

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Ranger-Guided Programs

June 18-August 12, 2017

Sunday:

Andrews Bald Hike for Families
Forney Ridge Trailhead at Clingmans Dome

9:00 am

Join a Ranger on a 3.6 mile round trip hike to the most accessible of the Smokies' grassy balds to learn more about this unique high elevation feature. Leisurely hike back to the parking lot on your own after reaching the bald. Sturdy footwear, a snack, and water recommended. Moderate 600 foot elevation change.

Duration: 3 hours

Junior Ranger: Slimy Salamanders
Mingus Creek Trail

10:00 am

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

Duration: 2 hours

Longing for the "Good Ol' Days"
Davis House at the Mountain Farm Museum

3:00 pm

You've heard it before but was it really the "good ol' days?" Join a ranger for a walk on the Mountain Farm Museum and learn about the "new comers" who settled here and farmed this land.

Duration: 45 minutes

Junior Ranger: Smoky Mountain Elk
Palmer House, Cataloochee Valley

5:30 PM

It's all about connection and balance in nature to insure survival for elk and other species living together in an ecosystem. Learn about the history of the elk through "show and tell" activities. Then stay and watch the elk come into in the fields!

Duration: 45 minutes

Monday:

Smokemont Nature Hike
Smokemont Campground Nature Trail Near B Loop

11:00 am

Enjoy a short nature hike and uncover Smokemont's rich logging history.

Duration: 1 hour

Junior Range: Stream Splashers

Oconaluftee River adjacent to Mountain Farm Museum

2:00 pm

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

Duration: 2 hours

Junior Ranger: Feeding Time!

Entrance to Mountain Farm Museum

6:30 PM

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

Duration: 45 minutes

Junior Ranger: Smokemont Night Hike

Bradley Fork Trailhead, D-Loop Smokemont Campground

8:45 PM

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

Duration: 1 hour

Tuesday:

Junior Ranger Explorer!

Oconaluftee River Trail Head

10:00 am

Come take an adventure on the Oconaluftee River Trail using fresh eyes and ears. Did you know these are a ranger's most important tools in order to observe the world around us? You will need to be careful, some of the things we will explore may be smaller than a dime or larger than you.

Duration: 1 hour

Junior Ranger: But I Don't Wanna!

Meet at the Maple Tree below the visitor center porch

1:00 pm

Ever say that when someone asks you to do something you do not want to do? When it comes to putting out your campfire, Rangers would rather hear "Sure, I can do that!" Become a fire ecologist and see how fire can be used to help nature.

Duration: 1 hour

Return of the Elk

Cataloochee Valley, Rough Fork Trailhead

3:00 pm July 4, 11, 18; August 1, 15, 29

Come enjoy a guided hike to the elk acclimation pen and explore how, when, and why the elk were returned to the Smokies. Hike is moderate, less than one mile.

Duration: 1.5 hours

Junior Ranger: Feeding Time!
Entrance to Mountain Farm Museum
6:30 PM

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

Duration: 45 minutes

Wednesday:

Walking with the Passed - Mountain Cemeteries Hike

Mingus Mill Parking Lot

10:00 am

Do you know why coins were placed on the eyelids of the deceased? Join a Park Ranger on a 4 mile hike, as we explore two historic cemeteries, examining the mountain culture and traditions surrounding death and burial in Southern Appalachia.

Duration: 2.5 hours

Junior Ranger: Porch Program

Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch

11:00 am

Join a Ranger on the porch of the Oconaluftee Visitor Center to discover what makes Great Smoky Mountains National Park so special. Topics vary so feel free to come more than once!

Duration: 45 minutes

Waxing or Waning - Which one do I want?

Davis House at the Mountain Farm Museum

3:00 pm

Is it times for beans or potatoes? If you have ever wondered what it means to plant by the signs, such as the moon? Enjoy insights as to how people of the past...as well as the present use various signs to plant their gardens.

Duration: 1 hour

Junior Ranger: Feeding Time!

Entrance to Mountain Farm Museum

6:30 PM

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

Duration: 45 minutes

Thursday:

Kephart Prong Hike

Kephart Prong Trailhead

10:00 am (except August 10)

Explore the remains of an old logging camp which later became a Civilian Conservation Corp camp with a ranger. Discover what signs are still visible and what life was like. Easy to

Moderate walk.

Duration: 2 hours

Junior Ranger: Cherokee-style Pottery

Collins Creek Picnic Area

11:00 am (except August 10)

Step back in time for a hands-on demonstration about one life way skill of the Cherokee culture. Participants will fashion their own piece of pottery in a style used on the Qualla Boundary. Limited to 20 participants. Call 828/497-1904 up to four days in advance to make reservations.

Duration: 1 hour

Junior Ranger: Thinking Like a Scientist

Oconaluftee River Trail Head

1:30 pm (except August 10)

Look, listen, and question! Good science always begins with making observations and asking questions. Explore the Oconaluftee River Trail with a Park Ranger, and practice your science skills. What things will you notice? What questions will you ask?

Duration: 1 hour

Junior Ranger: Mountain Traditions

Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch

3:00 pm (except August 10)

Have you ever wondered what it would of been like to have lived in the Smokies over 100 years ago, before Great Smoky Mountains was a National Park? Join a ranger to learn about some of the mountain traditions of years past and how some of these traditions continue in present time!

Duration: 1 hour

Friday:

Junior Ranger: Blacksmithing

Blacksmith Shop at the Mountain Farm Museum

10:00 am, 10:30 am, 11:00 am, 11:30 am

Learn a new skill. Be a blacksmith and create your own item to take home. Limited to ages 10-12. Other Junior Ranger programs will be going on simultaneously for younger kids.

Duration: 30 minutes

Junior Ranger: Batteries Not Included

Mountain Farm Museum

10:00 am, 10:30 am, 11:00 am, 11:30 am

Join Park Staff for a fun morning of games. Learn a mix of historic games as well as more modern take on board-games. Each half hour features a different game. All ages welcome!

Duration: 30 minutes

“As papaw use to say”Southern Sayings

Davis House porch at Mountain Farm Museum

1:00 pm

“Don’t throw the baby out with the bathwater!” Have you ever heard a saying or a phrase and wondered its meaning? Join a Park Ranger at the Mountain Farm Museum to find out the meaning and history behind some common southern sayings, and how they might just be connect to mountain farm life.

Duration: 45 minutes

Cataloochee Elk:

Palmer House, Cataloochee Valley

5:30 pm - June 9, 23; July 14, 28; August 11

Cataloochee is a great place for viewing elk. Learn about the history of the elk through “show and tell” activities. Then stay and watch the elk come into in the fields!

Duration: 45 minutes

Junior Ranger: Feeding Time!

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6:30 PM

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Duration: 45 minutes

Saturday:

Don't Get Lost:

Oconaluftee River Trail Head

11:00 am, 2:00 pm

Join park staff and learn the basics of using a compass. You will learn how to use Azimuths readings and line of sight to get you where you want to go. This is a beginners hour to become familiar and comfortable with a hand held compass. Come see if you can finish the course.

Duration: 1 hour

Welcome Home!

Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch

4:00 pm

After more of than a century of absence, the elk have returned. Relax, have a seat on the visitor center porch and hear the story of the return of the largest mammal to the Great Smoky Mountains.

Duration: 45 minutes

What Smokey Didn't Tell You - Wildland Fire Ecology

Smokemont Campground; between C-Loop and D-Loop

7:00 pm

Not all fire is bad. Wildland fire has shaped the forests throughout our land, creating the forests as we know them. Bring your lawn chair, a cup of coffee, and join the conversation with a Park Ranger to learn how fire benefits the forest health.

Duration: 1 hour

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8:45 PM

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Duration: 1 hour

Special Programs:

Back Porch Old-Time Music Jam

Oconaluftee Visitor Center Porch

1:00 – 3:00 pm - June 3 & 17; July 1 & 15; August 5 & 19

Bring an acoustic instrument and join in on this old-time jam. Or just sit back and enjoy the sights and sounds as others play traditional Appalachian music.

Duration: Ongoing 2 hours

Women's Work Festival

Mountain Farm Museum

10:00 am - 4:00 pm - June 17

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