



2018 Outdoor Excursions Sign-Up Procedures

The following rules have been developed to help ensure safety, enjoyment, and fairness to all those wishing to participate in outdoor excursions during the 2018 Wilderness Wildlife Week:

SIGN-UP PROCEDURES

- 1.** All participants must register according to the schedule. After the initial sign-up period, outdoor excursions will remain open until filled.
- 2.** Interested participants must be in the designated room by the time listed in the daily schedule. Doors will close at the assigned time.
- 3.** Upon entry to the sign-up room, each participant will receive one ticket. Individuals must be present to receive a ticket. Tickets will be drawn and selected at random.
- 4.** Once an individual's ticket is randomly selected, that participant will be allowed to register themselves, in addition to three (3) others, not to exceed a total of four (4) people, for the open excursion of their choice.
- 5.** Once an excursion has filled, interested participants may sign up on an alternate list. This, however, does count as a participant's one excursion event for that day.
- 6.** Participants may only sign up for one excursion and one night event per day.
- 7.** There will be no pre-registration or phone registration.
- 8.** More strenuous excursions are not recommended for small children or less-experienced participants. Certain activities are open to certain ages.
- 9.** Parents are responsible for determining, in advance, children's ability to complete any hike/field trip, including, but not limited to, maintaining the hike/field trip pace. A parent or guardian must accompany children 13 and under at all times during hikes/field trips. Children ages 14-17 may participate in hikes, but must have a parent or guardian's signature on the release form.

EXCURSION RULES

1. All excursions originate only from LeConte Center at Pigeon Forge. For all excursions and activities, participants may not meet at the trail head or starting point of excursion.
2. It is essential that participants be at the designated assembly point for each hike on time. The first 15 minutes will consist of a hike orientation and completion of certain administrative requirements. Absence from this orientation may result in the loss of the participant's place on the excursion to an alternate participant.
3. Participants not present for initial roll call for bus loading will be replaced by an alternate participant, after the entire list is announced.
4. The excursion leaders and event staff will have the final decision to remove any individual from an excursion prior to departure due to, but not limited to, lack of essential equipment, or for any other reason.
5. It is the participant's responsibility to be prepared for a variety of weather conditions, such as wearing appropriate shoes, or carrying the proper equipment and supplies (water, trail snacks, poncho, flashlights, etc.).
6. Please respect all participants and leave cell phones behind or "off" while hiking or on excursions.
7. You will be required to sign the Off-Site Excursion Release Form acknowledging that you have read and understand all rules pertaining to requirements for excursions during Wilderness Wildlife Week.

Note: All programs and excursions are subject to rescheduling or cancellation.

Checklist for Hikers

Traditionally, May is warmer, with daytime highs in the 70s and 80s and lows in the 40s and 50s. May rainfall averages about 4.5 inches. If you are joining us for one of our day hikes into the mountains, be prepared. Not only should you wear a sturdy pair of hiking boots, be sure you also include the following items in your backpack:

- Towel
- Head Cover
- Rain Gear/Poncho
- Lunch or Trail Snacks (fruit, nuts)
 - Pocketknife
- Extra pair of socks
 - Flashlight
 - Water



WILDERNESS
WILDLIFE WEEK
PIGEON FORGE ★ TN

Outdoor Excursions Schedule

***Note:** All schedules subject to change with cancellations or additions.

Wednesday, May 9 (Sign-ups at 6 PM on Tuesday in Greenbrier Hall A)

7:30 AM – 4:45 PM: AT to Charlies Bunion – George Owen – 10.2 Miles – Moderate/Strenuous

This moderate to strenuous hike along the Appalachian Trail offers spectacular views of the mountains to the north, Mt. Kephart and the Jump Off to the west, and Mount Guyot towards the east. Due to the extremely steep drop-offs you'll definitely want to watch your footing in this area.

8:30 AM – 4 PM: Ramsey Cascade – Wildland Trekking – 8 Miles – Moderate/Strenuous

This hike is one that is used and appreciated by all who accomplish it. Although logging of years ago one will find record-size trees still stand along the trail. Not long past the trailhead you will encounter a long bouncy footbridge which crosses the Middle Prong where it plunges over huge boulders and forms into swimming holes. As you hike, watch out for bald faced hornet nests as they stand protecting the area. Just when you wonder if you will ever find the falls, you will come up on the right side of the cascades. Water splashes 90 feet from ledge to ledge. This is the highest waterfall accessible by trail in GSMNP. The water flows from Mt. Guyot some 2,000 feet above. Look for salamanders and tadpoles in the pools of water, but do not leave your lunch sitting out unless you want to share it with the red squirrels and yellow jackets.

9 AM – 1:30 PM: Photo Safari of the Smokies – Colby McLemore – Easy

Learn the use of your camera and photo composition from your instructor who will provide insight on how filters, lenses and other equipment can enhance your artistic ability as you tour beautiful Cades Cove. A small amount of hiking will be done as you hop on and off the bus during your tour.

9 AM – 3 PM: Trails, Tales & Taverns / Bush Beans Bus Trip – Kathy Gwinn

Learn a vast amount of history covering topics such as the formation of the TVA, the White Caps, old Cherokee accounts, early transportation and migration settlement, Davy Crockett, the taverns of Sevier County, the French Broad River Valley, circuit riding preachers and numerous other fascinating topics. You will then proceed to the famous Bush Beans Museum and Visitor Center in Chestnut Hill, Tennessee for a tour and lunch at the Bush restaurant.

9:30 AM – 2 PM: Chimney Tops – Danny Bernstein – 4 Miles – Moderate

This will be an interesting hike for those who know of the devastating fires the Smokies endured in late November 2016. The Chimneys trail was closed for an extended period and has only recently partially reopened. You will be able to ascertain some of the destruction as you journey up a portion of the trail to where the gated area is located due to the uncertain terrain above.

10:30 AM – 2:30 PM: American Eagle Foundation/Sevier Solid Waste – Lizzie Gaver

Participants see birds of prey in captivity, learn about the eagle breeding program, and will learn firsthand how the facility works. You will then proceed to Sevier County's Solid Waste facility to witness the County's commitment to better our environment in regards to recycling and waste handling and its proper operation.

1:30 PM – 6:30 PM: Hartford Whitewater Rafting Excursion – Smoky Mountain River Rat Rafting & Tubing

For those looking for a true easy to moderate fun adventure this special excursion is available today only. Participants will be bused to Hartford, Tennessee to the rafting headquarters. From there you will be taken up stream and your rafting guide will start your exciting adventure. You will get wet, but that is part of the fun. You will raft down river back to the rafting shack and return back to Pigeon Forge via bus. Participants must be 18 years of age.

Thursday, May 10 (Sign-ups at 6 PM on Tuesday in Greenbrier Hall A)

8 AM – 4 PM: Middle Prong – 8.2 Miles – Wildland Trekking Company – Moderate

This hike follows an old railroad bed which was the last to be used in hauling out timber in 1939. The Little River Lumber Company hauled out one billion board feet of lumber (enough to build 10,000 homes) during the period of 1903-1930. You will see signs of recent disturbance: road cuts, second growth forests, cables and bridges; however, you will see how this area has recovered into the beauty it once showcased. Notable sites include where the company store stood, home sites, a school, post office and hotel in the Stringtown area.

9 AM – 3 PM: Baskins Creek Falls – Keith Garnes – 3.2 Miles – Easy/Moderate

This is a beautiful and seldom used trail weaving through an impressive forest of chestnut oaks, red maples, Northern red oaks, Eastern hemlocks, striped maples and large black gums. At this time of year you will experience mountain laurel in bloom with its beautiful candy striped flowers. A short unmaintained side trail will lead you to the falls, which was used for showers and washing by those who lived in Baskins Creek.

9 AM – 4 PM: Clingman's to Mt. Collins Shelter – Mark Snyder – 5 Miles – Moderate

This is a wonderful hike along the Appalachian Trail from the Clingmans Dome Parking Lot on to the shelter area of Mt. Collins. One will experience the beauty of true high mountain hiking as you hike towards the twelve bunk shelter area, which is a popular stop on the AT due to its accessibility for day or overnight hikers.

9 AM – 5:30 PM: Chimney Tops/Alum Cave – George Owen – 8.6 Miles – Strenuous

You will have an opportunity to view much of the damage of the now famous wildfires that started in the Chimneys Top area. You will hike on down towards the recently rehabilitated Alum Cave trail, which is the most popular trail that leads to the famous Mt. LeConte Lodge. This is an opportunity to see much of the hard work that has been put into the upkeep and repair to parts of GSMNP.

10:30 AM – 12:30 PM: American Eagle Foundation – Event Staff

Participants see several birds of prey, learn about the eagle breeding program, and hear how the facility works.

10:30 AM – 1:30 PM: Avent Cabin – Jim Jenkins – 3 Miles – Easy/Moderate

This is a wonderful short hike to the summer cabin of artist Mayna Treanor Avent from the 1920s to the 40s. The trail follows the old railroad bed built in 1909 by Little River Lumber Company. During the first section you will pass where many of the old cabins of Elmont once stood, which was a popular vacation spot before GSMNP was established. Avent Cabin was built in 1845 and purchased by the Avent family in 1918. The National Park Service took final ownership of the cabin in 1932, but awarded a lease to the family until 1992.

11 AM – 5 PM: Porters Creek – Joel Zachry – 3 Miles – Easy/Moderate

You will experience the beauty of wildflowers, relaxation of the flowing river, the cemetery and most of all the cantilever barn and hiking cabin used by the Appalachian Hiking Club for many years. Bring a snack, sit and enjoy the natural sounds of the Smokies.

8 PM – 10:30 PM: Cades Cove Loop Road – Mike Meldrum – 2.5 Miles – Easy

Your guide for this hike is a retired GSMNP ranger based in Cades Cove. He will provide history and insight into the hardy folks who have resided in the Cove. There will be short hikes from the bus to further explain the

history and happenings, as well as stories passed down from various generations. This is the only nighttime hike scheduled and participants will experience something few have ever done.

Friday, May 11 (Sign-ups at 6 PM on Wednesday in Greenbrier Hall A)

7:30 AM – 12:30 PM: Hen Wallow Falls – Keith Garnes – 4.4 Miles – Moderate

This is a pleasant hike through a hemlock and rhododendron forest. A side trail will lead you down to the base of the falls. The falls are only two feet wide at the top, but fans out to 20 feet at the bottom some 90 feet below. If you look closely you will see salamander swimming at the bottom.

7:30 AM – 4:30 PM: Mt. Cammerer – Wildland Trekking Company – 11.1 Miles – Strenuous

This hike leads to the Mt. Cammerer Fire Tower located just .6 mile off of the Appalachian Trail. The hike to the tower is strenuous but well worth the effort to see the beauty of the mountains from all directions. The medieval looking tower was built in the late 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps to appear similar to the Yosemite model of fire towers utilized in the western part of the country. The CCC used native timber and stone for construction. After falling in disrepair in the 1970s, the tower was reconstructed in 1995 with assistance from the Appalachian Trail Conference and Friends of the Smokies.

7:30 AM – 4:45 PM: Sugarland Mountain / Huskey Gap – George Owen – 11 Miles – Moderate

This hike through a fragrant spruce fir forest showcases a multitude of wildflowers. Sugarland Mountain is known as one of the most popular areas for black bears due to the large amount of pin cherry trees and their bright red berries. At one point you will have the opportunity to look down on the Chimney Tops area where the November 2016 wildfires began. You will also see Mt. LeConte, Newfound Gap Road and Gatlinburg. Once you hit the Huskey Gap Trail you will find it broader and flat, a striking change from the narrow ridge tops you have recently encountered along with new growth trees due to the aforementioned wildfires.

9 AM – 3 PM: Historic Churches of Sevier County Bus Tour #1 – Kathy Gwinn

Your experienced guide and storyteller will fascinate you with numerous stories she has researched. This tour will visit six historic churches in Sevier County, including churches at Rocky Flats, Jones Cove, Fairgarden and the oldest church in Sevier County. You will also visit the church used in the making of Dolly Parton's film "Heartsong". You will then visit the Bush Beans Visitor Center and Museum and dine at their restaurant.

9 AM– 3 PM: People and Places of Cades Cove – Mark Snyder

Your guide is a walking history book of data of Cades Cove, its settlers, their triumphs and setbacks, as well as what life was like when Cades Cove was inhabited. While visiting home sites and churches, you will also learn of the first family who called this serene area home.

10 AM – 2 PM: Bush Beans Bus Tour – Steve Lutes

Tour the Bush Beans Museum and Visitor Center in downtown Chestnut Hill, Tennessee. You will stop for lunch at the Bush Bean restaurant before returning back to Pigeon Forge.

12:30 PM – 5 PM: Townsend Railroad Museum / Appalachian Bear Rescue Educational Center – Jim Eastin

Step back in time to view and learn of the old railroad systems that were so valuable to the area for the logging companies that operated within the mountains. Then you will be transported onward to Appalachian Bear Rescue's Educational Center where you will learn all about rehabilitation of orphaned and injured bear cubs and view videos of many of the ones who have been taken care of and released back into their nature habitat.

Saturday, May 12 (Sign-ups at 6 PM on Wednesday in Greenbrier Hall A)

8 AM – 2 PM: Finley Cane / Bote Mountain – 4 Miles – George Owen – Easy/Moderate

This hike is often used as an access to Spence Field via the Bote Mountain Trail. At the starting point you will notice rosebay rhododendrons and Frazer magnolias. Parts of this trail can be quite muddy until you get closer to the Bote Mountain Trail. Once there you will pass through a half mile tunnel of rhododendron.

Additionally, you will experience various types of trees such as hickories, big oaks, Eastern hemlocks and tulips.

9 AM – 1 PM: Elkmont History / Jakes Creek – Carroll McMahan – 4 Miles – Easy

This easy hike revels in history in regards to Elkmont and its residents. You will learn about the history of the area including the Appalachian Club house, Levi Trentham cemetery, as well as Uncle Lem Ownby's home.

9 AM – 3 PM: Historic Churches of Sevier County Bus Tour #2 – Kathy Gwinn

Your guide will continue her tour of yesterday with six more churches while providing insight regarding the history of each, its charter members, how each church was named.

10 AM – 4 PM: Sugarlands Cemetery – Joey Holt – 5.5 Miles – Easy/Moderate

Your knowledgeable guide will begin this hike at Sugarlands Visitor Center in GSMNP and will share history while following the trail along paths of old home sites, the CCC campsite and the old cemetery.