



Walker Valley

REFLECTIONS

The newsletter of Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont • Winter 2006-2007



*All
of us at
Tremont wish you
a happy holiday season
and joyous new year!*

PEACE ON EARTH

From the Director

Most of the leaves have now fallen in Walker Valley, revealing the winter landscape of rock and the blanketed mountain folds beneath barren trees. Crowds in the park are lessening. We now wake to frosted spider webs, twigs and stems of fall wildflowers with an occasional sense that the first snow will soon fall. A peaceful quiet settles in as we take a breath and reflect on all of the water that has flowed under our bridge both literally and figuratively this year.

It is hard to believe that 2006 is drawing to a close. It has been a busy and productive year at Tremont, and the past several months have been particularly eventful. Thousands of school children were able to spend some rich moments in our Smoky Mountain classroom and, along with many others, witnessed one of the most spectacular fall displays in a number of years.

We will serve a record number of participants by the time the year is out. Thanks to all of you who have spent some time at Tremont or supported us in some way this year. We are blessed to have such a long list of friends and supporters and appreciate each one of you. Check out Jennifer Love's report on school programs and the impressive list of 06-07 school groups in this issue.

Other exciting events over the past season included an incredible windstorm (see Mary Silver's article), the birth of Thomas Lyle Fincher Webster ("Lyle") to former School Program Director Jennifer (Arnold) Webster and proud papa Jesse, improvements at the activity center, planning for a big fundraiser in March (see the Spring for the Green announcement), and progress on planning for improved facilities.

The Environmental Assessment is proceeding to determine what the future will hold for Tremont's site and facilities. We are hopeful that we can raise the funds to make the dream of a campus that is

designed to fully support our mission on numerous fronts a reality. For info on the alternatives that have been developed, visit our website at www.gsmit.org/e_a_tremont_undvelopes.html.



This September I joined with 350 educators, developers, health professionals and conservationists at the National Conservation Training Center, including Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne, US Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dale Hall, The Conservation Fund's President Larry Selzer, author and Oberlin college professor David Orr and Yale University's Stephen Kellert to discuss the problems associated with what *Last Child in the Woods* author Richard Louv has dubbed "nature deficit disorder." During his keynote Louv said "For eons, human beings spent most of their formative years

in nature, but within the space of a few decades, the way children in many Western countries understand and experience nature has changed radically, with profound implications for mental and physical health, cognitive development, creativity and for the future of nature itself."

It was great to see a broader audience giving attention to this important issue. That the experiences with the outdoors that our children are having are radically different from those that most of us had growing up is an idea that resonates with people. They recognize the far-reaching consequences that this has on our children's health and our future and want to do something to change that.

"Healing the broken bonds between children and nature is in our best interest and well within our reach," said The Conservation Fund's president, Larry Selzer. "People protect what they love, and only love what they understand and value. If we cannot help our children build stronger connections with nature now, it is possible that we will raise a generation with no inclination to enjoy or steward our most precious natural resources."

These are ideas that we at Tremont have understood and worked to change through providing learning experiences that help people fall in love with Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Connecting children (of all ages) and nature at Tremont continues to be our ever important purpose.

Come play in 2007!

Executive Director

THE PERFECT GIFT

Give the gift of Tremont! With a Tremont gift certificate, your loved one can 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 the recipient's choice in 2007.



Weathering the Storm

Nature makes way for new growth

by Mary Silver

Nobody in Walker Valley got much sleep on the night of Monday, October 16, and it wasn't because of pillow fights in the dorm. From early evening through mid-morning Tuesday, high winds roared over ridges and buffeted valleys throughout the Tennessee side of the Smokies, punctuated every few minutes by the crack and solid thud of another tree falling on the mountainside.

If you've come to Tremont with a school group, you may have had the chance to visit our weather station early one morning to collect data. It's a small white cabinet mounted on a pole outside

the office. Perhaps you used the Beaufort Wind Scale to measure wind speed based on your observations. On an average morning in Walker Valley, the wind is usually just about strong enough to set leaves trembling at four to seven miles an hour. Every now and then we get a moderate 13 to 18 mph breeze, with smaller branches swaying, but most of the time it's pretty calm. On the morning of October 17, though, all we could really ascertain was that the wind was blowing hard enough to tear off the door of the weather station and toss our Beaufort Wind Scale chart somewhere in the woods. Later we found

that gusts in the park had peaked at 106 mph, well into the hurricane range.

Thirty Elderhostel participants and a small group of elementary school students were here for the excitement, and thankfully everyone was safe throughout the storm. After the winds died down on Tuesday we all ventured to the woods to survey the damage—logs several feet wide, thickets of tree branches, entire root systems torn out of the ground. Some Elderhostelers jumped right in with handsaws and clippers to begin clearing the trails, and the elementary school students eagerly set out on the coolest Falls Hike ever. The air smelled of leaves and fresh wood, there were logs and branches everywhere to climb over or wiggle under, and the views had suddenly become much clearer because so many leaves had blown down.

For a few days, Tremont Road was the only one open on the Tennessee side of the park. An Elderhostel group hiking the Schoolhouse Gap Trail on Wednesday the 18th had the unique experience of crossing Laurel Creek Road, the road leading to Cades Cove, on a beautiful fall day without seeing any traffic. Thanks to some very hard-working chainsaw crews, major park roads were re-opened by the weekend, but it may be months before some trails are clear enough to allow horse travel. In Cades Cove the historic Dan Lawson barn was moved a few feet off its foundation, but higher-elevation structures such as the tower at Clingmans Dome and the Mt. Le Conte lodge were not damaged. At Tremont, the hardest-hit areas were the Dorsey Trail and the beginning of the Falls Trail, which are now passable after some engineering from Tremont staff.

The next time you visit the Smokies, plan for a little extra time on the trail. There will be tree trunks to scramble over, giant root balls to navigate around, and a lot to think about. As you get yourself and your backpack over that monster log, look for woodpecker holes and small dens. Imagine all the sunlight that went into making that wood, all the rainwater that has pumped through it, all the millions of leaves that have shaded it over its long life. Return to these spots in the years to come, and you'll see younger saplings shoot up from the shaded understory, competing to fill new gaps in the forest canopy. Watch the logs, too, as they soften and rot to become new soil for next century's giant trees.

Thanks for Your Letters!

Keep 'em coming, kiddos!

by Josh Davis

Quotes taken from thank-you letters from the 5th grade students at Walland Elementary, who spent three days at Tremont this past October. Thank you and hello from all of us to all of them!

I think Tremont is the best place ever.

—Austin

I love letters from students. They absolutely make my day. Our staff passes around the letters we receive, to make sure we all have a chance to read each and every one. I have a folder of my own, saved up over the years from all the different places I've worked. If the week's been a tough one, and I haven't received any new ones recently, I'll flip through old ones. It has never failed to cheer me up.

I hadn't really ever realized how beautiful the mountains were.

—Payton

The students write to express all kinds of things. I read a lot of letters that talk about the beauty of the mountains, the height of the trees, or the noisy (and comforting) sounds of the Middle Prong. I smile to think of these students, sitting in their classrooms, daydreaming about the mountains.

I had a blast, but you were the ones who made it a blast.

—Kayla

You taught us everything we need to know and so much more...and you taught me how to have fun and I thank you for that.

—Angela

Even better, from an educator's perspective, are the ones that talk about the impact we've had. We talk a lot about the importance of environmental education. We read (and write) articles about how it helps improve test scores, increases self-confidence, and so forth. But in terms of sheer emotion, the grab-you-by-the-gut, this-really-IS-important kind of stuff, nothing beats the words from a 5th grader's pencil.

I had never had this much fun since I learned there was a TV...I think Tremont is more fun than playing video games.

—Kyle

These are better still. We get a lot of the phrase, "I didn't think I would have fun but I did." It always amazes me how amazed, how blown away, how completely and utterly shocked students are when they discover that being outside is fun. In this world where televisions, computers, and video games take primacy of place in our lives, this can be one of the most crucial lessons we teach.

When I'm older, I want to do your job.

—Virginia S.

A budding young naturalist? Imitation as the most sincere form of flattery?



Guess what. When I got home yesterday, I told my little brother all about you, because he is going to go in 2 more years to Tremont. He said, "I can't wait to go to Tremont!"

—Virginia A.

I hope if I have kids that they will get to go and visit you at Tremont and understand nature.

—Ginny

I want to bring my family and show them what we did, especially the falls and you all. I want to show them everything.

—Alayah

Ahh, but these are the best ones. These are the ones that never fail to get me a little choked up. I can't imagine a better way of proving the value of a few days spent with nature, than sending someone away with such excitement that they want to share it with others. This is when we know that the little spark we've tried so hard to nurture has really lit a fire. And what better fire than one burning so bright, it ignites others?

And then there are those that are so caught up, so excited, they can hardly express themselves.

I had so much fun. I wish I could go back now. I never had so much fun. I love nature. When I retire I want to buy a lot of Amazon rain-forest. Maybe even better, one mountain in or near the Smokies. I loved it. I miss it so much. I love Great Smoky Mountains National Park... I don't like Josh's jokes, unlike everything else.

—Christian

Hmm. Well, I guess you can't please everybody.

Spring for the Green *Fundraiser*



Tremont is organizing a one-of-a kind fundraiser to raise funds to support our programs. We are selling a limited number of raffle tickets (600 maximum) at \$1,000 each and on March 16th, Saint Patrick's Day Weekend, we will draw the winning ticket and give away \$100,000! A Spring for the Green celebration reception for ticket holders will be held at the Knoxville Convention Center that evening. We will celebrate the coming of spring, announce the grandprize winner, giveaway some great consolation prizes, as well as auction off several special gifts that have been donated including a 1988 560SEC Mercedes. We are still seeking event sponsors so that all proceeds can go to the Tremont Endowment Fund. The Endowment Fund provides financial aid for students to attend programs, funds special programs like the George Fry Science Education summer apprenticeship, and will provide support for Tremont programs for years to come. For more information about sponsorships or to purchase tickets visit our website.

Go in with your friends and Spring for the Green. Invest in Tremont's future and join our spring celebration!

Tremont 2006 Fall Weather Summary

Averages are over the past 16 years

	Aug	Sept	Oct
<i>Average rainfall (inches)</i>	4.46	4.23	2.42
<i>2006 rainfall (inches)</i>	5.37	8.62	3.15
<i>Average max. temp. (°F)</i>	87.3	82.6	73.2
<i>2006 avg. max. temp. (°F)</i>	89.5	77.7	69.9
<i>Average min. temp. (°F)</i>	61.9	55.6	44.0
<i>2006 avg. min. temp. (°F)</i>	67.1	56.7	44.6

Only 8 Miles

Only 8 miles
Of breathing hard,
And pushing uphill.

Only 7 miles
Of stepping over logs,
And slipping in the mud.

Only 6 miles
Of crossing creeks,
And slipping in rivers.

Only 5 miles
Of jumping over rocks,
And tripping on roots.

Only 4 miles
Of heaving heavy packs over rocks,
And trying not to complain.

Only 3 miles
Of tolerating cramps,
And straining to continue.

Only 2 miles
Of crawling under trees,
And stepping in puddles.

Only 1 mile
Of carrying your heavy pack,
And restraining from stopping.

No more miles
Of beautiful scenery
Or of nature never enjoyed.
Although life can be hard,
If you take the time to enjoy it,
You'll know your life can't pass you by.

—Anna Smith
Age 11
Cherokee Bend Elementary School
Birmingham, Alabama

Anna was here with her school in November of this year. She wrote this poem during one of her lessons at Tremont, as a part of a creative writing exercise. She, and all the rest of her classmates, had successfully completed their 8-mile All-Day Hike earlier in the week. Thanks for sharing your poem with us Anna!

The Backpacker's Nemesis: Too Much Weight

Some thoughts on lightening your load

by Sheri Liles

After the Women's Fall Backpacking Trip I paused to reflect on the ways we've learned to economize on the weight we carry. Teacher/naturalist Mary Silver sleeps under a tarp. It's roomy, mostly weather-proof, quick to put up and take down and only weighs about a pound. Its disadvantages are (1) finding a level place to suspend the tarp so as not to be washed away in a strong downpour or wake up to find you've rolled out from beneath it during the night, and (2) being willing to share your personal space with whatever nocturnal critters are around—I once was awakened by a salamander which flipped across my face unexpectedly.

Another of our teacher/naturalists, Josh Davis, introduced us to a new line of pre-packaged rehydratable meals with names like Max Patch Mac and Cheese, Switchback Spaghetti, and Beartooth Beans. Available from Enertia Trail Foods, these entrees are filling, tasty, and easy to prepare. Even the choice of eating utensils can cut down on the weight you're carrying: opt for a plastic or Lexan spoon instead of metal, and try using a single Tupperware bowl for both meals and drinks. Some savvy AT thru-hikers have found that dual-purpose items can save weight. One guy packed along a Frisbee and also used it for a dinner plate at mealtimes.

My own weight-saving devices include my compact Snowpeak stove with its own igniter, and water purification tablets or drops, which I prefer over the added weight of the heavier pump-action purifiers. Some folks still insist that it's just so peaceful sitting on a rock and pumping water down by the stream, but as fall temperatures drop precipitously in the evening, I just find it hard to cozy up to a hard damp rock, when I'd really rather be at the campsite starting a fire.

Newer breathable raingear fabrics offer a lightweight alternative to vinyl or rubberized material, and of course, don't overestimate the amount of clothing you'll need. Layers are still important for cold weather. I find it easier to stay warm if I change out of sweaty undergarments at the end of the day as soon as I arrive at the campsite. Removing layers as your body heats up on those uphill climbs can keep you drier (and warmer) later on.



The heaviest baggage we carry is the emotional baggage that tells us not to get out of our comfort zone, that we're too busy to take time off to spend in the woods, that we're too old or too out of shape to carry a pack. Some weight-saving tips for emotional baggage: if you're really worried about being too old or too out of shape, there's nothing like an overnight trip in the backcountry to boost your self-confidence and your overall fitness. Don't start with long trips; even a short overnight trek will do wonders for your morale as well as leave you some time at home before going back to work on Monday morning.

My own solution to coping with aging joints and waning strength is to pack with llamas. I'm looking forward to sharing time in the wilderness with these low-impact animals, and I'll keep you posted on this new endeavor as our llama trekking adventure takes shape.

We Have Results!

Determining the impact of Tremont programs

by Jen Martin

Several past newsletter articles have mentioned our evaluation and assessment of school programs that we have been conducting at Tremont. This process was developed to determine the impact of our programs on our students, reveal where we have been successful, and clarify topics we need to cover in greater depth. The evaluation system has been extensive and worthwhile, requiring extra time and energy from teachers, students, and Tremont staff. Such a thorough evaluation system is quite uncommon in environmental education centers, but necessary. After a full year, we have come to the part we have all been waiting for—we have results!

But before we get to the good stuff, here is a re-cap on our evaluation process. From each school group, ten students (picked randomly) and the lead teacher are asked to fill out a 30 question pre-survey when they arrive. It asks students to give their opin-

ions on such topics as their comfort level in the outdoors, the importance of taking care of natural places, and what their interest level is in learning more about cultural history and nature. We are continually evaluating our school programs—it's not a one-time thing.

Before the school group departs for home after 3-5 days here at Tremont, we give them a post survey. We then input all this information into our database, which helps us determine if the students' experiences at Tremont increased their comfort level in the outdoors, strengthened their connection with nature, and increased their interest in learning.

Our preliminary results come from a sample size of 500 students. Since this first assessment we have increased our sample size to over 1,000 student surveys, which will increase the statistical significance of our results. We are still adding to this database as

each school group arrives at Tremont.

Using these surveys, we have found that students have a statistically significant increase in the following indices after attending a school program:

- Sense of Place and a Connection with nature ($p < .001$)
- Stewardship ($p < .001$)
- Interest in Cultural History ($p < .001$)
- Interest in Learning ($p < .001$)

For those of us who have forgotten everything we might have known about stats, the p value is the measurement that our results are due to chance. The most common level, used to mean something is good enough to be believed, is $p = .05$. Anything less than $.05$ is a very good thing. To find the significant level subtract p from 1. Put simply, because our level is $p < .001$ that means the likelihood of truth of our findings is greater than 99.9%! These results show that students have a better connection with nature due to their experiences at Tremont. Our results also show that the students feel a stronger connection with the natural places around their home and an increased interest in learning more about their own hometown history! All of

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Testing the Waters

Summer interns learn the ropes of environmental education

Know anybody of college age who's interested in the field of environmental education? If so, tell them about us. Each summer our teaching staff doubles in size as four to six new faces join the ranks of the Tremont staff to help make summer camp a success. Tremont's Summer Internship Program is a unique opportunity for individuals to explore the environmental education field in a residential setting inside a national park.

It's not hard to find internship opportunities nationwide at nature centers. The unspoken truth about many such places is that interns fill the need for "labor" in this field that is all too often under-funded and under-appreciated. Tremont's program is altogether different. Plenty of hard work falls on the shoulders of our interns. A summer here involves long hours, six-day work weeks, and situations that challenge one physically and mentally. Not every college student looking for a job in the environmental field is up to such a challenge as one at Tremont presents. Several years ago one individual expressed interest in our internship program but opted instead to flip burgers in a nearby town because that way he could, in his words, "make more

money." What he gave up in return by taking the easy route, and by valuing a few ephemeral dollars over an experience that lasts a lifetime, is beyond estimation.

The fact that our interns get to live inside the borders of Great Smoky Mountains National Park alone is a big draw for many applicants. Our classroom, after all, is 520,000 acres large. But we seek in our applicants more than a desire to live and work in such a beautiful setting. More than anything we desire enthusiastic people who have a passion for teaching children – the next generation of people who will, if we at Tremont fulfill our mission, take care of this place.

Working with children is a big part of spending a summer at Tremont. Interns create evening programs, supervise campers overnight, and plan and teach lessons. The potential for co-leading backpack trips also exists. However, almost half of our summer programs are for adults. Interns can expect to co-lead natural history hikes with adult groups, join field classes during weeks when college and adult groups are here, and explore the inner-workings of non-profit organizations as well as the National Park

Service. Additionally, so far as time allows, there are a number of paths interns might choose for independent study. Our ultimate goal is for our interns to leave with a bur-nished resume that reflects newfound skills and experiences that will help them forward their careers.

Past interns have come from as far away as California, Minnesota and Maine, as well as right here in Tennessee. Almost all are college students or recent college graduates who want to explore this field to see if it's something they want to pursue further. While biology majors are common, other fields of study represented by past interns include sociology, English, and public policy. Many have gone on to careers in education and conservation. A few have become part of our permanent teaching staff.

Because interns live together in our dormitory, a close-knit community forms over the course of the summer. Together with permanent Tremont staff, frisbee games, campfires, and visits to "civilization" for an evening out in Knoxville make for an enriching experience on a more personal level.

The application deadline is February 16, 2007. To obtain an application and find out more about our Summer Internship Program, visit www.gsmiit.org.

—Jeremy Lloyd

...and the Winners are...

*Tremont's first Photo Contest
was a rousing success!*

We received some truly amazing photographs from folks out enjoying our beautiful national park. Our whole staff was very impressed with the photographs that were sent in (especially considering, in retrospect, how difficult a theme "Connecting People in Nature" actually is to capture visually.) Given the quality of the work sent in and the very large numbers of photographs we received, we had a very difficult time choosing our winners. If yours wasn't chosen, don't despair! We'll be announcing the theme for our next contest in August.

The top photos are also featured in our biweekly e-newsletter and on our website. *The Blount County Voice* and *The Maryville Daily Times* has also been kind enough to sponsor the contest as well, and ran articles featuring the photos and those who took them.

Thanks for all of your entries, and keep shooting!



First Place photograph by Charles Allen Pendergrass

FIRST PRIZE

Charles Allen Pendergrass, Maryville TN

Fly Fishing on the Middle Prong

This photo was taken October 20, 2006 on the Middle Prong of the Little River.

SECOND PRIZE

Cindy Shumpert, Swansea SC

Cades Cove Artist

In November 2005, my husband and I made an early morning trip to Cades Cove. The fog was rising out of the valley, but quickly burned off. We came across the artist at one of the pull-offs, and if you look closely, you can see he captured the scene before the fog had burned off. I don't know his name as I didn't interrupt him, but here's another way to enjoy the beauty of the Smokies.

THIRD PRIZE

Harold W. Rife, Maryville TN

Foggy Morning Shoot

It was a foggy morning in Cades Cove. I was shooting dew drenched spider webs along the fence line, when I looked back I saw other photographers doing the same as I was...that is when I decided to capture their image through the fog.

FOURTH PRIZE

Anne-Marie Miro, Sanford FL

A-hiking We Will Go

This was Cole's first hike. He had never seen mountains, large rocks or streams. The picture was taken on the hike up to Hen Wallow Falls. Scooby's legs were tired so he hiked up the easy way!



Most Original photograph by Jeremy Johnson



Second Place *photograph by Cindy Schumpert*

Fifth Place *photograph by Bob Young*

FIFTH PRIZE

Bob Young, Hebron KY
Miniscule

While driving through Cades Cove in Feb. of '06, on our way to hike, we stopped at one of the pull-offs to enjoy the scenery. My buddy walked out in the cove and he was dwarfed by its stunning magnificence and immensity. Kind of makes oneself miniscule in comparison.

MOST ORIGINAL

Jeremy Johnson, Sevierville TN
Dr. Seuss' Dome

My wife and I spent a day in the park just taking photos of all the fall colors and eventually found ourselves at Clingmans Dome. My wife, Leah Jane, has quite a few hats in her wardrobe and I thought it would be funny if she wore a bunch of them at once so we brought them along. We didn't know where we would take the photo or how we would shoot it, but once we got to the top of Clingmans Dome, it hit me. At first I tried to put her beside the column to mirror it, but then I realized if I got low enough I could make it look like the hats WERE the column holding up Clingmans Dome! She's also wearing her coat, my coat, 3 or 4 scarves, and one pair of her many mittens. She sure can accessorize.



Third Place *photograph by Harold W. Rife*

Fourth Place

photograph by
Anne-Marie Miro



Return to Nature

Reflections on Richard Louv's *Last Child in the Woods*

by Nichole Gaines

On the morning message to my first graders at Hempfield Elementary in Greenville, Pennsylvania, I asked if they played outside the day or evening before. I am always surprised by how many make a tally under the "No" column. When they share what they did instead, common answers usually include "watched TV," "played video games," "attended dance lessons" or "went to baseball practice" (insert any other organized sport here also). A few answer with "read a book" or "had family board game night." For some of these 6-year-olds, the only time spent outside is the 30 minute recess taken everyday. This is quite disturbing to someone who had a childhood full of outdoor experiences.

It came as no surprise to me when I read in Richard Louv's *Last Child in the Woods* that "the best predictor of preschool children's physical activity is simply being outdoors, and that an indoor, sedentary childhood is linked to mental health problems." (p. 32) With each passing year that I teach, I have more and more children labeled with mental health issues ranging from attention-deficit disorder to oppositional defiant disorder. Looking back on these children, most of them participated in some organized sport. As Louv asks, "what are these kids missing that soccer and Little League cannot provide?" (p. 47) The answer is free, unstructured time outdoors to make connections with the natural world.

Parents need to know how technology and the lack of natural world experiences affect their children.

Research shows that natural play areas stimulate all the senses making it essential for healthy childhood development (Louv, p. 85). We live in a world full of technology that allows for us to work, communicate and be entertained without ever making contact with one another. This lack of physical contact along with the tendency to live outside of the real world contributes to violence (p. 66). Many parents may not realize how they are covertly encouraging their children to be violent through the

acceptance of TV watching or video game playing for long periods of time. In Louv's book, he looks to North Carolina State professor Robin Moore on the experience of television and electronic media and to a University of Illinois study on attention deficit symptoms. Some of the advice and facts presented were insightful. Parents need to know how technology and the lack of natural world experiences affect their children. To inform parents of this knowledge, I plan to include some of the information in my Welcome Letter that I send home at the beginning of the school year. Richard Louv points out the following:

Children live through their senses. The natural environment is the principal source of sensory stimulation, freedom to explore and play with the outdoor environment through the senses in their own space and time is essential for healthy development. . .

Encourage children to play outdoors in green spaces. Plant and care for trees and vegetation at your residence. Caring for trees means caring for people.

This year at my school, I worked with a colleague, kindergarten teacher Eric Hart, to plan, design and construct a butterfly garden on the playground. All other teachers agreed that this garden would be a nice addition to the school grounds; however, some disagreed with planting it where

recess takes place. Our recess playground is an open grassy area with some playground equipment and a blacktop area for wet days. Eric and I feel that with proactive teaching to all grade levels, the students will appreciate and take care of the garden even though it is on the playground. After reading the research on schoolyards declaring that children engage in more creative forms of play in green and natural areas rather than on blacktops and play structure (Louv, p. 87), I am pleased that we con-

structed the butterfly garden on the playground and not away from the playing area. Recently, as a staff, we have been contemplating the installation of more playground equipment because the students seem to get bored easily with the open area, few swings and a small piece of existing equipment. Maybe the answer is not more equipment, but the addition of "loose-parts" on the playground. A typical list was given for a natural play area that included water, trees, bushes, flowers, long grasses, places to sit with privacy and views (p. 86). Children could sharpen their senses and social interaction skills instead of displaying their physical abilities.

Here at the Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont, children are surrounded by areas that stimulate all the senses. The Smoky Mountains take the place of a traditional classroom during Discovery Camps and Naturalist Expeditions Camp. Campers engage in activities that expand their basic knowledge of forest ecology, stream ecology, mammals, cultural history and themselves. A group of adolescent campers that was asked to adopt a tree during forest ecology Expeditions excitedly took on this mission. Each identified and measured his or her tree and then silently explored the new ground. Sketches were drawn; small critters were observed. They sat quietly with their trees and reflected. These inanimate objects captured their attentions with a sense of solid reality often absent with modern day electronic entertainment.

While teaching at Tremont, I watched as children made connections and developed personal affinities with the earth. Hopefully, the new butterfly garden at my school will inspire teachers to lead more lessons outside. I have new hopes and dreams of adding more natural pieces to our playground, such as native trees and grasses. We may not be able to control how much time is spent outdoors at home, but we can expose children to the natural world at school and camp with the hope that they will have a sense of wonder for nature and want to explore the outdoors at home.

—*Nicole Gaines is a school teacher who worked with our intern programs last summer.*

From the Science Lab...

Keeping an eye on mosquitoes, salamanders, and Monarch butterflies

by Jason Love, Citizen Science Director

Citizen science continues to flourish at Tremont. Over 125 individuals have participated in citizen science activities this year, from collecting mosquito larvae to snorkeling for hellbenders.

Below are some of the highlights from this year.

Mosquito Sampling

Some folks are just itching to find out what species of mosquitoes live in the park. **Dr. Roxanne Connelly**, a researcher from the University of Florida, is working with Discover Life in America and the park service to identify the park's mosquitoes as part of the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI). We sampled all life stages of the mosquito. We used plastic cups filled with water to lure female mosquitoes that oviposited onto moistened paper attached to the edge of the cup. Once a week, these strips of paper were collected, sealed in plastic bags, and sent to Dr. Connelly so the eggs could be raised to adulthood to make identification possible. To sample for larvae, volunteers hiked around Tremont armed with turkey basters, searching for standing pools of water. The turkey basters were used to suck-up the water (and any other critters) into a shallow pan; smaller eyedroppers were then used to collect the wriggling mosquito larvae. The larvae were deposited in a small plastic bag filled partly with water, which were then shipped to Dr. Connelly. We used light traps to attract and collect adult mosquitoes. These traps were hung at various places around Tremont. The samples were later sorted and adult mosquitoes were sent in a Petri dish to Dr. Connelly. Moths and other invertebrates collected in the traps also were identified as part of the ATBI.

Terrestrial Salamander Monitoring

Tremont established a new educational science project this past summer—the **Terrestrial Salamander Monitoring Project**.

Herpetologists use several methods to sample salamanders, including the use of cover boards (pieces of wood set out as artificial habitat to attract salamanders). However, researchers still debate whether cover boards are an efficient method for sampling salamanders. For this project, we decided to test a possible improvement over the existing protocols for using cover



boards. We set-out the traditional type of board generally used by herpetologists, a 12" x 12" x 1" piece of lumber, while the other type of cover board we used was a 12" diameter, 3" thick "cookie" cut from an existing downed log. Our hypotheses is that the thicker, more natural log "cookie" will attract a greater number of salamanders than the traditional 1" thick piece of lumber. We placed 40 boards at 4 different sites around Tremont; hardwood trees dominated two sites, while Eastern Hemlock dominated the other two sites. This type of sampling array will also allow us to test differences of salamander abundance and diversity between two different forest types, while also allowing us to monitor salamander populations under the canopy of Eastern Hemlock, a species of tree that is under threat from the exotic Hemlock

Woolly Adelgid, a type of aphid. Besides looking for salamanders, we also take soil moisture measurements, surface temperature measurements under the logs, and note any invertebrates under the log. This is a great activity for school groups to learn the scientific method and have a hands-on experience at hypothesis testing. If all goes well, data collected by students and volunteers from this project can be compiled into a peer-reviewed scientific manuscript.

Monarch Tagging

Tremont once again partnered with naturalist **Wanda DeWaard** to tag migrating Monarchs this autumn through a project known as MonarchWatch (www.monarch-watch.com). Nearly 150 students and volunteers joined us as we sought out the Monarch, the only butterfly in the world that truly migrates, sometimes up to 3,000 miles. The Monarchs east of the Rockies travel to the Transvolcanic Mountains of Mexico, where they gather in the tens of millions. This was an exceptional year for Monarchs, whose robust numbers were kept aloft by lack of drought and moderate spring temperatures. Volunteers and students tagged 121 Monarchs this year in Cades Cove, making it one of the best seasons yet for tagging. This project was established

in part to help track Monarch population fluctuations; there is growing concern that habitat destruction, in both the United States and Mexico, may cause Monarch numbers to decline.

Other Citizen Science Activities

Besides the above projects, Tremont volunteers and students actively participated in a wide array of other projects: stream salamander monitoring, tree mapping, fungi mapping, dung beetle collecting, odonate (dragonfly and damselfly) surveys, phenology, weather, and plant/animal sightings. All of these projects are unique in that they give students and volunteers an opportunity to participate in real and relevant science, an experience that often leads to a greater appreciation of the wonders of nature.

From the School Program Director

Field trips aren't just for fun!

by Jennifer Love

There are so many demands on teachers today. During a typical week, teachers fill the role of parent, secretary, fundraiser, researcher, police officer, mediator, and publicist. The U.S. and state governments place mandates on what and how education is provided for our children and require national norm-referenced assessments plus state curriculum assessments in public schools. Also, school boards and administrators have local requirements for staff training, test scores, and day-to-day protocol. Teaching is beyond a full time job. With papers to grade and parents to call, why would you take on planning a field trip away from home to Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont? Teachers do this because they know the impact that outdoor experiences have on their students.

Tremont was a great hands-on experience to compliment the knowledge gained from their

schoolwork in the classroom.

—Parent Chaperone, Sacred Heart Cathedral

How do we know this? Studies show that environmental education programs increase motivation for learning in all subject areas, develop critical thinking skills, and foster the ability to work both independently and collaboratively. In the state of Washington, studies show that children who attended outdoor school significantly raised their science scores by 27 percent and these students showed gains in cooperation and conflict resolution as well.

All of us are on cloud nine trying to describe the weekend to everyone at school today. I wish every teacher could see their students in learning situations as unique as Tremont. The labels of "troublemaker," "unmotivated," and "under-achiever" melt away in your outdoor classroom. It reminds me to look at each individual student I teach and try to discover what will make

them tick, what will motivate them to do their best, and what will make them reach success.

—Peggy Steffan, Immaculate Conception H.S.

Thanks to a grant from the Alcoa Foundation, Tremont has been conducting research on our own programming to determine the impact this experience has on its participants. Tremont has found students have a statistically significant increase in a variety of areas (see *Jen Martin's "We Have Results!"* article on page 7). We also found an increase in students who know how to read a topographic map, understand the definition of an exotic species, know how to use a field guide, and know the range of diversity (represented in approximate number of species) that exist within Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Students also learn about the environmental role of Great Smoky Mountains National Park and its ability to protect species, preserve cultural history, clean the air, and keep the water clean.

Here at Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont we continue to incorporate state and local curriculum standards into our award-winning curriculum, "Connecting People and Nature." We are also creating new programs. Programs such as "The Scientific Method and Salamander

Tremont School Group Adventures!

Over 4,000 students and teachers know that no matter the season, a Tremont school group adventure is an experience they will never forget. The 2006 school program schedule has been a busy one. Folks have traveled from 11 states to hike to Spruce Flats Falls, examine macro-invertebrates from the Middle Prong of the Little River, sing and hear stories around a campfire, and wake up to all of the sights, smells, and sounds of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

We want to thank all of the teachers who planned and prepared their students for Tremont programs. Thank you to the parents who helped pack the rain gear and water shoes so their child would be prepared, and for their financial support so Tremont can provide its quality programming. A special thank you goes out to the brave chaperones that volunteered sometimes for long bus rides with 30 or more excited fifth graders. Thank you also to the administrators who provide support to their teachers, assist with planning, and provide financial support—thank you all for making these Tremont trips possible!

We hope to see all of you again next year!

Jones Valley Elementary

Huntsville, AL 4th Grade

Randolph School

Huntsville, AL 6th Grade

St. Luke's Episcopal School

Mobile, AL 6th Grade

Weatherly Heights Elementary

Huntsville, AL 5th Grade

Cherokee Bend Elementary

Birmingham, AL 5th Grade

Holy Comforter Episcopal, Inc.

Tallahassee, FL 5th Grade

Hendricks Day School of

Jacksonville

Jacksonville, FL 7th Grade

Fayette Montessori School

Fayetteville, GA 4th-6th

The Cottage Middle School

Roswell, GA 6th Grade

McClellan County Diversity

Project

Downs, IL 7th-8th

Sycamore School

Indianapolis, IN 5th Grade

Central Middle School

Kokomo, IN 7th-8th

Westville High School

Westville, IN HS

Burlington Elementary

Burlington, KY 5th Grade

Grace Academy

Burlington, KY 3rd-8th

McDonald Intermediate School

Fort Knox, KY 6th Grade

Radcliff Middle School

Radcliff, KY 8th Grade

Verity Middle School

Ashland, KY 7th-8th

Sayre School

Lexington, KY 11th-12th

Berrien County Math &

Science Center

Berrien Springs, MI 10th Grade

Maplewood Richmond

Heights Middle

Maplewood, MO 7th Grade

Northview Middle School

Hickory, NC 6th-8th

Piedmont Environmental Center

High Point, NC 6th-8th

Valley Springs Middle School

Arden, NC 6th-7th

Old Trail School

Bath, OH 7th Grade

Harvest Prep School

Columbus, OH 10th Grade

McAuley High School

Cincinnati, OH 9th grade

Lighthouse Christian School

Antioch, TN 10th Grade

Woodland Middle School

Brentwood, TN 7th Grade

Brentwood Middle School

Brentwood, TN 6th Grade

Smoky Mountain Elementary

Cosby, TN 8th Grade

Chattanooga Christian School

Chattanooga, TN 5th Grade

Scenic Land School

Chattanooga, TN 5th-8th

Friendsville Elementary

Friendsville, TN 5th Grade

Poplar Grove School

Franklin, TN 6th Grade

College Heights Christian

Academy

Gallatin, TN 6th-8th

Pi Beta Phi Elementary

Gatlinburg, TN 5th Grade

Tusculum College Upward

Bound

Greeneville, TN HS

Knox Doss Middle School

Gallatin, TN 8th Grade

Grassy Fork Elementary

Hartford, TN 7th-8th

Merrol Hyde Magnet School

Hendersonville, TN 7th Grade

Austin East Magnet HS

Knoxville, TN 9th Grade



Monitoring” and “Stream Physics” assist teachers in meeting the rigorous objectives of the classroom and give students the opportunity to learn relevant science in the field.

“Students in school using environmental education consistently score higher on standardized tests than students in schools without environmental education.”

—2004 Environmental Education Report Card

Some teachers want their students to learn content during a field trip, so they

can build on this knowledge in the classroom. Other teachers may want to emphasize team-building or an appreciation of the natural world. No matter your goal, the mission of Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont is to provide in-depth experiences through educational programs designed to nurture an appre-

ciation Great Smoky Mountains National Park. We hope students will learn to recognize the value in biodiversity and see that same diversity in their own backyards so that they become responsible stewards of their homes, community, and natural areas like Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

When I was at Tremont, I learned there are more important things than TV and video games. I didn't even remember about TV until the last day.

—Jessica Jaeger

We Have Results!

continued from page 7

this information is, of course, quite positive because that is what we were striving to achieve—to have students fall even more in love with the outdoors.

We also found that there was a significant increase in students who can read a topographic map, and in those who can use a field guide. The number of students who understand what an exotic species is also increased. Students also have a greater understanding of diversity of life in the Smokies. All of these findings had a $p < .001$.

But the evaluation system is not just to make the Tremont staff feel good. We realized that there are particular subject areas where we did not see a statistically significant improvement, and our staff is working to improve that. This has also been a wonderful opportunity for the staff to focus on our goals and prioritize what we feel are the most important concepts students obtain when walking away from Tremont.

Not only do we find that having outdoor experiences affect the student in a positive way, but the survey also allows the student to give us feedback. They have an opportunity to tell us what they liked (hiking, salamanders, the waterfall), what they would change (serve more pizza!), and their overall thoughts on their trip. Many students say that their favorite part of the trip was making new friends, which shows that a Tremont trip is not only learning about nature, but also learning about cooperation.

This preliminary assessment is also useful for teachers and administrators. All of the pre-trip planning and the work of putting together a Tremont trip is paying off. The outdoor experiences that Tremont provides can shape students' views about nature. As one child simply put it on his post-survey, “Now I want to explore outside more.”

We will be continuing our evaluation of school programs and adding another stage: three-month follow up surveys and teacher interviews. Three-month follow up surveys will help us determine if our impact is short term, or if the students still recall what they learned at Tremont after this time period.

Check back with us as we continually evaluate our programs and release new data. Our webpage will be posting our results. It's exciting to see so many students having a connection with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park!

Concord Christian
Knoxville, TN 5th Grade
Episcopal School of Knoxville, Inc.
Knoxville, TN 7th Grade
Garden Montessori School
Knoxville, TN 5th-8th
Grace Christian Academy
Knoxville, TN 6th Grade
Nature's Way Montessori
Knoxville, TN 4th & 5th
Oakmont
Knoxville, TN 7th-10th
Shannondale Elementary
Knoxville, TN 5th Grade
South Doyle High School
Knoxville, TN 11th-12th
St. John Neumann Catholic School
Knoxville, TN 5th Grade
Vine Middle Magnet School
Knoxville, TN 8th Grade
Webb School of Knoxville
Knoxville, TN 6th Grade
Cherokee Middle School
Kingston, TN 6th Grade
Camp Quest
Louisville, TN 3rd-8th
Coffman Middle School
Lawrenceburg, TN 8th Grade

Lenoir City Middle School
Lenoir City, TN 6th Grade
Middlesettlements Elementary
Louisville, TN 5th Grade
Carpenters Elementary
Maryville, TN 5th Grade
Porter Elementary School
Maryville, TN 5th Grade
Eagleton Elementary
Maryville, TN 5th Grade
Lanier Elementary
Maryville, TN 4th Grade
Maryville Christian School
Maryville, TN 7th-8th
Maryville Intermediate School
Maryville, TN 6th-7th
Immaculate Conception HS
Memphis, TN 10th Grade
McFadden School of Excellence
Murfreesboro, TN 5th Grade
Homer Pittard Campus School
Murfreesboro, TN 6th Grade
Christ Presbyterian Academy
Nashville, TN 7th Grade
Harding Academy
Nashville, TN 6th Grade
Oak Hill School
Nashville, TN 5th Grade

Hillwood High School
Nashville, TN HS
Hume-Fogg Academic HS
Nashville, TN 11th-12th
West End Middle School
Nashville, TN 5th-6th
Edgemont Elementary School
Newport, TN 8th Grade
Oliver Springs Elementary
Oliver Springs, TN 6th Grade
Robertsville Middle School
Oak Ridge, TN 6th Grade
Rockford Elementary School
Rockford, TN 5th Grade
St. Andrews-Sewanee HS
Sewanee, TN 12th Grade
Sewanee Elementary
Sewanee, TN 6th Grade
Walland Elementary School
Walland, TN 5th Grade
St. Marcus School
Milwaukee, WI 7th-8th

We will begin our scheduling for 2007-2008 in early January. If you are interested in participating in a Tremont field trip, check out our website at www.gsmiit.org for more information. If you have any questions, call Jennifer Love at 865-448-6709 ext. 16 or email at Jennifer@gsmiit.org.

Making a Spiritual Home— Giving a Special Gift

Professional nature photographer Will Clay donates exclusive print to Tremont

by Kent Jones

Have you ever been told to shut your eyes and think of a special place? Then place yourself there even though you're not? Some people do this as a way to relieve stress or even to manage pain. We often glibly call it our "happy place." There are many unforgettable special places we connect with once we have been

there. It becomes special to us as it is imprinted in our mind, maybe even on our soul. If you visit your favorite place often, you could be on your way to making it your "spiritual home."

One man has made a spiritual home out of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. From his physical home in Ottawa, Illinois, Will Clay makes many memorable trips to the Smokies each year.

Prior to 1982 Will was pursuing a career as professor of botany at the University of Arizona. He enjoyed getting out and pho-

tographed nature as a hobby. He submitted a photograph that was published in Arizona Highways. His love for outdoor photography increased as requests for Will Clay photography increased. At a point where he knew he could no longer do both "careers" the decision was made to become the professional



photographer that he is to this day.

When he left Arizona and moved to Illinois, he had a difficult time adjusting to the unfamiliar cold climate. "I never felt so cold in all my life," stated Will. He began planning to spend some time photographing in

a warmer climate. The year he became a full-time photographer he planned a trip south to the Smokies. "That first trip as a full-time professional photographer I got a feeling in the Smokies that I just can't get anywhere else," states Will. "From that point on I knew that the

Smokies was my spiritual home."

He allows his camera (and soul) to experience every season and as many special places he can get to. One of the special places he enjoys the most is Tremont. Our area of the mountains, located along the Middle Prong of the Little River, is a quiet natural place that has all the sounds of gently rolling waters and crisp breezes that blow down the mountains into Walker Valley.

"Walker Valley is home to one of the special places dear to my heart—Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont," states Will. When asked why, he will tell you that it is special not only to himself but to the many people that come and stay here.

Here they learn what it is really like to connect with nature: where they too can make a spiritual home. Will says, "The planet could use more Tremonts."

Will has graciously made a donation of one of his special photographs to Tremont. Offered as part of a fundraising effort in support of Tremont's Endowment, this photograph is a one of a kind, high-resolution print of a young sweet gum tree along the flowing waters of the Middle Prong in fall regalia. Presented at auction on Tremont's website, you can view and bid on this beautiful 24 x 36 print. Numbered 1 of 1, Will Clay has committed that this photograph will never be printed or sold again.

Please visit www.gsmit.org and place your bid. Auction ends December 15, 2006. Bidding can be submitted by email to Kent@gsmit.org. See photograph and bidding history at www.gsmit.org/tremont_auctionpage.html

Donations

From 8/5/06 to 11/7/06. Thank you!

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Alcoa Foundation
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Looking Ahead

Join us for one of our upcoming workshops!

Wilderness First Responder

January 21 - 28

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. The curriculum will meet the Tennessee Dept. of Transportation's standards for First Responder while focusing on the special situations that may develop in the wilderness. 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.

Cost: \$820. Lodging and meals included in cost. There will be an additional fee to purchase text books. Limited financial aid is available from the Louise Barber endowment. To apply for aid send us a letter stating why the course would benefit you, why you need financial assistance and the amount you are requesting.

Wilderness First Responder Refresher

February 23 - 25

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. This program is also an excellent review of wilderness medical information and skills. Limited enrollment! Program lasts from Friday morning to Sunday afternoon.

Cost \$367. Lodging and meals included in cost.

Family Adventure Weekend

February 9 - 11

Run away from home and bring the family with you! There is no better way to spend a weekend with the family than exploring Great Smoky Mountains National Park. This weekend is chock full of hikes, crafts, games, waterfalls, beautiful views, campfires and plenty of time to enjoy being with the ones you love. We will provide discovery and adventure AND we do all the cooking! It doesn't get

much better than this! Join our talented staff for a weekend you will never forget.

Program lasts from Friday supper through Sunday lunch.

Cost: \$330 for family of four ages 6 and up (\$70 for each additional person); includes all meals, lodging, materials, and instruction. Visit our website www.gsmrit.org for a full schedule.

Spring Hiking Elderhostel

April 9 - 14

Discover the beauty of spring in the most rugged mountains in Appalachia! Led by our education staff, daily hikes will explore the cultural and natural history of this region with its unique traditions and rich biodiversity. Start each day with a hot breakfast then pack a lunch, grab your daypack and head out on the trail. Daily hikes of 5 to 13 miles bring you into contact with the varied plant life, sparkling mountain streams and breathtaking mountain vistas of this ancient mountain chain. Wildflowers, rushing water, and the misty green of spring all combine to make this an unforgettable experience. In the evenings, enjoy a fine meal at the Institute followed by Appalachian music and stories or educational sessions. Program lasts from Monday supper through Saturday breakfast.

Cost \$475. Information and registration materials may be obtained through: ELDERHOSTEL, 75 Federal St., Boston, MA 02110-1941, or call (877) 426-8056, or check their website at www.elderhostel.org.

Spring Photography Workshop

April 20 - 23

This is your chance to capture the wonder of sunrise, sunset, wildflowers and lavish landscapes! Spring in the Smokies is a time like no other. Wildflowers carpet the landscape and drip from every cliff. Nationally recognized nature photographer Bill Lea, along with other talented instructors, will lead a workshop emphasizing wildlife, landscape, and macro photography. Bill tailors the program to the skill level and interests of each individual par-

ticipant with plenty of one-on-one instruction. 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: \$520 (includes instruction, meals, and lodging).

Arts and the Environment

April 27 - 29

This is an inspirational and fun-filled spring weekend, dedicated to celebrating the environment through the arts via educational workshops. Past presentations have included workshops on storytelling, drama, naturalist skills, nature poetry, songwriting, and a wide variety of arts and crafts. We are excited to have internationally renowned folksinger Bill Staines joining us for a weekend of song and laughter. For over 35 years, Bill has captivated us with his great music that ranges from traditional folks tunes to more contemporary country ballads. Bill will share his music in a Friday night concert and also in a small group session on Saturday morning. Our annual Open Mic Night will commence Saturday evening in a relaxed coffee shop setting, giving everyone an opportunity to share their talent with others. Sunday activities are traditionally reserved for spontaneous ideas that emerge over the course of the weekend from the collective creative juices of the group. Program lasts from Friday supper through Sunday lunch.

Cost: \$220. One hour of graduate credit is available for an additional fee. Check out our website for more information as it becomes available.

Spring Wonders Weekend

April 27 - 29

There's nothing better than a spring day in the Smokies, except perhaps, a whole weekend! Join us for a weekend of exploration and fun focusing on the natural history of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Festivities begin after supper on Friday night when we enjoy a grand concert by legendary folksinger Bill Staines. All day Saturday and Sunday morning are devoted to "naturalizing" around the park. Field classes include such subjects as wildflowers and ferns, birds, butterflies and moths, salamanders and more. There will also be time to go on your own explorations around Walker Valley, where Tremont is located. Your instructors will include Tremont staff, scientists, and other experts that look forward to sharing their special knowledge with you. This weekend is designed for anyone that wants to get close to nature through activities that are in keeping with the naturalist tradition of careful observation, study, and shared knowledge. Everyone will leave this weekend with a new wealth of knowledge and appreciation of nature. Program lasts from Friday supper through Sunday lunch.

Cost: \$220 (includes instruction, meals, and lodging). One hour of graduate credit is available for an additional fee. Visit our website for a detailed weekend schedule.

Bill Staines Coming to Tremont

April 27-29

Singer-songwriter Bill Staines is coming to Tremont in April for this year's Arts & Environment weekend. This legendary performer has penned numerous songs over his career, which has spanned four decades. He's been featured on Garrison Keillor's NPR program "A Prairie Home Companion" and his songs have been recorded by the likes of Nanci Griffith, Grandpa Jones, and Peter, Paul & Mary. You may know him best for "Cowboy's Lament" and "All God's Critters Got a Place in the Choir."

In addition to Bill's Friday evening performance, he will lead a workshop on Saturday morning on how to use music in the classroom. The weekend workshop will include plenty of other sessions as well. Check our website out throughout the coming months for further updates.

Mark your calendar now and join us next spring for this spectacular arts weekend! Tickets may be bought for the Friday evening performance only or for the entire weekend. For ticketing information call 865-448-6709.



Time to renew!

Please let us know if you would like to remain on our mailing list.
Donations to help defer the cost of printing are not required, but much appreciated.

- 1) Mail this form to us, or
- 2) Fax this form to 865-448-9250, or
- 3) Email us at mail@gsmiit.org (give us your name as it is listed on the mailing label)

Address changes: _____

Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont is operated in cooperation with Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

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Sheri Liles
Mike Matzko
Mary Silver*

part-time naturalists

*Betsy Booth
Emily Guss
Courtney Lix
Jaimie Matzko
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