Smoky Mountain Fish Put On Colorful Breeding Displays

Large stone nests protect native spawn on the river bottom

Pink and purples, neon oranges and wisps of bright yellow shimmer in a dance of color under the flow of a clear mountain stream. One of the most spectacular displays of living color in the Smokies doesn’t fly through the air or bloom with the wildflowers—it billows in a ball at the bottom of a river.

Early summer means it’s mating time for many species of fish in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Males of some native species like the River Chub and the Tennessee Shiner put on a particularly striking show.

Male River Chubs begin to take on a pinkish-purple coloration in April to attract a mate, but they also play an ecological role by building large stone nests for their spawn out of pebbles gathered from the river bottom. Several smaller species of fish, which also take on distinctive hues to attract mates, have adapted to rely on these very same mounds as safe spawning sites throughout May and June.

At times in early summer, several species can be seen gathered at once in bright, shifting swarms above a single mound. “It’s quite a spectacle,” said Fisheries Technician Caleb Abramson. When the oranges and yellows of spawning Tennessee and Saffron Shiners intermingle, Abramson describes the shifting mass as a “fireball” of activity. Other fish including Central Stonerollers and Warpaint Shiners also use River Chub mounds as spawning sites.

Although this summer show can be one of the more elusive for park visitors, spawning events can occur in most of the major lower-elevation streams throughout GSMNP, including the Little River and the Little Pigeon River. Research remains to be done into the complex levels of interdependence between these and other remarkable Smoky Mountain natives.
Camping in the national park
The National Park Service maintains developed campgrounds at nine locations in the park. Only Cades Cove and Smokemont are open in winter. There are no showers or hookups other than those at Abrams Creek, Balsam Mountain, Big Creek, Cades Cove, Cataloochee, Cosby, Deep Creek, Elkmont and Smokemont.

Campsites at Abrams Creek, Balsam Mountain, Big Creek, Cades Cove, Cataloochee, Elkmont and Smokemont may be reserved. For reservations call 877.444.6777 or contact recreation.gov. Sites may be reserved up to 6 months in advance. Reservations are required at Abrams Creek, Balsam Mountain, Big Creek and Cataloochee campgrounds.

Site occupancy is limited to 6 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 877.444.6777 or contact recreation.gov. Group sites may be reserved up to a year in advance.

The list below shows number of campground sites, elevations, camping fees and maximum RV lengths.

For current dates of operation, visit nps.gov/grsm.

- **Abrams Creek**: 16 sites, elev. 1,125’, opens April 26, $17.50, 12’ trailers
- **Balsam Mountain**: 42 sites, elev. 5,310’, opens May 17, $17.50, 30’ RVs
- **Big Creek**: 12 sites, elev. 1,700’, opens April 19, $17.50, tents only
- **Cades Cove**: 159 sites, elev. 1,807’, open year-round, $21-$25, 35’-40’ RVs
- **Cataloochee**: 27 sites, elev. 2,610’, opens April 19, $25, 31’ RVs
- **Cosby**: 157 sites, elev. 2,459’, opens April 19, $17.50, 25’ RVs
- **Deep Creek**: 92 sites, elev. 1,800’, opens April 19, $21, 26’ RVs
- **Elkmont**: 220 sites, elev. 2,150’, opens March 8, $21-$27, 32’-35’ RVs
- **Smokemont**: 142 sites, elev. 2,198’, open year-round, $21-$25, 35’-40’ RVs.
- **Look Rock closed in 2019**

To prevent the spread of destructive insect pests, the NPS has banned outside firewood from entering the park unless it is USDA- or state-certified heat-treated wood. Campers may gather dead and down wood in the park for campfires. Certified wood may be purchased in and around the park.

Bicycling
Most park roads are too narrow and heavily traveled by automobiles for safe or enjoyable bicycling.

However, from May 8 to Sept. 25, on Wednesday and Saturday mornings from sunrise until 10 a.m., only bicycles and pedestrians are allowed on Cades Cove Loop Road. Bicycles may be rented at the Cades Cove Campground store. Cades Cove Loop Road is an 11-mile, one-way, paved road providing excellent opportunities for wildlife viewing and touring historic homesites.

Helmets are required by law for persons age 16 and under. However, helmets are strongly recommended for all bicyclists.

Bicycles are permitted on park roads but prohibited on trails except Gatlinburg, Oconaluftee River and lower Deep Creek/Indian Creek.

Accommodations
- **LeConte Lodge**: (accessible by trail only) provides the only lodging in the park. 865.429.5704 or lecontelodge.com For information on lodging outside the park:
  - **Bryson City**: 800.867.9246 or greatsmokies.com
  - **Cherokee**: 828.788.0034 or cherokeesmokies.com
  - **Fontana**: 800.849.2258 or fontanaavillage.com
  - **Gatlinburg**: 800.588.1817 or gatlinburg.com
  - **Maggie Valley**: 800.624.4431 or maggievalley.org
  - **Pigeon Forge**: 800.251.9100 or mypigeonforge.com

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.

Special events
- **June 15** Women’s Work: Mountain Farm Museum
- **September 21** Mountain Life Festival: Mountain Farm Museum
- **December 14** Festival of Christmas Past: Sugarlands Visitor Center
- **December 21** Holiday Homecoming: Oconaluftee Visitor Center

For rent
- The Appalachian Clubhouse and Spence Cabin at Elkmont can be rented for daytime events starting April 1 each year. Contact recreation.gov.

Visitor centers
- **Summer hours of operation are**: Oconaluftee and Sugarlands: 8-7; 8-6 in September. Cades Cove: 9-7; 9-6:30 in September. Clingmans Dome 10-6:30; 10-6 in September.

Picnic areas
- Picnic areas open year-round are: Cades Cove, Deep Creek, Greenbrier and Metcalf Bottoms. All other picnic areas (except Heintooga) opened on April 19 or earlier. Heintooga opened May 17. Please see the map on page 16.
for locations. Picnic pavilions may be reserved for $12.50-$80 at recreation.gov.

**Other services**
There are no gas stations, showers, or restaurants in the national park.

**Park weather**
- **Spring** - March has the most changeable weather; snow can fall on any day, especially at the higher elevations. Backpackers are often caught off guard when a sunny day in the 70s°F is followed by a wet, bitterly cold one. By mid- to late April, the weather is milder.
- **Summer** - By mid-June, heat, haze and humidity are the norm. Most precipitation occurs as afternoon thundershowers.
- **Autumn** - In mid-September, a pattern of warm, sunny days and crisp, clear nights often begins. However, cool, rainy days also occur. Snow may fall at the higher elevations in November.
- **Winter** - Days during this fickle season can be sunny and 65°F or snowy with highs in the 20s. At the low elevations, snows of 1” or more occur 3-5 times per year. At Newfound Gap, 69” fall on average. Lows of -20°F are possible at the higher elevations.

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

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

**Camping in the backcountry**
Summertime camping can be an exciting adventure for persons properly equipped and informed. To facilitate this activity, the National Park Service maintains more than 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. **Get the map.** Go online to view the park’s official trail map (nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/maps.htm), which shows all park trails, campsites and shelters. Park rules and regulations are also listed here. If you wish, you can purchase the printed version of the trail map for $1 by stopping at any park visitor center or calling 865.436.7318 x226 or shopping online at SmokiesInformation.org.

2. **Plan your trip.** Call or stop by the park’s backcountry office, which is open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., for trip planning help. The office is located in Sugarlands Visitor Center, two miles south of Gatlinburg on U.S. 441. 865.436.1297.

3. **Get a permit.** Make your reservation and obtain your permit through the backcountry office at Sugarlands Visitor Center (by phone or in person) or online at 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.

**Driving distances and estimated times**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cherokee, NC to:</th>
<th>Gatlinburg: 34 miles (1 hour)</th>
<th>Cades Cove: 58 miles (2 hours)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cades Cove</td>
<td>58 miles (2 hours)</td>
<td>Newfound Gap: 18 miles (½ hour)</td>
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<td>Newfound Gap</td>
<td>25 miles (¾ hour)</td>
<td>Clingmans Dome: 25 miles (¾ hour)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cataloochee</td>
<td>39 miles (1½ hours)</td>
<td>Cataloochee: 65 miles (2½ hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenbrier Cove</td>
<td>6 miles (¼ hour)</td>
<td>Cataloochee: 65 miles (2½ hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsend, TN to:</td>
<td>Cades Cove: 9 miles (¼ hour)</td>
<td>Newfound Gap: 16 miles (½ hour)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cades Cove</td>
<td>27 miles (1 hour)</td>
<td>Clingmans Dome: 23 miles (¾ hour)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newfound Gap</td>
<td>16 miles (½ hour)</td>
<td>Cataloochee: 39 miles (1½ hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clingmans Dome</td>
<td>52 miles (1½ hours)</td>
<td>Cataloochee: 87 miles (2½ hours)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Look Rock</td>
<td>25 miles (½ hour)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Townsend</td>
<td>22 miles (¾ hour)</td>
<td>Cataloochee: 87 miles (2½ hours)</td>
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<td>34 miles (1½ hours)</td>
<td>Cataloochee: 87 miles (2½ hours)</td>
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<td>Gatlinburg</td>
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<tr>
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<td>22 miles (¾ hour)</td>
<td>Cataloochee: 87 miles (2½ hours)</td>
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**Tempetature and precipitation averages**
These temperature and precipitation averages are based on data for the last 20 years. Temperatures are in degrees Fahrenheit. An average of over 84” (7 feet) of precipitation falls on the higher elevations of the Smokies. On Mt. Le Conte, an average of 82.8” of snow falls per year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gatlinburg, TN elev. 1,462’</th>
<th>Mt. Le Conte elev. 6,593’</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Avg. High</strong></td>
<td><strong>Low</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan.</td>
<td>49°</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb.</td>
<td>53°</td>
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<td>March</td>
<td>62°</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>71°</td>
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<td>May</td>
<td>77°</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>82°</td>
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<td>July</td>
<td>85°</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug.</td>
<td>84°</td>
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<td>Sept.</td>
<td>79°</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>70°</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>60°</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>51°</td>
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</table>

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1. Cosby
Highlights: hiking, waterfall, evening ranger programs, scenic drive, mountain views

Cosby features a large campground, picnic area and plenty of hiking trails. The 4.2-mile round-trip hike to Hen Wallow Falls is moderate and extremely popular. The mile-long Cosby Self-guiding Nature Trail is a good way to stretch your legs and get acquainted with the area. Sutton Ridge Overlook and its impressive views are accessible from the Lower Mt. Cammerer Trail. It’s 2.5 miles out and back.

Cosby Campground is generally one of the last campgrounds in the park to fill up. The picnic area includes a large covered pavilion that can be reserved in advance at recreation.gov. Join us Friday evenings this summer for “Celebrating Cosby” programs at the amphitheater (see program schedule on page 10).

A 6-mile section of Foothills Parkway between Cosby and I-40 provides stellar views of the majestic Smokies and is well worth the drive.

Mileage from Gatlinburg—20
from Townsend—40
from Cherokee—53

2. Look Rock Tower
Highlights: mountain views, short hike, scenic drive

Look Rock, named for a natural rock ledge, is the highest point on the western portion of Foothills Parkway. It is located between the Walland and Chilhowee entrances to the parkway.

A half-mile trail from the parking area to the top of the ridge provides access to Look Rock Tower, with a 360-degree panoramic view of the Great Smokies and neighboring foothills. Thunderhead and Gregory Bald are among the landmarks that can be viewed from this vantage point. This location makes a particularly good spot for stargazing and viewing summer meteor showers.

Please be aware that, although the observation tower is open, other Look Rock facilities, including the picnic area, campground and associated restrooms, are closed.

Mileage from Townsend—16
from Gatlinburg—38
from Cherokee—68

3. Foothills Parkway West
Highlights: mountain views, scenic drive, newly opened parkway section

See the Smokies in a new light as you drive 32 miles of continuous parkway—without billboards, utility poles, or commercial traffic—offering stunning views of the park and the Tennessee Valley.

Late in 2018, the Walland to Wears Valley section of Foothills Parkway opened to the public, connecting with the segment between U.S. Highway 129 at Chilhowee Lake and U.S. Highway 321 in Walland that was opened in 1968.

The newest portion of Foothills Parkway features nine bridges, the longest of which spans 800 feet and follows a curvilinear path around the mountain terrain. Known as Bridge 2, it is comprised of 98 pre-cast concrete segments that were lowered into place by a large, specially built gantry crane and tensioned together in a cantilevered construction. The result is an engineering marvel, presenting spectacular views of the wide expanse of the Smokies to drivers on this new roadway.

A parking area at Caylor Gap is an excellent stopping point with views.

Mileage to the Wears Valley entrance to Foothills Parkway (newest section):
from Townsend—8
from Gatlinburg—16
from Cherokee—46

4. Balsam Mountain
Highlights: mountain views, mid-to-late-summer wildflowers, elk, scenic drive

This mile-high area features a campground (reservations required), picnic area, hiking trails and a scenic drive.

Enjoy summer wildflowers along the way. To get there, take the Blue Ridge Parkway to Mile 458 and turn onto Heintooga Ridge Road. This paved road runs the ridge past scenic overlooks for 9 miles to Balsam Mountain Campground and Heintooga Picnic Area. You’ll pass the trailheads for two outstanding hiking trails—Hemphill Bald and Flat Creek. Either trail offers the opportunity to hike in a mile or more and return the way you came.

From the picnic area, you can continue onto one-way gravel Balsam Mountain Road for 13 miles, then another 14 miles on paved roads back to the town of Cherokee.

Mileage from Cherokee—12
from Gatlinburg—45
from Townsend—62

5. Cataloochee Valley
Highlights: historic buildings, elk viewing, horse and hiking trails

Access to Cataloochee will be more difficult later this fall when the main entry through Cove Creek Gap is closed due to roadwork. See this scenic valley while you can between now and November.

From just about anywhere you start, the journey to Cataloochee is long and winding. The last four miles are on a curvy, one-lane gravel road. Once safely in the valley, you will find that beauty and history abound.

Historic buildings include nicely preserved frame homes, barns, a church and even a school. Popular trails include the 2-mile-round-trip walk to the Woody House on Rough Fork Trail and the 7.5-mile Boogerman loop hike featuring old grove forests. The latter includes some difficult stream crossings.

During summer, the best times to view elk and other wildlife are early morning and evening. Fields are closed in May and June to protect calves and in September and October during the rut. Fields are also closed when elk are present. Please read the elk-watching guidelines on page 6 to learn how you can protect these magnificent animals and yourself.

Advance reservations via recreation.gov are required for Cataloochee Campground.

Mileage from Cherokee—39
from Gatlinburg—65
from Townsend—87
and federal partners to ensure stream populations remain free from non-native parasites and diseases. We also lead a variety of research studies to inform park managers on current topics such as water chemistry changes associated with acid rain, conservation genetics of our native fish species, and mercury levels in fish tissue.

I became interested in this field after attending local fishing club meetings with my father and watching presentations by the state fishery biologist. The data was fascinating to me and really helped me understand why they managed the populations and set the fishing regulations like they did. We hire a number of interns and seasonal fishery technicians annually that share a similar passion and are starting their careers as I did years ago.

Currently we are working to restore native Brook Trout to three miles of Anthony Creek (TN) and four miles of Little Cataloochee Creek (NC). These efforts are providing visitors with an additional 13 streams and 30 miles of fishing for native Brook Trout, which is an important part of the natural heritage of the Smoky Mountains.

We are also working to provide water quality data to our state and federal partners to determine if air quality policies are helping to improve both air and water quality across the park. These data, collected by Trout Unlimited and other park volunteers since 1993, are being used to adjust air quality policies so that acidified streams will be allowed to recover and once again support fish and aquatic insects.

These air and water quality improvements will not only benefit the Great Smoky Mountains but the entire Southern Appalachian region. And we are very proud of that.

New Chief Ranger Joins Park Staff

Great Smoky Mountains National Park welcomed Lisa Hendy as the new chief ranger in April. In this position, Hendy oversees employees in the Resource and Visitor Protection Division who perform law enforcement duties, wildland fire operations, emergency medical services, search and rescue operations and backcountry operations, and staff the emergency communications center.

Hendy brings a wealth of experience to the position after serving at several parks with complex ranger operations including Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Arches and Rocky Mountains national parks. Her most recent previous assignment was as chief ranger at Big Bend National Park.

“Lisa has demonstrated incredible leadership in managing law enforcement, fire and search and rescue operations at some of the nation’s busiest parks,” said Superintendent Cassius Hendy. “She’s built strong programs by investing in local partnerships with neighboring agencies to help make areas safer for visitors and residents. She is a great addition to the park’s management team.”

Hendy is the 2011 recipient of the prestigious Harry Yount National Park Ranger Award honoring excellence in protecting resources and serving visitors. In 2007, she received an Intermountain Region Exemplary Service Award for lifesaving efforts within Grand Canyon National Park. Growing up near Chattanooga, TN, Hendy had her first backcountry experiences in the Smokies where she backpacked as a youth. She continues to be a tremendous outdoor enthusiast and enjoys kayaking, climbing, hiking and canyoneering.

“I am delighted to have returned to my home state in the park that provided my first real outdoor adventures,” said Hendy. “It is a pleasure to be involved in the efforts to protect a place that was so instrumental in defining my passions and ultimately my career.”

Tremont Acquires Land, Celebrates 50 Years

The rhododendron isn’t the only thing growing in the Walker Valley this summer as Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont (GSMIT) announces their landmark purchase of 152 acres of land adjoining the GSMNP boundary in Townsend, TN.

The new space within hiking distance to GSMIT’s current campus promises to open a world of possibilities for the Smokies’ unique environmental education center, which has long been a trailblazer in the field of experiential learning. This year alone, GSMIT will provide more than 6,000 students of all ages extended opportunities to eat, sleep and learn in the park.

“As an organization, we have big goals for education,” said GSMIT President and CEO Catey Terry. “For some time, we have explored ways we can reach a larger audience and strengthen our community outreach. Once we saw this incredible piece of property, the vision of a second campus began to take shape in real and exciting ways.”

The news of expansion comes at an especially fitting time as 2019 marks another significant milestone for GSMIT—a century of learning in the Smokies. A special 50th anniversary celebration is currently planned as part of GSMIT’s homecoming on October 13, 2019.

Stay up to date on both anniversary festivities and plans for GSMIT’s new acreage or register for one of the many workshops and courses available at gsmit.org.
The open fields around Cataloochee, Oconaluftee and Tow String Road are closed to the public during May and June for visitor safety and to protect young elk calves. The same areas are closed during September and October because of dangers posed from bull elk during the annual rut.

The fields are closed to the public, regardless of the time of year, when elk are present. You may observe and photograph elk in the fields from your vehicle or by standing near the road. It is illegal to approach elk closer than 150 feet.

Bull elk can weigh 900 pounds and are dangerous. You may be gored or trampled by elk if you approach them.

Feeding elk harms the animals and causes them to lose their natural fear of people and thereby become threats to visitor safety. In order to protect visitor safety, park wildlife staff may need to euthanize elk that have lost their fear of people. **By not feeding or approaching wildlife, you are protecting them.**

**Average lifespan of an elk in the wild:**

**12 years**

**Lifespan of the food-conditioned bull elk that was euthanized in 2013 when he became aggressive towards humans:**

**1½ years**

Young elk are at risk of learning to associate people with food rewards when they separate from their mothers and must find their own food sources for the first time.
Escaping to the mountains allows us to forget our everyday routines. Unfortunately, some park visitors also forget basic good manners.

Graffiti is a serious issue affecting Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and evidence shows that many vandals may be acting out of a lapse of judgment and a desire to leave their mark in a place they have enjoyed—much like signing a registry book. Those who leave behind graffiti should be aware that it is a crime the park service is actively battling.

In late 2017, a group of park managers met at a popular scenic overlook on Newfound Gap Road to discuss the graffiti problem. “Three large stone walls that surround extremely popular pull-offs were covered in spray paint, nail polish and permanent marker,” said Trails and Facilities Volunteer Coordinator Adam Monroe. “The graffiti had become very obvious, even to drive-by visitors.”

A signature feature of Newfound Gap Road is beautiful stone masonry that was completed in the 1930s. These natural materials were chosen to blend into the landscape and complement mountain views from the roadway. Graffiti stands in stark contrast to those aesthetic values, so the park group determined that cleaning the entire surface encompassing the three walls was necessary. In total, 2,480 square feet of surface area would need to be cleaned.

Five park volunteers armed with a biodegradable removal product and a professional grade pressure washer spent a total of 42 hours over the course of three days scrubbing and spraying the walls, then repeating if necessary. The job required 1,200 gallons of water.

“One thing that really stood out is that the markings read more like a summit register than typical ‘tags’ or profanity,” said Monroe, who coordinated the volunteers. “It was common to see whole families signing full names and dates.”

It’s clear from these markings that some visitors want to commemorate their time here, and previous vandalism had possibly desensitized them to the fact that graffiti—no matter how small or what its intention—is a crime. The graffiti problem extends to the park’s collection of historic structures where it is virtually impossible to remove from the irreplaceable wood.

The park service is committed to preventing and removing graffiti wherever possible. In our digital age, a shared photograph is worth a thousand words scrawled across a stone wall or log cabin. So flash a smile. Take a photo at your favorite spot. And leave no trace.
The Ten Essentials Checklist

Before you head out on that backpacking trip, ask yourself these basic questions: Can I respond positively to an accident or emergency? Can I safely spend a night or more in the backcountry?

The items you carry along on your trip can deter- mine whether you are prepared for a safe backcountry experience. Below are ten essentials that all backcountry travelers should have:

- Navigation: map and compass
- Insulation: extra clothing, sleeping bag
- Hydration: extra water, filter or tablets
- Nutrition: extra food
- Fire: waterproof matches/lighter/candle
- First-aid supplies
- Solar protection: sunglasses, sunscreen
- Shelter: tent, tarp, garbage bag, emergency blanket
- Illumination: headlamp, flashlight
- Navigation: map and compass

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- Navigation: map and compass
- Insulation: extra clothing, sleeping bag
- Hydration: extra water, filter or tablets
- Repair kit and tools
- Sun protection: sunglasses, sunscreen
- Shelter: tent, tarp, garbage bag, emergency blanket
- Fire: waterproof matches/lighter/candle
- First-aid supplies
- Food: extra food
- Illumination: headlamp, flashlight

The items you carry along on your trip can deter-
**SUGARLANDS/ELKMONT/COSBY AREA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Description</th>
<th>WHEN?</th>
<th>MEETING LOCATION</th>
<th>DURATION/DIFFICULTY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Junior Ranger Program:</strong> From pollinators to otters, nature detectives to Appalachian music, the Smokies nurtures the soul and stirs the imagination! Join a ranger to learn more during this “ranger’s choice” style program. Limited to 25 participants. Call 865.436.1291 up to 4 days in advance to make reservations.</td>
<td>Sundays, Tuesdays, Thursdays &amp; Fridays 10 a.m.</td>
<td>Sugarlands Visitor Center</td>
<td>45 minutes Easy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Old Town of Elkmont:</strong> Is it lost? Is it a ghost town? Find out what happened at Elkmont before it became a campground.</td>
<td>Sundays 2 p.m.</td>
<td>Elkmont Campground Office</td>
<td>2 hours Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sugarlands Night Hike:</strong> Challenge your senses and experience the mystery of the Smokies after dark. Limited to 25 participants. Call 865.436.1291 up to 4 days in advance to make reservations.</td>
<td>Fridays 9 p.m.</td>
<td>Sugarlands Valley Nature Trail</td>
<td>1 hour Easy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Secrets of the Smokies:</strong> The Smokies are home to many hidden treasures. Join a ranger for a hike to explore the Avent Cabin and other secrets of the Smokies. Limited to 25 participants. Call 865.436.1291 up to 4 days in advance to make reservations.</td>
<td>Wednesdays June 19, July 3, July 17, July 31 &amp; August 14 8 a.m.</td>
<td>Jakes Creek Trailhead in Elkmont</td>
<td>3+ hours Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coffee with a Ranger:</strong> Start your morning with a ranger and a cup of joe to hear what’s happening in the park and plan your day’s activities.</td>
<td>Wednesdays &amp; Saturdays 9 a.m.</td>
<td>Wednesdays at Starbucks Saturdays at Anakeesta Plaza Gatlinburg, TN</td>
<td>1 hour Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Resilient Forest:</strong> Explore the park’s dynamic ecosystems and their resilience in times of change. Join a ranger to learn about how change affects the landscape.</td>
<td>Wednesdays 10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Cove Hardwood Nature Trail in Chimneys Picnic Area</td>
<td>1.5 hours Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Let’s Chat About It!</strong> The Smokies staff loves a good debate! Join a ranger to philosophize, pontificate, cajole or contemplate as we discuss hot topics in the park. Topics vary from week to week.</td>
<td>Wednesdays 2 p.m.</td>
<td>Sugarlands Visitor Center</td>
<td>1 hour Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Talking Tombstones:</strong> Cemeteries are a wealth of information. Find out what the tombstones have to tell us about communities of the Smokies. Great for families!</td>
<td>Thursdays 2 p.m.</td>
<td>Jakes Creek Trailhead in Elkmont</td>
<td>1 hour Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Let’s Explore the Backcountry:</strong> Do you know what to pack before you make tracks? Do you know how to set up a campsite? Learn what you need to bring, proper food storage, and where the best places are to camp in the Smokies!</td>
<td>Thursdays 3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Elkmont Amphitheater</td>
<td>1 hour Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parks in Focus: Discover, Create and Explore:</strong> Develop a new connection to the uniqueness of the Smokies through the lens of a camera. Bring your own device (35mm, digital camera, phone, ipad, etc.) Limited to 25 participants. Call 865.436.1291 up to 4 days in advance to make reservations.</td>
<td>Fridays 10 a.m.</td>
<td>Sugarlands Valley Nature Trail</td>
<td>1 hour Easy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### SUGARLANDS/ELKMONT/COSBY AREA (CONTINUED)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Duration/Difficulty</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Celebrating Cosby:</strong> Join rangers and community members in celebrating all that Cosby has to offer! Generations will come together in these programs to share the rich cultural history of Cosby. Refer to box call out for specific dates and subject matter varying from bluegrass to Cherokee to archaeology, and more.</td>
<td>Fridays 7 p.m. <strong>some exceptions—see full schedule on facing page</strong></td>
<td>1 hour Easy</td>
<td>Cosby Amphitheater In the event of rain, meet at the Picnic Pavilion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Where are the wildlife?</strong> Scientists use tools to locate and track species throughout the park. Learn more about these tools and ways that you can help map species in the park too!</td>
<td>Saturdays 10 a.m.</td>
<td>1 hour Moderate</td>
<td>Chimneys Picnic Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elkmont Evening Program:</strong> Join a ranger for a National Park Service tradition—the evening campfire program. Topics vary but you’re guaranteed to learn something new about the Smokies!</td>
<td>Times vary—check at Sugarlands VC or Campground Office for times and topics</td>
<td>1 hour Easy</td>
<td>Elkmont Amphitheater</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### METCALF BOTTOMS AREA

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
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<th>Duration/Difficulty</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Junior Ranger: School Days at Little Greenbrier:</strong> Go back in time to discover what it was like to live in a mountain community and go to school in a one-room schoolhouse. Fun for all ages, and great for Junior Rangers. <em>Please arrive 15 minutes before program start. Space is limited.</em></td>
<td>Tuesdays 11 a.m. &amp; 2 p.m.</td>
<td>1 hour Easy</td>
<td>Little Greenbrier Schoolhouse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### CADES COVE AREA (CONTINUED)

**Cades Cove Morning Hayride:** Join park staff for an open-air ride through the Cove, viewing wildlife and discovering the history and diversity of life. Hayrides can fill up quickly. **First-come, first-served. Call Cades Cove Stables at 865.448.9009 or visit cadescovestables.com for cost and other information. Be advised: high winds, rain, storms or special conditions may cause program cancellation.**

- **When:** Fridays 9 a.m.
- **Meeting Location:** Cades Cove Riding Stables
- **Duration/Difficulty:** 2 hours (traffic dependent) Easy

**Junior Ranger: Stream Splashers:** Come roll up your pants and wade through a mountain stream searching for aquatic creatures. Be prepared to get wet. **Closed-toed shoes that can get wet are recommended.** Visitor Center is halfway around the loop road.

- **When:** Fridays 1 p.m.
- **Meeting Location:** Cades Cove Visitor Center
- **Duration:** 45 minutes – 1 hour Easy

**Jr. Ranger: Discovery Hike:** Jr. Rangers are invited for a short woodland walk to discover the plants and animals that share a Smokies home. **Program is geared to young children. Must be accompanied by an adult.** Visitor Center is halfway around the loop road.

- **When:** Fridays 2:30 p.m.
- **Meeting Location:** Cades Cove Visitor Center
- **Duration:** 30 minutes Easy

### OCONALUFTEE AREA

**Mingus Mill Demonstration:** Chat with a miller and feel the rumble of this historic gristmill in action. **Mingus Mill is located a half-mile north of the Oconaluftee Visitor Center on U.S. 441 (Newfound Gap Road).**

- **When:** Daily 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- **Meeting Location:** Mingus Mill
- **Duration/Difficulty:** Ongoing, 8 hours Easy

**Mountain Farm Museum:** 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.

- **When:** Daily Dawn till dusk
- **Meeting Location:** Mountain Farm Museum adjacent to Oconaluftee Visitor Center
- **Duration/Difficulty:** Ongoing, all day Easy

**A Sunday Stroll on the Farm:** Take a leisurely stroll with a ranger to explore Southern Appalachian farm life more than a century ago.

- **When:** Sundays 11 a.m.
- **Meeting Location:** Davis House on Mountain Farm Museum
- **Duration:** 1 hour Easy

**Down on the Farm:** Walk down to the Mountain Farm Museum and see what past-times settlers may have been engaged in, such as gardening, woodworking or other endeavors. Activities vary.

- **When:** Sundays 1 p.m.
- **Meeting Location:** Mountain Farm Museum adjacent to Oconaluftee Visitor Center
- **Duration:** 1 hour Easy

**Junior Ranger: Smokemont Night Hike:** Move beyond the comfortable glow of the campfire and explore the Smokies nightlife. Red flashlights provided for the hike. **Limited to 25 participants. Call 828.497.1904 up to 4 days in advance to make reservations.**

- **When:** Sundays 8:45 p.m.
- **Meeting Location:** Bradley Fork Trail in the Smokemont Campground/ end of D-Loop
- **Duration:** 1 hour Easy

**Hike: When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder:** Hike with a ranger to two cemeteries and learn about end-of-life traditional rituals of early southern Appalachia settlers in the region. Discover how these traditions are similar to your family traditions and surprisingly, may still be used today.

- **When:** Mondays 1 p.m.
- **Meeting Location:** Mingus Mill Parking Area
- **Duration:** 3 hours/Moderate 4-mile round trip with stream crossings on bridges

**Walking the Spine of the Smokies:** Did you know 72 miles of the Appalachian Trail go through Great Smoky Mountains National Park? Join a ranger on a 1.5-mile hike up on the AT. Learn about high elevation life and the history of this iconic footpath. Leisurely hike back to the parking lot on your own after reaching Clingmans Dome Tower. **Sturdy footwear, jacket and water are recommended.**

- **When:** Tuesdays 10 a.m.
- **Meeting Location:** Forney Ridge Trailhead at the base of Clingmans Dome paved trail
- **Duration:** 2 hours Moderate, 1.5 miles 300’ elevation change

**Junior Ranger Walk: ‘Please, pleased, pleased, pleased-to-MEETCHA’:** Or you may hear the call of ‘drink your tea, drink your tea’. Learn the valuable basic skills of bird identification using simple guides so you can be the one to answer “what kind of bird is that?”

- **When:** Wednesdays 10 a.m.
- **Meeting Location:** Oconaluftee River Trailhead
- **Duration:** 1 hour Easy

**Junior Ranger: Eeek! Bats!** 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.

- **When:** Wednesdays 1 p.m.
- **Meeting Location:** Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch
- **Duration:** 45 minutes Easy
**OCONALUFTEE AREA (CONTINUED)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>WHEN?</th>
<th>MEETING LOCATION</th>
<th>DURATION/DIFFICULTY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Ancient Are these Mountains?</td>
<td>Wednesdays 2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch</td>
<td>45 minutes Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mammal Mania!</td>
<td>Thursdays 11 a.m.</td>
<td>Oconaluftee River Trailhead</td>
<td>45 minutes Easy, 1/2-mile walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Ranger: Salamanders!</td>
<td>Thursdays 1 p.m.</td>
<td>Mingus Mill Parking Area</td>
<td>1.5 hours Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Ranger: Blacksmithing:</td>
<td>Fridays 10 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 11 a.m., 11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Mountain Farm Museum Blacksmith Shop</td>
<td>30 minutes Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Ranger: Batteries Not Included:</td>
<td>Fridays 10 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 11 a.m., 11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Mountain Farm Museum/ Davis Queen House</td>
<td>30 minutes Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Did You Say?</td>
<td>Fridays 2 p.m.</td>
<td>Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch</td>
<td>45 minutes Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coming Home:</td>
<td>Fridays 7 p.m.</td>
<td>Smokemont Campground between C and D Loops</td>
<td>1 hour Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Ranger: Stream Splashers:</td>
<td>Saturdays 10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Deep Creek Picnic Area</td>
<td>2 hours Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Great Rangering Skill: Orienteering!</td>
<td>Saturdays 11 a.m.</td>
<td>Oconaluftee Visitor Center/ Under the maple tree</td>
<td>1 hour Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Ranger: How Do I Get There from Here?</td>
<td>Saturdays 1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Oconaluftee Multipurpose Room adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center</td>
<td>1 hour Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Ranger: Explore More!</td>
<td>Saturdays 2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Oconaluftee Visitor Center/ Under the maple tree</td>
<td>1 hour Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening Campground Program—a Ranger Tradition!</td>
<td>Saturdays 7 p.m.</td>
<td>Smokemont Campground between C and D Loops</td>
<td>1 hour Easy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CATALOOCHEE AREA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>WHEN?</th>
<th>MEETING LOCATION</th>
<th>DURATION/DIFFICULTY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Junior Ranger: Smoky Mountain Elk:</td>
<td>Sundays 3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Palmer House in Cataloochee Valley</td>
<td>45 minutes Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return of the Elk:</td>
<td>Tuesdays 7 p.m.</td>
<td>Cataloochee Valley/ Rough Fork Trailhead</td>
<td>1.5 hours Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cataloochee Elk:</td>
<td>Saturdays, June 8, 15, 29, July 6, 20, 27, August 10, 17, 31, Sept. 21, 28 3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Palmer House in Cataloochee Valley</td>
<td>45 minutes Easy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SnapIt & MapIt: Contribute to Park Science with iNaturalist App

Visitors can get the free iNaturalist app for their Android or Apple smart devices and then refer to DLiA’s “Species SnapIt & MapIt Priorities” guide, a list of high-interest species. Within the app, choose More > Guides > All, then search for ‘snaptip.’ Download the guide for use in areas where cell coverage is poor.

Next, take a hike in Great Smoky Mountains National Park and start making observations—including photos—using the app. Thus far, there are around 900 species mapped but nearly 20,000 species known to the park, and the visiting public can make important contributions toward developing maps for these remaining species through this ‘SnapIt & MapIt’ initiative. Learn more at dlia.org/snapit-mapit/.

Download the free iNaturalist app to identify species as you explore the park and contribute to DLiA’s SnapIt & MapIt initiative. Image by Valerie Polk
Test your detective skills! Here are a few things you might see while visiting the Smokies. Each time you see one as you go through the park, put an X in its square until you get four in a row. For extra challenge, see if you can find all 16.

For more fun stuff about Great Smoky Mountains National Park, pick up a copy of 10 Things I Like About You coloring book at any of the visitor centers in the park.
For more information, go to nps.gov/grsm

Information
General park info: 865.436.1200 • nps.gov/grsm
Backcountry information: 865.436.1297
smokiespermits.nps.gov
To order maps and guides: 865.436.7318 x226
SmokiesInformation.org

Emergencies
For emergencies 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

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

Avoid the fine
Picking or digging plants is prohibited in the park. Persons feeding wildlife are subject to a $5,000 fine.
Pets are only permitted on the Gatlinburg and Oconaluftee River trails, which allow dogs on a leash.