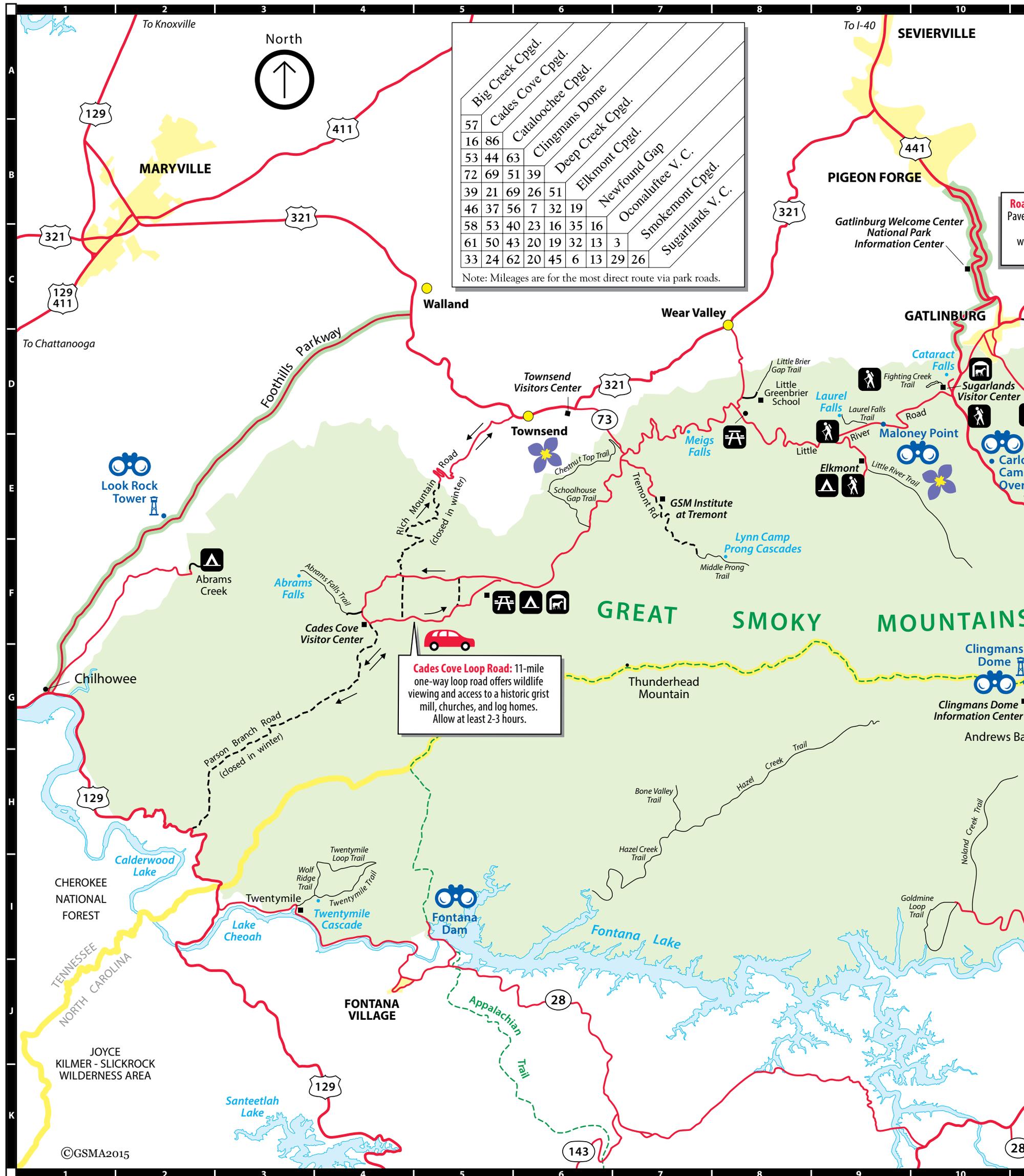
Blacksmith Demonstration Meet at the Cades Cove Visitor Center/Cable Mill historic area, halfway around the Loop Road

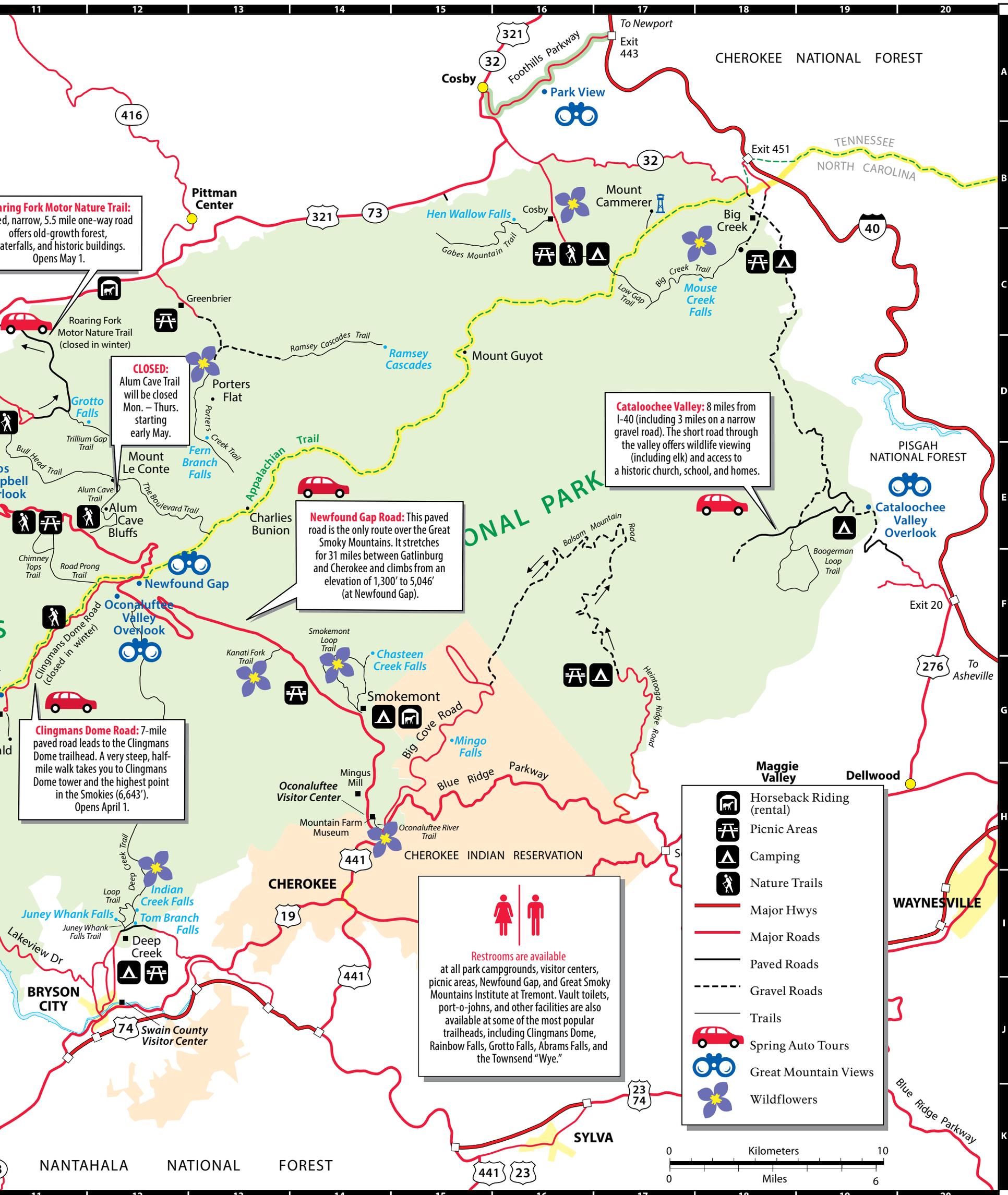
Saturday & Sunday, March 21 & 22, April 18-19, May 23 & 24
10 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Learn the art of Blacksmithing and why it was important in the Cades Cove community.
♿

Full Moon Walk Meet at the Orientation Shelter at the entrance to Cades Cove Loop Road.

Saturday, April 4; Saturday, May 2 8:00 p.m.
See the Cove in a different light. Wear good walking shoes, bring water and a flashlight. Children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult. Subject to cancellation due to hazardous weather. Call 448-4104 for more information.
Duration: 2 hours

GREAT SPRING DRIVING TOURS, VIEWS, AND WILDFLOWER TRAILS IN THE SMOKIES





Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail: A paved, narrow, 5.5 mile one-way road offers old-growth forest, waterfalls, and historic buildings. Opens May 1.

CLOSED: Alum Cave Trail will be closed Mon. - Thurs. starting early May.

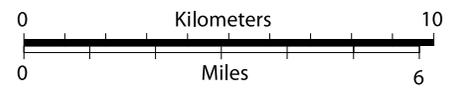
Newfound Gap Road: This paved road is the only route over the Great Smoky Mountains. It stretches for 31 miles between Gatlinburg and Cherokee and climbs from an elevation of 1,300' to 5,046' (at Newfound Gap).

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.

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'). Opens April 1.

Restrooms are available at all park campgrounds, visitor centers, picnic areas, Newfound Gap, and Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont. Vault toilets, port-o-johns, and other facilities are also available at some of the most popular trailheads, including Clingmans Dome, Rainbow Falls, Grotto Falls, Abrams Falls, and the Townsend "Wye."

- Horseback Riding (rental)
- Picnic Areas
- Camping
- Nature Trails
- Major Hwys
- Major Roads
- Paved Roads
- Gravel Roads
- Trails
- Spring Auto Tours
- Great Mountain Views
- Wildflowers



trilliums

Photographs by Ann and Rob Simpson



Sweet White (*Trillium simile*)
Whole colonies of this trillium can be seen blooming on hillsides along Little River Road and Rich Mountain Road above Cades Cove in April and May.



Large-flowered (*Trillium grandiflorum*)
This is one of the most abundant and attractive wildflowers in the park. Cove Hardwood Nature Trail is a great place to see it.

The "tri" in trilliums tips you off that all wildflowers in this genus have three leaves and that the blooms sport three sepals and three petals. Visitors to the Great Smoky Mountains can find at least nine species of trilliums in the park. The earliest, like white and Catesby's, may bloom as early as late March or early April. Others, including painted trillium, can be found flowering well into May. They are common at nearly all elevations in the park.

Trilliums are pollinated by butterflies, bees, flies, gnats, and beetles. Some lure the insects with a sweet scent, while others, like wake robin (a.k.a. stinking Benjamin) attract carrion-loving bugs with a rotting-meat odor. Ants play a vital role by dispersing the tiny seeds that trilliums create after pollination.

Because trilliums often mutate and hybridize, some can be tricky to identify. The wake robin, for example, comes in white and purple varieties. The Catesby's also ranges from rose to white.



Wake Robin, Stinking Benjamin (*Trillium erectum*)

This trillium, commonly purple to white but also highly variable in color, prefers the cool, damp woods of the park's middle to higher elevations.



Painted (*Trillium undulatum*)
Painted trilliums bloom amid the fog and mist of the high elevation spruce-fir forests, under the deep shade of rhododendron and hemlocks, and among mountain laurel on the balds.



Sessile-flowered Maroon (*Trillium cuneatum*)
This large trillium grows over a huge range in the East, most abundantly on limestone-based soils.



Vasey's (*Trillium vaseyi*)
In the Smoky Mountains' stupendous cove forests, it can bloom through May. Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail is a good place to see it.

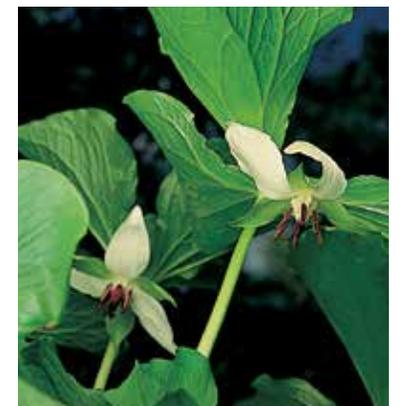


Catesby's (*Trillium catesbaei*)
This trillium's dainty flowers, in white, pale pink, or rose, nod beneath the stem.



PHOTOGRAPH BY BILL LEA

Yellow (*Trillium luteum*)
This common trillium grows along many park trails and roads in mature, moist, low-elevation forests.



Southern Nodding (*Trillium rugelii*)
This trillium can be found in bloom in April and May on steep wooded hillsides and flats, as well as along stream edges at the lower elevations.

search & rescue

Most rescues could have been avoided with thoughtful trip planning



Heavy rains in the park's high country can result in flash flooding downstream. Drowning is one of the leading causes of accidental death in the park! It's better to wait than to try to cross a flooded stream.

How Rescues Work

Area 911 emergency service providers receive a call from a person in distress or from a concerned relative or friend. 911 dispatchers may be able to locate the caller through their cell phone's GPS system or rangers may need to research the victim's planned itinerary.

A park ranger is assigned to be an Incident Commander (I.C.). The I.C. assigns staff to the incident and evaluates risks to both the victim and rescuers. For example, if the report is tak-

en late in the day, the I.C. may decide it is safer to wait until the next morning to initiate the rescue because of river crossings or arduous terrain. If this is the case, the victim may need to "manage on their own" or a team of two or three rangers may be sent with equipment to help the victim "shelter in place" until the rescue party arrives. It can easily take 8-12 hours or more to reach a stranded or injured person in a remote area of the park.

If the victim is unable to

walk, a minimum of 10-12 personnel must be dispatched to evacuate the victim by litter. If the victim is on a rough trail and is several miles from the trailhead, 15-20 personnel are needed.

Helicopters are almost never used in the Smokies because the dense forest precludes landing and mountain weather makes low-level flying extremely hazardous.

Many rangers have advanced emergency medical training to the Park Medic level.



Rescue Ranger Q & A.

Steve Kloster is a district ranger in Great Smoky Mountains National Park who oversees many of the search and rescue operations that occur here.

Q: How many search and rescues are conducted in the park each year?

A: It's surprisingly consistent from year to year. Usually just a little over 100. Most are rescues; we don't have too many searches here because most hikers are pretty good about staying on our well-marked trails.

Q: Are many of those life and death situations?

A: Most rescues are for lower leg injuries, which can be serious if the patient is in a remote location, or there are other medical conditions, or if there is bad weather. More serious conditions such as heart attacks, bee sting reactions, major falls, concussions, hypothermia, and near-drownings happen, too. On average we save about a dozen lives a year.

Q: That must be a good feeling?

A: That's why rangers become rangers.

Q: How have cell phones changed your operations?

A: Cell phones can be a positive when a person is in distress and dispatchers are able to use GPS to pinpoint their location. Of course, many areas of the park have no cell service. Also, hikers have to understand that if they call just because they are tired or hungry, that situation doesn't warrant a rescue.

Q: How much does the park spend on search and rescues per year?

A: On average \$100,000 are spent each year on search and rescue operations. If there is a major, multiday search for, say, a lost youth, that number gets much, much larger.

If You Don't Want to be a Rescue Victim...

• **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. Most hikers hike about 1.5 miles per hour in the Smokies. So if it's a six-mile round trip hike, you need at least four or five hours.

• **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 frequently and recently.

• **Prepare for the weather.** These mountains are green because it rains and snows a whole lot here. Wet, cold springtime hikers are highly vulnerable to hypothermia, which can be deadly.

Who Gets Rescued?

- Day hikers and backpackers who overestimate their ability to hike many miles on steep, rocky trails.
- More males usually need rescuing in the Smokies than females.
- Day hikers and backpackers who are inadequately equipped for the weather conditions they encounter.
- Persons ages 20-29 are the most likely to need rescuing.
- Persons ages 13-19 are the second most likely to need rescuing.
- Day hikers. Rangers rescue three times more day hikers than backpackers.
- Hikers without hiking boots or persons with a history of foot and ankle problems.

national park news

National Park Service News Briefs

NPS Kicks Off Centennial Celebration with “Find Your Park” Campaign

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE has announced that the centerpiece of its 2016 Centennial will be a campaign to reintroduce the national parks and the work of the National Park Service to a new generation of Americans, inviting them to visit and get involved. The campaign, titled “Find Your Park,” is kicking off this spring. Learn more at www.nps.gov/subjects/centennial/index.htm.

Alum Cave Trail To Close Mondays-Thursdays for Rehabilitation Work

THE VERY POPULAR ALUM CAVE Trail to Mt. Le Conte will close four days per week beginning in late spring this year and continuing through fall. The trail will be closed every Monday through Thursday so the Trails Forever crew can rehabilitate some badly eroded sections. Hikers to Mt. Le Conte should consider alternative trails such as The Boulevard, Brushy Mountain/Trillium Gap, Bull Head and Rainbow Falls.

Reservations for Synchronous Firefly Viewing at Elkmont Can be Made Online

BECAUSE OF THE POPULARITY of early summer firefly viewing at Elkmont, parking passes are required for all vehicles. Passes are limited and can be obtained at www.Recreation.gov one month prior to the variable dates. There is a \$1.50 administrative fee for the passes. For more information visit www.nps.gov/grsm.

Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail to Open

SCENIC ROARING FORK MOTOR NATURE TRAIL has been closed for repairs to several bridges, but is slated to reopen May 1. The narrow, steep, one-way road rolls through old-growth forest and offers excellent wildflower viewing.

White Oak Sinks is Closed to Public

THE WHITE OAK SINKS area will remain closed to the public until further notice to protect resident bat colonies that have been reduced by white nose syndrome.

New Firewood Regulation Will Help Protect Forests from Alien Invaders



A park technician measures the circumference of an old-growth ash tree in the Smokies. Below, an example of a firewood certification stamp.

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 March, 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 will be 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 Chief Ranger 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

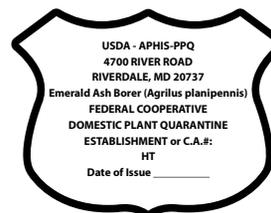
develop and implement new treatment strategies.”

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 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 spread of insect pests in firewood, including, in many cases, the banning of imported 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 regionally placed 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 and pests in the park, please visit the park website at <http://www.nps.gov/grsm/plan-yourvisit/firewood-alert.htm>.



behind the scenery

Great Smoky Mountains is the largest terrestrial national park in the East

New Crew Discovers the CCC-way

When the park's Trails Forever crew signed on for the Herculean task of reconstructing some of the rockiest and most eroded trails in the Smokies, they immediately began researching techniques to construct the most durable and aesthetically-pleasing trails possible.

"Most of the crew had gained training and experience in various national parks and other public land management agencies," said Tobias Miller, a supervisor for the park's facilities management division. "Our task was to combine trail construction traditions from across the county into a single approach that would work best in the Smokies with its steep terrain and challenging climate."

As Miller and the team contemplated the best way to go about reconstructing trails in the Smokies, a chance trip to the park's archives hit pay dirt. After some casting about, the park's archivist presented Miller with a 1935 document titled simply "Recommendations for Trail Construction." The succinct manual was written and beautifully illustrated by the park's Landscape and Engineering Department, especially for use by the hundreds of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) workers stationed in the Smokies.

"Almost everything in the CCC-era manual is applicable to modern trail work in this park," Miller said. "This manual is now our foundation for all trail construction projects."

Since discovering the Depression-era manual, the Trails Forever crew has had plenty of opportunities to put its methods to work. Between 2009 and 2011, the Friends of the Smokies-funded crew reconstructed the rutted and rocky Forney Ridge Trail from Clingmans Dome parking area to Andrews Bald. During 2012-2014 they rebuilt the notoriously steep and eroded Chimney Tops Trail. This summer Trails Forever begins a two-year rehab of the very popular Alum Cave Trail to Mt. Le Conte.

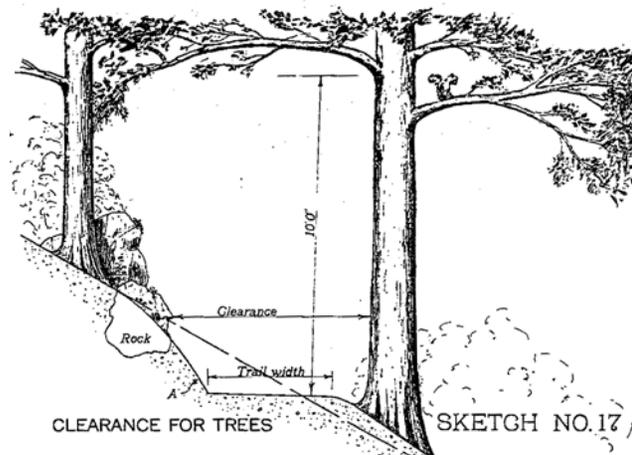
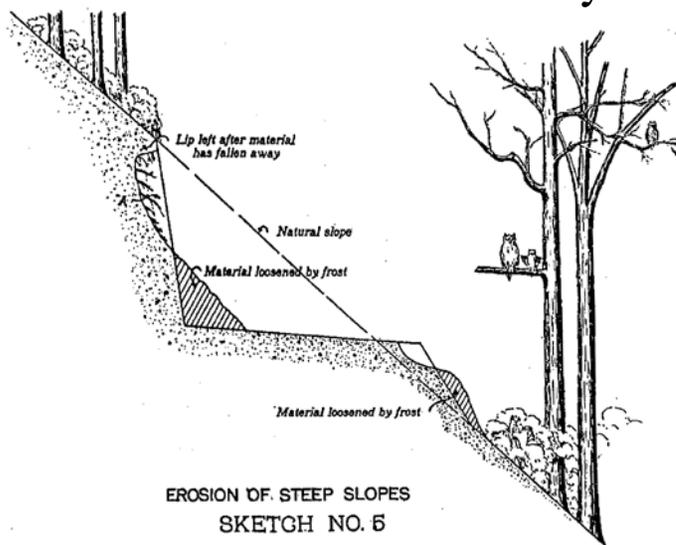
"Like the CCC, we design our trails to conform to the landscape, not conquer it," Miller said.

Alum Cave Trail will be closed from Monday through Thursday during the warmer months in 2015 and 2016. Weekday hikers looking for an alternate route to Mt. Le Conte should consider

The Boulevard Trail, Brushy Mountain/Trillium Gap, Rainbow Falls and Bull Head.

The trail construction manual can be found on-line at www.SmokiesInformation.org.

Top: Illustrations from the trail construction manual used by the CCC in the 1930s to build most of the park's trails. **Left:** The new Trails Forever crew at work last year on Chimney Tops Trail.



A park technician uses a pesticide soil drench to adelgid-proof a hemlock tree. Soil drenches can protect trees for up to five years.

Bitter Winter is Huge Help to Hemlock Trees

The prolonged February cold spell this winter has turned out to be a boon for ranger Jesse Webster and his crew's crusade to save hemlock trees in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. "This year's cold snap was a huge benefit to our program," Webster said, "especially coming as it did when the woolly adelgids were in their egg laying stage."

"Around 3 degrees F, adelgids start to die," Webster reported. "At -15 F, mortality is close to 100%. We hit -23 on Mt. Le Conte in February."

Better still, it seems that the predator beetles that the Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and University of Tennessee have been hustling to rear and release, survived the last two winters much better than their prey.

Webster explained that while adelgids spend the winter exposed on hemlock needles, predator beetles can crawl into the trunks of trees for shelter. With more predators and fewer adelgids, Webster is optimistic that the

predator beetles could exact a heavy toll on their prey this season and achieve a better predator-prey balance between hemlock and adelgid.

Eastern hemlock trees were once one of the most common and largest tree species in the Smokies. It's estimated that since the adelgid arrived in the park around 2001, it has killed over 70% of the hemlocks in old-growth stands.

"The cold weather has really changed our work plans for 2015," Webster said. "We can skip treating some of the high elevation sites and make some serious progress at the low elevations."

The Park Service uses a variety of treatments to save hemlocks, from pesticide sprays to root drenches and trunk injections. These methods are highly effective for up to five years, but are labor intensive. Webster's crew has treated over 200,000 trees and some 10,000 acres in the park using these strategies. He hopes to treat more than 20,000 hemlocks in 2015.



if you love the smokies...

help protect this place for ourselves and future generations

become a member



Since 1953, Great Smoky Mountains

Association has supported the educational, scientific, and historical efforts of the National Park Service through cash donations and in-kind services. In 2015 alone, the association plans to provide more than \$1.4 million in assistance that includes saving hemlock trees, living history demonstrations, environmental education programs, salaries for wildlife personnel, and historic preservation.

Association members receive a number of benefits to keep them informed about special events in the park and issues affecting the Smokies:

- Subscription to the semi-annual, full-color magazine *Smokies Life*
- Digital access to the award-winning quarterly park newspaper, *Smokies Guide*, and the association's newsletter, *The Bearpaw*
- A 15-20% discount on books, music, gifts, and other products sold at park visitor centers and at our web store
- Discounts up to 20% at more than 400 national park bookstores across the country
- Special discounts at area rental cabins, inns, restaurants, shops, and attractions
- And most importantly, the satisfaction of helping to preserve nature and history in Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Join today using the coupon to the right or visit www.SmokiesInformation.org, or call us at 1-888-898-9102 x222. Memberships start at just \$35. per year.

MARY ANN KRESSIG PHOTO



Great Smoky Mountains National Park is one of the few large national parks without an entrance fee. Most parks now charge \$20 or \$25 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 by using some of the money you saved at the entrance to support the park partners that support our park!

field school

An exciting variety of adventures await adults who long to get out and explore the park accompanied by expert guides. Programs are offered by the Smoky Mountain Field School and include Mt. Le Conte overnights, wildlife workshops, edible plants, wildflower photography, animal tracking, bird watching, salamanders, mountain cooking, and more. One-day programs start at as little as \$35. Contact: (865) 974-0150 or smfs.utk.edu

gsmi 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, and photography. Contact (865) 448-6709 or www.gsmi.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.gsmi.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 Cub Report) _____

Telephone # _____

Please include your check with this form. Mail to:

GSMA, P.O. Box 130, Gatlinburg, TN 37738

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

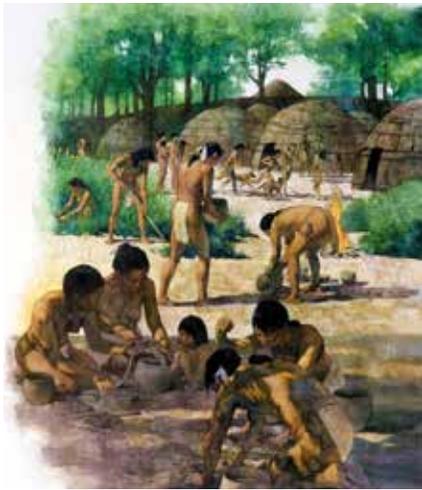
Your donation can help make these projects a reality. Put a few coins or a few dollars in one of the donation boxes located at visitor centers, roadsides, and other locations around the park. Buy the Smokies license plate for your car (available in Tennessee and North Carolina).

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

archaeologist discovers

prehistoric homesite on little river



remnants of tool making representative of almost every usable stone material in the area.

Bailey explained the homesite represents a time when people were transitioning from a wandering hunter-gatherer lifestyle to a more stationary one in which people raised crops and lived in relatively permanent settlements. It's likely they also caught fish in

the river; hunted bear, deer, turkey, and other animals; and wild harvested edible plants.

"We have a lot of work to do yet," Bailey said. "Taking into consideration the vastness of the park and the overall lack of archaeological work within it, we know very little about the prehistoric occupation of the Great Smoky Mountains overall."

The Woodland Period is known as "the age of ceramics" and pieces of pottery from Bailey's recent find count among its oldest, dating the site to between 200 and 700 years B.C. This ancient pottery style is known as the Swannanoa Series. It is thick-walled, often conical and decorated with fabric marks. The people who lived along the river at the time used quartz to temper the clay, making the finished pots stronger and more durable.

Swannanoa Pottery was used for cooking, carrying food and water, and for storage. As these "ancient mountaineers" became

more advanced in their ceramics making, the pots became thinner and

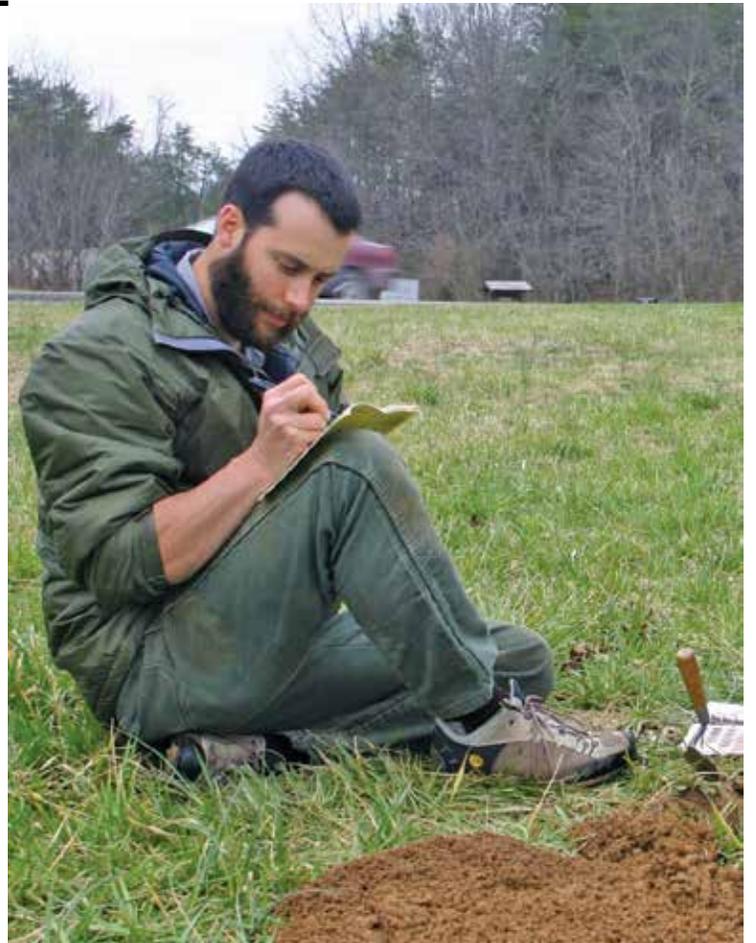
more sophisticated tempering agents were used, Bailey explained.

The discovery of this early thatched (or "wattle and daub") homesite will contribute to the recent swell of prehistoric information in the surrounding area. For example, Woodland use of the lower Little River drainage has been extensively documented through the University of Tennessee's Townsend Project, an effort undertaken only in the last decade.

"We have an opportunity here to look into the prehistoric past of the Little River's upper reaches, linking pieces of the Woodland story within the park," said Bailey. The inventory of sites along the Little River corridor documents human use going back 7,500 years, as evidenced from recovered projectile points and tools that are stylistically distinct throughout prehistoric time.

Within the park, there is a great deal of historic Cherokee archaeology on the North Carolina side; and recent investigations of structural sites there speak confidently to year-round human use of the Oconaluftee watershed going back to the Mississippian Period (1000-1450 AD). The oldest archaeological remnants found in the Smokies thus far indicate that people were using the area at least 9,000 years ago.

Bailey states that although Great Smoky Mountains National Park has long been considered "an archaeological hinterland," a growing body of evidence is suggesting considerable year-round use late in prehistory, at least at the lower elevations. "In terms of investigating the prehistoric human past in the Smokies, the future is wide-open," he added.



Top left: The house site discovered along the upper Little River watershed this winter was likely a thatched "wattle and daub" type home occupied by Woodland peoples some 2,700 years ago. "Wattle" is interwoven strips of wood or twigs that is covered with "daub" which can be various combinations of mud, clay, sand, and straw. The construction method dates back some 6,000 years worldwide and is one of the earliest forms of watertight building. (Image courtesy McClung Museum of Natural History & Culture, Knoxville, TN.)

Prior to the Woodland Period, roving groups of hunters and gatherers would visit the Great Smoky Mountains on a seasonal basis to collect chestnuts and acorns and other mast and to pick berries, hunt game, and harvest wild plants.

Bottom left: The large stone knife found at one of the Little River sites dates back to about 3,000-3,500 years ago and was probably used for cutting up meat and processing animal hides.

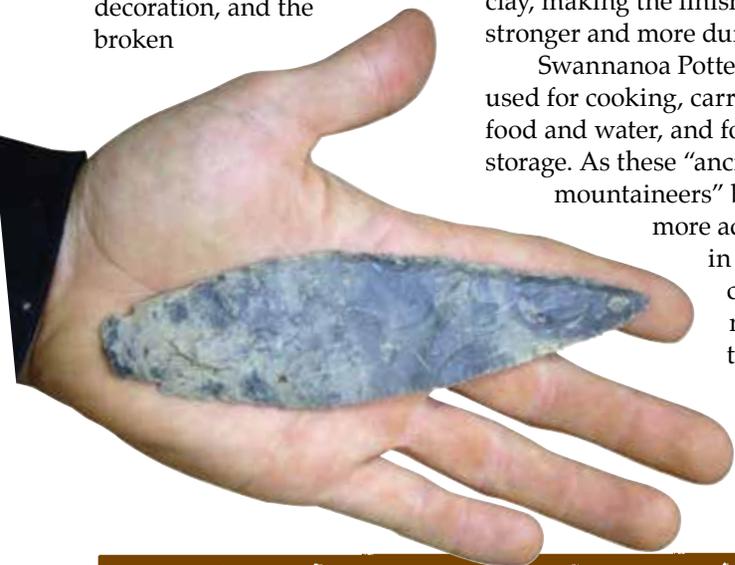
Top right: Park archaeologist Heath Bailey takes notes on materials from a test pit in the park. Federal law requires that an archaeological survey be conducted prior to any excavation work in the Smokies.

Cultural resource preservation is a central tenet of the National Park Service; and archaeological resources within Great Smoky Mountains National Park are protected by federal law. Artifacts and contextual information removed from archaeological sites are an irretrievable loss, and it is for this reason that site locations are not made public. Removing, disturbing, or damaging archaeological sites is a federal offense punishable by considerable fines and jail time.

Recent archaeological work along the Little River corridor in Great Smoky Mountains National Park has unearthed two major discoveries: the first known prehistoric homesite on the Tennessee side of the Smokies and the oldest local pottery from the Appalachian Summit region.

The floor of the prehistoric home was discovered along the Little River watershed and likely dates back to the early Woodland Period, 2,700 years ago. An exposed charcoal-rich layer alerted park archaeologist Heath Bailey to the likely presence of an occupational floor and additional evidence analyzed by Bailey indicates the home was made of thatch and mud.

Also found at the site was a large stone knife used for processing meat, red ochre for painting and decoration, and the broken



visitor information

for more information, www.nps.gov/grsm or follow us on Twitter @GreatSmokyNPS

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.

