



SMOKIES GUIDE



INDOOR ACTIVITIES—PLEASE SEE PAGE 2



THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK * WINTER 2014-15



STEVE GREER PHOTO

Beavers and their dams are on the increase in the Great Smokies.

Leave it to Beavers

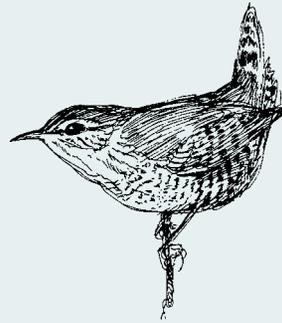
Like elk and otter, beavers were eliminated from the Great Smoky Mountains prior to establishment of the national park in 1934. Unregulated hunting and trapping, as well as agricultural practices, likely led to their demise.

However, during the mid 20th century, agencies in Tennessee and North Carolina reintroduced beavers to rural areas in their states, and in 1966 biologists confirmed that beavers were back in the Smokies for the first time in more than a century.

The beavers' return to the Smoky Mountains began north of Fontana Lake in the remote Eagle Creek watershed. Since then beavers have been documented all around the lower elevations of the park, including Abrams Creek, Greenbrier, the Foothills Parkway, Little River, Ravensford, the Oconaluftee River, and Deep Creek.

Yet even in the park's lowlands, most Smoky Mountain streams offer only marginal beaver habitat. Because of the area's steep gradients and flash floods, beavers can build dams only on the slowest-flowing tributaries. Consequently, many park beavers live in dens dug into river banks rather than the classic lodges in beaver ponds. As long as the streams maintain a steady flow, they can get by without the dam.

Park visitors can see plenty of beaver sign along certain streams, including trees gnawed and fallen by beavers with their famous "buck" teeth. Actually seeing beavers is rare because they are nocturnal. Beavers fall trees for a variety of purposes, but mainly to get at the edible bark. Local trees favored by beavers include tuliptree, river birch, black birch, sycamore, and dogwood.



WINTER WREN

This tiny bird is famous for its long, loud, melodious song. It is a permanent resident in the Smokies that spends summers in the high elevation spruce-fir forest. During the colder months this wren is usually found at elevations below 3,000 feet where it darts about looking for insects in tangles of roots, undercut banks, and brambles.



BILL LEA PHOTO



Newfound Gap Road offers visitors a glimpse of the high country.

Enjoy This Winter in the Mountains Safely

The 33-mile-long Newfound Gap Road (U.S. 441) is the main automobile route through Great Smoky Mountains National Park. It crosses the crest of the Smoky Mountains at Newfound Gap (elevation 5,046') to connect the towns of Gatlinburg, TN and Cherokee, NC. Driving time is typically one hour.

At Newfound Gap, where the road reaches its highest point, temperatures are frequently 10-15° F cooler than in Cherokee or Gatlinburg. In addition, the higher elevations of the park receive considerably more precipitation than the surrounding valleys. Annually, Newfound Gap records over five feet of snow.

This combination of low temperatures and high precipitation results in periods of hazardous driving conditions. For the safety of motorists, the Park Service imposes certain restrictions on winter driving.

Typically, Newfound Gap Road is temporarily closed 15-20 times each winter. The following signs may be posted at both ends of the road informing drivers of current restrictions:

- * Chains or 4WD Required: only vehicles with tire chains or 4WD may proceed.
- * Chains Required: only vehicles with chains on their tires may proceed.
- * Road Closed: the road is closed to all vehicles.

For current conditions call (865) 436-1200 or check Twitter at <http://twitter.com/smokiesroadsnps>.

Winter hikers should be prepared for cold and wet conditions, even if the day starts warm. Always bring rain gear, hat, and gloves. Dress in layers with wool or fleece. Avoid cotton clothing in winter because it loses insulation value when wet.



indoor activities

There are also plenty of indoor options for exploring the national park

When the weather calls for indoor activities, visitors to the Great Smoky Mountains still have a wide range of options for exploring the natural and cultural histories of the national park. Four quality museums with updated exhibits are located either inside the park or within five miles of its entrances. All are open year-round.



Sugarlands Visitor Center & Museum

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BILL LEA, LISA DUFF & JAMES WALKER

Sugarlands Visitor Center and Museum
 Located on U.S. 441 in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 2 miles south of Gatlinburg, TN.
 Open 8-4:30, closed Christmas Day
 Admission: Free
 (865) 436-1291

Highlights include a free 20-minute film shown on the hour and half hour in a state-of-the-art surround sound theater. The film provides an overview of the park's natural and cultural history. Exhibits in the museum area use intricate re-creations to spotlight the Smokies' rich habitats and diverse plant and animal life. There is a well-staffed information desk and a bookstore inside as well. Outside, several short trails lead to natural and historic points of interest.



Great Smoky Mountains Heritage Center

Great Smoky Mountains Heritage Center
 Located on Hwy 73 in Townsend, TN.
 Open 10-5, 12-5 on Sundays
 Admission: \$6 adults, \$4 seniors, \$4 kids 6-17, free for kids 5 and under
 (865) 448-0044

The center is located on six acres and includes both indoor and outdoor exhibits. Subject matter includes east Tennessee American Indian history and the lives of Euro-American settlers from the early 1800s to the establishment of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Highlights are restored historic buildings, re-creations of log cabin interiors, and quilts and other artifacts from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park collection.



Oconaluftee Visitor Center & Museum

Oconaluftee Visitor Center and Museum
 Located on U.S. 441 in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 2 miles north of Cherokee, NC.
 Open 8-4:30, closed Christmas Day
 Admission: Free
 (828) 497-1904

Exhibits include audio recordings of mountain folk, park artifacts, video clips, 3-D maps, historic photographs, and more. There is a well-staffed information desk and a bookstore inside as well. Outside the visitor center over a dozen historic log buildings are preserved on the Mountain Farm Museum. In addition, a walking and bicycling trail follows the river to Cherokee.



Swain County Heritage Museum

Swain County Visitor Center and Heritage Museum
 Located in downtown Bryson City, NC at the corner of Main & Everett Streets.
 Open 9-5, closed Christmas Day
 Admission: Free
 (865) 436-7318 x318

The Heritage Museum covers the dramatic history of Swain County, NC, including the story of Cherokee Indian towns like Kituwaha, European-American settlers eeking a living from the rugged Smoky Mountains, Civil War battles, moonshiners, bear hunters, Fontana Dam, and the creation of the national park. The museum includes interactive exhibits just for kids as well as video presentations, a real log cabin, and many mural-sized photographs and artifacts.

In the visitor center there is information about hiking, rafting, sightseeing, and riding the Smoky Mountain Railroad.

smokies trip planner

to order maps and guides: www.smokiesinformation.org

smokies guide

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

SPRING: March 15

SUMMER: June 1

AUTUMN: September 1

WINTER: December 1

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Campgrounds at Smokemont and Cades Cove are open all 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



Bicycling Cades Cove in winter.

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 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.

For biking in national forests, call (828) 257-4200.

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 closures

The following roads close for the winter. Listed below are the estimated 2015 opening dates. This schedule is subject to change.

Clingmans Dome—April 1
Rich Mountain—April 10
Roaring Fork—May 1
Straight Fork—April 3

special events

December 13, 2014
Festival of Christmas Past:
Sugarlands Visitor Center

December 20, 2014
Holiday Homecoming at
Oconaluftee Visitor Center

April 21-April 25, 2015
Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage: parkwide

April 25, 2015
Music of the Mountains:
Sugarlands Visitor Center

May 6, 2015
Start of bicycle mornings in
Cades Cove

June 20, 2015
Women's Work, Oconaluftee

picnic areas

Picnic areas open year-round are: Cades Cove, Deep Creek, Greenbrier, and Metcalf Bottoms. Please see pages 8-9 for locations.

other services

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

park information

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

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

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 in the high country.



Fishing for brook trout is now allowed in most 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
(1/2 hour)
Clingmans Dome:
25 miles (3/4 hour)
Cataloochee: 39 miles
(1 1/2 hours)
Deep Creek: 14 miles (1/2 hour)

Gatlinburg, TN to:

Cherokee: 34 miles (1 hour)
Cades Cove: 27 miles (1 hour)
Newfound Gap: 16 miles
(1/2 hour)
Clingmans Dome:
23 miles (3/4 hour)
Cataloochee: 65 miles (2 hours)
Greenbrier Cove: 6 miles
(1/4 hour)
Deep Creek:
48 miles (1 1/2 hours)

Townsend, TN to:

Cades Cove: 9 miles (1/3 hour)
Newfound Gap: 34 miles
(1 1/4 hours)
Gatlinburg: 22 miles (3/4 hour)
Cherokee: 52 miles (1 1/2 hours)
Look Rock: 18 miles (1/2 hour)
Cataloochee:
87 miles (2 1/4 hours)



Primitive backcountry shelters are located along the Appalachian Trail and near the summit of Mt. Le Conte. Reservations are required.

winter camping in the backcountry

Winter camping 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 daily from 8-5:00, 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. Make your reservation and obtain your permit 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.

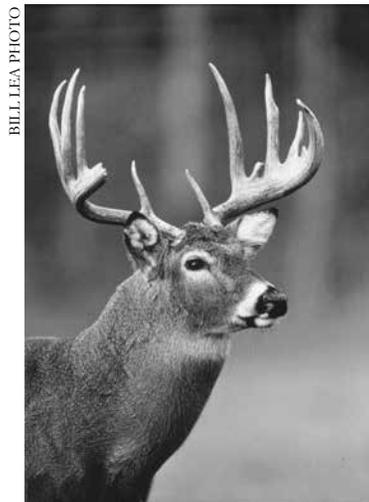
The cost is \$4 per person per night. Reservations may be made up to 30 days in advance.

Winter 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. Stay dry.

places to go

the national park encompasses over 800 square miles



BILLEA PHOTO

caedes cove

highlights: 🏠 historic buildings
🦌 wildlife viewing

Cades Cove is one of the most popular destinations in the Smokies because it offers an unusual blend of both natural and cultural resources.

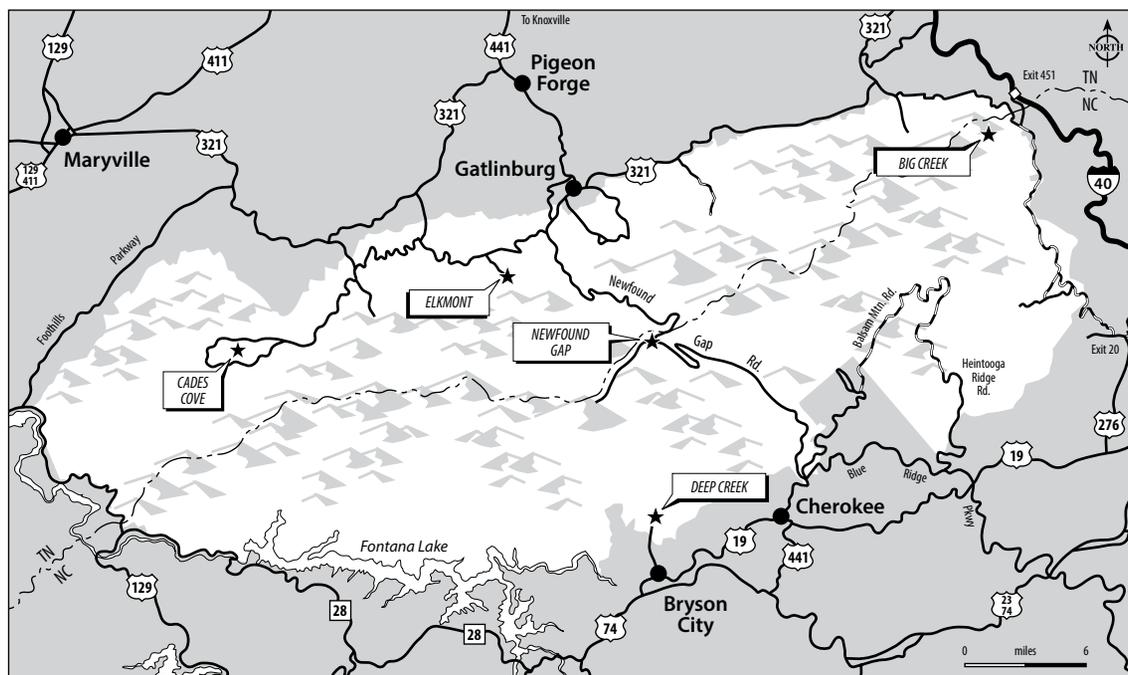
Deer are often sighted in the fields, and their breeding season (or "rut") continues through early winter. Observations of other wildlife, including bear, Wild Turkey, and coyote are also possible. Please use pullouts when viewing wildlife. Never approach or feed animals.

A wide array of historic buildings, some dating back to the mid-19th century, are preserved throughout the cove. These include a grist mill, a variety of barns, three churches, and a renowned collection of log homes.

An 11-mile one-way loop road takes you around the cove. A visitor center (open daily), restrooms, and the Cable Mill walking tour are located halfway around.

Numerous trails start in the cove, including the 5-mile roundtrip trail to Abrams Falls and the 8.5-mile Rich Mountain loop hike.

Mileage from Townsend—9
from Gatlinburg—27



old elkmont town

highlights: 🏠 historic buildings
🥾 walking trails

The Elkmont area was once a logging boomtown and a bustling enclave of summer vacation homes. Today the National Park Service has restored the Appalachian Clubhouse and Spence cabin and stabilized 17 other historic buildings. The site offers visitors a chance to explore an early 20th century Appalachian summer resort.

Elkmont also has a variety of easy-to-moderate hiking trails, including the Cucumber Gap loop (5.5 miles), Elkmont Self-guiding Nature Trail (0.8 mile roundtrip), Jakes Creek Falls (3.2 miles roundtrip), and Huskey Branch Falls (4.3 miles roundtrip). Little River Trail makes a pleasant streamside stroll.

Anglers have long frequented nearby Little River for its excellent trout fishing.

Mileage from Gatlinburg—7
from Townsend—15
from Cherokee—39

deep creek

highlights: 🥾 walking trails
🚲 mountain biking

The Deep Creek area is an off-the-beaten-path destination in the Great Smoky Mountains, celebrated for its rushing streams and waterfalls. Hikers enjoy the area because of the waterfalls and because there are several loop hikes to choose from. Mountain bikers can take advantage of one of the few park trails where bicycles are permitted.

Deep Creek area loop hikes include Juney Whank Falls (0.6 mile), Three Waterfalls Loop (2.4 miles), and Deep Creek-Indian Creek Loop (4.4 miles). Longer loop hikes are also possible.

Bicycles are allowed on Deep Creek and Indian Creek trails to the points where the old roadbeds end and the trail treads begin.

Deep Creek Picnic Area is open year-round. The picnic pavilion can be reserved at www.recreation.gov

Mileage from Cherokee—14
from Gatlinburg—48
from Townsend—65

big creek

highlights: 🥾 walking trails

Big Creek is one of the few areas in the Smokies that is relatively accessible via interstate highway. From I-40 between Asheville and Knoxville, take Exit 451, cross the Pigeon River on the bridge, turn left and follow the road two miles into the national park. Although the picnic area and campground are closed in winter, three excellent hiking trails originate from here.

Big Creek Trail starts from near the campground and offers a scenic 4-mile roundtrip hike along the creek to Mouse Creek Falls. Chestnut Branch Trail leads 2.1 steep miles up from the ranger station to the Appalachian Trail. From there it's another 3.8 miles to Mt. Cammerer fire tower and its famous views. Baxter Creek Trail starts from the picnic area and leads 6.1 strenuous miles (over 4,000' of elevation gain) to Mt. Sterling fire tower and its wonderful views.

Mileage from Gatlinburg—29
from Cherokee—62
from Townsend—50



NPS PHOTO

newfound gap

highlights: 🏔️ mountain views
❄️ snow?

In southern Appalachian vernacular, a gap is a low point in a mountain ridge. New Englanders call such places "notches" while westerners refer to them as mountain "passes."

At nearly a mile high (5,046'), Newfound Gap is significantly cooler than the surrounding lowlands and receives much more snow. On average, 69 inches of snow falls at the gap each year.

When there is snow on the ground, and Newfound Gap Road has not been closed because of it, opportunities do exist for snow sports in the area. Many people use Clingmans Dome Road (closed to vehicles in winter) for walking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. The road starts 0.1 mile south of Newfound Gap.

A trip to Newfound Gap is a trip to the Canadian zone spruce-fir forest. This fragrant evergreen woodland is similar to the boreal forests of New England and eastern Canada.

Mileage from Gatlinburg—16
from Cherokee—18
from Townsend—34

national park news

elevations in the park range from 850 to 6,643 feet

National Park Service News Briefs

Chimney Tops Trail Rehab to be Complete in December 2014



THREE CHEERS FOR THE TRAILS FOREVER crew that is slated to finish work on a total rehabilitation of the very popular Chimney Tops Trail in mid-December, 2014. This heavily used two-mile long trail was badly eroded and dangerous in many spots. The special Trails Forever crew is funded by an endowment administered by Friends of the Smokies.

Follow the Smokies on Facebook & Twitter

KEEP UP WITH ALL THE PARK NEWS on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GreatSmokyMountainsNPS>. Connect with us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/GreatSmokyNPS.

National Park Service Preparing for Centennial Celebration in 2016

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE was created in 1916 to protect places like Yellowstone and Mesa Verde from being ransacked by wildlife poachers and antiquities collectors. Prior to this date, our parks and monuments were overseen by the U.S. Cavalry or no one at all. Today the NPS is charged with protecting over 400 parks, historic sites, seashores, battlefields, and recreation areas, our nation's most valuable treasures.

Starting in 2015, the NPS will begin celebrating the centennial in the Smokies and across the country. Visit www.nps.gov to track the many activities and events related to this momentous occasion.

Your Cell Phone May Not Work Here

BECAUSE OF THE MOUNTAINOUS terrain and lack of local cell phone towers, your cell phone will likely not find service in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Don't rely solely on your cell phone for navigating or emergencies when hiking in the park. Make sure to bring a map and compass and let someone know where you are going and when you expect to be back.

Park Proposes Firewood Regulation to Protect Forests from Alien Pests



BILL LEA PHOTO

Certified firewood that is heat treated does not harbor insect eggs or beetle larvae that can emerge and devastate the park's forests.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park officials are proposing a new regulation to help protect forests by limiting the type of firewood brought into the park by campers. Non-native, tree-killing insects and diseases such as the emerald ash borer and Asian long-horned beetle often lay eggs and stowaway in dead wood and then disperse to wreak havoc in the forest.

Non-native pests have already wiped out most of the Fraser fir and eastern hemlock trees in the park, and the latest exotics could cause even more widespread carnage.

The Park Service proposes to reduce this eminent threat by changing regulations to allow only heat-treated wood to be brought into the park for campfires. If the proposal is adopted, beginning in March 2015, it would ban the importation of firewood that is not bundled and certified by the USDA or a state agency.

Heat-treated wood will be available to purchase from

concessioners in many of the campgrounds as well as from private businesses outside the park. In addition, visitors may still collect dead and down wood in the park for their campfires.

"We are asking visitors to help us protect park forests by ensuring they are using heat-treated firewood," said Interim Superintendent Clay Jordan. "The Smokies have already lost magnificent stands of chestnut, Fraser fir, and hemlock. We need to do all we can to protect the park from further threats."

The latest wave of non-native insects from Asia and Europe has the potential to devastate over 30 species of hardwood trees native to the park. Transportation of firewood has been implicated in the spread of gypsy moth, Dutch elm disease, emerald ash borer, thousand canker disease, Asian longhorned beetle, Sirex woodwasp, golden spotted oak borer, and other disease complexes.

Numerous federal and

state agencies, conservation organizations, and universities are joining forces to develop a national strategy to mitigate the risks associated with transporting firewood, including a public education campaign. 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 Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Current park regulations prohibit the importation of wood and wood products from states (or specific counties in states) quarantined for insects such as emerald ash borer or tree diseases such as thousand canker disease.

Although the proposed regulation prohibiting the importation of non-certified wood would not take effect until 2015, the park is asking visitors to make the switch to safe firewood now. Heat-treated wood is available from an increasing number of businesses outside the park and staff are working with concessioners within the park to use low-risk wood sources until they are able to make the transition.

A final decision on adopting the new regulation is expected in the coming months. Those wishing to comment may contact: by mail, 107 Park Headquarters Road, Gatlinburg, TN 37738; by e-mail at grsmcomments@nps.gov; or with comment cards available at visitor centers and campgrounds in the national park.

behind the scenery

The park is a sanctuary for over 18,000 species of plants and animals

Park Closes Limestone Cave Area to Protect Bats Threatened by White-nose Syndrome

As a result of the discovery of bats with white-nose syndrome (WNS) in local caves, Great Smoky Mountains National Park officials have announced the closure of the Whiteoak Sink area through March 31, 2015. The closure will limit human disturbance to bat hibernation sites and reduce the risk of hikers being bitten by bats.

Although white-nose syndrome is not a threat to humans, park bats do also carry rabies, a deadly disease that can be transmitted to humans through skin-to-skin contact, scratches, or bites.

Park biologists will be monitoring the area throughout the winter, collecting data on population, ecology, and bat behavior that will inform rangers who are developing a long-term protection plan. An extended closure through late spring may be recommended if the winter data suggests such an action would help bats survive and protect people from rabies.

The Whiteoak Sink area is an unusual habitat in the park in that its geology is primarily limestone and it is home to several caves (which are closed to the public). Most of the rest of the park is sandstone and there are few caves where bats can hibernate.

The area is usually accessed from the Schoolhouse Gap Trail between Townsend and Cades Cove. This closure includes the area bounded by Schoolhouse Gap Trail and Turkeypen Ridge Trail west to the park boundary. The Schoolhouse Gap and Turkeypen Ridge trails will remain open, however.

Park biologists have reported dramatic declines of cave-dwelling bat populations throughout the park. The decline is thought to be

due to WNS. Infected bats are marked by a white fungal growth on their noses, wings, and tails. The fungus damages skin tissue causing the bats to wake from hibernation during winter months. Once aroused, the bats burn energy at a much faster rate, depleting stored fat. With few insects available for food during winter, the bats soon starve.

Bats infected with WNS exhibit unusual behavior including flying erratically during the day, even during winter months, and diving toward people. They may be seen flopping on the ground near cave openings.

"We first confirmed the presence of WNS in the park in 2010," said Park Wildlife Biologist Bill Stiver. "The impact has been devastating. We estimate that some of our cave-dwelling bat populations have already declined by 80% and we are doing everything we can to both slow the spread of the disease and protect the remaining animals by closing caves and areas near caves to the public."

The park is home to 12 species of bats including the federally endangered Indiana bat and the Rafinesque's big-eared bat which is a state-listed species of concern in both Tennessee and North Carolina. Bats play a significant role in maintaining ecological balance as predators of night-flying insects. Biologists estimate that an individual bat can eat between 3,000 to 6,000 insects each night including moths, beetles, and mosquitoes.

In an effort to prevent the unintentional spread of WNS by people, the park closed all of its 16 caves and two mine complexes to public entry in 2009.

A recent plan released by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service identified caves found in Whiteoak Sink as one of only 13 sites across the country declared as critical habitat for this endangered bat. Wildlife biologists have determined that giving the bats the chance to survive includes establishing protective zones surrounding critical habitat caves.



NPS PHOTO

Most park bats are barely hanging on for survival. The closure should boost their chances.



BILL LEA PHOTO

Elk are most commonly seen in Cataloochee Valley and near Oconaluftee Visitor Center. Park biologists estimate that at least 150 live in the park area now.

At Least 24 Elk Calves Born Here in 2014

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 as a result of collisions with motor vehicles this 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 at least 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

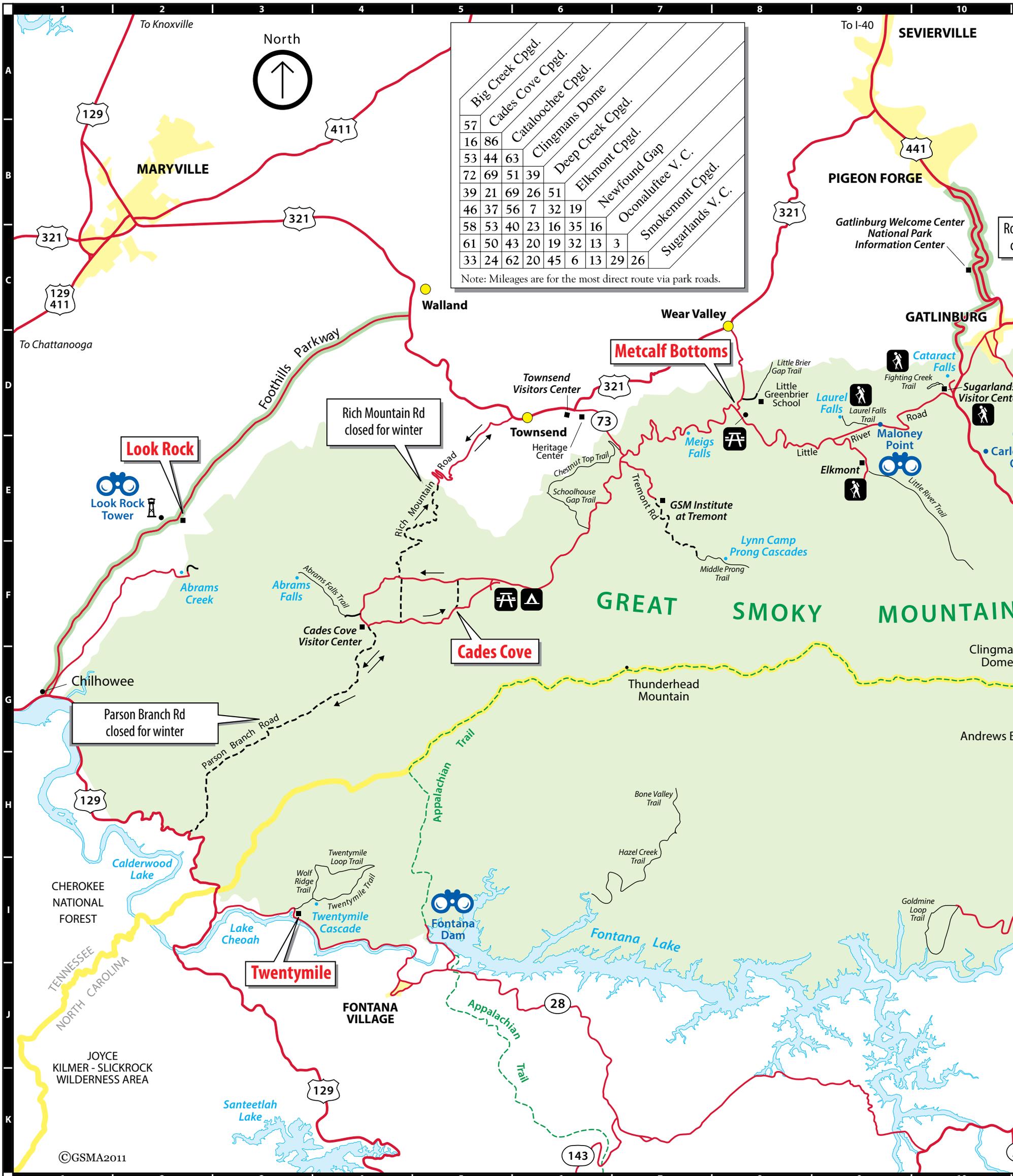
Cashiers, NC, Newport, TN, and Greenbrier.

During the fall, 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.

According to fire operations supervisor Shane Paxton, the burns should eventually increase "the cover and diversity of native grasses and wildflowers. Over time, this increase in herbaceous vegetation will 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. Also, during winter, the narrow, winding, gravel roads to Cataloochee may be dangerous to travel and temporarily closed.

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







Many nature lovers are surprised to learn just how good winter birding can be in the Great Smoky Mountains. Because deciduous trees have lost their leaves, seeing and identifying birds is much easier in winter. Smokies winters include many mild, sunny days that can be more pleasant for outdoor enthusiasts than sultry summer ones.

Winter birders have a chance to see at least 65 species here. These include year-round residents such as Wild Turkey and Pileated Woodpecker along with a few northern birds that migrate south to the Smokies for winter (Yellow-rumped Warbler, White-throated Sparrow, Pine Siskin, and more).

Hot Spots for Winter Birding

- **Cades Cove Loop Road.** This 11-mile loop road offers opportunities to see Wild Turkey, Water Pipit, Eastern Bluebird, hawks, owls, and a variety of other birds. Be sure to drive up and down the gravel side roads which cut across the cove (Sparks & Hyatt lanes).
- **Sugarlands Visitor Center.** Located two miles south of Gatlinburg on Newfound Gap Road (U.S. 441). Exhibits in the visitor center highlight native birds as well as other park fauna and flora. Outside, a variety of short trails and open areas offer excellent opportunities for birding.
- **Oconaluftee Mountain Farm Museum.** Located two miles north of Cherokee on Newfound Gap Road (U.S.

441). Open fields and the 1.6 mile Oconaluftee River Trail offer excellent opportunities for birding. (Elk are also common here.)

Winter Birds

- **White-throated Sparrow** You may hear this bird's familiar "poor-sam-pea-body-peabody-peabody" song during late fall and early spring. White-throated Sparrows summer in Canada and migrate to the Smokies for winter. It is a common species at the park's lower elevations.
- **Common Raven** Ravens spend the summer months at the higher elevations of the Smokies, but dip down to the lowlands in winter. They are much larger than American Crows and soar longer through the air than their little cousins.

Ravens make an interesting variety of sounds, including "cronk-cronk-cronk" and a metallic "knock."

- **Winter Wren** Though not much longer than your thumb, this bird has a voice like an opera singer. It is one of the few species that occasionally sings during winter. Winter Wrens summer in the park's high elevation spruce-fir forest but usually migrate vertically in winter to elevations less than 3,000 feet.
- **Wild Turkey** During the early years of the 20th century, the Wild Turkey had nearly vanished from the East and Midwest due to market hunting and deforestation. Today it is commonly seen in Cades Cove, Cataloochee, and the Sugarlands area. Male gobblers are nearly 4' long

Winter Bird Counts

Park Naturalist Arthur Stupka and the East Tennessee Ornithological Society started the annual winter bird count in Great Smoky Mountains National Park in 1935, just a year after the park was officially established. The tradition has continued every year since, with dedicated birders braving cold, rain, snow, and closed roads to see how many birds they can identify between dawn and dusk on a late December day. **Some protocols have changed over the years, but the chart below gives an indication of trends over seven decades. It is interesting to note that when the first count was held in 1935, not a single Wild Turkey was sighted, a species that is now common (see description at left).

Year	Bird Species	# Individual Birds	Bird Watchers
1935	39	1,512	2
1937**	47	3,165	23
1940	42	1,667	28
1945	56	1,442	27
1950	59	1,895	34
1955	56	3,040	27
1960	63	2,893	33
1965	71	12,096	33
1970	58	5,011	53
1975	62	6,424	44
1980	62	2,528	31
1985	64	4,003	30
1990	55	1,139	12
1995	51	1,996	18
2000	61	1,640	7
2005	53	1,165	19
2010	51	1,322	15
2012	54	1,024	13

head to tail and weigh more than 16 pounds.

- **Evening Grosbeak** This big, brightly colored bird is a permanent resident of southern Canada some years, but migrates south to the Smokies during others. Birders have not seen grosbeaks in the Smokies for several years, so if you do spot one, or other uncommon park bird, email us at:

grsm_smokies_information@nps.gov.

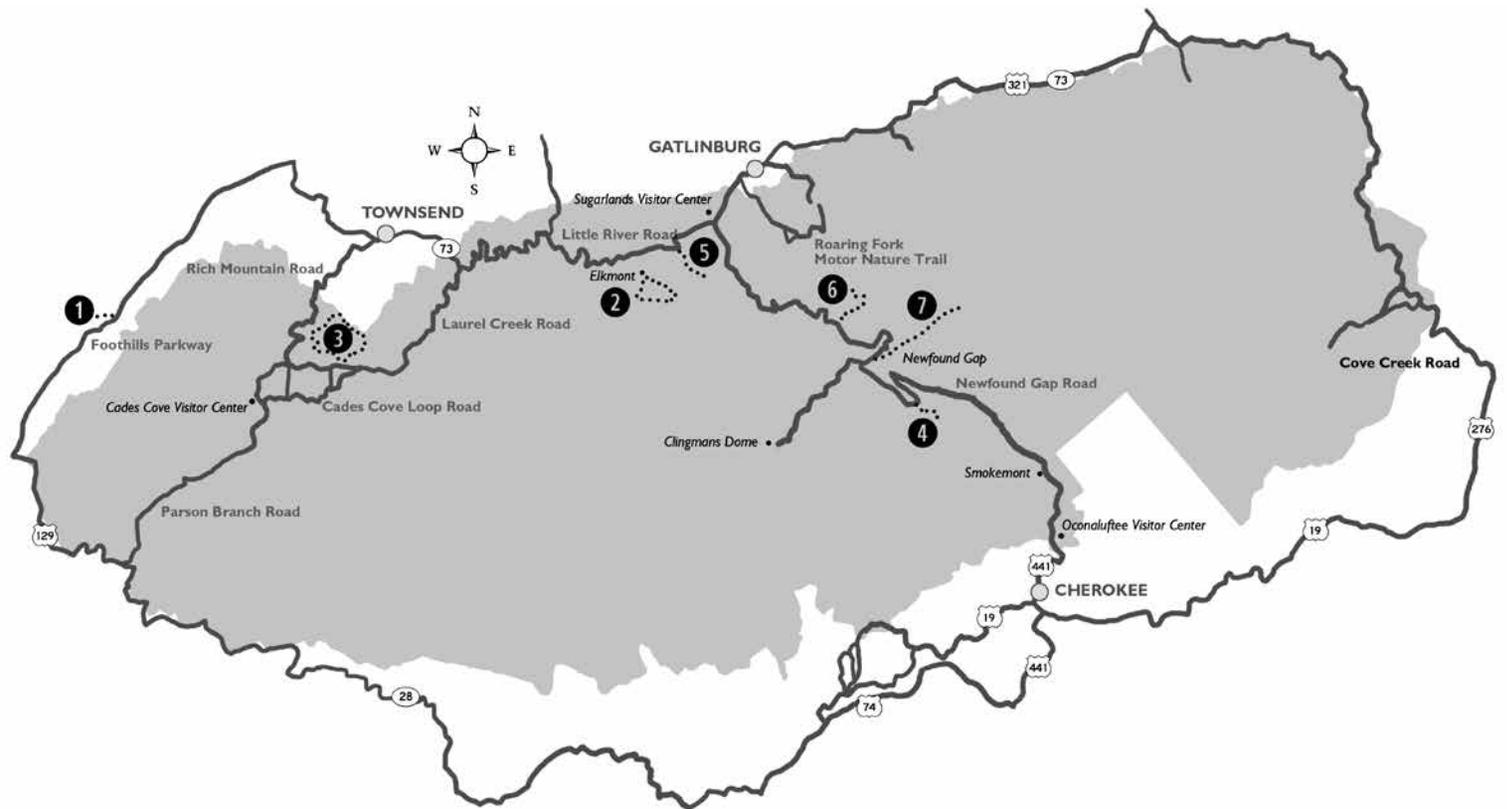
- **Pileated Woodpecker** This huge woodpecker is hard to miss. It stands over 16" tall and sports a bright red crest. Its cackling call is loud and unmistakable. Pileated Woodpeckers are common in rich forests below elevations of 4,000' where they chisel into trees in search of shelter and food (ants and other insects).



hikes with views

suggested day hikes in the Smokies with wintertime views

Just about any trail in Great Smoky Mountains National Park offers pretty good views in winter. After all, most of the park is covered with dense deciduous forest, and when the trees drop their leaves, an expansive world of ridges, valleys, and old settlements is revealed. Here are some of the better day hikes in the Smokies with good to excellent winter views.



EASIER

1 Look Rock Tower

The half-mile paved trail to Look Rock observation tower is located off the Foothills Parkway West between Walland and Chilhowee Lake. The tower offers excellent views of the Smokies and Tennessee Valley.

2 Cucumber Gap Loop

A 5.5 mile loop hike starting from Little River trailhead near Elkmont Campground. The loop includes portions of Little River, Cucumber Gap, and Jakes Creek trails. There is one small creek crossing that can be challenging during high water.

MODERATE

3 Rich Mountain Loop

An 8.5 mile loop hike starting at the entrance to Cades Cove Loop Road. Follow Rich Mountain Loop Trail to Indian Grave Gap Trail and on to Crooked Arm Ridge Trail. Excellent views of Cades Cove.

4 Thomas Divide

The trail starts 3 miles south of Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road in a large parking area. Follow the trail out and back to the junction with Kanati Fork Trail for good views of the North Carolina Smokies. 3.6 miles roundtrip.

STRENUOUS

6 Alum Cave

The 2.3 mile hike to Inspiration Point and Alum Cave Bluff offers good views of the West Prong river valley. Start this trail at one of the large parking areas 6.8 miles south of Sugarlands Visitor Center on Newfound Gap Road.

5 Sugarland Mountain

Start this trail from Little River Road 4 miles west of Sugarlands Visitor Center. Parking is the same as for Laurel Falls Trail trailhead. Follow the Sugarland Mountain Trail out and back to the junction with Huskey Gap Trail for good views of Mt. Le Conte and The Sugarlands. 6.2 miles roundtrip.

7 Charlies Bunion

Follow the Appalachian Trail 4.0 miles north from Newfound Gap parking area to this famous rock outcrop. During cold weather this trail will be very icy and dangerous. Ice cleats may be required.



JIM THOMPSON PHOTO

Dress for Winter Success

Winter weather is extremely variable in the Smokies. Days may be sunny and 70° F or well below 0° F (in the high country) with howling winds. In case you haven't recently needed to dress for chilly winter weather, here are some tips.

1. **Avoid wearing cotton, especially next to your skin** (e.g. T-shirts, sweatshirts, socks). When cotton becomes wet from precipitation or perspiration it will not keep you warm.
2. **Dress in layers.** Avoid getting too warm or cold by wearing several light layers of clothing that can be easily removed or added. Materials such as wool, polypropylene or "fleece" are excellent for layering because they provide warmth even when damp.
3. **Wear a hat, gloves, and warm socks.**
4. **Always carry good rain gear.** Getting wet can quickly lead to hypothermia. Rain gear also makes a good windbreaker.

Winter Hiking Safety

In addition to proper clothing, hikers should always bring **water, a map, snacks, a flashlight, and matches**. Keep in mind that cell phones often do not work in the park because of terrain and lack of towers. Always let someone responsible know where you plan to go and when you plan to return.

wintering

How did families on mountain farms cope with the dark, damp, and cold days of winter?



In the days before television, movies, the internet, iPods, video games, Facebook, instagram, smart phones, tablets, and YouTube, people could still make their own music for entertainment.

Cabin Fever

The homes of 19th century farm families were usually small, while the families themselves were often large. The typical log home was 18' x 20' (360 square feet) plus, perhaps, a sleeping loft. Families were frequently multi-generational, including a grandparent and five to 12 kids.

During periods of cold, snowy, or rainy weather, families were forced to spend most of the day indoors. Dorie Woodruff Cope, who spent her childhood and young adulthood in the Smokies, described winter this way:

“So we waited. Snow came two or three times a week to add inches to the blanket already on the ground. Silence hung over the mountains like a misty fog... Wind whistled around the corners of the cabin and down the chimney, causing the fire to reach out of the fireplace and fill the room with ashes. Ma kept beans and meat boiling in a kettle.”

Most, but not all cabins, had a few windows for light.



Kids really did walk miles to school when school was in session. And sometimes it was snowing and sometimes they were barefoot.

Light sources other than the fireplace or open door included burning pine knots, homemade candles, saucers of oil with wicks, and kerosene lamps.

Making Music

Mountain folk knew lots of songs and enjoyed singing ballads at home during winter, often solo and unaccompanied by musical instruments. Many of

the ballads were from the British Isles and were about love or death, or religious faith. Ballads told stories and sometimes included lessons on life. Examples are “The Drunkard’s Last Drink,” “Barbara Allen,” “Pretty Pollie,” “Geordie,” “Young Hunting,” and “Bold Soldier.”

The most common types of musical instruments were fiddles and banjos and later on, guitars.

Lessons Learned

Winter days were often school days in the Great Smoky Mountains of the mid-1800s. Winter was when children were needed the least on the farm, so it was the logical time to hit the books.

In the early days, the school year lasted only 2-4 months. Parents paid about \$1 per student per month to get their children educated. The money (or produce in lieu of cash) went to a teacher who often boarded with a local family.

Most students completed only 3-5 years of schooling, enough to learn to read and write and perform basic mathematics. By the early 20th century, however, Smoky Mountain schools and school years more closely resembled today’s.

Two country schools are preserved in the national park, Little Greenbrier (near Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area) and Beech Grove in Cataloochee Valley.

Making Moonshine

Making corn whiskey or “moonshine” was a fairly common way of earning cash for “store bought” goods in the mountains. Homemade whiskey and brandy were perfectly legal during most of the 1880s. Later it became a way to dodge liquor taxes, and, from 1920-1933, Prohibition made moonshining very risky and very profitable.

According to one source, Prohibition-era moonshiners earned up to \$20 per gallon, but getting caught often resulted in a year or more in the penitentiary. Following repeal, prices dropped to around \$2 per gallon.

Whether moonshining was more prevalent in the Southern mountains than elsewhere in the country is a matter of debate. However, Cocke County, at the eastern end of the Smoky Mountains, was frequently championed as the “Moonshine Capital of America.” Stills as large as 500

gallons were confiscated by rangers on park property near Cosby. They were often concealed in rhododendron thickets or partially buried in the ground.

Tapping Maple Syrup

Sugarland Mountain, Sugar Orchard Branch, Maple Sugar Gap, The Sugarlands, and other park places were all named for sugar maple trees and the sweet sap they relinquish for the making of maple syrup and sugar.

Tapping sugar maples was once a fairly common enterprise in the Smokies and elsewhere in the Southern Highlands. Native Americans used maple sap and sugar to season meats and grains and to make candy and beverages. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, mountain farm families maintained areas in the forest they called “sugar camps” or “sugar bushes” for the production of syrup and sugar.

These operations might include several dozen sugar maples that had been grooved and tapped to produce sap. They would run wooden troughs from the trees to central buckets or barrels for efficient collection. Family members then carried the sap in buckets to a shed which housed a stone furnace and large metal evaporator pan.

One good-sized tree could produce about 20 gallons of sap per year or about 3/4 gallon of maple syrup.

Many Smoky Mountain residents described the best time to tap maples as “after the first snow of spring” and when the strong, warm late winter/early spring winds roar down from the mountains. The tapping season could last from two to eight weeks.

Maple syrup and sugar were commodities that farm families could consume themselves or trade at a country store for cash or merchandise. Stores were good places to obtain salt, coffee, tobacco, nails, and cloth.

people behind the places

smoky mountain summits were named in their honor

A Landmark Friendship: Mt. Kephart, Masa Knob, and Charlie (Conner's) Bunion

If you have ever hiked from Newfound Gap to Charlies Bunion on the Appalachian Trail, you have not only trod upon some of the most scenic geography in the Great Smoky Mountains, you have also traced the history of some of the most influential and entertaining players in the creation of our national park.

Mount Kephart (6,217') was named for Horace Kephart, a writer, scholar, outdoorsman,



George Masa photo of Horace Kephart high in the Great Smoky Mountains.

family. Life in the Smokies suited Kephart well, however. His 27 years here were prolific, resulting in the completion of such classic works as *Our Southern Highlanders*, *Camping and Woodcraft*, and *Sporting Firearms* as well as dozens of magazine articles in outdoor magazines, a novel titled *Smoky Mountain Magic*, and contributions to many other works and projects.

Proving once again that the



George Masa with some of his cameras.

American with an unquenchable love for the Southern mountains. Masa lugged a massive view camera into the rugged wilderness so he could capture images that would accompany Kephart's articles promoting park establishment. In acknowledgement of his successful efforts, Masa Knob (5,685'), the promontory adjacent to Charlies Bunion, was dedicated in 1961.

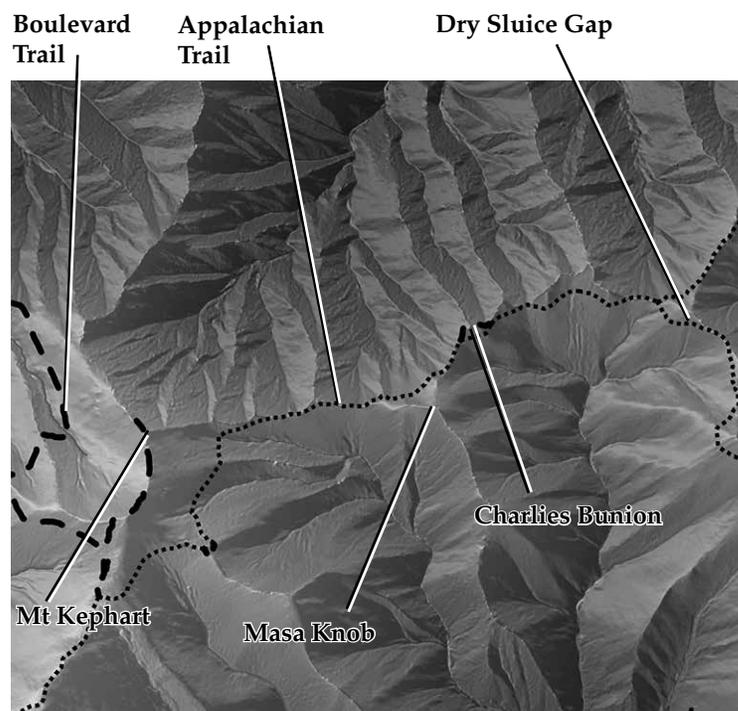
Sadly, neither Kephart nor Masa lived long enough to see the park officially established in 1934. However, both knew the creation was imminent after the 1926 legislation had passed.

Yet another storied landmark stands near those of Masa and Kephart, Charlies Bunion. The scenic promontory, just off the Appalachian Trail, was named for the foot of famed guide and mountaineer, Charlie Conner. Kephart, Masa, and Conner were on a reconnaissance trip in 1929, scouting the impacts of a massive landslide, when they noted the rocky point. According to legend, it was the writer Kephart who proposed that the site be named in honor of their companion's podiatry problem.

pen is mightier than the sword, Kephart wrote articles and a barrage of letters advocating that the Smokies be protected as a national park. In 1925, his letter to the *Asheville Citizen* bemoans the havoc wreaked by unfettered logging operations: "When I first came to the Smokies, the whole region was one of superb forest primeval....Not long ago I went to that same place again. It was wrecked, ruined, desecrated, turned into a thousand rubbish heaps, utterly vile and mean."

One year later Congress authorized the states of Tennessee and North Carolina to begin acquiring land for the park.

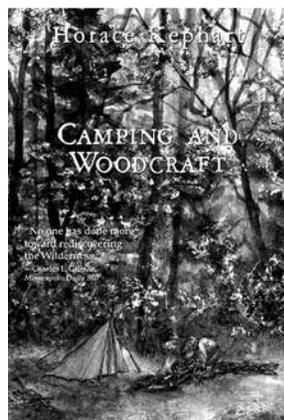
Joining Kephart in his crusade was fellow hiker and esteemed photographer George Masa. Sometimes called "the Ansel Adams of the East," Masa was a 5' 2" Japanese-



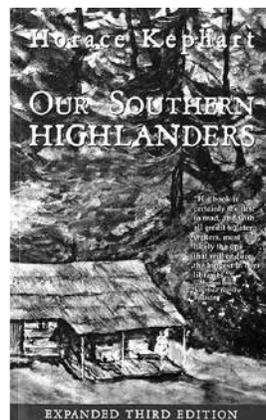
The three promontories are named for three friends who hiked together and played roles in the creation of the national park.



George Masa was known for his photographs of clouds, as in this example of Mt. Kephart and Clingmans Dome.



Camping and Woodcraft and *Our Southern Highlanders* are still in print after 98 and 101 years, respectively.



Aerial view of Charlies Bunion, Mt. Black, Mt. Guyot and Laurel Top prior to park establishment.

if you love the smokies...

help protect and preserve a true American masterpiece

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 million in assistance that includes saving hemlock trees, living history demonstrations, environmental education programs, backcountry staff, 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*
- Exclusive digital access to the award-winning quarterly park newspaper, *Smokies Guide*, the association's newsletter, *The Bearpaw*, and many other members-only features
- A 15-25% 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. GSMA memberships start at just \$35 per year.

JOHN DICKSON 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 gate to support the park partner programs on this page.

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

gsmit 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.gsmit.org

summer camps

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

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

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

GSMA MEMBERS

Stay in Touch with the Smokies All Year Long!

- Individual Annual Membership \$35
- Annual Supporting Membership \$50
**covers 2 persons per household*
- Lifetime Membership \$500
payable in 4 installments
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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 pro-



viding volunteers for park projects.

Since 1993, Friends has raised over \$35 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.

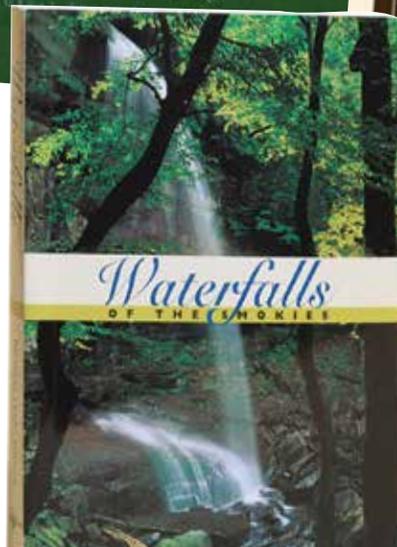
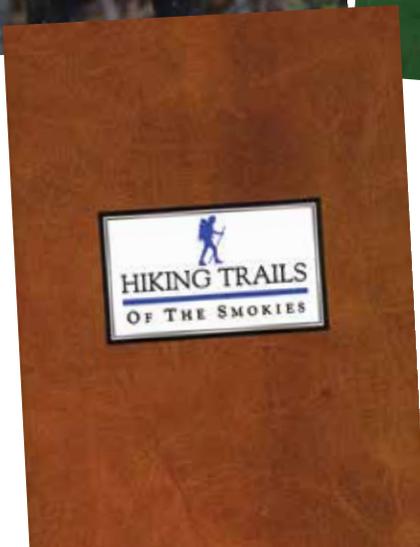
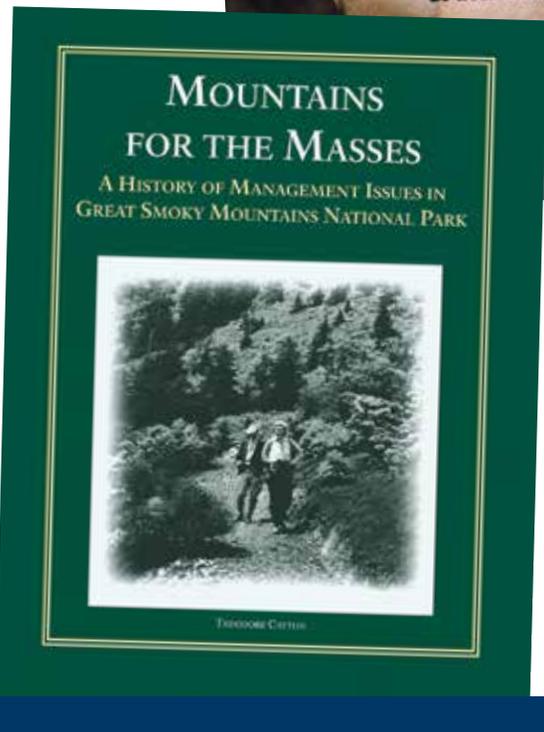
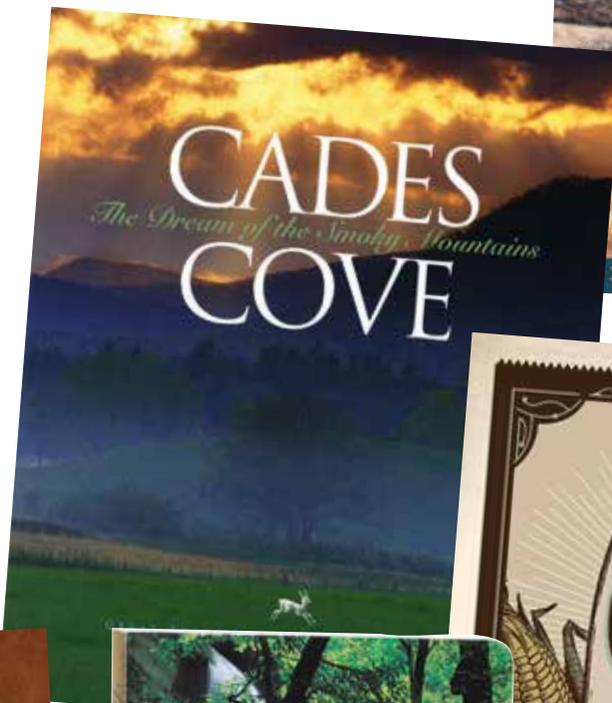
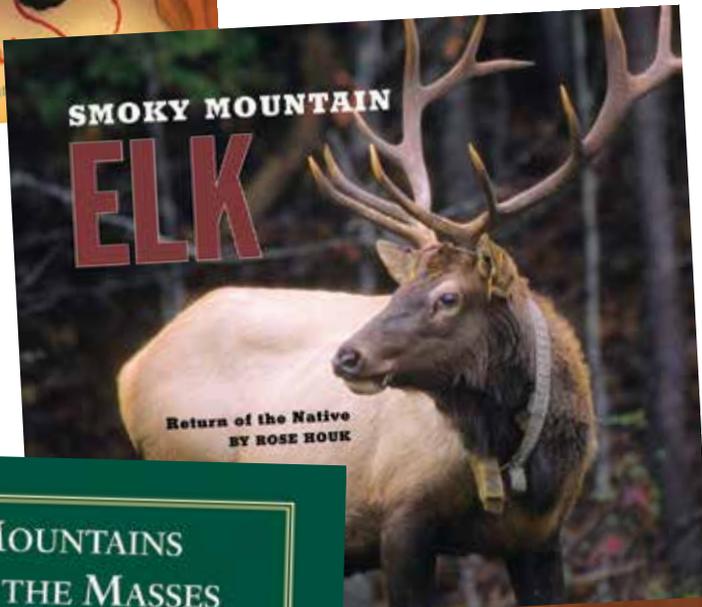
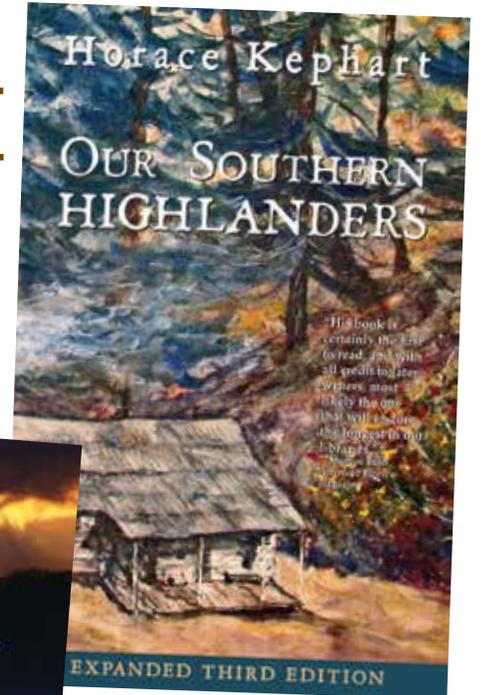
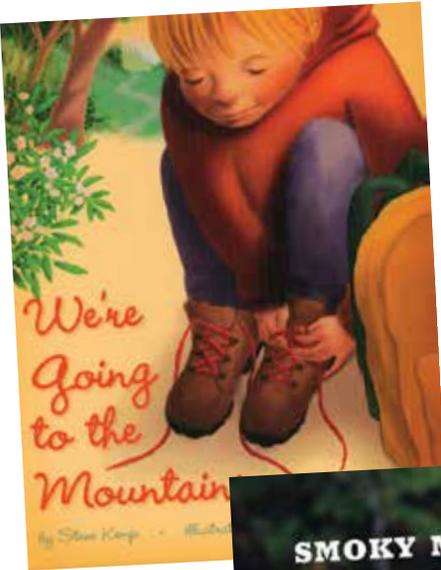
Your donation can help make these projects a reality. Put a few coins or a few dollars in one of the donation boxes located at visitor centers, roadsides, and other locations around the park. Buy the Smokies license plate for your car (available in Tennessee and North Carolina).

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



Great Smoky Mountains Association is a private, nonprofit organization that supports programs of education, historic preservation, and scientific research in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Since 1953 GSMA has provided over \$30 million worth of help.



All profits from the sales of merchandise in park stores and on our website support the park.

www.SmokiesInformation.org (865) 436-7318 x226.

winter travels

for more information: www.nps.gov/grsm

441 snow routes

For periods when Newfound Gap Road (U.S. 441) is closed because of snow, alternate routes around the Smokies are shown below. Commercial traffic must use "Primary" routes. "Secondary" routes are shorter but the roads are more winding.

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, 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.

