



SMOKIES GUIDE



LIZ DUPREE PHOTO

RANGER-LED WALKS & TALKS—SEE PAGES 11-13



THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK & AUTUMN 2015



DAVID LUTTRELL PHOTO

Great Smoky Mountains National Park is a wonderland where families can explore the great outdoors and spend quality time together.

Head Out to “Find Your Park” this Year

Ninety-nine years ago the National Park Service was created to defend Yellowstone and other sites against wildlife poachers and artifact collectors who were hauling away pieces of our national parks and monuments by the wagon load. Today the same Service protects over 400 parks, seashores, historic sites, battlefields, trails, lakeshores, and other national treasures in such a way as to “leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

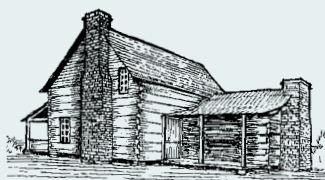
In preparation for the 100th birthday of the National Park Service, the agency is encouraging everyone to “Find Your Park.” Public lands belong to everyone, and this is the perfect opportunity to explore new places, whether they are historic sites,

forests, parkways, rivers, urban parks, or those “crown jewels” of the national park system like Grand Canyon, Mesa Verde, Everglades, Arches, Yosemite, Olympic, and Gettysburg.

You might be surprised how many beautiful places are preserved by the NPS, even in your own backyard.

Here are just a few of the sites within 100 miles of the Smokies:

- Andrew Johnson National Historic Site
- Appalachian National Scenic Trail
- Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area
- Blue Ridge Parkway
- Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site
- Obed Wild & Scenic River.



LOG CABINS

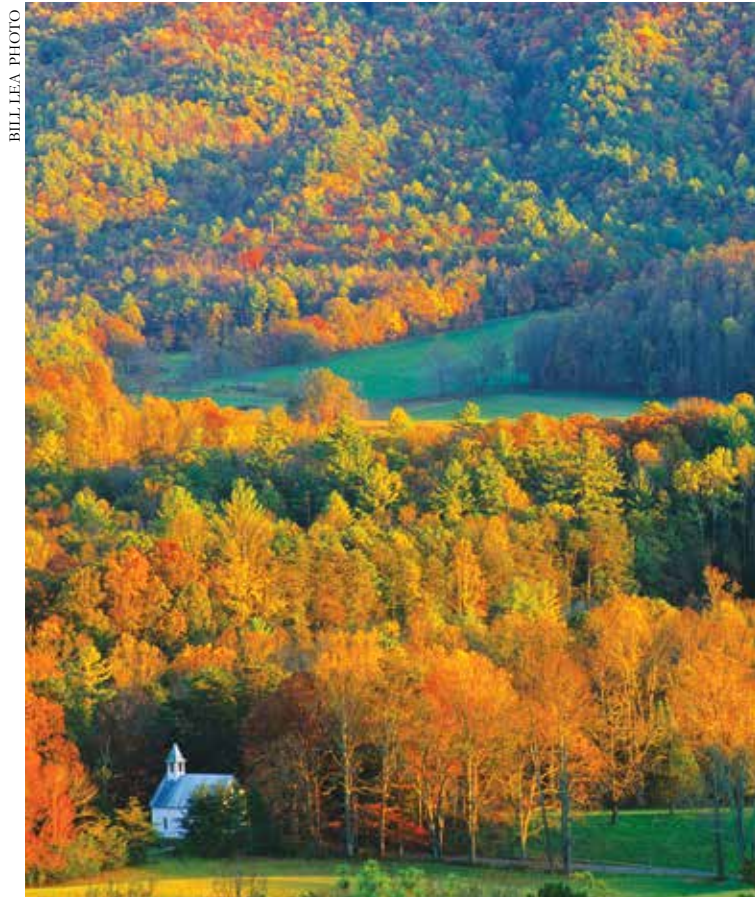
Did you know the park’s Historic Preservation Crew protects the largest collection of historic log buildings

in the East? This rich and varied collection includes homes, barns, spring houses,

grist mills, a school, and more. Some of the best places to explore them are

Cades Cove, Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail, and the Mountain Farm Museum at

Oconaluftee.



BIL LEA PHOTO

The Great Smoky Mountains are world-renowned for their immense variety of plants and animals, including 100 species of native trees.

When Will Colors Peak?

Elevation profoundly affects when fall colors change in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. At the higher elevations, where the climate is similar to New England’s, color displays start as early as mid-September with the turning of yellow birch, American beech, hobblebush, and pin cherry.

From October 1-15, fall colors are at peak above 4,000 feet. To enjoy them, drive the Clingmans Dome Road, the Blue Ridge Parkway, Balsam Mountain-Heintooga Ridge roads, or Newfound Gap Road.

Fall colors usually peak at the mid and lower elevations between October 15 and November 7. This is the park’s

most spectacular display as it includes such colorful trees as sugar maple, scarlet oak, sweetgum, red maple, and the hickories. Sunny days and cool nights are generally thought to bring out the best fall colors.

There are many good drives to enjoy the fall color peak. Little River and Laurel Creek roads between Sugarlands Visitor Center and Cades Cove are noteworthy late in the season. So are the Foothills Parkway segments (East and West) and the Deep Creek area. Keep in mind that late October weekend traffic on Newfound Gap and Cades Cove Loop roads will be extremely heavy, especially late in the day.



smokies trip planner

to order maps, apps, and guides: www.SmokiesInformation.org

smokies guide

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

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AUTUMN: September 20

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BILL LEA PHOTO



Abrams Creek and Balsam Mountain campgrounds are open this year.

camping in the national park

The National Park Service maintains developed campgrounds at nine locations in the park. There are no showers or hookups other than circuits for special medical uses at Cades Cove, Elkmont, and Smokemont.

Campsites at Elkmont, Smokemont, Cataloochee, Cosby, and Cades Cove may be reserved. For reservations call 1-877-444-6777 or contact www.recreation.gov. Sites may be reserved up to six months in advance. Reservations are required at Cataloochee Campground. Other park campgrounds are first-come, first-served.

Site occupancy is limited to six people and two vehicles (a trailer = 1 vehicle). The maximum stay is 14 days.

Camping sites for large groups are available at Big Creek, Cades Cove, Cataloochee, Cosby, Deep Creek, Elkmont, and Smokemont. Group sites must be reserved. Call 1-877-444-6777 or contact www.recreation.gov. Group sites may be reserved up to one year in advance.

The list below shows number of sites, elevations, fees, 2015 operation dates, and maximum RV lengths. Visit www.nps.gov/grsm for additional information.

ABRAMS CREEK 16 sites, elev. 1,125', \$14, open May 22-Oct. 13, 12' trailers
BALSAM MOUNTAIN 46 sites, elev. 5,310', \$14, open May 22-Oct. 13, 30' RVs
BIG CREEK 12 sites, elev. 1,700', \$14, open April 10-Oct. 31, tents only
CADES COVE 159 sites, elev. 1,807', \$17-\$20, open year-round, 35'-40' RVs
CATALOOCHEE 27 sites, elev. 2,610', \$20, open April 3-Oct. 31, **reservations required**, 31' RVs
COSBY 157 sites, elev. 2,459', \$14, April 10-Oct. 31, 25' RVs
DEEP CREEK 92 sites, elev. 1,800', \$17, open April 10-Oct. 31, 26' RVs
ELKMONT 220 sites, elev. 2,150', \$17-\$23, open March 13-Nov. 28, 32'-35' RVs
LOOK ROCK *Closed*
SMOKEMONT 142 sites, elev. 2,198', \$17-\$20, open year-round, 35'-40' RVs

accommodations

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 1-800-438-1601
Fontana 1-800-849-2258
Gatlinburg 1-800-267-7088
Maggie Valley 1-800-624-4431
Pigeon Forge 1-800-251-9100
Sevierville 1-888-766-5948
Townsend 1-800-525-6834

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.

facility rentals

The historic Appalachian Clubhouse and Spence Cabin at Elkmont are now accepting reservations for day-use rentals. Picnic pavillions are also available for \$10-\$20 per day at Collins Creek, Cosby, Deep Creek, Greenbrier, Metcalf Bottoms, and Twin Creeks. To make a reservation, call 1-877-444-6777 or visit www.recreation.gov.

special events

September 19
Mountain Life Festival at Oconaluftee Visitor Center

November 6-8 & 11-15
Sorghum Molasses Making at Cades Cove Cable Mill area

December 12
Festival of Christmas Past at Sugarlands Visitor Center

picnic areas

Please see pages 8-9 for locations of picnic areas. All picnic areas have charcoal grills for cooking.

visitor centers

Park visitor centers offer information, exhibits, and a bookstore. Fall hours of operation are:
Oconaluftee: 8-6:30 (Sept. & Oct.), 8-5 (Nov.)
Sugarlands: 8-6:30 (Sept. & Oct.), 8-5 (Nov.)
Cades Cove: 9-6:30 (Sept & Oct), 9-5:30 (Nov.)
Clingmans Dome 10-6:00 (Sept. & Oct.), 9:30-5 (Nov.)

MARY ANN KRESSIG PHOTO



Bicycle and pedestrian only morning in Cades Cove

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 May 6-Sept. 23 on Wednesday and Saturday mornings from sunrise to 10:00 a.m., only bicycles and pedestrians are allowed on Cades Cove Loop Road. Bicycles may be rented at the Cades Cove Campground store.

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 annual 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.

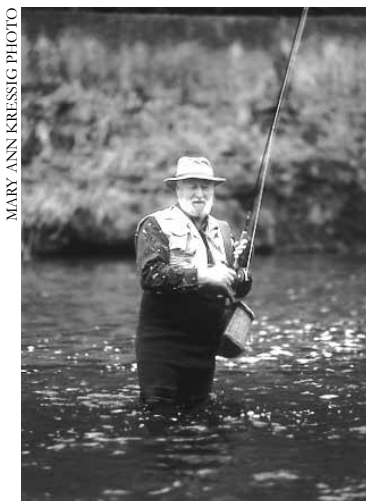
horse riding

Horseback riding is generally available from early March through late 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 cadescovestables.com
- Smokemont (828) 497-2373 smokemontridingstables.com
- Smoky Mtn. (865) 436-5634 smokymountainridingstables.com
- Sugarlands (865) 436-3535 sugarlandsridingstables.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. Soft drink vending is 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 most park streams.

fishing

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

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

DRIVING DISTANCES & ESTIMATED TIMES

Cherokee, NC to:

- Gatlinburg: 34 miles (1 hour)
- Cades Cove: 57 miles (2 hours)
- Newfound Gap: 18 miles (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 and permits are required for backcountry campers.

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, which is open daily from 8-5, for trip planning help. The office is located in Sugarlands Visitor

Center, two miles south of Gatlinburg on U.S. 441. (865) 436-1297.

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

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

Fall hikers should be especially aware of the danger of hypothermia—the lowering of body temperature. The combination of rain, cold, and wind is especially dangerous. At the park's higher elevations, hypothermia can be a threat even during summer.

To prevent hypothermia, carry good rain gear at all times. Layer clothing that provides warmth when wet (not cotton). Be prepared for sudden weather changes, especially at the high elevations.

great sights to see

an even dozen must-see sights in the Great Smoky Mountains



KENT CAVE PHOTO

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

1. clingmans dome

A paved, but very steep, 0.5 mile trail leads to an observation tower that offers 360° views of the Great Smoky Mountains and beyond. 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 large parking area at the end. A visitor center is located along the trail to the tower.

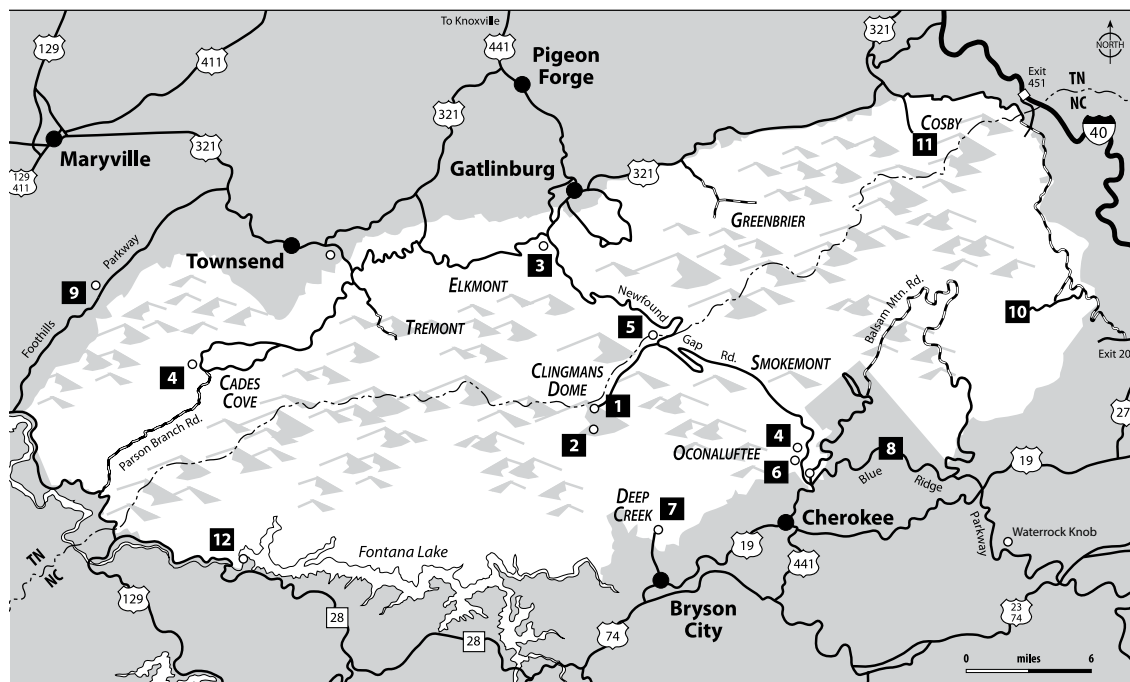
The road to Clingmans Dome is closed from December 1 through March 31 due to weather.

2. andrews bald

"Balds" are mountaintop meadows of mysterious origin. Andrews offers panoramic mountain views in favorable weather. The 3.4 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 8-6:30 (Sept.-Oct.), 8-5 (Nov.)

4. water-powered grist mills

Two historic, water-powered grist mills operate 7 days per week in the park from mid-March to mid-November. 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). Open 9-5.

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.



BILL LEA PHOTO

The Davis-Queen house.

6. oconaluftee museums

This history buff's paradise now offers free indoor and outdoor museums and an audio tour. It also features old-time breeds of livestock (seasonally) and an heirloom garden. The new visitor center and mountain farm museum are located on U.S. 441, two miles north of Cherokee, NC. Open 8-6:30 (Sept.-Oct.), 8-5 (Nov.).

7. deep creek waterfalls

The Deep Creek area features a campground, picnic area, mountain stream, and miles of

hiking trails. 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). The area is located about 3 miles from downtown Bryson City, NC.

8. blue ridge parkway

The Blue Ridge Parkway starts where Great Smoky Mountains National Park ends, on U.S. 441 near Cherokee, NC. The parkway is a 469-mile-long scenic drive that connects the Smokies to Shenandoah National Park.

In the early fall it is especially enjoyable for those looking for fall colors, wildflowers, and mountain views. If 469 miles sounds a little long, the 20-mile drive from Oconaluftee Visitor Center to Waterrock Knob takes less than an hour. A loop drive that includes Balsam Mountain Road is also accessible from the parkway.

WHERE TO BEAT THE CROWDS

If you want to beat the autumn weekend 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. Cosby Campground, Picnic Area, and hiking trails. The campground rarely fills, and there are short and long trails to waterfalls, views, and Mt. Cammerer fire tower. The campground is 20 miles from Gatlinburg, TN.

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 of the park like Hazel Creek and Eagle Creek.

park news

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

National Park Service News Briefs

Firewood Restriction Will Help Save Park's Trees from Non-native Invaders



PARK OFFICIALS HAVE ENACTED REGULATIONS that will help protect park forests by restricting the type of firewood brought into the park. Beginning this year, only heat-treated firewood that is bundled and displays a certification stamp by the USDA or a state department of agriculture will be allowed in park campgrounds. The regulation will help protect ash trees and other species from the total devastation caused by non-native insects like the emerald ash borer that are often stowaways on firewood.

Area Near Caves Closed to Protect Bats

THE WHITEOAK SINK AREA HAS BEEN CLOSED through March 31, 2016 to limit human disturbance to bat hibernation sites and help hikers avoid interactions with bats. An extended closure through late spring may be recommended if the winter data suggests such an action would increase the chances for survival of a significant number of bats. Park biologists have reported dramatic declines of cave-dwelling bat populations throughout the park. The decline is thought to be due to white-nose syndrome. Infected bats exhibit unusual behavior including flying erratically during the day, even during winter months, and diving down toward people.

The park is home to 11 species of bats including the federally endangered Indiana bat.

New Audio Tour Brings Farm to Life

A BRAND NEW AUDIO TOUR created by the National Park Service, Great Smoky Mountains Association, and Antenna International is now available for visitors to the Mountain Farm Museum at Oconaluftee. The tour uses oral histories and other research materials to recreate the hardships and exhilaration that mountain families experienced on a small farm. The 30-minute tour rents for \$2.99.

Alum Cave Trail Closed Monday-Thursday

THE POPULAR ALUM CAVE TRAIL on Mt. Le Conte will remain closed Monday-Thursday through November 19, 2015 for trail restoration work. From November 20 through mid-spring, 2016 the trail will be open daily. Hikers on the trail will be impressed by the quality of the work already completed.

Smokies Gets Help from Partners, Centennial Fund to Restore Mills



Mingus Mill was built in 1886 and is still grinding corn on its original stones. A turbine and the waters of Mingus Creek provide the power.

Thanks to a National Park Service Centennial grant and matching funds from Great Smoky Mountains Association and Friends of

the Smokies, the park's elite historic preservation crew is hard at work on an ambitious project to restore two historic gristmills. The restoration

will be part of the NPS's 2016 centennial celebration.

The crew recently replaced a roof at Cable Mill in Cades Cove and is beginning work to replace the drive belt on the turbine of Mingus Mill in North Carolina. The total cost of the public/private historic preservation project is set at \$35,440.

"We're really excited to be able to do this for the centennial," said Historic Preservation Program Manager Randy Hatten. "A big shout out for the Friends of the Smokies and Great Smoky Mountains Association for partnering with us to be able to accomplish this. The public's support for these nonprofit partner organizations really does make a difference."

Later on the crew plans to repair rotten cribbing under the flume at Cable Mill and completely replace the lining of the millrace at Mingus Mill. The elevated millrace diverts water into the flume which feeds the grist mill's 19th century steel turbine.

Hatten said keeping the historic grist mill in working order requires skilled workers. "We've got some very experienced craftsmen that work here that have been doing this type of work for more than 20 years," Hatten said. "They've been through the Historic Preservation Training Center, operated by the NPS, where they learn to hone their craft."

Cable Mill, which is powered by the big overshot wooden waterwheel, was built in the 1870s. Turbine-powered Mingus Mill dates back to 1886. Both mills were restored by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s.

Group Returns Stream to Natural, Wild Condition

National Park Service officials have announced the completion of a project to restore a nearly mile-long section of Chilogate Branch to its natural condition. The stream, located along the park boundary near Chilhowee Lake and the Foothills Parkway, was degraded by deforestation, channel relocation, and unrestricted livestock grazing in the past.

"The Chilogate Branch site was transformed from a severely degraded cow pasture to a diverse habitat for native plants and wildlife," said supervisory forester Kristine Johnson.

A collaborative

team, led by the Tennessee Stream Mitigation Program (TSMP) accomplished this project by reconstructing major portions of the stream on a new alignment. The Park Service provided seeds and seedlings of native plants. Eight hundred fifty tons of boulders and 70 large logs were used in the reconstruction.



Chilogate Branch after the restoration project.

NPS PHOTO

2015 SPECIAL REPORT

State of the Park



WILDLIFE



WARREN BIELEBERG PHOTO

The cable-pulley systems installed at backcountry campsites allow campers to easily and securely hang their food and food-related items.

Wild hogs in the park continue to test positive for pseudorabies, a significant disease for the domestic swine industry. The occurrence of pseudorabies in the Smokies is thought to be directly related to

the illegal release of feral hogs near the park boundary.

White-nose Syndrome has killed 98% of the Eastern pipestrelles and 95% of the little brown bats in the park. The

fungal disease usually affects bats while they are hibernating in caves. Consequently, the Park Service has closed all caves to the public

Some visitors continue to approach, harass, disturb and feed wildlife in the park. Unfortunately, it only takes a few careless people to impact the behavior of wildlife.

A bear seriously mauled a backcountry camper in the Hazel Creek area this year. The 16-year-old camper is expected to recover from most of his injuries, but the incident is a reminder that park animals are wild and can be dangerous.



The food storage cables at backcountry campsites and shelters have proven to be very successful at keeping bears and people-food apart. Funding has been secured this year to repair some damaged systems.

The non-native wild hog population appears to be relatively low. The cause is likely due to low reproduction and consistent control efforts by park staff. Since 1959, more than 12,000 invasive wild hogs have been removed from the park.

A new program allows researchers to track radio-collared bears to areas inside and outside the park where they may be obtaining garbage or other human-related food. Wildlife staff can then pinpoint the trouble spots and take action to clean them up.



STREAM LIFE



Recent water quality monitoring data has provided the first evidence of slight improvements in stream acidity in mid-elevation streams. These improvements

are attributed to reductions in acid rain (from power plants and factories) in the last decade.

Fisheries research indicates that brook trout populations in the park are healthy. Brook trout and rainbow trout produced two healthy year classes of young fish in 2014 and 2015, which means there will be good numbers of adult fish in 2016 and 2017. Brook trout continue to expand their downstream range in some streams since the droughts of 2007. The park has some of the best brook trout waters in the Southeast.

Research shows aquatic insect diversity in park streams is generally high, resulting in stream condition ratings of good to excellent for most waters. The ratings are based on the premise that high-quality streams usually have the greatest species richness for mayflies, stoneflies, and caddisflies.

Monitoring of reintroduced endangered and threatened fish indicates there are now viable reproducing populations in the park.



Twelve park streams (41 miles) remain officially listed as impaired by acid deposition. Research is underway to determine how much acid deposition must be reduced for these streams to recover.

Water quality improvements are not being seen in the high elevation streams (>3,500') yet as there is a lot of nitrate and sulfate to flush from these soils, which will take decades. An additional brook trout population has disappeared since surveys in 1998.



NPS PHOTO

NPS fisheries crews use backpack electroshocking equipment to stun fish and remove non-natives from brook trout habitat.

PLANT LIFE

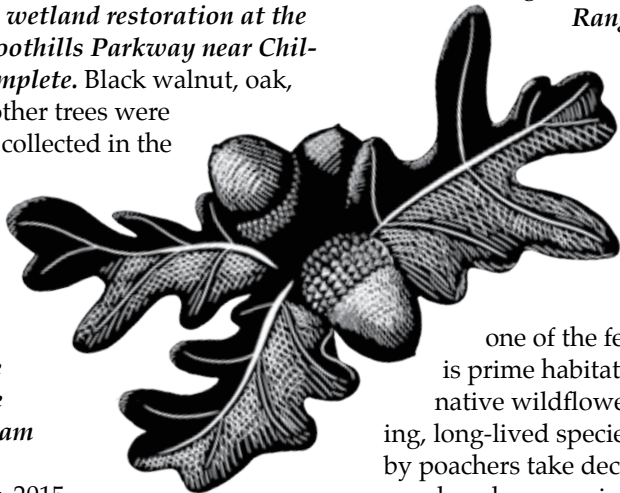


Park management decided to restrict outside firewood from entering the park. Only heat-treated firewood is allowed now. Heat treatment kills insects and diseases that

may be in wood and reduces the chance that a new pest could be introduced into the park. Visitor compliance with the new regulation has been good and many visitors already understand the need for it—Shenandoah N.P. has had a firewood restriction since 2010.

The Chilogate wetland restoration at the west end of the Foothills Parkway near Chilhowee Lake is complete. Black walnut, oak, persimmon and other trees were grown from seed collected in the area and will be planted at the site.

Fraser fir trees are re-growing in some areas where mature trees were killed by the balsam woolly adelgid, a non-native insect. 2015 is also a cone production year for Fraser fir, which will provide more seedlings for the future. Over 70% of the surviving Fraser firs in the world live in the Smokies.



The non-native emerald ash borer beetle continues to spread. In July 2015 it was found in Graham county, NC on the south shore of Fontana Lake near the USFS Tsali Camp-

ground. This is the first EAB infestation detected in western N.C. The developing insect feeds unnoticed under the bark; signs of infestation are dead branches, woodpeckers pecking the bark, and clusters of bright green branches along the trunk.

Rangers made an early arrest and seized over 500 ginseng roots from persons who had illegally harvested them in the park. Ginseng only grows in eastern North America and

the national park is one of the few places where there is prime habitat that is protected. The native wildflower is a very slow-growing, long-lived species and areas ravaged by poachers take decades to recover. Plant poachers have received jail sentences of up to six months.

New infestations of non-native oriental bittersweet plants are found frequently, especially in Cades Cove and the Fontana Lake area where the seeds are spread by birds from heavily infested lands outside the park.

AIR QUALITY



Ozone pollution, acid rain, particulate matter, and regional haze levels at the park have all improved dramatically since 1999. Cleaner power plants and cleaner motor vehicles are the reasons. Visibility on

the worst days has improved from 9 miles in the 1990s to 39 miles in 2014.

Nearly 12,000 customers have signed up for the Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA's) Green Power Program.

Since December of 2008, TVA has installed sulfur dioxide scrubbers on the nearby Bull Run and Kingston coal-fired power plants, reduc-

ing emissions and improving air quality. Additionally, TVA plans to install more scrubbers on other nearby smokestacks.



Because of sulfate and nitrate pollution, park rainfall is five times more acidic than natural rainfall, causing streams to become too acidic for Clean Water Act standards.

In summer, ground level ozone pollution can make air in the park unhealthy to breathe.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION



The park has contracted with an archivist to begin processing approximately 300 linear feet of largely inaccessible records that were stored in park attics. This project will

help protect the records for future generations and provide new insights into the history of the park.

Construction is underway on a new joint Collections Preservation Center that is scheduled for completion in 2016. This facility will house all of the park's historic and archeological collections and historic documents, photographs, and records under appropriate climate-controlled conditions. The facility leverages scarce federal funds by housing collections for several other regional National Park Service units, including Cumberland Gap, Big South Fork, and Andrew Johnson. Park nonprofit partners Friends of the Smokies and Great Smoky Mountains Association have provided at least \$1.6 million toward the facility.

Historic Structure Reports are being prepared to guide the park's care of 18 historic buildings being preserved in Elkmont, including the Appalachian Club House. Thirteen reports are complete and work has begun on the final five.



The Appalachian Club in its heyday.



The park's cabins, churches, and other historic buildings are being permanently damaged by vandals carving or writing their names on walls. If you witness vandalism

taking place, please call (865) 436-1230 to report it.

Someone stole several unique historic artifacts on display in Cataloochee prompting the park to remove all the remaining artifacts from the exhibit. As a result, visitors to Cataloochee no longer have the opportunity to view artifacts associated with the history of that community.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE



Visitation to Great Smoky Mountains National Park is up eight percent through the first six months of 2015.

If this trend continues, 2015 could set the all-time record for visits to the park.

Progress is being made on the restoration of Alum Cave Trail. The planned work will improve overall trail safety and protect natural resources by repairing historic cable and handrail systems, reinforcing hanging trail sections, reducing trail braiding, and improving drainage to prevent erosion.

Great Smoky Mountains Association, the National Park Service, and Antenna International have completed an audio tour to the Mountain Farm Museum at Oconaluftee. The tour developers used oral histories and professional actors to create a program that

brings the mountain farm to life.

The National Park Service has placed a temporary moratorium on the use of drones (unmanned aircraft) in all national parks.

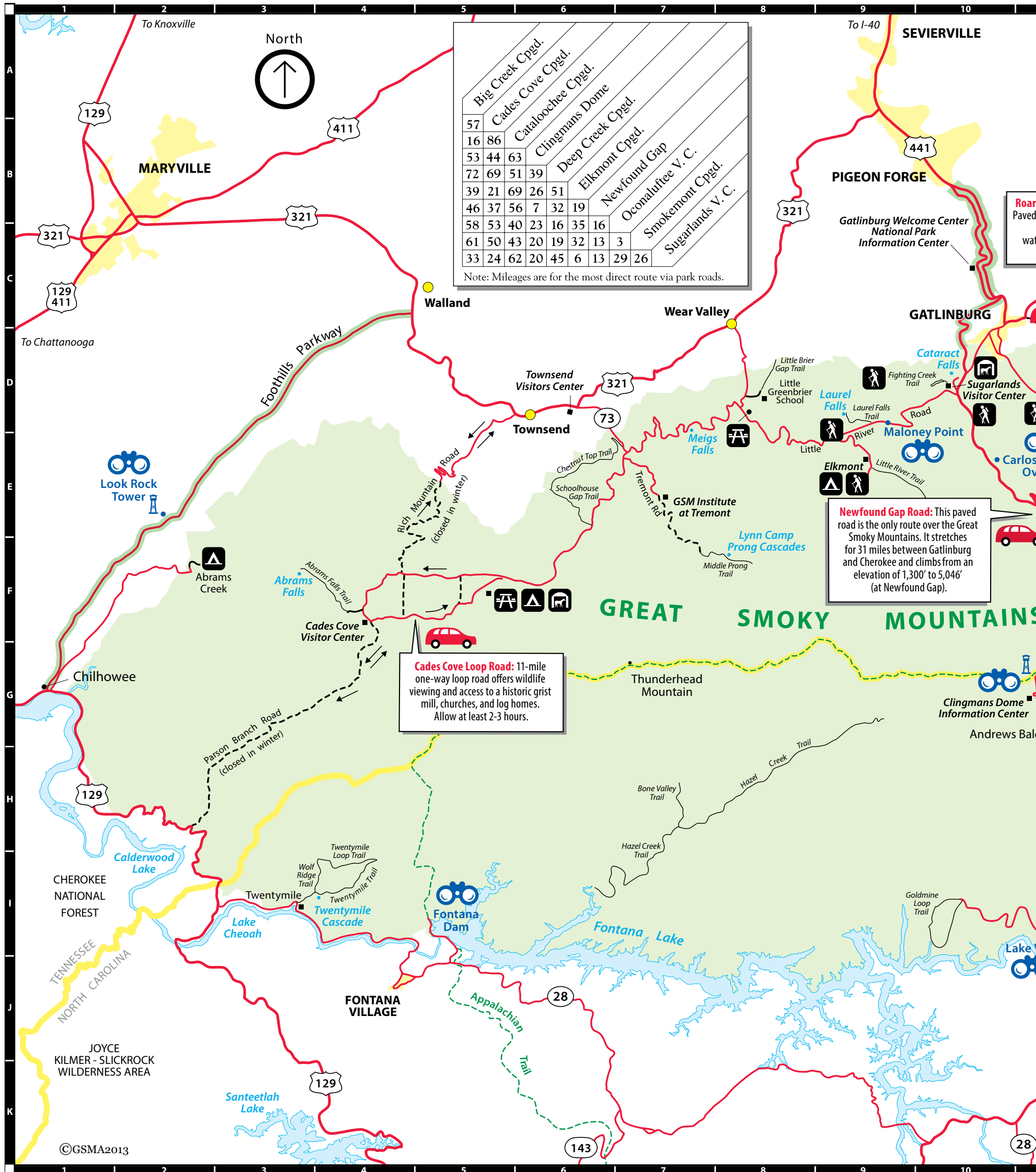


Visitation to Great Smoky Mountains National Park is up eight percent through the first six months of 2015. The high visitation

is testing the limits of the park's infrastructure, including roads, parking areas, and restrooms during the peak months.

The very popular Alum Cave Trail is closed Monday-Thursday through November 19 for restoration work. This is the first year of a two year project.

GREAT FALL DRIVING TOURS AND SCENIC VIEWS IN THE SMOKIES

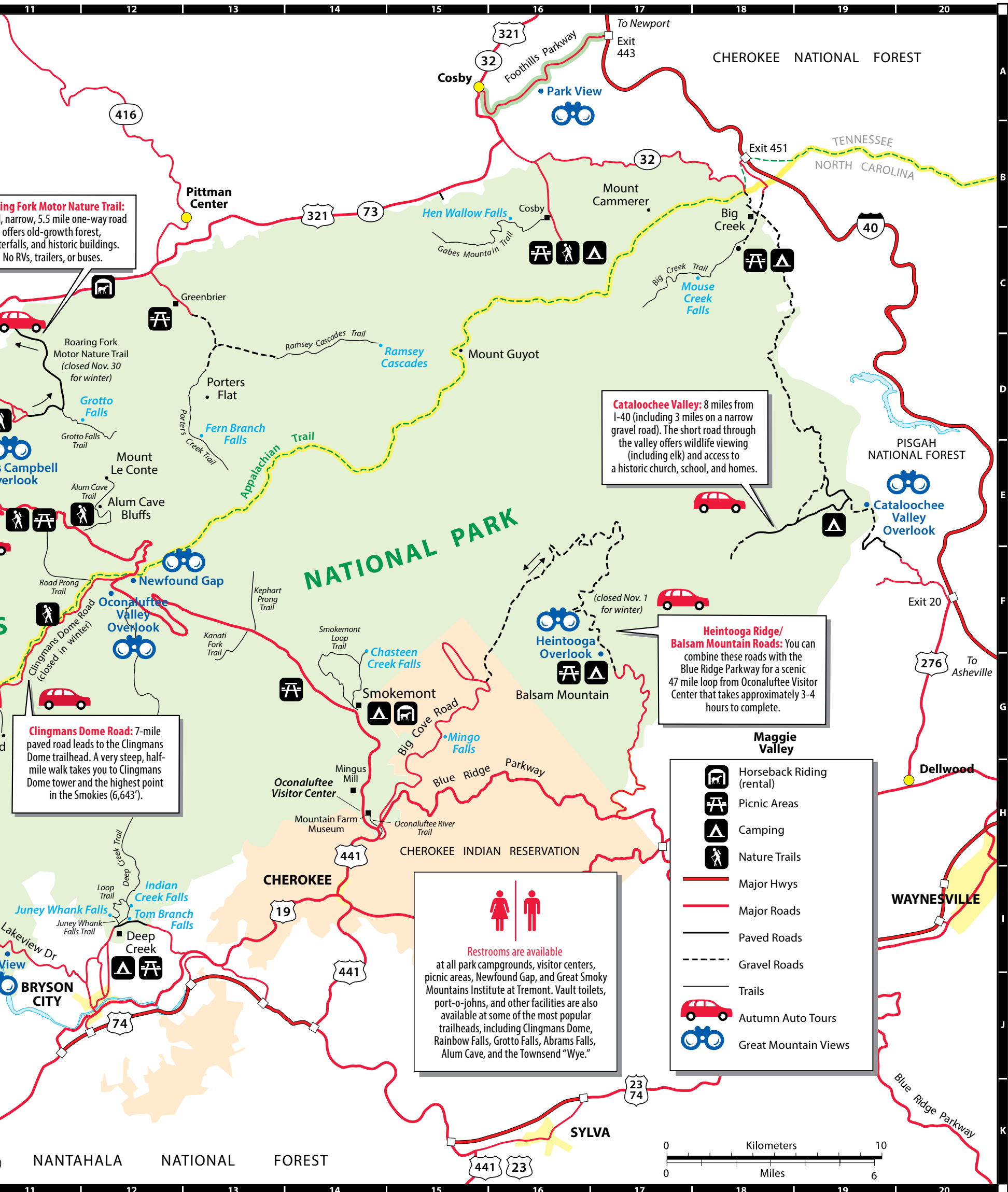


Big Creek Cpgd.		Cades Cove Cpgd.		Cataloochee Cpgd.		Clingmans Dome		Deep Creek Cpgd.		Elkmont Cpgd.		Newfound Gap		Oconaluftee V. C.		Smokemont Cpgd.		Sugarlands V. C.		
57	16	86	53	44	63	72	69	51	39	39	21	69	26	51	19	32	19	3	29	26
46	37	56	7	32	19	58	53	40	23	16	35	16	61	50	43	20	19	32	13	3
33	24	62	20	45	6	13	29	26												

Note: Mileages are for the most direct route via park roads.

Cades Cove Loop Road: 11-mile one-way loop road offers wildlife viewing and access to a historic grist mill, churches, and log homes. Allow at least 2-3 hours.

Newfound Gap Road: This paved road is the only route over the Great Smoky Mountains. It stretches for 31 miles between Gatlinburg and Cherokee and climbs from an elevation of 1,300' to 5,046' (at Newfound Gap).



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

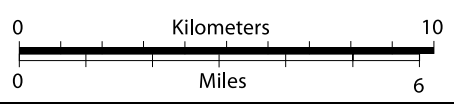
Cataloochee Valley: 8 miles from I-40 (including 3 miles on a narrow gravel road). The short road through the valley offers wildlife viewing (including elk) and access to a historic church, school, and homes.

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 and the highest point in the Smokies (6,643').

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



The Wild Life



Big Antlers on Deer and Elk Mean

IT'S RUT TIME!



ALL DEER AND ELK PHOTOS BY BILL LEA

This autumn, the Smokies' 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, preening, 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 elk 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.

Oftentimes, bugling by dominant males is enough to discourage younger or weaker bulls. If that fails, challengers may prance side-by-side, comparing antlers and body size.

If push finally comes to shove, bulls spar by lowering their heads, locking their impressive antlers, and shoving for all they are worth. The stronger animal wins by pushing his opponent backwards until he retreats. In the course of head-to-head combat, bulls often inflict minor punctures and bruises upon their opponent, or, in rare cases, they may cause mortal injuries.

The best places to see elk during the rut are Cataloochee valley and the area around Oconaluftee Visitor Center. Cataloochee is a remote area accessible only by a narrow, winding road, three miles of which are gravel. The Oconaluftee Visitor Center is just off Newfound Gap Road (U.S. 441). Elk may also be seen around Heintooga Ridge Road and Balsam Mountain Campground off the Blue Ridge Parkway. Please see the map on the back page of this publication.

The elk rut generally begins in September and peaks in early October. Biologists estimate that over 140 elk currently live in and near Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Elk were reintroduced to the Smokies in 2001 and 2002.

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.

Both deer and elk shed their antlers in late winter and start growing new ones for the upcoming season almost immediately.

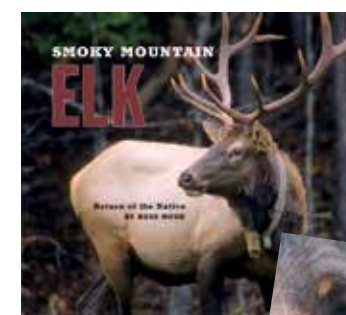
The white-tailed deer rut lasts from October into January with a peak around Thanksgiving. Cades Cove is probably the best place in the park to watch deer. The 11-mile Cades Cove Loop Road is open from sunrise to sunset throughout the year. Deer may also be seen in the vicinity of Elkmont Campground and Sugarlands Visitor Center.

Both deer and elk are especially unpredictable in fall. People should never approach or attempt to feed them. Use binoculars and telephoto lenses to watch them instead. Certain fields in Cataloochee Valley and near Oconaluftee Visitor Center are closed during the elk rut and spring calving season for the safety of people and wildlife. Federal law prohibits approaching elk or bear closer than 50 yards or any distance that disturbs or displaces the animals.

Above: the Smokies' elk herd has grown steadily since the animals were reintroduced in 2001 and 2002. **Right:** white-tailed deer had been almost entirely extirpated from the Great Smoky Mountains before park establishment in 1934. They are now common in Cades Cove and elsewhere.



Approaching elk or bear closer than 50 yards is dangerous and punishable by fines and imprisonment.



Want to know more about Smokies wildlife? These books published by Great Smoky Mountains Association are available at all park visitor centers or online at www.SmokiesInformation.org. Smoky Mountain Elk: \$9.95 Mammals of the Smokies: \$12.95



FUN FOR EVERYONE

Programs and activities in Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Sept 20 - Oct 31, 2015

Park visitor centers are located at Cades Cove, Oconaluftee, Clingmans Dome, and Sugarlands. All offer information, exhibits, and publications related to the park and its resources.

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

♻ Accessible to persons using wheelchairs.

	Mornings	Afternoons/Evenings
SUNDAY	<p><i>Dawn to Dusk Mountain Farm Museum</i> Adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center ♻</p> <p><i>9 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Mingus Mill Demonstration</i> Near Oconaluftee Visitor Center ♻</p> <p><i>10:30 a.m. A Walk in the Woods</i> Sugarlands Visitor Center</p> <p><i>11:00 a.m. Longing for the "Good Ol' Days"</i> Mountain Farm Museum</p>	<p><i>1:30 p.m. Cherokee Culture</i> Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch Area</p> <p><i>1:00 p.m. Junior Ranger Program</i> Cades Cove Visitor Center/Cable Mill area ♻</p> <p><i>2:00 p.m. Autumn Creature Feature</i> Sugarlands Visitor Center ♻</p> <p><i>2:30 p.m. WILD Program</i> Cades Cove Visitor Center/Cable Mill area ♻</p> <p><i>5:30 p.m. Junior Ranger: Smoky Mountain Elk</i> Palmer House, Cataloochee Valley</p>
MONDAY	<p><i>Dawn to Dusk Mountain Farm Museum</i> Adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center ♻</p> <p><i>9 a.m.-5 p.m. Mingus Mill Demonstration</i> Near Oconaluftee Visitor Center ♻</p> <p><i>10:30 a.m. A Walk in the Woods</i> Sugarlands Visitor Center</p>	<p><i>2:00 p.m. Autumn Creature Feature</i> Sugarlands Visitor Center ♻</p> <p><i>2:30 p.m. Black Bears: Big, Smelly, and Smart</i> Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch ♻</p>
TUESDAY	<p><i>Dawn to Dusk Mountain Farm Museum</i> Adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center ♻</p> <p><i>9 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Mingus Mill Demonstration</i> Near Oconaluftee Visitor Center ♻</p> <p><i>10:00 a.m. Longing for the "Good Ol' Days"</i> Mountain Farm Museum ♻</p> <p><i>10:30 a.m. A Walk in the Woods</i> Sugarlands Visitor Center</p> <p><i>11:00 a.m. to noon Little Greenbrier Schoolhouse</i> Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area</p>	<p><i>2:00 p.m. Autumn Creature Feature</i> Sugarlands Visitor Center ♻</p> <p><i>2:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. Little Greenbrier Schoolhouse</i> Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area</p> <p><i>4:30 p.m. Evening Hayride</i> Cades Cove Riding Stables</p>
WEDNESDAY	<p><i>Dawn to Dusk Mountain Farm Museum</i> Adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center ♻</p> <p><i>9 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Mingus Mill Demonstration</i> Near Oconaluftee Visitor Center ♻</p> <p><i>10:30 a.m. A Walk in the Woods</i> Sugarlands Visitor Center</p> <p><i>11:00 a.m. Forecasting the Future with Mother Nature</i> Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch ♻</p>	<p><i>1:30 p.m. Creation of the Park</i> Newfound Gap</p>
THURSDAY	<p><i>Dawn to Dusk Mountain Farm Museum</i> Adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center ♻</p> <p><i>9 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Mingus Mill Demonstration</i> Near Oconaluftee Visitor Center ♻</p> <p><i>10:30 a.m. A Walk in the Woods</i> Sugarlands Visitor Center</p> <p><i>11:00 a.m. Welcome Home!</i> Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch ♻</p>	<p><i>1:30 p.m. Cherokee Culture</i> Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch Area</p> <p><i>2:00 p.m. Autumn Creature Feature</i> Sugarlands Visitor Center ♻</p>
FRIDAY	<p><i>Dawn to Dusk Mountain Farm Museum</i> Adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center ♻</p> <p><i>9 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Mingus Mill Demonstration</i> Near Oconaluftee Visitor Center ♻</p> <p><i>10:00 a.m. Coffee with a Ranger</i> Porch, Oconaluftee Visitor Center (Starts October 2) ♻</p> <p><i>10:30 a.m. A Walk in the Woods</i> Sugarlands Visitor Center</p>	<p><i>2:00 p.m. Old Town of Elkmont</i> Behind Elkmont Ranger Station</p>
SATURDAY	<p><i>Dawn to Dusk Mountain Farm Museum</i> Adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center ♻</p> <p><i>9 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Mingus Mill Demonstration</i> Near Oconaluftee Visitor Center ♻</p> <p><i>10:30 a.m. A Walk in the Woods</i> Sugarlands Visitor Center</p> <p><i>11:00 a.m. Smoky Mountain Elk</i> Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch ♻</p>	<p><i>1:00 p.m. Junior Ranger program</i> Cades Cove Visitor Center/Cable Mill area ♻</p> <p><i>1:30 p.m. Fall Foliage Exploration</i> Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap</p> <p><i>2:30 p.m. WILD by Design</i> Cades Cove Visitor Center/Cable Mill area</p>

CADES COVE AREA

**** 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.**

Sunday

Junior Ranger Program

Meet at the Cades Cove Visitor Center/Cable Mill area halfway around the Loop Road

1:00 p.m.

Join a Park Ranger for a hands-on exploration of the Smokies. Participation counts towards credit for earning a Junior Ranger badge and certificate.

Duration: 45 minutes ☺

WILD Program

Meet at the Cades Cove Visitor Center/Cable Mill area halfway around the Loop road.

2:30 p.m.

A short talk and demonstration about the wild things in the Smokies.

Duration: 30 minutes ☺

Tuesday

Evening Hayride

Meet at the Cades Cove Riding Stables

4:30 p.m.

Enjoy a ranger-led open air hayride viewing wildlife and discovering the diversity of Cades Cove.

Duration: 1 1/2 - 2 hours ☺ Fee: \$14.00/person

Saturday

Junior Ranger program

Meet at the Cades Cove Visitor Center/Cable Mill area halfway around the Loop Road

1:00 p.m.

Bring the family for a hands-on exploration of the Smokies. Participation counts towards credit for earning a Junior Ranger badge and certificate.

Duration: 30 - 45 minutes ☺

WILD by Design

Meet at the Cades Cove Visitor Center/Cable Mill area halfway around the Loop Road.

2:30 p.m.

A talk and hands-on demonstration about some of the wild things in the park

Duration: 30 minutes

Difficulty: Easy ☺

CATALOOCHEE VALLEY AREA

Sunday

Junior Ranger: Smoky Mountain Elk

Palmer House, Cataloochee Valley

5:30 p.m.

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 in the fields!

Duration: 45 minutes

NEWFOUND GAP

Wednesday

Creation of the Park

Newfound Gap

1:30 pm

Stand on the monument where Great Smoky Mountains National



Park was dedicated by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and learn to appreciate both the sacrifice of former Smokies residents and the dedication of park supporters during the formative years of the park.

Duration: 30 minutes

Saturday

Fall Foliage Exploration

Meet at the Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap

1:30 p.m.

Join a ranger to explore the beauty of the changing leaves during this special time of year. Learn how trees adapt to the cooling temperatures as they paint the mountains with color.

Duration: 45min

Level: Easy

OCONALUFTEE AREA

Daily

Mingus Mill Demonstration

Located a half-mile north of Oconaluftee Visitor Center on U.S. 441 (Newfound Gap Road)

9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Chat with a miller and feel the rumble of this historic gristmill in action. ☺

Mountain Farm Museum

Adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

Dawn to Dusk

Walk down to the farm for a glimpse into the past. An audio tour and self-guiding brochure are available and some days you may find demonstrations such as blacksmithing, hearth cooking, or gardening taking place. ☺

Sunday

Longing for the "Good Ol' Days"

Mountain Farm Museum adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

11:00 a.m.

You've heard it before, but was it really the "good ol' days?" Join a ranger for a walk around the Mountain Farm Museum and learn what life may have been like on an Appalachian mountain farm.

Duration: 45 minutes ☺

Cherokee Culture

Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch Area

1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Join Cherokee Friends to learn about Cherokee culture and history through demonstrations and storytelling.

Duration: 2 hours

Monday

Black Bears: Big, Smelly, and Smart

Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch

2:30 p.m.

Discover the wondrous ways black bears adapt to their environment. Find out how bears prepare for the upcoming winter season.

Duration: 30 minutes ☺

Tuesday

Longing for the "Good Ol' Days"

Mountain Farm Museum adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

10:00 a.m.

You've heard it before, but was it really the "good ol' days?" Join a ranger for a walk around the Mountain Farm Museum and learn what life may have been like on an Appalachian mountain farm.

Duration: 45 minutes ☺

Wednesday

Forecasting the Future with Mother Nature

Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch

11:00 a.m.

Nuts were fair, berries were late. Several morning fogs and rings around the moon in August. Does this mean 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.

Duration: 30 minutes ☺

Thursday

Welcome Home!

Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch

11:00 a.m.

After more of than a century of absence, the elk have returned. Relax, have a seat on the visitor center porch and hear the story of the return of the largest mammal to the Great Smoky Mountains.

Duration: 30 minutes ☺



Cherokee Culture

Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch Area

1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Join Cherokee Friends to learn about Cherokee culture and history through demonstrations and storytelling.

Duration: 2 hours

Friday

Coffee with a Ranger

Porch of the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

10:00 a.m. (Starts October 2)

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.

Duration: 45 minutes ☺

Saturday

Smoky Mountain Elk

Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch

11:00 a.m.

Fall is a great time to view elk in rut and listen to their bugle.

Discover how elk stay warm in the winter. Feel the weight of the antlers they carry on their head. A ranger will be available to answer your questions about elk and let you know the best places in the park to see and hear the elk.

Duration: 30 minutes ☺

SUGARLANDS/ELKMONT/ METCALF BOTTOMS AREA

Sunday

A Walk in the Woods

Sugarlands Visitor Center

10:30 a.m.

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.

Duration: 1 1/2 hours

Level: Easy

Autumn Creature Feature

Sugarlands Visitor Center

2:00 p.m.

Did you know that the Great Smokies are one of the most biologically diverse places in the world? Join a ranger to learn about some of the creatures that live here and how they prepare for winter during this "Ranger's Choice" style program.

Duration: 30 minutes ☺

Monday

A Walk in the Woods

Sugarlands Visitor Center

10:30 a.m.

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.

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Duration: 30 minutes ☺

Little Greenbrier Schoolhouse

Little Greenbrier Schoolhouse near Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area

11:00 a.m. to noon, and 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

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. This program is fun for all ages. Please arrive 15 minutes before program start; space is limited.

Duration: 1 hour

Level: Easy

Wednesday

A Walk in the Woods

Sugarlands Visitor Center

10:30 a.m.

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.

Duration: 1 1/2 hours

Level: Easy

Thursday

A Walk in the Woods

Sugarlands Visitor Center

10:30 a.m.

Special Programs

Blacksmith Demonstrations.

Meet at the Blacksmith building near the Cades Cove Visitor Center/Cable Mill area.

Saturday & Sunday, October 17 – 18, 10-4

Saturday & Sunday, October 31 – November 1, 10-4

Learn the art of blacksmithing and why it was important in the Cades Cove community. ☺

Sorghum Making Demonstration

At the Cable Mill Historic Area half-way around the Cades Cove Loop Road.

Friday-Sunday, November 6 – 8, 10-4

Wednesday - Sunday, November 11 – 15

☺

Cades Cove Full Moon Hike

Meet at the Orientation Shelter at the beginning of the Cades Cove Loop Road
Saturday, September 26 & Tuesday, October 27 8:00 pm

Duration: 2 hours

Level: Easy. Wear comfortable walking shoes and bring a flashlight ☺

Cades Cove Stargazing

Meet at the Orientation Shelter at the beginning of the Cades Cove Loop Road.

Saturday, September 19

7:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Join a park ranger and the Smoky Mountain Astronomical Society as we learn about the stars and galaxies. Numerous telescopes will be available for viewing the night skies. Bring warm clothes, a blanket to sit on and a flashlight. Carpooling is strongly encouraged. The program will be postponed in case of rain and/or cloudy weather where the

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.

Duration: 1 1/2 hours

Level: Easy

Autumn Creature Feature

Sugarlands Visitor Center

2:00 p.m.

Did you know that the Great Smokies are one of the most biologically diverse places in the world? Join a ranger to learn about some of the creatures that live here and how they prepare for winter during this "Ranger's Choice" style program.

Duration: 30 minutes ☺

Friday

A Walk in the Woods

Sugarlands Visitor Center

10:30 a.m.

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.

Duration: 1 1/2 hours

Level: Easy

Old Town of Elkmont

Meet behind Elkmont Ranger Station

2:00 p.m.

Take an afternoon stroll with a ranger and learn about Elkmont when it was a turn-of-the-century logging boomtown.

Duration: 2 hours

Level: Easy

Saturday

A Walk in the Woods

Sugarlands Visitor Center

10:30 a.m.

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.

Duration: 1 1/2 hours

Level: Easy

night sky is not clear for viewing. Call 865 448-4104 for more information and by 9 a.m. on September 19 to check if program will be cancelled due to cloudy or rainy weather.

Difficulty: Easy 1/3 mile walk to the program site in an open field. ☺

Back Porch Old-Time Music Jam

Porch of the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Saturdays, October 3 & 17, November 7 & 21

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. ☺



if you love the smokies...

help protect this place for ourselves and future generations

become a member



Great Smoky Mountains Association has supported

the educational, scientific, and historical efforts of the National Park Service through cash donations and in-kind services since 1953. In 2015 alone, the association plans to provide more than \$1 million in assistance, including funds for hemlock tree treatments, living history demonstrations, environmental education programs, salaries for backcountry information provider, 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 seasonal park newspaper, *Smokies Guide*, the association's newsletter, *The Bearpaw*, and the monthly *Cub Report*
- A 15-20% discount on books, music, gifts, and other products sold at park visitor centers and at our web store
- Discounts up to 20% at more than 400 national park bookstores across the country
- Special discounts at area rental cabins, inns, restaurants, shops, and attractions
- And most importantly, the satisfaction of helping to preserve nature and history in Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Join today using the coupon to the right or visit www.SmokiesInformation.org, or call us at 1-888-898-9102 x222. Memberships start at just \$35. per year.

JOHN DICKSON PHOTO



Great Smoky Mountains National Park is one of the few large national parks without an entrance fee. Most parks now charge \$20 to \$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 on this page.

field school

An exciting variety of adventures await adults who long to get out and explore the park accompanied by expert guides. Programs are offered by the Smoky Mountain Field School and include Mt. Le Conte overnights, wildlife workshops, edible plants, wildflower photography, animal tracking, bird watching, salamanders, mountain cooking, and more. One day programs start at as little as \$49. Contact: (865) 974-0150 or smfs.utk.edu

gsmit at tremont

Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont provides residential environmental education programs in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Up to 5,000 students and adults annually attend workshops and school programs at the Institute. Tremont's adult workshops include birding, backpacking, environmental education, naturalist weekends, teacher escapes, and photography. Contact (865) 448-6709 or www.gsmit.org

summer camps

Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont offers a variety of summer youth camps in the national park. Camps last from 6-11 days and cost from \$572. Fees include meals, lodging, and most equipment.

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

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

GSMA MEMBERS

"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
- Annual Business Membership \$250

SIGN ME UP!

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Email (for *Cub Report*) _____

Telephone # _____

Please include your check with this form.

Mail to: GSMA, P.O. Box 130, Gatlinburg, TN 37738

support your 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 \$35 million for park projects and programs. These donations help:

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

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

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

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

the birds of autumn

There is considerable diversity of habitat, topography, and climatic conditions between the high crests and the sheltered lowlands of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. These elements, along with a lengthy growing season and an ancient mountain range, all make the Smokies a premier home for birds and a paradise for birders. More than 240 species of birds have been reliably recorded in the park. At least 110 species are known to breed here and more than 60 are year-round residents. Other birds use the park as an important stopover and foraging area during their

spring and fall migrations.

Fall is a time of restless change in the park. Many species of birds have raised their broods and molted their feathers. Warblers now wear the confusing fall plumage which so frustrates the birders trying to identify them. On one mysterious autumn night, the songbirds leave their perch to migrate south. In mid-September the Broad-winged Hawks begin to kettle-up over the ridges and glide to the bottom of the next thermal, then rise again. A good place to observe these migrating raptors is from the concrete observation tower at Look Rock on the Foothills Parkway.

Autumn is also a time when a cock Ruffed Grouse may stand on a favorite drumming log, raise his crest and ruff, fan his tail, and vigorously beat his wings against the air. It begins slowly and accelerates before fading into the distance; but at first notice it sounds as if your own heart is running away.

SOUTHBOUND

Many of the park's summer residents depart for their wintering grounds in late August, September, and October. The warblers, vireos, orioles, Wood Thrush, Veery, tanagers, most flycatchers, and others steal away in the night. Yet even as they leave, winter visitors from the north begin to

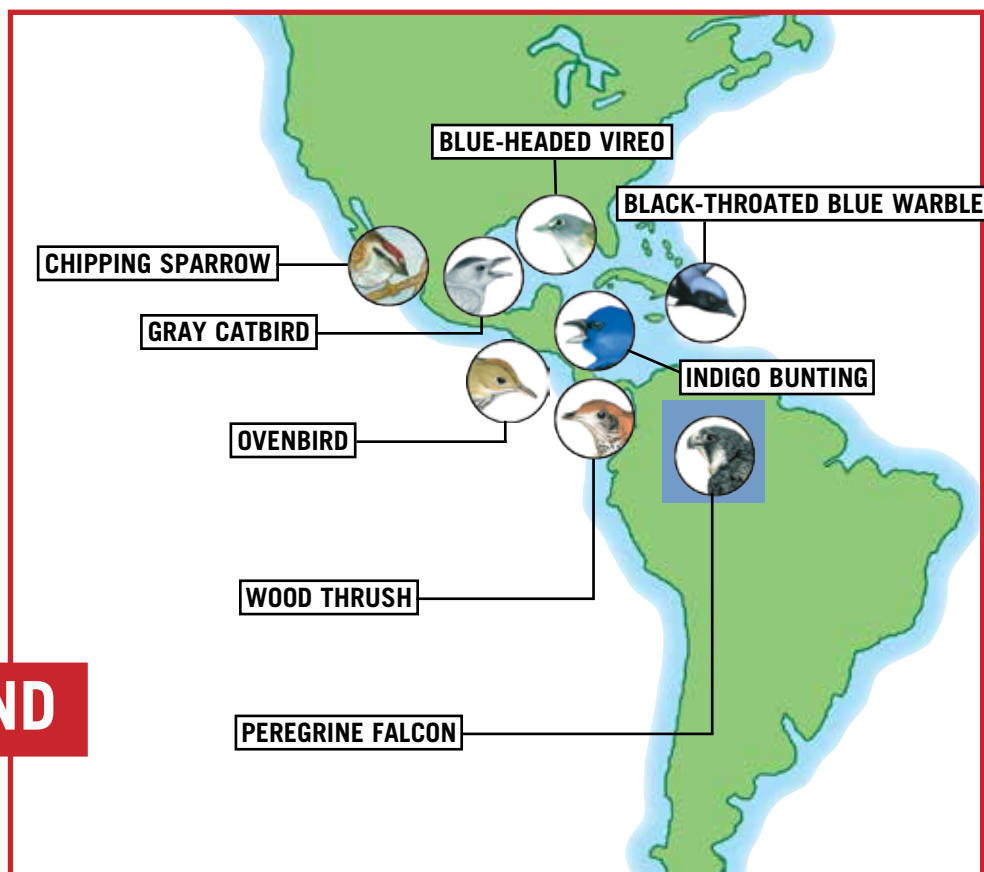
arrive. Soon one can count Hermit Thrush, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Purple Finch, Evening Grosbeak, and others in a day's birding.

Here are some of the favorite wintering grounds for "snowbirds" who breed in the Smokies in summer and then depart for warmer climes in fall. Most of these species have a diet that consists primarily of insects.



Fall Birding Hot Spots

- 1 CADES COVE LOOP ROAD**—Be on the lookout for Wild Turkey, Eastern Bluebird, Eastern Meadowlark, Vesper Sparrow, Water Pipit, Wood Duck.
- 2 CLINGMANS DOME ROAD/SPRUCE-FIR NATURE TRAIL**—Be on the lookout for Common Raven, Black-capped Chickadee, Hairy Woodpecker, Pine Siskin, Red Crossbill, Dark-eyed Junco, Solitary Vireo, Broad Winged Hawk. Watch for flocks of migrating warblers at Indian Gap and Newfound Gap.
- 3 DEEP CREEK PICNIC AREA AND TRAIL**—Be on the lookout for Eastern Screech-owl, Downy Woodpecker, Carolina Chickadee, Carolina Wren, Belted Kingfisher, Rufous-sided Towhee, Hermit Thrush, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-rumped Warbler.



The Autumn Birder's FIVE MOST WANTED

Here are five of the most asked about birds and some places where you might find them.



Northern Saw-whet Owl
Elevations above 4,500 feet, principally in the spruce-fir zone. Check out Newfound Gap and Clingmans Dome Road.



Pileated Woodpecker
Most common in lowland hardwood forests. Look in Cades Cove and along Huskey Gap Trail.



Red Crossbill
An erratic species that can be found almost anywhere at any elevation and at any time of the year.



Black-capped Chickadee
Mid-high elevations. Take a walk on the Appalachian Trail from Newfound Gap.



Common Raven
Most often observed in the highlands of the park: Clingmans Dome Road, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and Alum Cave Trails.

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

www.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.

