



SIGN-UP PROCEDURES AND RULES FOR 2021 EXCURSIONS

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

SIGN-UP PROCEDURES

- 1.** Lottery-based registration for the entire week of excursions will take place at 2 PM on Monday, February 1 in Salon AB. Doors will close at 2:15 PM. After the initial sign-up period, hikes and field trips will remain open until filled.
- 2.** Interested hikers 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 hiker will be allowed to register themselves, plus three other hikers, not to exceed a total of 4 people, for the open hike/bus tour of their choice.
- 5.** Once an excursion has filled, interested attendees may sign up on an alternate list. This, however, does count as an attendee's one excursion for that day.
- 6.** Attendees may only sign up for one excursion per day.
- 7.** There will be no pre-registration (prior to the in person signups listed) or phone registration.

8. More strenuous excursions are not recommended for small children or less-experienced hikers.

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 excursions, but must have a parent or guardian's signature on the release form.

RULES FOR EXCURSIONS (COVID-19 INCLUDED)

1. All excursions originate only from The Ramsey Hotel & Convention Center. Participants may not meet at the trail head.

2. It is essential for participants to be at the designated assembly point for each excursion 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 hike/field trip to an alternate hiker.

3. Participants not present for initial roll call for bus loading will be replaced by an alternate on the list, after the entire list is announced.

4. You will be required to sign the Excursion Participation Release Form acknowledging that you have read and understand all rules pertaining to requirements for excursions during Wilderness Wildlife Week.

5. The excursion guides 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. 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. As the world, the country and our community have all been impacted by COVID-19, we do require all participants to wear a mask while being transported to and from all excursions. While on a trail, or where you can socially distance with a minimum of six feet apart, masks are not required but are encouraged for the safety of the group and to halt any potential spread of COVID-19.

7. Please respect all participants and leave cell phones behind or "off" while hiking.

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

WINTER EXCURSION CHECKLIST

Winter weather in the Great Smoky Mountains is unpredictable, to say the least. If you are joining us for one of our daytime excursions into the mountains, please be prepared. Not only should you wear a sturdy pair of hiking boots, be sure you also include the following items in your backpack:

- Gloves and hand sanitizer
- Head Cover (hat, toboggan or hooded coat)
 - Rain Gear/Poncho
- Lunch or Trail Snacks (fruit, nuts)
- Pocketknife
- Extra pair of socks
- Flashlight
- Water

Daily excursion transportation provided in part by



Tuesday, February 2 Excursions

Sign-ups are at 2 PM on Monday, February 1 in Salon AB. Doors will close at 1:50 PM.

HIKES

9 AM – 4 PM – LITTLE RIVER/HUSKEY GAP – 7 MILES – MODERATE/STRENUOUS – GUIDE: GEORGE OWEN

This trail has quite a history due to the fact that the Little River Lumber Company bought out several farms and built a base camp with rail lines up steep areas. When the terrain became too steep for rails, loggers pulled the logs down with overhead cable skidders, mule teams and or wooden chutes. You will probably see remnants still standing of these structures. Gold was discovered here in the early 20's but the rush was short lived when someone calculated that you could only earn \$1.27 in gold for each ton of rock crushed. This hike is considered moderate to strenuous.

11 AM – 2 PM – AVENT CABIN – 3 MILES – EASY/MODERATE – GUIDE: JIM JENKINS

This is a wonderful short hike to the summer cabin of artist Mayna Treanor Avent from the 1920's to the 40's. The trail follows the old railroad Obed built in 1909 by the Little River Lumber Company. During the first section you will pass where many of the old cabins of Elkmont once stood, which was a popular vacation spot before the 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.

FIELD TRIPS

9:30 AM – Noon – PINK JEEP TOUR OF SEVIER COUNTY & THE SMOKIES

This is something new to the area and you will have a chance to take a scenic and educational tour of Sevier County and parts of the Smokies. Your experienced guide will show you many sites of beauty not found by the normal visitor to the area.

10 AM – 3 PM – LET'S GO QUILT-INN – BUS TOUR – GUIDE: KATHY GWINN

Your guide is one of the best studied guides in regards to the history of Appalachian life and what the early settlers experienced and had to overcome. You will tour 4 – 5 historic and/or Country Inns, with spoken history about the mountains and that of early inn keeping.

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Wednesday, February 3 Excursions

Sign-ups are at 2 PM on Monday, February 1 in Salon AB. Doors will close at 1:50 PM.

HIKES

8 AM – 4 PM – ALBRIGHT GROVE – 6.7 MILES – EASY/MODERATE – GUIDE: KEITH GARNES

This trail hike leads one through a vast forest with a canopy overhead of Eastern hemlock and the needle carpet provides an atmosphere that seems to require whispering. Tulip trees, Fraser magnolias and maples have grown into giants over the years in a virgin forest that Champion Fibre Company once owned. There are beech trees that send out buttress roots; silverbell trees bulge at the base; and Fraser magnolias extend roots that look like big toes. This is an enjoyable historic hike with an old cabin built in the 1889's out of one chestnut tree. The trees located on this hike are the largest trees that grow in the Park.

8 AM – 5 PM – FINLEY CANE/BOTE MOUNTAIN – 8.9 MILES – MODERATE/STRENUOUS – GUIDE: GEORGE OWEN

This hike is often used as an access to Spence Field via the Bote Mountain Trail. At the starting point you will see rosebay rhododendrons and Frazer magnolias. Parts of the 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. This is a beautiful hike, one in which you will gain a new experience for the mountain beauty.

9 AM – 11:30 PM – SENIOR NATURE TRAIL – 1 MILE – EASY – GUIDES: BLEVINS/YORK

This is a wonderful, short hike on black top. You will pass through a brief barrier of woods that runs along a stream with a beaver dam. You may see otter swimming as well. Also included will be a visit to a butterfly compound where butterflies are raised, tagged and released once they are fully grown. Various speakers will provide information on the butterflies, birds and the general surroundings.

9 AM – 2:30 PM – SUGARLANDS CEMETERY – 5.5 MILES – EASY/MODERATE – GUIDE: JOEY HOLT

This easy to moderate hike is for everyone interested in the history of the Sugarland Valley, the contribution of the Civilian Conservation Corps and history of the inhabitants of the area before the establishment of the park.

10 AM – 3 PM – JOHN OLIVER'S CABIN & OTHER HOMESITES – 3.5 MILES – EASY/MODERATE – GUIDE: MARK SNYDER

The start of this hike is at the entrance to Cades Cove where you will follow the Rich Mountain Loop Trail to the John Oliver Cabin. Along the way you will make some side trips to various former home sites, some are real close to the trail. After reaching the John Oliver Cabin you will continue to some of John Oliver's descendants, one home site still has a nice chimney standing.

11 AM – 4:30 PM – WALKER SISTERS – 3 MILES – MODERATE – GUIDE: JOEL ZACHRY

If you truly want an historical hike, then this is one you don't want to miss. The Walker sisters were a family of eleven children – seven girls and four boys. The home where they were raised consisted of 122 acres and all of the children had moved away except for six girls. When the Park was dedicated in 1940 by President Roosevelt the sisters were paid \$4,750 for their land, as well as given a lifetime lease. The sisters continued to live and love their previous land and the last one stayed until her passing in 1964. You will hike to their home where you can stand on the porch and imagine what life was like for these sisters who survived by themselves for many, many years.

FIELD TRIPS

9 AM – 5 PM – APPLACIAN BEAR/TOWNSEND RAILROAD MUSEUM/CADES COVE MUSEUM/FOOTHILLS

PARKWAY BUS TOUR – GUIDE: JIM EASTIN

This bus tour includes several educational and enjoyable stops along the way. First you will visit the Educational Center for the Appalachian Bear Rescue where you will learn about rehabilitation of orphaned and injured black bear cubs and view videos of many of the ones who have been taken care of and released back to their natural environment. Then you will 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. After the railroad museum, you will proceed on to the Cades Cove Museum where you will learn history of living in the Smokies from artifacts to stories of those early mountain settlers. On leaving the museum you will be transported back home on the newly completed and very scenic section of the famous Foothills Parkway which was just completed in 2020.

9:30 AM – NOON – PINK JEEP TOUR OF SEVIER COUNTY & THE SMOKIES

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Thursday, February 4 Excursions

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HIKES

7:30 AM – 5 PM – ROCKY TOP VIA ANTHONY CREEK – 14 MILES – STRENUOUS – GUIDE: MARTY SILVER

Marty Silver, Park Ranger with Warriors Path (Tennessee) State Park will take you on a hike that you can say when it is over, “wow look at what I accomplished today”. You will enjoy amazing views across the main range of the Smokies. It’s a long way up and a long way down, but it’s worth the climb for all the winter wildlife discovery along the way, and for the great wide-ranging views from the top! Bring a day pack with lunch, plenty of water, and foul weather gear. Wear stout hiking boots and layered clothing.

8 AM – 4 PM – LAUREL FALLS/COVE MTN. – 8.5 MILES – MODERATE/STRENUOUS – GUIDE: CHARLES MAYNARD

This is a wonderful hike on a paved trail until you reach the beautiful Laurel Falls. Passing the falls, you will begin to go up further to the summit of Cove Mountain and a fire tower. Once you reach the summit you will have the opportunity to reflect on why parks exist and the challenges we all face with growth. On the right side is what is good and special about the Smokies. There you will encounter birds, squirrels and maybe even a bear or two. On the left you will pass private homes, chalets, ski resort and a public hunting area. You will then start a descent down toward Cataract Falls, a thing of beauty in itself and the easiest reachable waterfall in the park from the parking lot at Park Headquarters.

9 AM – 3:30 PM – MIDDLE PRONG – 8.2 MILES – MODERATE/STRENUOUS – GUIDE: GEORGE OWEN

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 showed. You will visit where the Company store stood, home sites, a school, post office and hotel all in the area called Stringtown.

9 AM – 4 PM – WALKER SISTERS FRIENDS & FAMILY – 5.5 MILES – MODERATE/STRENUOUS – GUIDE: MARK SNYDER

This particular hike is very popular. If you truly want an historical hike, then this is one you don’t want to miss. The Walker sisters was a family of eleven children – seven girls and four boys. The home where they were raised consisted of 122 acres and all of the children had moved away except for six girls. When the Park was dedicated in 1940 by President Roosevelt the sisters were paid \$4,750 for their land as well as given a lifetime lease. The sisters continued to live and love their previous land and the last one stayed until her passing in 1964. You will hike to their home where you can stand on the porch and image what life was like for these sisters who survived by themselves for many, many years. You will also visit one of the brother’s homes, as well as another sister’s.

9 AM – 4:30 PM – CUMCUMBER GAP LOOP – 7.5 MILES – MODERATE – GUIDE: DANNY BERNSTEIN

A gentle ascent through second growth forest, stream crossings and partial mountain vistas with approximately 500 ft. in elevation gain. Your guide will highlight park history and management. Trail conditions can be wet as well as some rough and challenging terrain. This hike follows the Little River bearing right onto Cucumber Gap trail and then onto Jakes Creek and down through what used to be Elkmont town. Many cabins have been removed but you will still see the partial remains where cabins once stood.

FIELD TRIPS

9 AM – 2 PM – PHOTO SAFARI OF THE SMOKIES – GUIDE: COLBY MCLEMORE

Learn use of your camera and creative composition. The instructor will give insight on how filters and various other equipment can enhance your artistic ability as you tour the beautiful Smokies. A small amount of hiking will be done as you hop on and off the bus during your tour.

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Friday, February 5 Excursions

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HIKES

8 AM – 4 PM – SCHOOLHOUSE GAP/CHESTNUT TOP – 6.5 MILES – EASY/MODERATE – GUIDE: JOEL ZACHRY

The Schoolhouse Gap Trail was the beginning in the 1840's of a dream of Dr. Isaac Anderson, then President of Maryville College, to better educate young male students for the missionary. Dr. Anderson thought a road from Hazel Creek to East Tennessee would allow his mission to reach the multitude of those who were working in copper mining. He wanted to have North Carolina build a road to Spence Field and he would get a road built from Schoolhouse to Spence on this side. This hike will give you all of the historical detail and how it was paid for and utilized. You will also be given much insight into the growth and demise of the American Chestnut.

9:30 AM – 2:30 PM – WEARS COVE/METCALF BOTTOMS – 4.4 MILES – MODERATE – GUIDE: GEORGE OWEN

This is a great hike beginning at Wears Cove and leading into Metcalf Bottoms proceeding towards what became the Little Greenbrier School. In the 1800's schooling was not available to the children of this area so the families that lived in this valley petitioned the Sevier County government for a school and a teacher. Proposals were made by each side and finally in 1882 an agreement was reached: the community would provide the school house and the County would provide the teacher for at least as long as the poll tax (\$1.25 per student) would allow.

As you walk this trail, try to imagine life at this time. The trail runs left and begins climbing away from the picnic area and river. As you reach a water tower you will notice the stone wall where signs of past lives exist. Further you will find much growth of rhododendron and eventually you will come upon the old school itself. School was only held two months of the year as the children were needed in the fields and this was all that the poll tax could cover. Like many schools built in these mountains this building became the community meeting place as well as a church. This little hike has a great deal of history and is one of the most popular in the Park due to its location and stories.

9:30 AM – 3 PM – OLD SETTLERS CEMETERY HIKE – 3.5 MILES – MODERATE – GUIDE: JIM RIGSBY

When the Smoky Mountains settlers relinquished their land to form Great Smoky Mountains National Park, they left behind nearly 200 documented cemeteries and smaller plots, plus numberless others lost to history. Your guide will take you to visit three in the former Soak Ash Community. Cemetery historian Jim Rigsby, of the Remembrance Project, will present historical background and allow time to explore each site. The trail involves moderate inclines and several rock-hop creek crossings. There is one short, steep trail to one site which you may or may not desire to sit out.

FIELD TRIP

8:30 AM – 2:30 PM – CADES COVE EXCURSION – BUS TOUR – GUIDE: MARK SNYDER

Your guide is a walking history book of data of Cades Cove, it's 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.

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