



## SMOKIES GUIDE

The Official Newspaper of the Smokies • Fall 2024



Kendra Straub,  
Management and Program Analyst

A monarch butterfly feeds on the nectar of tall boneset, a plant that flowers in early fall. Monarchs must make many stopovers during fall migration to sustain themselves on their journeys. *Photo by Beth Dhunjisha.*

### Witness a Migration Marvel this Fall

*Park provides important habitat for wildlife on the move*

**A**utumn is a time of transition in the Smokies. As hot summer afternoons give way to crisp fall days, all manner of winged species pass through the park on their way south for the winter.

Perhaps the most well-known fall migrant is the monarch butterfly. Measuring four inches across and weighing less than half a gram, these remarkable insects journey as many as 2,800 miles each year from summer habitat in the United States and Canada back to their wintering grounds in central Mexico.

In the Smokies, migrating monarchs typically pass through from mid-September until late October. They are most often seen in Cades Cove but can also be glimpsed in other areas that offer the open habitats they favor, such as Catalochee or Oconaluftee. Placing trackable tags

on monarchs is one way scientists are gathering more information about them, and the public is invited to help with tagging events held each fall by Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont. Learn more at [gsmit.org](http://gsmit.org).

Monarchs aren't the Smokies' only fall migrants. Through early October, head to high-elevation overlooks like Newfound Gap, Clingmans Dome, Indian Gap, and Look Rock Tower to see broad-winged hawks on their way to Central and South America. Also heading south are various species of warblers, buntings, tanagers, and vireos. Scientists have only recently begun to learn about dragonfly migrations. These insects don't travel in large groups, but some migrate hundreds of miles. Find out how you can help these and other species once your Smokies visit ends at [nps.gov/subjects/connect-edconservation/get-involved.htm](http://nps.gov/subjects/connect-edconservation/get-involved.htm).

### Words with a Ranger

I didn't grow up camping or hiking, but I did spend a lot of time on the beach in Maine. It wasn't until I was in college that I discovered my love of outdoor recreation beyond building sandcastles and staring at the crashing waves—both of which I still love to do.

Now, as the management and program analyst in the Smokies, I ultimately help others enjoy the great outdoors by coordinating our Visitor Experience Stewardship program and supporting the park's long-term planning efforts.

Many visitors don't realize that Great Smoky Mountains National Park is the most visited national park in the country. I'm inspired to know I work in a place beloved by so many people, but such high visitation levels can also present a challenge: How do we offer

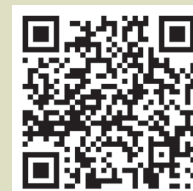
*Continued on page 12*



### 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



GreatSmokyNPS

# SMOKIES TRIP PLANNER



## Visitor centers

**Sugarlands, Oconaluftee, and Cades Cove:** open 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Sept.–Nov.; 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Dec. (Cades Cove Wednesday hours 7 a.m.–3 p.m. through Sept.)  
**Clingmans Dome:** open 9:30 a.m.–6 p.m. Sept.–Oct.; 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Nov.; closed Dec.  
**GSM Institute at Tremont:** open 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Tuesday–Saturday.



## Road closures

- **Cades Cove Loop Road** is closed to vehicles on Wednesdays from May 1 through September 25 to allow for non-motorized recreation.
- Many secondary and higher-elevation roads close in late fall and remain closed in winter. Refer to the map on pages 8-9 for closing dates.
- All park roads are subject to temporary closure during dangerous driving conditions. Visit [nps.gov/grsm](https://nps.gov/grsm) and click “Alerts.”



## Shuttle services

Local shuttle services offer convenient transportation to and from the park’s most iconic destinations. Routes, schedules, pricing, and pick-up/drop-off locations vary. Visit [go.nps.gov/grsmshuttles](https://go.nps.gov/grsmshuttles) for a list of authorized concessioners.



## Weather

In autumn, a pattern of warm, sunny days and crisp, clear nights emerges by mid-September. However, cool, rainy days may also occur. Snow may fall at higher elevations beginning in November.

As winter arrives, days can be sunny and 65°F or snowy with highs in the 20s. Snows of an inch or more may occur at lower elevations.



## Campgrounds 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 is considered 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).

Campground	No. of Sites	Elevation	Open Dates 2024	Nightly Fees	Max RV Length
<b>Abrams Creek</b>	16	1,125'	4/26 – 10/27	\$30	12'
<b>Balsam Mountain</b>	43	5,310'	5/10 – 10/14	\$30	30'
<b>Big Creek</b>	12	1,700'	3/29 – 10/27	\$30	tents only
<b>Cades Cove</b>	159	1,807'	open year-round	\$30	35–40'
<b>Cataloochee</b>	27	2,610'	3/29 – 10/27	\$30	31'
<b>Cosby</b>	157	2,459'	3/29 – 10/27	\$30	25'
<b>Deep Creek</b>	92	1,800'	3/29 – 10/27	\$30	26'
<b>Elkmont</b>	220	2,150'	3/8 – 11/24	\$30	32–35'
<b>Look Rock</b>	68	2,600'	4/26 – 10/27	\$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. Heintooaga closes October 14; Big Creek and Look Rock close October 27; Cosby closes October 28; Collins Creek and Twin Creeks Pavilion close October 31; Chimneys closes December 2. Picnic pavilions may be reserved for a fee at [recreation.gov](https://recreation.gov).



## Accommodations

**LeConte Lodge** (accessible by trail only, closes November 27) provides the only lodging in the park. Advance reservations only. 865.429.5704, [lecontelodge.com](https://lecontelodge.com)



## Services

There are no gas stations, charging stations, showers, or restaurants in the national park. Limited food options are available in visitor centers and camp stores.



## Event reservations

Reserve the Appalachian Clubhouse or Spence Cabin at Elkmont for daytime events at [recreation.gov](https://recreation.gov). Cabin and clubhouse close October 31.



## Pets

Pets are allowed in 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 on a leash no longer than six feet. See page 6.

## SMOKIES GUIDE

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

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

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### 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 or under and strongly recommended for all.

Cades Cove Loop Road is open exclusively to cyclists and pedestrians on Wednesdays from May 1 through September 25. 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.

- Cades Cove 865.448.9009 [cadescovestables.com](http://cadescovestables.com)
- Smokemont 828.497.2373 [smokemontridingstable.com](http://smokemontridingstable.com)
- Sugarlands 865.436.5470 [sugarlandsstables.com](http://sugarlandsstables.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 in the backcountry 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 ([go.nps.gov/grsmmaps](http://go.nps.gov/grsmmaps)), 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 [SmokiesLife.org](http://SmokiesLife.org).

**2. Plan your trip.** Call the park's Backcountry Office

from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or drop into the office located within Sugarlands Visitor Center for trip-planning help. The office is open to visitors during visitor center hours. 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.

Fall hikers should be especially aware of abrupt weather changes and the danger of hypothermia—the dangerous lowering of body temperature. The combination of rain, cold, and wind (especially at the higher elevations) is extremely dangerous.

See page 11 for more hiking tips and trip essentials.



### Special events and ranger activities

See pages 4–5 for ranger activities, inquire at a visitor center, or visit [go.nps.gov/grsmcalendar](http://go.nps.gov/grsmcalendar) for a full calendar of events.



*The only two pet-friendly trails in the Smokies are the Gatlinburg Trail in Tennessee and the Oconaluftee River Trail in North Carolina.*

**Learn the BARK principles so you and your pet can have a safe and fun visit in the Smokies.**

### 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



**MOVING ROCKS HARMS AQUATIC LIFE.**

**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



**10,400+** species of insects



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

**Download the free NPS App**

for interactive maps, tours, and more!



# RANGER ACTIVITIES






Activity schedules are weather-dependent and subject to change. For a full list of programs, inquire at a visitor center or visit:

[go.nps.gov/grsmcalendar](https://go.nps.gov/grsmcalendar)



NORTH DISTRICT (near Gatlinburg, TN)	PROGRAMS RUN THROUGH OCT. 31	WHEN	MEETING LOCATION	DURATION/ ACCESSIBILITY
<b>Wildlife Wonders Talk:</b> Wondering what wild things live in the park? Come learn about Smokies biodiversity from bats and bugs to bears and much more.		<b>Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday</b> 11 a.m.	Noah Bud Ogle parking area (Cherokee Orchard Road)	30 minutes
<b>Junior Ranger Ramble:</b> Join a ranger for a walk, talk, or activity to learn about natural and cultural history and become a park steward. Topics vary daily—inquire at the visitor center about accessibility.		<b>Friday, Saturday</b> 11 a.m.	Sugarlands Visitor Center	1 hour
<b>Walker Sisters Hike:</b> Take a walk through the woods 2.2 miles roundtrip to the Walker family homesite and discover the folks who once lived in the mountains. Learn about communities, religion, education, and the “modern” conveniences of the day.		<b>Sunday, Friday</b> 11 a.m.	Little Greenbrier School	1.5 hours
<b>Vital Signs of the Smokies Talk:</b> Join a ranger for a talk exploring the beauty and biodiversity of the park and learn about the vital signs of the Smokies that help us to track and better understand the challenges faced by this fragile ecosystem.		<b>Monday, Thursday</b> 12 p.m.	Newfound Gap overlook	30 minutes
<b>Bear with Us Talk:</b> Come learn all about an iconic symbol of Great Smoky Mountains National Park—black bears!		<b>Monday, Wednesday</b> 11 a.m.	Sugarlands Visitor Center patio	30 minutes
<b>A Tale of Two States Talk:</b> Come stand where President Franklin D. Roosevelt dedicated the park in 1940. Learn about how the people of two states came together to help create Great Smoky Mountains National Park.		<b>Tuesday, Friday</b> 12 p.m.	Newfound Gap Rockefeller Memorial	30 minutes
<b>Porters Creek Hike:</b> Ever wanted to be a detective? Join us as we search for signs of early Smokies homesteads and learn about cultural and natural history on this two-mile hike.		<b>Monday</b> 11 a.m.	Porters Creek trailhead (Greenbrier)	3 hours
<b>Cove Hardwood Hike:</b> Join a ranger for a family-friendly one-mile hike through an old-growth hardwood forest, leafy ferns, and babbling creeks with rich stories of the past.		<b>Wednesday</b> 10 a.m.	Chimneys Picnic Area, group picnic site	2 hours
<b>History of Daisy Town Walk:</b> Explore the many restored cabins and vacation homes of Daisy Town and learn about the birth of regional tourism before the Great Smoky Mountains became a national park.		<b>Tuesday</b> 11 a.m.	Jakes Creek parking lot (Elkmont)	1 hour
<b>Cosby Nature Trail Hike:</b> Learn about what makes this forest so unique and diverse as you explore a one-mile loop trail with a ranger.		<b>Saturday</b> 10 a.m.	Cosby Picnic Area parking lot	2 hours

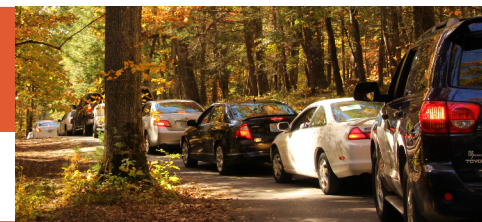



SOUTH DISTRICT (near Cherokee, NC)	PROGRAMS RUN THROUGH OCT. 31	WHEN	MEETING LOCATION	DURATION/ ACCESSIBILITY
<b>Wild about the Smokies Talk:</b> Join a ranger for a short talk about elk behavior, habitat, and ongoing conservation efforts to help them thrive in the Smokies. Get the inside scoop on where to spot these majestic creatures and how to do it safely.		Daily 3 p.m.	Oconaluftee Visitor Center porch	30 minutes 
<b>Clingmans Dome Guided Hike:</b> Join a ranger on this 1.5-mile roundtrip guided hike that leads to majestic views atop Clingmans Dome Observation Tower. Hike through the park's unique spruce-fir forest and discover all that the Smokies has to offer.		Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday 11 a.m.	Clingmans Dome parking area	1.5 hours
<b>Down on the Farm:</b> Immerse yourself in Smokies history! See how families survived here with demonstrations such as blacksmithing, fencing, or broom-making. Program topic varies. Check the Oconaluftee Visitor Center for more information.		Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 1–3 p.m.	Mountain Farm Museum	Drop in 
<b>Deep Creek Waterfall Hike:</b> Deep Creek is defined by gushing waterfalls and peaceful streams. Join a ranger on this two-mile roundtrip guided hike to discover these wonders and learn about the natural and cultural history of the area.		Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday 10:30 a.m.	Deep Creek trailhead	1 hour
<b>Return of the Elk Talk:</b> Learn about how elk—which were nearly extinct due to over-hunting and loss of habitat across North America—managed to return to the Smokies, filling Cataloochee Valley once again with their echoing bugles every fall.		Saturday, Sunday 1 p.m.	Cataloochee Valley	1 hour
<b>Old-Time Music Jam:</b> Join in with local musicians playing old-time songs on traditional Appalachian instruments like the banjo and mountain dulcimer. All experience levels and instruments are welcome.		First and third Saturday of the month 1 p.m.	Oconaluftee Visitor Center porch	2 hours 



**DUE TO HEAVY FALL TRAFFIC, REGULARLY SCHEDULED RANGER ACTIVITIES IN CADES COVE WILL END ON SEPTEMBER 30.**

Some programming may continue on a day-to-day basis. Check a visitor center or the online calendar (see opposite page) for the most up-to-date information, and please allow extra time for your visit to Cades Cove.



CADES COVE (near Townsend, TN)	PROGRAMS RUN THROUGH SEPT. 30	WHEN	MEETING LOCATION	DURATION/ ACCESSIBILITY
<b>Bear Aware Talk:</b> Stop by for a short chat about bears in the Smokies, what to do if you see one, and how it takes all of us working together to keep them healthy and wild.		Sunday, Thursday 9:30–11:30 a.m. Monday, Saturday 1:30–3:30 p.m.	Cades Cove Orientation Shelter	Drop in 
<b>Old-Time Technology Walk:</b> Take a walking tour of the historic buildings in the mill area to learn how residents used innovative technology to make life in Cades Cove more comfortable and efficient.		Sunday, Tuesday, Friday 11 a.m.	Cable Mill Historic Area, Program Circle	30 minutes 
<b>Wild Things:</b> Bring the whole family for an interactive experience to learn about some of the creatures that call Cades Cove home. Experiences vary daily—inquire at the ranger station for accessibility.		Sunday, Tuesday, Friday 1 p.m.	Cable Mill Historic Area, Program Circle	45 minutes–1 hour
<b>Stream Connections Walk:</b> Learn about and look for critters found in the waterways of the park while discovering what they reveal about the health of our streams. Be prepared to walk a quarter mile and get wet. Closed-toe shoes are recommended.		Sunday, Thursday 1 p.m.	Cades Cove Amphitheater	1.5 hours
<b>Cove Life Talk:</b> Visit a historic cabin to learn about daily life in Cades Cove prior to the creation of the national park. The trail to the cabin is a half mile roundtrip.		Tuesday 9–11 a.m.	John Oliver Cabin	Drop in 
<b>Drop into History:</b> Watch historical demonstrations related to life in Cades Cove and possibly try some for yourself. Demos will vary but may include blacksmithing, Appalachian music, quilting, storytelling, doll-making, weaving, or other skills.		Thursday 10 a.m.–2 p.m.	Cable Mill Historic Area	Drop in 



# THINGS TO DO IN THE FALL

## Explore the Smokies' hidden gems

An 18-month closure of Laurel Falls Trail starts this fall, allowing crews to make much-needed improvements to the popular trail. But for this and other iconic locations such as Clingmans Dome, Alum Cave, and Rainbow Falls, alternatives abound within the 816-square-mile national park.

Instead of Laurel Falls, consider visiting Hen Wallow Falls in the park's Cosby area. The trailhead at Cosby Picnic Area offers easy parking, and the lightly used trail provides a pleasant 4.4-mile roundtrip hike through hemlock and rhododendron forest. At 90 feet, the falls are ten feet higher than Laurel Falls.

Leave the crowds behind when exploring Smokies history at Metcalf Bottoms Trail. Hike 0.7 miles roundtrip to the one-room Little Greenbrier Schoolhouse, built in 1881, or make it 2.5 miles to reach the Walker Sisters Cabin, where the five unmarried sisters continued to live for decades after the park's creation.

In lieu of Clingmans Dome, consider a scenic drive along Foothills Parkway West. Stop at Look Rock Tower and hike 0.8 miles roundtrip to panoramic views of the Smokies and East Tennessee. On the North Carolina side of the park, Balsam Mountain Road and Lakeview Drive offer gorgeous scenery without the crowds. *Foothills Parkway West photo by Joye Ardyn Durham.*



## Find pet-friendly trails

Pets are prohibited on most trails in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, but two exceptions are Gatlinburg Trail near Sugarlands Visitor Center in Tennessee and Oconaluftee River Trail near Oconaluftee Visitor Center in North Carolina. On these two trails, pets are welcome but should be kept on a leash no longer than six feet at all times. Pets are also allowed in frontcountry campgrounds and along roads in the Smokies but must be appropriately restrained.

If you're looking for more options nearby, consider exploring a few of the national forests surrounding the national park. Sections of Cherokee National Forest to the west and northeast of the Smokies are great options with many trails to choose from, as are Pisgah National Forest to the northeast, Nantahala National Forest to the south, and the Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness and Citico Creek Wilderness to the west. You can also find and compare dozens of pet-friendly trails using the AllTrails app and the "dog-friendly" suitability filter. *Photo by Michele Sons.*



*Check out the BARK Ranger gear available at park visitor centers!*



## Enjoy a special fall event

FALL EVENTS	WHEN?	MEETING LOCATION
<b>Stargazing Party:</b> Join rangers and local astronomy clubs to enjoy the night sky in Cades Cove. Be prepared to walk approximately a half mile and bring blankets, camp chairs, binoculars, flashlights, water, snacks, and layers for cool weather. Check <a href="https://go.nps.gov/grsmcalendar">go.nps.gov/grsmcalendar</a> for updates in the event of weather-related cancellation.	<b>September 14</b> Sunset	Cades Cove Orientation Shelter
<b>Mountain Life Festival:</b> Peek into the past and share in some of the traditional fall abundance of Appalachia. Learn what life was like for families who lived on lands that later became Great Smoky Mountains National Park as you interact with living historians demonstrating blacksmithing, sorghum milling, apple cider pressing, soap making, live music, and more.	<b>September 28</b> 10 a.m.–4 p.m.	Mountain Farm Museum at Oconaluftee Visitor Center
<b>Cades Cove Sorghum-Making Demonstrations:</b> Learn all about growing, harvesting, and preserving a Smoky Mountain staple at live sorghum-making demonstrations. Don't forget to try a sample!	<b>September 20, 21, 22</b> <b>November 14, 15, 16, 17</b> <b>November 22, 23, 24</b> 10 a.m.–5 p.m.	Cable Mill Historic Area



Old-fashioned toy making on display at the Mountain Life Festival. Photo by Kristine Brunzman.



Hikers use an adaptive wheelchair to explore Cooper Road Trail. NPS photo.

## Free adaptive programs and equipment check-out

Those with physical disabilities can take advantage of free equipment rentals and an exciting series of guided outdoor activities in the park this fall. In the ranger-led outings listed below, participants of all abilities and their families can register to use off-road wheelchairs provided by the park free of charge or bring their own equipment to hike or bike while learning about the natural and cultural history of the Smokies. **Registration is required to ensure adequate equipment and volunteer support through Catalyst Sports at [catalystsports.org/great-smoky-mountain-adaptive-hike-bike](https://catalystsports.org/great-smoky-mountain-adaptive-hike-bike).**

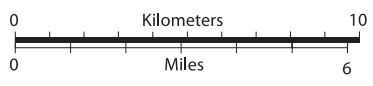
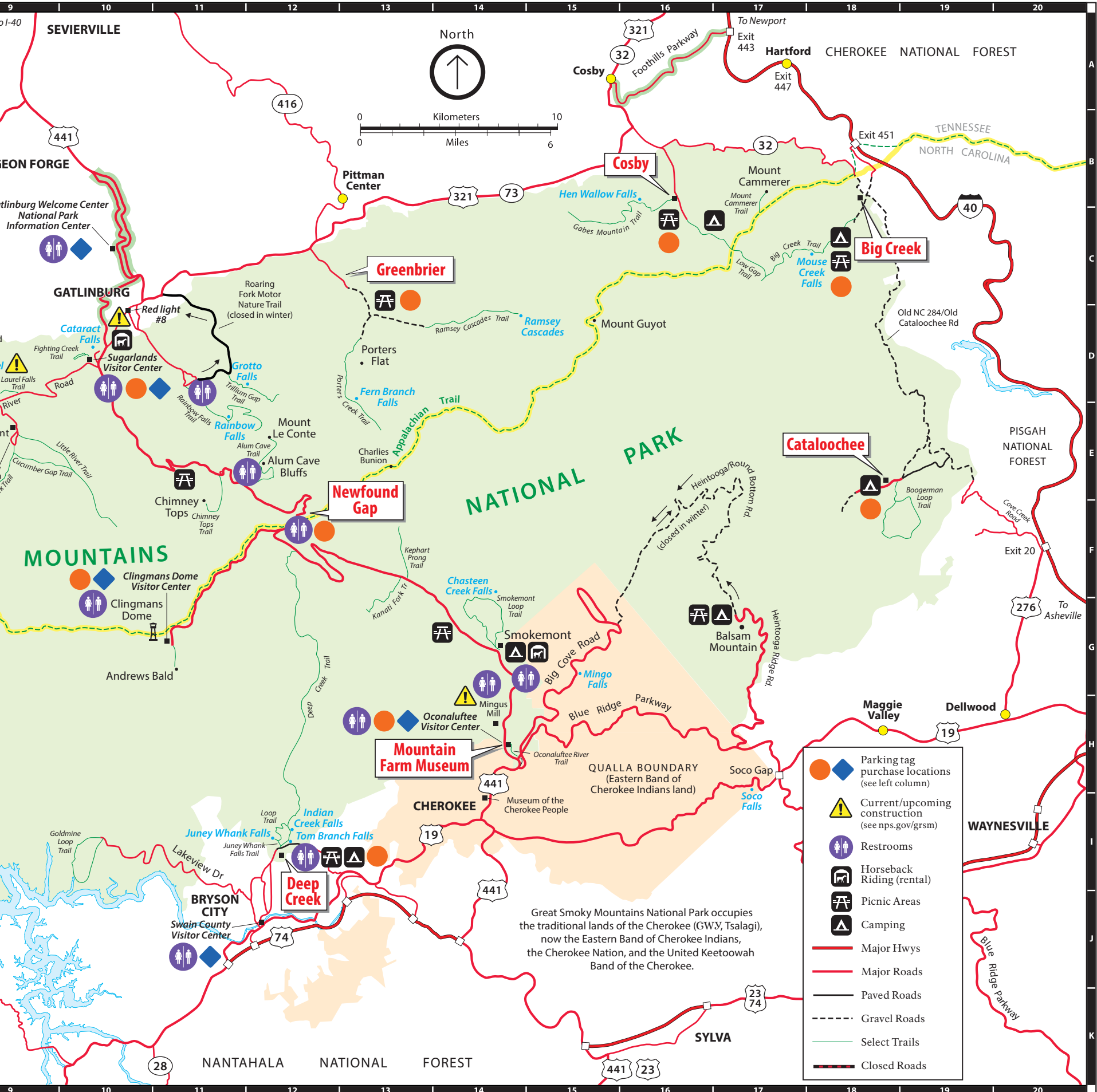
Although space in these programs is limited, wheelchair users can also explore the Smokies anytime by checking out one of the park's off-road GRIT Freedom chairs available Mondays and Tuesdays at Sugarlands Visitor Center on a first-come, first-served basis and reservable Wednesday through Sunday online at [catalystsports.org/grit-chair-rental](https://catalystsports.org/grit-chair-rental) through September.

Users must register at least three business days in advance and can do so up to 30 days ahead of time. GRIT Freedom chairs have been evaluated and approved for use on Gatlinburg Trail, Little River Trail, Sugarlands Valley Nature Trail, Bradley Fork Trail, Oconaluftee River Trail, Deep Creek Trail, Middle Prong Trail, John Oliver Trail, Elijah Oliver Trail, and the areas around Sugarlands, Oconaluftee, and Cades Cove visitor centers.

FALL 2024 ADAPTIVE PROGRAMS	WHEN?	MEETING LOCATION	DURATION
<b>Adaptive Hike NC</b>	<b>September 7</b>	Bradley Fork trailhead	2 hours ♿
<b>Adaptive Mountain Bike NC</b>	<b>September 14</b>	Deep Creek trailhead	2 hours ♿
<b>Adaptive Mountain Bike TN</b>	<b>September 15</b>	Cades Cove Visitor Center	2 hours ♿
<b>Adaptive Hike TN</b>	<b>October 5</b>	Middle Prong trailhead	2 hours ♿







- Parking tag purchase locations (see left column)
- Current/upcoming construction (see nps.gov/grsm)
- 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), the Cherokee Nation, and the United Keetoowah Band of the Cherokee.

WAYNESVILLE

**MOUNTAINS**

**NATIONAL PARK**

**Mountain Farm Museum**

**Cataloochee**

**Newfound Gap**

**Big Creek**

**Greenbrier**

**Cosby**

**Pittman Center**

**GATLINBURG**

**SEVIERVILLE**

**CLINGMANS DOME**

**Mountain Farm Museum**

**Deep Creek**

**BRYSON CITY**

**SEVIERVILLE**

**CLINGMANS DOME**

**Mountain Farm Museum**

**Deep Creek**

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**CLINGMANS DOME**

**Mountain Farm Museum**

**Deep Creek**

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# THINGS TO DO IN THE FALL, CONT.

## Hit the trail

There's nothing better than the sound of crunching leaves on the trail. Set out to see the Smokies' famous fall color on more than 800 miles of maintained trails in the park ranging from leisurely quiet walkways to challenging mountain ascents. Just be sure to come prepared with rain gear, layers, and plenty of water and snacks.

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 Michele Sons.*



Find the Smokies Most Wanted

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



## Immerse yourself in history

Great Smoky Mountains National Park is home to historic mills, churches, cemeteries, and one of the best collections of log structures in the eastern United States. Cades Cove, Cataloochee, Elkmont, Oconaluftee, and Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail are all particularly good destinations to see historic structures in the park.

The Museum of the Cherokee People just beyond the park boundary in Cherokee, North Carolina, is another great destination where visitors can learn about the history, culture, and stories of the Cherokee people. Visit [motcp.org](https://motcp.org) for hours, ticket prices, and details. *Photo by Paul Driessche.*

**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.

## Nerd on birds

Autumn is a great time for birding in the Smokies since so many species are on the move. In mid-September, migrant hawks and harriers pass through the Smokies, and summer residents like orioles, wood thrushes, tanagers, and flycatchers begin to depart for their southern wintering grounds. In late October, hikers may hear male ruffed grouse as they stand on drumming logs and beat their wings to mark their territory.

You can contribute to ongoing research into these species by taking photos or audio recordings of what you come across in the Smokies and using the iNaturalist app to share your observations.

*Photo by D. Machado.*



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

*Photo by Erica Mitchell*







## Words with a Ranger

Continued from page 1

quality experiences for everyone while protecting the park's landscape and cultural history?

One place we're currently trying to strike that balance is at Laurel Falls Trail. Over the next 18 months, we'll be closing this popular hiking destination to rehabilitate the trail, improve the viewing platform at the falls, and add 50 new parking spaces to replace the unsafe, ad hoc roadside parking that had once been a regular sight near the trailhead. We may never be able to build enough parking to meet demand, but this project will help maximize visitor access while also protecting natural resources and improving visitor safety. (In the meantime, see page 6 for alternative hikes.)

In addition to enhancing the park's built environment, we're working to make trip planning as easy as possible with a new online tool at [go.nps.gov/smokiestips](https://go.nps.gov/smokiestips) that predicts how congested the park will be on any given day. Be sure to check it out if you have flexibility around when you visit or prefer to avoid the crowds. If your plans aren't flexible, shuttle services can help. Shuttles eliminate the stress of finding parking and ensure you'll arrive where you want, when you want. Visit [go.nps.gov/grsm-shuttles](https://go.nps.gov/grsm-shuttles) for park-authorized concessioners.

The Smokies have so much to offer, and I know we can find innovative solutions to make this beloved park accessible and enjoyable for everyone. It's certainly a puzzle at times, but when we can make plans and measure improvements in the real world, it makes it all worth it.



Raccoon and dog illustration 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.



### BIN IT FOR THE BEARS

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



### 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.





**PLEASE LEAVE YOUR FIREWOOD AT HOME**

Use only heat-treated or dead and down wood within the park. Harmful pests can hitchhike into the park on your firewood, which could kill millions of trees.

**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!

**PARK SAFELY IN THE SMOKIES**



# IF YOU LOVE THE SMOKIES

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

## Smokies Life



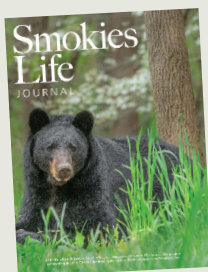
Smokies Life (formerly Great Smoky Mountains Association) brings people of all backgrounds together as advocates and stewards to honor, sustain, and protect Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Since 1953, Smokies Life has provided more than \$50 million to the park. Today, the organization operates the park's official bookstores, publishes books and other media about the Smokies, and supports the park's educational, scientific, and historical preservation efforts.

Become a Smokies Life Park Keeper today by visiting [SmokiesLife.org](http://SmokiesLife.org) or calling 888.898.9102, ext. 257.

Interested in working in the park? Smokies Life is currently hiring for retail and information desk positions with rates beginning at \$15.75/hr. Apply online at [SmokiesLife.org/employment](http://SmokiesLife.org/employment).

### Park Keepers enjoy...



- Bi-annual *Smokies Life Journal*
- *Smokies Live* e-newsletter

- Discounts at park bookstores and local businesses



- Exclusive group hikes and expert-led events



## Friends of the Smokies

Since 1993, Friends of the Smokies has raised over \$85 million to assist GSMNP in providing visitors a safe, memorable experience while protecting the park's historic and natural resources.

Every year, the park requests funding for projects and programs that would be unfulfilled without support from Friends.

Examples include:

- Trail rehabilitation
- Preservation of historic structures
- Facility repairs, upgrades, and renovations
- Accessibility improvements
- First responder equipment and training
- Educational programs for 10,000+ students
- Conservation and wildlife management

Learn more and become a 'Friend' at [FriendsOfTheSmokies.org](http://FriendsOfTheSmokies.org).



## Discover Life in America

Discover Life in America (DLiA) is devoted to cataloging every living species in the Smokies through the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory. This ongoing project helps the National Park Service better understand and protect the 21,000 kinds of organisms documented in the Smokies, with more discovered every day.

DLiA also offers internship, volunteer, community science, and education opportunities that provide firsthand experiences in the Smokies, promote the importance of biodiversity, and foster stewardship of the natural world. Learn how you can support DLiA at [dlia.org](http://dlia.org) or call 865.430.4757.

Join the discovery!



Record life in the park with the iNaturalist app! [dlia.org](http://dlia.org)



## Tremont

Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont offers kids and adults an opportunity to connect with nature through immersive, multi-day experiences in the national park. Through residential workshops, summer camps, and school programs, Tremont promotes curiosity and inspires learning for thousands of individuals each year.

Adult workshops include the Southern Appalachian Naturalist Certification program, photography courses, backpacking adventures, community science, and professional development for teachers.

Visit [gsmit.org](http://gsmit.org) for program information or to learn how you can support life-changing learning experiences in the Smokies. *Header photo by Rich Bryant.*

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS INSTITUTE AT TREMONT

# GSMNP BY THE NUMBERS



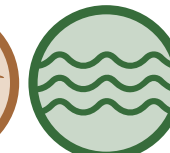
135

species of trees



250+

species of birds



2,900

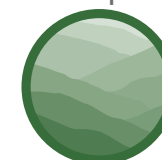
miles of streams



90+ historic structures



3,500+ species of fungi



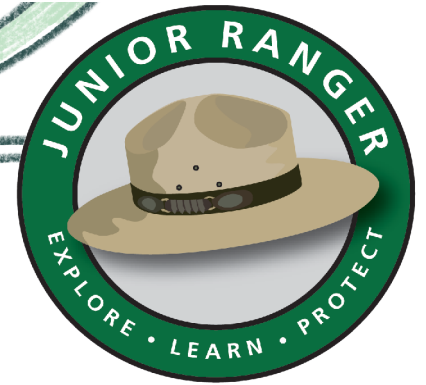
500,000+ acres of land



848 miles of trails



# PLAY



Life in the mountains wasn't all work and no play. Toys were handmade from everyday materials like corn shucks, string, or wood scraps. Games included strategy games, like checkers and fox and geese; active games, like tag and hide and seek; tests of skill, like darts and graces; as well as puzzles, riddles, and games of chance. **TEST YOUR BRAIN** by trying to solve these riddles, then make up your own Smoky Mountain riddle to fool a friend!

**1. WHAT HAS AN EYE BUT CANNOT SEE?**

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**2. WHAT HAS A HEAD BUT NEVER WEEPS, HAS A BED BUT NEVER SLEEPS, HAS A BANK BUT NO MONEY, AND CAN RUN BUT NEVER WALKS?**

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Illustration by  
Jesse White



**3. I'M ALWAYS HUNGRY, I MUST BE FED. THE FINGER I TOUCH WILL SOON TURN RED. WHAT AM I?**

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**YOUR RIDDLE:**

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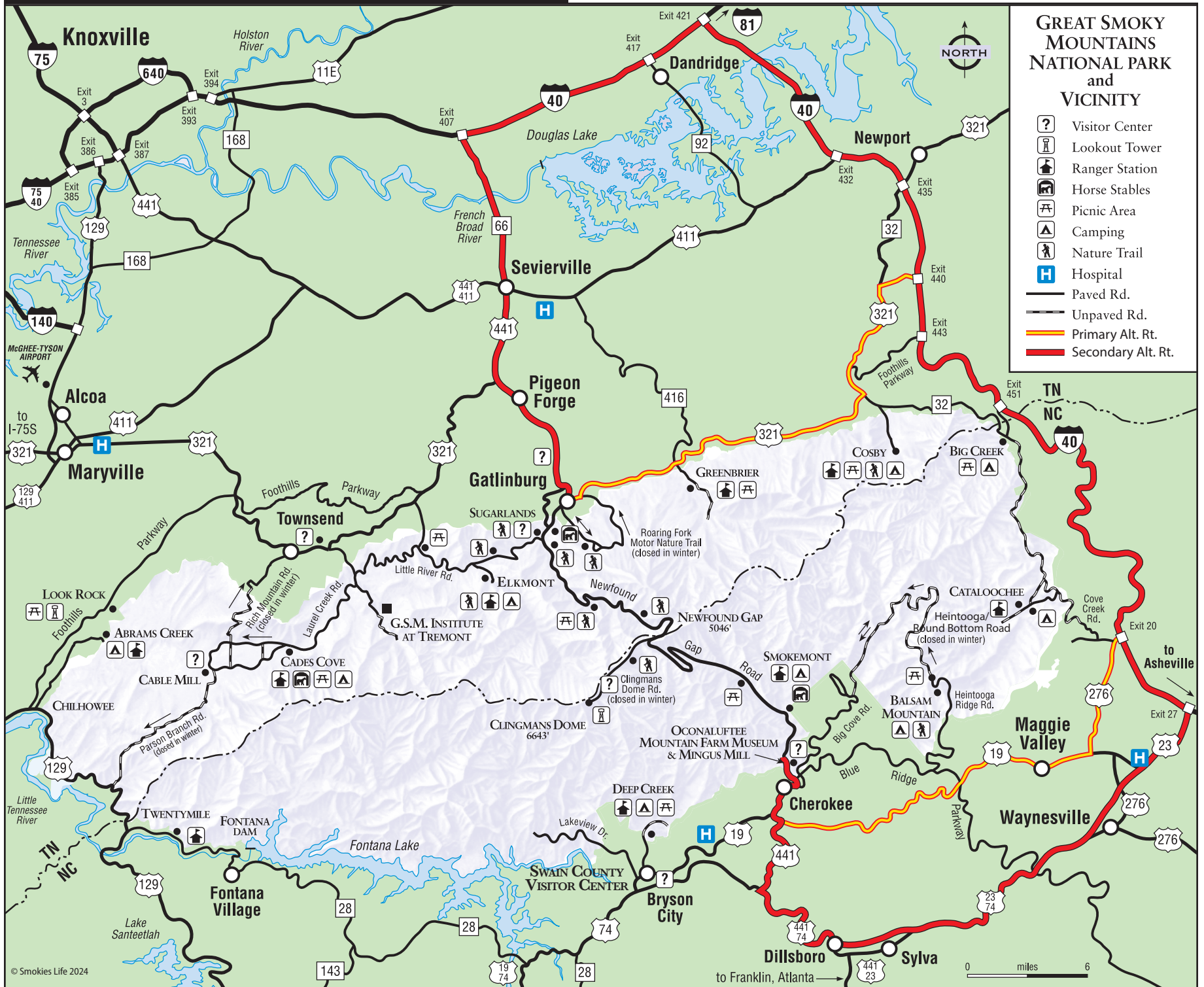
**ANSWERS TO RIDDLES:**  
1. A needle or potato or hurricane  
2. A river  
3. A fire

**THIS ACTIVITY IS ADAPTED FROM GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK'S NEW JR. RANGER ACTIVITY GUIDE! WORK AS A TEAM TO FILL OUT THE GUIDE AND EARN A JR. RANGER BADGE. AVAILABLE AT ANY PARK VISITOR CENTER!**



# SMOKIES INFORMATION

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



## Information

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

## Backcountry info:

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

## Emergencies

911  
Cherokee Police  
828.497.4131

Gatlinburg Police  
865.436.5181

## Avoid the fine

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

## 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](https://nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/accessibility.htm).