



SMOKIES GUIDE



FUN RANGER-LED WALKS & TALKS—PGS 10-15

THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK — SUMMER 2015



BILL LEA PHOTO

Mountain folk nicknamed red squirrels “Boomers” because they chatter loud and long whenever they feel their territory is being invaded.

Smokies’ “Boomer” Lives Up to its Name

If you have ever encountered a red squirrel (aka “Boomer”) in the Great Smoky Mountains, you have probably been scolded by a red squirrel in the Great Smoky Mountains. The red squirrel is a highly vocal animal as well as a very territorial one. Perched on a tree limb just beyond your reach, a red squirrel will chatter at you incessantly, determined to make you aware of your trespass on its territory.

With 100 species of native trees and nearly 800 square miles of verdant forest, Great Smoky Mountains National Park is the perfect habitat for an arboreal species like the red squirrel. Almost everything a red squirrel needs can be found among the limbs and branches of a tree. Their preferred foods in this forest buffet include tree buds,

hickory nuts, beech nuts, acorns, insects, and seeds from the cones of pine, hemlock, spruce, and fir trees. Red squirrels satisfy their sweet tooth by gnawing into the branch of a sugar maple tree and licking the sap.

A mushroom dangling from a tree limb is a sure sign that a red squirrel has chosen that branch for mushroom storage. This unusual behavior is actually good for forest health because it spreads beneficial fungi.

Red squirrels are found mostly at the park’s mid and higher elevations, especially in the Canadian Zone spruce-fir forest. Unlike gray squirrels, red squirrels are a northern species that reaches the southern edge of their range just south of the Smokies in the highlands of South Carolina.



RHODODENDRON

All told, ten varieties of native rhododendron can be found in the famously diverse Great Smoky Mountains. The biggest stars in this constellation are Catawba (purple) which blooms at the higher elevations in June, and rosebay (white) which blooms lower down in June and July. Clingmans Dome and Parson Branch roads are good places to enjoy “rhodo” displays.



DAVID LUTTRELL PHOTO



Families love Great Smoky Mountains National Park for its variety of hiking trails. To find other great national parks, visit www.nps.gov.

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.

FIND YOUR PARK

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.



smokies trip planner

to order maps and guides: www.SmokiesInformation.org

smokies guide

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

SPRING: March 15

SUMMER: June 1

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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-serve.

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

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

The list below shows number of sites, elevations, fees, approximate 2015 operation dates, and maximum RV lengths. **Dates are subject to change.** Visit www.nps.gov/grsm for current information.

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

accommodations

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

For information on lodging outside the park:
Bryson City 1-800-867-9246
Cherokee 1-800-438-1601
Fontana 1-800-849-2258
Gatlinburg 1-800-267-7088
Maggie Valley 1-800-624-4431
Pigeon Forge 1-800-251-9100
Sevierville 1-888-766-5948
Townsend 1-800-525-6834

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

June 20
Womens Work at Oconaluftee Visitor Center

September 19
Mountain Life Festival at Oconaluftee Visitor Center

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

Summer hours of operation are: Oconaluftee & Sugarlands: 8-7:30; Clingmans Dome: 10-6, Cades Cove: 9-7:30, Gatlinburg Welcome Center: 8:30-7.

other services

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



Bicycle 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 average of over 88" of precipitation falls on the higher elevations of the Smokies. On Mt. Le Conte, an average of 82.8" of snow falls per year.

horse riding

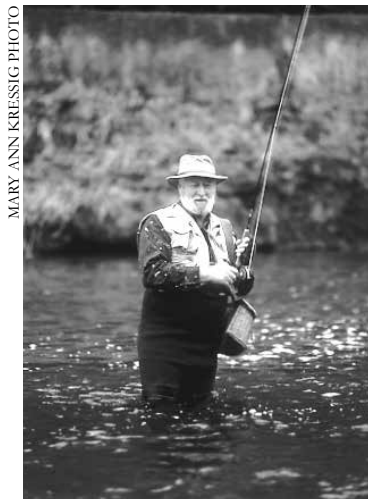
Horseback riding is generally available from early March through November. Rates are \$30 per hour. Most stables have maximum rider weight limits of 225 or 250 pounds and age restrictions for children. Please call the stables below or stop at a visitor center for detailed information.

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 all 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 are required for all campers in the backcountry.

Backcountry Camping in the Great 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 every day from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The office is located in Sugarlands Visitor Center, two miles south of Gatlinburg on U.S. 441. (865)

436-1297.

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

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

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

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

if you are in love with

the Great Smoky Mountains...

become a member



Since 1953, Great Smoky Mountains

Association has supported the educational, scientific, and historical efforts of the National Park Service through cash donations and in-kind services. In 2015 alone, the association plans to provide more than \$1 million in assistance that includes saving hemlock trees, living history demonstrations, environmental education programs, salaries for backcountry patrols, 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 quarterly 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 national parks without an entrance fee. Most large parks now charge \$30 or more 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 the Smokies 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 \$555. 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. 1-888-898-9102

support the

friends

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

Since 1993, Friends has



raised over \$34 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

park news

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

National Park Service News Briefs

Researcher Studies Impact of Sounds

IS PEACE AND QUIET as important to national park visitors as clean water and clear air? Are the sounds of singing birds, bugling elk, and rushing mountain streams part of your memorable park experience? Researcher Scott McFarland will be in the Smokies this summer monitoring some of the noisiest and quietest areas of our park. His data will help park officials shape future management actions with the value of natural sounds and quiet in mind. To learn more, visit www.nature.nps.gov/sound/

Alum Cave Trail Closed Mondays-Thursdays

THE VERY POPULAR Alum Cave Trail to Alum Cave Bluffs and Mt. Le Conte will be closed from Monday mornings through Thursday evenings (excluding federal holidays) through November 19 this year. Work will then resume on a similar schedule next year. The closure will allow volunteers and the park's Trails Forever Crew to repair portions of the pathway damaged by landslides and washouts. The five-mile long trail will remain open Fridays-Sundays throughout the year. Alternative trails to Mt. Le Conte include The Boulevard, Brushy Mountain, Trillium Gap, Rainbow Falls, and Bull Head.

Park Adds \$806 Million to Local Economy

A NEW REPORT SHOWS THAT 10,099,276 VISITORS to Great Smoky Mountains National Park in 2014 spent \$806,719,900 in communities near the park. That spending supported 12,759 jobs in the local area.

"After a record setting year in 2014, we are pleased Great Smoky Mountains National Park continues to provide not only an incredible resource for visitors to explore and enjoy, but also serves as a driving economic force in the local community," said Superintendent Cassius Cash. For more information: www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/economics.cfm

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations Coming

LATER THIS SUMMER, the Smokies will be the first national park in the country to offer DC fast charging stations for electric vehicles. Thanks to a grant from the Department of Energy, partnerships with the Clean Cities groups, and a donation from Nissan, the park will have charging stations at Sugarlands and Oconaluftee visitor centers for the public to quickly recharge their electric cars. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/grsm.

New Firewood Regulation Will Help Protect Forests from Alien Invaders



Campers can collect dead and down wood in the park or purchase certified firewood at the larger campgrounds or stores outside the park.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park officials have enacted regulations that will help protect park forests by restricting the type of firewood brought into the park. Beginning this spring, 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.

Heat-treated firewood is now for sale from concessioners in many of the park campgrounds as well as from private businesses in the communities around the park. Certified heat-treated firewood is packaged in 0.75 cu-ft. bundles clearly displaying a certification stamp.

The wood is a high-quality hardwood product that has been heated for 60 minutes at 140 degrees Fahrenheit. The wood lights easily, burns well for campfires, is safe to cook over, and is already available at over 85 locations near the park that can be viewed on an interactive map at www.nature.org/firewoodmap. In

addition, visitors may still collect dead and down wood in the park for campfires.

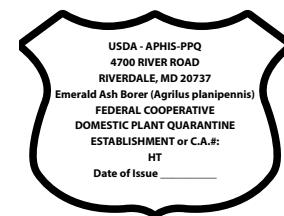
"The threat of these new pests coming into our forests, both in the park and regionally, compels us to do all we can to reduce the risk to our forests," said Deputy Superintendent Clayton Jordan. "While a ban on the

These insects from Asia and Europe have the potential to devastate over 40 species of hardwood trees native to the Smokies.

importation of non-treated firewood will not entirely halt the spread of forest pests and diseases, it will greatly slow it down. This allows us time to develop and implement new treatment strategies."

Non-native, tree-killing insects and diseases can unknowingly be introduced through firewood transported from infested areas. A variety of destructive pests lay eggs or stowaway in firewood. These insects from Asia and Europe have the potential

to devastate over 40 species of hardwood trees native to the park. New infestations threaten our forests with widespread tree mortality that could degrade wildlife



habitat, biodiversity, and scenic views. Using firewood that has been heat treated eliminates the threat.

National parks throughout the Appalachian region have taken action to limit the spread of insect pests in firewood, including the banning of imported firewood. For the past three years the Smokies has prohibited the importation of firewood from areas quarantined by the USDA Inspection Service.

Park rangers have been working over the past year with numerous partner organizations to mitigate the

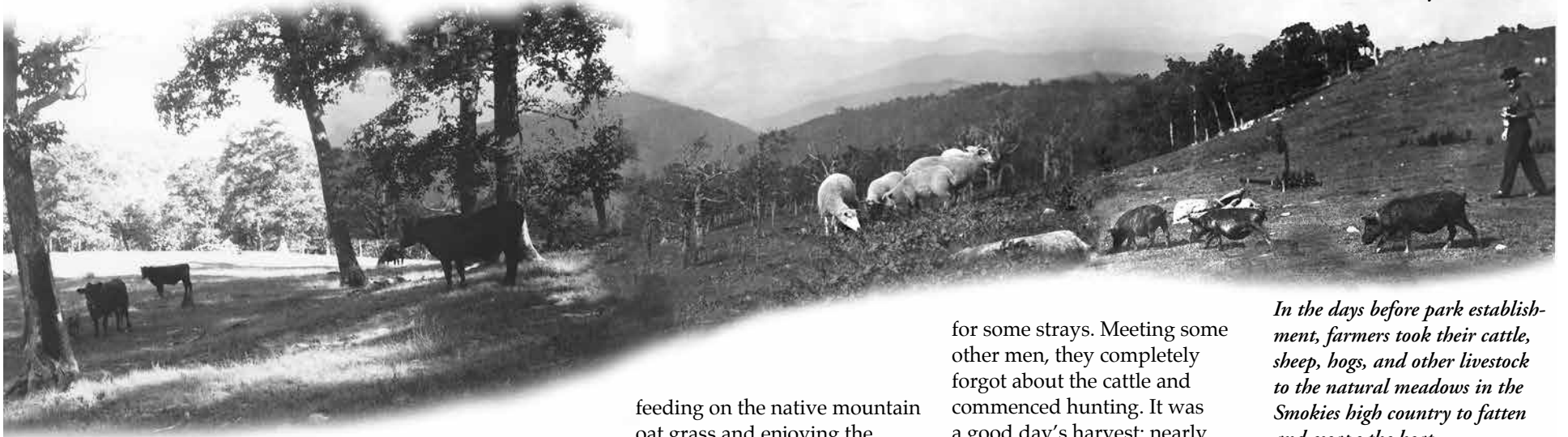
risks associated with movement of firewood, including a public education campaign with campground programs and billboards. The park also hosted public meetings and developed an informational handout that was provided to all Smokies campers inviting public comments.

For more information about firewood and forest and pests in the park, please visit the park website at <http://www.nps.gov/grsm/plan-yourvisit/firewood-alert.htm>.

smokies history

“When Summer’s in the Meadow” Grazing livestock on the Grassy Balds

by Rose Houk



For at least a century before the Great Smokies became a national park, livestock were driven up onto the grassy balds every summer to fatten on the flavorful forage. Herders kept watch over cattle, sheep, hogs, and a few horses and mules, and in the fall they rounded up all the animals and brought them down to market.

This tradition of grazing goes back at least to the early 1800s, and possibly even earlier. Native Americans may have grazed animals on the balds—historians say the Cherokee held communal grazing lands, and leased pastures to farmers to range their cattle as well. And it’s certain that the earliest white settlers saw the value of that grazing land and put it to use. With their Scotch-Irish heritage, they found it fairly easy to adapt their old-country, upland grazing methods to the new environment of the Smokies. Because of the large number of livestock sent to the highlands, places like Spence Field, Andrews Bald, and Gregory Bald were kept grassy and free of trees.

Grazing livestock in the high

country was a seasonal ritual. Come April or early May, word rippled through surrounding towns and valleys that it was time to ready the livestock for their journey. To tell one owner’s animals from another, they nipped distinctive notches or impressed tattoos into the ears. Most of the cattle and sheep also had bells around their necks. As many as 50 families mingled their livestock for the long migration. By the time all were assembled, there would be several hundred head of cattle—steers, heifers, cows, some blackface, whiteface, and good old mountain mixed-breeds. Add in sheep, hogs, horses and mules—and the usual noisy entourage of barking dogs and shouting and whistling drovers—and it was quite the procession.

Herds headed for Spence and Russell fields went up to the crest by way of the Bote Mountain Road. Those bound for Gregory or Parson took the Cooper and Rich Mountain roads into Cades Cove, and continued along Forge Creek or the Fork Ridge Trail. After reaching the top, the animals were let loose to wander at will,

feeding on the native mountain oat grass and enjoying the pleasant breezes and lack of bugs at 5,000 feet elevation. It was heaven on earth for a cow.

Men hired on as herders and charged a nominal sum per head. Dan Myers, Fonze Cable, Granville Calhoun, George Tipton, and Tom Sparks were among the best-known. Some herders went back and forth to the balds to tend the animals, while others lived up there all summer in cabins they built beside springs. Spence Cabin and Hall Cabin were notable. All these structures are gone now, but photographs show them as small log cabins of one or two rooms, with a fireplace and simple furnishings. The herder would keep a loyal dog, and maybe a cat, for company. They had a few visitors too, as hunters and hikers stopped in along the way.

Some herders cleared a garden patch and grew potatoes and cabbage to supplement the standard fare of cornbread, fatback, and beans. And nearly every one of them hunted wild game, to vary the monotonous diet and probably to help pass the long hours. One nice fall day, Granville Calhoun and his father-in-law, Crate Hall, went out searching

for some strays. Meeting some other men, they completely forgot about the cattle and commenced hunting. It was a good day’s harvest: nearly a dozen wild turkey, a buck deer, one bear, a groundhog, raccoons, several squirrels, and a grouse.

Seymour Calhoun helped his father herd. They ran their own cattle and those of others at the same time, he said, “anywhere from five to seven or eight hundred head” from Clingmans Dome west for about 16 miles to Spence Field.

Lightning was a real threat to animals standing out on the open balds. Randolph Shields said his family received word that lightning had killed most of their sheep at Ekaneetlee Gap. His grandmother took everyone up, and they pulled the wool off the carcasses because it was too valuable to waste.

Bears could be a problem, mostly for calves and sheep, but in pre-park days the bear population was much sparser than it is today. If a herder did hear of a marauding bear, though, he’d form a hunting party and go get it.

Poisonous plants, especially mountain laurel, or “ivy,” were to be avoided. The cattle wore muzzles of leather bark, or wire to prevent their nibbling laurel along the trail. “It’d kill them” if they ate it, said Uncle Jim

In the days before park establishment, farmers took their cattle, sheep, hogs, and other livestock to the natural meadows in the Smokies high country to fatten and escape the heat.

Shelton, who started herding as a teenager with Granville Calhoun.

Come the first of September, it was time for “the gathering” or roundup—all the cattle and sheep had to be collected, counted, separated according to ownership, and readied for the trip back down the mountains. This was the only count that was done, said Asa Sparks, but it was an important one because this was when the herder discovered if any animals in his charge were lost or missing. If any were unaccounted for, he had to go find them. Randolph Shields said he and Kermit Caughron combed the thick-wooded hollows of the Twenty-Mile area for three days just to find three missing cows.

But by the 1930s, people had begun to place a different value on the Great Smoky Mountains. The range was about to become a new national park. Grazing, and other uses considered incompatible with the park, would no longer be allowed. The last holdout was John Oliver, who took some of his cattle up on the balds above Cades Cove for the last time in 1936.

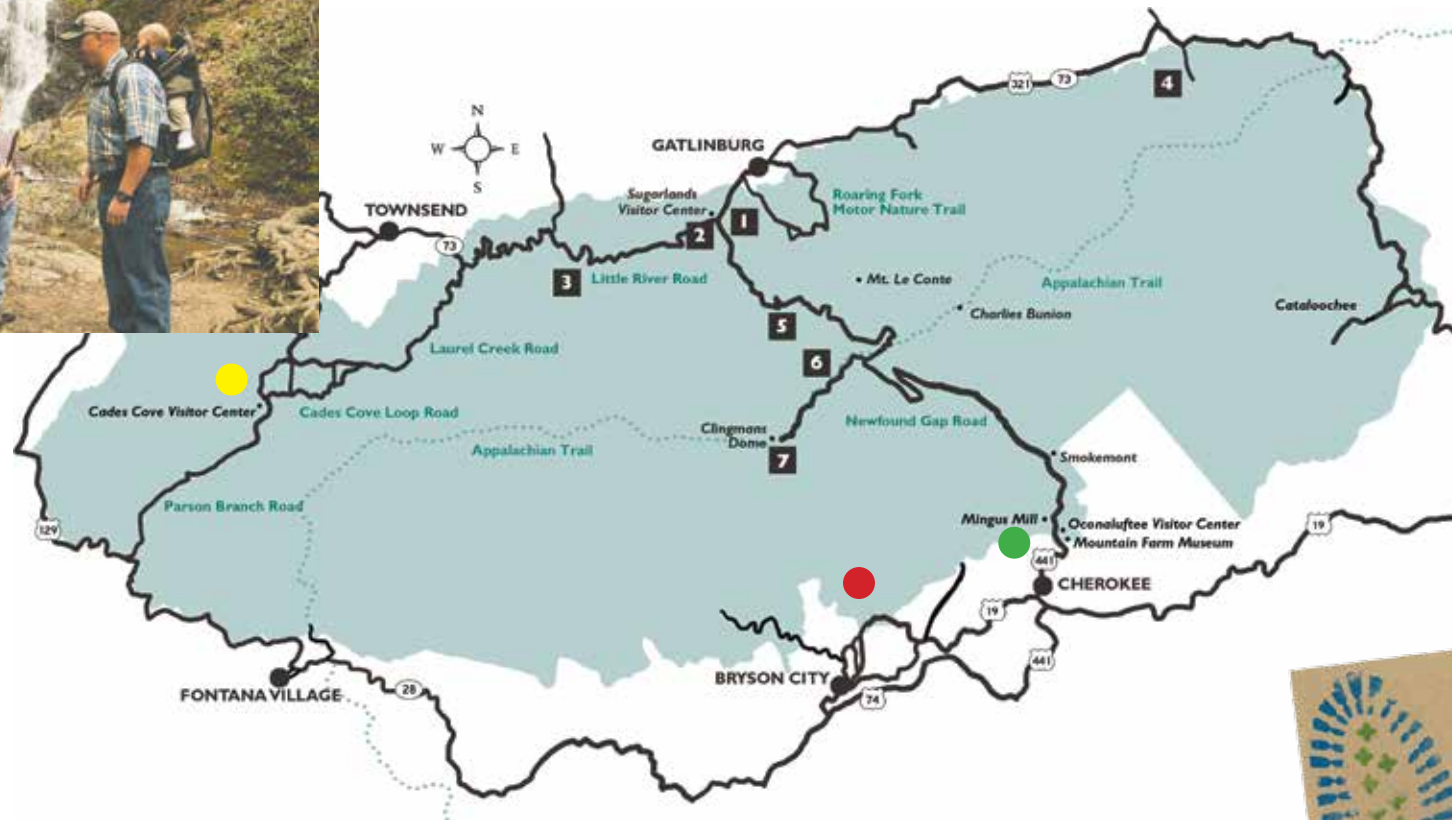
hit the trail

Day hiking in the Smokies is a fun way for families to escape the car and enjoy the great outdoors

DAVID LUTTRELL PHOTO



Great Hikes for Families



- 1** Sugarlands Valley Nature Trail (0.5 mile)
- 2** Fighting Creek Nature Trail (1.0 mile)
- 3** Elkmont Nature Trail (0.8 mile)
- 4** Cosby Nature Trail (0.75 mile)
- 5** Cove Hardwood Nature Trail (0.75 mile)
- 6** Spruce-fir Nature Trail (0.5 mile)
- 7** Clingmans Dome Trail (1.0 mile)

With over 800 miles of gorgeous hiking trails to choose from, Great Smoky Mountains National Park is a wonderland for families who want to escape from the car and busy roadways and experience the peace and beauty of the Smokies. Hiking is not only great for your health, it gives families the opportunity for bonding and shared adventures that will be remembered for a lifetime.

Perhaps the best way for families with younger children to hike the Smokies is on one of the park's self-guiding nature trails shown on the map above. Each offers an inexpensive brochure and numbered posts that help you learn about some of the things you see along the way. Many are loop trails. Mileages shown are round trip.

Quiet Walkways are another great way to stretch your legs and enjoy the Smokies backcountry. Look for signs along park roadways to find these short gems. A few are loop trails, but most are not, so you just walk a ways, then return the way you came.

Other family favorite day hikes include:

● The Three Waterfalls Loop. Starting at the trailhead past Deep Creek Campground and Picnic areas, this 2.4 mile moderate loop hike includes three impressive waterfalls you can enjoy and photograph.

● Abrams Falls. Beginning from the Cades Cove Loop Road, this 5 mile roundtrip moderate hike climbs up and down over ridges to reach beautiful Abrams Falls.

● Oconaluftee River Trail. This easy, 3-mile roundtrip hike starts at Oconaluftee Visitor Center and follows the river into the town of Cherokee. Exhibit signs along the way tell Cherokee Indian stories.

Get Your Kids Hiking!

This summer, family hiking expert and author of *Get Your Kids Hiking*, Jeff Alt, teams up with Great Smoky Mountains National Park rangers to lead kids and accompanying adults on a short hike loaded with hands-on family hiking tips and ways to explore the outdoors. Learn how a few simple techniques and some basic equipment can turn any walk in the woods into a safe, fun-filled adventure. Come prepared for a 1 hour easy walk (less than one mile). Programs are open to children of all ages. Children must be accompanied by an adult/caregiver.

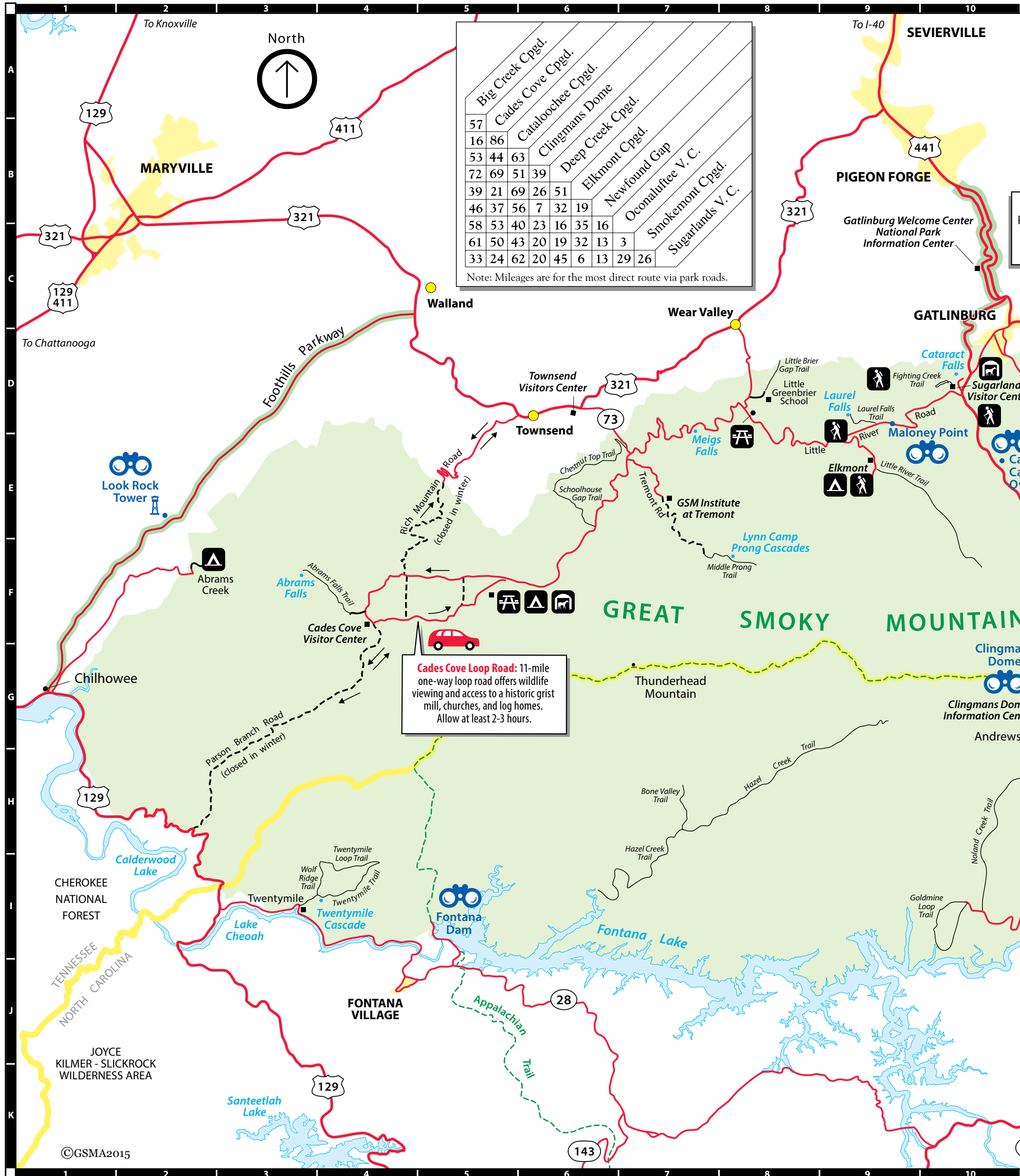
- Saturday, June 20, 10:30 a.m., Location: Sugarlands Visitor Center
- Saturday, July 18, 11:00 a.m. Location: Oconaluftee Visitor Center
- Saturday, October 10, 10:30 a.m. Location: Sugarlands Visitor Center

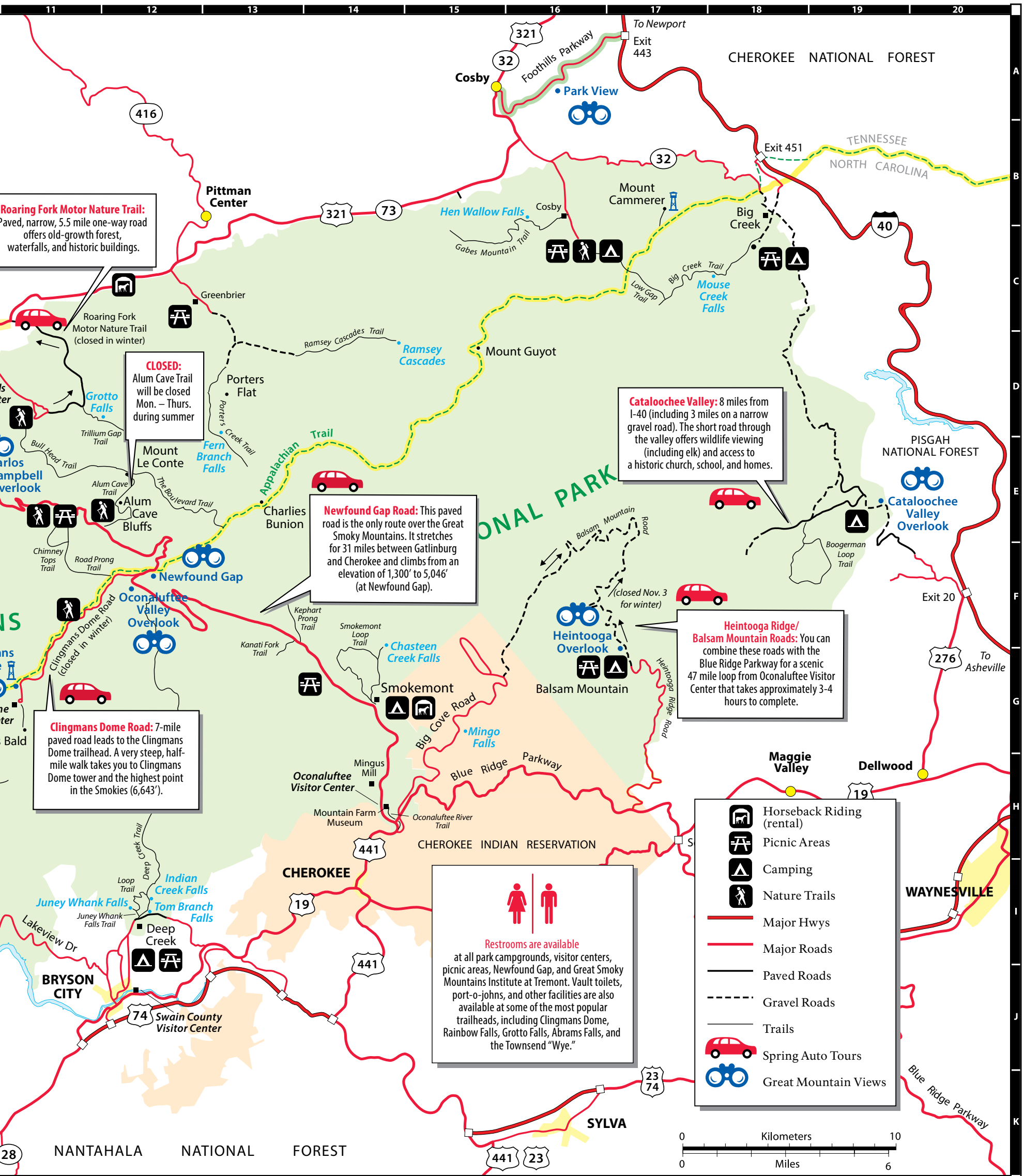


Don't forget to pick up a *Hike the Smokies—FOR FAMILIES* log book to keep track of your hikes and earn cool stickers and pins for the miles you cover. Available for \$1 at park visitor centers.

Scavenger Hike Adventures are 13 hikes especially for families who want to engage their kids in searching for clues and hidden wonders as they walk park trails. Your kids will look for such treasures as a wrecked steam engine, a tree marked by bear claws, remains of an old Model T, and historic log cabins. Available at park visitor centers or by visiting www.SmokiesInformation.org.

GREAT SUMMER DRIVING TOURS AND VIEWS IN THE SMOKIES





Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail: Paved, narrow, 5.5 mile one-way road offers old-growth forest, waterfalls, and historic buildings.

CLOSED: Alum Cave Trail will be closed Mon. - Thurs. during summer

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).

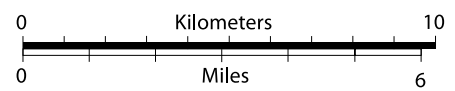
Cataloochee Valley: 8 miles from I-40 (including 3 miles on a narrow gravel road). The short road through the valley offers wildlife viewing (including elk) and access to a historic church, school, and homes.

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.

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').

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, and the Townsend "Wye."

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



great things to do

Programs and activities in Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

JUNE 14 – AUGUST 8, 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.

♿ Accessible to persons using wheelchairs.

👨👩👧👦 Families who hike in the Smokies can now earn special stickers and collector pins as rewards. Pick up a “Hike the Smokies—For Families” booklet at any park visitor center to learn more.



CADES COVE

Because of slow moving traffic, it may take over an hour to drive the six miles from the start of Cades Cove Loop Road to programs at the Cades Cove Visitor Center/Cable Mill Historic Area.

Sundays

Junior Ranger Program: Blue & Gray

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

1:00 p.m.

The Civil War needs young folks to enlist for the Union or Confederacy! As a recruit you will learn about the life of a soldier. Join a Park Ranger to see how the Civil War affected communities such as Cades Cove.

Duration: 1 hour

Difficulty: Easy



WILD by Design

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

2:30 p.m.

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

Duration: 30 – 45 minutes

Difficulty: Easy



Mondays

Early Bird Hayride

Meet at Cades Cove Riding Stables

8:00 a.m.

Join a park ranger for an early morning hayride viewing wildlife and discovering the diversity of life in the Cove.

Duration: 2 hours

Fee: \$14.00/person



Junior Ranger Program: Eager Weaver

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

1:00 p.m.

Join a park ranger to learn the art of weaving using a loom. Take home your work.

Duration: 30 – 45 minutes

Difficulty: Easy



Cades Cove Night Hike

Meet at the Orientation shelter at the entrance to the Cades Cove Loop Road

9:00 p.m.

Listen to the spirits of Cades Cove. Children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult.

Duration: 2 hours

Difficulty: Easy, 2.5 miles



Tuesdays

Junior Ranger Program: Blacksmithing

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

10:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 1:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m.,

3:00 p.m.

Join a ranger in the blacksmith shop to learn about the blacksmith. Create your own item to take home. Other Junior Ranger programs will be going on simultaneously for younger kids. Limited to children 8–12 with group size limited to 8 children per program.

Duration: 45 minutes

Junior Ranger: Animal Olympics

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

10:30 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.

This interactive fun activity compares your abilities to the animals of the park.

Duration: 45 minutes

Difficulty: Easy



Junior Ranger Program: Blue & Gray

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

11:30 a.m. & 2:00 p.m.

The Civil War needs young folks to enlist for the Union or Confederacy! As a recruit you will learn about the life of a soldier. Join a Park Ranger to see how the Civil War affected communities such as Cades Cove.



Most ranger-guided programs are free of charge.

Duration: 1 hour

Difficulty: Easy



Cades Cove Evening Hayride

Meet at Cades Cove Riding Stables

5:00 p.m.

Join a ranger for an evening open air hayride viewing wildlife and discovering the diversity of life in the Cove. Hayrides can fill up quickly, first-come, first-serve for this program.

Duration: 2 hours

Fee: \$14.00/person



Wednesdays

Junior Ranger Program: Ranger's Choice

Meet at the Cades Cove Visitor Center/Cable Mill area half way 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

Difficulty: Easy



WILD by Design

Meet at the Cades Cove Visitor Center area half way around the Cades Cove Loop Road

2:30 p.m.

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

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Junior Ranger: Slimy Salamanders

Sugarlands Visitor Center

9:00 a.m. Friday, June 26 & July 10 ONLY

Join a Ranger to explore the damp, dark world of the park's most popular amphibian. Be prepared to get a little wet and even a little dirty as we search for this slimy creature. Closed-toed shoes that can get wet are recommended.

Duration: 1.5 hours

Difficulty: Easy



Cades Cove Full Moon Hike

Meet at the Orientation Shelter at the entrance to the Cades Cove Loop Road

8:30 p.m. Saturday, August 29

Wear comfortable walking shoes. Children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult.

Duration: 2 hours

Difficulty: Easy, 2 mile walk



Blacksmith Demonstrations

Saturday & Sunday, May 23 & 24

Saturday & Sunday, June 6 & 7

Saturday & Sunday, July 4 & 5, 25 & 26

Saturday & Sunday, August 8 & 9

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

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

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



Old-Time Toy Demonstration

Wednesdays, May 27 – August 5

11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

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

See how wooden toys were used back in Cades Cove's earlier days.



Shaped-Note Singing School

Little Greenbrier Schoolhouse

Sunday, July 12 at 2:00 p.m.

Singing schools in the mountains were scheduled when people were not occupied with their work. Usually held when the "literary" schools were adjourned; singing schools taught the rudiments of music to the general population by the use of shape notes (also know as Old Harp singing). Come and participate or just listen. Songbooks

Duration: 30 minutes

Difficulty: Easy



Cades Cove Evening Hayride

Meet at Cades Cove Riding Stables

5:00 p.m.

Join a ranger for an evening open air hayride viewing wildlife and discovering the diversity of life in the Cove. Hayrides can fill up quickly, first-come, first-

will be provided.

Duration: 2 hours

Back Porch Old-Time Music Jam

Porch of the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Saturdays, June 6 & 20, July 4 & 18, and August 1 & 15

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.



Women's Work Festival

Mountain Farm Museum adjacent to Oconaluftee Visitor Center

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Saturday, June 20

Join Park Staff and Volunteers for a glimpse into the past roles that rural women held in the family and community. Come experience the similarities as well as the differences life presented more than a century ago. A variety of demonstrations will be ongoing throughout the day.



Return of the Elk

Cataloochee Valley, Rough Fork Trailhead

3:00 p.m.

Tuesdays, July 7 & July 14

Come enjoy a guided hike to where the elk acclimation pen was located and explore how, when, and why the elk returned to the Smokies.

Duration: 1.5 hours

Difficulty: Moderate, less than 1 mile



SPECIAL SUMMER FAMILY HIKES

Get Your Kids Hiking!

This short family stroll turns a walk in the park into a fun-filled, multi-dimensional adventure. Family hiking expert and author of *Get Your Kids Hiking*, Jeff Alt, teams up with Great Smoky Mountains National Park Rangers to lead kids and accompanying adults on a short hike loaded with hands-on family hiking tips and ways to explore the outdoors. Learn how a few simple techniques and some basic equipment can turn any walk in the woods into a safe, fun-filled adventure. Come prepared for a 1 hour easy walk. Walks that are less than one mile are open to children of all ages. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

-Saturday, June 20, 10:30 a.m. at Sugarlands

serve for this program.

Duration: 2 hours

Fee: \$14.00/person



Thursdays

I Remember When

Meet at the Cades Cove amphitheater next to the campground store

9:00 p.m.

Visitor Center

-Saturday, July 18, 11:00 a.m. at Oconaluftee

Visitor Center

-Saturday, October 10, 10:30 a.m. at Sugarlands

Visitor Center

Family Hike Series

Join a Ranger to become more confident traversing the trails with the whole family. This hike series is designed to help you and your children build on your skills and get comfortable planning future trips to the park. Children must be accompanied by an adult/caregiver. **Sign up at Sugarlands Visitor Center to ensure a spot for your entire family!**

-Tuesday, June 23 at 10:30 a.m.

Hike to Fern Branch Falls along Porters Creek

Enjoy this walk along beautiful Porters Creek to explore the Smokies' history, wildflowers and waterfalls. Learn about hiking in the Smokies and how hikers played a role in the preservation of the Park. Bring a picnic lunch. Recommended for youth ages 5 – 8. Maximum of 30 participants.

Distance: 3.6 miles round-trip

Difficulty: Easy to Moderate

Duration: 3- 3.5 hours



-Tuesday, July 21 at 10:00 a.m.

Hike to Hen Wallow Falls

Beat the crowds at this "hidden gem" and see a beautiful waterfall, search for salamanders, and see some of the Smokies' oldest trees. Bring a picnic lunch. Recommended for youth ages 7 – 10. Maximum of 30 participants.

Distance: 4.3 miles round-trip

Difficulty: Moderate

Duration: 4 hours



-Tuesday, August 11 at 9:00 a.m.

Hike to the Chimney Tops

Get your heart pumping on this very, very steep hike. If the climb doesn't take your breath away the view from the Chimney Tops surely will! Bring a picnic lunch. Recommended for youth ages 10 and up. Maximum of 25 participants.

Distance: 4 miles round-trip

Difficulty: Strenuous with rock scrambling

Duration: 4 hours



Explore the Smokies and create family memories to take home and last a lifetime.

Duration: 1 hour

Difficulty: Easy




Fridays

Early Bird Hayride

Meet at Cades Cove Riding Stables

8:00 a.m.



Join a park ranger for an early morning hayride viewing wildlife and discovering the diversity of life in the Cove.

Duration: 2 hours
Fee: \$14.00/person
♿

Junior Ranger Program: Ranger's Choice
Meet at the Cades Cove Visitor Center/Cable Mill area, halfway around the Cades Cove 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
Difficulty: Easy
♿

Cades Cove Night Hike
Meet at the Orientation shelter at the entrance to the Cades Cove Loop Road
9:00 p.m.

Listen to the spirits of Cades Cove. Children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult.
Duration: 2 hours
Difficulty: Easy, 2.5 miles
♿

Saturdays
Junior Ranger: Animal Olympics
Meet at the Cades Cove Visitor Center/Cable Mill area, halfway around the Cades Cove Loop Road
1:00 p.m.

This interactive fun activity compares your abilities to the animals of the park.
Duration: 45 minutes
Difficulty: Easy

WILD by Design
Meet at the Cades Cove Visitor Center area half way around the Cades Cove Loop Road
2:30 p.m.

A talk and hands-on demonstration about the wild things in the park.
Duration: 30 minutes
Difficulty: Easy
♿

GATLINBURG/ SUGARLANDS AREA

Daily
Cataract Falls
Meet at Sugarlands Visitor Center
11:30 a.m.

Join a ranger on a short walk to discover why the Smokies is special in the summer. Topics may include waterfalls, wildflowers, trees, history, salamanders, and birds.
Duration: 1 hour
Difficulty: Easy

Sundays
A Wondrous Diversity of Life
Meet at Sugarlands Visitor Center
2:00 p.m.

Come learn more about reintroduced species, non-native insects, slimy salamanders or the secret lives of bears. Topics vary, but you're sure to be amazed by the Smokies biodiversity.
Duration: 45 minutes
♿

Mondays
Junior Ranger: Bein' A Kid in the Mountains
Sugarlands Visitor Center
10:30 a.m.

What was it like to grow up in these mountains before any of the modern conveniences we enjoy today? Join a Ranger to experience how life used to be in these mountains, including how kids explored and what they liked to do for fun.
Duration: 1 hour
Difficulty: Easy
♿

A Wondrous Diversity of Life
Meet at Sugarlands Visitor Center
2:00 p.m.

Come learn more about reintroduced species, non-native insects, slimy salamanders or the secret lives of bears. Topics vary, but you're sure to be amazed by the Smokies biodiversity.
Duration: 45 minutes
♿

Tuesdays
Junior Ranger: Yucky Animal Stuff
Sugarlands Visitor Center
10:00 a.m.

Want to know some gross stuff about animals? Check out some skulls, smells, and scat. Learn some disgusting facts. Join a ranger for this fun and entertaining program.
Duration: 1 hour
Difficulty: Easy
♿

Junior Ranger: Find Your Park
Sugarlands Visitor Center
1:00 p.m.
Join a Ranger for a look into National Parks across the country and find out which one might be yours!
Duration: 1 hour
Difficulty: Easy
♿

Wednesdays
Early Bird Hike: Laurel Falls & Old-Growth Forest
Laurel Falls Trailhead
8:00 a.m.

Enjoy one of the Smokies most popular hikes well before the crowds arrive, and beat the heat of summer, too. Hike to Laurel Falls and beyond to some of the Smokies most accessible, remaining old-growth forest.
Duration: 2.5 hours
Level: Moderate, 3 miles
♿

A Wondrous Diversity of Life
Meet at Sugarlands Visitor Center
2:00 p.m.

Come learn more about reintroduced species, non-native insects, slimy salamanders or the secret lives of bears. Topics vary, but you're sure to be amazed by the Smokies biodiversity.
Duration: 45 minutes
♿

Thursdays
Highland Homeland
Noah Bud Ogle Cabin (from downtown Gatlinburg, turn at traffic light #8, and follow Airport Road—Historic Nature Trail into the park)
2:00 p.m.
Sit a spell on the front porch of the Ogle cabin and learn about the families who once lived here. Demonstrations and activities will vary throughout the season.
Duration: 45 Minutes
Level: Easy

Fridays
A Wondrous Diversity of Life
Meet at Sugarlands Visitor Center
2:00 p.m.
Come learn more about reintroduced species, non-native insects, slimy salamanders or the secret lives of bears. Topics vary, but you're sure to be amazed by the Smokies biodiversity.
Duration: 45 minutes
♿

Saturdays
Junior Ranger: Bear-mania!
Meet at Sugarlands Visitor Center
2:00 p.m.
So you think you know a lot about bears, huh? Well join a ranger to test your knowledge and learn more about this "symbol of the Smokies."
Duration: 45 minutes
♿

See the Stars in the Smokies
Meet at Sugarlands Visitor Center
8:30 p.m.
Come learn the stories of some of the most popular constellations and enjoy the dark sky that only National Parks can provide. Use a telescope to get up-close and personal with the stars. Maximum of 40 participants. Sign-up at Sugarlands Visitor Center is first come, first serve, beginning on Friday morning preceding the program.
Duration: 1.5 hours
Difficulty: Easy
♿



ELKMONT/LITTLE GREENBRIER/METCALF BOTTOMS AREA

Sundays

Elkmont Campfire Program

Elkmont Campground Amphitheater

8:00 p.m.

Join a Ranger for a National Park tradition—the evening campfire program. Topics vary, but you’re guaranteed to learn something new about the Great Smoky Mountains.

Duration: 1 hour



Mondays

Junior Ranger: Creepy Critters

Elkmont Amphitheater

1:00 p.m.

Join a Ranger on this adventure into the dark and mysterious world of bugs and macro-invertebrates. Get up close and personal with the use of equipment such as “sucky-uppy-things”, leaf litter boxes and magnifying glasses.

Duration: 1 hour

Difficulty: Easy



Tuesdays

Junior Ranger: School Days at Little Greenbrier

Little Greenbrier Schoolhouse

11:00 a.m. & 2:00 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. Fun for all ages. Please arrive 15 minutes before program start; space is limited.

Duration: 1 hour

Difficulty: Easy

Wednesdays

Junior Ranger: Stream Splashers Metcalf Bottoms, Picnic Area Pavilion

10:30 a.m.

Roll up your pants and wade through a mountain stream to look for mayflies, stoneflies, dragonflies, and other aquatic critters. Be prepared to get wet. Closed-toed shoes that can get wet are recommended.

Duration: 1 – 1.5 hours

Difficulty: Easy

Junior Ranger: Family Adventure – Schoolhouse Hike

Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area Pavilion

1:00 p.m.

Not sure how to explore the Smokies with the whole family? Learn hiking basics that are Ranger tested and kid approved as we hike along a mountain stream to a one-room schoolhouse where we will learn what it was like to be a student “back then.” Wear sturdy hiking boots and bring plenty of water.

Duration: 2 hours

Difficulty: Easy, 1.5 miles



Old Elkmont Town by Lantern Light

Elkmont Campground, Meet at Little River Trailhead

8:15 p.m.

Limit 25. Sign-up at Sugarlands Visitor Center is first come, first served, beginning on the Tuesday preceding the program. Join a park volunteer to hear the stories of Elkmont’s heyday, whilst walking amongst the remnants of the old resort community at twilight.

Duration: 1 hour

Difficulty: Easy

Thursdays

Junior Ranger: Creepy Critters

Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area Pavilion

10:00 a.m.

Join a Ranger on this adventure into the dark and mysterious world of bugs and macro-invertebrates. Get up close and personal with the use of equipment such as “sucky-uppy-things”, leaf litter boxes and magnifying glasses.

Duration: 1 hour

Difficulty: Easy, 0.5 mile

Junior Ranger: Family Adventure – Advent Cabin

Elkmont: Jakes Creek Trailhead

1:00 p.m.

Not sure how to explore the Smokies with the whole family? Learn hiking basics that are Ranger tested and kid approved as we hike up an old railroad grade. Our final destination will be a pre-park historic cabin, hidden off any established trail. Wear sturdy hiking boots and bring plenty of water.

Duration: 2 hours

Difficulty: Easy, 2.5 miles



Fridays

Elkmont Campfire Program

Elkmont Campground Amphitheater

8:00 p.m.

Join a Ranger for a National Park tradition—the evening campfire program. Topics vary, but you’re guaranteed to learn something new about the Great Smoky Mountains.

Duration: 1 hour



CLINGMANS DOME/ NEWFOUND GAP AREA

Sundays

Junior Ranger: Geology Rocks!

Meet at Newfound Gap Overlook

2:00 p.m.

Amaze your friends with newfound knowledge about how these mountains were born and how they have changed over time.

Duration: 45 minutes

Mondays

Islands in the Sky

Viewing Area below Clingmans Dome Visitor Center

1:00 p.m.

The high elevation forest of the Smokies is one of the most interesting and endangered ecosystems in the Eastern U.S. Come learn more about what makes this beautiful area unique.

Duration: 45 minutes



Tuesdays

Andrews Bald Hike for Families

Clingmans Dome Parking Lot, Forney Ridge Trailhead

10:00 a.m.

Toss your day pack in the car and join a Ranger on a 3.6 mile round trip stroll through one of the Smoky Mountains’ best-known ecosystems. This hike will take you out to Andrews Bald on a moderate trail that loses about 600 feet in elevation. Enjoy a leisurely hike back to the parking lot on your own after reaching the bald. Sturdy footwear, a snack, and water recommended.

Duration: 3 hours

Difficulty: Moderate, 3.6 miles



Islands in the Sky

Viewing Area below Clingmans Dome Visitor Center

1:00 p.m.

The high elevation forest of the Smokies is one of the most interesting and endangered ecosystems in the Eastern U.S. Come to learn more about what makes this beautiful area unique.

Duration: 45 minutes



Thursdays

On Top of Old Smoky

Clingmans Dome Visitor Center

10:00 a.m.

Join a Ranger on a hike to the highest peak in the park to take in 360° views and learn about the unique Canadian Zone environment. Discover some of the park’s most influential people, or hear stories behind the park’s place names. Topics vary, but you’re sure to be inspired by the stories behind the scenery.

Duration: 1.5 hours

Difficulty: Moderate

Fridays

Clingmans Dome Sunset Hike

Meet Clingmans Dome Visitor Center

8:00 p.m. (June 19th – July 17th)

7:30 p.m. (July 24th – August 14th)

Walk with a Ranger up the Clingmans Dome Trail as the light fades from the sky. Enjoy the sun setting from the highest peak in Tennessee and walk back down amongst the stars. Group Limit is 50. Sign-up at Sugarlands Visitor Center starting on the Wednesday preceding the program.

Duration: 1.5 hours

Difficulty: Moderate

Saturdays

On Top of Old Smoky

Clingmans Dome Visitor Center

10:00 a.m.

Join a Ranger on a hike to the highest peak in the park to take in 360° views and learn about the unique Canadian Zone environment. Discover some of the park's most influential people, or hear stories behind the park's place names. Topics vary, but you're sure to be inspired by the stories behind the scenery.

Duration: 1.5 hours

Difficulty: Moderate

OCONALUFTEE/ SMOKEMONT AREA

Daily

Mingus Mill Demonstration

Located a half-mile north of the Oconaluftee Visitor Center on US 441 (Newfound Gap Road)

9:00 a.m. to 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. Self-guiding brochures are always available and some days you may find demonstrations such as blacksmithing, hearth cooking, gardening, or weaving taking place.



Sundays

Endangered Species

Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch

11:30 a.m.

How can you help ensure Great Smoky Mountains doesn't lose any plants or animals? Join a ranger to learn how to protect all the park has to offer!

Duration: 45 minutes



Down on the Farm

Mountain Farm Museum adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

Starting June 21 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Walk down to the farm and see the kinds of activities 19th century families may have been engaged with, such as hearth cooking, woodworking, or gardening. Demonstration activities vary.

Duration: On-going for 2 hours



From Snout to Tail...Everything But the Squeal!

Mountain Farm Museum adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

Starting June 21 at 5:00 p.m.

Join a Ranger on the farm to learn about the mountain farmer's "best friend."

Duration: 45 minutes

Junior Ranger: Night Hike

Bradley Fork Trailhead, D-Loop Smokemont Campground

Starting June 21 at 8:45 p.m.

Ever wonder what goes "grrr" in the night? What

creatures are out there moving under the cover of darkness? Take a walk on the dark side with a Ranger and learn about some of the mysteries and wonders found only after the sun goes down. Limited to 25 participants. Call (828) 497-1904 up to four days in advance to make reservations.

Duration: Approximately 1 hour

Difficulty: Easy, less than 1 mile



Mondays

Kephart Prong Trail Hike

Kephart Prong Trailhead on Newfound Gap Road

10:00 a.m.

Starting June 22 at 9:30 a.m.

Join a Ranger and explore the remains of an old logging camp, which later became a Civilian Conservation Corp camp. Discover what signs are still visible and what life was like.

Duration: 2 hours

Difficulty: Easy to moderate, less than 2 miles



Old-Time Mountain Religion

Smokemont Baptist Church near Smokemont Campground entrance

Starting June 22 at 11:00 a.m.

Join a Ranger and discover how old-time mountain religion met spiritual, social, and community needs.

Duration: 45 minutes

Junior Ranger: Welcome Home!

Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch

2:00 p.m.

After more 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: 45 minutes



You're Not Wanted Here

Porch of the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

Starting June 22 at 4:00 p.m.

Join a Ranger on the visitor center porch to discover things you may not know about two unwanted visitors to the park.

Duration: 45 minutes



Junior Ranger: Feeding Time

Mountain Farm Museum adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

6:00 p.m.

Join park staff as they close up the Mountain Farm Museum for the evening. You'll even be able to help feed the pigs and chickens!

Duration: 30 minutes

Tuesdays

Salamanders!

Mingus Mill Parking Area

10:00 a.m.

Join a Ranger to explore the world of salamanders. Participants learn why the Smokies are the Salamander Capital of the World as we search for and collect monitoring data on these sometimes elusive critters.

Duration: 1.5 hours; *Difficulty:* Easy

Junior Ranger: Stream Splashers

Oconaluftee River adjacent to the Mountain Farm Museum

2:00 p.m.

Roll up your pants and wade through a mountain stream to look for mayflies, stoneflies, dragonflies, and other aquatic critters. Be prepared to get wet. Closed toed shoes recommended.

Duration: 1.5 hours

Difficulty: Easy

Junior Ranger: Find Your Park

Porch of the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

Starting June 23 at 3:00 p.m.

Join a Ranger for a look into National Parks across the country and find out which one might be yours!

Duration: 1 hour

Difficulty: Easy



Junior Ranger: Feeding Time!

Mountain Farm Museum adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

6:00 p.m.

Join park staff as they close up the Mountain Farm Museum for the evening. You'll even be able to help feed the pigs and chickens!

Duration: 30 minutes

Wednesdays

Junior Ranger: Neighbors or Nuisances?

Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch

11:00 a.m.

Join park staff on the porch to learn about three small animals found right here around the Mountain Farm Museum. As cute as they may be, you decide whether they are friend or foe!

Duration: 45 minutes



Junior Ranger: Pack Your Day Pack

Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch

Starting June 24 at 1:00 p.m.

Scenic vistas, waterfalls, and home sites...Let's hit the trail! But, wait....what should we take with us? Join a ranger and learn the knack of what to pack before you make tracks!

Duration: 45 minutes



Welcome Home!

Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch

Starting June 24 at 3:00 p.m.

After more 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: 45 minutes



Black Bears in the Smokies

Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch

5:00 p.m.

There's danger everywhere, high and low but always close especially if you're an *American ursus*. Learn how we are the greatest danger to the American black bear.

Duration: 45 minutes



Junior Ranger: Feeding Time!

Mountain Farm Museum adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

6:00 p.m.

Join park staff as they close up the Mountain Farm Museum for the evening. You'll even be able to help feed the pigs and chickens!

Duration: 30 minutes

Thursdays

Junior Ranger Guided Hike to Chasteen Creek Waterfall

Bradley Fork Trailhead, D-Loop Smokemont Campground

10:00 a.m.

Pack a snack and water and join a ranger on a moderate 3-mile round-trip hike along side Bradley Fork to Chasteen Creek Falls.

Duration: 3 hours

Difficulty: Moderate, 4 miles



Appalachian Life – Guided Walk

Mountain Farm Museum adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

Starting June 25 at 12:00 p.m.

Why did people settle this land? What made this area attractive to call home? Join a ranger for a walk at the Mountain Farm Museum to discover what life was like “in the old days.”

Duration: 45 minutes



Junior Ranger: Animal Defenses

Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch

2:00 p.m.

Skunks aren't the only animals that defend themselves in the woods. Join a Ranger for a look at how animals big and small fend off those larger than themselves.

Duration: 45 minutes



Junior Ranger: Mammal Mania!

South Porch of the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

Starting June 25 at 4:00 p.m.

Otters and rabbits and bears, Oh my! Join a Ranger for a hands-on discovery of mammals in the park.

Duration: 45 minutes



Junior Ranger: Feeding Time!

Mountain Farm Museum adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

6:00 p.m.

Join park staff as they close up the Mountain Farm Museum for the evening. You'll even be able to help feed the pigs and chickens!

Duration: 30 minutes

Fridays

Junior Ranger: Batteries Not Included

Mountain Farm Museum adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

Starting June 26 at 10:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m. 11:00 a.m., 11:30 a.m.

What kind of toys did kids play with in the “old days?” Join a ranger to discover (or remember!)

how kids were entertained before video games and iPods. You'll be able to take home a “buzz button” of your very own. All ages welcome.

Duration: 30 minutes

Level: Easy



Junior Ranger Blacksmithing

Blacksmith Shop at the Mountain Farm Museum, adjacent to Oconaluftee Visitor Center

Starting June 26 at 10:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 11:30 a.m.

Join a blacksmith to create your own take home item and experience the hard work of the past.

Limited to ages 10 – 12.

Duration: 30 minutes

Junior Ranger: Leave No Trace

Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch

Starting June 26 at 12:30 p.m.

When you explore the wilderness, can anyone tell you've been there? How can you minimize the impact you leave behind? Join a ranger to find out!

Duration: 45 minutes



What is Land Worth?

Mountain Farm Museum adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

Starting June 26 at 2:30 p.m.

Join a ranger for a walk at the Mountain Farm Museum to explore the history of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Duration: 45 minutes



Junior Ranger: Feeding Time!

Mountain Farm Museum adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

6:00 p.m.

Join park staff as they close up the Mountain Farm Museum for the evening. You'll even be able to help feed the pigs and chickens!

Duration: 30 minutes

Saturdays

Longing for the “Good Ol’ Days”

Mountain Farm Museum adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

Starting June 27 at 10:30 a.m.

You've heard it before, but was it really the “good ol’ days?” Join a ranger on this walk at the Mountain Farm Museum to learn what life was like on an Appalachian mountain farm.

Duration: 45 minutes



Down on the Farm

Mountain Farm Museum adjacent to the Oconaluftee Visitor Center

Starting June 27 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Walk down to the farm and see the kinds of activities 19th century families may have been engaged with, such as hearth cooking, woodworking, or gardening. Demonstration activities vary.

Duration: On-going for 2 hours



Eeek! Bats!

Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch

Starting June 27 at 1:00 p.m.

Do they really suck blood? Do they really get caught in your hair? Are they friend or foe? Let the Ranger tell you the truth about these amazing creatures and the enemy among them.

Duration: 45 minutes

Difficulty: Easy



Junior Ranger: Stream Splashers

Oconaluftee River adjacent to the Mountain Farm Museum

Starting June 27 at 3:00 p.m.

Roll up your pants and wade through a mountain stream to look for mayflies, stoneflies, dragonflies, and other aquatic critters. Be prepared to get wet. Closed toed shoes recommended.

Duration: 1.5 hours

Difficulty: Easy

Junior Ranger: Find Your Park

Tree Cookie area adjacent to Oconaluftee Visitor Center

Starting June 27 at 5:00 p.m.

Join a Ranger for a look into National Parks across the country and find out which one might be yours!

Duration: 1 hour

Difficulty: Easy



Smokemont Night Hike

Bradley Fork Trailhead, D-Loop Smokemont Campground

Starting June 27 at 8:45 p.m.

Move beyond the comfortable glow of the campfire and explore the Smokies nightlife. Limited to 25 participants. Call 828/497-1904 up to four days in advance to make reservations.

Duration: Approximately 1 hour

Difficulty: Easy, less than 1 mile



CATALOOCHEE VALLEY

Sundays

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

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.

