

# Great Smoky Mountains National Park

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Becky Nichols, Entomologist

## Words with a Ranger

Spring is a great time to observe wildlife in the Smokies, the vibrant green of new plant growth, and of course, the abundant wildflowers that carpet the understory. As an entomologist—a scientist who studies insects—I like to keep an eye out for pollinators, the roaming heroes of wildflower season.

Pollinators are animals that transfer pollen from one flower to another as they drink nectar or gather pollen. Without them, spring wildflowers could not reproduce. This transfer of pollen fertilizes the plant, which will then produce seeds, ensuring the future survival of the species. Several different kinds of animals can serve as pollinators, including some birds and mammals, but more than 70 percent of flowering plants worldwide are pollinated by insects.

Among the insects, bees are by far the most efficient and abundant of pollinators. We have documented 304 species of bees in the park so far, and over 200 of these have been discovered only in the last 25 years, mostly as a result of the ongoing All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory, or ATBI. This diversity of bees is directly

*Continued on page 8*



# SMOKIES GUIDE

The Official Newspaper of the Smokies • Spring 2023

Crested dwarf irises are a common sight in park woodlands around mid-April. These petite perennials grow in densely formed clusters no more than nine inches tall. *Image by Ryan Somma.*

## Park It Forward in 2023

*Parking tags help pave the way for improved visitor services and park preservation*

As of March 1, a valid parking tag is required for all visitors parking for more than 15 minutes in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Parking tags are not required for motorists who simply pass through the area or park for less than 15 minutes.

Daily (\$5), weekly (\$15), and annual (\$40) parking tags are available for purchase at automated fee machines and visitor centers as well as online at [recreation.gov](https://recreation.gov) or [smokiesinformation.org](https://smokiesinformation.org). Each tag is valid for use in a single vehicle and must include a license plate number matching the vehicle in which it is displayed. Tags must be displayed physically in vehicles; digital representations will not be accepted. Parking tags do not guarantee a parking spot in a specific location or at a specific time.

Revenue generated by parking tags will help to improve visitor services

in the park and preserve the Smokies for generations to come. Park visitation has increased by 38 percent over the last decade to 12.9 million visits in 2022. These critically needed funds will supplement federal funding, grant monies, and donation dollars, providing an opportunity to address the rising costs associated with maintaining what is consistently the most visited national park in the country.

All revenue generated through the sales of parking tags will stay in the Smokies to directly improve visitor experiences and help fund things like trail maintenance, custodial services, trash removal, historic cabin preservation, and staffing for increased ranger presence across the park.

For more information about parking tags, scan the code at the right with your camera app or visit [go.nps.gov/GRSMfees](https://go.nps.gov/GRSMfees).



## PARKING TAG REQUIRED!

Parking in the Smokies for more than 15 minutes requires a valid parking tag (annual tag pictured).

For more info, scan code with camera app



OUR PARK  
ON SOCIAL MEDIA



GreatSmoky  
MountainsNPS



GreatSmokyNPS  
and SmokiesRoadsNPS



GreatSmokyNPS

# SMOKIES TRIP PLANNER



## Visitor centers

Oconaluftee, Sugarlands, and Cades Cove: open 9 a.m.–5 p.m. March through May.

**Clingmans Dome:** reopens April 1, open 10 a.m.–6 p.m. in April and May.

**GSM Institute at Tremont:** open 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Tuesday–Saturday only.

**Mingus Mill:** closed until further notice.

**Cable Mill:** opens March 5.



## Road closures

Many secondary and higher-elevation roads are closed seasonally in winter and reopen in spring. Refer to the map on pages 6-7 for opening dates.

- **Cades Cove Loop Road** is closed to vehicles on Wednesdays from May 3 through September 27 to allow for non-motorized recreation.

- All roads including Newfound Gap, Cataloochee, and Cades Cove Loop roads are subject to temporary closure due to dangerous driving conditions. Check [twitter.com/SmokiesRoadsNPS](https://twitter.com/SmokiesRoadsNPS) for updates.



## Park weather

March is an unpredictable time in the Smokies. Snow can fall any day, especially at the higher elevations. Backpackers are often caught off guard when a sunny, warm day is followed by a wet, bitterly cold one.

By mid- to late April, the weather is typically more mild with an average high of 71°F in Gatlinburg and 52°F at Mount Le Conte.



## Special events and ranger programs

- **April 26–29**, Wildflower Pilgrimage: parkwide, see [wildflowerpilgrimage.org](https://wildflowerpilgrimage.org)
- **June**, Firefly viewing: Elkmont Campground, lottery for vehicle passes opens April 28 at [recreation.gov](https://recreation.gov)



## Camping in the national park

The National Park Service maintains developed campgrounds at ten locations in the park. There are no showers, and hookups are only available at Look Rock Campground (ten campsites include electric and water hookups). There are circuits for special medical uses at Cades Cove, Elkmont, and Smokemont.

Campsite reservations are required at all park campgrounds. Sites may be reserved up to six months in advance.

Make your reservation online at [recreation.gov](https://recreation.gov) or call 877.444.6777.

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

Campsites for larger groups are available at Big Creek, Cades Cove, Cataloochee, Cosby, Deep Creek, Elkmont, and Smokemont. Reservations are required and may be secured up to a year in advance. For more information, visit [nps.gov/grsm](https://nps.gov/grsm).

Site	No. of Sites	Elevation	Expected Open Dates 2023	Nightly Fees	Max RV Length
<b>Abrams Creek</b>	16	1,125'	4/28 – 10/29	\$30	12'
<b>Balsam Mountain</b>	42	5,310'	5/12 – 6/4 6/17 – 10/9	\$30	30'
<b>Big Creek</b>	12	1,700'	4/7 – 10/29	\$30	tents only
<b>Cades Cove</b>	159	1,807'	open year-round	\$30	35'–40'
<b>Cataloochee</b>	27	2,610'	4/7 – 10/29	\$30	31'
<b>Cosby</b>	157	2,459'	4/7 – 10/29	\$30	25'
<b>Deep Creek</b>	92	1,800'	4/7 – 10/29	\$30	26'
<b>Elkmont</b>	220	2,150'	3/10 – 11/26	\$30	32'–35'
<b>Look Rock</b>	68	2,600'	4/28-10/29	\$30-36	no limit
<b>Smokemont</b>	142	2,198'	open year-round	\$30	35'–40'



## Firewood

To prevent the spread of destructive pests, only USDA- or state-certified heat-treated firewood may be brought into the park. Campers may gather dead and down wood in the park for campfires.



## Picnic areas

Picnic areas at Cades Cove, Deep Creek, Greenbrier, and Metcalf Bottoms are open year-round. Chimneys, Collins Creek, and the pavillion at Twin Creeks open April 1. Big Creek and Cosby open April 7. Look Rock opens April 28, and Heintooga opens May 12. Picnic pavilions may be reserved for a fee at [recreation.gov](https://recreation.gov). Some restroom facilities at picnic areas may be closed.



## Accommodations

LeConte Lodge (accessible by trail only, reopens March 20) provides the only lodging in the park. Advanced reservations required. 865.429.5704 or [lecontelodge.com](https://lecontelodge.com)



## Services

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



## For rent

The Appalachian Clubhouse and Spence Cabin at Elkmont can be reserved for daytime events at [recreation.gov](https://recreation.gov) starting April 1.



## Pets in the park

Pets are allowed in frontcountry campgrounds and along roads as long as they are restrained at all times. Pets are not allowed on park trails, except for Gatlinburg and Oconaluftee River trails. Pets must be kept in control on a leash no longer than six feet.

## SMOKIES GUIDE

*Smokies Guide* is produced four times per year by Great Smoky Mountains Association and Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

[nps.gov/grsm](https://nps.gov/grsm)  
[SmokiesInformation.org](https://SmokiesInformation.org)

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**Download the free NPS App** for interactive maps, tours, and more.





## Bicycling

Most park roads are too narrow and heavily traveled for safe or enjoyable bicycling. Bicycles are permitted on park roads but prohibited on trails except Gatlinburg, Oconaluftee River, and lower Deep Creek and Indian Creek trails. Helmets are required by law for persons age 16 and under and strongly recommended for all.

Cades Cove Loop Road is open exclusively to cyclists and pedestrians on Wednesdays from May 3 through September 27. Bikes may be rented at the Cades Cove Campground Store 9 a.m.–2:30 p.m. Bike rental opens early at 7 a.m. on vehicle-free Wednesdays. 865.448.9034.



## Horseback riding

Some 550 miles of park trails are open to horses. See park trail map for trails and rules. Horse camps are available at Anthony Creek, Big Creek, Cataloochee, Round Bottom, and Tow String. Make reservations at recreation.gov.

Three concession horseback riding stables offer rides from March through November. Call for exact opening dates.

- **Cades Cove** 865.448.9009 [cadescovestables.com](http://cadescovestables.com)
- **Smokemont** 828.497.2373 [smokemontridingstable.com](http://smokemontridingstable.com)
- **Sugarlands** 865.436.3535 [sugarlandsriddingstables.com](http://sugarlandsriddingstables.com)



## 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. Fishing with bait is prohibited. Special permits are required for the Qualla Boundary and Gatlinburg, and licenses are available in nearby towns. A free fishing map with a complete list of all park fishing regulations is available at visitor centers.



## Backcountry camping

Camping can be an exciting adventure for those who are properly equipped and informed. To facilitate this activity, the NPS maintains more than 800 miles of trails and more than 100 backcountry campsites and shelters throughout the park. One of the greatest challenges is deciding where to go. Here are some tools to help.

**1. Get the map.** Go online to view the park's official trail map ([nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/maps.htm](http://nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/maps.htm)), which shows all park trails, campsites, and shelters. Park rules and regulations are also listed here. You can purchase the printed version of the trail map for \$1 at any park visitor center or online at [SmokiesInformation.org](http://SmokiesInformation.org).

**2. Plan your trip.** Call or stop by the park's Backcountry Office from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. for trip planning help. The office is located in Sugarlands Visitor Center, two miles south of Gatlinburg on US 441. 865.436.1297.

**3. Get a permit.** Make your reservation and get your permit through the Backcountry Office at Sugarlands Visitor Center (*by phone or in person*) or online at [smokiespermits.nps.gov](http://smokiespermits.nps.gov).

Reservations and permits are required for all overnight stays in the backcountry. The cost is \$8 per person per night. Reservations may be made up to 30 days in advance.

Backcountry camping permit holders are not exempt from parking tag requirements.

Spring hikers should be especially aware of quickly changing conditions and the danger of hypothermia—the lowering of body temperature. Always carry an ample supply of food, water, and reliable rain gear. Layer clothing that provides warmth when wet (not cotton). Be prepared for sudden weather changes, especially at the higher elevations, including rain, cold, and wind. Stay dry and know your limitations.

See page 4 for more hiking tips and trip essentials.



## COVID-19

The National Park Service is working with federal, state, and local health authorities to closely monitor the COVID-19 pandemic. Check [nps.gov/grsm](http://nps.gov/grsm) for active alerts about open facilities, access, and mask-wearing requirements.



**Learn the BARK principles so you and your pet can have a safe and fun visit any time you go to a national park.**

## Take the BARK pledge:



**B**ag and bin your pet's waste



**A**lways leash your pet



**R**espect wildlife



**K**now where you can go

*The **only** two pet-friendly trails in the Smokies are Gatlinburg Trail in TN and Oconaluftee River Trail in NC.*

*Check out the BARK ranger products at [SmokiesInformation.org](http://SmokiesInformation.org)*

**GSMNP**  
**BY THE NUMBERS**



**12 million+**  
visitors per year



**1,000+** species  
new to science  
found in the park



**31** species of  
salamanders



**69** species  
of mammals



**9,900+** species  
of insects



**16** mtns. higher  
than 6,000'



## Keep it **SMOKIES SMART**:

- S** Stay hydrated
- M** Map your hike
- A** Always wear proper clothing/footwear
- R** Remember your flashlight
- T** Turn back when conditions change

Tell someone where you're going, stay on established trails, pack the essentials, and know what to do in case of an emergency.

Let the NPS Backcountry Office help you plan and prepare for your hike. Call 865.436.1297, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

### PACK ESSENTIALS

- **Navigation**—map, compass, and knowledge of how to use them
- **Water and food**
- **Extra layers**
- **Rain gear** and pack cover or waterproof bags
- **Headlamp** or flashlight
- **Traction support** like hiking poles or microspikes
- **Emergency whistle**
- **First aid kit**
- **Sun protection** with sunscreen, sunglasses, and hat

### FOR A LONGER HIKE

- **Repair kit** with multi-tool or knife
- **Fire starter**
- **Shelter**—emergency tent or tarp



### IN AN EMERGENCY

- Call 911 if you can acquire a signal.
- Remain with any injured parties until help arrives. Use what basic first-aid techniques you know, but do not attempt invasive intervention unless you are medically trained.
- Use an emergency whistle to issue a series of three spaced blasts every few minutes to alert rescue crews. If you are in an open area, display brightly colored clothing or gear.

### YOUR CELL PHONE IS **NOT**

- a light
- a map
- a survival kit
- always going to have service

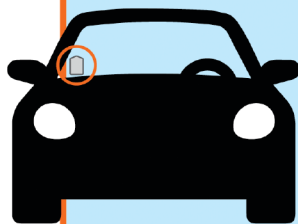


# PARK IT FORWARD

## Parking tags: Know before you go

A valid parking tag must be displayed when parked for more than 15 minutes anywhere in Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

You can purchase your tag online or in person.



- Three tag durations will be available for purchase for all vehicle sizes and types (Daily – \$5, Weekly – \$15, and Annual – \$40)
- Interagency passes (Senior Pass, Access Pass, etc.) are not accepted in lieu of parking tags.
- Parking tags will not be replaceable, refundable, transferable, or upgradeable.
- Each tag will be valid for a single vehicle and must include a license plate number matching the vehicle in which it is displayed.
- Backcountry campers, picnic pavilion reservation holders, and concessions customers are not exempt from the parking tag requirement.
- Registered frontcountry campers do not need a parking tag to park at their campsite.
- Visitors with a handicap license plate or placard do not need a parking tag.



**SCAN ME** or visit  
[go.nps.gov/GRSMfees](https://go.nps.gov/GRSMfees)  
for more information on fees.

## Where can I get a parking tag?

Great Smoky Mountains National Park



### For the plan-ahead visitor

Not to worry—you can  
purchase all tag types  
online ahead of your visit.



### Annual tags

can be purchased through Great Smoky Mountains Association at **[SmokiesInformation.org](https://SmokiesInformation.org)**. The tag will be mailed to you, so leave at least 14 days for it to arrive before your planned visit.

### Daily and weekly tags

can be purchased at **[recreation.gov](https://recreation.gov)**. You will receive your tag via email. You *must* print your tag and display it in your vehicle; park staff will not print it for you, and digital representations will not be accepted. You must know the license plate number of the vehicle(s) you will be visiting in. Daily and weekly tags are available for purchase six months in advance of your visit.

### Automated fee machines (daily and weekly tags)

***Year-round, 24/7. Credit card only.***

- Cades Cove entrance parking area
- Deep Creek parking area
- Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area
- Oconaluftee Visitor Center
- Sugarlands Visitor Center
- Newfound Gap overlook

### Visitor centers (daily, weekly, and annual tags)

***Be sure to check hours of operation.***

- Sugarlands Visitor Center
- Oconaluftee Visitor Center
- Cades Cove Visitor Center
- Clingmans Dome Visitor Center
- Gatlinburg Welcome Center
- Swain County Visitor Center
- Townsend Visitor Center
- GSM Institute at Tremont

### For the spontaneous visitor

**We've got you covered!  
Tags are for sale in person  
and on demand.**



***All driving times may vary due to traffic conditions.***

Gatlinburg: 34 miles (1 hour)  
Cades Cove: 58 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)

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 (2½ hours)  
Greenbrier Cove: 6 miles (¼ hour)  
Deep Creek: 48 miles (1½ hours)

Cades Cove: 9 miles (¼ hour)  
Newfound Gap: 34 miles (1¼ hours)  
Gatlinburg: 22 miles (¾ hour)  
Look Rock: 18 miles (½ hour)

## Automated Fee Machines

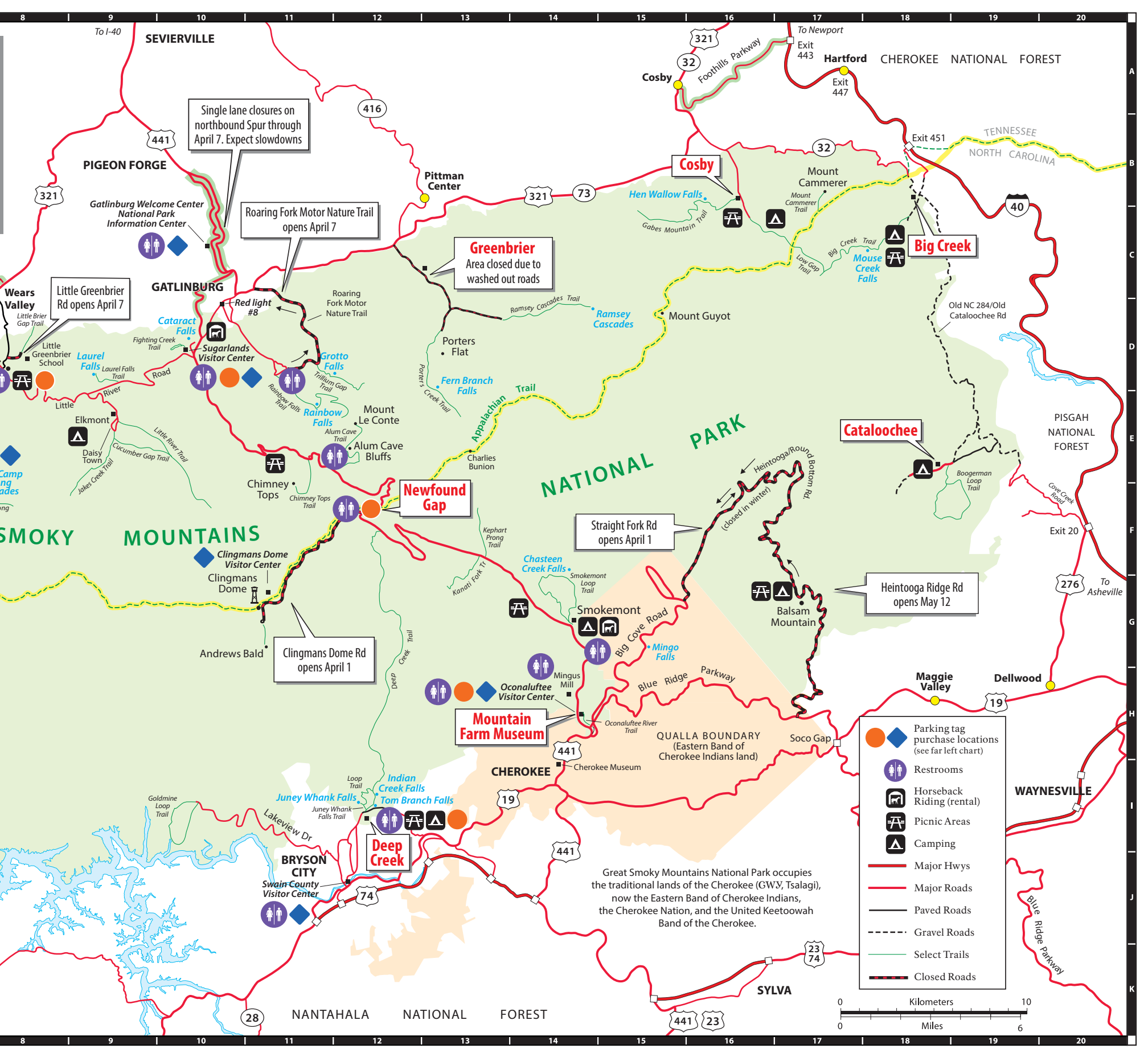
- 24 hours per day
- Credit/debit only
- Daily and weekly tags only

## Visitor Centers

- Business hours (page 2)
- Cash or credit/debit
- Daily, weekly, and annual tags available

*Parking tags are available outside the park at Townsend Visitor Center, Gatlinburg Welcome Center, and Swain County Visitor Center.*





Single lane closures on northbound Spur through April 7. Expect slowdowns

Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail opens April 7

**Greenbrier**  
Area closed due to washed out roads

Little Greenbrier Rd opens April 7

**Newfound Gap**

Straight Fork Rd opens April 1

Heintooga Ridge Rd opens May 12

Clingmans Dome Rd opens April 1

**Mountain Farm Museum**

**Deep Creek**

- Parking tag purchase locations (see far left chart)
- Restrooms
- Horseback Riding (rental)
- Picnic Areas
- Camping
- Major Hwys
- Major Roads
- Paved Roads
- Gravel Roads
- Select Trails
- Closed Roads

Great Smoky Mountains National Park occupies the traditional lands of the Cherokee (GWS, Tsalagi), now the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, the Cherokee Nation, and the United Keetoowah Band of the Cherokee.





**Words with a Ranger**  
*Continued from page 1*

related to the number of flowering plants we find here, which is currently over 1,700. These include the spring ephemerals, which are woodland plants that bloom early in the spring before the forest canopy is fully closed in.

Many of the park's spring ephemeral wildflowers are pollinated by solitary, ground-nesting native bees. They are often specialists, meaning they have a narrow, specialized preference for pollen sources. An example of this is the spring beauty mining bee (*Andrena erigeniae*), which only visits two species of the genus *Claytonia*, or spring beauties.

Bumble bees, on the other hand, are generalists that visit a wide variety of flowers. Because they are so hairy, they are particularly good pollinators, moving pollen from plant to plant as they search for food. Virginia bluebells, trout lilies, trailing arbutus, spicebush, dogwoods, and redbuds are all early spring bloomers that bumble bees seek out.

The reproduction of many plant species is intimately tied to pollinators, and it is therefore vital that we maintain habitats that support both. We can all contribute to the survival of pollinators by learning more about plants native to the region where we live and providing a diverse community of flowering plants for pollinators.



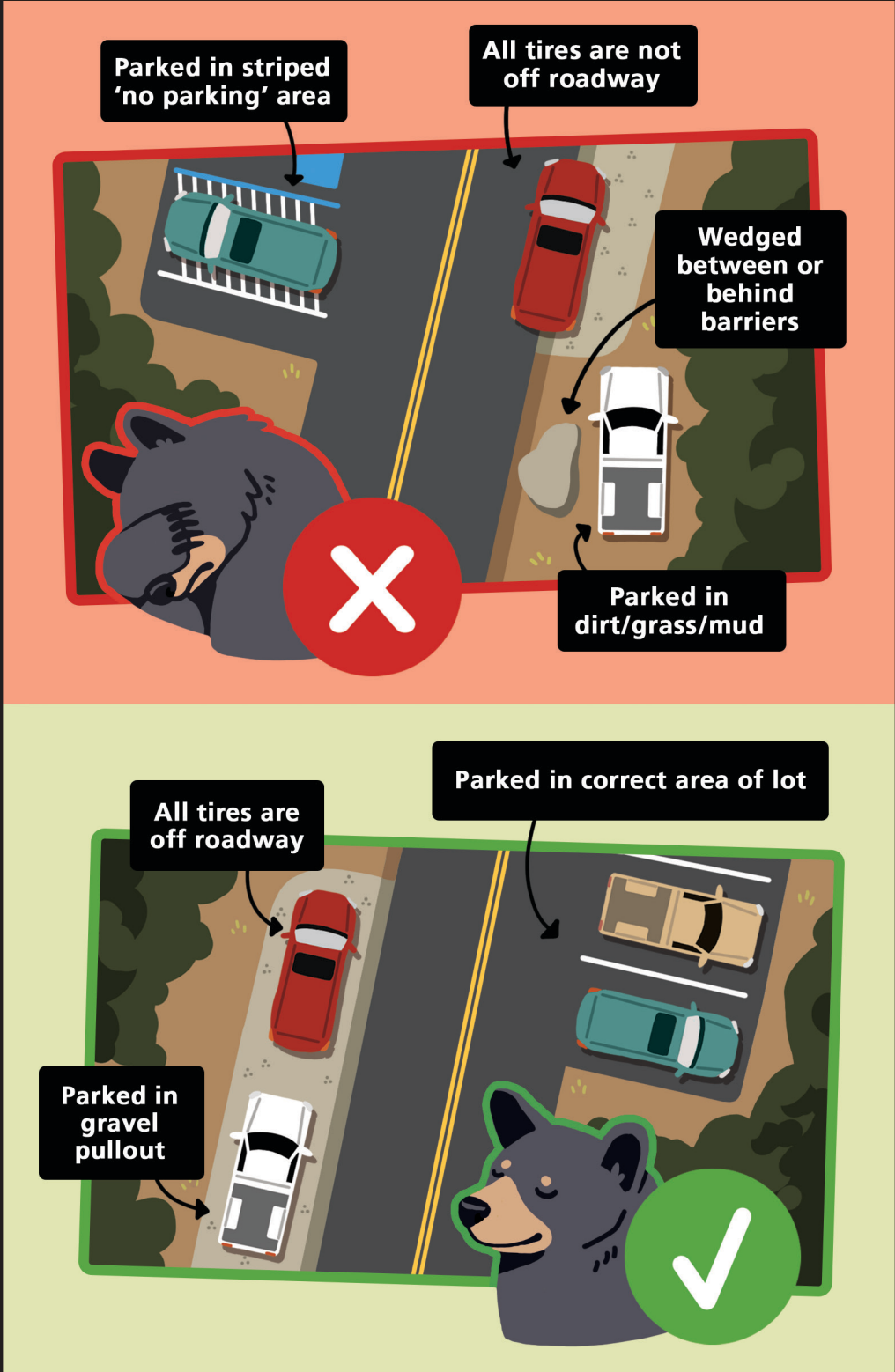
*Raccoon illustration on page 9 by Lisa Horstman. All others by Emma Oxford.*

**LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS**

Writing on or carving into trees, stones, or structures can cause permanent damage—it's also a crime! Taking a photo is always a better way to remember your time in the Smokies and helps preserve the park for others too.



**PARK SAFELY IN THE SMOKIES**



## ALWAYS USE THE RULE OF THUMB



When viewing wildlife, hold your arm out straight. If you can't cover the animal in your line of sight with your thumb, you're too close!



## STICK TO THE TRAIL

Help control erosion into Smokies waterways and protect important habitats for rare wildflowers, salamanders, and firefly larvae by staying on established trails.

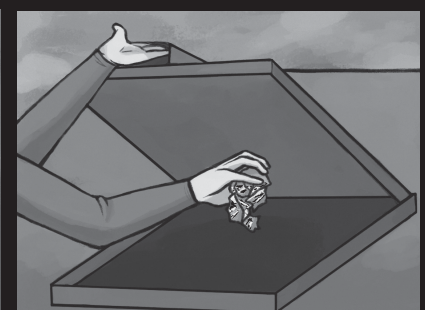
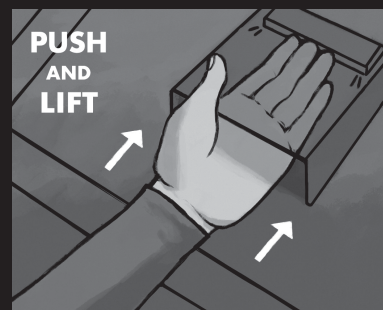
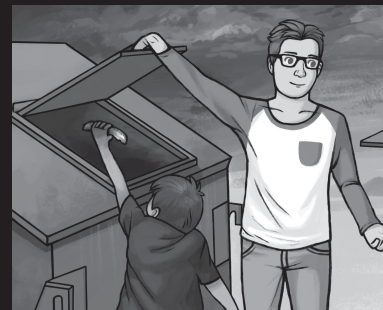


## KEEP PETS ON DESIGNATED TRAILS

Remember that the Gatlinburg Trail and Oconaluftee River Trail are the *only* pet-friendly trails in the park. All pets must be kept on a leash no longer than six feet at all times.

## BIN IT FOR THE BEARS

Help protect bears by packing out all trash and food waste and using bear-proof dumpsters in the park.





# IF YOU LOVE THE SMOKIES

Great Smoky Mountains National Park depends on four primary nonprofit partners as well as 2,800 park volunteers to help its staff meet the needs of 12+ million visitors and manage 522,000 acres of resources.

## Great Smoky Mountains Association

Since 1953, the nonprofit Great Smoky Mountains Association has supported the educational, scientific, and historical preservation efforts of the park by supporting park programs, operating the park's official bookstores, and publishing books and other media about the park's natural and cultural resources. Over the years, GSMA has contributed more than \$47 million to the national park.



GSMA members receive a number of benefits:

- Subscription to the biannual *Smokies Life* journal
- Digital access to the *Smokies LIVE* e-newsletter
- 15–20% discount on books, music, gifts, and products at park visitor centers and GSMA's web store
- 10% (or more) discount at 500+ additional nonprofit public lands partner stores
- Access to member-exclusive group hikes, backpacking excursions, and educational sessions
- Invitation to GSMA's Members Weekend

Join today by visiting [SmokiesInformation.org](http://SmokiesInformation.org) or call us at 888.898.9102, ext. 257.

Interested in working in the park? GSMA is currently hiring for retail, information desk, and miller positions! Rates begin at \$15/hr. plus opportunities for monthly sales and membership bonuses. Enjoy flexible scheduling and no evening shifts. Apply online at [SmokiesInformation.org/employment](http://SmokiesInformation.org/employment).

## Friends of the Smokies

Founded in 1993, supporters of Friends of the Smokies have contributed over \$75 million to the park. Funds help the park provide more than 12 million visitors a safe, memorable experience while protecting the historic and natural resources of the park. Every year, the park requests funding for numerous projects and programs that would be unfulfilled without the support of Friends.



Programs and projects include:

- 'Forever Places' endowment to support historic preservation
- 'Trails Forever' endowment to fund the skilled crews who lead trail rehabilitation
- 'Trails Now,' which funds materials for 'Trails Forever' projects
- Facility improvements and visitor amenities
- Campground renovations
- Cultural experiences and special events
- Search and Rescue vehicles and safety equipment
- Education programs to serve over 10,000 students every year
- Air and water quality monitoring
- Conservation and wildlife management

Programs like 'Forever Places' support the park's efforts to ensure that future generations will have the opportunity to enjoy the park and walk in the footsteps of those who once called these mountains home.

Your donation makes a difference. Learn more and become a 'Friend' by visiting [FriendsOfTheSmokies.org](http://FriendsOfTheSmokies.org).



For information about memberships and planned giving, email: [info@friendsofthesmokies.org](mailto:info@friendsofthesmokies.org) or call 800.845.5665.

Join the park's partners in helping to protect this special place for future generations

## Discover Life in America

The Smokies have long been renowned for their rich variety of life. Knowing what creatures reside here helps the National Park Service better protect the Smokies against threats like air pollution, wild-fire, habitat fragmentation, invasive species, and climate change.



Discover Life in America is a nonprofit partner that was launched in 1998 to manage the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI), an effort to identify and learn about every variety of plant and animal in the park. The organization works with leading biologists from around the globe to conduct this massive inventory.

Volunteers and interns become 'community scientists' who help with DLiA's work. These participants get an insider's look at the park, as well as firsthand knowledge of biology, field science, and laboratory practices. Funding comes from donations by individuals and institutions.

To date, DLiA has helped add more than 10,000 species to the inventory of life in the park, including more than 1,000 species completely new to science! Today there are more than 21,000 different kinds of organisms known to the park with new discov-

eries happening every day. You can support DLiA by purchasing the Smokies Species-a-Day perpetual calendar. Learn more at [DLiA.org](http://DLiA.org) or by calling 865.430.4757.

## Tremont

Born out of a need for residential education programs in the park, Great Smoky Mountains

Institute at Tremont has offered student and adult programs that promote a connection to nature for more than 50 years. Up to 6,000 students and adults annually attend workshops, camps, and school programs at the institute that are designed to promote curiosity and inspire learning.

Adult workshops include hiking, backpacking, community science, professional and teacher development, photography, and the Southern Appalachian Naturalist Certification program. Summer camps provide youth and their families opportunities to spend three to ten days exploring the national park and its wonders. Fees include meals, lodging, and most equipment.

Call 865.448.6709 or visit [GSMIT.org](http://GSMIT.org) for program dates and information and to learn how you can support life-changing learning experiences in the Smokies!

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS INSTITUTE AT TREMONT

# GSMNP

## BY THE NUMBERS



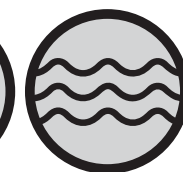
135

species of trees



250+

species of birds



2,900

miles of streams



90+ historic structures



3,400+ species of fungi



500,000+ acres of land



848 miles of trails



# THINGS TO DO IN THE SPRINGTIME

## Hit the trail

There are more than 800 miles of maintained trails in the Smokies ranging from leisurely quiet walkways to challenging mountain ascents. Just be sure to come prepared with rain gear, layers, and the rest of the hiking essentials (page 4).

Download a free copy of the park's trail map at [nps.gov](https://nps.gov) or purchase one for \$1 at a visitor center or kiosk. Visitor center bookstores offer hiking references including *Day Hikes of the Smokies* and *Hiking Trails of the Smokies*. Photo by Sheila Callahan



## Find the Smokies Most Wanted

Help scientists gather important information about plants and animals by using the free iNaturalist app in the park.

**1 Get the iNaturalist app**  
Download the app. Log in.  
Try it out.



**2 Record life you find in the Smokies**  
Find a cool organism. Take photos or sound recordings. Post it to iNaturalist. Repeat.

Up for a challenge? Look for the target species (like this little sweet Betsy) in the Smokies Most Wanted guide. Find the guide and more at [dliia.org/smokiesmostwanted](https://dliia.org/smokiesmostwanted).



Photo by misspt / iNaturalist

## Make a wildflower pilgrimage

Few places in the world can rival the abundance and diversity of spring wildflowers in the Smokies from late March through early May. Some of the best trails for viewing include Bradley Fork, Kanati Fork, Mingus Creek, Chestnut Top, Cucumber Gap, Cove Hardwood Nature Trail, and the park's quiet walkways.

The annual Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage returns in 2023 with guided wildflower walks and workshops April 26–29. Register and learn more at [wildflowerpilgrimage.org](https://wildflowerpilgrimage.org). Wildflower brochures and the *Wildflowers of the Smokies* field guide are available at visitor center bookstores. Photo by Chalice Keith



## Become a bird nerd

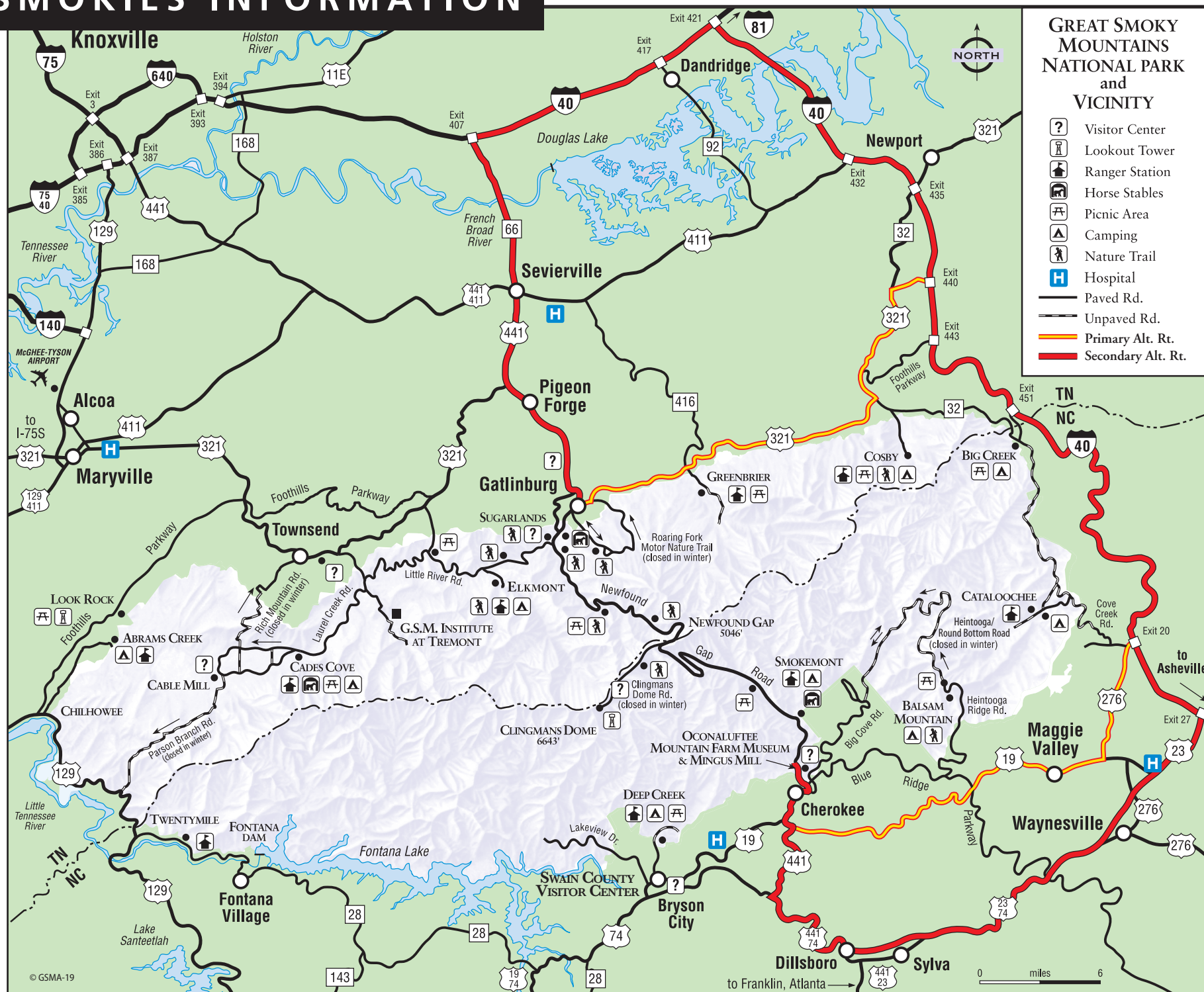
The Smokies are one of the best destinations for birding in the region thanks to their wide range of elevations and miles of protected habitat. In fact, many northern bird species find their southernmost range in the Smokies' higher elevations.

Once deciduous trees put out their leaves, it may become more difficult to see birds, but you can still keep an ear out for birdsongs. Apps like iNaturalist and eBird help users identify birds using photos or sound recordings. Photo by Warren Lynn



# SMOKIES INFORMATION

For more information, go to [nps.gov/grsm](http://nps.gov/grsm)



## Information

General park info:  
865.436.1200  
[nps.gov/grsm](http://nps.gov/grsm)

## Backcountry info:

865.436.1297  
[smokiespermits.nps.gov](http://smokiespermits.nps.gov)

## Road status updates:

[twitter.com/smokiesroadsnps](https://twitter.com/smokiesroadsnps)

## Emergencies

911

## Park Headquarters

865.436.9171

## Cherokee Police

828.497.4131

## Gatlinburg Police

865.436.5181

## Accessibility

Restrooms at Cades

Cove, Oconaluftee, and Sugarlands visitor centers are fully accessible. For more information about accessibility, go to [nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/accessibility.htm](http://nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/accessibility.htm).

## Avoid the fine

A valid parking tag must be displayed when parked for more than 15 minutes anywhere in the park. Pets are only permitted on the Gatlinburg and

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