

Walker Valley REFLECTIONS

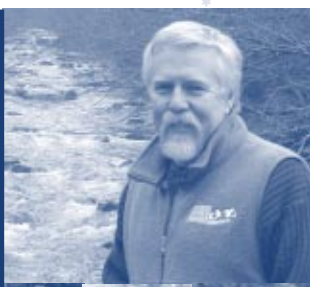
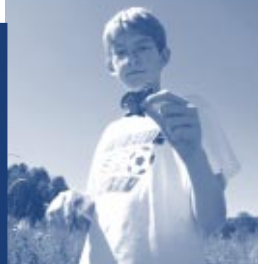
The newsletter of Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont • Winter 2005

From
all of
us at
Tremont

Have a joyous
**HOLIDAY
SEASON!**

We hope
to see you
in the
new year

...connecting people and
nature in Great Smoky
Mountains National Park



Appreciating What We Have

From the Executive Director

On this first day with electric power since Monday, it was with much more pleasure than usual as I read your newsletter. Although all my favorite places on the Mississippi Coast, White Caps, Ship Island Ferry, and J. L. Scott Marine Research Center are gone along with most of my favorite places in New Orleans, including a wonderful friend's apartment only a few blocks from Jackson Square, its comforting to know that my other favorite places—Cades Cove, Elkmont, and Tremont—are still there, waiting for me to visit, when and if gasoline is available.

Thanks for your wonderful newsletter, reading about Tremont and the magic of the Smokies is just what I needed at a time like this.

*—Elizabeth, Mississippi
Fri, 2 Sep 2005*

...

This has certainly been a season and year of much loss and disaster. I've talked to so many people who had a personal story or were close to someone who experienced loss in one way or another. Friends and family who joined part of the relief efforts spoke of the immensity of the damage but also people's drive to get back on their feet and the outpouring from people willing to help. On a hike this October during our fall Elderhostel one of the participants from New Orleans spoke about losing so much that was important to her and later thanked many of her fellow hikers for listening to her as she unloaded that burden as she walked the mountain trails. As I write this on Thanksgiving week I am sure that I along with many Americans are a bit more appreciative of what we do have and what is really important.

The Perfect Gift!

Give the gift of Tremont! With a Tremont gift certificate, enjoy one of our great hikes or programs in the Great Smoky Mountains. Give us a call at 865-448-6709. We'll send you a special Tremont gift certificate that you can present with the amount of your choice, for the program of their choice in 2006.

One of the things I am so appreciative of is our National Parks. It is not just the disaster that makes someone like Elizabeth from Mississippi appreciate places like Great Smoky Mountains National Park. It is a need for wild places, a need for peace and quiet, of rivers, mountains, flowers and wildlife, of things beautiful and untouched, of places where people for centuries have retreated, and left a bit of themselves. Those who preserved these wild places knew that as our country progressed they needed protection from that progress but that people would increasingly have the need to enjoy those places as well. The balance of protection and enjoyment continues today and our job as the stewards who protect that balance requires continual work.

There are so many of you who have acted as stewards of Great Smoky Mountains National Park through supporting the programs at Tremont. That support comes from schools, teachers, and students who value our programs, from board members and other volunteers who lend a hand, to partners like Friends of Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Great Smoky Mountains Association who provide funding, assistance and inspiration. It comes from a talented and well trained park staff, and experts who help us teach classes, run our business, or plan for the future. The team we have on staff at Tremont is world-class and so committed to educating people about the Smokies. We are so thankful for and appreciative of all of these supporters who are, as we say ...committed to the Institute!

We are also supported by a variety of generous donors from those who give us five dollars to corporations, foundations, and individuals who give us thousands. (see sidebar) By now you should have received a mailing for us requesting an annual donation* and outlining the many things that those contributions help us to accomplish. In our spring newsletter we will review our many accomplishments of 2005 and recognize are various donors. Thanks so much to all of you who have given or are planning to do so.

I do want to recognize someone who

has been one of Tremont's biggest supporters. That person is Bill Cobble who has served as president of our board for the past 6 years. Bill will remain on our board but is stepping down as president and passing the reigns to the capable hands of Fred Forster. Bill helped us tremendously as we transitioned into an independent non-profit organization. He has been a constant champion for building a large vision for what Tremont can and should be. He would tell you that he would like to see us closer to that reality and he continues to challenge us to think big and move us toward those goals. Our board recently recognized Bill and his work with us by establishing a fund as part of our endowment in his honor and contributing the first \$10,000 towards that fund. If you too, would like to join the board, staff and park in honoring Bill by helping to grow the Tremont endowment you can designate a gift in that way.

Over 70 years ago forward thinking people decided to create Great Smoky Mountains National Park. We are thankful for that vision and to those today who are helping us develop and support a vision for this park and Tremont's role in creating the next generation of stewards.

See you in 2006!



Executive Director

**from Treasurer of the Tremont board, Wright Tisdale: "The Katrina Emergency Tax Relief Act of 2005 provides two great opportunities to support various charitable organizations, such as Tremont. This opportunity exists between today and December 31, 2005. The limitation on the amount that may be deducted on your tax return of 50% of adjusted gross taxable income will not apply if the gift is a cash gift. So, you can sell appreciated property and contribute the proceeds or you may withdraw funds from you IRA or other type of retirement account and contribute the cash distribution. This is an excellent opportunity to help Tremont in a significant and important way. Please contact us as soon as possible to further discuss this option."*

Winter

Baby, it's cold outside!

by Josh Davis

ILLUSTRATION ©LISA HORSTMAN

Winter is here. And I feel, sometimes, like I'm the only one who's excited.

Perhaps that's not entirely fair. I know there are a lot of folks who are looking forward to the change of season. The Park isn't as crowded, they say, and the air is clearer, and there're no insects or snakes to worry about.

But no one really seems overly excited about the weather itself. I hear virtually no one saying "Hooray, it's cold out!" or anything similar. And when I say things like that, I get really strange looks. Probably similar to the face you're making right now, reading this.

This past week has been the first in which students at Tremont have had to deal with any wintery weather. And trying to get them excited about spending the day out in the cold can be a tough sell. To actually have them appreciate the cold itself...well, good luck. Though, it must be said, most are pretty tolerant, if not appreciative.

I admit it. I love the cold. Yes, I am aware of how odd this makes me. I tell 5th graders this, and they give me a look, too. "You're weird," they say, and blow on their hands to keep them warm.

But I adore it. I truly do. To me, there's nothing quite like stepping out of your nice warm house, bundled against the cold, and taking that first deep breath of frosty air, so cold in your nostrils that it burns. It's one of the only times that you can feel your lungs inside you. As they fill with the cold air, they stand out in stark contrast to the rest of your warm insides. If you don't know what I am talking about, give it a try. Soon.

Some try to avoid the cold by spending the winter indoors. I, for one, can't spend that length of time inside, especially during the long winters of Michigan and Minnesota where I used to live. So I'd head out to play in the cold, and grew to appreciate the winter. It's a pretty special time to be out and about.

The forest changes character in the winter. It's more open, with the leaves off the trees. And more silent, with birds quiet and insects gone. Upon first heading down the trail, it may feel more empty, more lonesome. But spend a few minutes, and that feeling changes. The quiet focuses you on details nearer at hand, a dusting of snow makes animal signs easier to see. The open, silent, empty trees suddenly come alive with rich detail, and the evidence that the woods are alive is as obvious as in other seasons.

But back to the cold weather. Some, as I said, prefer to spend the winter indoors. I can't say that I entirely blame them. Some days, it feels easier to sit on the couch with a blanket and a good book, or a favorite movie, than to layer up and brave the cold.

Though in the preparation, too, is something too love. Bundling up for the cold is something I enjoy as well. Assuming, of course, that it's done right. Too little, and you'll spend your day thinking about your frozen toes



rather than the scenery. Too much, and you look like the little brother in *A Christmas Story*—so overdressed you can't move. But done right, you stay warm all day in the worst weather. The wind can blow, the rain and snow can fall, and yet you stay toasty warm, with perhaps a frosty nose and rosy cheeks to betray the fact that it's pretty chilly out.

I think you know where I'm going with this. Yes, it's getting colder. And yes

the indoors seem extra appealing this time of year. Do not spend your winter inside, wishing for spring. Get out.

The park is an amazing place in the winter. As I said before, the air is clear, the trails are empty. Come spend an afternoon, a day, or a weekend. Go for a hike to Spruce Flats Falls; check to see if there are icicles forming. Ride your bike around Cades Cove. Get off it, head to the middle of one of the fields, lie on your back and look up at the clear winter sky. Breathe air so cold and crisp it hurts. There's nothing like it.

Bundle up. Wear two pairs of socks and extra layers, throw a few more in your pack, and go for a hike. Go. Let your nose get frosty and your cheeks get rosy. Revel in the stillness of the mountains and how cozy you feel nestled deep in your piles of fleece.

Take pleasure in a little bit of adversity. It lets you know you're alive. I promise, no hot shower, fire, or cup of hot chocolate will be as good as the one after a day out in the cold.

Get out. Now, before it's too late, and the season has passed you by. You'll regret it if you don't. In one of my favorite books, *Travels with Charley*, John Steinbeck describes the inherent danger in forever dodging the cold. He speaks of those who move to Florida to avoid the cold of winter:

I do wonder if the stab of memory doesn't strike him high in the stomach just below the ribs where it hurts. And in the humid ever-summer, I dare his picturing mind not to go back to the shout of color, to the clean rasp of frosty air, to the smell of pine wood burning and the caressing warmth of kitchens. For how can one know color in perpetual green, and what good is warmth without cold to give it sweetness?

Alcoa Foundation continues to support Tremont

In 2002 we received a \$250,000 matching grant from Alcoa foundation because of matching support from Friends of GSMNP. Since then Alcoa has continued to support us with the help of yearly grants. This year we were pleased to be awarded \$15,000!

Those funds will support our Citizen Science program by providing needed equipment, helping us with recruitment efforts of new volunteers, and supporting our summer youth science program where we select three high school students to assist with citizen science projects and integrating those into our summer educational programs. You might be interested to know that this year Alcoa was recognized by ?????????????? as one on the top three environmental companies in the U.S>>???????

Thanks, Alcoa Foundation!

Great Smoky Mountains National Park Pocket Guide and Journal Now Available!

Tremont's brand new, long-awaited publication is finally here. You may remember reading about the *Great Smoky Mountains National Park Pocket Guide & Journal* in last winter's issue of *Walker Valley Reflections*. The birthing process is now complete and the pocket guide has entered the world.

This exciting new resource is rich with natural history and background information about the park. It's also full of interactive activities for students and adults alike to help them better connect with this special place. There really is no other publication about the Smokies quite like this. It truly is one of a kind.

Never before in a single publication have wildlife viewing tips sat alongside

information about old-growth forests, reptiles and amphibians, and the park's six forest types. Checklists are included for commonly seen wildflowers and trees.

A special section called "Nature By the Seasons" details the natural goings-on in the Smokies every month of the year. Another one highlights the achievements and contributions made by park luminaries Horace Kephart and Arthur Stupka, the park's first naturalist. In still another section, a timeline of important dates of the park's history is provided, as well as a list of issues that continue to affect the park, such as air quality, exotic species and habitat loss.

The second half of the pocket guide shifts focus to the individual and invites the reader to reflect on his or her place in nature. Tips are provided to hone one's observation skills, and prompts are given for a variety of writing activities. Over thirty blank pages, both lined and unlined, are available for sketching and journaling.

Inspirational quotes appear throughout the pocket guide, including this one by Charles Lindbergh: *I realize that if I had to choose, I would rather have birds than airplanes.* But perhaps the most alluring thing in the publication is the beautiful illustrations, customized specifically for the book and which appear on almost every page.

We are grateful to the Clayton Family Foundation and the Tennessee Arts Commission for providing resources to bring this project to fruition. Joey Heath is the artist who provided illustrations and design expertise. Jeremy Lloyd, Tremont Senior Teacher-Naturalist, provided writing and research.

Copies of the *Great Smoky Mountains National Park Pocket Guide & Journal* are available to school groups at a discount. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate it into the students' Tremont experience. Regular sales of the book will help fund art programs at Tremont.



Experiencing the Smokies

Being a new teacher/naturalist can mean more questions than answers

by Sheri Liles

Life as part of the Tremont family has been rewarding, to say the least. As one of the latest additions to the Tremont staff as a teacher/naturalist, I find that on most days I have a lot more questions than answers. After leading backpacking trips for Tremont all summer, I was feeling pretty good about my ability to meet the challenges of a full time teacher/naturalist, but I'm only beginning to get a clue as to the organization, preplanning and communication required to lead the environmental education programs during the school year. I've learned new computer skills, lead a pack of squirrely fifth graders through the after-meal clean-up regimen, washed out countless zip lock bags after stream ecology, and stumbled around in the dark, determined not to turn on my flashlight on a night hike... until I realized I was completely off the trail. You might wonder why I took this job.

But I'm gradually feeling my way through the massive amounts of new knowledge that I need to interpret the natural world for the people who come to enjoy this very special place. So far, I've witnessed some pretty sensational events. In a single day I watched a box turtle laying her eggs, a dragonfly catch and consume a luna moth, and saw two copperheads in an hour's time. Since then I've seen copperheads mating and managed to step on one on the way down Dorsey Branch Trail (neither the snake nor I were delighted by that experience). I've discovered a huge nursery web spider near the office who has kept watch over her mass of spider babies for over two weeks. The change of seasons has brought new birds to our campus, and a whole new world of mature nuts, seeds, and fruits is revealing itself as summer gives way to fall.

By far, the greatest experiences have been the co-discovery of local flora and fauna with the students who come here. Their enthusiasm for face painting, catching crawdads, and turning over rocks to find earthworms and millipedes is one of the most rewarding parts of my new job. Trips to Cades Cove and re-enactments of Walker Valley history have forced me to reach deeper into the human history of this diverse biosphere, and I'm developing a new respect for the people who lived

here before the National Park was created. When I step into the fictional character of Eunice Moore for Walker Valley Living History, I really begin to feel the angst that plagued those whose lives were permanently disrupted by the changing economics and growing support for establishment of the park in the early part of the twentieth century.

One can only begin to imagine the upheaval wrought upon our human predecessors, the Native Americans, in this part of the world. The gears of civilization ground slowly toward the loss of Cherokee homelands and their way of life, but their story sometimes gets lost in the recounting of how the park came to exist and the sacrifices that were made to preserve it for future generations.

Acknowledging those sacrifices is humbling and instructive. To honor what was lost on our behalf impels me to care for the park, to preserve its diversity and to mentor the next generation toward that same sense of gratitude and responsibility.

So here I am, a new teacher/naturalist with a lot of questions, and a huge responsibility to make the right choices. Wish me luck as I try to set my priorities and find my niche as part of the great living organism that we call Tremont.

I'm only beginning to get a clue as to the organization, preplanning and communication required to lead the environmental education programs during the school year.

A Journey North

One woman's story of Hiking the Appalachian Trail

by Jen Martin

Folks can do some amazing things when they put their mind to it. This October we had a women's only backpack trip, where over the span of 3 days we hiked up and down mountains carrying everything we would need for the adventure. Twelve women from different professions, and from all over the country met at Tremont on a Friday afternoon, not really knowing what to expect. All during our time together we enjoyed each other's company, supported each other up the steep trails, made each other laugh, and quickly became close friends. And yes, it is amazing what women will put their bodies through in order to have a wonderful adventure.

This backpack trip reminded me of a book I had recently read entitled *A Journey North: One woman's story of hiking the Appalachian Trail*, by Adrienne Hall. I have always been intrigued with the Appalachian Trail—over 2,000 miles of trail running from Georgia to Maine. And 70 of those miles run right through the heart of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. There is a certain feeling one can get when hiking along the AT. It is almost like you are on sacred territory, realizing that every year thousands of footsteps with aspirations of heading to Maine have been placed right next to your own.

Adrienne agreed to hike AT with her boyfriend, although she admits that she did not truly understand the situation in which she was placing herself. On the months prior to their departure she read up on the issues, learned how to pack properly, and studied maps of the trail. On a dark and dreary day in February they departed for Springer Mountain, Georgia, the start of the AT.

The book depicts the discomfort of being one of the only women on the trail: dealing with deeply bruised hips from a pack waist belt, having to go to the bathroom on a trail with men hikers, the challenge of changing clothes in a shelter full of men, and missing the support and friendship of another woman. But Adrienne also focuses on the many positive aspects of hiking the Appalachian Trail. Seeing outstanding views has strengthened

Stalk the gaps. Squeak into a gap in the soil, turn, and unlock...a universe. This is how you spend the afternoon, and tomorrow morning, and tomorrow afternoon. Spend the afternoon. You can't take it with you.

—Annie Dillard



Women's Fall Backpack Trip, 2005

her own connection with nature, as they have with thousands of others. When she thought she could not go on, she pushed herself to make it to her destination and felt a huge sense of pride when reaching the shelter for the night.

It took years and the support and hard work from many folks to make the Appalachian Trail dream a reality. Adrienne informs us on the history of the trail, as well as the current problems and issues that involve the AT today. Acid rain is damaging vegetation and water quality, exotic species have overtaken the natives, and encroaching development next to the trail is diminishing this wilderness experience.

Although Adrienne and her boyfriend had many problems along the way, including blizzards, massive mosquitoes, and flooding, they made it all the way to the AT terminus in Mt. Katahdin, Maine. In Adrienne's closing chapter reflecting back

Arts Funding Available for School Groups

Are you a schoolteacher who is bringing your class to Tremont this school year? Funding is now available to schools wishing to host a visiting artist (evening presenter) at Tremont during the 2005-2006 school year. Our Community Artisan Fund is made possible thanks to a generous grant from the Avent Cabin Endowment, and is part of our larger Arts Initiative that seeks to increase the presence of the arts in our programs.

Any school visiting Tremont during the 2005-2006 school year is welcome to apply. However, we especially encourage schools that have struggled in the past to fund evening presenters, or schools that are struggling now. A menu of Community Artisans from which to choose is available on the application. You'll recognize familiar names such as Bob Grimac and Elizabeth Rose, as well as not-so-familiar names like Nancy Brennan-Strange and Sparky and Rhonda Rucker.

Funds have been and will continue to be dispersed on a first-come/first-serve basis until they run out, so send your application in as soon as possible! Applications available at www.gsmit.org.

on her six-month journey, she quotes Annie Dillard on finding life in the gaps: "Stalk the gaps. Squeak into a gap in the soil, turn, and unlock...a universe. This is how you spend the afternoon, and tomorrow morning, and tomorrow afternoon. Spend the afternoon. You can't take it with you."

Sometimes we all need a little adventure. Maybe it won't be hiking 2,000 miles through the Appalachian Mountains, but we can still get a taste of what that might be like. Walk around your neighborhood or a state park. Explore the area where you live. If you are interested in a more challenging quest, discover our adult backpack trips offered in the spring and fall. **Call us at (865) 448-6709 or check out www.gsmit.org to find out more about A Journey North as well as our upcoming programs.**

That Indescribable Feeling

...put into words

The mission of Tremont has always been connecting people and nature, but sometimes it can be difficult to see if your students are really making that connection.

This year, during the week of November 7th through November 12th Tremont hosted Cherokee Bend's 5th grade class from Birmingham, Alabama. With the help of the talented staff at Cherokee Bend we were able to make some great strides with this 5th grade class. The last morning for these students was spent in the sunshine amongst giant boulders and the chatter of the Middle Prong of the Little River. As the students sat and listened to the river, they were asked to reflect on what the past week had meant to them. There were experiences big and small, from the solo-hike to identifying the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. Here is a selection of some of the memories made at Tremont and Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

—compiled by Michael Matzko



Tremont

by Mary Screven

**Tremont, Tremont,
Oh what a blast.**

**This past week has
Gone by very fast.**

**Salamanders, and other
Critters found in the creek.**

**You also need a water bottle
So it better not leak.**

**Frost, rain, and sunshine,
It doesn't get better than that.**

**Also when you come to Tremont,
Be sure to bring a hat.**

**You go hiking in the woods,
Where most of the Nature grows.**

**If you haven't been to Tremont
Ask somebody who knows.**

My Week at Tremont

by Dawling Briggs

When I first got here at Tremont I was kind of worried. The day we went on the All-day hike I started to feel really good about staying in the mountains. It made me

feel really proud when we did stream ecology, because I caught a lot of mayflies. When we went to Cades Cove I really felt good during the solo sit. Also when we did the solo hike I really got to experience the mountains and the wildlife. I felt really happy after I did all of these things at Tremont.

Beauty

by Allie Cannon

Of all the place I've been this one is the best! When you look at the clear blue sky, listen to the rushing water, touch the wise oaks, and breathe the fresh clean air, you must think that this wilderness is pure beauty. When I came to this place and learned about its history I thought about what it must have been like back then, and how blessed they were to have lived in this wondrous place. This place has such a beautiful culture. I have truly been inspired.

Tremont

beautiful, magnificent

hiking, learning, exploring

I enjoy the wilderness!

Beauty



Tremont

by Grace Williams

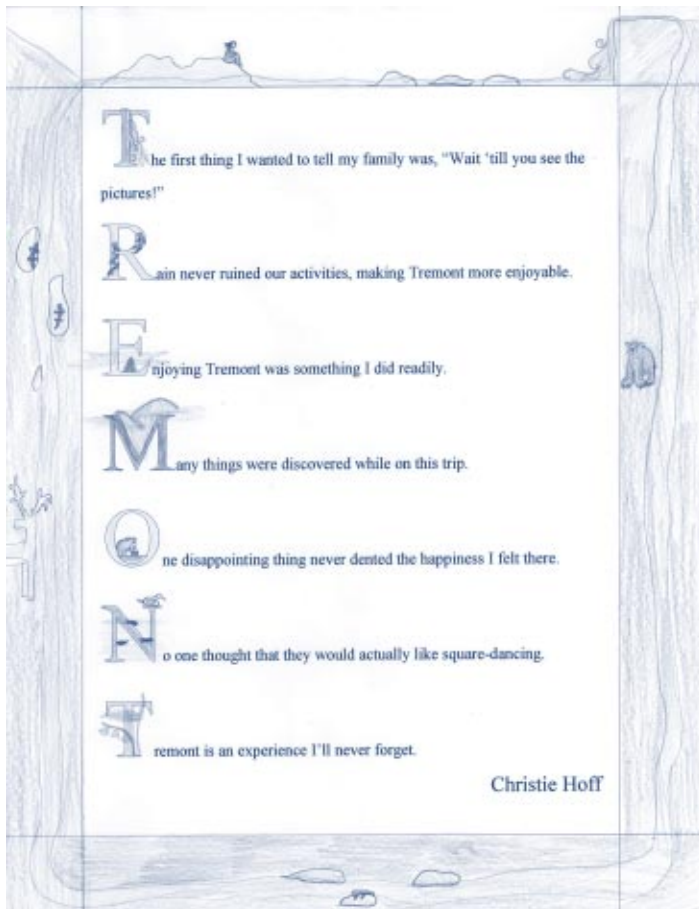
The sun's reflection on cool river water, the weather is cold but begins to get hotter. The fresh mountain air opens my lungs, the frogs enjoy it to unrolling their tongues. The rocks pile high making homes for the bugs, and the nice little campers drink from their jugs. I have learned so much from the plants and trees. Surely I will see this place again, and it will see me.

Tremont

by Jordan Carr

All through the week you feel different. Every activity has it's own purpose, and they're all different. Like at Cades Cove you felt alone:

As the soft freeze makes its way through
I'd like to say some things to you.
I stand alone with the cool air
it goes, it goes, it rustles my hair.
I feel the water tickle my toes
as I stare down into farm rows.



When is it Too Much of a Good Thing?

Taking what nature deals

by Charlie Muise

Taking a Look at Tremont

Many of you who have visited Tremont in the last year with your school group have experienced taking a pre and post survey. First, a big Thank You to all who have and those who will take part in our evaluations of our school program. We are far from finished with this evaluation and keep your ears open for results of our many questions. As of now, we have administered surveys to a subset of students and teachers from our school groups in the spring and fall of 2006. Our initial results are showing very positive gains in the measurements of "Sense of Place and Connection with Nature," "Stewardship," "Interest in Cultural History," and "Interest in Learning."

We will be continuing with the surveys this coming spring and conducting interviews with teachers over the summer months. Stay tuned for more extensive results coming next winter!

—Jennifer Arnold,
School Program Director

Yesterday I had a great time with eleven sixth graders from Homer Pittard Campus School (Murfreesboro, TN). We saw a lot of nature, learned a lot, and they helped me collect some important information for the park. We saw some creatures that will soon be hard to find around here as they burrow underground, migrate, or die after laying eggs for next year.

That would sound like a wonderful success—if our goal was to study animals. But I was leading a lesson called "Keying into Plants." The lesson plan has few references to animals. The goals include learning about dichotomous keys, identifying some trees, studying the forest floor and discussing why plants are important. We covered about half of that. Only covering half of the goals of a class is often something that needs correction, but we left happy and satisfied.

That is part of the give and take of teaching outdoors. Teaching moments are unpredictable and must be used when available. One must take what nature deals. Sometimes it is cold, rainy weather—which helps us appreciate sunny days. Sometimes it is a morning of bird watching with few birds to see or hear—which helps us appreciate migration fall-outs. And sometimes it means seeing a lot of interesting things that are just too important, too interesting and too exciting to ignore—even if they are not in the plan. One key to a successful outdoor lesson is to have a plan, have a backup plan...and be ready to stray far from both if there is a reason.

Our reasons started while I was introducing them to an Eastern Hemlock Tree, when three

Wood Ducks flew right over our heads. We all know ducks are not plants, but how much would the students have listened to me and enjoyed the moment if I had just ignored the birds and stayed on topic? They did eventually learn about the tree.

Later, while we discussed the myriad ways animals make use of plants, a student spotted a dragonfly. Then another, then two more. We spent the next twenty minutes chasing them. We caught a Lance-tipped Darner (*Aeschna constricta*). As I pointed out field marks, a student asked about a red spot on the thorax. The dragonfly had mites! Since many mites are host-specific, I thought there was a chance that this might be a new species to the park list, so I used the opportunity to teach the students how to properly document such an observation and collect a specimen. This led to a talk about the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory.

After a bit more plant talk, one of the fathers asked me about the plants moving in the water—it was a Snapping Turtle!

Still later, while talking about how a tree's shape is determined by its surroundings, a bit of yellow caught my eye. A Garter Snake! That led to a productive talk about how cold blooded animals survive winter time. All of a sudden, the lesson was over. Fast-moving time is the hallmark of a good lesson for teacher and student alike.

Today brought an end to the unseasonably warm weather. It's cold and rainy. We likely won't see a bunch of animals today. Maybe today we'll talk more about plants. They are not so fickle about weather.

COOKS CORNER

by Lori Flanagan,
Food Service Manager



Easy One-Dish Meal

3/4 to 1 cup cooked brown rice
Cooked beans - pinto, red (amount you desire)
Chopped tomato
Finely chopped broccoli
Chopped green onion
Shredded carrot
Herbs/seasonings of your choice
Cheese (soy cheese if preferred) optional

Place rice in greased oven proof dish. Stir in beans, as many as you like. Add vegetables on top, any vegetables will do-use whatever you like or have on hand and chop it up. Season with herbs. I use basil, oregano and garlic. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Top with cheese if you wish. Cover and bake at 350 for 30 minutes. Enjoy!

Beyond the Valley and into the World

It's a small world after all

by Jennifer Webster



It has been dry this fall in Walker Valley. Some days our thoughts don't travel much beyond the end of the Middle Prong, a mere 2 miles away. Most days it feels as though we have so much to learn, teach and experience just here at Tremont, that the rest of the world is light years away. It is, however, very important for us to step back and realize that the world is indeed very small and we are all in a joint effort to assure a livable and sustainable world for the next generations of Americans, Africans, Asians, Europeans, Australians as well as all the other creatures with which we share our small planet.

I was lucky to have a chance to travel from East Tennessee to New Mexico this fall to attend the annual conference of the North American Association for Environmental Education. The conference was a wonderful

- facilitate networking, linkages, exchange and interaction among stakeholders in ESD

- foster an increased quality of teaching and learning in education for sustainable development

- help countries make progress towards and attain the millennium development goals through ESD efforts

- provide countries with new opportunities to incorporate ESD into education reform efforts.

As the United Nations lead agency in education, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) is designated as the leader for the promotion of the Decade and has created a draft of the international implementation scheme. The draft can be viewed by visiting

Do You Shop Online?

If so, you could help Tremont at the same time! We have recently registered with [iGive.com](http://www.iGive.com). Shop at any of their online stores, and specify Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont as your "cause" and we'll earn money for every purchase you make. With over 600 stores to choose from, you'll recognize names like Lands' End, Barnes & Noble, JCPenney, Hallmark and Hickory Farms. Registration is free, and Tremont will benefit from your online shopping. Go to www.iGive.com for more information.



Even though we at Tremont keep our heads only in

Walker Valley much of the time, we also want to play a

positive role in our global village.

assortment of, not only North Americans, but representatives of all over the world. It was refreshing to hear the joys and challenges faced by other environmental educators who teach children about the special places they live and play every day. We are all striving toward the same goals even though we have our own accents, languages and flavors that reflect different home environments. While at the conference, I also learned that we are entering the first year of a decade that will hopefully unite many of our different programs. 2005 marks the beginning of the *United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development*. As stated by the UN, "the overall goal of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development is to integrate the principles, values, and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning and to encourage changes in behavior that allow for a more sustainable and just society for all."

The objectives for the decade are to:

UNESCO.org along with other information about the decade planning and teacher activities.

The subject of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) may be a new term for many who are more familiar with Environmental Education (EE). The two are really very similar and the differences are mostly semantics. ESD encompasses the idea that to have global environmental protection, we need to strive for socio-economic balance and access to basic education for all people. The hope is to change the model that has been so prevalent in the world that only wealthy countries have the excess energy and capability to address environmental concerns. ESD seeks to help communities "develop" in a sustainable way and avoid having to solve the problems created during development.

Even though we at Tremont keep our heads only in Walker Valley much of the time, we also want to play a positive role in

our global village. With that in mind, Tremont is looking very forward to being involved by reviving our international internship program. We have heard from many of you that you miss having the interactions of international interns while visiting Tremont. By hosting, teaching and learning from people from around the world we are both sharing our knowledge of EE and learning about the wonderful natural areas in other countries. We hope to contribute to the goals set forth by the UN and serve as an education center for those wishing to bring EE back to their home countries.

Keep an eye and an ear out as you visit Tremont in 2006. If all goes well, you may hear the sounds of new accents floating through the dining hall and have a chance to meet a new friend from a distant land.

From the Science Room...

A synopsis of accomplishments

It is strange to be the one writing the science report for this newsletter. For four years I have eagerly awaited the great science updates and tidbits that have issued from Michelle Prysby, Tremont's Citizen Science Director. Michelle was an integral part of our Tremont team. As many of you know, Michelle has left Tremont to direct the new Master Naturalist Program in Virginia. We miss her and her enthusiasm for science and education.

Now at the end of the year, as we look back over our science accomplishments and search for a new Citizen Science Director, we realize what big shoes that new person will have to fill. It is always amazing to see what a dedicated Citizen Science Director, great research assistants, and fantastic volunteers can achieve. Because of these people, we better understand the national park and the organism that create it.

Read ahead for a synopsis (compiled by Michelle before her departure) of our citizen science accomplishments. Thank you Michelle for all your great work and for preparing us for great science to come.

—Amber Parker

2005 Science Report

Many school groups, summer campers, volunteers, and teacher workshop participants were involved in monitoring, inventory, and other studies of a variety of taxa. 75 volunteers (students, parents, and teachers), one paid Summer Research Assistant

and one paid teacher intern also assisted with these projects. 18 students were highly involved in citizen science activities as part of the Field Ecology Adventure Camp. Thousands of students in our school programs were exposed to our citizen science activities, and several hundred were involved intensely in the data collection.

Research Activities:

Lepidoptera

In 2005, a refrigerator/UV light trap was set out over 14 trap nights from February through August. A total of 448 moths were captured and released after identification. Eleven moths were collected for expert identification and/or added to the reference collection at Tremont. The moth species list for Tremont is now at 627 species.

Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*) egg and larva populations were monitored on 10 occasions at one Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) patch in Cades Cove and on 7 occasions in a second patch. An average of 140 milkweed plants were examined per sampling date. Sampling dates ran from 24 May 2005 to 25 August 2005. A total of 136 monarchs (124 eggs, 8 first instars, 1 second instar, 1 third instar, 1 fourth instar, and 1 fifth instar) were found. The bulk of this reproduction occurred in late August. The data were shared with the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project and are available at <http://www.mlmp.org>. For the migration season, 30 monarchs were caught and tagged at Cades Cove.

Coleoptera

A total of 42 aquatic beetles were collected from 9 locations (behind the Tremont dorm/pavilion, Tremont sewage lagoons, Cades Cove Methodist Church Pond, Cades Cove Gum Swamp, sinkhole in the field by Abrams Falls trailhead, sinkhole on the manway between Abrams Falls trailhead and Cades Cove Visitor Center, a temporary pool on Tremont Road, the West Prong trailhead, and the Abrams Falls trailhead parking area itself). Collections were made on 11 occasions with educational groups or staff. A total of 40 dung beetles on 11 total

occasions from a variety of places including the horse trailer parking lot at Tremont, Middle Prong Trail, Lumber Ridge Trail, West Prong Trail, Gabes Mountain Trail, and Forney Ridge Trail. These samples were sent to Dr. Charles Staines, who has identified the samples, or, in some cases, sent them on to other experts.

Fungi

Tremont continued to assist with data collection for the FungiMap project to document distributions of 50 species of fungi throughout the park. 40 records were sent to Paul Super for inclusion in the FungiMap database.

Salamanders

Students continued to monitor salamander populations in 6 locations within 5 streams (Ashley, Dorsey, Loan, Pigpen, and Spicewoods Branches) using modified Pauley bags. A total of 40 visits were made in 2005. Species recorded included adults and larvae of *Desmognathus conanti*, *D. quadramaculatus*, *D. monticola*, *D. imitator*, *D. santeetlah*, *Pseudotriton ruber*, *Gyrinophilus porphyriticus*, and *Eurycea wilderae*. A database for the salamander monitoring data is in creation on the Hands on the Land Web site.

Tremont was also fortunate to continue our relationship with Lee University and Dr. Michael Freake through the hellbender research project. Many summer campers, research assistants, staff, and even the park's superintendent were able to have an up-close-and-personal encounter with one of these large salamanders. Preliminary research indicates that there is a healthy hellbender population in the Little River.

Other Projects:

As usual, weather, phenology, and plant/animal sightings data were collected throughout the year. Data reside at Tremont, with significant sightings shared with park staff. Anyone visiting Tremont should check the bulletin boards in the dining hall for the latest in phenological data and plant and animal sightings. Biomonitoring data were collected in the Tremont ozone garden and data were submitted to the Hands on the Land Web site. Tremont program participants and staff assisted several other investigators with various projects, including searching for hellbenders and checking of artificial reptile habitats.



Looking Ahead

Upcoming events

Great Smoky Mountains Institute is looking forward to a fantastic year, filled with fun, though provoking workshops and camps. Here are a few of our upcoming activities:

Wilderness First Responder Course

January 22-29

Do you know how to respond to backcountry emergency situations? Anyone interested in the wilderness or in emergency medical training will benefit from this course. Instructors from Roane State Community College will lead the program. Participants will be eligible for national registry and state testing upon completion of this program. Program lasts from Sunday evening to the following Sunday afternoon. Test fee, textbooks, lodging, and meals included in cost. Cost: \$875.

Financial Aid available for WFR

The Louise Barber memorial endowment allows us to provide some financial aid for those who would like to get this special training. The funds are designated especially for teachers and youth workers who would use this training to increase their preparedness for leading trips with children in the outdoors and who could not afford to get this training without some assistance. To apply please send us a letter indicating how you are aligned with youth work your need and amount requested.

Wilderness First Responder Refresher

February 24-26

If you have taken Wilderness First Responder in the past and are due for a renewal, this program will satisfy the requirements to renew certification in First Responder on the national registry. Program lasts from Friday morning to Sunday afternoon, meals and lodging included. Cost \$350.

Family Adventure Weekend

February 10-12

What better way is there to spend a weekend with the family than exploring Great Smoky Mountains National Park. This weekend is chocked full of hikes, crafts, games, waterfalls, beautiful views, campfires and plenty of time to enjoy being with the ones you love. Program lasts from Friday supper through Sunday lunch. Cost: \$315 for family of four ages 6 and up (\$70 for each additional person); includes all meals, lodging, materials, and instruction. Visit GSMIT's web site www.gsmnit.org for a full schedule.

Arts and the Environment*

February 17-19

This is an inspirational and fun-filled early spring weekend, dedicated to celebrating the environment through the arts via educational workshops. Program lasts from Friday supper through Sunday lunch. Cost: \$200. One hour of graduate credit is available for an additional fee.



Environmental Music Duo MAGPIE Coming to Tremont

Award-winning environmental music group MAGPIE is coming to the Smokies this February 17-19 as part of Tremont's annual Arts and the Environment weekend workshop. This is an inspirational and fun-filled early spring weekend, dedicated to celebrating the environment through the arts and providing educational workshops.

Greg Artzner and Terry Leonino have performed together since 1973 and recorded over ten albums. MAGPIE uses songs, stories, and a wide variety of instruments and musical traditions to delight its audience. They have collaborated with the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center and are master artists with the Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts.

"Magpie weaves magic with an intimate and exciting evening that blends good music with environmental concern," says Amber Parker, Education Director at Tremont.

In addition to their Friday evening performance, MAGPIE will lead a workshop on Saturday morning on how even non-musicians can incorporate music into their classrooms. The weekend workshop will include many other sessions on Saturday focusing on the arts and the environment. For the latest update on what's been added visit www.gsmnit.org

Tickets may be bought solely for the Friday evening performance or for the entire weekend workshop. For ticketing information call (865) 448-6709

LeConte Overnights

May 12-14

September 22-24

Head to the top of the Smokies and spend the night at LeConte Lodge, the highest elevation lodge in the eastern United States. Friday evening will be spent at Tremont, and we'll head up the mountain the following morning. We suggest you sign-up with a friend, or be prepared to bunk with a new one. Program lasts from Friday supper to Sunday late lunch. Cost: \$350 (includes all meals, lodging, transportation, and instruction). Full amount is required for registration.

Spring Photography Workshop

April 21-24

Wildflowers carpet the landscape and drip from every cliff. Nationally recognized nature photographers Bill Lea and David Duhl will lead a workshop emphasizing wildlife, landscape, and macro photography. Field sessions and lectures will cover the use of light, composition, and equipment. Program lasts from Friday supper to Monday mid-morning. This workshop fills quickly, so register early! Cost: \$495.

Spring Awakenings Naturalist Weekend

April 28-30

Spend the day focusing on your topic of choice and the evening participating in lectures, campfires, storytelling or musical entertainment. Choose from four areas of focus:

• Smoky Mountain Wetlands

Venture into the liquid world of wetlands and discover the wonders that await. We will visit several types of wetlands in Cades Cove and other sites on the Tennessee side of the Smokies where we will learn about their creation, inhabitants, and overall ecology.

• Naturalizing on the Wildside

Not satisfied with front-country naturalizing? Interested in what's really out there? Join Executive Director Ken Voorhis for a weekend of great hikes that will get you to some amazing backcountry areas.

• Birds, Buds, and Blooms

Explore the mountains and valleys as we learn to identify birds, trees, and wildflowers and the ecosystems they call home.

• Smokies Sampler

This workshop is designed for those folks who want a little bit of everything. We will cover wildflowers, salamanders, trees, history, forests, birds, geology, and much more during this weekend of woodand rambles. Join us for an educational and inspirational weekend.

Program lasts from Friday supper to Sunday lunch. Cost: \$210/participant (includes meals, lodging and instruction.) One hour of graduate credit is available for an additional fee. Visit GSMIT's web site www.gsmnit.org for workshop schedules.

Donations

From 8/4/05 to 11/21/05. Thank you!

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Newsletter design by Lisa Horstman, courtesy of Great Smoky Mountains Association.

Great Smoky Mountains Institute at



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Great Smoky Mountains National Park
9275 Tremont Road
Townsend, TN 37882

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