



SMOKIES GUIDE



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THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK ◉ AUTUMN 2017



BILL LEA PHOTO

Approximately 200 elk now live in the vicinity of the national park.

The Fall “Rut” Is On!

This autumn, Smoky Mountain elk will be players in a courtship ritual that is one of the great spectacles of the North American animal kingdom. Mature male (bull) elk will compete for control of groups of females called “harems.”

Most of the time, the competition between males will be pure showmanship—prancing, bugling, grunting, and other noncontact methods of intimidation. At times, however, the contests may turn deadly serious with bulls using their sharp antlers to attack other males.

Bugling is one of the most widely-recognized parts of courtship (called the rut). Bulls toss back their heads and utter a long, loud, sonorous call that can be heard for as much as a mile away. Bugling is a way for bull elk to assert their dominance against rival males as larger bulls usually have deeper, louder calls. The best place to see elk during the rut is Cataloochee Valley or in the vicinity of Oconaluftee Visitor Center. The elk rut begins in September

and peaks in early October. Most fields frequented by elk will be closed to the public during the rut, but visitors may observe from pull-offs or other designated areas. Approaching elk or bear closer than 50 yards is strictly prohibited.

Male white-tailed deer (bucks) also have some dramatic courtship rituals. They generally stop eating during the rut and will chase or lock antlers with other bucks to determine dominance. Males may also be observed chasing females and making bleating sounds.

The white-tailed deer rut lasts from October into January with a peak around Thanksgiving. Cades Cove is probably the best place in the park to watch deer. The 11-mile Cades Cove Loop Road is open from sunrise to sunset throughout the year.

Both deer and elk are especially unpredictable in fall. People should never approach or attempt to feed them. Use binoculars and cameras with telephoto lenses to observe their activities.



BLACK BEARS

During fall, bears depend heavily on acorns, hickory nuts, and other types of hard “mast” to gain weight for winter. If the trees provide plentiful mast, bears will not need to wander far and wide in search of food and females will give birth to 1-3 tiny bear cubs over the winter. If the mast crop is poor, bears will be crossing roads and searching for food in developed areas more frequently. Be alert!



VERNON LIX PHOTO



Construction of the Clingmans Dome tower was completed in 1960.

Major Grant Funds Tower Rehabilitation

Thanks to a \$250,000 grant from Partners in Preservation (PIP), crews will be at work this fall rehabilitating the iconic Clingmans Dome observation tower. Their tasks will include stabilizing support walls at the base of the ramp, repairing deteriorated sections of columns, and re-pointing some stone masonry.

For safety reasons the tower will be closed to the public during the duration of the project, which is likely to last through most of the fall. However, visitors will still be allowed to hike up the 0.5 mile paved trail to the top of the mountain, which is the high point in the Smokies and the third highest summit east of the Mississippi River. Visitors on the trail should be aware that construction vehicles may be headed up or down the route.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park competed with 20 other parks for the Partners

funding. In honor of the National Park Service centennial last year, grants were awarded to nine historic preservation projects in various national parks. The National Trust for Historic Preservation and the American Express Company, among others, team up to provide the PIP grants each year.

The modern design of Clingmans Dome tower was a radical concept when it was conceived by local architect Hubert Bebb and the NPS in the late 1950s.

The observation tower was created to replace a wooden structure upon which visitors had to climb steep stairs to get a view above the Fraser fir trees. That tower had fallen into disrepair and was closed in 1950. The ramp of the new tower was designed to mimic the grade of the trail leading to the mountaintop and allows access by strollers and persons unable to climb multiple flights of stairs.

smokies trip planner

to order maps and guides: www.SmokiesInformation.org

smokies guide

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

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BILL LEA PHOTO



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

camping in the the national park

The National Park Service maintains developed campgrounds at nine locations in the park. There are no showers or hookups. Circuits for special medical devices are available 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, daily fees, approximate 2017 operation dates, and maximum RV lengths. Visit www.nps.gov/grsm for current information.

ABRAMS CREEK 16 sites, elev. 1,125', \$14, open May 26-Oct. 9, 12' trailers

BALSAM MOUNTAIN 42 sites, elev. 5,310', \$14, open May 26-Oct. 9, 30' RVs

BIG CREEK 12 sites, elev. 1,700', \$14, open April 14-Oct. 29, 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 7-Oct. 29, **reservations required**, 31' RVs

COSBY 157 sites, elev. 2,459', \$14, April 14-Oct. 29, 25' RVs

DEEP CREEK 92 sites, elev. 1,800', \$17, open April 14-Oct. 29, 26' RVs

ELKMONT 220 sites, elev. 2,150', \$17-\$23, open March 10-Nov. 26, 32'-35' RVs

LOOK ROCK *Closed*
SMOKEMONT 142 sites, elev. 2,198', \$17-\$20, open year-round, 35'-40' RVs.

accommodations

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

For information on lodging outside the park:
Bryson City 1-800-867-9246
Cherokee 1-828-788-0034
Fontana 1-800-849-2258
Gatlinburg 1-800-588-1817
Maggie Valley 1-800-624-4431
Pigeon Forge 1-855-716-6199
Sevierville 1-888-889-7415
Townsend 1-800-525-6834

pets in the park

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

picnic areas

Please see pages 8-9 for locations of picnic areas. All have charcoal grills for cooking. Cades Cove, Deep Creek, Greenbrier, and Metcalf Bottoms are open year-round. Heintooga closes October 9. Big Creek, Collins Creek, and Cosby close on October 29. Chimneys closes November 26. Look Rock will not open this year.

special events

December 9
Festival of Christmas Past
Sugarlands Visitor Center

December 16
Holiday Homecoming
Oconaluftee Visitor Center

visitor centers

Sugarlands—Sept. & Oct.: 8-6; Nov. 8-5. Oconaluftee—Sept. & Oct.: 9-6; Nov. 9-5. Cades Cove—Sept. & Oct.: 9-6:30; Nov. 9-5:30. Clingmans Dome—Sept. & Oct.: 10-6; Nov. 9:30-5.

facility rentals

The Appalachian Clubhouse and Spence Cabin, both located near Elkmont Campground, can be rented for daytime events from spring through fall. Contact www.recreation.gov.

other services

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

MARY ANN KRESSIG PHOTO



Bicycle and pedestrian morning on Cades Cove Loop Road.

bicycling

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

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

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

park information

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

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

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

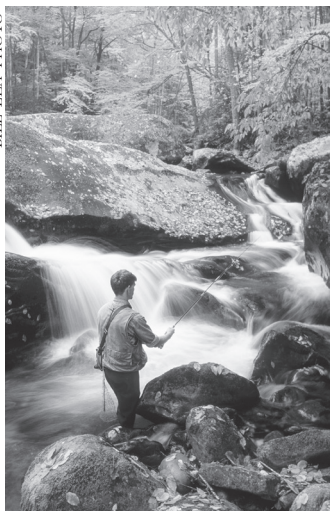
horse riding

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

CADES COVE (865) 448-9009
www.cadescovestables.com
SMOKEMONT (828) 497-2373
www.smokemontriding-stable.com
SMOKY MTN (865) 436-5634
www.smokymountainriding-stables.com
SUGARLANDS (865) 436-3535
www.sugarlandsriding-stables.com

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

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



Fishing for brook trout is now allowed in park streams.

fishing

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

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

DRIVING DISTANCES & ESTIMATED TIMES

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

Gatlinburg, TN to:
Cherokee: 34 miles (1 hour)
Cades Cove: 27 miles (1 hour)
Newfound Gap: 16 miles
(½ hour)
Clingmans Dome:
23 miles (¾ hour)
Cataloochee: 65 miles (2 hours)
Greenbrier Cove: 6 miles
(¼ hour)
Deep Creek:
48 miles (1½ hours)

Townsend, TN to:
Cades Cove: 9 miles (¼ hour)
Newfound Gap: 34 miles
(1¼ hours)
Gatlinburg: 22 miles (¾ hour)
Cherokee: 52 miles (1½ hours)
Look Rock: 18 miles (½ hour)
Cataloochee:
87 miles (2¼ hours)



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

backcountry camping in the smokies

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

1. Go online to view the park's official trail map (www.nps.gov/grsm/plan-yourvisit/maps.htm), which shows all park trails, campsites, and shelters. Park rules and regulations are also listed here. If you wish, you can purchase the printed version of the trail map for \$1 by stopping at any park visitor center or calling (865) 436-7318 x226 or shopping online at www.SmokiesInformation.org.
2. Call or stop by the park's backcountry office (open every day from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.). The office is located in Sugarlands Visitor Center, two miles south of Gatlinburg on Newfound Gap Road (U.S.

441). (865) 436-1297.

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

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

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

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

great sights to see

A dozen must-see places in the Great Smoky Mountains



KENT CAVE PHOTO

The observation tower atop the Smokies highest peak, 6,643'.

1. clingmans dome

A paved, but steep, 0.5 mile trail leads to the highest point in the Great Smoky Mountains. The observation tower may be closed for repairs, but there are good views from the trail. To get there: turn off Newfound Gap Road 0.1 mile south of Newfound Gap and follow the 7-mile-long Clingmans Dome Road to the parking area. A visitor center is located along the trail.

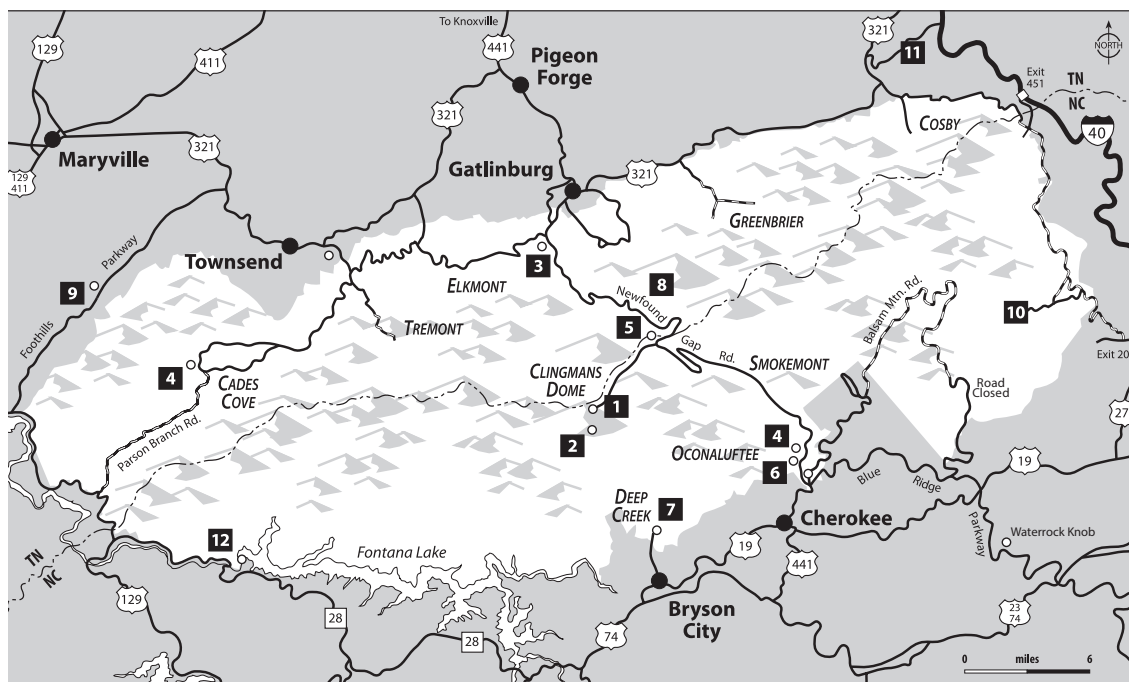
The road to Clingmans Dome is closed from December 1 through March 31 due to weather.

2. andrews bald

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

3. sugarlands visitor center

It's fun, it's free, and it's easy to find. Sugarlands Visitor Center is located 2 miles south



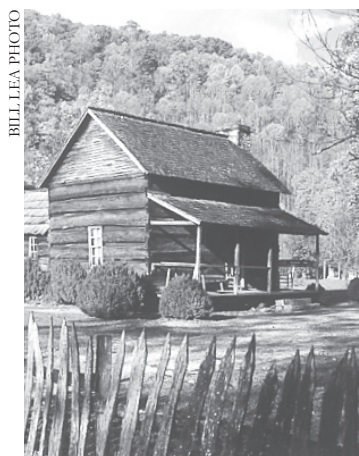
of Gatlinburg, TN on U.S. 441. Highlights include flora and fauna exhibits, a 20-minute film in the surround-sound theater, an information desk, and bookstore. Several short nature trails also begin at the center, as do ranger-led walks and talks. Open every day except Christmas.

4. water-powered grist mills

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

5. newfound gap

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



THE DAVIS-QUEEN HOUSE AT THE MOUNTAIN FARM MUSEUM.

6. oconaluftee history museums

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

7. deep creek waterfalls

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

8. mt. le conte

The Rainbow Falls Trail to Mt. Le Conte and LeConte Lodge will be closed Mondays-Thursdays for trail repairs through November 16. However, there are plenty of alternatives for hikers to this popular peak. The Boulevard Trail starts from Newfound Gap and runs 8.1 miles to LeConte Lodge. Bull Head Trail begins from Cherokee Orchard and is 6.4 miles long. Alum Cave Trail starts from Newfound Gap Road and is 5 miles long. Brushy Mountain and Trillium Gap trails lead 9.1 miles to the summit.

WHERE TO BEAT THE CROWDS

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

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

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

11. Foothills Parkway East. A 6-mile scenic road connects U.S. 321 with Interstate-40 and offers several parking areas with spectacular autumn views along the way.

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

park news

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

National Park Service New Briefs



Progress Made on Trails Closed by Fires

PARK OFFICIALS REPORT that part of Chimney Tops Trail and all of Road Prong Trail are expected to reopen sometime this fall. The upper quarter-mile section of Chimney Tops will remain closed until at least next year because of fallen trees, unstable ground, and erosion. Hikers will be able to go as far as a scenic viewpoint at 1.7 miles, but not to the rocky promontory where the Chimney Tops 2 fire originated in 2016.

In 2018, park trail crews plan to reopen Sugarland Mountain, Bull Head, and Rough Creek trails. The Bull Head area was heavily impacted by the fire and hikers will find many stunning new views and exposed boulder fields.

Thousands View Solar Eclipse from Park

PEOPLE FLOCKED TO THE PARK to view the total solar eclipse on August 21, but rangers were happy to report they weren't overwhelmed. The days before, after, and of the eclipse set all-time records for park visitation (nearly 9,000 were tallied at a Sugarlands Visitor Center on September 21). At Clingmans Dome, where 1,500 ticketed participants gathered for the celestial event, the clouds parted just in time to offer a full view. While officials were prepared to close Newfound Gap and Cades Cove loop roads because of overcrowding on eclipse day, neither closure was necessary.

Tree Hazards Close Parson Branch Road

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

Please Leave Your Firewood at Home

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

Trails Forever Crews Turn Rocky, Rooty Gulleys into Beautiful Trails



Adam Monroe and the Wednesday volunteers on Rainbow Falls Trail this year. For more information about low- or "no-" impact hiking, horseback riding, and camping, please visit lnt.org. Josh Shapiro photo

Any veteran hiker in Great Smoky Mountains National Park has probably noticed a spectacular improvement in several of the park's most popular trails over the last eight years. Forney Ridge Trail to Andrews Bald has been transformed from an ankle twisting obstacle course into an attractive, durable, landscaped footpath. Ditto for Chimney Tops and Alum Cave trails.

Now the park's Trails Forever crew, the cadre of park employees, interns, and volunteers responsible for the aforementioned successes, has turned its efforts to Rainbow Falls Trail to Mount Le Conte, one of the most heavily-used trails in America's most-visited national park.

"A lot of the [Rainbow Falls] trail was eroded down to a hazardous gulley filled with roots and rocks," said Josh Shapiro, Trail Supervisor for the Trails Forever crew. "Because the drainage system had failed, the gullies kept

eroding deeper and deeper," he added.

Rainbow Falls has also become plagued with a destructive network of social trails, places where hikers have decided to shortcut to a stream or cut across the swithbacks of the maintained trail. Social trails cause erosion, destroy wildflowers, trees, and other vegetation, and all-too-frequently cause people to get lost.

For the Trails Forever crew, erasing social trails is no small task. Workers need to rehabilitate the soil, transplant ferns, grasses, and other vegetation on top of the paths, bring in forest duff, then arrange logs and deadfalls to discourage hikers from recreating the social trails. Of course, trail crews would greatly prefer hikers to stay on the maintained trails and refrain from creating new ones. This would save park flora and fauna, reduce the soil eroding into streams, cut down on visitor injuries and

searches, and save the park a significant amount of money.

Shapiro said fixes for the eroded gullies are by necessity drastic. The crew often builds "turnpikes"—frames made from black locust logs that hold rocks and soil in place—and stone staircases constructed from native materials. The massive rocks are moved into place with help from heavy duty grip hoists.

To accommodate the ongoing work, Rainbow Falls Trail is closed Mondays through Thursdays until November 16. Hikers are welcome Fridays through Sundays and on holidays. By the end of the season, reconstruction work should be finished from the Rainbow Falls trailhead to the waterfall.

In 2018, plans are to again close the trail Mondays through Thursdays from early May to mid-November. The crew will then be focusing on the section from the waterfall to the top of Le Conte, including a quarter-mile stretch that was heavily impacted by the 2016 wildfire.

The Trails Forever crew consists of nine National Park Service employees, most of whom work on a temporary or seasonal basis and 12 Ameri-corps enrollees who are part of the American Conservation Experience (ACE) program. On Wednesdays the crew is bolstered by a number of park volunteers.

Trails Forever is supported by an endowment created and managed by the nonprofit Friends of the Smokies.

"The rock work we are doing should last over 100 years," Shapiro said. "The turnpikes and other improvements should be good for decades as long as they receive routine maintenance."

free, fun things to do

SUGARLANDS/ELKMONT AREA	WHEN?	MEETING LOCATION	DURATION/DIFFICULTY
Autumn Amble: Join a ranger to discover the wondrous world of the Smokies in fall. Locations will vary as the leaf color peaks at different elevations. <i>Limit 25. Call 865-436-1291 to sign up!</i>	Sundays & Wednesdays 10:00 A.M.	Varies	1.5 hours / Moderate
Branching Out: The Smokies are home to over 130 species of trees. Explore the dramatic forest and find out what the trees can tell us about their ecosystem.	Sundays & Fridays 2:00 P.M.	Elkmont Nature Trail	1.5 hours / Easy
A Walk in the Woods: Do you have a few minutes? Get away from the hustle and bustle by taking an easy stroll and discover stories of history and nature along this scenic, wooded trail.	Daily 11:00 A.M.	Sugarlands Visitor Center	1.5 hours / Easy
Old Town of Elkmont: Take an afternoon stroll with a ranger and learn about Elkmont when it was a turn-of-the-century logging boomtown.	Sundays 2:00 P.M.	Elkmont Ranger Station	2 hours / Easy
Junior Ranger: Porch Talk: Did you know that the Smokies is one of the most diverse places in the world? Join a ranger to learn more during this “Ranger’s Choice” style program.	Daily 3:00 P.M.	Sugarlands Visitor Center	30 minutes / Easy ♿
Sugarlands Night Hike: Challenge your senses and experience the mystery of the Smokies after dark. ** Begins September 24	Sundays 7:30 P.M.	Sugarlands Visitor Center	1 hour / Easy
Junior Ranger Explorer: Explore life beneath the trees. Come prepared to get your hands dirty as we reveal what is hidden on the forest floor.	Sundays & Fridays 1:00 P.M.	Sugarlands Visitor Center	45 minutes / Easy to Moderate
Ranger Skills: Join a ranger to learn a new set of skills designed to help you get the most out of your Great Smoky Mountain experience.	Mondays 1:00 P.M.	Sugarlands Visitor Center	45 minutes / Easy to Moderate
Little River Night Hike: Challenge your senses and experience the mystery of the Smokies after dark.	Mondays & Thursdays 7:30 P.M.	Little River Trailhead	1 hour / Easy
Hike With A Naturalist: Get outside, connect with nature, and explore the Smokies!	Tuesdays & Fridays 10:00 A.M.	Sugarlands Visitor Center	1.5 hours / Easy
Aw Shucks: Come and experience the art of making a simple cornshuck doll while gaining historical insight of the diversity of corn in the region. <i>Limit 25. Call 865-436-1291 to sign up!</i>	Thursdays 1:00 P.M.	Sugarlands Visitor Center	45 minutes / Easy
Porters Creek Hike: Enjoy this walk along beautiful Porters Creek to discover signs of the past—things in Greenbrier Cove have changed both so much and so little over time.	Wednesdays & Saturdays 1:30 P.M.	Porters Creek Trailhead	2 hours / Easy
Talking Tombstones: The Smokies preserves almost 200 cemeteries. Researching a cemetery can be lots of work but very informative and entertaining. Come and experience the stories the tombstones share with us.	Fridays 3:00 P.M.	Jakes Creek Trailhead	45 minutes / Easy
Evening Campfire: Join a ranger for a National Park tradition—the evening campfire program. Topics vary, but you’re guaranteed to learn something new about Great Smoky Mountains.	Fridays & Saturdays 7:30 P.M.	Elkmont Campground	1 hour / Easy ♿
Freshwater Wilderness: Join a Ranger to learn more about the complex world of plants and animals found in and around our mountain streams.	Saturdays 9:30 A.M.	Little River Trailhead	1.5 hours / Easy
METCALF BOTTOMS AREA			
Junior Ranger: School Days at Little Greenbrier: 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. <i>Please arrive 15 minutes before program start; space is limited.</i>	Tuesdays 11:00 A.M. & 2:00 P.M.	Little Greenbrier School	1.5 hours / Easy
CADES COVE AREA			
Junior Ranger Program: Join a Park Ranger for a hands-on exploration of the Smokies. Participation counts towards credit for earning a Junior Ranger badge and certificate.	Sundays & Saturdays 1:00 P.M.	Cades Cove Visitor Center	45 minutes / Easy ♿
WILD by Design: A short talk and demonstration about the wild things in the Smokies.	Sundays & Saturdays 2:30 P.M.	Cades Cove Visitor Center	30 minutes / Easy ♿
Wee Wild Ranger Program: A fun, interactive program specifically for kids 3- 5 years old learning about butterflies. Kids will receive a “Wee Wild Ranger” certificate.	Mondays (Sept. only) 11, 11:30 A.M., 12:00, 12:30, 1, 2, 2:30, 3 P.M.	Cades Cove Visitor Center	20 minutes / Easy
Evening Hayride: Enjoy a ranger-led open air hayride viewing wildlife and discovering the diversity of Cades Cove. <i>Fee: \$14.00 per person.</i>	Wednesdays & Fridays 4:00 P.M.	Cades Cove Riding Stables	1.5-2 hours / Easy ♿
			

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES IN GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

SEPTEMBER 16 – OCTOBER 28, 2017 ONLY

OCONALUFTEE AREA	WHEN?	MEETING LOCATION	DURATION/ DIFFICULTY
Smokemont History Walk: Join a Ranger for a short walk to the former home site of Julius Carver and discover what life was like for families living in the area before the park.	Sundays 10:30 A.M.	Bradley Fork Trailhead Smokemont Campground	1 hour / Easy
Down on the Farm: Walk down to the farm and see what activities may have kept families busy yesterday and today. Demonstrations vary.	Sundays & Fridays 2:00 P.M.	Mountain Farm Museum	1 hour / Easy
Oconaluftee Elk: Have you ever wondered how a bull elk’s antlers grow or how elk stay warm in the winter? Join a Ranger to discover the answers to these questions and much more.	Mondays 2:00 P.M.	Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch	45 minutes / Easy ♿
Coffee With a Ranger: Join a Ranger for a cup of coffee and find out what’s happening in the park! Coffee provided. Bring a cup if you have one. Topics may vary based on visitor interests and things going on in the park.	Tuesdays 10:30 A.M.	Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch	1 hour / Easy ♿
Forecasting the Future with Mother Nature: How do you tell if this will be a hard winter or a mild one? What about snow this year? How did people in the past use nature to forecast the upcoming winter? Join park staff and explore the possibilities this year.	Wednesdays 10:30 A.M.	Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch	45 minutes / Easy ♿
What Smokey Bear Didn’t Tell You—Wildland Fire Ecology: Not all fire is bad. Naturally occurring wildland fire has shaped the forests throughout our land, creating the forests as we know them. Join the conversation with a Park Ranger to learn how fire benefits the forest health.	Wednesdays 2:00 P.M.	Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch	1 hour / Easy ♿
River Ramble: Stroll along a mountain stream. This easy walk with a Ranger offers you an amazing opportunity to explore the Smokies only minutes from your car.	Thursdays 10:30 A.M.	Oconaluftee River Trailhead	1 hour / Easy
No Nails Needed: Have you ever wondered how the wooden structures on the farm are held together? Join a ranger to learn how buildings were constructed in Southern Appalachia without using nails!	Fridays 10:30 A.M.	Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch	45 minutes / Easy ♿
Longing for the “Good Ol’ Days”: You’ve heard it before but was it really the “good ol’ days?” Join a ranger for a walk on the Mountain Farm Museum and learn about the “new comers” who settled here and farmed this land.	Saturdays 10:30 A.M.	Mountain Farm Museum	45 minutes / Easy
CATALOOCHEE AREA			
Junior Ranger: Smoky Mountain Elk: It’s all about connection and balance in nature to insure survival for elk and other species living together in an ecosystem. Learn about the history of the elk through “show and tell” activities. Then stay and watch the elk come into the fields!	Sundays 2:30 P.M.	Palmer House in Cataloochee Valley	45 minutes / Easy
Return of the Elk: Come enjoy a guided hike to the elk acclimation pen and explore how, when, and why the elk were returned to the Smokies. Hike is moderate, less than one mile.	Tuesdays, Sept. 26 Oct. 3, 10, 17 3:00 P.M.	Rough Fork Trailhead in Cataloochee Valley	1.5 hours / Moderate
Welcome Home!: After more than a century of absence, the elk have returned. Join a member of our Elk Bugle Corp to hear the story of the return of the largest mammal to the Great Smoky Mountains.	Fridays, Sept. 22 Oct. 13 5:30 P.M.	Palmer House in Cataloochee Valley	45 minutes / Easy
SPECIAL PROGRAMS			
Hike Bradleytown to Campground: Join Park Volunteer Dick Sellers for an easy 2 hour stroll through time from early Bradleytown to the present campground. Learn how this area transformed from a forested haven to a barren wasteland and back again. Afterwards visitors may choose to hike to the Bradley Fork Cemetery with Dick. Walking shoes and water bottle recommended.	Saturday, Sept. 30 Oct. 14 & 28 10:00 A.M.	Smokemont Campground Ranger Station	2 hours with 1 hour optional walk to cemetery (add 1 hour)
Back Porch Old-Time Music Jam: Bring an acoustic instrument and join in on this old-time jam. Or just sit back and enjoy the sights and sounds as others play traditional Appalachian music.	Saturday, Oct. 7 & 21 Nov. 18 1:00 P.M.	Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch	2 hours / Easy ♿
Blacksmith Demonstrations: Learn the art of blacksmithing and why it was important in the Cades Cove community.	Saturday, Oct. 21 Sunday, Oct. 22 10:00 A.M.-4 P.M.	Blacksmith building near Cades Cove Visitor Center	♿
Basketmaking Demonstration: Learn the craft of basketmaking.	Saturday, Oct. 21 Sunday, Oct. 22 10:30 A.M.-4:00 P.M.	Cades Cove Visitor Center	♿

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



North

MARYVILLE

WALLAND

TOWNSEND

Wear Valley

GATLINBURG

SEVIERVILLE

PIGEON FORGE

GATLINBURG

Fontana Village

Fontana Dam

Fontana Lake

Cherokee National Forest

Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness Area

Look Rock Tower

Abrams Falls

Chilhowee

Calderwood Lake

Lake Cheoah

Santeetlah Lake

Twentymile Cascade

Fontana Dam

Fontana Lake

Appalachian Trail

Thunderhead Mountain

Meigs Falls

Laurel Falls

Maloney Point

Elkmt

GSM Institute at Tremont

Lynn Camp Prong Cascades

Little Brier Gap Trail

Little Greenbrier School

Fighting Creek Trail

Sugarland Visitor Center

Clingmans Dome

Andrews

Rich Mountain Road (closed in winter)

Parson Branch Road (closed in winter)

Wolf Ridge Trail

Twentymile Loop Trail

Twentymile Trail

Bone Valley Trail

Hazel Creek Trail

Hazel Creek Trail

Goldmine Loop Trail

Look Rock Tower

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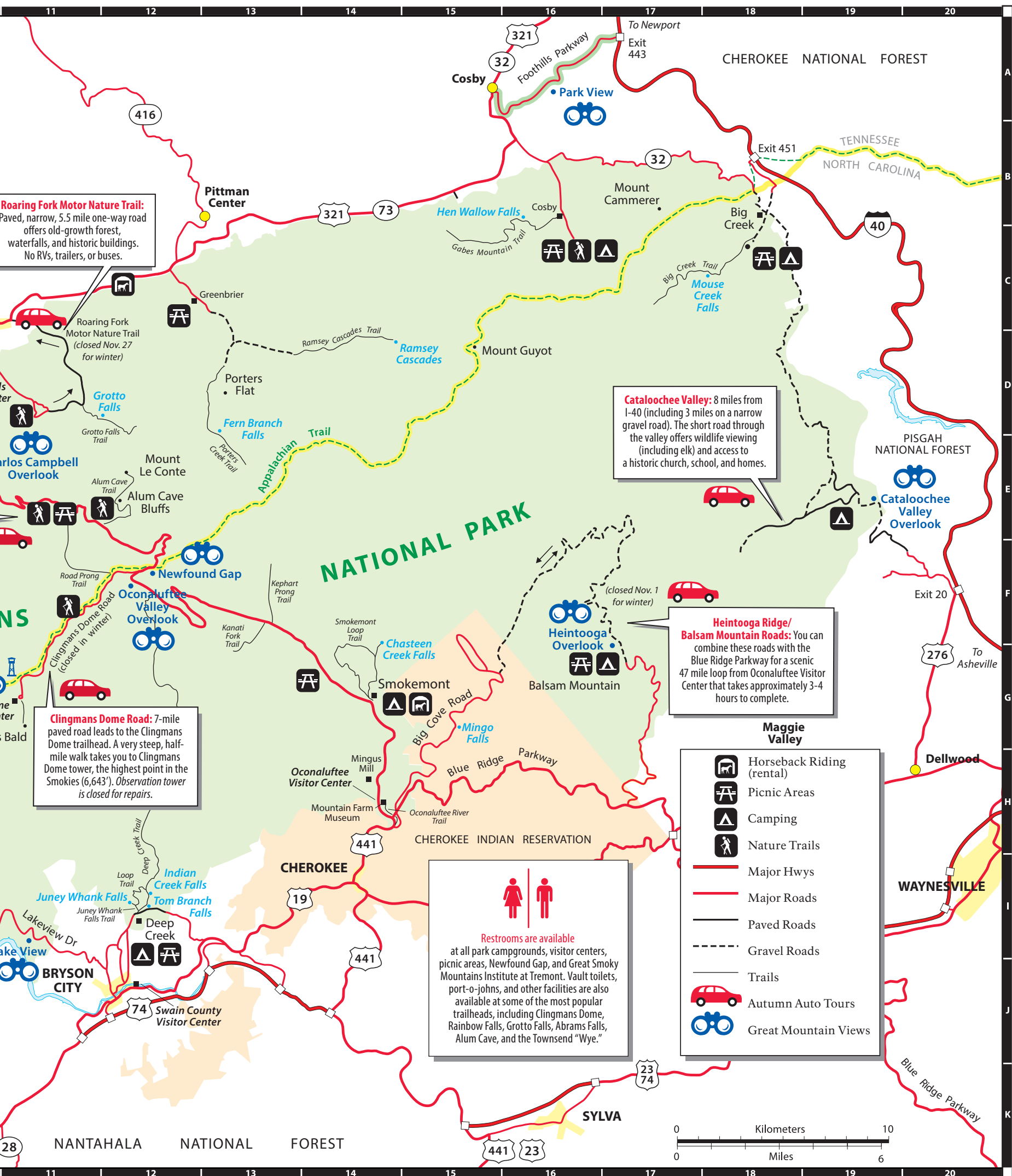
Clingmans Dome

Andrews

Rich Mountain Road (closed in winter)

Parson Branch Road (closed in winter)

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Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail:
Paved, narrow, 5.5 mile one-way road
offers old-growth forest,
waterfalls, and historic buildings.
No RVs, trailers, or buses.

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

Clingmans Dome Road: 7-mile
paved road leads to the Clingmans
Dome trailhead. A very steep, half-
mile walk takes you to Clingmans
Dome tower, the highest point in the
Smokies (6,643'). Observation tower
is closed for repairs.

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

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

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

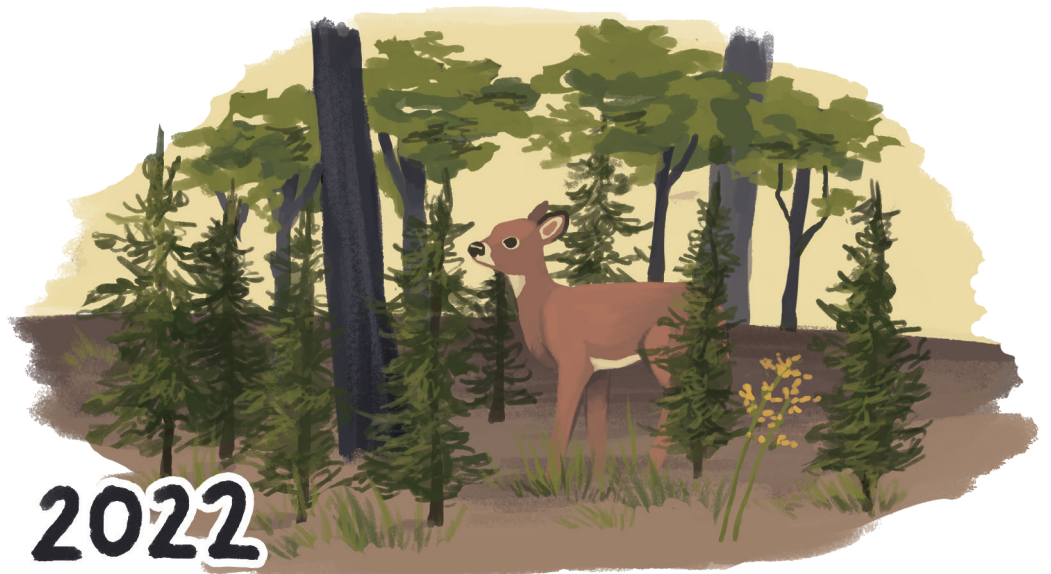
after the fires

throughout the burn area, the forest is rapidly recovering

THE LATE NOVEMBER 2016 wildfires burned hottest on south-facing, dry sites where Table Mountain pine forest dominates. Most of the duff ground cover was reduced to charcoal. Still, tiny Table Mountain pine seeds rained from the cones dangling in the treetops. By the summer of 2018, the pines will be knee-high. The roots of burned mountain laurel and scarlet oaks will send up shoots and eastern fireweed and Canada horseweed will proliferate.



TABLE MOUNTAIN PINES will be 3-5 feet tall in five years. It will be a “dog-hair thicket” of pines, too dense to walk through. There may be “islands” of red maple and oak saplings 8-10 feet tall. Some grasses and wildflowers such as goldenrod and greater tickseed will cover the ground.

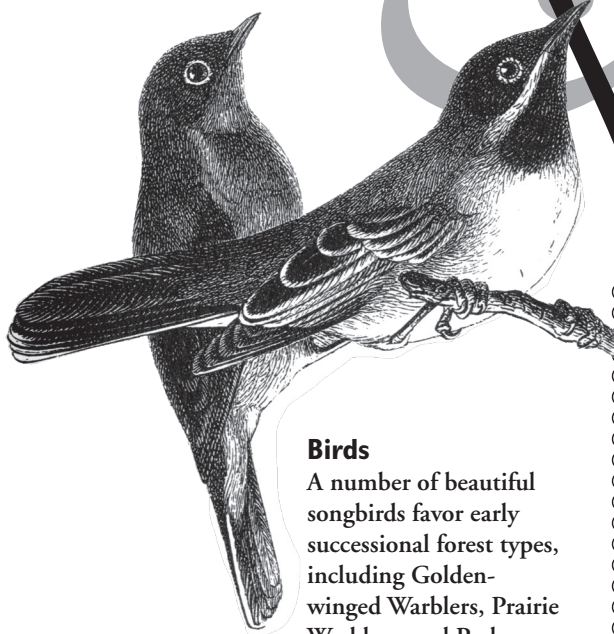


VERY DENSE, DARK Table Mountain pinewoods (with trees 25 feet tall) will cover the driest, sunniest mountain slopes. This pinewoods will be interspersed with a very few mountain laurel shrubs and oaks. Eventually, this forest type will require additional fire to perpetuate itself.



art by Emma DuFort

Of Wildfire & Wildlife

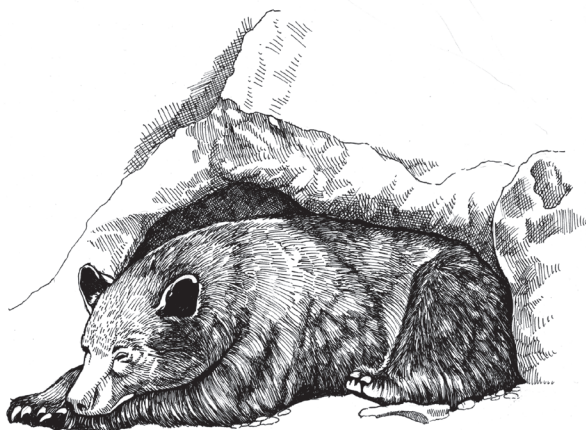


Birds

A number of beautiful songbirds favor early successional forest types, including Golden-winged Warblers, Prairie Warblers, and Red-headed Woodpeckers. All of these species are uncommon in the Smokies because disturbances like large fires are rare in the park's usually soggy environment.

Bears

Black bears will benefit early in the year from the grasses that emerge in burn areas where the duff layer on the forest floor has been reduced or eliminated. Duff, like mulch in your garden, inhibits the growth of new plant life. The native shrubs that produce the blackberries, blueberries, and huckleberries that bears love also get a boost in the post-fire cycle of forest succession.



During late November of 2016, the Chimney Tops 2 fire burned an area of approximately 11,000 acres in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Although the wildfire killed at least two black bears and probably killed small mammals such as chipmunks, squirrels, and mice in the park, the fire's long-term impact on wildlife habitat should be positive.

"Fire creates early successional forest habitat," said wildlife biologist Bill Stiver, "Which is good for elk, deer, bear, turkey, rabbits—and lots of other wildlife."

Disturbances like fire open up the forest canopy and allow energy in the form of sunlight to reach the forest floor. This, along with the nutrients released by the burned vegetation, triggers a surge of growth for plants that are nutritional for wildlife.

"Wildlife flourishes when there is a mosaic of habitats, from old-growth forest to open, early successional zones," Stiver added.



Bats

Most bats have a hard time flying through dense vegetation, so a more open forest makes hunting insects easier.



Pollinating Insects

The burning of the duff layer, a more open forest canopy, and the influx of nitrogen and other nutrients from burned wood should lead to a proliferation of flowering plants. These flowers will attract native bumblebees, butterflies, moths, and other insects that should in turn flourish themselves.



Deer, Elk

Browsers will benefit from the boost to grasses and other herbaceous plants. Root sprouts from burned trees and shrubs also make excellent browse.

food from the forest

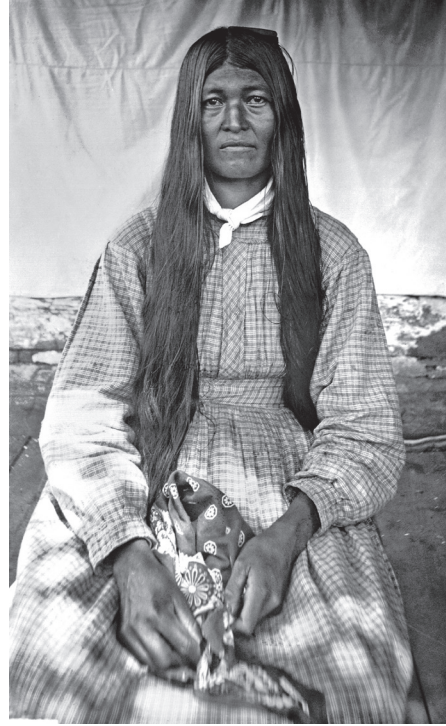
The wondrous diversity of plants and animals in the mountains offered food for families

Until approximately 1,200 years ago, Native Peoples who called the Great Smoky Mountains their home lived off the generous bounty of the land by hunting, fishing, and gathering wild plant foods. Over the centuries they had learned to follow nature's smorgasbord, harvesting berries, wild greens, fruits, seeds, and nuts as the seasons provided them. Between 1,200 and 600 years ago, Native Peoples became increasingly proficient at agriculture, so that the majority of their plant-based foods came from the corn, beans, and squash they cultivated. All of these plants were native to the New World and seeds were exchanged among peoples in North America, Central America, and Mexico.

The European-American farmers who arrived in the Smokies in the early 1800s brought their own agricultural practices but also adopted many of the Cherokee life skills. The Europeans grew corn, raised livestock, hunted, fished, and gathered dozens of types of wild foods. For the most part, they were able to support their large families just from

Gathering small quantities of berries and edible mushrooms for personal consumption is allowed in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. However, digging roots, pulling leaves, or otherwise damaging plants is strictly prohibited. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/grsm.

what they grew and gathered from the forest. Wild foods do not simply fall into one's lap. Harvesting, preparing, and preserving them takes an enormous amount of skill and practice. Families needed to know exactly when and where the foods would be ready for harvest so they could get there before insects, birds, and agents of decay beat them to it. People also needed to know how to prepare and preserve the bounty, whether through drying, pickling, canning, or other methods. When depending on wild foods for survival, the margin for error is thin.



BOTH PHOTOGRAPHS GSMNP ARCHIVES

Wild plant foods the Cherokee, earlier Native Peoples, and European-American families gathered from the Smoky Mountain wilds:

Black walnuts	Hazelnuts	Wild grapes
Oak acorns	Persimmons	Blackberries
Chestnuts	Passionflower fruits	Raspberries

Additional wild plant foods gathered by the Cherokee and earlier Native Peoples:

Hickory nuts
Sunflower seeds
Hawthorn
Amaranth
Honey locust pods
Knotweed
Ragweed
Bearsfoot (*Polymnia uvedalia*)

Additional wild plant foods gathered by European-American families:

Violet leaves
Cut-leaved toothwort
Pokeweed
Butternuts
Beechnuts
Buckeye nuts
White pine bark
Maple syrup
Holly leaves (for tea)
Blueberries
Huckleberries
Gooseberries
Wild cherries
Haw apples
Paw-paws

filling station for birds

migrating birds use the Smokies to refuel



Flying from Nova Scotia to south Florida can be exhausting, especially for a warbler or vireo that weighs less than half an ounce and travels under its own power at night, through unfamiliar terrain, dodging predators and storms along the way. So imagine, as dawn approaches, just how welcome a sight the Great Smoky Mountains must be, with their high ridge tops and 800 square miles of protected, verdant forest. It truly is the ideal place for a migrating flock to perch, rest, and refuel.

Southbound migrants travel at altitudes of around 10,000 feet, so being able to land atop a 6,000' ridge saves a tired bird a significant amount of vertical flying. But the best thing about pulling over at the Smokies rest area is the all-you-can-eat buffet of energy-rich foods patiently awaiting the arrival of sojourning songsters.

With over 1,500 species of trees, shrubs, and other flowering plants, plus an even richer variety of insects, the Great Smoky Mountains are perfectly equipped to help the birds succeed in their trips from breeding area to wintering grounds. And for the plants it's not all give and no take. The birds help the plants disperse their seeds and propagate their species by gobbling the berries and depositing the seeds elsewhere.

If you want to observe some of these migrating flocks, good places to watch are along Clingmans Dome Road and the Appalachian Trail. Newfound Gap, Look Rock, Mt. Collins, and Indian Gap are some of the best places to see songbirds feeding and restoring their fat reserves. The southbound migration starts in August and continues through October.

Other visiting migrants:

Tanagers (eat dogwood tree berries)
Crossbills (eat hemlock tree cones)
Pine siskins (eat hemlock tree cones)

if you love the smokies...

help protect this place for ourselves and future generations

become a member



Since 1953,
Great Smoky
Mountains

Association has supported the educational, scientific, and historical efforts of the National Park Service through cash donations and in-kind services. By the end of 2017 alone, the association will have provided more than \$1.3 million in assistance that includes saving hemlock trees, living history demonstrations, environmental education programs, salaries for wildlife personnel, and historic preservation.

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

- Subscription to the semi-annual, full-color magazine *Smokies Life*
 - Digital access to the award-winning quarterly park newspaper, *Smokies Guide*, and the association's newsletter, *The Bearpaw*
 - A 15-20% discount on books, music, gifts, and other products sold at park visitor centers and at our web store
 - Special GSMA "Hiking 101" outings to Twentymile Loop, Porters Creek, Gregory Bald, Boogerman Trail, Charlies Bunion, cemeteries, and more. All hikes are led by knowledgeable staff who love to share the park with others. Groups are limited to 20 people. Also this year, ask us about "Gear Fest" programs and special gear discounts.
- Join today using the coupon to the right or visit www.SmokiesInformation.org, or call us at 1-888-898-9102 x349. Memberships start at just \$35. per year.

MARY ANN KRESSIG PHOTO



Great Smoky Mountains National Park is one of the few large national parks without an entrance fee. Most parks now charge \$20 or \$30 per vehicle. Without this supplemental income, it is difficult for the Smokies to adequately protect wildlife, preserve historic areas, and provide educational opportunities. You can help by using some of the money you saved at the entrance to support the park partners that support our park!

field school

An exciting variety of adventures await adults who long to get out and explore the park accompanied by expert guides. Programs are offered by the Smoky Mountain Field School and include Mt. Le Conte overnights, wildlife workshops, edible plants, wildflower photography, animal tracking, bird watching, salamanders, mountain cooking, and more. One-day programs start at as little as \$79. Contact: (865) 974-0150 smfs.utk.edu.

gsmi at tremont

Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont provides residential environmental education programs in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Up to 5,000 students and adults annually attend workshops and school programs at the Institute. Tremont's adult workshops include birding, backpacking, environmental education, teacher escapes, 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 start at \$589. 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.

support the friends

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

Since 1993, Friends has



raised over \$50 million for park projects and programs. These donations help:

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

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

However you choose to give, your donation will really help protect the Great Smoky Mountains for many years to come!

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

GSMA MEMBERS

"Get Rooted in the Smokies"

- ☐ Acorn (youth) Membership \$15
- ☐ Buckeye Annual Membership \$35
- ☐ Chestnut Annual Membership \$100
- ☐ Dogwood Membership \$200
- ☐ Hemlock Lifetime Membership \$1,000
payable in 5 installments
- ☐ Lookout League Business Memberships
\$250-\$10,000

SIGN ME UP!

Name(s)* _____

Address _____

Email (for Cub Report) _____

Telephone # _____

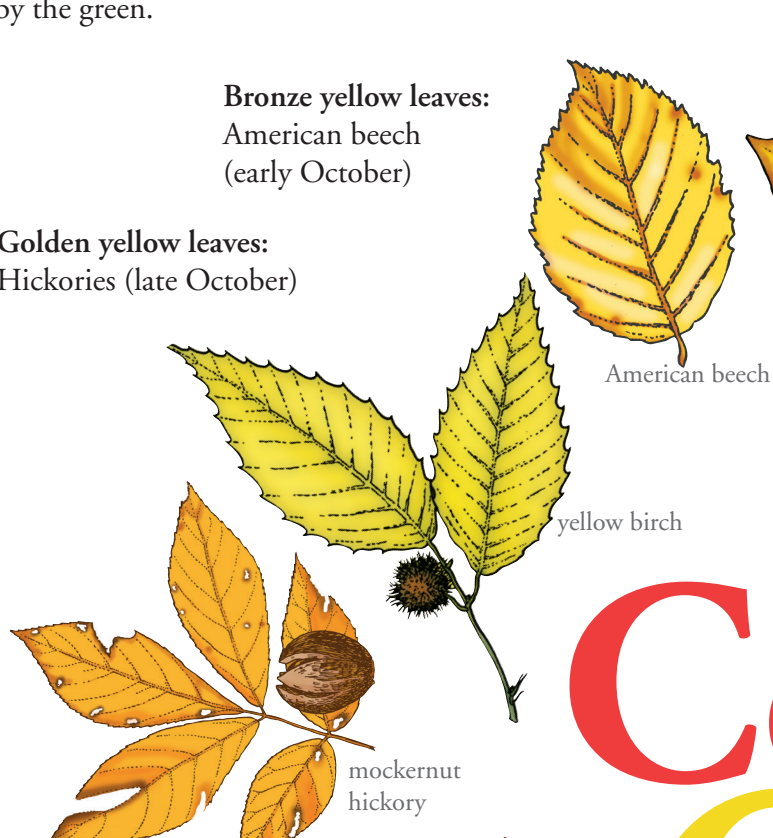
Please include your check with this form. Mail to:
GSMA, P.O. Box 130, Gatlinburg, TN 37738

Yellows and Golds:

Leaves turn yellow as trees stop producing green chlorophyll late in the summer. As chlorophyll breaks down, it reveals the yellow pigments carotin and xanthophyll, which were present all along but masked by the green.

Bronze yellow leaves:
American beech
(early October)

Golden yellow leaves:
Hickories (late October)



Reds:

Leaves turn red when the green chlorophyll breaks down and reveals the reds created by leaves that have been converted into anthocyanins. The process is triggered by the shortening length of days and cooling temperatures, which signal trees to prepare for winter dormancy.

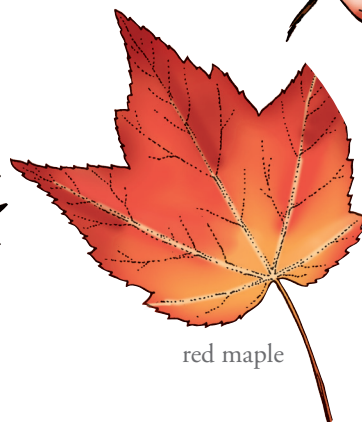
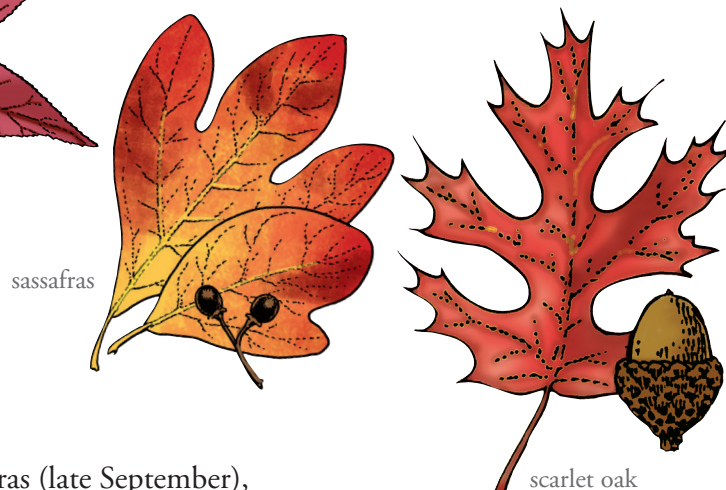
Clear yellow leaves:
Tuliptree (late September),
yellow birch (early October),
black birch (October)

Colors Of Autumn



Red and/or gold leaves: Sassafras (late September),
sugar maple (late October), sweetgum (October)

Red leaves: Witch hobble (early September),
dogwood (late September), sourwood (early October),
blackgum (early October), Red maple (late October),
scarlet oak (early November)



visitor information

for more information, www.nps.gov/grsm

information

General park information:
(865) 436-1200
www.nps.gov/grsm
Backcountry information
(865) 436-1297
smokiespermits.nps.gov
To order maps & guides
(865) 436-7318 x226
www.smokiesinformation.org

emergencies

Listed below are some numbers to call **for emergencies** that arise after hours.
Park Headquarters (865) 436-9171
Cherokee Police (828) 497-4131
Gatlinburg Police (865) 436-5181

hospitals

Le Conte/Sevier County
(865) 446-7000, Middle Creek Rd., Sevierville, TN.
Blount Memorial (865) 983-7211, U.S. 321, Maryville, TN.
Haywood County (828) 456-7311, Waynesville, NC.
Swain County (828) 488-2155, Bryson City, NC.

regulations

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

accessibility

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

