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SPRING WILD 2024 FLOWER PILGRIMAGE

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FEATURED ARTIST

PLANT JOURNAL MAKING AND BEING KIN WITH THE FLOWERS

In Becs' all day Plant Journal Making workshop on Friday, pilgrims will create their own journal and build new relationships with flowers. In the first half of the session, pilgrims will learn coptic or saddle stitch techniques while crafting their own personalized book. The second half of the class invites everyone to immerse themselves in nature while going on a group walk where the class will channel your newfound bookbinding skills to sketch vibrant flowers and compose heartfelt apologies to the flora, fostering a deep connection between art, craft, and nature. The class will include a short artist's talk about Bec's work.



BECS EPSTEIN



Becs' practice is anchored in the dynamics of human-plant relationships. Becs makes research-based ceramics, performance, painting, and installation. Exhibiting internationally, her work has been featured in diverse venues, including In/Form at Chicago's Links Hall, Legend Galleries in Philadelphia, Elbow Room Gallery in New York City, and Manifestos of Systematic Change in New Zealand. Holding a BFA in contextual practice/sculptural installation from Carnegie Mellon University and an MFA in studio art from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Becs has cultivated her artistic practice through diverse residencies, including Barim in South Korea, Stomping Ground in New York, and NARS Governors Island Satellite Residency in NYC.

EVENING SPEAKER

MYSTERIES UNVEILED: THE ENCHANTING WORLD OF MOSS MORPHOLOGY



JESSICA BUDKE

Dr. Jessica Budke is an Associate Professor at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Her research focuses on mosses and the study of conflicts over resources between parents and their offspring. She mentors early career scientists, including undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers, in her laboratory.

Dr. Budke is also the Director of the TENN Herbarium, which houses over 650,000 plant specimens. Budke integrates these herbarium specimens into her research by measuring features of mosses and extracting DNA to build phylogenetic trees, increasing our understanding of the relationships between species. Recently a student in her laboratory successfully extracted DNA from a specimen collected in the year 1842!

Currently, Dr. Budke is the President-Elect for the American Bryological and Lichenological Society, an organization open to all persons who are interested in mosses and lichens. Budke is a strong proponent of science communication and believes the united voices of professional and community scientists helps educate the public about botany and the importance of plant biodiversity for our world.

This lecture will focus on the important characteristics of moss morphology that will allow you to better understand terminology, structures, and life history aspects of this often-overlooked group of plants, shedding light on their unique characteristics and ecological significance. Mosses display a fascinating array of features that distinguish them from other plant groups. In this informal, chalk-on-board-style lecture Dr. Jessica Budke, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, will delve into their life cycle, emphasizing the dominance of the gametophyte generation and the critical role of spore dispersal in their reproductive strategy. It'll also cover the diverse structures of mosses, encompassing their leafy gametophytes, rhizoids for anchorage, and sporophytes with distinct capsules for spore production. Attention will be given to the adaptive advantages conferred by their small size, enabling colonization of diverse habitats, from forests to urban environments. By exploring moss morphology, this lecture will provide you with an understanding of these resilient organisms, fostering an appreciation for their evolutionary adaptations and ecological contributions.



EVENING SPEAKER

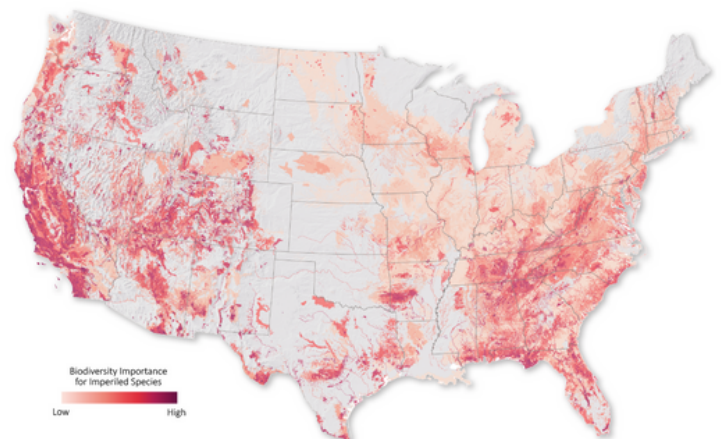
FORTUNE TELLERS OF THE FUTURE: HOW CONSERVATIONISTS ARE CHARTING THE FUTURE ONE MAP AT A TIME



SUNNY FLEMING

Sunny Fleming is Esri's Industry Lead for the domains of public sector environment, conservation, and natural resources. Throughout her career, she has applied "The Science of Where" to environmental policy, conservation, and natural resources; from monitoring rare plant species in the field to helping state parks manage their operations and illuminate their economic impacts. Her academic and professional career has found her chasing lemurs through the cloud forests of Madagascar, to hunting for rare plants extensively in the southeast...always with maps in hand! She holds a degree in Biology from UT Chattanooga and she now continues to pursue her passion for the environment by helping industry leaders streamline and improve their work with GIS technology, whether in the field or in the office, and whether setting policy or managing wildlife and resources. Born and raised in Nashville, TN, a child of the music industry, she now resides with her husband, botanist Chris Fleming, and two dogs Elsie and Odin in Asheville, NC.

Climate change is happening at increased velocity and with increasing severity. Characterized as the "6th Mass Extinction", against these massive challenges, how do conservationists keep up? Maps have long held our imaginations; from "Thar be dragons" to shaping our understanding of foundational scientific concepts such as biogeography, plate tectonics and more recently with visualizing the spread of a global pandemic in near real-time. Can geography captivate us once again to help us shape the future we want to see? Sunny Fleming is the Industry Lead for Environment and Conservation at Esri, the global leader in geographic information systems technology, or GIS. In this talk, she explores the ways in which conservationists are pushing the boundaries of GIS technology and revolutionizing how we approach and scale conservation efforts in these unprecedented times. Her message is one of hope as she examines how the conservation community are applying the science of geography to create "digital twins" of our fragile planet; facilitating greater understanding of the complex interactions of our social, economic and environmental systems to design a more resilient and sustainable future.



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Legend

-  **ADA Accessible**
-  **Easy Hikes**
-  **Transportation Provided**
- **Color Coded Titles: Birds, Fungi, Insects, Mammals, Plants, Reptiles & Amphibians, Other**

Wednesday All Day

1. Cades Cove Wetlands Caravan

Wednesday AM

2. Birding and Wildflowers on School House Gap Trail

3. Birding from Sugarlands to Newfound Gap

4. Birding on Low Gap Trail

5. Fungi and their Funky Forest Friends found in the Cosby Picnic Area

6. Lichen Hikin' on the Spruce-Fir Nature Trail

7. Insects: Aquatic Insect Diversity Walk at Twin Creeks

8. Black Bear and Wild Hogs in the Smokies - Jakes Creek

9. Geology: Tremont Faults and Falls

10. Elkmont, Then and Now

11. Skills of a Naturalist: Observing Nature

12. NEON: Learn about how our National Science Foundation is monitoring long-term climate change in the GSMNP using NEON!

13. Photography Workshop for Beginners

14. Ferns at Greenbrier Cove

15. Moss & Fern Walk: Sugarlands Valley Nature Trail

16. Tree and Shrub Identification Walk at Metcalf Bottoms

17. Trees and Shrubs at Cucumber Gap

18. Trees and Shrubs of High Elevation, an iNaturalist expedition at Indian Gap Trail

19. Understanding Flowers: Structures, Form, Function

20. Wildflower Hike at Cove Hardwood Nature Trail (Chimneys Picnic Area loop trail)

21. Wildflower Hike at Huskey Gap Trail - Short Version

22. Wildflower Hike at Kanati Fork Trail

23. Wildflower Hike at Kephart Prong Trail

24. Wildflower Hike at Little River Above Elkmont

25. Wildflower Hike on the Riverview Quiet Walkway

26. Wildflowers: Lady Slippers at Bud Ogle

Wednesday PM

27. Fungi and their Funky Forest Friends found in the Cosby Picnic Area

28. Lichens of the High-Elevation Smokies

29. Salamanders of the Smokies: Motorcade from Peaks to Seeps

30. Black Bear and Wild Hogs in the Smokies - Jakes Creek

31. Explore the Wonders of Animal Communication at the UT Field Station

32. Geology: Karst and Bull Cave

33. History, Wildflowers, and Culture of Noah Bud Ogle

34. Advanced iNaturalist for Pilgrims

35. Nature Journaling at Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area

36. NEON: Learn about how our National Science Foundation is monitoring long-term climate change in the GSMNP using NEON!

37. Ferns at the Cosby Nature Trail

38. Moss Walk: Appalachian Trail from Indian Gap to Newfound Gap

39. Tree Identification for Beginners at Greenbrier Picnic Pavilion

40. Understanding Leaves of Trees, Shrubs, and Lianas: Structures, Form, Function



41. Nature Explorers: Kids' Educational Wildflower Walk



42. Understanding Flowers: Structures, Form, Function

43. Wildflower Hike at Chestnut Top Trail

44. Wildflower Hike at Cucumber Gap Trail - Short Version

45. Wildflower Hike at Kanati Fork Trail

46. Wildflower Hike at Kephart Prong Trail



47. Wildflower Hike at Little River Above Elkmont

48. Wildflower Hike at Ramsey Cascades Trail - Short version

49. Wildflowers: Lady Slippers at Bud Ogle

Wednesday Evening



50. Owl Prowl at Mynatt Park

51. Lichens at Night in the Smokies



52. Bugs at Light at Ash Hopper Branch

Thursday All Day

53. Birding: A Musical Walk Through Old Settlers Trail

54. Sugar Magnolia Warblers and Scarlet Bignonias

55. Cades Cove Wetlands Caravan

56. Rambling with Wildflowers, Mushrooms, and Lichens on the Big Creek Trail



57. Wildflower Hike at Huskey Gap Trail - Long Version



58. Bird Banding Basics at the Premier Seven Islands State Birding Park

59. Birding and Wildflowers on School House Gap Trail



60. Birding from Sugarlands to the Cove Hardwood Nature Trail

61. Salamanders: Streams, Springs, and Leaves... What Hides Beneath?



62. Black Bear and Wild Hogs in the Smokies - Jakes Creek



63. Life in the Leaf Litter: A Tour of the Seldom-Seen Animal Diversity at Our Feet

64. Oil Painting Wildflowers from Photographs



65. Tour the GSMNP Natural History Museum at Twin Creeks

66. NEON: Learn about how our National Science Foundation is monitoring long-term climate change in the GSMNP using NEON!



67. Photography of Flowers Using iPhone

68. Ferns at Baxter Creek Trail, along Big Creek

69. Moss Walk: Engine Creek Trail (formerly Injun Creek) in Greenbrier

70. Tree and Shrub Identification Walk at Metcalf Bottoms

71. Trees and Shrubs of High Elevation at Indian Gap Trail

72. Trees and Shrubs of High Elevation at Sugarland Mountain Trail

73. Secret Stories of The Wildflowers along Porters Creek Trail

74. Wildflower Hike along Meigs Creek Trail.

75. Wildflower Hike at Cove Hardwood Nature Trail (Chimneys Picnic Area loop trail)

76. Wildflower Hike at Cucumber Gap Trail - Short Version

77. Wildflower Hike at Kanati Fork Trail

78. Wildflower Hike at Ramsey Cascades Trail - Short version



79. Wildflower Hike on the Riverview Quiet Walkway

80. Wildflowers: Lady Slippers at Bud Ogle

Thursday PM



81. Fungi and their Funky Forest Friends found in the Cosby Picnic Area

82. Lichens along a High-Elevation Ridge

83. Salamanders: Streams, Springs, and Leaves... What Hides Beneath?

84. Wild about Ants! Discovering Ants of the Smokies



85. Insects: Aquatic Insect Diversity Walk at Twin Creeks



86. Black Bear and Wild Hogs in the Smokies - Jakes Creek



87. Explore the Wonders of Animal Communication at the UT Field Station



88. Oil Painting Wildflowers from Photographs

89. Geology: Deep Time at Big Creek



90. Elkmont, Then and Now



91. Native People's Use of Nature's Garden at Collins Creek Pavilion

92. Exotic Plants on the Gatlinburg Trail

93. NEON: Learn about how our National Science Foundation is monitoring long-term climate change in the GSMNP using NEON!



94. Parasites! An Important Component of Our Hidden Biodiversity



95. Photography Workshop



96. Sketching Wildflowers at Twin Creeks Pavilion

97. Ferns at Little River above Elkmont

98. Moss Walk: Basics of Mosses and their Relatives at Chimneys Picnic Area



99. Moss Walk: Sugarlands Valley Nature Trail

100. Tree Identification for Beginners at Greenbrier Picnic Pavilion

101. Trees and Shrubs of High Elevation at Indian Gap Trail

102. Trees and Shrubs of High Elevation at Sugarland Mountain Trail

103. Nature Explorers: Kids' Educational Wildflower Walk

104. Wildflower Hike at Chestnut Top Trail

105. Wildflower Hike at Kanati Fork Trail

106. Wildflower Hike at Porters Creek Trail

107. Wildflower Hike at Ramsey Cascades Trail - Short version



108. Wildflower Hike on the Riverview Quiet Walkway



109. Owl Prowl at Mynatt Park



110. Bugs at Light at Ash Hopper Branch

111. Bats: Stirring the Cauldron at the Twin Creeks Area

111.5 Artist-of-the-Year Reception at Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts for Bees Epstein (Open to all Pilgrims)

112. Mysteries Unveiled: The Enchanting World of Moss Morphology

Friday All Day












113. Plant Journal Making & Being Kin with the Flowers

Friday AM

114. Birding at the Townsend Wye - Chestnut Tops Trail

115. Birding on Bullhead Trail












116. Birding the East End of Cades Cove

-  **117. Edible Mushrooms at Chimneys Picnic Area**
-  **118. Wildflower & Fungi Hike at Huskey Gap Trail - Short Version**
-  **119. Kids Salamander Hike**
- 120. Salamanders: Streams, Springs, and Leaves... What Hides Beneath?**
-  **121. Pollinators and Plants: Lessons in Pollination Biology**
- 122. Wild about Ants! Discovering Ants of the Smokies**
-  **123. Black Bear and Wild Hogs in the Smokies - Jakes Creek**
-  **124. Life in the Leaf Litter: A Tour of the Seldom-Seen Animal Diversity at Our Feet**
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- 125. Fungi, Lichen, and Wildflower Hike at Ramsey Cascades Trail**
-  **126. Elkmont, Then and Now**
-  **127. Tour the GSMNP Natural History Museum at Twin Creeks**
-  **128. Advanced iNaturalist for Pilgrims**
-  **129. Photography of Flowers with Mirrorless or SLR Cameras: Advanced Workshop**
- 130. Secret Stories of The Wildflowers Along Meigs Creek Trail.**
- 131. Ferns at Baxter Creek Trail, along Big Creek**
- 132. Ferns at Little River above Elkmont**
- 133. Moss Walk: Engine Creek Trail (formerly Injun Creek) in Greenbrier**
- 134. Trees and Shrubs at Cucumber Gap**
- 135. Trees and Shrubs of High Elevation at Indian Gap Trail**
- 136. Trees and Shrubs of High Elevation at Sugarland Mountain Trail**
- 137. Wildflower and Cascade Walk Along Middle Prong Trail**
- 138. Wildflower Hike at Cove Hardwood Nature Trail (Chimneys Picnic Area loop trail)**
- 139. Wildflower Hike at Gabes Mountain Trail**

140. Wildflower Hike at Old Settlers Trail

141. Wildflower Hike at Snake Den Ridge Trail

Friday PM

-  **142. Edible Mushrooms at Chimneys Picnic Area**
-  **143. Fungi and their Funky Forest Friends found in the Cosby Picnic Area**
- 144. Salamanders: Streams, Springs, and Leaves... What Hides Beneath?**
- 145. Butterflies in Cades Cove**
- 146. Geology: Karst and Bull Cave**
- 147. Tips and Tricks for Long Distance Hiking**
-  **148. Elkmont, Then and Now**
-  **149. History, Wildflowers, and Culture of Big Greenbrier**
- 150. Exotic Plants on the Gatlinburg Trail**
-  **151. Nature Journaling at Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area**
-  **152. Fun with Names: Botanical Latin for Beginners**
-  **153. Parasites! An Important Component of Our Hidden Biodiversity**
- 
-  **154. Sketching Wildflowers at Twin Creeks Pavilion**
- 155. Ferns at Baxter Creek Trail, along Big Creek**
- 156. Moss Walk: Engine Creek Trail (formerly Injun Creek) in Greenbrier**
-  **157. Tree Identification for Beginners at Collins Creek Picnic Pavilion**
- 158. Trees and Shrubs at Cucumber Gap**
- 159. Trees and Shrubs of High Elevation at Sugarland Mountain Trail**
-  **160. Nature Explorers: Kids' Educational Wildflower Walk**
- 161. The Incredible Plant Biodiversity of Porters Creek**
- 162. Wildflower Hike at Chestnut Top Trail**



163. Wildflower Hike at Huskey Gap Trail - Short Version

164. Wildflower Hike at Kephart Prong Trail

165. Wildflower Hike at Old Settlers Trail

166. Wildflower Hike on the Appalachian Trail from Newfound Gap to Indian Gap

Friday Evening

167. Bats: Stirring the Cauldron at the Twin Creeks Area



168. Fortune Tellers of the Future: How Conservationists Are Charting the Future One Map at a Time

Saturday All Day



169. Photography of Flowers Motorcade



170. Tree Hike to See the Giants at Albright Grove



171. Wildflowers, Plant Communities, Fungi, and Lunch at LeConte with Botanical Amigos

Saturday AM

172. Birding and Wildflowers on School House Gap Trail

173. Birding at the Townsend Wye - Chestnut Tops Trail

174. Birding on Low Gap Trail

175. Fungi of Thunderhead Prong Quiet Walkway

176. Salamanders: Streams, Springs, and Leaves... What Hides Beneath?



177. Pollinators and Plants: Lessons in Pollination Biology



178. Life in the Leaf Litter: A Tour of the Seldom-Seen Animal Diversity at Our Feet



179. Advanced iNaturalist for Pilgrims

180. A Pilgrimage to the Hidden Avent Cabin for Wildflower Tea



181. Moss & Fern Walk: Sugarlands Valley Nature Trail

182. Tree and Shrub Identification Walk at Metcalf Bottoms

183. Tree Identification for Beginners at Greenbrier Picnic Pavilion

184. Trees and Shrubs at Cucumber Gap

185. Trees and Shrubs of High Elevation at Sugarland Mountain Trail

186. Wildflower Hike at Cove Hardwood Nature Trail (Chimneys Picnic Area loop trail)

187. Wildflower Hike at Kanati Fork Trail

188. Wildflower Hike at Kephart Prong Trail

189. Wildflower Hike at Porters Creek Trail

190. Wildflower Hike at Rainbow Falls

191. Wildflower Hike at Ramsey Cascades Trail - Short version



192. Wildflower Hike on the Old Sugarlands Trail

Saturday PM

193. Fungi of Thunderhead Prong Quiet Walkway

194. In Search of the Rarest Lichen of All



195. Salamanders of the Smokies: Motorcade from Peaks to Seeps



196. Pollinators and Plants: Lessons in Pollination Biology

197. Exotic Plants on the Gatlinburg Trail



198. Sketching Wildflowers at Collins Creek Pavilion



199. Ferns at Greenbrier Cove



200. Moss Walk: Sugarlands Valley Nature Trail

201. Trees and Shrubs of High Elevation at Indian Gap Trail

202. Trees and Wildflowers of Metcalf Bottoms

203. Wildflower Hike at Chestnut Top Trail

204. Wildflower Hike at Cucumber Gap Trail - Short Version

205. Wildflower Hike at Kanati Fork Trail

206. Wildflower Hike at Kephart Prong Trail

207. Wildflower Hike at Porters Creek Trail

208. Wildflower Hike at Rainbow Falls

209. Wildflower Hike at Ramsey Cascades Trail - Short version

Saturday Evening



210. Stargazing

1. Cades Cove Wetlands Caravan

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 4:00:00 PM
Trail: Cades Cove Loop Road
Meeting-Location: D - Cades Cove Campground Store.

Join park ecologists Troy Evans and Jonathan Cox to visit various wetland locations around Cades Cove Loop Rd. We will drive to multiple sites, then hike into wetlands to discuss plant species, amphibians, and wetland ecology in general. Be prepared for carpooling through cove traffic, and then hiking on short-offtrail hikes through sometimes dense vegetation. We will be visiting a variety of wetlands, including Sweet gum swamps, rush marshlands, and alluvial floodplain forests. While this trip does not involve any long hikes, it does include multiple short hikes over uneven, vegetated terrain and is considered moderate difficulty.

Logistics: Meet your group in the store's parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 50 min [Click here for Map.](#)

2. Birding and Wildflowers on School House Gap Trail

Time: 7:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: School House Gap Trail
Meeting-Location: AD - Townsend Wye "Y" on Little River Road.

The School House Gap Trail follows a beautiful stream lined with rhododendron, and ultimately enters into an upland deciduous habitat with scattered pines containing a variety of colorful spring warblers, vireos, and tanagers. Bring binoculars, water, rain gear, and comfortable walking shoes.

Logistics: Meet in the Townsend Wye Parking area. Leaders will organize a carpool to travel from Townsend Wye to School House Gap Trailhead. Fit as many people into as few cars as possible. Drive 3.9 miles towards Cades Cove on Laurel Creek Rd to School House Gap Trailhead. There is limited parking there. **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

3. Birding from Sugarlands to Newfound Gap

Time: 7:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Sugarlands to Newfound Gap (Hybrid)
Meeting-Location: G - City Parking Lot on Reagan Drive By Gatlinburg Fire Station.

Join expert birders to search for spring migrants and Appalachian residents. These walks will begin at Sugarlands, a low elevation area, then you will carpool to Newfound Gap, a high elevation area, where the program will end. Bring binoculars and rain gear. Short, easy walks.

Logistics: Meet your group at the parking lot, and carpool in as few cars as possible to Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 10 min [Click here for Map.](#)



4. Birding on Low Gap Trail

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Low Gap Trail
Meeting-Location: J - Cosby Picnic Area off TN Route 32 (parking area on left).

Join expert birders for a hike on the Low Gap Trail. Bring binoculars and rain gear. Easy 2-3 mile walk.

Logistics: Meet your group in the parking lot, and then head out on the Low Gap Trail. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)

5. Fungi and their Funky Forest Friends found in the Cosby Picnic Area

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Cosby Picnic Area/Pavilion, Trails TBD
Meeting-Location: J - Cosby Picnic Area off TN Route 32 (parking area on left).

Fungi are essential organisms in the forest. You will start this program by learning about what fungi are and what they are not. You will get to study, smell, and touch a display of different fungal types, including mushrooms, puffballs, cup fungi, conks, and lichens. After the fun fungal lesson, you will head out on a hike to explore the forest and look for evidence of the fungal friends and foes. Bring a hand lens if you have one. Easy 2-3 mile walk.

Logistics: Meet your group at the picnic area/pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)



- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

6. Lichen Hikin' on the Spruce-Fir Nature Trail

Time: 8:45:00 AM to 11:45:00 AM
Trail: Spruce-Fir Nature Trail
Meeting-Location: AA - Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road.

Join lichen expert Jason Hollinger on an exploration of a fascinating group of organisms that are estimated to cover up to 8% of the earth's surface. Learn the basics of lichen identification, anatomy, morphology, reproduction, and their importance on the landscape. Bring warm clothing, rain gear, and comfortable footwear. A 10x hand lens is highly recommended. This is a short, easy hike on relatively level ground.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at Rockefeller Memorial. Because of limited parking at the trailhead, consolidate into a maximum of 5 cars and then carpool to the site. From Rockefeller Memorial drive southwest 2.75 miles along Clingmans Dome Road. The pull-off for the Spruce-Fir Nature Trail will be on the left (35.59568, -83.45873). **Transportation:** None provided. Car shuttle needed. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

7. Insects: Aquatic Insect Diversity Walk at Twin Creeks

Time: 9:30:00 AM to 11:45:00 AM
Trail: Twin Creeks Pavilion, Twin Creeks Stream
Meeting-Location: AF - Twin Creeks (off Cherokee Orchard Road).

Learn to identify and collect insects in pristine streams with entomologists (scientists who study insects). During this program, you will take short walks on multiple streams in order to learn about the differences in the preferred habitats of a variety of insects. Short, easy walk.

Logistics: Meet your group in the gravel parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)



8. Black Bear and Wild Hogs in the Smokies - Jakes Creek

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Jakes Creek Trail
Meeting-Location: R - Jakes Creek Trailhead past Elkmont Campground.

Walk along this old railroad route with retired Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency Managers and expert biologists as they describe the life history, tracking signs, human impacts, and environmental issues of black bears, wild hogs, and other mammals in the Southern Appalachians. An easy 2-3 mile walk.

Logistics: Park at the Jakes Creek Trailhead parking area that is 0.1 miles past the Little River Trailhead parking area. Meet your group at the Jakes Creek Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)



9. Geology: Tremont Faults and Falls

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 11:00:00 AM
Trail: Middle Prong Trail
Meeting-Location: AE - Tremont Road (parking lot at end of gravel road).

Take a walk up the Middle Prong Trail to explore a particularly vexing area of the Smokies geology. We will talk about faulting in this area where the Gatlinburg Fault is broken up and the Greenbrier Fault begins. We will tie it all in to how the Smokies were built and how they fit in with the study of mountain building and view a lovely waterfall or two along the way. Approx. 3 miles of easy walking.

Logistics: From the Townsend Wye, take Laurel Creek Rd to Tremont Rd, continuing after it turns to gravel until it terminates at the Middle Prong Trail Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 55 min [Click here for Map.](#)

10. Elkmont, Then and Now

Time: 9:30:00 AM to 11:45:00 AM
Trail: Elkmont Campground Area
Meeting-Location: AZ - Elkmont Campground (field behind Elkmont Campground Office).

Join Interpretive Park Ranger and historian Brad Free on a tour of the human history of Elkmont. Learn about Elkmont's interesting history and politics while touring the old vacation homes and other buildings at Elkmont, some of which only foundations remain. See the amazing restoration efforts of some of these homes that have taken place over the last few years. Be sure to ask Brad about the plane crash!

Logistics: Park within the Elkmont Campground. Meet your group in the grass field behind the Elkmont Campground Office. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)



- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

11. Skills of a Naturalist: Observing Nature

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 11:00:00 AM
Trail: Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area (North)
Meeting-Location: AU - Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area off Little River Road (North Parking Lot).

Nature is a remarkable teacher, and the GSMNP has been called a great outdoor classroom. Naturalists tap into their knowledge with observational methods of study. Through patience, awareness, and the five senses, you can discover a great deal about the natural world. Valuable tips and simple tools explored in this program will help cultivate and sharpen the skills needed to derive the greatest benefit from time spent outdoors and begin your journey as an amateur naturalist. Bring a small notebook or journal and writing implement of choice.

Logistics: Park at the north parking lot at Metcalf Bottoms, and meet your group at the picnic area. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

12. NEON: Learn about how our National Science Foundation is monitoring long-term climate change in the GSMNP using NEON!

Time: 9:00:00 AM to 11:00:00 AM
Trail: Twin Creeks Pavilion
Meeting-Location: AF - Twin Creeks (off Cherokee Orchard Road).

Learn about the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) Program and what kind of data collection NEON performs around the GSMNP. There will be a tour of the NEON Tower and Aquatic sensors, and a demonstration of sampling techniques used for measuring flora and fauna data. In this program, you'll walk about 600 yards in total, some of it off trail.

Logistics: Meet at the Twin Creeks Pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

13. Photography Workshop for Beginners

Time: 8:15:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Sugarlands Training Room
Meeting-Location: AB - Sugarlands Visitor Center Training Room.

Learn how to improve your wildflower images with mirrorless and SLR cameras. Robert Hutson, co-author of Great Smoky Mountain Wildflowers: When and Where to Find Them, and Jack Carman, author of Wildflowers of Tennessee, will give a short visual presentation and then migrate outside for hands-on instruction in composition and photo technique. Bring hiking boots, a mirrorless or SLR camera, and a tripod. An easy 1-mile walk.

Logistics: Park in the third lot on the right. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 5 min [Click here for Map.](#)



14. Ferns at Greenbrier Cove

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Greenbrier Cove
Meeting-Location: M - Greenbrier Road Ranger Station.

Come join expert pteridologists (people who study ferns) on this walk to learn about fern species in the Park. You will learn about the parts, life cycle, and ecology of ferns, as well as how to distinguish different forms. Bring a hand lens if you have one. An easy 2-mile walk.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, drive 1 mile, and park and meet your group at the Greenbrier Road Ranger Station (35.729633° -83.406016°). You will then head out onto Engine Creek Trail (formerly Injun Creek) from the Ranger Station.

Transportation: None provided. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)



15. Moss & Fern Walk: Sugarlands Valley Nature Trail

Time: 9:00:00 AM to 11:45:00 AM
Trail: Sugarland Valley Nature Trail
Meeting-Location: AQ - Sugarland Valley Nature Trail

Learn about the diminutive world of mosses and their ferny friends: diverse groups of beautiful and unique non-flowering plants that are found throughout the Smokies. You will learn about a variety of ferns, mosses, liverworts, and hornworts as you observe them along the trail, rock fences, and remnant chimneys. You will also discuss their life cycle and basic ways to distinguish them from one another. Bring a 10x hand lens or a strong magnifying glass, if possible. This wheelchair accessible program runs along the flat concrete 0.5 mile Sugarland Valley Nature Trail, next to the Bullhead Branch creek.

Logistics: Meet your group in the parking area. NOTE: the parking area for Sugarland Valley Nature Trail IS NOT at the Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 5 min [Click here for Map.](#)



- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided**
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

16. Tree and Shrub Identification Walk at Metcalf Bottoms

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:45:00 AM
Trail: Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area (South), Metcalf Bottoms Trail
Meeting-Location: U - Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area off Little River Road (South Parking Area).

This program is more than an introduction to terms. You will learn characters used in the identification of woody plants (trees, shrubs, and woody vines). You will also learn how to differentiate leaf and bark characteristics, which will help you to distinguish between genera and species of common and lesser common woody plants in the Park. Bring field guides and hand lenses if you have them, but they are not required. A moderate 2-mile walk.

Logistics: Park at the south parking lot at Metcalf Bottoms, and meet your group at the picnic area. Then, head out onto Metcalf Bottoms Trail. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

17. Trees and Shrubs at Cucumber Gap

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 11:00:00 AM
Trail: Cucumber Gap Trail
Meeting-Location: R - Jakes Creek Trailhead past Elkmont Campground.

This hike begins in a large grove of second growth tulip poplar trees. After the first mile, you will start to notice a change in tree species composition. Make sure to find the Fraser magnolias at the top of the gap. This trip begins at Jakes Creek, following the old railroad route, and ends near Tulip Branch on Cucumber Gap Trail, and then returns. A moderate 2-3 mile hike. Elevation gain: 500'.

Logistics: Park at the Jakes Creek Trailhead parking area that is 0.1 miles past the Little River Trailhead parking area. Meet your group at the Jakes Creek Trailhead. After walking 0.7 miles on Jakes Creek Trail with your group, you will turn left onto Cucumber Gap Trail. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

18. Trees and Shrubs of High Elevation, an iNaturalist expedition at Indian Gap Trail

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 11:45:00 AM
Trail: Appalachian Trail, Indian Gap, Newfound Gap
Meeting-Location: AA - Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road.

Learn to ID trees and shrubs with John Shelton-Sarabia, a botanist for the TVA! Then post all of the cool trees and shrubs you find on the iNaturalist App with the iNat expert Janet Wright. On this journey you will pass from the closed canopy of an old growth spruce-fir forest into the open canopy of a pristine beech gap forest. Notice the giant dead Fraser firs, which have succumbed to the spread of the invasive balsam woolly adelgid. A 1.5-mile moderate walk. Elevation gain: 500'.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at Rockefeller Memorial. Before beginning this hike, some group members need to shuttle their cars to the end point of the hike at the Road Prong Trail parking area while others wait at the Rockefeller Memorial. Leave as many cars at the Road Prong parking area as will be necessary to shuttle everyone back to Rockefeller Memorial after the hike. From Rockefeller Memorial drive southwest 1.5 miles along the Clingmans Dome Road. The Road Prong parking area will be on the right (35.60937, -83.44654). Leave cars there and return to Rockefeller Memorial to begin your hike. After your hike, shuttle everyone back to Rockefeller Memorial. **Transportation:** None provided. Car shuttle needed. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

19. Understanding Flowers: Structures, Form, Function

Time: 9:30:00 AM to 11:45:00 AM
Trail: Chimneys Picnic Area/Outdoor Classroom, Ash Hopper Branch
Meeting-Location: F - Chimneys Picnic Area on Newfound Gap Road.

Understanding the parts of flowers and how to interpret flower structures is key to having a great Wildflower Pilgrimage! Come to this program early in the week for a lecture-style presentation that will allow you to better interpret flower structures. Then, go for a short walk to reinforce your new knowledge by studying flowers in the field. This program will sharpen your eye for the rest of the event, especially if you are a beginner.

Logistics: Park in the Chimneys Picnic Area parking lot, and meet your group at the outdoor classroom. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 10 min [Click here for Map.](#)



- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

20. Wildflower Hike at Cove Hardwood Nature Trail (Chimneys Picnic Area loop trail)

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 11:00:00 AM
Trail: Cove Hardwood Nature Trail
Meeting-Location: F - Chimneys Picnic Area on Newfound Gap Road.

Cove hardwood forests are one of the most biologically diverse communities in North America. This easily accessible trail is a great place to see a lot of different wildflowers as well as trees, shrubs, and vines. There are more species of wildflowers along this short, easy walk than just about any other place in the Park, making it a must for those wanting to learn about spring wildflowers like fringed phacelia, several trillium species, golden saxifrage (can you spot this tiny little plant?), wild ginger, and more. Short walk with elevation gain.

Logistics: Park in the Chimneys Picnic Area parking lot, and meet your group at the Cove Hardwood Nature Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 10 min [Click here for Map.](#)

21. Wildflower Hike at Huskey Gap Trail - Short Version

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Huskey Gap Trail
Meeting-Location: AC - Sugarlands Visitor Center.



The Huskey Gap Trail is one of the few trails that was chosen for the first SWFP in 1951, and this botanically rich trail continues to be a must-see after 72 years! Walk the old trail that connected settlers of Sugarlands Valley to Little River while passing old homesites and viewing the wildflower displays of crested dwarf iris, trillium, wild ginger, and bloodroot. A moderate 2-mile walk. Elevation gain: 500'.

Logistics: Meet your group in the bus parking lot, and take provided transportation to the Huskey Gap Trailhead. The bus will travel two miles south from Sugarlands Visitor Center on Newfound Gap Rd. The Huskey Gap Trailhead is directly across from the Riverview Quiet Walkway Trailhead. The bus will pick you up between 11:30am and 11:45am from the Huskey Gap Trailhead to return you to Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** Van shuttle provided: 5 min. **Drive Time:** [Click here for Map.](#)

22. Wildflower Hike at Kanati Fork Trail

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:45:00 AM
Trail: Kanati Fork Trail
Meeting-Location: AA - Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road.

The Kanati Fork Trail has many spring ephemeral wildflowers including painted trillium, Clinton lily, foam flower, Indian cucumber root, brook lettuce, and Canada mayflower as well as a lot of the more common species in the Park. Turn around when the group is ready. A moderate 2 mile walk.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at Rockefeller Memorial. There is limited parking at the Kanati Fork Trailhead, so carpool in as few cars as possible with your group from Rockefeller Memorial to the Kanati Fork Trailhead. From Rockefeller Memorial, drive 8.4 miles east along Newfound Gap Road, and parking at the Kanati Fork Trailhead will be on the left (35.58790, -83.36387). **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

23. Wildflower Hike at Kephart Prong Trail

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:45:00 AM
Trail: Kephart Prong Trail
Meeting-Location: T - Kephart Prong Trailhead

Hiking among history, water, and wildflowers, this trail will follow the Kephart Prong past the remains of a Civilian Conservation Corps camp, a former fish hatchery, and an old narrow gauge railroad. All of these historic remains have wildflowers such as wood betony and rue-anemone growing in and around them. Hike up to the Kephart Prong Shelter before turning around. An easy 4 mile walk.

Logistics: Park in the Kephart Prong parking lot and meet your group at the trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

24. Wildflower Hike at Little River Above Elkmont

Time: 8:45:00 AM to 11:45:00 AM
Trail: Little River Trail
Meeting-Location: S - Little River Trailhead past Elkmont Campground.



While walking up this former logging railroad bed, you will discover the tenacity of nature in recovering from the massive logging operations that cleared this valley in the early twentieth century. Many species of wildflowers, ferns, and trees dot the landscape and are easily observable. An easy 2-mile walk. Elevation gain: 200'.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at the parking area at the Little River Trailhead. The parking area and trailhead are just past the Little River Bridge. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided**
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

25. Wildflower Hike on the Riverview Quiet Walkway

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Riverview Quiet Walkway

Meeting-Location: AC - Sugarlands Visitor Center.



This easy walk from Newfound Gap Road to West Prong Little Pigeon River has a rich diversity of wildflowers, trees and shrubs, and plant communities. The trail follows the level flood plain of the river through groves of hardwoods and passes some seepages. This walk is one of the only places in the Park to see silky willow. An easy 2-mile walk.

Logistics: Meet your group in the bus parking lot at Sugarlands Visitor Center and take provided transportation to the Riverview Quiet Walkway. The bus will travel two miles south from Sugarlands Visitor Center on Newfound Gap Rd. The Riverview Quiet Walkway is past the Bullhead View Quiet Walkway and directly across from Huskey Gap Trail. After hiking the loop trail, the bus will pick you up at the Riverview Quiet Walkway Trailhead between 11:30am and 11:45am and return you to Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** Van shuttle provided: 5 min. **Drive Time:** [Click here for Map.](#)

26. Wildflowers: Lady Slippers at Bud Ogle

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:45:00 AM

Trail: Noah Bud Ogle Trail

Meeting-Location: X - Noah "Bud Ogle" parking area on Cherokee Orchard Road.

Walking through former homesteads, you will see a splendid variety of wildflowers and American chestnut tree remnants in the reforested fields. Pink Lady's slippers are found along this trail in abundance and are sure to delight seekers of these beautiful plants! Leaders will discuss the differences between Lady Slipper species (other than their color), as well as their life histories and pollination syndromes. Short, easy walk with one creek crossing at the beginning (caution: the rocks here are often very slippery).

Logistics: Meet your group in the parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

27. Fungi and their Funky Forest Friends found in the Cosby Picnic Area

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Cosby Picnic Area/Pavilion, Trails TBD

Meeting-Location: J - Cosby Picnic Area off TN Route 32 (parking area on left).



Fungi are essential organisms in the forest. You will start this program by learning about what fungi are and what they are not. You will get to study, smell, and touch a display of different fungal types, including mushrooms, puffballs, cup fungi, conks, and lichens. After the fun fungal lesson, you will head out on a hike to explore the forest and look for evidence of the fungal friends and foes. Bring a hand lens if you have one. Easy 2-3 mile walk.

Logistics: Meet your group at the picnic area/pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)

28. Lichens of the High-Elevation Smokies

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Appalachian Trail, Sugarland Mountain Trail to Mt. Collins

Meeting-Location: AA - Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road.

There are currently over 1,000 known lichen species in GSMNP, and globally, lichens are estimated to cover as much as 8% of the earth's surface. Join lichen expert Jason Hollinger on a 1.5- mile hike along the Appalachian Trail to explore the noteworthy lichen diversity in high-elevation spruce-fir and hardwood communities. Learn the basics of lichen identification, anatomy, morphology, reproduction, and their importance on the landscape. Bring warm clothing, rain gear, and comfortable footwear. A 10x hand lens is highly recommended. This is a moderate walk with a maximum elevation gain of 500 ft.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at Rockefeller Memorial. Because of the potential for limited parking at Collins Gap, participants will consolidate into as few vehicles as comfortably possible. From Rockefeller Memorial drive southwest approximately 5 miles along the Clingmans Dome Road. The Collins Gap parking area will be on the left (35.57794, -83.47990). After your hike, caravan back to Rockefeller Memorial. **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

29. Salamanders of the Smokies: Motorcade from Peaks to Seeps

Time: 1:15:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Chimneys Picnic Area/Outdoor Classroom, Ash Hopper Branch

Meeting-Location: G - City Parking Lot on Reagan Drive By Gatlinburg Fire Station.



In this program, you will travel from high to low elevation in search of Tennessee's slimy jewels. These hikes are short, but time will fly while discovering the true diversity of salamanders on this motorcade through the Smokies. Learn why Tennessee is the salamander capital of the world! The first stop will be at the Chimneys Picnic Area to see high elevation salamander communities and the Smoky's only endemic amphibian species. The program will conclude at the Sugarlands Visitor Center (Ash Hopper Branch) to see a vastly different community of mid to low elevation salamanders. Every amphibian-based hike will begin and end with decontamination, and a short discussion of survey protocols/ethics in order to protect these species from the spread of dangerous pathogens. Be prepared for wet or muddy conditions.

Logistics: Meet your group at the parking lot. Fit as many people into as few cars as possible for this motorcade adventure. Fewer cars helps with traffic and parking. **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 10 min [Click here for Map.](#)

30. Black Bear and Wild Hogs in the Smokies - Jakes Creek

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Jakes Creek Trail
Meeting-Location: R - Jakes Creek Trailhead past Elkmont Campground.



Walk along this old railroad route with retired Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency Managers and expert biologists as they describe the life history, tracking signs, human impacts, and environmental issues of black bears, wild hogs, and other mammals in the Southern Appalachians. An easy 2-3 mile walk.

Logistics: Park at the Jakes Creek Trailhead parking area that is 0.1 miles past the Little River Trailhead parking area. Meet your group at the Jakes Creek Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

31. Explore the Wonders of Animal Communication at the UT Field Station

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 3:30:00 PM

Trail: UT Field Station
Meeting-Location: AC - Sugarlands Visitor Center.



Why do birds sing? Did you know that some fireflies lie to each other? Do bees do the tango or fox trot when they are excited? Loren Hayes and Monica Miles will lead a discussion, game, and walk focused on why and how animals communicate in the GSMNP. Bring your dancing shoes (hiking boots).

Logistics: Meet your group in the bus parking lot, and take provided transportation to the UT Field Station at Greenbrier. The bus will drop you off at the entry gate, and you will walk up to the Field Station with your group. The bus will pick you up between 3:30pm and 3:45pm from the entry gate at the Field Station and return you to Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** Van shuttle provided: 30 min. **Drive Time:** [Click here for Map.](#)

32. Geology: Karst and Bull Cave

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Ace Gap Trail
Meeting-Location: AL - Ace Gap Trailhead

Tennessee has over 10,000 caves – the most of any state, and the Smokies has the deepest one of them all! We will take a short walk to the cave entrance (but not enter the cave) and adjacent active sinkholes. We will discuss the very unique nature of this mountaintop karst feature and how it relates to nearby Cades and Tuckaleechee coves and Whiteoak Sink and learn how it all fits in with the geologic history of the Park. About 1/2 mile of (possibly muddy) walking - a walking staff is helpful.

Logistics: Meet your group in the gravel parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 50 min [Click here for Map.](#)

33. History, Wildflowers, and Culture of Noah Bud Ogle

Time: 1:15:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Twin Creeks and Noah Bud Ogle Trail
Meeting-Location: AR - Grassy Branch Trailhead

In this program, you will discover a diversity of wildflowers and hear stories of Noah Bud Ogle and his family. What was his life like in this area? How did people use this magnificent landscape? What was a day in the life like for people who made the Great Smoky Mountains their home? Park Volunteer and VIP Frances Hensley, also known as Granny Frannie, will be in character to convey these things and much more during this easy 2-mile hike.

Logistics: Meet your group in the parking lot across from the Grassy Branch Trail. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided**
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

34. Advanced iNaturalist for Pilgrims

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:45:00 PM
Trail: Gatlinburg Trail
Meeting-Location: Z - Park Headquarters Road.



Do you already use the iNaturalist app (or Seek) to identify wildflowers? Great, but you could be doing so much more with this digital resource! Learn how to keep a log of your hike, track down a target plant, join a project or BioBlitz with other naturalists, make yourself a preview field-guide for a trail, and become part of the iNaturalist social network, all to make your Pilgrimage an even better event!

Logistics: Meet your group outside of the gated area. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 5 min [Click here for Map.](#)

35. Nature Journaling at Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 3:30:00 PM
Trail: Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area (North)
Meeting-Location: AU - Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area off Little River Road (North Parking Lot).



Keeping a nature journal is a fun way to create a record of your experiences in the natural world, using primarily images - usually drawings or writing. We'll talk about different methods and ideas for ways to make your journal a lively, informative treasure to enjoy for years to come. No drawing skills are necessary, just the desire to keep a thoughtful notebook about what you observe. Bring at least a pencil and paper. Additional materials will be provided.

Logistics: Park at the north parking lot at Metcalf Bottoms, and meet your group at the picnic area. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

36. NEON: Learn about how our National Science Foundation is monitoring long-term climate change in the GSMNP using NEON!

Time: 1:00:00 PM to 3:00:00 PM
Trail: Twin Creeks Pavilion
Meeting-Location: AF - Twin Creeks (off Cherokee Orchard Road).

Learn about the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) Program and what kind of data collection NEON performs around the GSMNP. There will be a tour of the NEON Tower and Aquatic sensors, and a demonstration of sampling techniques used for measuring flora and fauna data. In this program, you'll walk about 600 yards in total, some of it off trail.

Logistics: Meet at the Twin Creeks Pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

37. Ferns at the Cosby Nature Trail

Time: 1:15:00 PM to 4:15:00 PM
Trail: Low Gap Trail/Cosby Nature Trail
Meeting-Location: J - Cosby Picnic Area off TN Route 32 (parking area on left).

Follow skilled pteridologists (Fern experts) as they guide you through an exploration of the Park's fern diversity. Uncover the intricacies of fern anatomy, life cycles, and ecology while sharpening your skills in distinguishing between different species. Enhance your experience with a 10x hand lens if you have one. This leisurely 1-mile walk promises an engaging and educational immersion into the captivating world of ferns.

Logistics: Meet your group in the parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)

38. Moss Walk: Appalachian Trail from Indian Gap to Newfound Gap

Time: 1:15:00 PM to 4:15:00 PM
Trail: Appalachian Trail, Indian Gap, Newfound Gap
Meeting-Location: AA - Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road.

Discover the distinctive flora of high elevation mosses and liverworts along the Appalachian Trail. Learn about their adaptations to higher elevation habitats and how they differ from low elevation species. Bring a 10x hand lens or a strong magnifying glass, if possible. A moderate 1-2 mile walk.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at Rockefeller Memorial. Before beginning this hike, group members need to shuttle everyone in as few cars as possible to the start point of the hike at the Indian Gap parking area. From Rockefeller Memorial, drive one mile north on Clingmans Dome Rd, and the Indian Gap parking area will be on the right (35.60937, -83.44654). Leave cars there and begin your hike. After your hike, shuttle those that need to pick up their car at the Indian Gap parking area. **Transportation:** None provided. Car shuttle needed. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided**
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

39. Tree Identification for Beginners at Greenbrier Picnic Pavilion

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM
Trail: Greenbrier Picnic Pavilion
Meeting-Location: O - Greenbrier Road at Picnic Pavilion.

This program is for novices who want to gain a better understanding of trees and shrubs. After your leaders teach you the basics of leaf shapes and patterns, you will take a short hike to apply and reinforce what you have learned. Bring a hand lens and/or magnifying glass if you have them, but they are not required. A moderate 1.5-mile walk.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, drive 3.5 miles, and park and meet your group at the picnic area/pavilion (35.703623° - 83.386516°). **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 35 min [Click here for Map.](#)

40. Understanding Leaves of Trees, Shrubs, and Lianas: Structures, Form, Function

Time: 1:15:00 PM to 4:15:00 PM
Trail: UT Field Station
Meeting-Location: AH - UT Field Station at Greenbrier

Understanding how to interpret leaves, leaflets, stems, and axillary buds is a vital part of being able to interpret the basics of plants and distinguish species. This program will begin with a lecture on these structures and finish up with a short walk to apply what you have learned. After this program, your eyes will be opened to so much more during the rest of the Pilgrimage!

Logistics: Park and meet your leader in the cemetery. The cemetery is located on the right before the gate. You will then hike 0.5 miles up the road with your leader past an old house to a pavilion area. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

41. Nature Explorers: Kids' Educational Wildflower Walk

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM
Trail: Sugarland Valley Nature Trail
Meeting-Location: AQ - Sugarland Valley Nature Trail

Join us on a delightful educational wildflower walk crafted just for kids! Led by passionate naturalists, this hands-on adventure transforms nature into a vibrant classroom. On this interactive walk, children will engage with the diverse flora, learning about colors, shapes, and scents, fostering a love for the environment. This immersive experience not only nurtures a connection to nature but also inspires the next generation to become enthusiastic stewards of our planet.



Logistics: Meet your group in the parking area. NOTE: the parking area for Sugarland Valley Nature Trail IS NOT at the Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 5 min [Click here for Map.](#)

42. Understanding Flowers: Structures, Form, Function

Time: 1:15:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM
Trail: Collins Creek Pavilion
Meeting-Location: I - Collins Creek Pavilion on Newfound Gap Road near Cherokee, NC.

Understanding the parts of flowers and how to interpret flower structures is key to having a great Wildflower Pilgrimage! Come to this program early in the week for a lecture-style presentation that will allow you to better interpret flower structures. Then, go for a short walk to reinforce your new knowledge by studying flowers in the field. This program will sharpen your eye for the rest of the event, especially if you are a beginner.



Logistics: Meet your group at the pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)

43. Wildflower Hike at Chestnut Top Trail

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM
Trail: Chestnut Top Trail
Meeting-Location: AD - Townsend Wye "Y" on Little River Road.

The Chestnut Top Trail is home to one of the grandest wildflower displays in the Smokies. While hiking on this narrow trail, be prepared to see wildflower species such as Jack-in-the-pulpit, little brown jug, stonecrop, Carey's saxifrage, miterwort, foam flower, fire pink, longspur violet, cross-vine, and many others. A moderate 2-mile walk.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at the Townsend Wye, across the road from the Chestnut Top Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided**
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

44. Wildflower Hike at Cucumber Gap Trail - Short Version

Time: 1:00:00 PM to 4:15:00 PM
Trail: Cucumber Gap Trail
Meeting-Location: R - Jakes Creek Trailhead past Elkmont Campground.

Walk through a secondary cove hardwood forest, and enjoy the rich diversity of wildflowers along the way. This trip begins on Jakes Creek, following the old railroad route, terminates near Tulip Branch on Cucumber Gap Trail, and then returns. A moderate 2-mile walk.

Logistics: Park at the Jakes Creek Trailhead parking area that is 0.1 miles past the Little River Trailhead parking area. Meet your group at the Jakes Creek Trailhead. After walking 0.7 miles on Jakes Creek Trail with your group, you will turn left onto Cucumber Gap Trail.

Transportation: None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

45. Wildflower Hike at Kanati Fork Trail

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:45:00 PM
Trail: Kanati Fork Trail
Meeting-Location: AA - Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road.

The Kanati Fork Trail has many spring ephemeral wildflowers including painted trillium, Clinton lily, foam flower, Indian cucumber root, brook lettuce, and Canada mayflower as well as a lot of the more common species in the Park. Turn around when the group is ready. A moderate 2 mile walk.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at Rockefeller Memorial. There is limited parking at the Kanati Fork Trailhead, so carpool in as few cars as possible with your group from Rockefeller Memorial to the Kanati Fork Trailhead. From Rockefeller Memorial, drive 8.4 miles east along Newfound Gap Road, and parking at the Kanati Fork Trailhead will be on the left (35.58790, -83.36387). **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

46. Wildflower Hike at Kephart Prong Trail

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:45:00 PM
Trail: Kephart Prong Trail
Meeting-Location: T - Kephart Prong Trailhead

Hiking among history, water, and wildflowers, this trail will follow the Kephart Prong past the remains of a Civilian Conservation Corps camp, a former fish hatchery, and an old narrow gauge railroad. All of these historic remains have wildflowers such as wood betony and rue-anemone growing in and around them. Hike up to the Kephart Prong Shelter before turning around. An easy 4 mile walk.

Logistics: Park in the Kephart Prong parking lot and meet your group at the trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

47. Wildflower Hike at Little River Above Elkmont

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:45:00 PM
Trail: Little River Trail
Meeting-Location: S - Little River Trailhead past Elkmont Campground.



While walking up this former logging railroad bed, you will discover the tenacity of nature in recovering from the massive logging operations that cleared this valley in the early twentieth century. Many species of wildflowers, ferns, and trees dot the landscape and are easily observable. An easy 2-mile walk. Elevation gain: 200'.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at the parking area at the Little River Trailhead. The parking area and trailhead are just past the Little River Bridge. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

48. Wildflower Hike at Ramsey Cascades Trail - Short version

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:45:00 PM
Trail: Ramsey Cascades Trail
Meeting-Location: P - Greenbrier Road Parking Lot #2.

A 4 to 5-mile round trip (not going all the way to the falls) will allow you to hike among the rich forests of the Ramsey Cascades Trail. You will hike along the mountain rivers and experience a rich display of wildflowers, ferns, and Fraser's sedge. Try to make it at least 2.5-miles to a hobbit-like tunnel of rhododendrons that canopy the trail. Elevation gain: ~1000 ft.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, drive 0.3 miles, and park and meet your group at the second parking lot on the right. From there, carpool in as few cars as possible to the Ramsey Cascades Trailhead. To get to the trailhead from the parking lot, continue driving on Greenbrier Rd, and turn left onto Ramsey Prong Rd, where you will find the Ramsey Cascades Trailhead (35.702716° - 83.357737°). **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

49. Wildflowers: Lady Slippers at Bud Ogle

Time: 1:00:00 PM to 4:00:00 PM

Trail: Noah Bud Ogle Trail

Meeting-Location: X - Noah "Bud Ogle" parking area on Cherokee Orchard Road.

Walking through former homesteads, you will see a splendid variety of wildflowers and American chestnut tree remnants in the reforested fields. Pink Lady's slippers are found along this trail in abundance and are sure to delight seekers of these beautiful plants! Leaders will discuss the differences between Lady Slipper species (other than their color), as well as their life histories and pollination syndromes. Short, easy walk with one creek crossing at the beginning (caution: the rocks here are often very slippery).

Logistics: Meet your group in the parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

50. Owl Prowl at Mynatt Park

Time: 8:30:00 PM to 10:30:00 PM

Trail: Mynatt Park

Meeting-Location: W - Mynatt Park.



Come learn about the night predators that reign supreme after the sun goes down. This 2-hour "Owl Prowl" is guided by Karen La Mere and Laura Marsh. Bring warm clothes and a flashlight (preferably with a red light). Short, easy walk.

Logistics: Park in the Mynatt Park parking area off of Cherokee Orchard Road. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

51. Lichens at Night in the Smokies

Time: 8:00:00 PM to 10:30:00 PM

Trail: Sugarlands Visitor Center Parking Lot

Meeting-Location: AC - Sugarlands Visitor Center.

Come explore the fascinating world of lichens at night! Many lichens produce secondary chemicals and metabolites that fluoresce brightly under UV light. Using handheld UV lights to scan tree trunks and rocks. We will search for lichens with brilliant colors of yellow, orange, electric blue, and more on this unique lichen night walk. Bring a flashlight, warm clothes, and comfortable walking shoes. The leaders will have 4-5 UV lights that you can borrow, but if you have one, bring it along. Short, easy walk.

Logistics: Meet your group in the Sugarlands Visitor Center bus parking lot, and your leaders will decide which trails to travel to from there. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** [Click here for Map.](#)

52. Bugs at Light at Ash Hopper Branch

Time: 8:30:00 PM to 10:30:00 PM

Trail: Sugarlands Visitor Center Parking Lot

Meeting-Location: AC - Sugarlands Visitor Center.



If you want to see a lot of really cool insects, join University of Tennessee at Chattanooga entomologist Stylianos Chatzimanolis (Dr. C) as he attracts nocturnal moths, beetles, and a wide diversity of other insects using a black light. Dress warmly, bring a headlamp or flashlight with a red cover, and hand lens if you have them. No trail walking. This is a great event for people of all ages and any who are interested!

Logistics: Meet your group in the Sugarlands Visitor Center bus parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

53. Birding: A Musical Walk Through Old Settlers Trail

Time: 7:00:00 AM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: UT Field Station (AM), Old Settlers Trail (PM)

Meeting-Location: AH - UT Field Station at Greenbrier

Come join naturalists Kevin Barry and Laura Marsh on an all-day workshop to learn to identify birds based on song! The program will begin in a field classroom setting at the UT Field Station. You will use the Cornell University Ornithology App to study songs and pictures of many of the Park's most common birds, paying particular attention to warblers, as they are some of the most interesting and confusing to identify. After lunch, you will put what you have learned into practice as you take an afternoon hike along Old Settlers Trail near Greenbrier. Bring a notebook/journal, pencil, binoculars, and a smartphone, if you have one.

Logistics: Park and meet your leader in the cemetery. The cemetery is located on the right before the gate. You will then hike 0.5 miles up the road with your leader past an old house and pavillion area to the UT Field Station. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

54. Sugar Magnolia Warblers and Scarlet Bignonias

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 3:30:00 PM

Trail: Bullhead Trail

Meeting-Location: AI - Rainbow Falls and Trillium Gap Parking Area.

Spring is here! The birds are singing and the flowers are popping up along the forest floor. Join us on an ears-open, eyes-open hike as we look for springtime birds and wildflowers along the Bullhead Trail. We welcome nature lovers of all levels to join us as we learn about local birds from song and sight and share tips for identifying Smoky Mountain wildflowers. A little over 3 miles into the hike, the group will encounter Bull Head Peak. This is an all-day hike, so be sure to bring water, snacks, and binoculars if you have them for this strenuous 6-8 mile out and back.

Logistics: Park at the Rainbow Falls and Trillium Gap main parking lot. If the main parking lot is full, a second parking lot can be found 0.3 miles down the road on the right. Meet your group at the main parking lot, and then head out on the Bullhead Trail. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 25 min [Click here for Map.](#)

55. Cades Cove Wetlands Caravan

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 4:00:00 PM

Trail: Cades Cove Loop Road

Meeting-Location: D - Cades Cove Campground Store.

Join park ecologists Troy Evans and Jonathan Cox to visit various wetland locations around Cades Cove Loop Rd. We will drive to multiple sites, then hike into wetlands to discuss plant species, amphibians, and wetland ecology in general. Be prepared for carpooling through cove traffic, and then hiking on short-offtrail hikes through sometimes dense vegetation. We will be visiting a variety of wetlands, including Sweet gum swamps, rush marshlands, and alluvial floodplain forests. While this trip does not involve any long hikes, it does include multiple short hikes over uneven, vegetated terrain and is considered moderate difficulty.

Logistics: Meet your group in the store's parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 50 min [Click here for Map.](#)

56. Rambling with Wildflowers, Mushrooms, and Lichens on the Big Creek Trail

Time: 9:30:00 AM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Big Creek Trail

Meeting-Location: AP - Big Creek and Baxter Creek Parking Area

This strenuous hike will take you through magnificent cove hardwood and hemlock forests, eventually crossing the Big Creek at Mouse Creek Falls. On this adventure, you will catch glimpses of unique lichens and mushrooms inhabiting a multitude of microhabitats. Majestic trees and wildflowers are also plentiful. Bring lunch, water, rain gear, and comfortable walking shoes. 5-6 mile out and back, elevation gain: 1000'.

Logistics: Meet your group in the parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 50 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

57. Wildflower Hike at Huskey Gap Trail - Long Version

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Huskey Gap Trail

Meeting-Location: AC - Sugarlands Visitor Center.



Follow expert botanists on a physically challenging, one-way trek from Huskey Gap to Little River Trail, Cucumber Gap, and then Jakes Creek Trail. Hikers may elect to take a short detour to the Mayna Treanor Avent Studio Cabin, which was once used as a retreat for the noted artist. Bring lunch, water, rain gear, and comfortable walking shoes. A strenuous 6-mile one-way hike. Maximum elevation gain: 1,500'.

Logistics: Meet your group in the bus parking lot at Sugarlands Visitor Center and take provided transportation to the Huskey Gap Trailhead. The bus will travel two miles south from Sugarlands Visitor Center on Newfound Gap Rd. The Huskey Gap Trailhead is directly across from the Riverview Quiet Walkway Trailhead. The bus will pick you up between 4:30pm and 4:45pm at Jakes Trailhead in Elkmont to return you to Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** Van shuttle provided: 5 min. **Drive Time:** [Click here for Map.](#)

58. Bird Banding Basics at the Premier Seven Islands State Birding Park

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Seven Islands State Birding Park (outside of GSMNP)

Meeting-Location: AM - Seven Islands State Birding Park.



Join experienced birders and conservationists in a hands-on birding program outside of the GSMNP. Seven Islands State Birding Park is a premier birding park along the French Broad River where more than 215 species of birds have been documented! In this program, you will get closer up views of birds than programs in the GSMNP can offer; you will experience catching, identifying, measuring, aging, banding, and releasing many species, including spring migrants. You will be able to observe the whole process and release the birds after data are recorded. An additional fee of \$12 per person is requested, 100% of which will be donated to Seven Islands State Park to support their bird banding research.

Logistics: Meet your group at the Bluebird Barn near the main parking area, and walk approximately one mile to the banding site with your leaders. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 60 min [Click here for Map.](#)

59. Birding and Wildflowers on School House Gap Trail

Time: 7:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: School House Gap Trail

Meeting-Location: AD - Townsend Wye "Y" on Little River Road.

The School House Gap Trail follows a beautiful stream lined with rhododendron, and ultimately enters into an upland deciduous habitat with scattered pines containing a variety of colorful spring warblers, vireos, and tanagers. Bring binoculars, water, rain gear, and comfortable walking shoes.

Logistics: Meet in the Townsend Wye Parking area. Leaders will organize a carpool to travel from Townsend Wye to School House Gap Trailhead. Fit as many people into as few cars as possible. Drive 3.9 miles towards Cades Cove on Laurel Creek Rd to School House Gap Trailhead. There is limited parking there. **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

60. Birding from Sugarlands to the Cove Hardwood Nature Trail

Time: 7:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Sugarlands to Cove Hardwood

Meeting-Location: G - City Parking Lot on Reagan Drive By Gatlinburg Fire Station.



Join expert birder Roger Hedge to search for spring migrants and Appalachian residents at Sugarlands Visitor Center, and look for the blackthroated blue warbler at Cove Hardwood Nature Trail. Bring binoculars and rain gear. Short, easy walks.

Logistics: Meet your group at the parking lot, and carpool in as few cars as possible to Sugarlands Visitor Center. When arriving at Cove Hardwood Nature Trail, a wildflower program will also be on the trail. Please keep a respectful distance from the other program.

Transportation: None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 10 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided**
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

61. Salamanders: Streams, Springs, and Leaves... What Hides Beneath?

Time: 8:45:00 AM to 12:00:00 PM

Trail: Cosby Picnic Area/Pavilion

Meeting-Location: J - Cosby Picnic Area off TN Route 32 (parking area on left).

This program begins with a short herpetology discussion on identification, life history, and ethics before embarking on a hike to search for some of Tennessee's greatest treasures (salamanders of course!). Hopefully, you'll get a chance to spot some of their scaly relatives along the way in this mid-elevation environment where densely forested streams and seeps meet open woodlands. Every amphibian-based hike will begin and end with decontamination, and a short discussion of survey protocols/ethics in order to protect these species from the spread of dangerous pathogens.

Logistics: Meet your group at the picnic area/pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)

62. Black Bear and Wild Hogs in the Smokies - Jakes Creek

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Jakes Creek Trail

Meeting-Location: R - Jakes Creek Trailhead past Elkmont Campground.

Walk along this old railroad route with retired Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency Managers and expert biologists as they describe the life history, tracking signs, human impacts, and environmental issues of black bears, wild hogs, and other mammals in the Southern Appalachians. An easy 2-3 mile walk.

Logistics: Park at the Jakes Creek Trailhead parking area that is 0.1 miles past the Little River Trailhead parking area. Meet your group at the Jakes Creek Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)



63. Life in the Leaf Litter: A Tour of the Seldom-Seen Animal Diversity at Our Feet

Time: 9:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: UT Field Station

Meeting-Location: AC - Sugarlands Visitor Center.

Join zoologists at the University of Tennessee Field Station to explore the seldom-seen diversity living in the fallen leaf layer under the trees. Leaf litter provides habitat to many organisms and plays an important role in nutrient cycling in the forest. In this program, you will learn some of the methods that scientists use to study the animals that call leaf litter home. You will look under cover boards for salamanders and snakes, check live animal traps to find small mammals, and use Berlese funnels and microscopes to see the tiny invertebrates that live under our feet.

Logistics: Meet your group in the bus parking lot, and take provided transportation to the UT Field Station at Greenbrier. The bus will drop you off at the entry gate, and you will walk up to the Field Station with your group. During this time, there will likely be another group at the Field Station. This group will need to use a separate classroom area from the other group. The bus will pick you up between 11:30am and 11:45am from the entry gate at the Field Station and return you to Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** Van shuttle provided: 30 min. **Drive Time:** [Click here for Map.](#)



64. Oil Painting Wildflowers from Photographs

Time: 9:00:00 AM to 12:00:00 PM

Trail: Arrowmont Painting Studio

Meeting-Location: C - Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts on Gatlinburg Parkway.

In this class, pilgrims will learn how to paint wildflowers in oil paint from photographs the instructor provides, all while using a limited color palette (6 colors). Pilgrims will learn some brush handling and brush work skills and techniques through out the class and will paint on a 9 x 12" canvas panel. John hopes to inspire you to try painting at home and to continue to study oil painting once you complete this 3 hour workshop.

Logistics: There is limited parking on the Arrowmont campus. There are two parking options with a fee near the campus: 1) the city parking garage located at 526 Parkway, Gatlinburg, TN 37738 (traffic light #3), which has an adjoining walkway to the Arrowmont campus, 2) or the Anakeesta parking lot. Walk from your parking location to meet your group at the Arrowmont Art Studios: Painting studio **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

65. Tour the GSMNP Natural History Museum at Twin Creeks

Time: 9:30:00 AM to 11:00:00 AM
Trail: Twin Creeks Science and Education Center
Meeting-Location: AF - Twin Creeks (off Cherokee Orchard Road).



Come tour the natural history collections that have been used to document the biodiversity of the GSMNP since its beginning. In this behind-the-scenes tour of the GSMNP Natural History Museum, you will see specimens of mammals, birds (including the now-extinct passenger pigeon), fungi, insects, and plants. You will also learn how these specimens are prepared, stored, and cataloged as well as their importance to the Park.

Logistics: Meet your group in the Twin Creeks Science and Education Center. Park in the Twin Creeks Public Parking Area, cross the street, and walk up the short trail to the south end of the Science and Education Center. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

66. NEON: Learn about how our National Science Foundation is monitoring long-term climate change in the GSMNP using NEON!

Time: 9:00:00 AM to 11:00:00 AM
Trail: Twin Creeks Pavilion
Meeting-Location: AF - Twin Creeks (off Cherokee Orchard Road).

Learn about the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) Program and what kind of data collection NEON performs around the GSMNP. There will be a tour of the NEON Tower and Aquatic sensors, and a demonstration of sampling techniques used for measuring flora and fauna data. In this program, you'll walk about 600 yards in total, some of it off trail.

Logistics: Meet at the Twin Creeks Pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

67. Photography of Flowers Using iPhone

Time: 8:15:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Sugarlands Training Room
Meeting-Location: AB - Sugarlands Visitor Center Training Room.



Learn how to improve your wildflower images with an iPhone. Join Robert Hutson, co-author of Great Smoky Mountain Wildflowers: When and Where to Find Them, and Jack Carman, author of Wildflowers of Tennessee as they give hands-on instruction in composition and photo techniques. Bring hiking boots and a smart phone (the focus of this program will be on iPhones, but Samsungs are welcome). An easy 1-mile walk.

Logistics: Park in the third lot on the right. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 5 min [Click here for Map.](#)

68. Ferns at Baxter Creek Trail, along Big Creek

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Baxter Creek Trail
Meeting-Location: AP - Big Creek and Baxter Creek Parking Area

Come join expert pteridologists (people who study ferns) on this walk to learn about fern species in the Park. You will learn about the parts, life cycle, and ecology of ferns, as well as how to distinguish different forms. Bring a hand lens if you have one. A moderate 2-mile walk.

Logistics: Meet your group in the parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 50 min [Click here for Map.](#)

69. Moss Walk: Engine Creek Trail (formerly Injun Creek) in Greenbrier

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Engine Creek Trail (formerly Injun Creek)
Meeting-Location: M - Greenbrier Road Ranger Station.

Learn about the diminutive world of mosses: a diverse group of very beautiful, unique, and small non-flowering plants that are found throughout the Smokies. You will learn about a variety of mosses, liverworts, and hornworts as you observe them along the trail. You will also discuss their life cycle and basic ways to distinguish them from one another. Bring a 10x hand lens or a strong magnifying glass if possible. An easy 2-mile hike that includes a narrow but sturdy stream crossing with a handrail and a short rocky area that is often wet and muddy.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, drive 1 mile, and park and meet your group at the Greenbrier Road Ranger Station (35.729633° -83.406016°). You will then head out onto Engine Creek Trail (formerly Injun Creek) from the Ranger Station.

Transportation: None provided. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided**
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

70. Tree and Shrub Identification Walk at Metcalf Bottoms

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:45:00 AM

Trail: Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area (South), Metcalf Bottoms Trail
Meeting-Location: U - Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area off Little River Road (South Parking Area).

This program is more than an introduction to terms. You will learn characters used in the identification of woody plants (trees, shrubs, and woody vines). You will also learn how to differentiate leaf and bark characteristics, which will help you to distinguish between genera and species of common and lesser common woody plants in the Park. Bring field guides and hand lenses if you have them, but they are not required. A moderate 2-mile walk.

Logistics: Park at the south parking lot at Metcalf Bottoms, and meet your group at the picnic area. Then, head out onto Metcalf Bottoms Trail. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

71. Trees and Shrubs of High Elevation at Indian Gap Trail

Time: 8:45:00 AM to 11:45:00 AM

Trail: Appalachian Trail, Indian Gap, Newfound Gap
Meeting-Location: AA - Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road.

Pass from the closed canopy of an old growth spruce-fir forest into the open canopy of a pristine beech gap forest. Notice the giant dead Fraser firs, which have succumbed to the spread of the invasive balsam woolly adelgid. A 1.5-mile moderate walk. Elevation gain: 500'.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at Rockefeller Memorial. Before beginning this hike, some group members need to shuttle their cars to the end point of the hike at the Road Prong Trail parking area while others wait at the Rockefeller Memorial. Leave as many cars at the Road Prong parking area as will be necessary to shuttle everyone back to Rockefeller Memorial after the hike. From Rockefeller Memorial drive southwest 1.5 miles along the Clingmans Dome Road. The Road Prong parking area will be on the right (35.60937, -83.44654). Leave cars there and return to Rockefeller Memorial to begin your hike. After your hike, shuttle everyone back to Rockefeller Memorial.

Transportation: None provided. Car shuttle needed. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

72. Trees and Shrubs of High Elevation at Sugarland Mountain Trail

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 11:00:00 AM

Trail: Fork Ridge Trail, AT, Sugarland Mountain Trail
Meeting-Location: AA - Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road.

Walk through a range of forest types as you hike through the elevation changes along the Sugarland Mountain Trail. You'll notice epiphytic tree growth, signaling the temperate rainforest nature of this high point in the mountains. The trail follows a ridgeline surrounded by old, largely uncut sections of yellow birch and red spruce.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at the Newfound Gap parking area. There is VERY limited parking at the Fork Ridge Trailhead, a max of 6 cars can fit in this area. Carpool in as few cars as possible from the Newfound Gap parking area to the Fork Ridge Trailhead. From the Newfound Gap parking area, head southwest onto Clingmans Dome Rd. Continue for 3.8 miles. The Fork Ridge Trailhead parking area will be on your left. IF THERE IS NOT ENOUGH PARKING AT THE FORK RIDGE TRAILHEAD, park as many cars as possible in the Fork Ridge parking lot, leaving one space open. Shuttle the remaining cars 1.2 miles further down Clingmans Dome Rd to a larger parking lot. Park the cars and bring all the people who shuttled back to the trailhead in one car. **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed.

Drive Time: 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

73. Secret Stories of The Wildflowers along Porters Creek Trail

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Porters Creek Trail
Meeting-Location: N - Greenbrier Road Terminus at Porters Creek Trailhead.

Set out on a stunning wildflower hike along the Porter's Creek Trail, one of the few areas of the Smokies untouched by the early 1900's logging operations. Surrounded by misty peaks, the trail unveils a vibrant display of native wildflowers, from trilliums to azaleas, creating a picturesque scene along the way. With expert guides sharing insights into the diverse flora, this immersive experience not only showcases the natural beauty of the Smokies but also fosters a deep appreciation for the unique biodiversity thriving in this untouched area.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, and drive for 4.5 miles, all the way to the end where you will reach the Porters Creek Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

74. Wildflower Hike along Meigs Creek Trail.

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:45:00 AM

Trail: Meigs Creek Trail

Meeting-Location: AU - Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area off Little River Road (North Parking Lot).

Numerous species of wildflowers are scattered along this trail as you intermittently pass through wet habitats with many stream crossings. As you move through the wetter coves and across creeks, you'll see hemlock, pawpaw, lots of ferns, and seersucker sedge (plantain-leaved sedge). A moderate to difficult 3-mile out and back hike from the Sinks Bridge at Meigs Creek Trail. Elevation gain: 500'.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at the north parking area at Metcalf Bottoms. There is limited parking at the Sinks Bridge parking area, so carpool with your group in as few cars as possible from Metcalf Bottoms to the Sinks Bridge parking area (35.669493° - 83.662464°). From Metcalf Bottoms, turn right onto Wear Cove Gap Rd. Then, turn right onto Little River Gorge Rd, and follow this road for 2 miles. The trailhead will be on the left. After the hike, shuttle back to Metcalf Bottoms. **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool and car shuttle needed. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

75. Wildflower Hike at Cove Hardwood Nature Trail (Chimneys Picnic Area loop trail)

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Cove Hardwood Nature Trail

Meeting-Location: F - Chimneys Picnic Area on Newfound Gap Road.

Cove hardwood forests are one of the most biologically diverse communities in North America. This easily accessible trail is a great place to see a lot of different wildflowers as well as trees, shrubs, and vines. There are more species of wildflowers along this short, easy walk than just about any other place in the Park, making it a must for those wanting to learn about spring wildflowers like fringed phacelia, several trillium species, golden saxifrage (can you spot this tiny little plant?), wild ginger, and more. Short walk with elevation gain.

Logistics: Park in the Chimneys Picnic Area parking lot, and meet your group at the Cove Hardwood Nature Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 10 min [Click here for Map.](#)

76. Wildflower Hike at Cucumber Gap Trail - Short Version

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 11:00:00 AM

Trail: Cucumber Gap Trail

Meeting-Location: R - Jakes Creek Trailhead past Elkmont Campground.

Walk through a secondary cove hardwood forest, and enjoy the rich diversity of wildflowers along the way. This trip begins on Jakes Creek, following the old railroad route, terminates near Tulip Branch on Cucumber Gap Trail, and then returns. A moderate 2-mile walk.

Logistics: Park at the Jakes Creek Trailhead parking area that is 0.1 miles past the Little River Trailhead parking area. Meet your group at the Jakes Creek Trailhead. After walking 0.7 miles on Jakes Creek Trail with your group, you will turn left onto Cucumber Gap Trail. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

77. Wildflower Hike at Kanati Fork Trail

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:45:00 AM

Trail: Kanati Fork Trail

Meeting-Location: AA - Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road.

The Kanati Fork Trail has many spring ephemeral wildflowers including painted trillium, Clinton lily, foam flower, Indian cucumber root, brook lettuce, and Canada mayflower as well as a lot of the more common species in the Park. Turn around when the group is ready. A moderate 2 mile walk.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at Rockefeller Memorial. There is limited parking at the Kanati Fork Trailhead, so carpool in as few cars as possible with your group from Rockefeller Memorial to the Kanati Fork Trailhead. From Rockefeller Memorial, drive 8.4 miles east along Newfound Gap Road, and parking at the Kanati Fork Trailhead will be on the left (35.58790, -83.36387). **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

78. Wildflower Hike at Ramsey Cascades Trail - Short version

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Ramsey Cascades Trail

Meeting-Location: P - Greenbrier Road Parking Lot #2.

A 4 to 5-mile round trip (not going all the way to the falls) will allow you to hike among the rich forests of the Ramsey Cascades Trail. You will hike along the mountain rivers and experience a rich display of wildflowers, ferns, and Fraser's sedge. Try to make it at least 2.5-miles to a hobbit-like tunnel of rhododendrons that canopy the trail. Elevation gain: ~1000 ft.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, drive 0.3 miles, and park and meet your group at the second parking lot on the right. From there, carpool in as few cars as possible to the Ramsey Cascades Trailhead. To get to the trailhead from the parking lot, continue driving on Greenbrier Rd, and turn left onto Ramsey Prong Rd, where you will find the Ramsey Cascades Trailhead (35.702716° - 83.357737°). **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

79. Wildflower Hike on the Riverview Quiet Walkway

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Riverview Quiet Walkway

Meeting-Location: AC - Sugarlands Visitor Center.



This easy walk from Newfound Gap Road to West Prong Little Pigeon River has a rich diversity of wildflowers, trees and shrubs, and plant communities. The trail follows the level flood plain of the river through groves of hardwoods and passes some seepages. This walk is one of the only places in the Park to see silky willow. An easy 2-mile walk.

Logistics: Meet your group in the bus parking lot at Sugarlands Visitor Center and take provided transportation to the Riverview Quiet Walkway. The bus will travel two miles south from Sugarlands Visitor Center on Newfound Gap Rd. The Riverview Quiet Walkway is past the Bullhead View Quiet Walkway and directly across from Huskey Gap Trail. After hiking the loop trail, the bus will pick you up at the Riverview Quiet Walkway Trailhead between 11:30am and 11:45am and return you to Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** Van shuttle provided: 5 min. **Drive Time:** [Click here for Map.](#)

80. Wildflowers: Lady Slippers at Bud Ogle

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:45:00 AM

Trail: Noah Bud Ogle Trail

Meeting-Location: X - Noah "Bud Ogle" parking area on Cherokee Orchard Road.

Walking through former homesteads, you will see a splendid variety of wildflowers and American chestnut tree remnants in the reforested fields. Pink Lady's slippers are found along this trail in abundance and are sure to delight seekers of these beautiful plants! Leaders will discuss the differences between Lady Slipper species (other than their color), as well as their life histories and pollination syndromes. Short, easy walk with one creek crossing at the beginning (caution: the rocks here are often very slippery).

Logistics: Meet your group in the parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

81. Fungi and their Funky Forest Friends found in the Cosby Picnic Area

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Cosby Picnic Area/Pavilion, Trails TBD
Meeting-Location: J - Cosby Picnic Area off TN Route 32 (parking area on left).



Fungi are essential organisms in the forest. You will start this program by learning about what fungi are and what they are not. You will get to study, smell, and touch a display of different fungal types, including mushrooms, puffballs, cup fungi, conks, and lichens. After the fun fungal lesson, you will head out on a hike to explore the forest and look for evidence of the fungal friends and foes. Bring a hand lens if you have one. Easy 2-3 mile walk.

Logistics: Meet your group at the picnic area/pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)

82. Lichens along a High-Elevation Ridge

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Thomas Divide Trailhead

Meeting-Location: AV - Thomas Divide Trailhead

There are currently over 1,000 known lichen species in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, lichenologically speaking the most biodiverse park in the lower 48. Join local lichenologist Jason Hollinger on this walk along a high elevation ridge through oldgrowth montane oak forest with fabulous views and -- more importantly! -- spectacular lichen habitat. This is where the biggest, showiest macrolichens such as the ubiquitous beard lichens of the genus *Usnea* thrive on the diffuse light and humidity these high elevation ridges receive from frequently being hidden in the clouds. Learn the basics of lichen identification and how to recognize the specialized ecological niches they fill. Warning: you may never see the forest the same way again! Bring warm clothing, rain gear, and comfortable footwear. Moderate out and back. Elevation gain - 500 ft. We hope to reach at least the first high point near where the trail intersects Beetree Ridge. A 10x hand lens is highly recommended. A high-powered UV flashlight, even during broad daylight, can reveal a fascinating and hidden dimension to these organisms: bring one if you have one!

Logistics: Park at the trailhead. If additional parking is required, the leader will arrange a carpool from overflow parking at the Charles A. Webb overlook about 0.5 mile west of the trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 35 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

83. Salamanders: Streams, Springs, and Leaves... What Hides Beneath?

Time: 1:45:00 PM to 4:45:00 PM

Trail: Cosby Picnic Area/Pavilion

Meeting-Location: J - Cosby Picnic Area off TN Route 32 (parking area on left).

This program begins with a short herpetology discussion on identification, life history, and ethics before embarking on a hike to search for some of Tennessee's greatest treasures (salamanders of course!). Hopefully, you'll get a chance to spot some of their scaly relatives along the way in this mid-elevation environment where densely forested streams and seeps meet open woodlands. Every amphibian-based hike will begin and end with decontamination, and a short discussion of survey protocols/ethics in order to protect these species from the spread of dangerous pathogens.

Logistics: Meet your group at the picnic area/pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)

84. Wild about Ants! Discovering Ants of the Smokies

Time: 1:00:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Cosby Picnic Area/Pavilion

Meeting-Location: J - Cosby Picnic Area off TN Route 32 (parking area on left).

It is estimated that there are over 20,000 ant species worldwide. Approximately 133 of those species live in Tennessee! Come explore the fascinating world of ants with Dr. DeAnna Beasley from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. We'll set up stations to observe food preferences, learn about different ant behaviors, and conclude with a short hike to seek out different ant homes.

Logistics: Meet your group at the picnic area/pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)

85. Insects: Aquatic Insect Diversity Walk at Twin Creeks

Time: 1:00:00 PM to 3:15:00 PM

Trail: Twin Creeks Pavilion, Twin Creeks Stream

Meeting-Location: AF - Twin Creeks (off Cherokee Orchard Road).

Learn to identify and collect insects in pristine streams with entomologists (scientists who study insects). During this program, you will take short walks on multiple streams in order to learn about the differences in the preferred habitats of a variety of insects. Short, easy walk.

Logistics: Meet your group in the gravel parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)



86. Black Bear and Wild Hogs in the Smokies - Jakes Creek

Time: 1:00:00 PM to 4:00:00 PM

Trail: Jakes Creek Trail

Meeting-Location: R - Jakes Creek Trailhead past Elkmont Campground.

Walk along this old railroad route with retired Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency Managers and expert biologists as they describe the life history, tracking signs, human impacts, and environmental issues of black bears, wild hogs, and other mammals in the Southern Appalachians. An easy 2-3 mile walk.

Logistics: Park at the Jakes Creek Trailhead parking area that is 0.1 miles past the Little River Trailhead parking area. Meet your group at the Jakes Creek Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)



87. Explore the Wonders of Animal Communication at the UT Field Station

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 3:30:00 PM

Trail: UT Field Station

Meeting-Location: AC - Sugarlands Visitor Center.

Why do birds sing? Did you know that some fireflies lie to each other? Do bees do the tango or fox trot when they are excited? Loren Hayes and Monica Miles will lead a discussion, game, and walk focused on why and how animals communicate in the GSMNP. Bring your dancing shoes (hiking boots).

Logistics: Meet your group in the bus parking lot, and take provided transportation to the UT Field Station at Greenbrier. The bus will drop you off at the entry gate, and you will walk up to the Field Station with your group. The bus will pick you up between 3:30pm and 3:45pm from the entry gate at the Field Station and return you to Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** Van shuttle provided: 30 min. **Drive Time:** [Click here for Map.](#)



- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided**
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

88. Oil Painting Wildflowers from Photographs

Time: 1:00:00 PM to 4:00:00 PM

Trail: Arrowmont Painting Studio

Meeting-Location: C - Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts on Gatlinburg Parkway.

In this class, pilgrims will learn how to paint wildflowers in oil paint from photographs the instructor provides, all while using a limited color palette (6 colors). Pilgrims will learn some brush handling and brush work skills and techniques through out the class and will paint on a 9 x 12" canvas panel. John hopes to inspire you to try painting at home and to continue to study oil painting once you complete this 3 hour workshop.

Logistics: There is limited parking on the Arrowmont campus. There are two parking options with a fee near the campus: 1) the city parking garage located at 526 Parkway, Gatlinburg, TN 37738 (traffic light #3), which has an adjoining walkway to the Arrowmont campus, 2) or the Anakeesta parking lot. Walk from your parking location to meet your group at the Arrowmont Art Studios: Painting studio

Transportation: None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

89. Geology: Deep Time at Big Creek

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Big Creek Trail

Meeting-Location: AP - Big Creek and Baxter Creek Parking Area

Boulder-strewn Big Creek is one of the most impressive of the Park's streams. The Big Creek gorge cuts through some excellent exposures of the nearly 1 billion year-old rocks that belie the inner workings of the mountains. We will look at some interesting features in these exposures such as cleavage, folds, and thrust faults and talk about how geologists tease the geologic history from them. We will also view one of the Smokies' best examples of block fields at the Rock House and may even visit Midnight Hole.

Logistics: Meet your group in the parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 50 min [Click here for Map.](#)

90. Elkmont, Then and Now

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 3:30:00 PM

Trail: Elkmont Campground Area

Meeting-Location: AZ - Elkmont Campground (field behind Elkmont Campground Office).

Join Interpretive Park Ranger and historian Brad Free on a tour of the human history of Elkmont. Learn about Elkmont's interesting history and politics while touring the old vacation homes and other buildings at Elkmont, some of which only foundations remain. See the amazing restoration efforts of some of these homes that have taken place over the last few years. Be sure to ask Brad about the plane crash!

Logistics: Park within the Elkmont Campground. Meet your group in the grass field behind the Elkmont Campground Office.

Transportation: None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)



91. Native People's Use of Nature's Garden at Collins Creek Pavilion

Time: 1:15:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Collins Creek Pavilion

Meeting-Location: I - Collins Creek Pavilion on Newfound Gap Road near Cherokee, NC.

Listen to Native American Karen La Mere (Ho-Chunk) as she tells an oral history that has been passed down through generations by America's indigenous people. You will also discover and even taste ingenious uses of native plants. Short, easy walk.

Logistics: Meet your group at the pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)



92. Exotic Plants on the Gatlinburg Trail

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Gatlinburg Trail

Meeting-Location: Z - Park Headquarters Road.

Since the 1700s, botanists have used the term "exotic" to describe plant species from elsewhere introduced into a new area. During this hike, you'll focus on learning to identify exotic plant species, the differences between naturalized exotic species and those that aren't, what makes a species "invasive," and about the negative impact these species have on our native plants and animals. An easy 2-3 mile walk.

Logistics: Meet your group outside of the gated area. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 5 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

93. NEON: Learn about how our National Science Foundation is monitoring long-term climate change in the GSMNP using NEON!

Time: 1:00:00 PM to 3:00:00 PM

Trail: Twin Creeks Pavilion

Meeting-Location: AF - Twin Creeks (off Cherokee Orchard Road).

Learn about the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) Program and what kind of data collection NEON performs around the GSMNP. There will be a tour of the NEON Tower and Aquatic sensors, and a demonstration of sampling techniques used for measuring flora and fauna data. In this program, you'll walk about 600 yards in total, some of it off trail.

Logistics: Meet at the Twin Creeks Pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

94. Parasites! An Important Component of Our Hidden Biodiversity

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: UT Field Station

Meeting-Location: AC - Sugarlands Visitor Center.



Parasite Ecologist Dr. Ricky Fiorillo from Georgia-Gwinnett College will discuss the natural history and ecology of an often-unappreciated component of our hidden biodiversity, while guiding you through a hands-on dissection searching for worm parasites in a natural host. You will examine the heart, liver, and digestive tract of common freshwater fish species. See for yourself just how interesting and beautiful parasites can be, and why they are an important component of our ecosystem. The minimum age to perform dissections is high school, but anyone can watch.

Logistics: Meet your group in the bus parking lot, and take provided transportation to the UT Field Station at Greenbrier. The bus will drop you off at the entry gate, and you will walk up to the Field Station with your group. The bus will pick you up between 4:30pm and 4:45pm from the entry gate at the Field Station and return you to Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** Van shuttle provided: 30 min. **Drive Time:** [Click here for Map.](#)

95. Photography Workshop

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Sugarlands Training Room

Meeting-Location: AB - Sugarlands Visitor Center Training Room.



Learn how to improve your wildflower images with mirrorless and SLR cameras. Robert Hutson, co-author of Great Smoky Mountain Wildflowers: When and Where to Find Them, and Jack Carman, author of Wildflowers of Tennessee, will give a short visual presentation and then migrate outside for hands-on instruction in composition and photo technique. Bring hiking boots, a mirrorless or SLR camera, and a tripod. An easy 1-mile walk.

Logistics: Park in the third lot on the right. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 5 min [Click here for Map.](#)

96. Sketching Wildflowers at Twin Creeks Pavilion

Time: 1:45:00 PM to 4:45:00 PM

Trail: Twin Creeks Pavilion

Meeting-Location: AF - Twin Creeks (off Cherokee Orchard Road).



View wildflowers through the eyes of expert botanical artists, and explore your own creativity in the natural world. Bring your own art materials (at least a pencil and paper). Short, easy walk.

Logistics: Meet your group at the pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

97. Ferns at Little River above Elkmont

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Little River Trail

Meeting-Location: S - Little River Trailhead past Elkmont Campground.

Have you ever seen an adder's tongue, a sang pointer, or the hitchhiking southern lady? Do you understand what parts of ferns or fern allies are leaves, and what parts are stems? Come see a variety of the Park's more common ferns and fern allies, learn about their structures, how they grow and reproduce, and their biodiversity in the Park. Bring a hand lens. An easy 2-mile walk.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at the parking area at the Little River Trailhead. The parking area and trailhead are just past the Little River Bridge. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

98. Moss Walk: Basics of Mosses and their Relatives at Chimneys Picnic Area

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Chimneys Picnic Area/Outdoor Classroom
Meeting-Location: F - Chimneys Picnic Area on Newfound Gap Road.

Learn about the diminutive world of mosses: a diverse group of very beautiful, unique, and small non-flowering plants that are found throughout the Smokies. You will learn about a variety of mosses as you observe them along the trail. You will also discuss their life cycle and basic ways to distinguish them from one another. Bring a 10x hand lens or a strong magnifying glass if possible. Moderate 2-3 mile walk with a few uphill/downhill sections.

Logistics: Meet your group at the picnic area/outdoor classroom above the parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 10 min [Click here for Map.](#)

99. Moss Walk: Sugarlands Valley Nature Trail

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Sugarland Valley Nature Trail
Meeting-Location: AQ - Sugarland Valley Nature Trail



Embark on a captivating exploration into the enchanting realm of mosses—a diverse group of small, non-flowering wonders that grace the landscapes of the Smokies with their unique beauty. You will learn about a variety of mosses, liverworts, and hornworts as you observe them along the trail, rock fences, and remnant chimneys. You will also discuss their life cycle and basic ways to distinguish them from one another. Bring a 10x hand lens or a strong magnifying glass, if possible. This wheelchair accessible program runs along the flat concrete 0.5 mile Sugarland Valley Nature Trail, next to the Bullhead Branch creek.

Logistics: Meet your group in the parking area. NOTE: the parking area for Sugarland Valley Nature Trail IS NOT at the Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 5 min [Click here for Map.](#)

100. Tree Identification for Beginners at Greenbrier Picnic Pavilion

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Greenbrier Picnic Pavillion
Meeting-Location: O - Greenbrier Road at Picnic Pavilion.

This program is for novices who want to gain a better understanding of trees and shrubs. After your leaders teach you the basics of leaf shapes and patterns, you will take a short hike to apply and reinforce what you have learned. Bring a hand lens and/or magnifying glass if you have them, but they are not required. A moderate 1.5-mile walk.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, drive 3.5 miles, and park and meet your group at the picnic area/pavilion (35.703623° - 83.386516°). **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 35 min [Click here for Map.](#)

101. Trees and Shrubs of High Elevation at Indian Gap Trail

Time: 1:45:00 PM to 4:45:00 PM

Trail: Appalachian Trail, Indian Gap, Newfound Gap

Meeting-Location: AA - Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road.

Pass from the closed canopy of an old growth spruce-fir forest into the open canopy of a pristine beech gap forest. Notice the giant dead Fraser firs, which have succumbed to the spread of the invasive balsam woolly adelgid. A 1.5-mile moderate walk. Elevation gain: 500'.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at Rockefeller Memorial. Before beginning this hike, some group members need to shuttle their cars to the end point of the hike at the Road Prong Trail parking area while others wait at the Rockefeller Memorial. Leave as many cars at the Road Prong parking area as will be necessary to shuttle everyone back to Rockefeller Memorial after the hike. From Rockefeller Memorial drive southwest 1.5 miles along the Clingmans Dome Road. The Road Prong parking area will be on the right (35.60937, -83.44654). Leave cars there and return to Rockefeller Memorial to begin your hike. After your hike, shuttle everyone back to Rockefeller Memorial.

Transportation: None provided. Car shuttle needed. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided**
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

102. Trees and Shrubs of High Elevation at Sugarland Mountain Trail

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM
Trail: Fork Ridge Trail, AT, Sugarland Mountain Trail
Meeting-Location: AA - Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road.

Walk through a range of forest types as you hike through the elevation changes along the Sugarland Mountain Trail. You'll notice epiphytic tree growth, signaling the temperate rainforest nature of this high point in the mountains. The trail follows a ridgeline surrounded by old, largely uncut sections of yellow birch and red spruce.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at the Newfound Gap parking area. There is VERY limited parking at the Fork Ridge Trailhead, a max of 6 cars can fit in this area. Carpool in as few cars as possible from the Newfound Gap parking area to the Fork Ridge Trailhead. From the Newfound Gap parking area, head southwest onto Clingmans Dome Rd. Continue for 3.8 miles. The Fork Ridge Trailhead parking area will be on your left. IF THERE IS NOT ENOUGH PARKING AT THE FORK RIDGE TRAILHEAD, park as many cars as possible in the Fork Ridge parking lot, leaving one space open. Shuttle the remaining cars 1.2 miles further down Clingmans Dome Rd to a larger parking lot. Park the cars and bring all the people who shuttled back to the trailhead in one car. **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed.
Drive Time: 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

103. Nature Explorers: Kids' Educational Wildflower Walk

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM
Trail: Middle Prong Trail
Meeting-Location: AE - Tremont Road (parking lot at end of gravel road).

Join us on a delightful educational wildflower walk crafted just for kids! Led by passionate naturalists, this hands-on adventure transforms nature into a vibrant classroom. On this interactive walk, children will engage with the diverse flora, learning about colors, shapes, and scents, fostering a love for the environment. This immersive experience not only nurtures a connection to nature but also inspires the next generation to become enthusiastic stewards of our planet.

Logistics: From the Townsend Wye, take Laurel Creek Rd to Tremont Rd, continuing after it turns to gravel until it terminates at the Middle Prong Trail Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 55 min [Click here for Map.](#)

104. Wildflower Hike at Chestnut Top Trail

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM
Trail: Chestnut Top Trail
Meeting-Location: AD - Townsend Wye "Y" on Little River Road.

The Chestnut Top Trail is home to one of the grandest wildflower displays in the Smokies. While hiking on this narrow trail, be prepared to see wildflower species such as Jack-in-the-pulpit, little brown jug, stonecrop, Carey's saxifrage, miterwort, foam flower, fire pink, longspur violet, cross-vine, and many others. A moderate 2-mile walk.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at the Townsend Wye, across the road from the Chestnut Top Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

105. Wildflower Hike at Kanati Fork Trail

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:45:00 PM
Trail: Kanati Fork Trail
Meeting-Location: AA - Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road.

The Kanati Fork Trail has many spring ephemeral wildflowers including painted trillium, Clinton lily, foam flower, Indian cucumber root, brook lettuce, and Canada mayflower as well as a lot of the more common species in the Park. Turn around when the group is ready. A moderate 2 mile walk.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at Rockefeller Memorial. There is limited parking at the Kanati Fork Trailhead, so carpool in as few cars as possible with your group from Rockefeller Memorial to the Kanati Fork Trailhead. From Rockefeller Memorial, drive 8.4 miles east along Newfound Gap Road, and parking at the Kanati Fork Trailhead will be on the left (35.58790, -83.36387). **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

106. Wildflower Hike at Porters Creek Trail

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM
Trail: Porters Creek Trail
Meeting-Location: N - Greenbrier Road Terminus at Porters Creek Trailhead.

Spend a few hours on one of the Park's most famous and popular wildflower trails. This trail features an abundance of wildflowers (including painted trillium), old homesteads, a cemetery, and an old-growth cove hardwood forest. Hike up Porters Creek Trail to either Brushy Mountain Trail (at 1 mile), or continue onto Fern Branch Falls (just short of 2 miles) before turning around. An easy 2-4 mile walk.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, and drive for 4.5 miles, all the way to the end where you will reach the Porters Creek Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

107. Wildflower Hike at Ramsey Cascades Trail - Short version

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM
Trail: Ramsey Cascades Trail
Meeting-Location: P - Greenbrier Road Parking Lot #2.

A 4 to 5-mile round trip (not going all the way to the falls) will allow you to hike among the rich forests of the Ramsey Cascades Trail. You will hike along the mountain rivers and experience a rich display of wildflowers, ferns, and Fraser's sedge. Try to make it at least 2.5-miles to a hobbit-like tunnel of rhododendrons that canopy the trail. Elevation gain: ~1000 ft.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, drive 0.3 miles, and park and meet your group at the second parking lot on the right. From there, carpool in as few cars as possible to the Ramsey Cascades Trailhead. To get to the trailhead from the parking lot, continue driving on Greenbrier Rd, and turn left onto Ramsey Prong Rd, where you will find the Ramsey Cascades Trailhead (35.702716° - 83.357737°). **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

108. Wildflower Hike on the Riverview Quiet Walkway

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM
Trail: Riverview Quiet Walkway
Meeting-Location: AC - Sugarlands Visitor Center.



This easy walk from Newfound Gap Road to West Prong Little Pigeon River has a rich diversity of wildflowers, trees and shrubs, and plant communities. The trail follows the level flood plain of the river through groves of hardwoods and passes some seepages. This walk is one of the only places in the Park to see silky willow. An easy 2-mile walk.

Logistics: Meet your group in the bus parking lot at Sugarlands Visitor Center and take provided transportation to the Riverview Quiet Walkway. The bus will travel two miles south from Sugarlands Visitor Center on Newfound Gap Rd. The Riverview Quiet Walkway is past the Bullhead View Quiet Walkway and directly across from Huskey Gap Trail. After hiking the loop trail, the bus will pick you up at the Riverview Quiet Walkway Trailhead between 4:30pm and 4:45pm and return you to Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** Van shuttle provided: 5 min. **Drive Time:** [Click here for Map.](#)

109. Owl Prowl at Mynatt Park

Time: 8:30:00 PM to 10:30:00 PM
Trail: Mynatt Park
Meeting-Location: W - Mynatt Park.



Come learn about the night predators that reign supreme after the sun goes down. This 2-hour "Owl Prowl" is guided by Karen La Mere. Bring warm clothes and a flashlight (preferably with a red light). Short, easy walk.

Logistics: Park in the Mynatt Park parking area off of Cherokee Orchard Road. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

110. Bugs at Light at Ash Hopper Branch

Time: 8:30:00 PM to 10:30:00 PM
Trail: Sugarlands Visitor Center Parking Lot
Meeting-Location: AC - Sugarlands Visitor Center.



If you want to see a lot of really cool insects, join University of Tennessee at Chattanooga entomologist Stylianos Chatzimanolis (Dr. C) as he attracts nocturnal moths, beetles, and a wide diversity of other insects using a black light. Dress warmly, bring a headlamp or flashlight with a red cover, and hand lens if you have them. No trail walking. This is a great event for people of all ages and any who are interested!

Logistics: Meet your group in the Sugarlands Visitor Center bus parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** [Click here for Map.](#)

111. Bats: Stirring the Cauldron at the Twin Creeks Area

Time: 7:30:00 PM to 9:30:00 PM
Trail: Twin Creeks Pavilion
Meeting-Location: AF - Twin Creeks (off Cherokee Orchard Road).

In this program, learn from chiropterologists (people who study bats) about the ecology, distributions, feeding and mating behaviors of bats as well as why bats are important and economically beneficial to preserve. You will also get to use some high-tech gadgetry to listen to bats echolocating to hunt insects. Bring warm clothes and a flashlight (preferably with a red light). Short, easy walk.

Logistics: Meet your group at the pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

111.5 Artist-of-the-Year Reception at Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts for Becs Epstein (Open to all Pilgrims)

Time: 5:30:00 PM to 7:00:00 PM
Trail: Arrowmont Wolpert Gallery
Meeting-Location: C - Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts on Gatlinburg Parkway.

Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts is proud to feature Becs Epstein, the Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage's Artist-of-the-Year. Becs was invited to teach an Art Workshop this year on Plant Journal Making & Being Kin with the Flowers, which will be Friday, All Day. The workshop will require an additional fee, but you will take home your own handmade journal to record your experiences with nature! Come appreciate her real work exhibited in the Geoffrey A. Wolpert Gallery. Refreshments provided. Free to all pilgrims, no registration required.

Logistics: There is limited parking on the Arrowmont campus. There are two parking options with a fee near the campus: 1) the city parking garage located at 526 Parkway, Gatlinburg, TN 37738 (traffic light #3), which has an adjoining walkway to the Arrowmont campus, 2) or the Anakeesta parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

112. Mysteries Unveiled: The Enchanting World of Moss Morphology

Time: 7:30:00 PM to 9:30:00 PM
Trail: Arrowmont Wolpert Gallery
Meeting-Location: C - Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts on Gatlinburg Parkway.

This lecture will focus on the important characteristics of moss morphology that will allow you to better understand terminology, structures, and life history aspects of this often-overlooked group of plants, shedding light on their unique characteristics and ecological significance. Mosses display a fascinating array of features that distinguish them from other plant groups. In this informal, chalk-on-board-style lecture Dr. Jessica Budke, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, will delve into their life cycle, emphasizing the dominance of the gametophyte generation and the critical role of spore dispersal in their reproductive strategy. It'll also cover the diverse structures of mosses, encompassing their leafy gametophytes, rhizoids for anchorage, and sporophytes with distinct capsules for spore production. Attention will be given to the adaptive advantages conferred by their small size, enabling colonization of diverse habitats, from forests to urban environments. By exploring moss morphology, this lecture will provide you with an understanding of these resilient organisms, fostering an appreciation for their evolutionary adaptations and ecological contributions.

Logistics: There is limited parking on the Arrowmont campus. There are two parking options with a fee near the campus: 1) the city parking garage located at 526 Parkway, Gatlinburg, TN 37738 (traffic light #3), which has an adjoining walkway to the Arrowmont campus, 2) or the Anakeesta parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

113. Plant Journal Making & Being Kin with the Flowers

Time: 9:00:00 AM to 3:00:00 PM
Trail: Arrowmont Fibers Studio
Meeting-Location: C - Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts on Gatlinburg Parkway.

In this workshop, pilgrims will create their own journal and build new relationships with flowers. In the first half of the session, pilgrims will learn coptic or saddle stitch techniques while crafting their own personalized book. The second half of the class invites everyone to immerse themselves in nature while going on a group walk where the class will channel your newfound bookbinding skills to sketch vibrant flowers and compose heartfelt apologies to the flora, fostering a deep connection between art, craft, and nature. The class will include a short artist's talk about Bec's work.

Logistics: There is limited parking on the Arrowmont campus. There are two parking options with a fee near the campus: 1) the city parking garage located at 526 Parkway, Gatlinburg, TN 37738 (traffic light #3), which has an adjoining walkway to the Arrowmont campus, 2) or the Anakeesta parking lot. Walk from your parking location to meet your group at the Arrowmont Art Studios: Fibers studio
Transportation: None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

114. Birding at the Townsend Wye - Chestnut Tops Trail

Time: 7:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Chestnut Top Trail

Meeting-Location: AD - Townsend Wye "Y" on Little River Road.

Explore different habitats around the Townsend Wye from the perspective of a bird. We will watch the antics of northern rough-winged swallows by the bridge, check on the eastern phoebes who nest along the river, search the banks for little tail-bobbing Louisiana water thrushes, and venture up the Chestnut Tops trail to look for and listen to a variety of spring migrants. Bring binoculars, water, rain gear, and comfortable walking shoes.

Logistics: Meet your leader in the Townsend Wye parking lot. Explore the Townsend Wye area and then head out on the Chestnut Tops Trail. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

115. Birding on Bullhead Trail

Time: 7:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Bullhead Trail

Meeting-Location: AI - Rainbow Falls and Trillium Gap Parking Area.

Join expert birders for a hike on the Bullhead Trail. Bring binoculars and rain gear. The walk ascends the moderate Bullhead Trail for 2.2 miles. The total round-trip hike is 4.5 miles.

Logistics: Park at the Rainbow Falls and Trillium Gap main parking lot. If the main parking lot is full, a second parking lot can be found 0.3 miles down the road on the right. Meet your group at the main parking lot, and then head out on the Bullhead Trail. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 25 min [Click here for Map.](#)

116. Birding the East End of Cades Cove

Time: 7:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Cades Cove Loop Road

Meeting-Location: D - Cades Cove Campground Store.

Retired National Park Service Ranger, Warren Bielenberg and Outdoor Educator, Wanda DeWaard have been chasing birds and butterflies for over 30 years. Join them to explore a variety of habitats in Cades Cove to identify birds and butterflies on the wing. Dress for the weather and bring a field guide if you have one, binoculars, water, and rain gear. Short, easy walks.

Logistics: Meet your group in the store's parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 50 min [Click here for Map.](#)

117. Edible Mushrooms at Chimneys Picnic Area

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Chimneys Picnic Area/Outdoor Classroom

Meeting-Location: F - Chimneys Picnic Area on Newfound Gap Road.

Learn the do's and don'ts about recognizing edible mushrooms and their habitat preferences with mycologists Hill Craddock and Andrew Methven. Short, easy walk.

Logistics: Meet your group at the picnic area/outdoor classroom above the parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 10 min [Click here for Map.](#)



118. Wildflower & Fungi Hike at Huskey Gap Trail - Short Version

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Huskey Gap Trail

Meeting-Location: AC - Sugarlands Visitor Center.

The Huskey Gap Trail is one of the few trails that was chosen for the first SWFP in 1951, and this botanically rich trail continues to be a must-see after 72 years! Walk the old trail that connected settlers of Sugarlands Valley and Little River, passing old homesites along the way while viewing the wildflower displays of crested dwarf iris, trillium, wild ginger, and bloodroot. A moderate 2-mile walk. Elevation gain: 500'.

Logistics: Meet your group in the bus parking lot, and take provided transportation to the Huskey Gap Trailhead. The bus will travel two miles south from Sugarlands Visitor Center on Newfound Gap Rd. The Huskey Gap Trailhead is directly across from the Riverview Quiet Walkway Trailhead. The bus will pick you up between 11:30am and 11:45am from the Huskey Gap Trailhead to return you to Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** Van shuttle provided: 5 min. **Drive Time:** [Click here for Map.](#)



- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

119. Kids Salamander Hike

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Thunderhead Prong Quiet Walkway
Meeting-Location: AE - Tremont Road (parking lot at end of gravel road).



Join our Kids Salamander Hike for a fun, educational adventure! Led by knowledgeable herpatologists, discover the fascinating world of these unique creatures and their vital role in nature. Explore the Thunderhead Prong Trail, observe salamanders, and engage in hands-on activities. Foster a love for wildlife in your little ones with this unforgettable learning experience!

Logistics: From the Townsend Wye, take Laurel Creek Rd to Tremont Rd, continuing after it turns to gravel until it terminates at the Middle Prong Trail Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 55 min [Click here for Map.](#)

120. Salamanders: Streams, Springs, and Leaves... What Hides Beneath?

Time: 8:45:00 AM to 12:00:00 PM
Trail: Cosby Picnic Area/Pavilion
Meeting-Location: J - Cosby Picnic Area off TN Route 32 (parking area on left).

This program begins with a short herpetology discussion on identification, life history, and ethics before embarking on a hike to search for some of Tennessee's greatest treasures (salamanders of course!). Hopefully, you'll get a chance to spot some of their scaly relatives along the way in this mid-elevation environment where densely forested streams and seeps meet open woodlands. Every amphibian-based hike will begin and end with decontamination, and a short discussion of survey protocols/ethics in order to protect these species from the spread of dangerous pathogens.

Logistics: Meet your group at the picnic area/pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)

121. Pollinators and Plants: Lessons in Pollination Biology

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Collins Creek Pavilion
Meeting-Location: I - Collins Creek Pavilion on Newfound Gap Road near Cherokee, NC.



Did you know that oftentimes you can predict the types of insects that will pollinate certain plants based on the shapes and colors of their flowers? Join experts in pollination biology to learn how to predict pollinators based on floral characteristics.

Logistics: Meet your group at the pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)

122. Wild about Ants! Discovering Ants of the Smokies

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Cosby Picnic Area/Pavilion
Meeting-Location: J - Cosby Picnic Area off TN Route 32 (parking area on left).

It is estimated that there are over 20,000 ant species worldwide. Approximately 133 of those species live in Tennessee! Come explore the fascinating world of ants with Dr. DeAnna Beasley from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. We'll set up stations to observe food preferences, learn about different ant behaviors, and conclude with a short hike to seek out different ant homes.

Logistics: Meet your group at the picnic area/pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)

123. Black Bear and Wild Hogs in the Smokies - Jakes Creek

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Jakes Creek Trail
Meeting-Location: R - Jakes Creek Trailhead past Elkmont Campground.



Walk along this old railroad route with retired Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency Managers and expert biologists as they describe the life history, tracking signs, human impacts, and environmental issues of black bears, wild hogs, and other mammals in the Southern Appalachians. An easy 2-3 mile walk.

Logistics: Park at the Jakes Creek Trailhead parking area that is 0.1 miles past the Little River Trailhead parking area. Meet your group at the Jakes Creek Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

124. Life in the Leaf Litter: A Tour of the Seldom-Seen Animal Diversity at Our Feet

Time: 9:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: UT Field Station
Meeting-Location: AC - Sugarlands Visitor Center.



Join zoologists at the University of Tennessee Field Station to explore the seldom-seen diversity living in the fallen leaf layer under the trees. Leaf litter provides habitat to many organisms and plays an important role in nutrient cycling in the forest. In this program, you will learn some of the methods that scientists use to study the animals that call leaf litter home. You will look under cover boards for salamanders and snakes, check live animal traps to find small mammals, and use Berlese funnels and microscopes to see the tiny invertebrates that live under our feet.

Logistics: Meet your group in the bus parking lot, and take provided transportation to the UT Field Station at Greenbrier. The bus will drop you off at the entry gate, and you will walk up to the Field Station with your group. The bus will pick you up between 11:30am and 11:45am from the entry gate at the Field Station and return you to Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** Van shuttle provided: 30 min. **Drive Time:** [Click here for Map.](#)

125. Fungi, Lichen, and Wildflower Hike at Ramsey Cascades Trail

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Ramsey Cascades Trail
Meeting-Location: P - Greenbrier Road Parking Lot #2.

Join professional mycologists, ecologists, and botanists to discover the rich diversity of wildflowers, fungi as well as how these unrelated organisms interact in the forest. A 4-5mile strenuous out and back hike (not going all the way to the falls). Elevation gain: ~1000 ft. Bring lunch, water, rain gear, and comfortable walking shoes.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, drive 0.3 miles, and park and meet your group at the second parking lot on the right. From there, carpool in as few cars as possible to the Ramsey Cascades Trailhead. To get to the trailhead from the parking lot, continue driving on Greenbrier Rd, and turn left onto Ramsey Prong Rd, where you will find the Ramsey Cascades Trailhead (35.702716° - 83.357737°). **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

126. Elkmont, Then and Now

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Elkmont Campground Area
Meeting-Location: AZ - Elkmont Campground (field behind Elkmont Campground Office).



Join Interpretive Park Ranger and historian Brad Free on a tour of the human history of Elkmont. Learn about Elkmont's interesting history and politics while touring the old vacation homes and other buildings at Elkmont, some of which only foundations remain. See the amazing restoration efforts of some of these homes that have taken place over the last few years. Be sure to ask Brad about the plane crash!

Logistics: Park within the Elkmont Campground. Meet your group in the grass field behind the Elkmont Campground Office. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

127. Tour the GSMNP Natural History Museum at Twin Creeks

Time: 9:30:00 AM to 11:00:00 AM
Trail: Twin Creeks Science and Education Center
Meeting-Location: AF - Twin Creeks (off Cherokee Orchard Road).



Come tour the natural history collections that have been used to document the biodiversity of the GSMNP since its beginning. In this behind-the-scenes tour of the GSMNP Natural History Museum, you will see specimens of mammals, birds (including the now-extinct passenger pigeon), fungi, insects, and plants. You will also learn how these specimens are prepared, stored, and cataloged as well as their importance to the Park.

Logistics: Meet your group in the Twin Creeks Science and Education Center. Park in the Twin Creeks Public Parking Area, cross the street, and walk up the short trail to the south end of the Science and Education Center. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

128. Advanced iNaturalist for Pilgrims

Time: 9:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Gatlinburg Trail
Meeting-Location: Z - Park Headquarters Road.



Do you already use the iNaturalist app (or Seek) to identify wildflowers? Great, but you could be doing so much more with this digital resource! Learn how to keep a log of your hike, track down a target plant, join a project or BioBlitz with other naturalists, make yourself a preview field-guide for a trail, and become part of the iNaturalist social network, all to make your Pilgrimage an even better event!

Logistics: Meet your group outside of the gated area. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 5 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

129. Photography of Flowers with Mirrorless or SLR Cameras: Advanced Workshop

Time: 8:15:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Sugarlands Training Room

Meeting-Location: AB - Sugarlands Visitor Center Training Room.



Learn how to improve your wildflower images with mirrorless and SLR cameras. Robert Hutson, co-author of Great Smoky Mountain Wildflowers: When and Where to Find Them, and Jack Carman, author of Wildflowers of Tennessee, will give a short visual presentation and then migrate outside for hands-on instruction in composition and photo technique. Bring hiking boots, a mirrorless or SLR camera, and a tripod. An easy 1-mile walk.

Logistics: Park at the Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 5 min [Click here for Map.](#)

130. Secret Stories of The Wildflowers Along Meigs Creek Trail.

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Meigs Creek Trail

Meeting-Location: AU - Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area off Little River Road (North Parking Lot).

Come on this relaxed, thoughtful, and sensory-immersive hike for a unique blend of wildflower folklore, indigenous plant usage, and our relationship to the natural world. Bring a sketchbook and pen for recording experiential impressions and take part in some simple 'green sketching' activities. No sketching or drawing experience necessary. Total round-trip will be 3-4 miles.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at the north parking area at Metcalf Bottoms. There is limited parking at the Sinks Bridge parking area, so carpool with your group in as few cars as possible from Metcalf Bottoms to the Sinks Bridge parking area (35.669493° - 83.662464°). From Metcalf Bottoms, turn right onto Wear Cove Gap Rd. Then, turn right onto Little River Gorge Rd, and follow this road for 2 miles. The trailhead will be on the left. After the hike, shuttle back to Metcalf Bottoms. **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool and car shuttle needed. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

131. Ferns at Baxter Creek Trail, along Big Creek

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Baxter Creek Trail

Meeting-Location: AP - Big Creek and Baxter Creek Parking Area

Come join expert pteridologists (people who study ferns) on this walk to learn about fern species in the Park. You will learn about the parts, life cycle, and ecology of ferns, as well as how to distinguish different forms. Bring a hand lens if you have one. A moderate 2-mile walk.

Logistics: Meet your group in the parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 50 min [Click here for Map.](#)

132. Ferns at Little River above Elkmont

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Little River Trail

Meeting-Location: S - Little River Trailhead past Elkmont Campground.

Have you ever seen an adder's tongue, a sang pointer, or the hitchhiking southern lady? Do you understand what parts of ferns or fern allies are leaves, and what parts are stems? Come see a variety of the Park's more common ferns and fern allies, learn about their structures, how they grow and reproduce, and their biodiversity in the Park. Bring a hand lens. An easy 2-mile walk.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at the parking area at the Little River Trailhead. The parking area and trailhead are just past the Little River Bridge. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

133. Moss Walk: Engine Creek Trail (formerly Injun Creek) in Greenbrier

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Engine Creek Trail (formerly Injun Creek)

Meeting-Location: M - Greenbrier Road Ranger Station.

Learn about the diminutive world of mosses: a diverse group of very beautiful, unique, and small non-flowering plants that are found throughout the Smokies. You will learn about a variety of mosses, liverworts, and hornworts as you observe them along the trail. You will also discuss their life cycle and basic ways to distinguish them from one another. Bring a 10x hand lens or a strong magnifying glass if possible. An easy 2-mile hike that includes a narrow but sturdy stream crossing with a handrail and a short rocky area that is often wet and muddy.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, drive 1 mile, and park and meet your group at the Greenbrier Road Ranger Station (35.729633° -83.406016°). You will then head out onto Engine Creek Trail (formerly Injun Creek) from the Ranger Station.

Transportation: None provided. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

134. Trees and Shrubs at Cucumber Gap

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 11:00:00 AM
Trail: Cucumber Gap Trail
Meeting-Location: R - Jakes Creek Trailhead past Elkmont Campground.

This hike begins in a large grove of second growth tulip poplar trees. After the first mile, you will start to notice a change in tree species composition. Make sure to find the Fraser magnolias at the top of the gap. This trip begins at Jakes Creek, following the old railroad route, and ends near Tulip Branch on Cucumber Gap Trail, and then returns. A moderate 2-3 mile hike. Elevation gain: 500'.

Logistics: Park at the Jakes Creek Trailhead parking area that is 0.1 miles past the Little River Trailhead parking area. Meet your group at the Jakes Creek Trailhead. After walking 0.7 miles on Jakes Creek Trail with your group, you will turn left onto Cucumber Gap Trail.

Transportation: None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

135. Trees and Shrubs of High Elevation at Indian Gap Trail

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Appalachian Trail, Indian Gap, Newfound Gap
Meeting-Location: AA - Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road.

Pass from the closed canopy of an old growth spruce-fir forest into the open canopy of a pristine beech gap forest. Notice the giant dead Fraser firs, which have succumbed to the spread of the invasive balsam woolly adelgid. A 1.5-mile moderate walk. Elevation gain: 500'.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at Rockefeller Memorial. Before beginning this hike, some group members need to shuttle their cars to the end point of the hike at the Road Prong Trail parking area while others wait at the Rockefeller Memorial. Leave as many cars at the Road Prong parking area as will be necessary to shuttle everyone back to Rockefeller Memorial after the hike. From Rockefeller Memorial drive southwest 1.5 miles along the Clingmans Dome Road. The Road Prong parking area will be on the right (35.60937, -83.44654). Leave cars there and return to Rockefeller Memorial to begin your hike. After your hike, shuttle everyone back to Rockefeller Memorial.

Transportation: None provided. Car shuttle needed. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

136. Trees and Shrubs of High Elevation at Sugarland Mountain Trail

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 11:00:00 AM
Trail: Fork Ridge Trail, AT, Sugarland Mountain Trail
Meeting-Location: AA - Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road.

Walk through a range of forest types as you hike through the elevation changes along the Sugarland Mountain Trail. You'll notice epiphytic tree growth, signaling the temperate rainforest nature of this high point in the mountains. The trail follows a ridgeline surrounded by old, largely uncut sections of yellow birch and red spruce.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at the Newfound Gap parking area. There is VERY limited parking at the Fork Ridge Trailhead, a max of 6 cars can fit in this area. Carpool in as few cars as possible from the Newfound Gap parking area to the Fork Ridge Trailhead. From the Newfound Gap parking area, head southwest onto Clingmans Dome Rd. Continue for 3.8 miles. The Fork Ridge Trailhead parking area will be on your left. IF THERE IS NOT ENOUGH PARKING AT THE FORK RIDGE TRAILHEAD, park as many cars as possible in the Fork Ridge parking lot, leaving one space open. Shuttle the remaining cars 1.2 miles further down Clingmans Dome Rd to a larger parking lot. Park the cars and bring all the people who shuttled back to the trailhead in one car. **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed.

Drive Time: 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

137. Wildflower and Cascade Walk Along Middle Prong Trail

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Middle Prong Trail
Meeting-Location: AE - Tremont Road (parking lot at end of gravel road).

Stroll with expert botanists and conservationists along Middle Prong Trail while stopping along the way to enjoy many of the spring ephemeral wildflowers, ferns, and flowering trees of the Smokies such as tulip trees, wild ginger, and violets. Interestingly, this trail used to be a railroad bed, and carried out the last logs from the Smokies in 1939. A moderate 4-mile walk.

Logistics: From the Townsend Wye, take Laurel Creek Rd to Tremont Rd, continuing after it turns to gravel until it terminates at the Middle Prong Trail Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 55 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

138. Wildflower Hike at Cove Hardwood Nature Trail (Chimneys Picnic Area loop trail)

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 11:00:00 AM

Trail: Cove Hardwood Nature Trail

Meeting-Location: F - Chimneys Picnic Area on Newfound Gap Road.

Cove hardwood forests are one of the most biologically diverse communities in North America. This easily accessible trail is a great place to see a lot of different wildflowers as well as trees, shrubs, and vines. There are more species of wildflowers along this short, easy walk than just about any other place in the Park, making it a must for those wanting to learn about spring wildflowers like fringed phacelia, several trillium species, golden saxifrage (can you spot this tiny little plant?), wild ginger, and more. Short walk with elevation gain.

Logistics: Park in the Chimneys Picnic Area parking lot, and meet your group at the Cove Hardwood Nature Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 10 min [Click here for Map.](#)

139. Wildflower Hike at Gabes Mountain Trail

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Gabes Mountain Trail

Meeting-Location: J - Cosby Picnic Area off TN Route 32 (parking area on left).

Starting near the large parking area, hike up Gabes Mountain paralleling Rock Creek for a short period. When confronted with a fork in the trail, take a left to head back to Cosby Campground, take a right to extend the hike and make it an out and back. On this hike you'll encounter creeping and blue phlox, wild geraniums, trout lilies, yellow fairy bells, cut-leaf and two-leaved toothworts, sweet white and canada violets, and who knows you might see some trilliums and orchids too. An easy 2-3 mile hike.

Logistics: Meet your group in the parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)

140. Wildflower Hike at Old Settlers Trail

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Old Settlers Trail

Meeting-Location: Q - Greenbrier Road Parking Lot #3.

As you walk through former homesteads and cemeteries in this program, you will discover the many wildflowers now growing in the abandoned fields and among the stone chimneys and fences. Hike up the trail to the Copeland Divide, and then return. A moderate 3-mile walk. Elevation gain: 200'.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, drive 0.5 miles, and park and meet your group at the third parking lot on the right. From there, carpool in as few cars as possible to the Old Settlers Trailhead. To get to the trailhead from the parking lot, continue driving on Greenbrier Rd, and turn left onto Ramsey Prong Rd. The Old Settlers Trailhead will be on the left (35.708638° -83.377394°).

Transportation: None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

141. Wildflower Hike at Snake Den Ridge Trail

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Snake Den Ridge Trail

Meeting-Location: J - Cosby Picnic Area off TN Route 32 (parking area on left).

This 4-5 mile round trip does not go all the way to the top of the ridge, but still sees some significant elevation gain. On this trail you will encounter species such as white clintonia, Fraser's sedge, silver bells, foam flower, squirrel corn, creeping phlox, and fraser magnolia.

Logistics: Meet your group in the parking lot. Walk through the campground with your leader to find the trail head. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)

142. Edible Mushrooms at Chimneys Picnic Area

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Chimneys Picnic Area/Outdoor Classroom

Meeting-Location: F - Chimneys Picnic Area on Newfound Gap Road.

Learn the do's and don'ts about recognizing edible mushrooms and their habitat preferences with mycologists Rachel Swenie and Hill Craddock. Short, easy walk.

Logistics: Meet your group at the picnic area/outdoor classroom above the parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 10 min [Click here for Map.](#)



- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

143. Fungi and their Funky Forest Friends found in the Cosby Picnic Area

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Cosby Picnic Area/Pavilion, Trails TBD
Meeting-Location: J - Cosby Picnic Area off TN Route 32 (parking area on left).



Fungi are essential organisms in the forest. You will start this program by learning about what fungi are and what they are not. You will get to study, smell, and touch a display of different fungal types, including mushrooms, puffballs, cup fungi, conks, and lichens. After the fun fungal lesson, you will head out on a hike to explore the forest and look for evidence of the fungal friends and foes. Bring a hand lens if you have one. Easy 2-3 mile walk.

Logistics: Meet your group at the picnic area/pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)

144. Salamanders: Streams, Springs, and Leaves... What Hides Beneath?

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Cosby Picnic Area/Pavilion
Meeting-Location: J - Cosby Picnic Area off TN Route 32 (parking area on left).

This program begins with a short herpetology discussion on identification, life history, and ethics before embarking on a hike to search for some of Tennessee's greatest treasures (salamanders of course!). Hopefully, you'll get a chance to spot some of their scaly relatives along the way in this mid-elevation environment where densely forested streams and seeps meet open woodlands. Every amphibian-based hike will begin and end with decontamination, and a short discussion of survey protocols/ethics in order to protect these species from the spread of dangerous pathogens.

Logistics: Meet your group at the picnic area/pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)

145. Butterflies in Cades Cove

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Cades Cove Loop Road
Meeting-Location: D - Cades Cove Campground Store.

Retired National Park Service Ranger, Warren Bielenberg and Outdoor Educator, Wanda DeWaard have been chasing birds and butterflies for over 30 years. Join them to explore a variety of habitats in Cades Cove to identify birds and butterflies on the wing. Dress for the weather and bring a field guide if you have one, binoculars, water, and rain gear. Short, easy walks.

Logistics: Meet your group in the store's parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 50 min [Click here for Map.](#)

146. Geology: Karst and Bull Cave

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Ace Gap Trail
Meeting-Location: AL - Ace Gap Trailhead

Tennessee has over 10,000 caves – the most of any state, and the Smokies has the deepest one of them all! We will take a short walk to the cave entrance (but not enter the cave) and adjacent active sinkholes. We will discuss the very unique nature of this mountaintop karst feature and how it relates to nearby Cades and Tuckaleechee coves and Whiteoak Sink and learn how it all fits in with the geologic history of the Park. About 1/2 mile of (possibly muddy) walking - a walking staff is helpful.

Logistics: Meet your group in the gravel parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 50 min [Click here for Map.](#)

147. Tips and Tricks for Long Distance Hiking

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Lower Mt. Cammerer Trail
Meeting-Location: J - Cosby Picnic Area off TN Route 32 (parking area on left).

Do you find yourself captivated by the allure of long-distance hiking? Are visions of conquering the Appalachian Trail (AT), Pacific Crest Trail (PCT), and Continental Divide Trail (CDT) a constant presence in your thoughts? Embark on an informative hike with Randy Small, a proud member of the 900 club, and Andy Wall, an accomplished AT through-hiker. Together, they'll delve into the intricate logistics and essential skills required for the world of long-distance hiking! Join us for an insightful discussion that will fuel your passion for adventure.

Logistics: Meet your group in the parking lot. Walk through the campground with your leader to find the trail head. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

148. Elkmont, Then and Now

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 3:30:00 PM
Trail: Elkmont Campground Area
Meeting-Location: AZ - Elkmont Campground (field behind Elkmont Campground Office).



Join Interpretive Park Ranger and historian Brad Free on a tour of the human history of Elkmont. Learn about Elkmont's interesting history and politics while touring the old vacation homes and other buildings at Elkmont, some of which only foundations remain. See the amazing restoration efforts of some of these homes that have taken place over the last few years. Be sure to ask Brad about the plane crash!

Logistics: Park within the Elkmont Campground. Meet your group in the grass field behind the Elkmont Campground Office.

Transportation: None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

149. History, Wildflowers, and Culture of Big Greenbrier

Time: 1:15:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM
Trail: Greenbrier Cove
Meeting-Location: N - Greenbrier Road
 Terminus at Porters Creek Trailhead.

In this program, you will discover a diversity of wildflowers and hear stories of life in Big Greenbrier prior to and following the establishment of the Park. What were the communities like in this area? How did people use this magnificent landscape? What was a day in the life like for people who made Big Greenbrier their home? Park Volunteer and VIP Frances Hensley, also known as Granny Frannie, will be in character to convey these things and much more during this easy 2-mile hike.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, and drive for 4.5 miles, all the way to the end where you will reach the Porters Creek Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

150. Exotic Plants on the Gatlinburg Trail

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM
Trail: Gatlinburg Trail
Meeting-Location: Z - Park Headquarters Road.

Since the 1700s, botanists have used the term "exotic" to describe plant species from elsewhere introduced into a new area. During this hike, you'll focus on learning to identify exotic plant species, the differences between naturalized exotic species and those that aren't, what makes a species "invasive," and about the negative impact these species have on our native plants and animals. An easy 2-3 mile walk.

Logistics: Meet your group outside of the gated area. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 5 min [Click here for Map.](#)

151. Nature Journaling at Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM
Trail: Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area (North)
Meeting-Location: AU - Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area off Little River Road (North Parking Lot).



Keeping a nature journal is a fun way to create a record of your experiences in the natural world, using primarily images - usually drawings or writing. We'll talk about different methods and ideas for ways to make your journal a lively, informative treasure to enjoy for years to come. No drawing skills are necessary, just the desire to keep a thoughtful notebook about what you observe. Bring at least a pencil and paper. Additional materials will be provided.

Logistics: Park at the north parking lot at Metcalf Bottoms, and meet your group at the picnic area. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

152. Fun with Names: Botanical Latin for Beginners

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM
Trail: Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area (South), Metcalf Bottoms Trail
Meeting-Location: U - Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area off Little River Road (South Parking Area).



On this leisurely hike, observe a variety of beautiful wildflowers, learn to identify them, and hear the stories behind their Latin names. You will discover that learning botanical names can be as much fun (or more fun!) as knowing the common ones, discuss the importance of botanical names, and realize that knowing a little basic Latin helps you better understand various aspects of plants and their relationships to others. Previous experience is not needed.

Logistics: Park at the south parking lot at Metcalf Bottoms, and meet your group at the picnic area. Then, head out onto Metcalf Bottoms Trail. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided**
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

153. Parasites! An Important Component of Our Hidden Biodiversity

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: UT Field Station

Meeting-Location: AC - Sugarlands Visitor Center.



Parasite Ecologist Dr. Ricky Fiorillo from Georgia-Gwinnett College will discuss the natural history and ecology of an often-unappreciated component of our hidden biodiversity, while guiding you through a hands-on dissection searching for worm parasites in a natural host. You will examine the heart, liver, and digestive tract of common freshwater fish species. See for yourself just how interesting and beautiful parasites can be, and why they are an important component of our ecosystem. The minimum age to perform dissections is high school, but anyone can watch.

Logistics: Meet your group in the bus parking lot, and take provided transportation to the UT Field Station at Greenbrier. The bus will drop you off at the entry gate, and you will walk up to the Field Station with your group. The bus will pick you up between 4:30pm and 4:45pm from the entry gate at the Field Station and return you to Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** Van shuttle provided: 30 min. **Drive Time:** [Click here for Map.](#)

154. Sketching Wildflowers at Twin Creeks Pavilion

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Twin Creeks Pavilion

Meeting-Location: AF - Twin Creeks (off Cherokee Orchard Road).



View wildflowers through the eyes of expert botanical artists, and explore your own creativity in the natural world. Bring your own art materials (at least a pencil and paper). Short, easy walk.

Logistics: Meet your group at the pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

155. Ferns at Baxter Creek Trail, along Big Creek

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Baxter Creek Trail

Meeting-Location: AP - Big Creek and Baxter Creek Parking Area

Come join expert pteridologists (people who study ferns) on this walk to learn about fern species in the Park. You will learn about the parts, life cycle, and ecology of ferns, as well as how to distinguish different forms. Bring a hand lens if you have one. A moderate 2-mile walk.

Logistics: Meet your group in the parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 50 min [Click here for Map.](#)

156. Moss Walk: Engine Creek Trail (formerly Injun Creek) in Greenbrier

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Engine Creek Trail (formerly Injun Creek)

Meeting-Location: M - Greenbrier Road Ranger Station.

Learn about the diminutive world of mosses: a diverse group of very beautiful, unique, and small non-flowering plants that are found throughout the Smokies. You will learn about a variety of mosses, liverworts, and hornworts as you observe them along the trail. You will also discuss their life cycle and basic ways to distinguish them from one another. Bring a 10x hand lens or a strong magnifying glass if possible. An easy 2-mile hike that includes a narrow but sturdy stream crossing with a handrail and a short rocky area that is often wet and muddy.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, drive 1 mile, and park and meet your group at the Greenbrier Road Ranger Station (35.729633° -83.406016°). You will then head out onto Engine Creek Trail (formerly Injun Creek) from the Ranger Station.

Transportation: None provided. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

157. Tree Identification for Beginners at Collins Creek Picnic Pavilion

Time: 1:15:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Collins Creek Pavilion

Meeting-Location: I - Collins Creek Pavilion on Newfound Gap Road near Cherokee, NC.



This program is for novices who want to gain a better understanding of trees and shrubs. After your leaders teach you the basics of leaf shapes and patterns, you will take a short hike to apply and reinforce what you have learned. Bring a hand lens and/or magnifying glass if you have them, but they are not required. A moderate 1.5-mile walk.

Logistics: Meet your group at the pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

158. Trees and Shrubs at Cucumber Gap

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM
Trail: Cucumber Gap Trail
Meeting-Location: R - Jakes Creek Trailhead past Elkmont Campground.

This hike begins in a large grove of second growth tulip poplar trees. After the first mile, you will start to notice a change in tree species composition. Make sure to find the Fraser magnolias at the top of the gap. This trip begins at Jakes Creek, following the old railroad route, and ends near Tulip Branch on Cucumber Gap Trail, and then returns. A moderate 2-3 mile hike. Elevation gain: 500'.

Logistics: Park at the Jakes Creek Trailhead parking area that is 0.1 miles past the Little River Trailhead parking area. Meet your group at the Jakes Creek Trailhead. After walking 0.7 miles on Jakes Creek Trail with your group, you will turn left onto Cucumber Gap Trail.

Transportation: None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

159. Trees and Shrubs of High Elevation at Sugarland Mountain Trail

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM
Trail: Fork Ridge Trail, AT, Sugarland Mountain Trail
Meeting-Location: AA - Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road.

Walk through a range of forest types as you hike through the elevation changes along the Sugarland Mountain Trail. You'll notice epiphytic tree growth, signaling the temperate rainforest nature of this high point in the mountains. The trail follows a ridgeline surrounded by old, largely uncut sections of yellow birch and red spruce.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at the Newfound Gap parking area. There is VERY limited parking at the Fork Ridge Trailhead, a max of 6 cars can fit in this area. Carpool in as few cars as possible from the Newfound Gap parking area to the Fork Ridge Trailhead. From the Newfound Gap parking area, head southwest onto Clingmans Dome Rd. Continue for 3.8 miles. The Fork Ridge Trailhead parking area will be on your left. IF THERE IS NOT ENOUGH PARKING AT THE FORK RIDGE TRAILHEAD, park as many cars as possible in the Fork Ridge parking lot, leaving one space open. Shuttle the remaining cars 1.2 miles further down Clingmans Dome Rd to a larger parking lot. Park the cars and bring all the people who shuttled back to the trailhead in one car. **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed.

Drive Time: 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

160. Nature Explorers: Kids' Educational Wildflower Walk

Time: 1:00:00 PM to 4:00:00 PM
Trail: Sugarland Valley Nature Trail
Meeting-Location: AQ - Sugarland Valley Nature Trail

Join us on a delightful educational wildflower walk crafted just for kids! Led by passionate naturalists, this hands-on adventure transforms nature into a vibrant classroom. On this interactive walk, children will engage with the diverse flora, learning about colors, shapes, and scents, fostering a love for the environment. This immersive experience not only nurtures a connection to nature but also inspires the next generation to become enthusiastic stewards of our planet.



Logistics: Meet your group in the parking area. NOTE: the parking area for Sugarland Valley Nature Trail IS NOT at the Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 5 min [Click here for Map.](#)

161. The Incredible Plant Biodiversity of Porters Creek

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM
Trail: Porters Creek Trail
Meeting-Location: N - Greenbrier Road Terminus at Porters Creek Trailhead.

This plant biodiversity hike will be led by Tom Groves, Senior Botanist/@plants.are.people.too, and Joey Shaw. The botanical hike will focus on exploration of the incredible botanical diversity within Porters Creek. This distinguished wildflower hike will traverse an area of the Smoky Mountains that has remained unaltered by the logging activities of the early 1900s. Encircled by mountains and following the creek upslope, the trail reveals an exhibition of indigenous wildflowers at every turn and creek crossing. We are sure to see most of the Pilgrimage's "most wanted" as well as the often overlooked, beautiful grasses and sedges, vibrant trilliums, azaleas, magnolias, buckeyes, and more. Tom and Joey will impart insights into the species rich flora of flowers, ferns, trees, and shrubs encountered along this absolute gem of a trail.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, and drive for 4.5 miles, all the way to the end where you will reach the Porters Creek Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided**
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

162. Wildflower Hike at Chestnut Top Trail

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Chestnut Top Trail

Meeting-Location: AD - Townsend Wye "Y" on Little River Road.

The Chestnut Top Trail is home to one of the grandest wildflower displays in the Smokies. While hiking on this narrow trail, be prepared to see wildflower species such as Jack-in-the-pulpit, little brown jug, stonecrop, Carey's saxifrage, miterwort, foam flower, fire pink, longspur violet, cross-vine, and many others. A moderate 2-mile walk.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at the Townsend Wye, across the road from the Chestnut Top Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

163. Wildflower Hike at Huskey Gap Trail - Short Version

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Huskey Gap Trail

Meeting-Location: AC - Sugarlands Visitor Center.



The Huskey Gap Trail is one of the few trails that was chosen for the first SWFP in 1951, and this botanically rich trail continues to be a must-see after 72 years! Walk the old trail that connected settlers of Sugarlands Valley to Little River while passing old homesites and viewing the wildflower displays of crested dwarf iris, trillium, wild ginger, and bloodroot. A moderate 2-mile walk. Elevation gain: 500'.

Logistics: Meet your group in the bus parking lot, and take provided transportation to the Huskey Gap Trailhead. The bus will travel two miles south from Sugarlands Visitor Center on Newfound Gap Rd. The Huskey Gap Trailhead is directly across from the Riverview Quiet Walkway Trailhead. The bus will pick you up between 4:30pm and 4:45pm from the Huskey Gap Trailhead to return you to Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** Van shuttle provided: 5 min. **Drive Time:** [Click here for Map.](#)

164. Wildflower Hike at Kephart Prong Trail

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:45:00 PM

Trail: Kephart Prong Trail

Meeting-Location: T - Kephart Prong Trailhead

Hiking among history, water, and wildflowers, this trail will follow the Kephart Prong past the remains of a Civilian Conservation Corps camp, a former fish hatchery, and an old narrow gauge railroad. All of these historic remains have wildflowers such as wood betony and rue-anemone growing in and around them. Hike up to the Kephart Prong Shelter before turning around. An easy 4 mile walk.

Logistics: Park in the Kephart Prong parking lot and meet your group at the trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

165. Wildflower Hike at Old Settlers Trail

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Old Settlers Trail

Meeting-Location: Q - Greenbrier Road Parking Lot #3.

As you walk through former homesteads and cemeteries in this program, you will discover the many wildflowers now growing in the abandoned fields and among the stone chimneys and fences. Hike up the trail to the Copeland Divide, and then return. A moderate 3-mile walk. Elevation gain: 200'.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, drive 0.5 miles, and park and meet your group at the third parking lot on the right. From there, carpool in as few cars as possible to the Old Settlers Trailhead. To get to the trailhead from the parking lot, continue driving on Greenbrier Rd, and turn left onto Ramsey Prong Rd. The Old Settlers Trailhead will be on the left (35.708638° -83.377394°).

Transportation: None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

166. Wildflower Hike on the Appalachian Trail from Newfound Gap to Indian Gap

Time: 1:00:00 PM to 4:00:00 PM

Trail: Appalachian Trail, Indian Gap, Newfound Gap

Meeting-Location: AA - Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road.

Pass from the closed canopy of an old growth spruce-fir forest into the open canopy of a pristine beech gap forest where early spring ephemeral wildflowers like trout lilies, more spring beauties than you can imagine, white phacelia, and various trilliums abound because of protections afforded from feral hog exclosures. A moderate 1.5-mile walk. Elevation gain: 500'.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at Rockefeller Memorial. Before beginning this hike, some group members need to shuttle their cars to the end point of the hike at the Road Prong Trail parking area while others wait at the Rockefeller Memorial. Leave as many cars at the Road Prong parking area as will be necessary to shuttle everyone back to Rockefeller Memorial after the hike. From Rockefeller Memorial drive southwest 1.5 miles along the Clingmans Dome Road. The Road Prong parking area will be on the right (35.60937, -83.44654). Leave cars there and return to Rockefeller Memorial to begin your hike. After your hike, shuttle everyone back to Rockefeller Memorial.

Transportation: None provided. Car shuttle needed. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided**
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

167. Bats: Stirring the Cauldron at the Twin Creeks Area

Time: 7:30:00 PM to 9:30:00 PM

Trail: Twin Creeks Pavilion

Meeting-Location: AF - Twin Creeks (off Cherokee Orchard Road).

In this program, learn from chiropterologists (people who study bats) about the ecology, distributions, feeding and mating behaviors of bats as well as why bats are important and economically beneficial to preserve. You will also get to use some high-tech gadgetry to listen to bats echolocating to hunt insects. Bring warm clothes and a flashlight (preferably with a red light). Short, easy walk.

Logistics: Meet your group at the pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

168. Fortune Tellers of the Future: How Conservationists Are Charting the Future One Map at a Time

Time: 7:30:00 PM to 9:30:00 PM

Trail: Arrowmont Wolpert Gallery

Meeting-Location: C - Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts on Gatlinburg Parkway.



Climate change is happening at increased velocity and with increasing severity. Characterized as the “6th Mass Extinction”, against these massive challenges, how do conservationists keep up? Maps have long held our imaginations; from “Thar be dragons” to shaping our understanding of foundational scientific concepts such as biogeography, plate tectonics and more recently with visualizing the spread of a global pandemic in near real-time. Can geography captivate us once again to help us shape the future we want to see? Sunny Fleming is the Industry Lead for Environment and Conservation at Esri, the global leader in geographic information systems technology, or GIS. In this talk, she explores the ways in which conservationists are pushing the boundaries of GIS technology and revolutionizing how we approach and scale conservation efforts in these unprecedented times. Her message is one of hope as she examines how the conservation community are applying the science of geography to create “digital twins” of our fragile planet; facilitating greater understanding of the complex interactions of our social, economic and environmental systems to design a more resilient and sustainable future.

Logistics: There is limited parking on the Arrowmont campus. There are two parking options with a fee near the campus: 1) the city parking garage located at 526 Parkway, Gatlinburg, TN 37738 (traffic light #3), which has an adjoining walkway to the Arrowmont campus, 2) or the Anakeesta parking lot. Walk from your parking location to meet your group at the Arrowmont Art Studios: Painting Studio.

Transportation: None provided. **Drive Time:** 15 min [Click here for Map.](#)

169. Photography of Flowers Motorcade

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 4:45:00 PM

Trail: Trails TBD

Meeting-Location: G - City Parking Lot on Reagan Drive By Gatlinburg Fire Station.



Travel with Jack Carman, author of Wildflowers of Tennessee, and Robert Hutson, co-author of Great Smoky Mountain Wildflowers: When and Where to Find Them, to nearby wildflower locations to learn basic and advanced techniques for photographing wildflowers. They provide hands-on instruction and assistance. Short, easy walks.

Logistics: Meet your group at the city parking lot, and leaders will decide which trails to carpool toward from there. **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 10 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided**
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

170. Tree Hike to See the Giants at Albright Grove

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Maddron Bald Trail, Albright Grove Loop Trail

Meeting-Location: AC - Sugarlands Visitor Center.



Hike to one of the most magnificent groves of old-growth trees in the Park. See massive tulip poplars, fraser magnolias, silverbells, maples, and hemlocks (which are unfortunately mostly now fallen because of hemlock wooly adelgids). Pass wonderful displays of wildflowers and an 1889 cabin made of chestnut. See if you can spot the epiphytic elderberry way up in the canopy of a large tree! Bring lunch, water, rain gear, and comfortable walking shoes. A moderate 6.5-mile hike. Elevation gain: 1,600'.

Logistics: Meet your group in the bus parking lot, and take provided transportation to the Maddron Bald Trailhead, located off of Hwy 321 and Baxter Road (behind Imagination Mountain Camp Resort). The bus will pick you up between 4:30pm and 4:45pm from the Maddron Bald Trailhead to return you to Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** Van shuttle provided: 40 min. **Drive Time:** [Click here for Map.](#)

171. Wildflowers, Plant Communities, Fungi, and Lunch at LeConte with Botanical Amigos

Time: 7:30:00 AM to 5:30:00 PM

Trail: Alum Cave Trail, Bullhead Trail

Meeting-Location: AC - Sugarlands Visitor Center.



Here is one you won't want to miss! Put a real end to your pilgrimage with a program that'll be fulfilling to your legs, lungs, spirits, and brains! Join the Amigos, Ed Lickey, Randy Small, Joey Shaw, and Shannon Gordon on an all-day quest through many of the park's ecological communities from low to high elevation. We'll be dropped off at the Alum Cave Trailhead and climb from about 3600 ft to 6400 ft in ~5 miles to tally as many plant and fungi species as possible through many of the park's ecological communities. We'll have lunch (you must bring your own lunch) at LeConte with spectacular views and a visit to the lodge. After lunch we'll start our ~6-mile descent down Bullhead Trail, which following the 2016 fires and young regrowth of Table Mountain Pine should provide more spectacular views as well as a unique ephemeral post-fire ecological community and suite of species. We guarantee you'll see over 100 species on this spirit quest!

Logistics: We'll leave SVC in a van shuttle at 7:30AM and start on trail by 8:00AM. We will be picked up between 5:00-5:30PM in the parking area for the Old Sugarlands Trail Trailhead (same as Trillium Gap Trailhead), which is off of the one-way loop Cherokee Orchard Road. The van shuttle will bring us back to Sugarlands Visitor Center between 5:30-6:00PM. **Transportation:** Van shuttle provided: 15 min. **Drive Time:** [Click here for Map.](#)

172. Birding and Wildflowers on School House Gap Trail

Time: 7:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: School House Gap Trail

Meeting-Location: AD - Townsend Wye "Y" on Little River Road.

The School House Gap Trail follows a beautiful stream lined with rhododendron, and ultimately enters into an upland deciduous habitat with scattered pines containing a variety of colorful spring warblers, vireos, and tanagers. Bring binoculars, water, rain gear, and comfortable walking shoes.

Logistics: Meet in the Townsend Wye Parking area. Leaders will organize a carpool to travel from Townsend Wye to School House Gap Trailhead. Fit as many people into as few cars as possible. Drive 3.9 miles towards Cades Cove on Laurel Creek Rd to School House Gap Trailhead. There is limited parking there. **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

173. Birding at the Townsend Wye - Chestnut Tops Trail

Time: 7:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Chestnut Top Trail

Meeting-Location: AD - Townsend Wye "Y" on Little River Road.

Explore different habitats around the Townsend Wye from the perspective of a bird. We will watch the antics of northern rough-winged swallows by the bridge, check on the eastern phoebes who nest along the river, search the banks for little tail-bobbing Louisiana water thrushes, and venture up the Chestnut Tops trail to look for and listen to a variety of spring migrants. Bring binoculars, water, rain gear, and comfortable walking shoes.

Logistics: Meet your leader in the Townsend Wye parking lot. Explore the Townsend Wye area and then head out on the Chestnut Tops Trail. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided**
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

174. Birding on Low Gap Trail

Time: 7:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Low Gap Trail

Meeting-Location: J - Cosby Picnic Area off TN Route 32 (parking area on left).

Join expert birders for a hike on the Low Gap Trail. Bring binoculars and rain gear. Easy 2-3 mile walk.

Logistics: Meet your group in the parking lot, and then head out on the Low Gap Trail. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)

175. Fungi of Thunderhead Prong Quiet Walkway

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Thunderhead

Prong Quiet Walkway

Meeting-Location: AE - Tremont Road (parking lot at end of gravel road).

Learn from expert mycologists about fungal biology and the importance of fungi in nutrient and life cycles within forest ecosystems. Leaders will also discuss classification of fungi and edible vs. poisonous fungi. An easy 2-3 mile walk.

Logistics: From the Townsend Wye, take Laurel Creek Rd to Tremont Rd, continuing after it turns to gravel until it terminates at the Middle Prong Trail Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 55 min [Click here for Map.](#)

176. Salamanders: Streams, Springs, and Leaves... What Hides Beneath?

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Cosby Picnic Area/Pavilion

Meeting-Location: J - Cosby Picnic Area off TN Route 32 (parking area on left).

This program begins with a short herpetology discussion on identification, life history, and ethics before embarking on a hike to search for some of Tennessee's greatest treasures (salamanders of course!). Hopefully, you'll get a chance to spot some of their scaly relatives along the way in this mid-elevation environment where densely forested streams and seeps meet open woodlands. Every amphibian-based hike will begin and end with decontamination, and a short discussion of survey protocols/ethics in order to protect these species from the spread of dangerous pathogens.

Logistics: Meet your group at the picnic area/pavilion. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)

177. Pollinators and Plants: Lessons in Pollination Biology

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: Cosby Nature Trail

Meeting-Location: J - Cosby Picnic Area off TN Route 32 (parking area on left).

Did you know that oftentimes you can predict the types of insects that will pollinate certain plants based on the shapes and colors of their flowers? Join experts in pollination biology to learn how to predict pollinators based on floral characteristics.

Logistics: Meet your group in the parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)



178. Life in the Leaf Litter: A Tour of the Seldom-Seen Animal Diversity at Our Feet

Time: 9:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM

Trail: UT Field Station

Meeting-Location: AH - UT Field Station at Greenbrier

Join zoologists at the University of Tennessee Field Station to explore the seldom-seen diversity living in the fallen leaf layer under the trees. Leaf litter provides habitat to many organisms and plays an important role in nutrient cycling in the forest. In this program, you will learn some of the methods that scientists use to study the animals that call leaf litter home. You will look under cover boards for salamanders and snakes, check live animal traps to find small mammals, and use Berlese funnels and microscopes to see the tiny invertebrates that live under our feet.

Logistics: Park and meet your leader in the cemetery. The cemetery is located on the right before the gate. You will then hike 0.5 miles up the road with your leader past an old house to a pavillion area. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)



- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

179. Advanced iNaturalist for Pilgrims

Time: 9:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Gatlinburg Trail
Meeting-Location: Z - Park Headquarters Road.



Do you already use the iNaturalist app (or Seek) to identify wildflowers? Great, but you could be doing so much more with this digital resource! Learn how to keep a log of your hike, track down a target plant, join a project or BioBlitz with other naturalists, make yourself a preview field-guide for a trail, and become part of the iNaturalist social network, all to make your Pilgrimage an even better event!

Logistics: Meet your group outside of the gated area. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 5 min [Click here for Map.](#)

180. A Pilgrimage to the Hidden Avent Cabin for Wildflower Tea

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Jakes Creek Trail
Meeting-Location: R - Jakes Creek Trailhead past Elkmont Campground.

Embark with Nina, #blueridgebotanic, on a relaxed, interesting, and soul-stirring pilgrimage to the historic and curious Avent Cabin, nestled in the heart of the park. After passing through the rich wildflower displays along Jakes Creek, you'll sneak to the little-visited destination to relax and savor a moment of serenity by partaking in a unique wildflower tea ceremony at one of the oldest cabins in the park. Delicately brewed with handpicked wildflowers, the tea offers a taste of the mountains' essence. This sojourn blends nature, history, art, and sensory delight, leaving pilgrims with a profound connection to the beauty of the Smoky Mountains.

Logistics: Park at the Jakes Creek Trailhead parking area that is 0.1 miles past the Little River Trailhead parking area. Meet your group at the Jakes Creek Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

181. Moss & Fern Walk: Sugarlands Valley Nature Trail

Time: 9:30:00 AM to 11:45:00 AM
Trail: Sugarland Valley Nature Trail
Meeting-Location: AQ - Sugarland Valley Nature Trail



Learn about the diminutive world of mosses and their ferny friends: diverse groups of beautiful and unique non-flowering plants that are found throughout the Smokies. You will learn about a variety of ferns, mosses, liverworts, and hornworts as you observe them along the trail, rock fences, and remnant chimneys. You will also discuss their life cycle and basic ways to distinguish them from one another. Bring a 10x hand lens or a strong magnifying glass, if possible. This wheelchair accessible program runs along the flat concrete 0.5 mile Sugarland Valley Nature Trail, next to the Bullhead Branch creek.

Logistics: Meet your group in the parking area. NOTE: the parking area for Sugarland Valley Nature Trail IS NOT at the Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 5 min [Click here for Map.](#)

182. Tree and Shrub Identification Walk at Metcalf Bottoms

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:45:00 AM
Trail: Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area (South), Metcalf Bottoms Trail
Meeting-Location: U - Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area off Little River Road (South Parking Area).

This program is more than an introduction to terms. You will learn characters used in the identification of woody plants (trees, shrubs, and woody vines). You will also learn how to differentiate leaf and bark characteristics, which will help you to distinguish between genera and species of common and lesser common woody plants in the Park. Bring field guides and hand lenses if you have them, but they are not required. A moderate 2-mile walk.

Logistics: Park at the south parking lot at Metcalf Bottoms, and meet your group at the picnic area. Then, head out onto Metcalf Bottoms Trail. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

183. Tree Identification for Beginners at Greenbrier Picnic Pavilion

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Greenbrier Picnic Pavilion
Meeting-Location: O - Greenbrier Road at Picnic Pavilion.

This program is for novices who want to gain a better understanding of trees and shrubs. After your leaders teach you the basics of leaf shapes and patterns, you will take a short hike to apply and reinforce what you have learned. Bring a hand lens and/or magnifying glass if you have them, but they are not required. A moderate 1.5-mile walk.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, drive 3.5 miles, and park and meet your group at the picnic area/pavilion (35.703623° - 83.386516°). **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 35 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided**
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

184. Trees and Shrubs at Cucumber Gap

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Cucumber Gap Trail
Meeting-Location: R - Jakes Creek Trailhead past Elkmont Campground.

This hike begins in a large grove of second growth tulip poplar trees. After the first mile, you will start to notice a change in tree species composition. Make sure to find the Fraser magnolias at the top of the gap. This trip begins at Jakes Creek, following the old railroad route, and ends near Tulip Branch on Cucumber Gap Trail, and then returns. A moderate 2-3 mile hike. Elevation gain: 500'.

Logistics: Park at the Jakes Creek Trailhead parking area that is 0.1 miles past the Little River Trailhead parking area. Meet your group at the Jakes Creek Trailhead. After walking 0.7 miles on Jakes Creek Trail with your group, you will turn left onto Cucumber Gap Trail.

Transportation: None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

185. Trees and Shrubs of High Elevation at Sugarland Mountain Trail

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 11:00:00 AM
Trail: Fork Ridge Trail, AT, Sugarland Mountain Trail
Meeting-Location: AA - Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road.

Walk through a range of forest types as you hike through the elevation changes along the Sugarland Mountain Trail. You'll notice epiphytic tree growth, signaling the temperate rainforest nature of this high point in the mountains. The trail follows a ridgeline surrounded by old, largely uncut sections of yellow birch and red spruce.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at the Newfound Gap parking area. There is VERY limited parking at the Fork Ridge Trailhead, a max of 6 cars can fit in this area. Carpool in as few cars as possible from the Newfound Gap parking area to the Fork Ridge Trailhead. From the Newfound Gap parking area, head southwest onto Clingmans Dome Rd. Continue for 3.8 miles. The Fork Ridge Trailhead parking area will be on your left. IF THERE IS NOT ENOUGH PARKING AT THE FORK RIDGE TRAILHEAD, park as many cars as possible in the Fork Ridge parking lot, leaving one space open. Shuttle the remaining cars 1.2 miles further down Clingmans Dome Rd to a larger parking lot. Park the cars and bring all the people who shuttled back to the trailhead in one car. **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed.

Drive Time: 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

186. Wildflower Hike at Cove Hardwood Nature Trail (Chimneys Picnic Area loop trail)

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Cove Hardwood Nature Trail
Meeting-Location: F - Chimneys Picnic Area on Newfound Gap Road.

Cove hardwood forests are one of the most biologically diverse communities in North America. This easily accessible trail is a great place to see a lot of different wildflowers as well as trees, shrubs, and vines. There are more species of wildflowers along this short, easy walk than just about any other place in the Park, making it a must for those wanting to learn about spring wildflowers like fringed phacelia, several trillium species, golden saxifrage (can you spot this tiny little plant?), wild ginger, and more. Short walk with elevation gain.

Logistics: Park in the Chimneys Picnic Area parking lot, and meet your group at the Cove Hardwood Nature Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 10 min [Click here for Map.](#)

187. Wildflower Hike at Kanati Fork Trail

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:45:00 AM
Trail: Kanati Fork Trail
Meeting-Location: AA - Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road.

The Kanati Fork Trail has many spring ephemeral wildflowers including painted trillium, Clinton lily, foam flower, Indian cucumber root, brook lettuce, and Canada mayflower as well as a lot of the more common species in the Park. Turn around when the group is ready. A moderate 2 mile walk.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at Rockefeller Memorial. There is limited parking at the Kanati Fork Trailhead, so carpool in as few cars as possible with your group from Rockefeller Memorial to the Kanati Fork Trailhead. From Rockefeller Memorial, drive 8.4 miles east along Newfound Gap Road, and parking at the Kanati Fork Trailhead will be on the left (35.58790, -83.36387). **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

188. Wildflower Hike at Kephart Prong Trail

Time: 8:00:00 AM to 11:00:00 AM
Trail: Kephart Prong Trail
Meeting-Location: T - Kephart Prong Trailhead

Hiking among history, water, and wildflowers, this trail will follow the Kephart Prong past the remains of a Civilian Conservation Corps camp, a former fish hatchery, and an old narrow gauge railroad. All of these historic remains have wildflowers such as wood betony and rue-anemone growing in and around them. Hike up to the Kephart Prong Shelter before turning around. An easy 4 mile walk.

Logistics: Park in the Kephart Prong parking lot and meet your group at the trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

189. Wildflower Hike at Porters Creek Trail

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Porters Creek Trail
Meeting-Location: N - Greenbrier Road Terminus at Porters Creek Trailhead.

Spend a few hours on one of the Park's most famous and popular wildflower trails. This trail features an abundance of wildflowers (including painted trillium), old homesteads, a cemetery, and an old-growth cove hardwood forest. Hike up Porters Creek Trail to either Brushy Mountain Trail (at 1 mile), or continue onto Fern Branch Falls (just short of 2 miles) before turning around. An easy 2-4 mile walk.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, and drive for 4.5 miles, all the way to the end where you will reach the Porters Creek Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

190. Wildflower Hike at Rainbow Falls

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Rainbow Falls Trail
Meeting-Location: AI - Rainbow Falls and Trillium Gap Parking Area.

Join expert botanists on Rainbow Falls Trail to experience a variety of wildflower diversity. Begin your trip by walking along an area that was once home to the apple orchard owned by M.M. Whittle from 1930 to 1960. A few old trees still bloom here and produce apples. After about a mile, you will begin to follow Le Conte Creek past rosebay rhododendron, galax, and tea berry. At about two miles once you hit a walking bridge, you will need to turn around. A steep 4-mile walk, but your group may turn around at anytime.

Logistics: Park at the Rainbow Falls and Trillium Gap main parking lot. If the main parking lot is full, a second parking lot can be found 0.3 miles down the road on the right. Meet your group at the main parking lot, and then head out on the Rainbow Falls Trail. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 25 min [Click here for Map.](#)

191. Wildflower Hike at Ramsey Cascades Trail - Short version

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:30:00 AM
Trail: Ramsey Cascades Trail
Meeting-Location: P - Greenbrier Road Parking Lot #2.

A 4 to 5-mile round trip (not going all the way to the falls) will allow you to hike among the rich forests of the Ramsey Cascades Trail. You will hike along the mountain rivers and experience a rich display of wildflowers, ferns, and Fraser's sedge. Try to make it at least 2.5-miles to a hobbit-like tunnel of rhododendrons that canopy the trail. Elevation gain: ~1000 ft.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, drive 0.3 miles, and park and meet your group at the second parking lot on the right. From there, carpool in as few cars as possible to the Ramsey Cascades Trailhead. To get to the trailhead from the parking lot, continue driving on Greenbrier Rd, and turn left onto Ramsey Prong Rd, where you will find the Ramsey Cascades Trailhead (35.702716° - 83.357737°). **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

192. Wildflower Hike on the Old Sugarlands Trail

Time: 8:30:00 AM to 11:45:00 AM
Trail: Old Sugarlands Trail
Meeting-Location: AC - Sugarlands Visitor Center.



This one way wildflower hike follows the old roadbed of Tennessee Highway 77 from Cherokee Orchard to Sugarlands Visitor Center. Along the way experts will discuss the historic anthropogenic (human caused) disturbance in the area, and how nature was able to reclaim the land with little help. Learn about natural succession and the forces currently at play arresting it. A Moderate 4.5-mile hike.

Logistics: Meet your group in the bus parking lot, and take provided transportation to the Old Sugarlands Trailhead/Bullhead Trail. The group will be hiking back to the Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** Van shuttle provided: 20 min. **Drive Time:** [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided**
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

193. Fungi of Thunderhead Prong Quiet Walkway

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Thunderhead Prong Quiet Walkway
Meeting-Location: AE - Tremont Road (parking lot at end of gravel road).

Learn from expert mycologists about fungal biology and the importance of fungi in nutrient and life cycles within forest ecosystems. Leaders will also discuss classification of fungi and edible vs. poisonous fungi. An easy 2-3 mile walk.

Logistics: From the Townsend Wye, take Laurel Creek Rd to Tremont Rd, continuing after it turns to gravel until it terminates at the Middle Prong Trail Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 55 min [Click here for Map.](#)

194. In Search of the Rarest Lichen of All

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Bradley Fork Trail
Meeting-Location: AS - Bradley Fork Trailhead

Join local lichenologist Jason Hollinger on an exploration of an ecologically important and strikingly beautiful group of organisms. This walk will nicely complement earlier lichen walks in the spruce-fir zone, this time focusing on cyanolichens -- lichens which consort with cyanobacteria instead of green algae -- in prime habitat deep in the heart of the Smokies. Learn the basics of lichen identification and ecology... and perhaps find a species collected only once before decades ago from this very same valley: *Leioderma cherokeeense*. Bring rain gear and comfortable footwear. This is a short, easy hike on level ground. Long pants or gaiters are recommended for those sensitive to poison ivy. A 10x hand lens is highly recommended to appreciate the full beauty and intricacy of our quarry.

Logistics: Meet your group at the Bradley Fork trail head within the Smokemont Campground. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)

195. Salamanders of the Smokies: Motorcade from Peaks to Seeps

Time: 1:15:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Chimneys Picnic Area/Outdoor Classroom, Ash Hopper Branch
Meeting-Location: G - City Parking Lot on Reagan Drive By Gatlinburg Fire Station.



In this program, you will travel from high to low elevation in search of Tennessee's slimy jewels. These hikes are short, but time will fly while discovering the true diversity of salamanders on this motorcade through the Smokies. Learn why Tennessee is the salamander capital of the world! The first stop will be at the Chimneys Picnic Area to see high elevation salamander communities and the Smoky's only endemic amphibian species. The program will conclude at the Sugarlands Visitor Center (Ash Hopper Branch) to see a vastly different community of mid to low elevation salamanders. Every amphibian-based hike will begin and end with decontamination, and a short discussion of survey protocols/ethics in order to protect these species from the spread of dangerous pathogens. Be prepared for wet or muddy conditions.

Logistics: Meet your group at the parking lot. Fit as many people into as few cars as possible for this motorcade adventure. Fewer cars helps with traffic and parking. **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 10 min [Click here for Map.](#)

196. Pollinators and Plants: Lessons in Pollination Biology

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Cosby Nature Trail
Meeting-Location: J - Cosby Picnic Area off TN Route 32 (parking area on left).



Did you know that oftentimes you can predict the types of insects that will pollinate certain plants based on the shapes and colors of their flowers? Join experts in pollination biology to learn how to predict pollinators based on floral characteristics.

Logistics: Meet your group in the parking lot. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

197. Exotic Plants on the Gatlinburg Trail

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM
Trail: Gatlinburg Trail
Meeting-Location: Z - Park Headquarters Road.

Since the 1700s, botanists have used the term "exotic" to describe plant species from elsewhere introduced into a new area. During this hike, you'll focus on learning to identify exotic plant species, the differences between naturalized exotic species and those that aren't, what makes a species "invasive," and about the negative impact these species have on our native plants and animals. An easy 2-3 mile walk.

Logistics: Meet your group outside of the gated area. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 5 min [Click here for Map.](#)

198. Sketching Wildflowers at Collins Creek Pavilion

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM
Trail: Collins Creek Pavilion
Meeting-Location: I - Collins Creek Pavilion on Newfound Gap Road near Cherokee, NC.

View wildflowers through the eyes of expert botanical artists, and explore your own creativity in the natural world. Bring your own art materials (at least a pencil and paper). Short, easy walk.

Logistics: Meet your group at the pavilion. This large pavilion will be shared with another program. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 45 min [Click here for Map.](#)



199. Ferns at Greenbrier Cove

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM
Trail: Greenbrier Cove
Meeting-Location: M - Greenbrier Road Ranger Station.

Come join expert pteridologists (people who study ferns) on this walk to learn about fern species in the Park. You will learn about the parts, life cycle, and ecology of ferns, as well as how to distinguish different forms. Bring a hand lens if you have one. An easy 2-mile walk.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, drive 1 mile, and park and meet your group at the Greenbrier Road Ranger Station (35.729633° -83.406016°). You will then head out onto Engine Creek Trail (formerly Injun Creek) from the Ranger Station.

Transportation: None provided. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)



200. Moss Walk: Sugarlands Valley Nature Trail

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM
Trail: Sugarland Valley Nature Trail
Meeting-Location: AQ - Sugarland Valley Nature Trail

Embark on a captivating exploration into the enchanting realm of mosses—a diverse group of small, non-flowering wonders that grace the landscapes of the Smokies with their unique beauty. You will learn about a variety of mosses, liverworts, and hornworts as you observe them along the trail, rock fences, and remnant chimneys. You will also discuss their life cycle and basic ways to distinguish them from one another. Bring a 10x hand lens or a strong magnifying glass, if possible. This wheelchair accessible program runs along the flat concrete 0.5 mile Sugarland Valley Nature Trail, next to the Bullhead Branch creek.

Logistics: Meet your group in the parking area. NOTE: the parking area for Sugarland Valley Nature Trail IS NOT at the Sugarlands Visitor Center. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 5 min [Click here for Map.](#)



201. Trees and Shrubs of High Elevation at Indian Gap Trail

Time: 1:45:00 PM to 4:45:00 PM
Trail: Appalachian Trail, Indian Gap, Newfound Gap
Meeting-Location: AA - Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road.

Pass from the closed canopy of an old growth spruce-fir forest into the open canopy of a pristine beech gap forest. Notice the giant dead Fraser firs, which have succumbed to the spread of the invasive balsam woolly adelgid. A 1.5-mile moderate walk. Elevation gain: 500'.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at Rockefeller Memorial. Before beginning this hike, some group members need to shuttle their cars to the end point of the hike at the Road Prong Trail parking area while others wait at the Rockefeller Memorial. Leave as many cars at the Road Prong parking area as will be necessary to shuttle everyone back to Rockefeller Memorial after the hike. From Rockefeller Memorial drive southwest 1.5 miles along the Clingmans Dome Road. The Road Prong parking area will be on the right (35.60937, -83.44654). Leave cars there and return to Rockefeller Memorial to begin your hike. After your hike, shuttle everyone back to Rockefeller Memorial.

Transportation: None provided. Car shuttle needed. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

202. Trees and Wildflowers of Metcalf Bottoms

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area (South), Metcalf Bottoms Trail

Meeting-Location: U - Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area off Little River Road (South Parking Area).

Did you know that species of trees, shrubs, and wildflowers associate into different communities across the landscape? In this program, you will discuss the technical differences between trees and shrubs, as well as which species of wildflowers associate with them. You will learn to identify some trees, shrubs, and associated wildflowers on this walk with experts. An easy 2-mile walk.

Logistics: Park at the south parking lot at Metcalf Bottoms, and meet your group at the picnic area. Then, head out onto Metcalf Bottoms Trail. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

203. Wildflower Hike at Chestnut Top Trail

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Chestnut Top Trail

Meeting-Location: AD - Townsend Wye "Y" on Little River Road.

The Chestnut Top Trail is home to one of the grandest wildflower displays in the Smokies. While hiking on this narrow trail, be prepared to see wildflower species such as Jack-in-the-pulpit, little brown jug, stonecrop, Carey's saxifrage, miterwort, foam flower, fire pink, longspur violet, cross-vine, and many others. A moderate 2-mile walk.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at the Townsend Wye, across the road from the Chestnut Top Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

204. Wildflower Hike at Cucumber Gap Trail - Short Version

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Cucumber Gap Trail

Meeting-Location: R - Jakes Creek Trailhead past Elkmont Campground.

Walk through a secondary cove hardwood forest, and enjoy the rich diversity of wildflowers along the way. This trip begins on Jakes Creek, following the old railroad route, terminates near Tulip Branch on Cucumber Gap Trail, and then returns. A moderate 2-mile walk.

Logistics: Park at the Jakes Creek Trailhead parking area that is 0.1 miles past the Little River Trailhead parking area. Meet your group at the Jakes Creek Trailhead. After walking 0.7 miles on Jakes Creek Trail with your group, you will turn left onto Cucumber Gap Trail. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 20 min [Click here for Map.](#)

205. Wildflower Hike at Kanati Fork Trail

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Kanati Fork Trail

Meeting-Location: AA - Rockefeller Memorial at Newfound Gap on Newfound Gap Road.

The Kanati Fork Trail has many spring ephemeral wildflowers including painted trillium, Clinton lily, foam flower, Indian cucumber root, brook lettuce, and Canada mayflower as well as a lot of the more common species in the Park. Turn around when the group is ready. A moderate 2 mile walk.

Logistics: Park and meet your group at Rockefeller Memorial. There is limited parking at the Kanati Fork Trailhead, so carpool in as few cars as possible with your group from Rockefeller Memorial to the Kanati Fork Trailhead. From Rockefeller Memorial, drive 8.4 miles east along Newfound Gap Road, and parking at the Kanati Fork Trailhead will be on the left (35.58790, -83.36387). **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

206. Wildflower Hike at Kephart Prong Trail

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:45:00 PM

Trail: Kephart Prong Trail

Meeting-Location: T - Kephart Prong Trailhead

Hiking among history, water, and wildflowers, this trail will follow the Kephart Prong past the remains of a Civilian Conservation Corps camp, a former fish hatchery, and an old narrow gauge railroad. All of these historic remains have wildflowers such as wood betony and rue-anemone growing in and around them. Hike up to the Kephart Prong Shelter before turning around. An easy 4 mile walk.

Logistics: Park in the Kephart Prong parking lot and meet your group at the trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided** 
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

207. Wildflower Hike at Porters Creek Trail

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Porters Creek Trail

Meeting-Location: N - Greenbrier Road
Terminus at Porters Creek Trailhead.

Spend a few hours on one of the Park's most famous and popular wildflower trails. This trail features an abundance of wildflowers (including painted trillium), old homesteads, a cemetery, and an old-growth cove hardwood forest. Hike up Porters Creek Trail to either Brushy Mountain Trail (at 1 mile), or continue onto Fern Branch Falls (just short of 2 miles) before turning around. An easy 2-4 mile walk.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, and drive for 4.5 miles, all the way to the end where you will reach the Porters Creek Trailhead. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 40 min [Click here for Map.](#)

208. Wildflower Hike at Rainbow Falls

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:45:00 PM

Trail: Rainbow Falls Trail

Meeting-Location: AI - Rainbow Falls and Trillium Gap Parking Area.

Join expert botanists on Rainbow Falls Trail to experience a variety of wildflower diversity. Begin your trip by walking along an area that was once home to the apple orchard owned by M.M. Whittle from 1930 to 1960. A few old trees still bloom here and produce apples. After about a mile, you will begin to follow Le Conte Creek past rosebay rhododendron, galax, and tea berry. At about two miles once you hit a walking bridge, you will need to turn around. A steep 4-mile walk, but your group may turn around at anytime.

Logistics: Park at the Rainbow Falls and Trillium Gap main parking lot. If the main parking lot is full, a second parking lot can be found 0.3 miles down the road on the right. Meet your group at the main parking lot, and then head out on the Rainbow Falls Trail. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 25 min [Click here for Map.](#)

209. Wildflower Hike at Ramsey Cascades Trail - Short version

Time: 1:30:00 PM to 4:30:00 PM

Trail: Ramsey Cascades Trail

Meeting-Location: P - Greenbrier Road Parking Lot #2.

A 4 to 5-mile round trip (not going all the way to the falls) will allow you to hike among the rich forests of the Ramsey Cascades Trail. You will hike along the mountain rivers and experience a rich display of wildflowers, ferns, and Fraser's sedge. Try to make it at least 2.5-miles to a hobbit-like tunnel of rhododendrons that canopy the trail. Elevation gain: ~1000 ft.

Logistics: Turn onto Greenbrier Rd from Hwy 321, drive 0.3 miles, and park and meet your group at the second parking lot on the right. From there, carpool in as few cars as possible to the Ramsey Cascades Trailhead. To get to the trailhead from the parking lot, continue driving on Greenbrier Rd, and turn left onto Ramsey Prong Rd, where you will find the Ramsey Cascades Trailhead (35.702716° - 83.357737°). **Transportation:** None provided. Carpool needed. **Drive Time:** 30 min [Click here for Map.](#)

210. Stargazing

Time: 8:30:00 PM to 10:30:00 PM

Trail: Carlos Campbell Overlook

Meeting-Location: AR - Carlos Campbell Overlook



Experience the natural history of the universe in a truly dark sky. In this program, you will learn the basics of skywatching, star names, and constellations, and examine the wonders of the deep sky through a variety of optical instruments. Bring warm clothes and binoculars if you have them, but not a flashlight. Very short, easy walk. Not recommended for children under 10.

Logistics: Parking is limited. Park and meet your group at the Carlos Campbell Overlook. If Carlos Campbell Overlook parking is full, alternate parking can be found 0.1 miles north and south of the Carlos Campbell Overlook. **Transportation:** None provided. **Drive Time:** 5 min [Click here for Map.](#)

- **ADA Accessible** , **Light on the Legs** , **Transportation Provided**
- **Color Coded Titles:** **Birds**, **Fungi**, **Insects**, **Mammals**, **Plants**, **Reptiles & Amphibians**, **Other**

**Dear Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage Leaders,
Pilgrims, Partners, Patrons, Sponsors, Friends, and
Donors,**

**THANK YOU! Our Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage
has for 73+ years connected experts of their fields
with members of the public of all ages to gather in
the greatest national park. The connections and
community we form every spring to fellowship,
educate one another, and reconnect with nature
around a common love for education and the
outdoors is unquestionably special. Please help us
to spread the word and grow our Pilgrimage! I am
honored to be around each of you every year and I
thank you for your trust in leading the Spring
Wildflower Pilgrimage in the Great Smoky
Mountains National Park.**

Respectfully,

Joey Shaw



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