

FREE EVENT

January 5-8, 2026



34th Annual

WILDERNESS

WILDLIFE WEEK

PIGEON FORGE ★ TN



LeCONTE
EVENT CENTER



AT PIGEON FORGE
Located at 2986 Teaster Lane

Learn more about the Smoky Mountains,
the plants, the animals and it's people.

PIGEON FORGE
T E N N E S S E E

MyPigeonForge.com



❖ ESCAPE THE ORDINARY ❖

Get off the Beaten Path and Dive into a Unique Destination!

At The Old Mill, we're not just a place; we're a tradition, a legacy, and purveyors of all things good.

Step back in time at The Old Mill, built in 1830 and recognized as the oldest continually running grist mill in the country. Indulge in great food, rich history, exquisite pottery, and endless shopping.

Savor the authentic flavors of the South at our acclaimed restaurants, honored as the best in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. With our award-winning Southern comfort food, your taste buds are in for a delightful experience.

The Old Mill warmly invites you to embrace the true spirit of the Smoky Mountains. Your unforgettable adventure begins here!



OLD-MILL.COM

175 OLD MILL AVENUE, LIGHT #7 | PIGEON FORGE, TN 37863 | @THEOLDMILLTN



Table of Contents

MESSAGE FROM KEN JENKINS	Page 3
EXHIBITORS - VENDORS - MAP	Page 7
OUTDOOR EXCURSIONS SIGN-UP INFORMATION	Page 9
PRE-REGISTRATION AND SIGN-UP INFORMATION	Page 10
SMOKIES THROUGH THE LENS CONTEST	Page 11
ON-SITE WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES	Page 13
MEET THE EVENT'S FEATURED SPEAKERS	Page 14
EVENT NONPROFIT EXHIBITORS AND PARTICIPANTS	Page 18
EVENT SPONSORS	Page 19
EXCURSIONS SCHEDULE	Page 20
PROGRAMS SCHEDULE	Page 21
OFFICIAL EVENT MERCHANDISE	Page 37

For Wilderness Wildlife Week questions prior to the event: (865) 429-7350
If you have Wilderness Wildlife Week questions during the event: (865) 453-8574
** All schedules and activities subject to change.*

Our Mission

Ken Jenkins

Cover Photography:
Courtesy of Ken Jenkins

From its inception, Wilderness Wildlife Week has been committed to the education and enjoyment of the public to the wonders of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Our commitment is to create and provide an enjoyable and enriching series of walks, talks and workshops, as well as informative and entertaining exhibits to encourage attendees to know more of the abundant opportunities available in this beautifully diverse area.

As experts share their knowledge, expertise and understanding with those who desire a deeper insight as to the significance and struggle that produced such a resilient people to settle the area, we believe a deeper connection to the mountains can be had by all who participate.

Wilderness Wildlife Week involves a continuous thread of wholesome, family-oriented presentations and excursions. It is the constant aim and commitment as Wilderness Wildlife Week proceeds (and succeeds) as an event of the highest standards and principles, to provide every participant a safe, encouraging and giving event.



Ken Jenkins
The Father of Wilderness Wildlife Week

Welcome to Wilderness Wildlife Week

Greetings and welcome to Wilderness Wildlife Week 2026! It is nice to be back in the beautiful and spacious LeConte Center at Pigeon Forge. It hardly seems like a year has gone by since we were last together celebrating our spectacular mountain area and all the characters who make up our Appalachian identity.

We have some new and exciting activities and programs coming in January, from new tour locations to several hands-on activities and wonderful presentations, along with new faces and a new host hotel. There are many familiar faces returning to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with our many participants and guests.

Enjoy Wilderness Wildlife Week's many presentations, classes, hikes and tours, but do not forget to relax and take in the Photography Contest Digital Display in the lobby area. The beautiful entries and extraordinary winners are on display all week in the viewing area. This might give you some ideas for your entry next year!



Whether this is your first Wilderness Wildlife Week or your 34th, do, see, and listen to as much as you can, but most of all have a fantastic time learning about, and enjoying our beautiful Smoky Mountains.

See you on the wild side,

Your Special Events Team: Todd Hurst, Sherry Lutes, Ryan Morris, and Jayne Miller-Carr

If you would like to volunteer with us for Wilderness or any of our other events, fill out the card at the information desk in the lobby.

Thank You to our Many Contributors!

Throughout three decades of Wilderness Wildlife Week, the City of Pigeon Forge and the event have relied heavily on contributors including event volunteers, knowledgeable field guides, expert presenters, as well as a multitude of educational organizations, exhibitors and vendors. Their input has been, and continues to be, invaluable in making Wilderness Wildlife Week a reality. For all our contributors past, present and future, thank you for your commitment to providing a hands-on educational experience for all who have and will continue to attend Wilderness Wildlife Week! While we wish we could thank everyone individually, here are a handful of men and women we would especially like to thank for their decades of behind-the-scenes assistance in producing Wilderness Wildlife Week 2026:

Ken Jenkins, Leon Downey, Rocky Top Tours, John Clabough, Colby McClemore, Doug Hubbard

How to be a Contributor!

Interested in being involved as a contributor for Wilderness Wildlife Week 2027?

Please contact the Pigeon Forge Office of Special Events at
(865) 429-7350 or jayne.miller-carr@cityofpigeonforgetn.gov



TAKE *A Hike!*

THEN COME IN AND FILL UP ON THE SMOKIES BEST BBQ!



Appetizers

Enjoy shareable appetizers like Deep Fried Deviled Eggs, Pulled Pork Nachos, Smoked Wings, Deep Fried Pickle Chips & more!



Sandwiches

From the OG Pulled Pork to Brisket to Smoked Sausage and everything in between, our sandwiches are great fuel before and after a hike in the Smoky Mountains!



Platters & Combos

Can't decide what to try? We got you! Our dinner platters and combos are shareable or perfect if you aren't sure which delectable smoked meat to try.



WWW.BENNETTS-BBQ.COM

TWO CONVENIENT LOCATIONS

2910 Parkway
Pigeon Forge, TN

714 River Rd.
Gatlinburg, TN



PIGEON FORGE HOTEL WITH MOUNTAIN VIEWS!

2193 Parkway, Pigeon Forge, TN
(865)366-5022 • (800)269-1222
info@pigeonforgeramada.com
www.pigeonforgeramada.com



Pigeon Forge Lodging Options

Should you decide you would prefer to stay at one of Pigeon Forge's other properties - whether it be cabins/chalets, condos, or campgrounds, you can visit **MyPigeonForge.com** and click on "Where to Stay".



Wilderness Wildlife Week 2026

LeCONTE EVENT CENTER



**Convention Center
Event Hours
Open Daily
8:30 AM - 8:30 PM**

**Vendor Hours
Mon-Wed 10 AM - 6 PM
Thurs 10 AM - 4 PM**

Contact us

(865) 429-7350
info@mypigeonforge.com
MyPigeonForge.com



Wilderness Wildlife Week 2026 EXHIBITORS AND VENDORS

Adkins Rollman Gallery
Aurora Harrison Bull-Artist
Barefoot University
Bays Mountain Park Association (Wednesday and Thursday)
Cades Cove Preservation Association
Cherry Lemonds, Crocheting
Cliff Dwellers Gallery, Pat K. Thomas
Craig Cruise, Author (Monday and Tuesday)
Custom Beaded Earrings
Cut & Creations
East Tennessee Historical Society
Friends of the Smokies
Golden View Alpacas Mini Mill
Gray Fossil Site and Museum
Izabella's Place
Jewelry Designs by LaDonna
Keep Sevier Beautiful
LeConte Photographic Society
Little River Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Louise Bales, Artist
Mark Warren-Medicine Bow Wilderness School
MoonPie General Store and the Original Book Warehouse
Mountain Hill Press
Mountain Wildlife Rehab
My People Senior Activity Center

Nathan Collie Photography
Nature's Legacy
NOLI - Nolichucky Outdoor Learning Institute
Ocean Connections
Pink Adventure Tours
Proffitt's Woodworks
Quilts of Valor
Red Clay State Historic Park (Wednesday and Thursday)
Rocky Top Tours, Inc.
Sevier County Master Gardeners
Smokies Life
Snuffy Smith Comic Strip Cartoonist John Rose (Monday and Tuesday)
Talon Ridge Raptor Institute
Tennessee Naturalist Program - Frozen Head Chapter
Tennessee State Bank
TWRA-Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
The Salt Maker
Tim Simek Music, Tim and Cherry on the Strings
Tree of Life Creations
Wildflowers of Tennessee by Jack Carman
Wildlife & Nature Photography by Clay Thurston
Writing For Him by Lettie Whisman
Wilderness Wildlife Week Official Merchandise
Zoo Knoxville

Wilderness Wildlife Week 2026



The Smoky Mountain Charity Credit Card and Debit Card



Timeless
TSB Visa® Credit Card*



Snow Line
TSB Visa® Debit Card

Offered exclusively at Tennessee State Bank. Featuring artwork by Robert A. Tino.
For an annual contribution of \$10, you may carry the Smoky Mountain Charity Card.
100% of your contribution benefits The Friends of the Smokies.

Tennessee State Bank is a proud sponsor of
Wilderness Wildlife Week
and transportation to its Outdoor Excursions.
We hope you enjoy this wonderful event.



Member FDIC

Tennessee State Bank

"Banking at its Best"®



NMLS # 410355

(865) 453-0873

www.tnstatebank.com

*Credit Cards subject to credit approval.

15 locations across Sevier, Knox, Jefferson & Cocke Counties



Outdoor Excursions Sign-Up Information

Sponsored by



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. All hikes, bus trips, Jeep tours, and craft classes will have an online sign-up.
2. The hikes, bus trips, Jeep tours, specialty and craft classes will be posted on the **MyPigeonForge.com** website starting in mid-December 2025. There will be a list and description of each activity.
3. Starting on December 15, 2025, at 10 AM, you will be able to register online for one hike or bus trip per day. You may sign up four names per excursion.
4. You will receive a confirmation email upon successfully completing the sign-up. Please make sure to fully complete your shopping cart before exiting the order.
5. Alternates will be taken from the list of names beyond the cut-off number.
6. More strenuous excursions are not recommended for small children or less experienced participants. 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.
7. The folders will be available at the Hike Desk at the event to sign up for any activities that did not fill-up online.

EXCURSION RULES

1. All excursions originate only from the LeConte Event Center. 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 (Hike Desk) 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 the initial roll call for the 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 will 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, January is cooler, with daytime highs in the 40s and 50s and lows in the 20s and 30s. This time of year you can be dealing with snow, ice, and rain. 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, and possibly a hiking stick, be sure you also include the following items in your backpack:

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



Pre-Registration Sessions

1. Class descriptions will be online in late fall.
2. Online sign-ups begin on December 15, 2025. You may only register four names per registration form.
3. If a limited session is full, interested individuals may sign up as alternates.
4. Participants who successfully register, as well as those who wish to be alternates, must be in the designated classroom or event space by the start time listed in the daily schedule. Attendance will be taken and if a registered participant is not present, then he/she will be replaced with the first alternate on the list who is present.
5. Participants cannot sign up for limited classes with conflicting time slots. This will not be allowed and if done, said participant will lose his/her spot in both sessions.
6. More strenuous and attention-based sessions are not recommended for small children. Certain activities are open to specific ages.
7. Parents are responsible for determining, in advance, children's ability to complete any limited session. A parent or guardian must accompany children ages 13 and under for any limited session.
8. Please be courteous and respectful to all instructors. They donate their goods and time to provide a unique hands-on approach and knowledge.



Smokies Through the Lens Photography Contest

The most up-to-date rules and entry information can be found online at www.colbysphotosvideos.com/smokies-through-the-lens-photography-contest/

Submission Dates

SUBMISSIONS END: MIDNIGHT, DECEMBER 7, 2025

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please read everything below.

Contact Colby McLemore at colby@colbysphotography.com or (865) 924-1455.

Do not e-mail images as they will not be processed - use the following link:

www.colbysphotosvideos.com/smokies-through-the-lens-photography-contest/

Images will be displayed during Wilderness Wildlife Week, January 5 - 8, 2026, at The LeConte Center in Pigeon Forge from 10 AM to 6 PM daily (Thursday, January 8 from 10 AM to 4 PM).



Categories and Criteria

#	Category	Subject
1	Scenic Views of Great Smoky Mountains National Park	Any broad view image of land within Great Smoky Mountain National Park. The photograph may have people or human-made objects, but they must not be the dominant subject of the picture.
2	Wildlife of Great Smoky Mountains National Park	Any wildlife subject within Great Smoky Mountain National Park (no pets, posed subjects, or studio photographs).
3	Black and White Images of Great Smoky Mountains National Park	Any subject or scene related to nature, wilderness, or wildlife within Great Smoky Mountains National Park (no pets, posed subjects, or studio photographs) in black and white.
4	Man-made Landmarks of Great Smoky Mountains National Park	Entry must be of a human-made Great Smoky Mountains National Park landmark (such as the Walker Sisters' Cabin, John Oliver Cabin, John Cable Grist Mill, Tyson McCarter Place, Primitive Baptist Church Cemetery, etc.). The entry can be from any season (fall, winter, spring, or summer). Artistic interpretations are welcome.
5	Macros of Great Smoky Mountains National Park	Any image that is photographed close up and must be photographed within Great Smoky Mountains National Park.
6	Youth	All entries must conform to one of the above categories AND the submitter be 16 years or younger on the deadline for submissions.

Awards in each Category

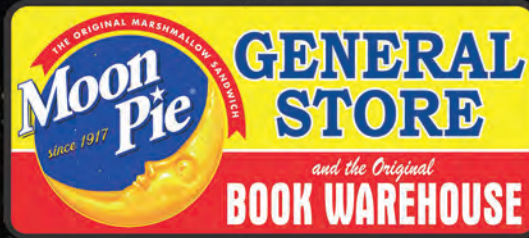
FIRST PLACE: \$50 + RIBBON • SECOND PLACE: \$30 + RIBBON • THIRD PLACE: \$20 + RIBBON

One Best of Show Ribbon, along with \$50 will be awarded to the photo the judges deem to have the best overall image quality while representing the spirit of wilderness and wildlife found in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. All first-place winners in all categories are eligible for the Best of Show award. The image awarded Best in Show, 1st Place, 2nd Place, or 3rd place winners may be included in Wilderness Wildlife Week promotions. An image file of sufficient print quality must be given to the City and its representatives once the contest and judging are complete. Failure to do so will result in forfeiture of this honor. All qualified images will be digitally displayed during Wilderness Wildlife Week, along with the winning photos, which will also be printed and displayed.

NOTE: Winners are to pick up their ribbons, checks, and potential printed images, at the informational front desk at the Wilderness Wildlife Event on Thursday, January 8th before 3:00 pm or contact cheryl.lutes@cityofpigeonforgetn.gov for an alternate pickup time.

Wilderness Wildlife Week 2026





**25% OFF
ONE ITEM**

**IN-STORE ONLY
MUST SHOW COUPON**



- MoonPies • Gifts • Books • Bargain Basement
- Quilt Sets • Toys • Tin Signs • And More!

(865) 428-5708

3127 PARKWAY, PIGEON FORGE, TN 37863



Wilderness Wildlife Week 2026



SPONSORED BY



IT'S "BEAR" NECESSITIES FOR THE KIDS!

This year we are pleased to continue our Junior Ranger Program for ages 12 and younger. As an incentive program, youths can achieve free prizes and gifts daily by completing educational activities and sessions.

HERITAGE, EXPLORATION, WILDLIFE, AND ART

Stop by the Information Desk during the event and request a Junior Ranger Form to participate. Return the completed form to the Information Desk for your daily incentive prize! Achievement milestone gifts may include a backpack, a Junior Ranger pin, stuffed animal, coloring book, seed packet, earth flyer, colored pencils, stickers, etc...

GREAT MILESTONE GIFTS FOR KIDS!



Adult Only Drawing!

Pick up your BEAR HUNT at the Information Desk and embark on an adventure to meet some of our great onsite sponsors, exhibitors and vendors! At each booth, write down the Wilderness Wildlife Week bear's name with the corresponding exhibit. Turn in your completed Explorer Passport in to the Information Desk for an opportunity to win a daily giveaway. Remember, bears roam and will find different homes daily. We hope you have fun visiting with all the participating organizations!



Meet the Featured Speakers



STEVE KEMP

Monday, January 5

7:00 PM – Rockefeller Rescues the Smokies

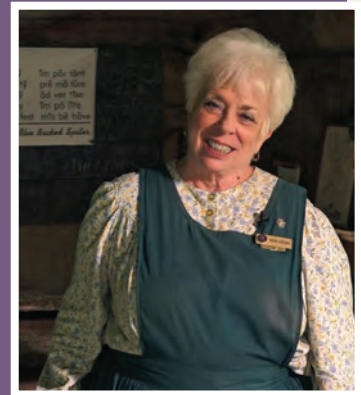
Steve Kemp worked as a seasonal park ranger in Yellowstone and Denali National Parks and served as publications director for Great Smoky Mountains National Park's partner organization Smokies Life for 30 years. He has written for National Parks, Outdoor Life, and Smokies Life Journal and is also the author of Trees of the Smokies and Great Smoky Mountains Simply Beautiful.

Tuesday, January 6

ROBIN GODDARD

7:00 PM – Stepping Back in Time: Stories and Stewardship in the Smokies

Robin Goddard is retired from a 32-year teaching career. She received many education honors including Tennessee Environmental Teacher of the Year, Who's Who Among American Teachers and VIP National Park Service – Little Greenbrier School Interpreter. She also teaches at Tremont and works with the National Park Community Outreach Programs, Parks as a Classroom and Junior Ranger Programs. She also has received the President's Highest Call to Service Award in 2004 and the George B. Hartzog National Award as the Enduring Service Volunteer for the entire National Park Service.



DANA SOHEN

Tuesday, January 6

7:00 PM – Stepping Back in Time: Stories and Stewardship in the Smokies

Dana Sohen in 2023, after serving as a National Park Service employee for more than 30 years, became the President and CEO of the Friends of the Smokies, the park's non-profit philanthropic partner. Originally from Missouri, Dana started her career in Great Smoky Mountains National Park as a college intern in 1989. Since then, she has held several roles at the park, including Biological Technician, Parks as Classrooms Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator, Park Spokesperson and Management Assistant. Dana obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 1992, and her Masters of Science in Wildlife and Fisheries Resources from West Virginia University in 1995. She resides in Gatlinburg where she and her husband Heath raised their two sons, Grant and Garrett.



Meet the Featured Speakers



KEN JENKINS

Wednesday, January 7

7:00 PM – Heaven and Nature Sing

Ken Jenkins grew up in East Tennessee and lives in Gatlinburg, TN with his wife Vicki. He has worked as a natural history photographer for 45 years and operated his 8,000 square foot photo gallery/nature center at the western entrance to the Great Smoky Mountains for 42 years. His books on Great Smoky Mountains National Park, black bears, grizzly bears, and wolves were the beginnings of his publishing business and have been distributed nationally and internationally. He has exhibited in galleries across the country including the Officer's Gallery at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. He recently presented an exhibition of his work in London at British Airlines' Gallery One after filming a documentary with the BBC in Scotland.

Ken's ministry, "Illustrated Principles", uses his gift of photography to illustrate and speak on biblical principles in churches and conferences for over 35 years. He taught on cruises and traveled with Dr. Charles Stanley. He spoke at every ReFresh Conference with Michael Catt and Tom Elliff for 16 years, traveling from Alaska to Boston and many areas in between. He was co-speaker at every Encouragers Pastor Conference in Branson, MO, on multiple occasions he has taught at several locations in the Holy Land, and was one of three speakers at every Heartland Bible Conference in Oklahoma City for seven years. Ken has spoken multiple times at the International Mission Board in Virginia and travels widely to speak in individual churches across the country. He does Christian Cowboy Roundups in South Dakota each year. In addition to photographing for ongoing clients and projects, Ken has been serving as an interim pastor in Greeneville, TN since July of 2023.

www.kenjenkins.com • www.brokenandbranded.com • ken@kenjenkins.com

JUDY FELTS

Wednesday, January 7

7:00 PM - Heaven and Nature Sing

Judy Felts moved to Nashville from Pine Bluff, Arkansas to pursue a musical career as a performer at Opryland USA and later traveled with Grand Ole Opry Star Bill Anderson as a back-up singer and keyboard player. Judy graduated from Ouachita Baptist University with a degree in Music Education. Later pursuing graduate studies at Auburn University and Middle Tennessee State University. Since 1999 she has served as a volunteer at the Tennessee Prison for Women facilitating a worship service for the women and staff. In 2016 Judy started a non-profit organization called Oak Cottage for Women, a transition home for women coming out of prison. The home opened in June 2020 and later a second home in March 2022. These two homes are currently the only homes in Williamson County that are on the Department of Corrections approved list. Judy served on the Community Resource Board at the Tennessee Prison for Women for 20 years.



Judy is actively involved in her community. For the last 16 years she has been involved in the Herb Society of Nashville and served as the Chairman in 2020-2022. She is also a Master Gardener. Judy is a member of the Franklin Rotary and Williamson County Chamber. She is active in her church, Christ Presbyterian, where she is a member of the choir. Judy has been married to Mike Felts for the past 43 years, they have 2 children and 5 grandchildren. She and Mike are both Real Estate brokers and have been active since 1991.

In Memory of Ray “Ranger Ray” Sellers



Ray certainly left his mark on Pigeon Forge’s Wilderness Wildlife Week and each of us. He was a most welcome and familiar face along the Pigeon Forge Riverwalk. It was a good day when you ran into Ray, either walking along the trail or resting on a bench, keeping a watchful eye on his favorite crane. For many of our Wilderness Wildlife Week attendees, Ray’s was the first face they’d see each morning as he gleefully greeted them and helped them get settled on the bus for their next adventure. Ray had answers—great answers—about so many things. He was knowledgeable of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, its trails and the wildlife that awaited park visitors. For many, Ray was a bookend for their day as his was the first and last face they saw.

Ray was a joy to be around, and if there was a lull in the activity, Ray filled it with one of his stories. When things got busy, he was the first to step up and lend a helping hand. Ray loved serving others. He arrived early, stayed late and found joy in all the tasks in between. From parking lot duty to counting pennies, Ray was there. From making sure there was hot chocolate on a cold trail, to delivering ice during a sweltering Patriot Festival, Ray was there.



We gathered in June to celebrate Ray’s life—a life well lived. It was clear that day and remains so today that Ray Sellers was a wonderful man. He was a dear friend to many and a lover of Pigeon Forge, GSMNP and all who dwell and visit here.

While Ray’s hiking boots are empty this year, our hearts are full. Full of great memories, smiles and places we won’t see Ray. Instead, we’ll fondly recall the mark Ray left on each of our hearts and know that we’ll carry his memory with us in each and everything we do. In so many ways, Ray will still be there.

Memories of Dwight McCarter

Mountain Man, the Legend, the Ranger, the Guide, the Tracker, Son, Dad, Friend...Dwight has had many names through the years. Most of us remember his twinkling eyes as he tells how he followed a trail leading to the next adventure. His history was in the park, growing up with it in his backyard in the Roaring Fork Community, he then went to work for the park. Dwight's first job was as a fire watcher – you know, the guy that sits in the fire tower watching for lightning strikes, recording where they hit, then going to check out the damage. He was a natural park ranger, with his hiking, tracking and knowledge of the area Dwight spent over 30 years doing a job he loved. Even after his retirement he spent time tracking and guiding folks in the park. He was a born naturalist. He loved to share his love and knowledge of the wilderness.



We also remember him for his part in Wilderness Wildlife Week – leading hikes filled with facts and stories, laughter and beautiful scenery. The programs where we sat and listened for too short a time it seemed, we could have listened to his tales for hours. We heard about what he looked for when tracking a lost hiker, the signs, what nature told him. Stories of the history of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, what it was like growing up there and what is different today. It all made us look at things through his eyes.



Dwight relied on his instincts and teachings from his childhood and family, circling when lost, zigzagging when searching, and looking for the white of broken branches, sticks and plants. There are many folks very grateful that his skills were so honed, they were found, and returned home. We would like to think of Dwight as out there still on the trail, still tracking and guiding folks along their way today.

Thank You 2026 Nonprofit Exhibitors & Participants



Cades Cove Preservation Assoc



Historic Sam
Houston Schoolhouse



Smoky Mountain
Historical Society

Sevier County
Master Gardeners



Wilderness Wildlife Week 2026

Thank you 2026 Event Sponsors

PLATINUM SPONSORS

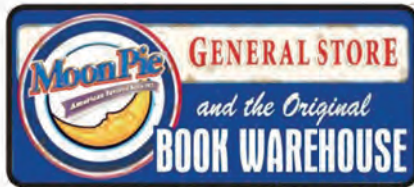


Tennessee State Bank
"Banking at its Best"®

GOLD SPONSORS



SILVER SPONSORS



LOUISE BALES, ARTIST



BRONZE SPONSORS



Proffitt's Woodwork
Gatlinburg, TN



MONDAY, JANUARY 5 | EXCURSIONS

Sign-up online starting December 15, 2025.

*Due to flood damage or weather conditions, some hiking excursions and tours may be changed or cancelled after the printing of this booklet.

HIKES

Mount Cammerer In-and-Out (11 miles, Strenuous)

7:30 AM - 4:00 PM 🗺️ **Guide: Ranger Marty Silver** 🗺️ **6 - 7 hr Hike - Limit: 25**

Join Marty on this adventurous hike to experience the Smokies at their best. We will discover new insights into winter wildlife, mountain geology, and park history. And of course, the amazing views from Lookout Tower! There are some steep and rocky places, and some long uphill grades. Be sure to pack your lunch and snacks, plenty of water, and foul weather gear. Bring a flashlight (just in case) and wear sturdy hiking footwear.

Sugarlands Cemetery (5.5 miles, Easy/Moderate)

8:30 AM - 3:30 PM 🗺️ **Guide: Joey Holt** 🗺️ **5 hr Hike - Limit: 11**

You will start out at the Sugarlands Cemetery and follow Joey down this historic trail where you learn about the early settlers of the mountain area. You will pass by old home sites, the Civilian Conservation Corp camp and old cemeteries while learning their history and how they were a part of developing this area. Make sure to bring water, lunch/snacks, good hiking shoes/boots as the trail will be muddy in some parts with exposed roots in others.

Grapeyard Ridge Trail (6.4 miles, Moderate)

9:00 AM - 4:00 PM 🗺️ **Guide: Jim Plant** 🗺️ **4 hr Hike - Limit: 12**

Starting and ending at the Grapeyard Ridge Trailhead on Greenbrier Cove Road you will follow this historic trail through 19th century homesteads, old cemeteries and various other markers of the early life in the Smokies. This beautiful trail winds up, down and around through several creek crossings so make sure you wear your "creek-crossing" footwear Jim advises. Also bring water, lunch, snacks and your camera.

Birding on Riverwalk Trail (1 mile, Easy)

9:30 AM - 11:30 AM 🗺️ **Guide: Nathan Collie** 🗺️ **2 hr Hike - Limit: 7**

Join wildlife photographer, Nathan, to wander along the Riverwalk Trail down from the LeConte Center to observe bird species for identification and photography. Walking shoes, water, binoculars and a camera are suggested to bring with you to amble along this paved, sidewalk trail. You might pick up some pointers for your next award-winning photo.

Gatlinburg Trail/Cataract Falls/Fighting Creek Nature Trail (3.5 miles, Easy)

9:30 AM - 1:00 PM 🗺️ **Guide: Keith Garnes** 🗺️ **3 hr Hike - Limit: 16**

This hike begins on the edge of Gatlinburg starting on the Gatlinburg Trail and proceeding to Cataract Falls. After the falls, the group will take the Fighting Creek Nature Trail Loop to visit a historical cabin in the woods. The trail then continues on to the Sugarlands Visitor Center and its Museum for a short tour, then board the bus to return to the LeConte Center. Keith advises you to pack water, snacks and your camera!

BUS TRIPS

American Eagle Foundation Tour (Easy - Indoors)

10:00 AM - 1:30 PM 🗺️ **Guide: Bart Brammer** 🗺️ **Limit: 24**

There will be a meet and greet when you arrive at the American Eagle Foundation's new headquarter location in Kodak. Classroom activities, time to explore the museum and hear more about the facility will be on the agenda for your trip. Donations are appreciated and cheerfully accepted at the American Eagle Foundation location.

Pink Jeep Tours

10:00 AM and 2:00 PM 🗺️ **Approximately 2 - 2.5 Hours Each Tour** 🗺️ **Limit: 6**

You will have a chance to take a scenic and educational tour of Elkmont Historic District. Your experienced guide will show you many sights of beauty not found by the normal visitor to the area, including a short off-road experience!

Appalachian Bear Rescue (Easy)

10:30 AM - 2:30 PM 🗺️ **Guide: Darlene Kemp** 🗺️ **Limit: 24**

You will be transported through the beautiful Wears Valley area to the Appalachian Bear Rescue's Trillium Cove Visitor and Education Center in Townsend. There you will learn about the 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 natural habitat. There will also be a question and answer time after the program. Donations are greatly appreciated and accepted at the Visitor Center.

Photo Safari in the Smokies (Easy)

1:00 PM - 4:00 PM 🗺️ **Guide: Colby McLemore** 🗺️ **Limit: 24**

Join photographer Colby for a photo-how-to in Cades Cove. There will be stops along the way to step out of the bus onto the gravel and dirt trails to learn how to set up your shots. Wear good walking shoes, bring water, and a snack to keep you going.

Gatlinburg Trout Farm Tour (Easy)

1:30 PM - 4:00 PM 🗺️ **Guide: Little River Chapter Host** 🗺️ **Approximately 1 Hour at Trout Farm - Limit: 22**

You will learn the benefits of the restoration of native trout to local habitats. While enroute, a Little River Chapter member will speak to ongoing restoration and conservation efforts in support of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park Fisheries. At the facility, the purpose and process of trout stocking in the Little Pigeon River will be presented. Guests should be prepared for cold or rainy conditions as the Trout Facility is outdoors with a paved parking area.



Wilderness Wildlife Week 2026 Program Schedule

MONDAY, JANUARY 5 | PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Pre-register for limited sessions in RED online starting December 15, 2025

Time	Session Topic	Presenter(s)	Location	Description
9:00am-10:00am	Time Travel Through the Smokies Like a Pro: Fun Park Adventures for the Entire Family	Jeff Alt	North 3	Jeff Alt, author of the Adventures of Bubba Jones: Time Traveling Through the Great Smoky Mountains, shares family-friendly park tips-from historic sites and stories to easy trails, scenic views, and ways to beat the crowds.
9:00am-10:30am	Cellphoneography-getting the most from your cellphone's camera	Colby McLemore, photographer	North 2	Discover the full potential of your cellphone's camera! Join us for this hands-on presentation that will elevate your photography skills. Get ready to embark on this thrilling experience and take your wildlife photography to new heights!
9:00am-10:00am	Look and Touch Wildlife Program	Chris Ogle, TWRA Biologist	Greenbriar B	Explore an interactive program with preserved specimens and learn about reptiles through a live animal encounter.
9:00am-10:30am	"Yearning to Burn" (Ages 11 years old and older. 11-14 years old must have a parent present.)	Linda and David Feagan	South 2	A wood burning class. Students will learn wood burning techniques and will take a finished product with them.
KIDS 10:00am-11:00am	Build a Bed for Wildlife (Ages 7 years old to 15 years old)	Karen and Jim Summerville	South 3	Using clay and other materials, participants will create a bed for a native wildlife figurine of their choice. Along the way, we'll explore the resources animals need for good habitats. Participants will take home their handmade creation and a certificate.
10:00am-11:30am	Fly-Fishing the Smokies and East Tennessee	Greg Ward and Dennis Ogle	North 1	Discuss fly-fishing area streams for trout and small mouth bass, including equipment and fly selections.
10:00am-11:00am	The Appalachian Trail-Hiking the "Green Tunnel" from Georgia to Maine	Butch McDade and Brad Knight	Greenbriar A	Join retired Smokies and Big South Fork park ranger/author "Butch" McDade and hiking guide/Appalachian Trail thru-hiker Brad Knight for a slideshow and talk about the legendary 2,200-mile Appalachian Trail-often called the "Green Tunnel" as it winds through the highlands and ridges of the eastern Appalachian Mountains.
10:00am-12:00pm	Pioneer Food Preservation (Ages 14 years through adults)	Roy Henson	South 4	Join us for a hands-on lesson in kraut making, apple peeling and drying, corn husking, stringing beans, and bean shelling. There will be various tastings. Bring a paring knife, 2 large apples and a large zip lock baggie.
10:30am-11:30am	Survival Tricks of the Trail	Mark Warren	Greenbriar B	Mark Warren, founder of the nationally renowned Medicine Bow Wilderness School, will share simple native plant remedies and practical materials useful for hikers and nature enthusiasts alike.
11:00am-12:00pm	A Walk for Sunshine Appalachian Trail Show	Jeff Alt	North 3	Jeff shares his Appalachian Trail Journey, from Georgia to Maine, through stories, music, stunning slides, and lessons learned-based on his award-winning book A Walk for Sunshine.
11:00am-12:00pm	Gupton Wetlands-A Wildlife Treasure	Clay Thurston	North 2	Join photographer, Clay Thurston as he will show some of the wildlife and beauty that is available in this area year round.
11:00am-12:00pm	Wire Wrapping a Natural Gemstone (Age 18 years and older)	LaDonna Twyman	South 1	Learn how to wrap a natural gemstone
11:30am - 12:30pm	Sit a Spell-We've a Tale to Tell	Christina Wolfenbarger and Marcia Huskey Nelson	Greenbriar A	Come travel back in time with us to 1872 as we interview a true mountain woman, Mrs. Dorothea Trotter Huskey. A visitor to her home in Emert's Cove once described her as fair, fat, strong-minded, sarcastic, and genial. Presented by Pigeon Forge Public Library's historian Christina Wolfenbarger and library director Marcia Huskey-Nelson, one of the many direct descendants of Ms. Huskey still living in Sevier County today.

Wilderness Wildlife Week 2026 Program Schedule

MONDAY, JANUARY 5 | PROGRAM SCHEDULE (CONT.)

Pre-register for limited sessions in RED online starting December 15, 2025				
12:00pm - 1:00pm	Fun and Easy Songs on the Autoharp	Brenda Lentz-Dawson	North 1	Brenda will show how easy some of our favorite songs are on the autoharp. Let's sing them together.
12:30pm-1:30pm	My Journey to Hootin' Holler: A Snuffy Smith Chalk Walk with Cartoonist John Rose	John Rose, Cartoonist	Greenbriar B	Join John as he travels his career as a nationally syndicated cartoonist and shares some of his favorite Snuffy Smith strips. He will draw out his characters as he tells their stories.
KIDS 12:30pm-1:30pm	Carve a Nature Stamp (Ages 11 to 14 years)	Pat K. Thomas	South 3	Using wood carver tools, you will carve into rubber to create a rubber stamp. Greeting cards will be made with your stamp.
1:00pm - 2:00pm	Early Communities of the Smokies and the Clans who Settled Them	Tommy Burns	North 3	Slide show with old photos and hand-drawn maps of the early communities in the Smokies: White Oak Flats (now Gatlinburg), Sugarlands and Greenbrier Cove.
1:00pm - 2:00pm	Discovering Tennessee State Parks	J.L. Stepp	North 2	Discussion and colorful powerpoint display of author's visit to all of Tennessee's State Parks.
1:00pm - 2:00pm	"Early Medical Doctors, Clinics and Hospitals in the Smokies"	Kathy Gwinn	Greenbriar A	Making house calls in the mountains was not an easy task, learn about the brave self-sacrificing doctors, who earned the trust of the mountain people.
1:30pm-3:30pm	Painting Nature in Oils (Ages 12 years and older, to adults)	Aurora Harrison Bull	South 2	Students will complete an 8x10 oil painting with materials provided and following a demonstration.
1:30pm-3:00pm	Spin-Fishing the Smokies and East Tennessee	Greg Ward and Dennis Ogle	North 1	Discuss spin-fishing area streams for trout and small mouth bass, including equipment and lure selection.
2:30pm - 3:30pm	The Roots that Withstood Helene: A Story of Resilience	Chelsea Walters, Ranger, Davy Crockett Birthplace State Park	Greenbriar B	This brief presentation presents a condensed timeline of events surrounding the catastrophic flooding event of Hurricane Helene on September 27, 2024. Although the flood waters ravaged the landscape, the community's and park's resilience shines through as a beacon of hope.
3:00pm - 4:00pm	Imaging the Beauty of Water	Tom & Pat Cory	North 2	From water drops to waterfalls we will explore our techniques for imaging the various forms that water takes on planet earth.
3:00pm - 4:00pm	The National Parks of the Southern Appalachians, Great Smokies and Shenandoah	Bill Dietzer and Dianne Klonne	North 3	Illustrate the attractions and history of the Great Smokies and Shenandoah National Parks.
KIDS 3:00pm - 4:00pm	Do-it-Yourself Salt Painting (A parent/guardian must accompany children in the room)	Virginia Stout	South 1	Put your design down with glue, add salt then use water color paint to color your design.
3:30pm-4:30pm	Flora of Yoknapatawpha	Sherra Owen	Greenbriar A	This program will be focused on plants used by William Faulkner in his prose as featured in the William Faulkner Literary Garden near his birthplace.
4:00pm-5:00pm	Ancient Appalachian Elephants: Mammoths, Mastodons in East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia	Matthew Inabinett, Grey Fossil Museum	Greenbriar B	Mammoths and mastodons, extinct kin of today's elephants, once roamed all across North America. Discoveries of the Grey Fossil Site, Saltville, and several cave sites give us a glimpse of those massive mammal's lives and times in the Southern Appalachian, from 5 million years ago to the end of the Ice Age.



Wilderness Wildlife Week 2026 Program Schedule

MONDAY, JANUARY 5 | PROGRAM SCHEDULE (CONT.)

Pre-register for limited sessions in RED online starting December 15, 2025

Time	Session Topic	Presenter(s)	Location	Description
4:00pm-5:00pm	Geologic History of the Smokies	James Wedekind	North 1	An introduction to the rocks found in the Park and how their distribution and character provides clues to their origin and later upheaval that forms the mountains we see today.
4:30pm-5:30pm	Hiking Toward Hope: Faith on the Trails	Lettie K. Whisman and Tazz Reid	North 2	Enjoy viewing several video snippets of the remarkable Facebook/YouTube series "The Weekly Word Outdoor Adventures". These brief narratives created by outdoorsman and pastor Tazz Reid feature East Tennessee stories in their true settings of history, memorials, legends, nature nuggets, and trail travels, summed up with a parallel to their impact on our spiritual lives.
5:00pm-6:00pm	Tall and Small Tales of Smoky Mountain Adventures	Charles Maynard and David Morris	North 3	With over 40 years hiking and 5 books experience, Morris and Maynard will share stories of the Smokies and their adventures.
5:30pm-6:30pm	From Sevier County to Vietnam	Ruth Miller and Terri Smith	North 1	After visiting Vietnam in September 2025, we are bringing you the best mix of the old and new after 50 years of the war with the United States involvement. Welcome Home Boys.
5:30pm-6:30pm	Dulcimer Concert by Tim and Cherry	Cherry Lemonds and Tim Simek	Greenbriar A	Join Tim and Cherry on a beautiful, musical journey of instrumental songs on the hammered dulcimers.
6:00pm-7:00pm	A Half Century of Hiking and Capturing The Beauties of the Smokies	Joel Zachry	North 2	This will be a pictorial discussion of fifty years of hiking and backpacking in the Smokies.
6:00pm-7:30pm	How to Find Polaris and Other Stars in the Night Sky	Michele M. Montgomery, PhD	Greenbriar B	Learn to Observe(Part I):Download the Star Walk 2 Plus app to your phone, come and learn how to find and take photos and planets in the sky. We will then go outside to put this knowledge into practice. (weather permitting)
7:00 pm-8:30 pm	Rockefeller Rescues the Smokies	Steve Kemp	Greenbriar C	Can the solution to challenges vexing national parks today be found in the past? Let's discuss one of the most successful conservation partnerships of all time.
7:45pm-8:30pm	Walk with an Astronomer	Michele Montgomery, PhD & Richard Olenick, PhD	Front Entrance of Convention Center	Let's walk a portion of the Wonders of Light Walking Trail to not only enjoy the millions of LED lights, but to search for celestial objects in the night sky. We will learn about light pollution during this 45 minutes 1 mile walk. (Weather permitting)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 6 | EXCURSIONS

Sign-up online starting December 15, 2025.

*Due to flood damage or weather conditions, some hiking excursions and tours may be changed or cancelled after the printing of this booklet.

HIKES

Hen Wallow Falls (4.5 miles, Moderate/Strenuous)

8:00 AM - 2:00 PM 🗺️ **Guide: Keith Garnes** 🗺️ **3.5 hr Hike - Limit: 12**

Leaving from Cosby Campground and traveling through rhododendron and hemlock, passing the historical old home sites and grave markers, and onto the 1000 foot elevation grind of a hike. You will be rewarded with the beautiful falls that descend to some 90 feet below. Let's also talk about "Bat Caves"!! Keith recommends packing hiking poles, lunch, and water. But, Keith says rain gear/layers are also a must for this hike.

Chestnut Top Trail (6.5 miles, Strenuous)

8:00 AM - 4:00 PM 🗺️ **Guides: Joel and Kathy Zachry** 🗺️ **6 hr Hike - Limit: 12**

Starting out at the Chestnut Top Trail Head at Townsend WYE, you will continue along this challenging trail until you reach the School House Gap Trail Head. Winter conditions, terrain and length add together to test your meddle while you hear about the natural history, seasonal flora and fauna, and learn about hiking tips for safety on the trail. Winter synthetic clothing layers, gloves, hat; trekking poles or hiking stick; water/fluid and lunch/snacks; adequate seasonal hiking boots and rain gear are essential.

Seven Islands State Birding Park (3 miles, Easy/Moderate)

8:30 AM - 2:00 PM 🗺️ **Guide: Stephanie Mueller** 🗺️ **2 hr Hike - Limit: 24**

Learn about the birds, wildlife, plants, and trees of Seven Islands, along with the history of the property and current habitat management and the programs happening at the park from Ranger Stephanie. She also recommends that participants should bring bottled water and good walking shoes. Mostly paved surface, also with flat grass/dirt trails. There is a slight sloped area on the paved surface in one spot.

Little River/Cucumber Gap (6.5 miles, Moderate)

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM 🗺️ **Guide: Charles Maynard** 🗺️ **4 hr Hike - Limit: 12**

Starting at the Little River Trail Head and traveling through the Elkmont area, you will learn about the early community and the start of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. There is an incline of about 800' and several stream crossings on this historic and beautiful trail. Good waterproof hiking shoes/boots, water, snacks and lunch are recommended for you to bring along on this adventure.

BUS TRIPS

Cades Cove Museum and Blount County Museum (Easy)

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM 🗺️ **Guide: Richard Anderson** 🗺️ **Approximately 2 Hours per Stop - Limit: 24**

Museum lovers, this is the tour for you! The Cades Cove Museum is located in the Thompson-Brown cabin, located on its original foundation, and in its original location next to Maryville College. It is small, but has a lot of information and artifacts relating to Cades Cove and the many families who lived there. Some of the helpful volunteers are related to the original families of Cades Cove. Just a short walking distance away is the Blount County Museum. Opened in the 1920s and filled with artifacts from the first families in the area. There are items that have been collected and on loan from the families throughout the county. It might be a good idea to bring water, snacks/lunch with you on your journey.

American Eagle Foundation Tours (Easy - Indoors)

10:00 AM - 1:30 PM 🗺️ **Guide: Darlene Kemp** 🗺️ **Limit: 24**

There will be a meet and greet when you arrive at the American Eagle Foundation's new headquarter location in Kodak. Classroom activities, time to explore the museum and hear more about the facility will be on the agenda for your trip. Donations are appreciated and cheerfully accepted at the American Eagle Foundation location.

Appalachian Bear Rescue (Easy)

10:30 AM - 2:30 PM 🗺️ **Guide: Bart Brammer** 🗺️ **Limit: 24**

You will be transported through the beautiful Wears Valley area to the Appalachian Bear Rescue's Trillium Cove Visitor and Education Center in Townsend. There you will learn about the 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 natural habitat. There will also be a question and answer time after the program. Donations are greatly appreciated and accepted at the Visitor Center.

Pink Jeep Tours

10:00 AM and 2:00 PM 🗺️ **Approximately 2 - 2.5 Hours Each Tour** 🗺️ **Limit: 6**

You will have a chance to take a scenic and educational tour of Elkmont Historic District. Your experienced guide will show you many sights of beauty not found by the normal visitor to the area, including a short off-road experience!



Wilderness Wildlife Week 2026 Program Schedule

TUESDAY, JANUARY 6 | PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Pre-register for limited sessions in RED online starting December 15, 2025

Time	Session Topic	Presenter(s)	Location	Description
8:30am-9:30am	The Empathy Effect: How Animal Encounters Inspire Conservation	Jenna Penland	Greenbriar A	Explore how Ocean Connections combines education with meaningful animal experiences to inspire empathy and motivate conservation. Learn about our non-releaseable marine mammal ambassadors and how you can help protect our world's ocean!
8:30am-9:30am	Gardening for Wildlife	Diane McCullen	North 3	Gardening for Wildlife means creating a garden that supports birds, butterflies, pollinators, and other animals. Find out what is needed and how to best attract wildlife to your gardens. The goal is to create a healthy, balanced habitat that benefits both wildlife and people by encouraging biodiversity right in your own backyard.
9:00am-11:00am	Pioneer Food Preservation (Ages 14 years through adults)	Roy Henson	South 4	Join us for a hands-on lesson on kraut making, apple peeling and drying, corn husking, stringing beans, and bean shelling. There will be various tastings. Bring a paring knife, 2 large apples and a large zip lock baggie.
9:00am-12:30pm	Oil Painting the Landscape (Ages 17 years and up)	John Adkins	South 1	I will teach you how to paint a Smoky Mountain landscape in oil. Including color value and perspective.
9:00am-10:30am	"Yearning to Burn" (Ages 11 years old and up. 11 - 14 MUST have a parent present)	Linda and David Feagan	South 3	A woodburning class. Students will learn wood burning techniques and they will take a finished project with them.
9:00am-10:00am	Conservation Stories ALL AGES	Frances Figart, Smokies Life	North 1	"Camilla and the Catapillars" Supporting the Homegrown National Park Movement that encourages planting native trees and plants on private land to boost species diversity. Discover how wildlife advocacy unexpectedly led her to become a children's author.
9:30am-10:30am	In and Of The Sky	Tom and Pat Cory	North 2	From insects to eagles, from the Northern Lights to Eclipses, we will explore techniques for imaging what happens in the skies above us.
9:30am-10:30am	People, Plants and Their Stories	Sherra Owen	Greenbriar B	General stories about southern plants and the people associated with them.
10:00am-11:00am	Stone Circles in Ancient Cultures	Donald Wells	Greenbriar A	Ancient cultures used stone circles for many of their sacred sites. This program discusses the worldwide use of the stone artifacts by ancient cultures.
10:00am-11:00am	Bird Banding at Seven Islands State Bird Park	Clare Datillo, Ranger	North 3	Ever wondered how scientists study bird migration and populations? Join us for a talk on bird banding-the vital research tool that helps track bird movements, survival, and behavior. You'll learn how banding works, what data it provides, and how it contributes to bird conservation across the continent.
11:00am-12:00pm	Beyond the Buzz: Meet the World's Weirdest Pollinators	Cindy Johnson-Smoky Mountain Nature Lady	North 1	Discover the strange and surprising creatures -other than bees-that help your garden bloom. Door prizes!
11:00am-12:00pm	Dragonflies-Where, When and How to Photograph Them	Clay Thurston	North 2	This session will explain how to improve your dragonfly images, as well as, where and when to find them.
11:00am-12:00pm	Natural Gemstone Earrings (Age 18 years and older)	LaDonna Tywman	South 2	Learn to make a pair of natural gemstone earrings.
11:00am-12:00pm	Appalachian Sounds Part 1	Knoxville Area Dulcimer Club	Greenbriar B	The 36 years old group of Knoxville-area musicians performs a variety of songs on traditional mountain and hammered dulcimers.
11:30am-12:30pm	Mythological Creatures of Tennessee	Chris Ogle, TWRA	North 3	Join a TWRA biologist to learn the TRUTH about suckers, hoop snakes, and black panthers in Tennessee

Wilderness Wildlife Week 2026 Program Schedule

TUESDAY, JANUARY 6 | PROGRAM SCHEDULE (CONT.)

Pre-register for limited sessions in RED online starting December 15, 2025

Time	Session Topic	Presenter(s)	Location	Description
12:00pm-1:00pm	Grandma Gatewood's Walk	Anne Van Curen	Greenbriar A	Actress Anne Van Curen transforms into Emma "Grandma" Gatewood to describe what it was like to be the first woman to solo hike the Appalachian Trail in 1955. Based on the book "Grandma Gatewood Takes a Walk"
12:30pm-1:30pm	Who's Traveled This Path? (Ages 7 years old to 15 years old)	Karen and Jim Summerville	South 3	This class will talk about where to find native animals, identify their tracks and other signs they leave behind. Participants will decorate their own tracking/observation journal to take with them and a certificate.
1:00pm-2:00pm	"The Forest's Gifts of Food, Medicine and Craft as Practiced by The Native Americans"	Mark Warren	North 1	Mark Warren is the owner of the nationally renowned Medicine Bow Wilderness School. He believes today's society can-and should-learn some invaluable lessons and skills regarding the use of native plants for food, medicine, insect repellent, craft shelter and fire. Mark will bring along some handmade crafts for viewing and discussion.
1:00pm-2:00pm	Nonprofit Partnership at Great Smoky Mountains National Park and How You Can Get Involved	Jacqueline Harp, Smokies Life	North 2	Join Smokies Life to discover how they support Great Smoky Mountains National Park, what cooperating associations do across the National Park network, and how each nonprofit partner in the region plays a unique role in creating experiences, stewarding science, and filling funding gaps for America's most visited National Park.
1:00pm-2:00pm	Food Preservation in the 1840's	Roy Henson	North 3	Join Roy as he shows us through video and photos the food preservation techniques of the early settlers in the Appalachians.
1:30pm-3:30pm	Painting Nature in Oils (All ages welcome, designed for kids)	Aurora Harrison Bull	South 1	Students will complete an 8x10 oil painting with materials provided and following a demonstration.
1:30pm-2:30pm	The Fascinating Big South Fork Country of Tennessee and Kentucky	Arthur "Butch" McDade and a Big South Fork Representative	Greenbriar A	Join Butch for a slide show journey through Big South Fork country in the Cumberland Plateau of Tennessee and Kentucky, featuring the history of the area.
1:30pm-2:30pm	Appalachian Sounds Part II	Knoxville Area Dulcimer Club	Greenbriar B	A concert from musicians playing Traditional Mountain & Hammered Dulcimers featuring a variety of music.
2:00pm-3:00pm	Friendship Bracelets	Virginia Stout	South 2	Instructions and materials will be provided to make and take a friendship bracelet for participants.
2:30pm-3:30pm	View From the South and North Rims of the Grand Canyon	Bill Dietzer and Dianne Klonne	North 1	This program will illustrate the views of the Grand Canyon and how it was discovered and developed.
2:30pm-4:00pm	Methods for Locating and Photographing Wildlife	Travis "Hill" Henry	North 2	We will discuss how to use technology to locate wildlife. We'll also discuss the types of behaviors that photographers can seek to capture to make images more interesting or artistic beyond the standard profile shot.
2:30pm-3:30pm	Winter Hummingbirds in East Tennessee and Western North Carolina	Mark Armstrong	North 3	Hummingbirds are a rare but regular winter visitor in Tennessee and North Carolina-some stay for the season while others just pass through. Learn how scientists study their movements by safely capturing and banding them to record species, age, and sex, all under federal permits.
3:00pm-4:00pm	"A Salute to Colonial America"	Kathy Gwinn	Greenbriar A	In 2026 our country will celebrate its 250th Anniversary. What was colonial America like? This session relates the history and traditions of the people back then.



Wilderness Wildlife Week 2026 Program Schedule

TUESDAY, JANUARY 6 | PROGRAM SCHEDULE (CONT.)

Pre-register for limited sessions in RED online starting December 15, 2025

Time	Session Topic	Presenter(s)	Location	Description
3:30pm-4:30pm	Make & Write: Natural Inks & Feathered Pens (Ages 10 years old and up please. Parent/Guardian must be in the room.)	Amber Brown and Madeline Braden, Barefoot University	South 4	Discover the art of writing with nature. In this hands-on session, you'll learn how to create your own natural inks from the earth, then try your hand at writing with a homemade feather pen.
3:30pm-4:30pm	Wildflowers of the Smokies	Jack Carman	Greenbriar B	Join Jack Carman, artist, for a powerpoint presentation of the Wildflowers found in the Smokies.
4:00pm-5:00pm	The Art of the Story- Mussopo the Adventurous Opossum	Craig Cruise, Author	North 1	In this presentation, Craig will share insights into his two children's books, discuss the artwork and writing process, and may even include a fun session of typewriter poetry.
4:30pm-5:30pm	Appalachian Rhinos: Five Million Years Ago in Tennessee	Joseph Gajewski, Grey Fossil Museum	North 3	Five million years ago, the forests of Tennessee may have looked the same, but the animals roaming them were very different. Come learn about the extinct Appalachian rhinoceros, and how studying fossils helps us better understand endangered species in the present.
4:30pm-5:30pm	Night-Scapes: Astro and Landscape Photography with Camera and Smart Phones	Rick Smith	North 2	I will be showing different techniques to capture the beauty of unique nightscape photography in single image for cameras and smart phones.
5:00pm-6:00pm	Hurricane Helene Thru the Eyes of a First Responder	Joey Holt	Greenbriar A	The destruction from the flooding of Helene in Newport/Cocke County. The 911 calls and what first responders went through to help the people in need.
5:30pm-6:30pm	"Tennessee Originals"	Hills-n-Hollows Kathy and Mike Gwinn	North 1	Come and discover the stories and songs behind some of Tennessee's original products such as Mountain Dew, Goo-Goo Pies, Milky Way Bars, etc....
6:00pm-7:00pm	Protecting Land Through Conservation Partnerships	Joel Zachry	North 2	A discussion of land conservancies and the Tennessee greenbelt and how they benefit nature.
6:00pm-7:00pm	Smoky Mountain Storytellers Association	Jim Easton and Friends	North 3	A variety of tellers will join us throughout the week to entertain us with their tales.
6:00pm-7:30pm	How to Find Your Zodiac Constellation in the Night Sky	Michele M. Montgomery, PhD.	Greenbriar B	Download the Star Walk 2 Plus to your android or iPhone and come learn how to find and take photos of zodiac constellations in the sky. We will then go outside to find and photo your zodiac constellation. (weather permitting)
7:00pm-8:30pm	Stepping Back in Time: Stories and Stewardship in the Smokies	Robin Goddard and Dana Sohen	Greenbriar C	Join us for an inspiring program featuring Robin Goddard, who grew up in the shadow of the Walker Sisters' home. Through her vivid storytelling, Robin will transport you back to a time when teaching, gathering, and community life in the mountains revolved around cherished places like the Little Greenbrier Schoolhouse. Dana Sohen, President of Friends of the Smokies, will share how philanthropy has been intertwined with the park since it's very beginning-when advocates raised \$10 million in the 1920s to help establish Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7 | EXCURSIONS

Sign-up online starting December 15, 2025.

*Due to flood damage or weather conditions, some hiking excursions and tours may be changed or cancelled after the printing of this booklet.

HIKES

Ramsey Cascade (8 miles, Moderate/Strenuous)

8:00 AM - 4:30 PM 🗺️ **Guide: Jim Plant** 🗺️ **6 hr Hike - Limit: 12**

Starting out from the Ramsey Cascade parking area you will follow an old jeep trail leading to the fire tower on Greenbrier Pinnacle on this steady uphill hike. Passing through old growth forests and seeing the rehabilitation work from Trails Forever Group 2022-2023 you will encounter rocky sections and may be icy near the waterfall. Jim says that hiking poles and foot traction are highly recommended. Make sure to pack plenty of water, snacks, and lunch.

Middle Prong Trail (6 miles, Easy/Moderate)

8:30 AM - 3:30 PM 🗺️ **Guide: Joey Holt** 🗺️ **5.5 - 6 hr Hike - Limit: 12**

Starting out at the Middle Prong Trail Head in the Tremont area you will be following the old railroad bed of the Little River Lumber Company. On this scenic route you will learn about the history of logging in the area and the Middle Prong Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp. Good hiking shoes/boots are a must, there are exposed rock and muddy spots along the 800 foot rise over a 3 mile area. Bring water, snacks and lunch.

Birding on Riverwalk Trail (1 mile, Easy)

9:30 AM - 11:30 AM 🗺️ **Guide: Nathan Collie** 🗺️ **2 hr Hike - Limit: 7**

Join wildlife photographer Nathan, to wander along the Riverwalk Trail down from the LeConte Center to observe bird species for identification and photography. Walking shoes, water/fluid, binoculars and a camera are suggested to bring with you to amble along this paved, sidewalk trail. You might pick up some pointers for your next award-winning photo!

BUS TRIPS

The Sam Houston School House and Museum (Easy to Moderate)

9:00 AM - 3:30 PM 🗺️ **Guide: Bart Brammer** 🗺️ **6.5 hr Trip (Bring a Sack Lunch/Snacks) - Limit: 24**

Travel over to Maryville to the Sam Houston Schoolhouse and Museum Center for a discussion on the history of Sam Houston while he was in this Appalachian area. Take a guided tour of the schoolhouse, museum, and the grounds around them, pausing for a lunch break in the enclosed event building on site. Remember to bring bottled water also. Donations will also be cheerfully accepted at the Museum Center to help keep this volunteer run historic site going.

American Eagle Foundation Tours (Easy - Indoors)

10:00 AM - 1:30 PM 🗺️ **Guide: Done Lockett** 🗺️ **Limit: 24**

There will be a meet and greet when you arrive at the American Eagle Foundation's new headquarter location in Kodak. Classroom activities, time to explore the museum and hear more about the facility will be on the agenda for your trip. Donations are appreciated and cheerfully accepted at the American Eagle Foundation location.

Pink Jeep Tours

10:00 AM and 2:00 PM 🗺️ **Approximately 2 - 2.5 Hours Each Tour** 🗺️ **Limit: 6**

You will have a chance to take a scenic and educational tour of Elkmont Historic District. Your experienced guide will show you many sights of beauty not found by the normal visitor to the area, including a short off-road experience!

Gatlinburg Trout Farm Tour

1:30 PM - 4:00 PM 🗺️ **Guide: Little River Chapter Host** 🗺️ **Approximately 1 Hour at Trout Farm - Limit: 22**

You will learn the benefits of the restoration of native trout to local habitats. While enroute, a Little River Chapter member will speak to ongoing restoration and conservation efforts in support of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park Fisheries. At the facility, the purpose and process of trout stocking in the Little Pigeon River will be presented. Guests should be prepared for cold or rainy conditions as the Trout Facility is outdoors with a paved parking area.



Wilderness Wildlife Week 2026 Program Schedule

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7 | PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Pre-register for limited sessions in RED online starting December 15, 2025

Time	Session Topic	Presenter(s)	Location	Description
7:45am-8:30am	Breathe and Stretch with Chair Yoga	Ruth Barber	Salon AB	A time for breathing and stretching before heading out on your hike or sitting in programs. Adults only, please.
9:00am-10:00am	Ten Essentials Everyone Should Carry	Joey Holt	Salon AB	The ten essentials every hiker should carry and the importance of each.
9:00am-10:00am	Tennessee's Sounds of the Night	Chris S. Ogle, TWRA	Salon C	Join a TWRA biologist to learn about the variety of nocturnal animals and the sounds they make with emphasis on birds, frogs, toads and bats.
09:00am-11:00am	Painting Wildflowers (Ages 16 years and up. Limit: 8)	John Adkins	Parlor B	Learn to paint Pink Lady's Slippers or Trilliums in oil.
9:00am-10:30am	Beginning Wood Burning (Ages 8yrs and up. Limit: 10)	Linda Feagan, Tree of Life Creations	Parlor A	Learn how to wood burn an ornament/magnet with Smoky Mountains on it. An adult must be present for each child.
9:00am-10:00am	Let's Be Friends! (Bracelet Making) (Limit: 30)	Rhonda Goins and Gail Stout	Falls Room	Make a friendship bracelet with yarn! Bring back the 80's!! Make one for yourself and one to trade. Take home your bracelet maker.
10:00am-6:00pm	EXHIBITS AND VENDORS	Staff	Salon D and Lobby area	
10:00am-6:00pm	PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST EXHIBIT	Staff	Salon D and Lobby area	A running digital display of the photography contest entries, and the winning photos!
10:30am-11:30am	Louis E. Jones and the Cliff Dwellers	Brian McKnight, Louise Bales and Pat K. Thomas	Salon AB	Join us for a special program featuring a brief history and introduction by Cliff Dweller's owners. Followed by the premier of the new documentary directed by Brian McKnight. After the screening, there will be a question and answer session.
10:30am-11:30am	Meet Aunt Liddy	Anne Van Curen	Salon C	Join Anne as she portrays Lydia Kear Whaley (1840-1926). Born in Sevier County, TN, this Civil War widow served the Sugarlands' community as a healer, midwife, teacher, tailor, undertaker and talented basket weaver helping many people in the Smoky Mountain area.
10:30am-11:30am	Daily Grind at the Old Mill	Chuck Childers	Falls Room	The Miller will talk about the history of the Old Mill in Pigeon Forge. You will learn the ins and outs of the business and all that grinding!
11:00am-12:00pm	Learn to make a Gemstone Pendant (Ages 18 and up. Limit: 12)	LaDonna Twyman	Parlor A	Learn to wrap wire to make a pendant gemstone necklace.
12:00pm-1:00pm	Valentine's Day Card Making (Ages 4 years to 10 years. Limit: 12)	Dolora Batchelor	Parlor B	Come make a Valentine's Day card using paper, markers, glue, etc... Please have an adult with each child.
12:00pm-1:00pm	Appalachian Sounds- Part One	Knoxville Area Dulcimer Club	Falls Room	We are a small group of musicians from the Knoxville Area Dulcimer Club, a 35 year old organization with over 100 members. We enjoy playing a variety of mostly traditional songs on dulcimers and a variety of accompanying instruments. We play at East TN events, festivals, museums, community centers, churches, parks, and senior living facilities throughout the year.

Wilderness Wildlife Week 2026 Program Schedule

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7 | PROGRAM SCHEDULE (CONT.)

Pre-register for limited sessions in RED online starting December 15, 2025

12:30pm-1:30pm	Communities of the Smokies and the Clans who Settled Them	Tommy Burns	Salon AB	This is a slide show presentation with photos about the different communities of Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the families who originally settled there.
12:30pm-2:00pm	Survival Tricks of the Trail	Mark Warren-Medicine Bow Wilderness School	Salon C	Mark shares some easy-to-use native plant medicines and practical materials for trail hikers and all lovers of the great outdoors. He covers many easy-to-identify plant remedies for bee sting, fire ants, stinging nettle, poison ivy, nausea, mouth sores, minor infection, inflammation, food or water poisoning, constipation, diarrhea and natural insect repellents. Also, some great tips for successfully observing wildlife.
Time	Session Topic	Presenter(s)	Location	Description
9:00am-10:00am	Animal EYE-identification	Clay Thurston	North 2	Clay will project the photo of an animal (mammal, bird, reptile or insect) eye onto the screen and you will try to guess what it is! This "photo" game is for all ages.
9:00am-10:30am	Incredible Wild Edibles	Donna M. Cyr	Greenbriar A	A show and tell of plants that grow outside your door. They can be used for food, medicine and utilitarian purposes.
9:00am-10:00am	Meet Aunt Liddy	Anne Van Curen	Greenbriar B	Join Anne as she portrays Lydia K. Whaley(1840-1926). This Civil War widow served the Sugarlands' Community as a healer, midwife, tailor, farmer and talented craftswoman, helping many families in the Smoky Mountains.
9:00am-10:30am	"Yearning to Burn" (Ages 11 years old and up. 11-14 years old MUST have a parent present)	Linda & David Feagan	South 2	A wood burning class. Students will learn wood burning techniques and they will take a finished project with them.
9:00am-11:00am	Pioneer Food Preservation (Ages 14 years old through adults)	Roy Henson	South 4	Join us for a hands-on lesson in kraut making, apple peeling and drying, corn husking, stringing beans, and bean shelling. There will be various tastings. Bring a paring knife, 2 large apples and a large ziploc baggie.
9:00am-12:30pm	Oil Painting the Landscape with John Adkins (Ages 17 years old and older)	John Adkins	South 1	I will teach you how to paint a Smoky Mountains landscape in oil. Including color, value and perspective!
9:00am-10:00am	Backyard Bird Watching for the Amateur	Ed Guindon	North 1	This session will describe the presenter's experiences with watching and feeding birds in his backyard for over 35 years. Topics covered will include feeder types, birdseed selection, feeder mounting and protection from pests. General bird identification aids will be discussed including binoculars, cameras, phone apps and even your ears. This will not be a course in identifying tricky bird species!
10:00am-11:00am	Butterfly Lessons and Blessings	Glenna Julian, Lois Worthington, and Guane Julian	North 3	We shall share what we have learned by watching butterflies, and tell what blessings we have received by observing nature.



Wilderness Wildlife Week 2026 Program Schedule

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7 | PROGRAM SCHEDULE (CONT.)

Pre-register for limited sessions in RED online starting December 15, 2025

10:00am-11:30am	Cyanotype Solar Prints with Light or Suminagashi Marbling on Paper - Weather Dependent (Ages 12 years old and up)	Linda Miller	South 3	Discover the art of cyanotype printing, an alternative photographic process that uses sunlight to create striking images. Participants are invited to bring found objects-such as lace, feathers, stencils or dried plants-to experiment with and capture unique silhouettes in their prints.
10:30am-11:30am	Great Smokies Adventures for Everyone	Bill Dietzer and Dianne Klonne	North 1	This program will illustrate the many activities and attractions for all ages in the Great Smokies.
11:00am-12:00pm	Smoky Mountains After Dark, How to Find and Photograph the Milky Way	Lisa Mayo	North 2	You will learn how to scout out locations and photograph the Milky Way in the Smoky Mountains
11:00am-12:00pm	Thumbprint Designs (Ages 5 years and up)	Aurora Harrison Bull	South 2	This class will be for all ages (geared toward children, but adults enjoy it too). They will be making animated characters with their own thumbprints to tell a story. Adult must attend with each child.
Time	Session Topic	Presenter(s)	Location	Description
11:00am-12:00pm	Tennessee's Top 40 Waterfalls	Keith Garnes	Greenbriar A	A look at top tier waterfalls from across eight geographic regions of the state. Did your favorites make the list??
11:00am-12:00pm	The Art of Stalking for Photography, Wildlife Observers and Hunters.	Mark Warren	Greenbriar B	Whether one hunts or not, simply getting close enough to a wild creature to observe its lifestyle is a worthwhile adventure for anyone. This presentation will impart the physical and mental discipline for approaching an animal by a motion that remains invisible in the peripheral vision of prey. This class boosts balance, strength and patience.
11:30am-12:30pm	North American Bears Through Time and Space: From Tiny to Gigantic	Blaine Schubert, Grey Fossil Museum	North 3	North American bears today are limited to three species, but in fossil record we had a diverse array of forms, some small and some quite enormous. This talk will review the evolution and development of bears in North America over the past 10 million years.
12:30pm-1:30pm	Arches Along the Way	Keith Garnes	Greenbriar A	A collection of arches and natural bridges along Tennessee's trails. Updated for the 2026 event!
1:00pm-2:00pm	Natural Gemstone Earrings (Ages 18 years and older)	LaDonna Twyman	South 4	Make a pair of natural gemstone earrings.
1:00pm-2:00pm	Food Preservation in the 1840s	Roy Henson	Greenbriar B	Join Roy as he shows us through video and photos about the food preservation techniques of the early settlers of the Appalachians.
1:00pm-2:00pm	Trout Unlimited Fisheries Conservation	David Tolliver, Little River Chapter	North 1	Come and learn about trout unlimited fisheries conservation and preservation in Great Smoky Mountains National Park and beyond.
1:00pm-2:00pm	Hiking Trails in My Smoky Mountain Novels	Dr. Lin Stepp	North 2	Colorful, powerpoint display of hikes her characters have taken in her Smoky Mountain novels.
1:00pm - 2:00pm	The Galapagos Islands: The land of Blue-footed Boobies, Sally Lightfoot Crabs, Tortoises, and Lava	Kris Light	North 3	The Galapagos Islands are blessed with fascinating animals, endemic plants, and amazing geology. Charles Darwin and past and present history will be discussed.
2:00pm-3:00pm	Uncle Lem Ownby	Carroll McMahan	Greenbriar A	Carroll McMahan author of "Elkmont's Uncle Lem Ownby, Sage of the Smokies" portrays the protagonist in a one man play.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 8 | EXCURSIONS

Sign-up online starting December 15, 2025.

*Due to flood damage or weather conditions, some hiking excursions and tours may be changed or cancelled after the printing of this booklet.

HIKES

Gatlinburg Trail/Cataract Falls/Fighting Creek Nature Trail (3.5 miles, Easy)

8:00 AM - 11:30 AM 🗓️ **Guide: Keith Garnes** 🗓️ **3 hr Hike - Limit: 16**

This hike begins on the edge of Gatlinburg starting on the Gatlinburg Trail and proceeding to Cataract Falls. After the falls, the group will take the Fighting Creek Nature Trail Loop to visit an historical cabin in the woods. The trail then continues on to the Sugarlands Visitor Center and its Museum for a short tour, then board the bus to return to the LeConte Center. Keith advises you to pack water, snacks and your camera!

Woodpecker Walk on Hickory Ridge Trail (1 mile, Moderate/Strenuous)

8:30 AM - 1:00 PM 🗓️ **Guide: Clare Dattilo** 🗓️ **1.5 hr Hike - Limit: 15**

Join Interpretive Ranger, Clare Dattilo to search for the seven species of woodpeckers that can be found at Seven Islands State Park during the winter. We will also search for signs of woodpeckers and learn about some of their interesting characteristics. The trail is a one mile loop that climbs to the highest point at Seven Islands to an overlook and come down a set of steep steps on the other side. This is a wooded trail with some exposed roots. Hikers will want to bring a set of binoculars and hiking poles along with water and snacks.

Voices of the Forest- Activity Hike (1.9 miles, Easy/Moderate)

9:00 AM - 2:00 PM 🗓️ **Guide: Amber Brown, Barefoot University** 🗓️ **1.5 - 2 hr Hike - Limit: 20**

Join us for a nature-filled adventure where trees are our teachers. This guided hike for kids and adults will connect us to trees of the Smokies. Along the hike, we will pause for tree stops and forest-school-style activities. Good walking/hiking shoes are recommended, and remember to bring water and snacks.

Little River Trail-Out and Back (5 miles, Moderate)

9:30 AM - 3:00 PM 🗓️ **Guides: Joel and Kathy Zachry** 🗓️ **4 hr Hike - Limit: 12**

Starting in the Little River Trail Head in the Elkmont area you will travel along the natural uneven terrain learning about the natural history, seasonal flora and fauna. During the hike Joel and Kathy will give you hiking safety tips for winter hiking using their own experiences and yours. They suggest winter synthetic clothing layers including gloves and hat; adequate seasonal hiking boots; trekking poles or hiking stick; water/fluid and lunch or snacks; sturdy rain gear is essential.

BUS TRIPS

Townsend/Cades Cove Loop (Easy/Moderate)

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM 🗓️ **Guide: Kathy Gwinn** 🗓️ **5 - 6 hr Trip - Limit: 23**

Join Kathy to listen to her stories where you will learn about the history of Townsend and Cades Cove area, history of the Cherokee, geography, natural science of plants, trees, animals, Civil War history and much more! Some walking is involved to tour the church cemetery and the John Oliver cabin, there are exposed roots on the pathway. Bring water, snacks/lunch, and wear good walking shoes for your adventure.

Cades Cove Museum and Blount County Museum (Easy)

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM 🗓️ **Guide: Richard Anderson** 🗓️ **2 hrs Per Stop - Limit: 24**

Museum lovers, this is the tour for you! The Cades Cove Museum is located in the Thompson-Brown cabin, located on its original foundation, and in its original location next to Maryville College. It is small, but it has a lot of information and artifacts relating to Cades Cove and the many families who lived there. Some of the helpful volunteers are related to the original families of Cades Cove. Just a short walking distance away is the Blount County Museum. Opened in the 1920s and filled with artifacts from the first families in the area. There are items that have been collected and on loan from the families throughout the county. It might be a good idea to bring water, snacks/lunch with you on your journey.

American Eagle Foundation Tours (Easy - Indoors)

10:00 AM - 1:30 PM 🗓️ **Guide: Dawn Orillio** 🗓️ **Limit: 24**

There will be a meet and greet when you arrive at the American Eagle Foundation's new headquarter location in Kodak. Classroom activities, time to explore the museum and hear more about the facility will be on the agenda for your trip. Donations are appreciated and cheerfully accepted at the American Eagle Foundation location.

Pink Jeep Tours

10:00 AM 🗓️ **Approximately 2 - 2.5 Hours Tour** 🗓️ **Limit: 6**

You will have a chance to take a scenic and educational tour of Elkmont Historic District. Your experienced guide will show you many sights of beauty not found by the normal visitor to the area, including a short off-road experience!



Wilderness Wildlife Week 2026 Program Schedule

THURSDAY, JANUARY 8 | PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Pre-register for limited sessions in RED online starting December 15, 2025

Time	Session Topic	Presenter(s)	Location	Description
9:00am-10:00am	The Obed Wild and Scenic River: Protected, thanks to engaged citizens.	Hans Christen, TCWP	North 1	Over 40 miles of stunningly beautiful gorges and pristine rivers provide numerous outdoors activities. This presentation tells the story of how it came to be protected, why it is important, and how you can enjoy it.
9:00am-10:00am	Heritage of the Mountains	Jim Bordwine, the Saltmaker	North 3	Come and learn about the history of salt and the smoked salt techniques in the Appalachian Mountains.
9:00am-10:30am	"Yearning to Burn" (Ages 11 years old and older 11 - 14 years old MUST have a parent present)	Linda and David Feagen	South 2	A wood burning class. Students will learn wood burning techniques and they will take a finished project with them.
KIDS 9:00am-10:00am	Art from Natural Materials (Ages 5 to 10 years)	Pat K. Thomas	South 4	Children will learn how to create a dragonfly from natural materials and paint, glue and fashioned onto a board. Adult must attend with each child.
9:00am-10:00am	Living with the Natives	Sherra Owen	Greenbriar A	The tour of a Southern Appalachian Landscape featuring natives and a woodland garden.
9:30am-10:30am	What Makes A Good Photograph	Douglas Hubbard	North 2	A large collection of how-to tips, rules and suggestions. These will help create a memorable photograph which will score well in competition; but, more importantly, how to improve impact and storytelling.
10:00am-11:00am	A Moth-er's Night Out	Kris Light	Greenbriar B	Learn about the ""Butterflies of the Night". Moths are an important part of our ecosystem. Their life cycles, food preferences, and how to attract them will be discussed.
10:00am-11:30am	Cyanotype Solar Prints with Light or Suminagashi Marbling on Paper - Weather Dependent (Ages 12 years old and up)	Linda Miller	South 1	Discover the art of cyanotype printing, an alternative photographic process that uses sunlight to create striking images. Participants are invited to bring found objects-such as lace, feathers, stencils or dried plants-to experiment with and capture unique silhouettes in their prints. Adult must attend with each child.
10:30am-11:30am	Can You Still Hear the Buzz?	Kris and Hans Christen, TCWP	North 1	Honeybees and other pollinators are critically important to our environment and to our food supply, but they are endangered by a dangerous combination of hazards. We will talk about insect health from a beekeeper's perspective, explain how honey is produced, and show what you can do to help pollinators.
10:30am-11:30am	Beginner's Crochet (Ages 13 years old through adults)	Cherry Lemonds	South 3	We will cover slip knots, chaining, tension, single/double/triple crochet, hook and yarn sizes, reading symbols and directions. We will create a sampler potholder. Participants may bring a J crochet hook and #4 worsted yarn. Adult must attend with each child.
11:00am-12:00pm	The Good, the Bad and the Ugly of Doing Arts and Craft Shows	Clay Thurston	North 2	This program will explain what you need to do for Arts and Craft Shows as well as what to watch out for!
11:00am-12:30pm	Black Bear Management in Great Smoky Mountains National Park	Ryan Williamson, Wildlife Biologist GSMNP	Greenbriar A	Learn about the biology of black bears and how populations are managed in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. This program will also address common myths and include time for questions.
11:00am-12:00pm	Making a Beaded Ring (Age 18 years and older)	LaDonna Twyman	South 4	Learn to make a free form wire ring of beads.

Wilderness Wildlife Week 2026 Program Schedule

THURSDAY, JANUARY 8 | PROGRAM SCHEDULE (CONT.)

Pre-register for limited sessions in RED online starting December 15, 2025

Time	Session Topic	Presenter(s)	Location	Description
11:00am-12:00pm	Story Songs from the Heart	Brenda Lentz-Dawson	North 3	Join us as Brenda shares with us some of her favorite stories and songs.
11:00am-12:00am	Rooted in Necessity-The Dooryard (early American Homestead) (Adults only)	Natileene Cassel and Donna Stinnett	South 2	Step Back into your grand parents door yard garden and sketch a door yard garden beautifully laid out for the necessity of their lives. Where did they grow the herbs, where were the chickens kept, where was the washing kettle located? How did they render soap? When finished you will have a sketch of how they lived as a keepsake.
11:30am-12:30pm	"I've Never Been Lost, Just Been Bothered a Few Days"	Arthur "Butch" McDade	Greenbriar B	This program will be an introduction to the fascinating life of Wiley Oakley, Sevier County's "Roamin" Man of the Smokies. Oakley was born on the slopes of the Smoky Mountains in 1885 and went on to become a master guide and a popular natural storyteller.
12:00pm-1:00pm	Tennessee Herpetology (Reptiles and Amphibians)	Chris Ogle, TWRA	North 1	Join a TWRA biologist to learn about Tennessee's diverse array of reptiles.
12:30pm-1:30pm	The Ten Essentials Everyone Should Carry	Joey Holt	North 3	The ten essentials every hiker should carry on them and the importance of each item.
KIDS 12:30pm-1:30pm	"Glitter Animals" (Ages 7 to 15 years old. A parent must be present with children under 12 years of age)	Karen and Jim Summerville	South 1	Participants will learn about precautions rehabbers take to prevent spread of common wildlife diseases (glitter). Each child will pretend to "rehab" a stuffed animal (cleaning, feeding, medicating) using what they have learned. Afterward we will talk about chances for spread of disease (glitter).
12:30pm - 1:30pm	Watch It Unfold: Time-lapse Build For You Tube and Instagram	Rick Smith	North 2	Making time-lapse images for Instagram and You Tube.
1:00pm-2:00pm	Pigeon Forge in the 1980's Discussion Panel	Butch Helton, Bill Bradley and Jackie Barnes	Greenbriar B	Big changes to the City of Pigeon Forge underwent in the 1980's that shaped and made the city more modern and more like it appears today.
1:30pm-2:30pm	Middle Tennessee Town and Country Scapes	Jack Carman	North 1	This is a powerpoint presentation of Middle Tennessee town and country scenes.
1:30pm-2:30pm	Predators Through Time	Jake Joyner, Bays Mountain Park	Greenbriar A	The white tailed deer has survived centuries of changes, but the predators around it have not. Take a journey through time to uncover the past and present hunters of Tennessee's most iconic prey animal.
1:30pm-3:00pm	Beginners Flower Vase Book Folding (Ages 10 years and up please. A parent/guardian must be present.)	Virginia Stout	South 3	Participants will be given instructions with a demonstration on folding pages of a hardback book into a vase shape. Then add flowers for a gorgeous display to take home.
2:00pm-3:00pm	Photography is Art	Chris Rohwer	North 2	Anytime Chris picks up his camera he thinks about how to photograph his subjects differently and how to make it a more artistic representation of what he sees. Sometimes it works, sometimes not. Come explore his images and see how he tries to create photographic art from capture to post processing.
2:30pm - 4:00pm	Smoky Mountain Storytellers Association Wrap-up Wilderness Wildlife Week 2026	Jim Eastin and Friends	Greenbriar B	There will be a variety of stories and tellers to end this fantastic week!



BEST OF
PIGEON FORGE
GOLD
2025



BROWSE TOURS



AWARD-WINNING, GUIDED ADVENTURE

Thick forests, roaring streams, fascinating stories and views that stretch the imagination.

Experience the Smokies like never before!

PINK JEEP TOURS 

Pinkjeep.com | (800) 873-3662 | 2611 Parkway, Pigeon Forge, TN



Louise Bales, Artist



Wilderness Wildlife Week 2026

OFFICIAL EVENT MERCH

Check out some of the great merchandise available for 2026!
In addition to the official event shirts, other quality merchandise for sale includes event hats, hiking sticks, books along with commemorative coins, lapel pins and medallions.





JOIN US FOR THE 35TH ANNUAL WILDERNESS WILDLIFE WEEK JANUARY 4 - 7, 2027

at LeConte Event Center in Pigeon Forge



**CHUCK WAGON COOKOFF
WEEKEND & COMPETITION
MARCH 6-8, 2026**



**A MOUNTAIN QUILTFEST
AT LECONTE EVENT CENTER
JUNE 8-11, 2026**



**250TH CELEBRATION OF AMERICA
PATRIOT FESTIVAL
JULY 3 & 4, 2026**



**PIGEON FORGE WINTERFEST CELEBRATION
NOVEMBER 13, 2026
WONDERS OF LIGHT CHRISTMAS VILLAGE
NOVEMBER 13-15, 20-28, 2026**

**Mark your calendar for upcoming City of Pigeon Forge Special Events!
Visit MyPigeonForge.com for event details.**



Warm up with breakfast to start your day!





VISITOR CENTER

MUSEUM | CAFE | GENERAL STORE



EXPLORE THOSE BEAUTIFUL BEAN BEGINNINGS

Head to the Bush's Visitor Center, located in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains in Chestnut Hill, Tennessee! Here, you can experience the Bush's story right in the place where it all began, with a completely renovated museum dedicated to our family, our company history and, of course, the humble little bean. You can also shop our general store and have lunch at our on-site cafe.

OPEN YEAR-ROUND | MONDAY-SATURDAY

Store/Museum: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Café Hours: April – December: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

January – March: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

(Check website for holiday closures)

Call 865-509-3077 or visit bushbeans.com/visitorcenter

3901 U.S. Highway 411, Dandridge, TN 37725

We're conveniently located off I-40 at exits 417 and 432



Call 865-509-3077 or visit bushbeans.com/visitorcenter



SCAN TO PLAN
YOUR VISIT