

Walker Valley REFLECTIONS

The newsletter of Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont • Fall 2008



In their own words

*Tremont
backpackers give voice
to their experiences*

By Mary Silver, Teacher/Naturalist

On night two of the Teen High Adventure backpack trip, 15 miles into our weeklong traverse of the entire park, my co-leader Brian and I sat down to review the day.

There had been a tough, steady climb that had lasted until early afternoon, stream crossings that had left most of the kids squelching in their boots, and yellow jackets that we were sure held personal vendettas against us. We had eaten wild huckleberries, played endless riddle games, and paused to rescue every snail and caterpillar reckless enough to try crossing our trail. The group had been glassy-eyed and slow in camp that evening; five minutes after the last tent was zipped Brian and I didn't hear so much as a whisper. We were worn out, and the next day's hike would be even longer.

"You know," said Brian before heading off to his own tent, "there's no way to go back and tell anyone about a trip like this. You can't put an experience into words." I agreed. For us as leaders, and even more for the participating teenagers, backpacking is such a blend of discomfort and beauty, new skills and basic human intuition, compassion and self-reliance, silliness and exhaustion and triumph, that any attempt to tell the story of a trip falls short of the experience.

Any attempt, that is, taken after the trip is over. For a glimpse of

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From the Executive Director

People Connecting People and Nature

This issue of *Walker Valley Reflections* captures a bit of what is experienced at Tremont by many students, campers, and staff each summer. It is true, as written in Mary's article, "You can't put an experience into words." Nonetheless, a good glimpse into those experiences is captured in the words in this issue.



One of the hardest things Tremont deals with as we transition from the craziness of summer programs to the business and intensity of school programs, is the changes in people. Summer staff and interns who seem like they just arrived, and whom we were really just getting to know, are headed back to school or moving on to

new places. Seasoned staff move on to new things as well and this fall we are experiencing a number of transitions with people who have had incredible impacts at Tremont.

Teacher/naturalists Mike Matzko and April Morris decided to move on to new endeavors at the end of the summer. Mike has been with us five years and April almost two. Education Director Amber Parker, as well as Citizen Science Director Jason Love, were both offered exciting new positions and will be leaving Tremont during

the fall season. Amber will be executive director at the Marine Consortium in Virginia and Jason, an ecologist at the Coweeta Hydrologic Lab in western North Carolina. Some of you are already ahead of me and understand that School Program director Jennifer Love would like to be with her husband so will also move on, but she has agreed to stay through the fall season to help us with the transition to a new program staff structure. Each of these individuals will be missed for the many things they contributed to the Tremont experience.

Kim Wagner and Nathan Daniel who worked with us over the last year will join us as teacher/naturalists as will Lindsay Menard, who was a naturalist this summer. Jen Martin will be promoted to school program coordinator and Jeremy Lloyd to special program coordinator. We have a great team in place to continue to offer the best possible programs and to keep things moving forward as we fill some key vacancies.

We wish the best those who are moving on and share pride in the reality that their experience at Tremont has both made a great impact here and has equipped them to carry our mission to other places.

Ken Voorhis
GSMIT Executive Director

Reminder—2008 Photo Contest "Color"

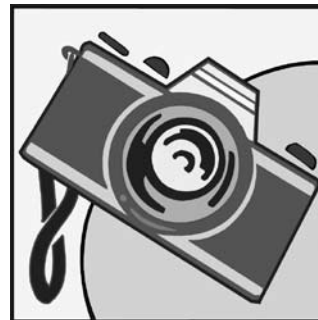
By Josh Davis, Senior Teacher/Naturalist

The deadline is approaching for our 2008 Amateur Photo Contest! Send us your brightest blues and your raciest reds, we want to see the best color this beautiful park has to offer.

All photos must be taken inside Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Ask about Tremont's Autumn Photo Workshop October 17-20 for the perfect chance to capture some color!

The grand prize is a voucher for admission to a Tremont program of your choice, up to a maximum value of \$450. Second prize will cover up to \$225 of admission to a Tremont program. Third prize,

added this year, is a \$100 voucher towards admission to a Tremont program. These can be used by the winner, or may be transferred to a person of your choosing. There will be three honorable mentions, each of which will receive a free Tremont water bottle. Additionally, we'll feature the winner (and perhaps others) in our winter newsletter and on our Web site; any of the photos may show up in future publications. A committee of Tremont staff will select the winners.



Submissions are limited to five (5) per person. Entries must be received by October 31, 2008. Photos can be submitted electronically, by mail, or in person. For complete rules, details on how to submit photos, and

entry forms, visit our Web site at www.gsmiit.org/photocontest; you can also email josh@gsmiit.org with questions.

In Their Own Words

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what it's really like to be along on one of Tremont's youth backpacking camps, you'd have to listen to the story told as it happens. So lace up your boots, strap on that pack, forget the toilet paper and deodorant, and enjoy the following quotes, taken more or less verbatim from real teenagers on real Tremont backpacking trips.

On food:

We really don't starve out there, but we do eat a lot of typical trail meals, which are not quite the same as typical "real world" fare. We burn a lot of calories, and it doesn't take long before somebody mentions watermelon, somebody else mentions Taco Bell, and the conversation just takes a downward spiral.

"What are you putting in your bowl?"

"I don't know."

"Let me get some of that."

(It was oregano.)

"Hey, do you guys want to try some lichen? It tastes like paper!"

I'm so hungry I could eat raw fat right now.

On dirt:

A week without indoor plumbing does things to you. There comes a point when the grime is so ground in that you think you're actually clean, and then you see someone who's just out for a day hike. They keep their distance when they speak to you.

"I smell like dirt. I like it."

"Whatever dirt you've got, I've got you beat."

"I just dropped my spoon in the dirt, wiped it on the pants I've been wearing for four days, and now I'm eating with it. My standards of cleanliness will never be the same."

On government:

The team spirit is strong. Everyone is a vital, contributing member of the group, and things are going so smoothly that we think

we could probably run the world, too, given a chance.

"Oh, yeah, back when Japan was trying to take over Mexico..."

"No, the only president I can think of who was assassinated is Martin Luther King."

"I think we should all just beat each other up later. We need a big brawl."

On pain:

Blisters, bee stings, scrapes and bruises, twisted ankles, and just plain sore muscles. Sometimes backpacking hurts.

"Tell me a story. I just got stung, so I need a story."



MARY SILVER

"I feel like my backpack is part of me now. If somebody hit it, I'd probably say ouch."

Smaller boy: "I'm so sore."

Older camper: "But you look so much stronger today than you did yesterday."
(Two hours later)

Smaller boy, to other boy his age: "Hey, do you think I look stronger today?"

On other park visitors:

Sometimes a long trip in the wilderness gives the group a certain sense of ownership of the national park.

"I didn't think dumb people went backpacking. Why is there foil in the fire ring?"

Tourist at Clingmans Dome, to one of our campers: "Did you bring a laptop?"

Camper: "No."

Tourist: "You don't have a computer with you?"

Camper: "No."

Tourist: "You really didn't bring one?"

Camper: "No."

Tourist: "Well, can you get the Internet on your cell phone?"

Little boy to his dad, after seeing us:

"Why can't we go on a real trail?"

*I'm going to die.
Pass the spaghetti.*

On why we go backpacking at all:

Yes, it's hard. We're stinky and dirty and hungry and sore, we miss our own beds and our friends and our music. It's probably the hardest thing some of the kids have ever done, yet most of them have come voluntarily and will return next summer. Why?

"Some people hardly even go outside of their houses, but when I go backpacking with a group like this, I can meet people from all over the country."

"I learned that you never really know what you can do physically until you're out there and have to rely on yourself to do it."

"I've never appreciated how easy my life usually is at home."

I like who I am out here.

"I go backpacking for the bragging rights. None of my friends has ever done anything like this."

"I go backpacking to see wild places. I like the feeling that there's no other way to get to where I am besides hiking there."

A Summer of Connections

By Avery Kelly, Environmental Education Summer Intern

One thing that has really struck me this summer is the ability for so many different ages and types of people from all over the country to come together at Tremont and be fascinated and captured by the same instances and beauty. Not only do the programs here “connect people to nature” meaningfully, but the hikes, nature study, and time together also connect people to people.

One way that Tremont helps connect people to one another is through the nature programming. This summer, stream searches were both a hit at Discovery

Camp and, several weeks later, with adults—science teachers and other adults alike. In this program, participants learn different ways of combing a stream for aquatic macroinvertebrates, and then examine their findings under a microscope displayed up on a projector. All the various groups I saw searched the stream with eager alacrity. After the search, both



GABBY SALAZAR

children and adults were completely enthralled with seeing the amazing creatures close up, learning different parts of the critters and their functions to understand how various species are adapted to their underwater habitat. An especially big hit was when a dragonfly larva was

captured—I can still see the participants’ faces in one particular class as the instructor moved the extended jaw of this ferocious creature back and forth.

Bird-banding is another example of a class that seems to be fulfilling to everyone. Seeing an Indigo Bunting, Kingfisher, Goldfinch, or any other type of bird close up, and perhaps even understanding how scientists monitor them, is something that cannot cease to be enthralling. Some birds, such as the beautiful Cedar Waxwing, are never envisioned the same way if you are lucky enough to see one at the banding station.

In programming, participants are united to one another in this admiration of other living things. The participants in each separate class are also connected to children and adults in other classes year-round that have been absorbed in the same activity or study. This same unity and connection occurs very frequently between people in multiple instances on the trail, such as when a bear is spotted, a big tree is passed, or a blanket of moss carpets the margins of the trail.

Tremont also connects people to one another by simply providing a place and habitat for people to spend time together and get to know one another, forming a community. Adult Hiking Week was particularly inspiring—some of the adults have been coming back year after year, becoming like family, which the first-time participants are welcomed into with open arms and excitement. This week was a wonderful opportunity for me to meet adults of all ages from all over the U.S. and learn from all their varied experiences, while also being able to see how they formed camaraderie as they continually supported one another and developed friendships.

The energetic, invigorating spirit that exists here at Tremont captures the bright side of everyone who spends time here. I hope that all who visit can return back to their home dwelling with a renewed zest for life, refreshed by both “connecting with nature” and by connecting with people.

An Evening with Doug Elliott

By Rachel Rasmussen, Environmental Education Summer Intern

This summer, Tremont had the privilege of hosting a wonderful guest: storyteller, naturalist, herbalist, educator, and rambler Doug Elliott. Spending a couple of days during each Discovery Camp and then performing at the Appalachian Celebration, Doug seemed to be able to connect with people of all ages.

There is one particular evening during Discovery Camp

that I distinctly remember. After dinner, we all gathered to hear Doug’s stories about the snake in his backyard and have him lead us in songs about blackberries, catfish, and the like. Everyone was engaged, but the fun didn’t stop after the designated hour had ended because it was now

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My Summer Classroom

By Mollie Klepack, Environmental Education Summer Intern

When reflecting on the opportunities Tremont has to offer, images of happy children playing in the swimming hole and squirming as a millipede crawls across their hands for the first time often flash across your mind. Tremont doubtlessly creates invaluable opportunities for the children it brings to the woods, but after a season spent working with Tremont's summer programs, I can say that the Institute has just as much to offer its staff members. As one of the four environmental education interns, I have benefited from all the new and exciting opportunities that Tremont has to offer in the field of environmental education.

I came to Tremont from the University of Vermont, interested in trying my hand at this field I had newly heard of, something called environmental education. An Environmental Studies major, I had no teaching background, but did have a fierce desire to find a way to instill environmental stewardship into American youth.

Before getting to the Smokies I had no idea what a tremendous opportunity Tremont would offer me, for not only was I headed into an internship to get experience working with kids but one that would offer me countless opportunities for personal education and growth. Upon arriving in Walker Valley, however, it didn't take long to realize how fortunate I was to have a whole summer exploring and learning from Tremont.

It's been nine weeks since then and the summer has proven to be far more than I could have ever expected. No two weeks are ever the same at Tremont, with the result that in a few short weeks my fellow interns and I have been able to work with participants ranging from elementary children to senior citizens, taking them on hikes through the wilderness, and teaching them how to explore and care for the national park. Not only have I gotten countless chances to do environmental education, but I have also received education on everything from firefly behavior to fern identification. These personal education opportunities have not only allowed for my personal

growth, but have also allowed me to enrich the appreciation of countless participants for the out-of-doors.

In college, it can be hard to escape the academia to get actual experience working and exploring possible career paths. One can easily get lost in theory and philosophy, only to come out at the other end of a four-year degree with very little idea about how to practically apply what one has learned. Tremont's internship program allows for college students to escape that and try their hand doing important influential work. After a summer at Tremont I

feel as though I have a firm understanding in the philosophy and application of environmental education, invaluable knowledge that I could have never gotten inside of college.

There are countless memories I will treasure from this summer spent with kids in the woods, but doubtlessly among my most valuable must be the first time I taught kids to identify trees. Armed with *The Trees of the Smokies* ID book and Tremont's dichotomous tree key we ventured into the woods. Explaining the differences between opposite and alternate leaves, lobed and toothed margins, proved more challenging than I could have ever

expected. How does one choose precise words to explain the difference between simple and compound leaves to kids without venturing too far into the complexity of scientific terms? Taking it one step at a time, however, the kids and I worked it out and by the end, the pleasure of watching the kids eagerly and accurately keying out trees was the highlight of my summer of environmental education.

I've only gotten to spend nine weeks here at Tremont, but it has doubtlessly been nine of the most influential weeks of my life. So now, when reflecting on Tremont, images of staff exploring and learning along with participants flash across my mind, knowing that I, and my other environmental education interns, have learned as much as any participant during our summer spent here.

After a summer at Tremont I feel as though I have a firm understanding in the philosophy and application of environmental education, invaluable knowledge that I could have never gotten inside of college.



GABBY SALAZAR

Sustainable Environmental Education

By Craig Lazzar, Environmental Education Summer Intern

I began my internship at Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont with a rather flimsy idea of what professional environmental education was or could be. I had taken college courses on the subject and was quite intrigued, but I was still missing that vital equation—the human component—of connecting people with the natural world. I had been taught how to give a natural history lecture or interpretive walk, but I knew in the back of my mind that that isn't where the real magic happens.

I've been fortunate to attend an internship position at GSMIT, and to have witnessed the awe and wonder inspired in participants here. I am even more fortunate to have been awed and wonderstruck myself; especially during my time at Liles Acres Organic Farm. As part of our preparation for Tremont's Naturalist Expeditions program, summer staff went to visit the farm and discuss the possibility of a partnership for our Frontier Days segment of the program. Sheri Liles, co-owner of the farm with her husband Russell, had worked for Tremont in the past. She readily agreed to work with us, and was instrumental in creating our program plan. During our planning session, I had time to observe the Liles' operation and what I saw nearly overwhelmed me.

I was raised on a small family-owned produce farm, and am keenly aware of how globalization and market forces are quickly smothering this vanishing American heritage.

Until my time at Liles Acres, I was reasonably convinced that there was simply no hope left for preserving my family's remaining 16 acres from becoming yet another high-impact housing development in my rapidly growing hometown of Webster, NY. But what I observed at the Liles' farm obliterated my previous conceptions of the future of small family farms.

As I spoke with the Liles, a whole new reality was revealed to me. They and many others have succeeded in creating a sustainable and profitable small-scale farm. As I stated, I was raised as a produce grower, but the possibilities revealed were unlike any I had known or was until now only dimly aware of. What the Liles have accomplished is the

construction of a self-sustaining ecosystem on their land that produces goods year-round—the

need for synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, oil-heat inputs and monocultures are, to this system, as illusory as a rapidly fading dream.

For me, this was the greatest gift that I could

be offered. But the Liles' farm was not done giving yet. A few weeks later, we brought a group of our campers to the farm for an extended overnight visit. I had a fantastic time watching as these children, many of whom had dealt with livestock only at arm's length—if at all—formed an immediate attachment with the Liles' llamas as they walked with them side by side and called them by name as they guided the animals along their regular exercise route. I was overjoyed at the smiles of satisfaction on the kids' faces as they tucked in to a meal made entirely by their hands; from garden and chicken coop to open fire and finally to the table. It was an exceptional day of learning for all.



Food Waste Hall of Fame Class of 2007-2008 Update!

The following schools, which visited after our last newsletter went to print, also made our zero waste hall of fame. Kudos to them!

Westville • Eastside Christian Academy • Brentwood MS

They're Back: School Students Back at Tremont for the Summer

By Jen Martin, Senior Teacher/Naturalist

At Tremont, we have over 5,000 students a year that attend programs with their schools, having in-depth outdoor experiences in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. For many of these students this is the first time they have been away from home overnight, gone hiking, seen a waterfall, or even been in a national park. Our hope is that by the time they head back home, they feel so connected with nature that they want to spend even more time in the outdoors, whether it is exploring natural areas close to home or perhaps returning to the Smokies.

This year we began a new summer program, called the Science Seekers. Science Seekers are students that have come to Tremont with their school and have shown a genuine interest in nature. Teachers nominated some of their students to attend one of our Discovery Camps this summer. The Science Seekers were awarded with a scholarship to help encourage their exploration of the outdoors. This year we had 27 nominated students return, some from just down the road, and others from as far away as Florida.

The goal of the Science Seeker program is to provide an additional opportunity for students to return to Tremont, to expand upon the student's knowledge of the national park, and to deepen their feeling of connection with the outside world. While at Discovery Camp, the Science Seekers engaged in salamander monitoring, plant and tree

identification, survival skills, nature journaling, and of course...swimming in the river. These experiences, while valuable on their own, are so much more meaningful on a camper's return trip to Tremont. They truly help them to develop a stronger relationship with the natural world.

For a lot of these campers, coming back to Tremont was like coming back home. Camper Seth Landry, from Florida, said that he missed Tremont, and that being back in the woods is so peaceful. Austin Dowell, from Nashville, TN, has been to Tremont several times with his school group. He was so excited to come back, stating "I do things here I can't do back home. Someday I want to work here." Being outside helps kids become more comfortable there, feel like the outdoors is a second home, and want to be out in nature.

In this day and age of electronic entertainment, playing outside often takes a backseat. However, Tremont's Science Seekers proved that digging in the dirt trying to find a salamander is much more entertaining and meaningful than something that needs to be plugged into the wall.

Special thanks to Tetra Tech of Oak Ridge, TN who helped to fund the Science Seeker scholarships this summer.



Having Nature Answer Our Question

By Brian Ballenger, Teacher/Naturalist

During our annual Discovery Camp, campers come and spend a week at Tremont. In that week they get to run around the woods, observe and learn firsthand about nature, swim in the refreshing Middle Prong, and hopefully try to see some wildlife. Throughout the week the campers like to bombard us teachers with questions such as, "Are we going to see a bear?" and "Is that noise a bear!" and "I thought there were bears here, where are they?" Much to their dismay, the closest thing they get to a bear is counselor Kyle.

In the course of a week, the campers, some of whom have never set foot in the woods before let alone explored any of the

Smokies' 800 square miles of wilderness, learned different skills ranging from hiking, tree identifying and teamwork. On the last full day of Discovery Camp the campers, now expert hikers, would be able to put their newly honed skills into use. During the week we try to help the campers understand why we need places like Great Smoky Mountains National Park—places where wildlife can roam free and undisturbed.

While out on the all-day hike, I like to ask my hikers questions such as why do we need national parks, or what is the value of having wild areas. During an all-day hike with the discovery campers I asked these questions during our break on the

unmaintained Spruce Flats Trail. While the campers were discussing this, we heard a loud crashing and looked up to the hill beside us and saw a black bear rumbling through the woods. The campers stood in awe as they watched their first bear scrambling up the hillside. That day the campers did not finish the question I had asked, but Mother Nature stepped in to finish it for us. Standing in the middle of the woods on an unmaintained trail, we were able to watch firsthand the answer of why national parks and wild areas alike are important.

From the Science Lab... Summer Summary

By Jason Love, Citizen Science Director

It was another super citizen science summer at Tremont. From collecting water mites to banding birds in Cades Cove, the summer was busy but productive. Our four summer research interns each adopted their own project:

- 1) Gar Secrist determined the distribution of ranavirus on salamanders in the park as part of his senior thesis at Maryville College;
- 2) Alex Durand washed the feet and legs of birds during bird banding to see if tardigrades (also known as water bears) hitch rides on avifauna;
- 3) Laura Rigell washed the legs and abdomen of dragonflies to see if tardigrades are carried by odonates; and
- 4) as part of her summer project, Hannah Harper made scientific illustrations of crayfish, butterflies, and other insects.

Other highlights of the summer include:

- High school science teacher Laura Neff and middle school science teacher Amanda Hendricks each spent 80 hours this summer assisting with a variety of science projects as ATBI teacher interns. Stipends for their internship were provided from a generous grant by Discover Life In America.
- Tremont's Backcountry Ecology Expedition, a camp for teens, made a successful foray into the wilds of Hazel Creek. Canoeing over Lake Fontana, we set up basecamp at campsite #86 near Proctor. Highlights include catching a huge crayfish

record for the park and the most western record in the park). Summer research intern Gar Secrist was able to collect tail tips from 30 salamanders in the Hazel Creek drainage. These have already been processed in the lab; 13 out of the 30 salamanders were positive for ranavirus.

- Throughout the summer, our summer research interns checked beetle sticky traps and wood boring moth pheromone traps for University of Tennessee PhD student Jason Hansen. Jason believes he has found at least two new park records from this survey.
- We performed canopy transects on all of our stream salamander sites to help document the decline of Eastern hemlock. The data will be used to help correlate any trends in salamander abundance/diversity resulting from the hemlock decline.

- Our Field Ecology Adventure camp was once again full. Students helped band birds, collect salamanders for the ranavirus study, net butterflies and



MICHELLE KEY

dragonflies in Cades Cove, and snorkel for larval hellbenders with University of Florida graduate student Kirsten Hecht. Kirsten stayed at Tremont this summer to collect data for her thesis and help teach students about hellbenders.

- Tremont's 3rd Annual Science Poster Presentations

took place on July 23rd. Students from the Field Ecology Adventure Camp, as well as our ATBI teacher interns and summer research interns, presented posters of their independent research projects to their peers, Tremont staff, parents, and guests from Alcoa and the Legacy of Tremont group.

- On July 18th, NPS biologist Paul Super brought along approximately 23 participants from the Society for Conservation Biology. The group was international in scope, representing 11 different nations. The group learned about our different citizen science projects and how Tremont is trying to engage future conservation biologists by connecting people and nature in the Smokies.



MICHELLE KEY

(likely an undescribed species), catching a Treetop Emerald dragonfly (last reported from the park in the 1940s) and catching a Three-lined Salamander (only the 4th recent

Student Art Contest for 2008-2009 School Year



Teachers!

Do you have your students write poems, draw, paint, or take artistic photographs before, during, or following your trip to Tremont? If so, please consider submitting it to our Student Art Contest. We are now accepting art for this contest.

The contest is open to any and all students visiting Tremont during the 2008-2009 school year. The contest will close in late spring 2009, at which time submissions will be evaluated and winners announced. Selections may be printed in an upcoming issue of *Walker Valley Reflections*.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. All art must relate to the Smoky Mountains and explore Tremont's motto of "connecting people and nature."
2. All art must be submitted by teachers and include the student's name, grade, and school. If you want materials to be returned, please enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Keep an eye on our e-news for updates on this exciting contest! If you're not subscribed, visit <http://www.gsmiit.org/newsroom/newsletters.html> to sign up today!

Mail to:

Meredith Goins
"Student Art Contest"
GSMIT
9275 Tremont Rd
Townsend, TN 37882

Want to go get some coffee?

Join your friends for a "fresh cup of Appalachian hospitality" and help support Tremont's scholarship fund at the same time!



The Tremont Blend, a vibrant medium roast, is roasted to order for each customer by Appalachian based micro-roaster Blue Smoke Coffee Roasting Co. This environmentally and socially responsible coffee is roasted using green renewable energy and contains 100% organic, shade grown and fair trade beans.

To order online visit www.BlueSmokeCoffee.com or look for local retailers in Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, and even Key West, Florida! Each purchase of the Tremont Blend supports the Tremont scholarship fund—helping us connect people and nature.

An Evening with Doug Elliott

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time for the girls to go on an evening walk with Doug.

We started just outside of the Cove Room where Doug showed the girls how to make a whistle out of a jewelweed stem. We wandered across the field and over the bridge continuing to learn interesting properties and uses of the common plants we walk by every day. As we paused to shoot plantain poppers at each other and chew on the minty 'toothbrush twig,' I could tell that Doug had already captured the attention and imagination of the girls. We continued our walk into the woods on the other side of the road, just keeping our eyes open and looking for whatever interesting things we might find.

When we finally came to an open space with a couple of logs by the side of the trail, Doug told the girls that he 'thought we might stop here for a while and watch the night come in.' So the girls settled down and got a little quieter. Someone had found a salamander, and then someone else a snail, so everyone was gathered around watching and taking turns holding them. All of a sudden we heard a loud 'hoo, hoo, too-HOO,' followed by several more. After explaining that it was not a bear or a mountain lion, as some of the girls had thought, Doug called back to the Barred Owl. For several captivating minutes we heard two or three owls calling back and forth to one another.

On our way back down the hill, Doug suggested that we do a short solo hike without flashlights. Some of the girls were hesitant and didn't know if they could do it, so they decided to go with a friend to experience the dark woods. It was really great that evening to be with Doug Elliott in leading the girls to try things that they hadn't done before and to watch them get excited about all of the plants and animals that they had seen, touched, tasted, and heard.

THANK YOU!

...to the many generous individuals and organizations who help support Tremont and connecting people and nature in Great Smoky Mountains National Park! Tax deductible contributions are needed and always welcome. If you would like to know more about our current needs, how to contribute, or help with planning or designating a donation, please contact Meredith at (865) 448-6709 x. 24 or meredith@gsmnit.org.

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Dana & Susan Plotts
Jeff Wadley

Science Research & Other Volunteers

From 5/1/08 to 7/30/08:

Grady Amann
Geneva Andrew
Chad Ayers
Susan Ayers
Caron Beard
Kristine Beard
Kelly Berna
Amy Bishop
Kenny Bishop
Isaac Blankenship
Mitch & Debbie
Brockman
Patrick Brukiewa
Debbie Claypool
Matti Coppinger
Syndi Coppinger
Traci Coppinger
Collen Cruz
Sam Curtis
Tim Dameron
Benton Davis
Chelsea Davis
Mattie Davis
Sharon Davis

Tyler Davis
Robert Dowbiggin
Larry Duncan
Jodi Eanes
Jean-Anne Ferguson
Spencer Ferguson
Myra Fields
Christi Fightmaster
Alice Fisher
Grant Fisher
Sterling Fisher
Shannon Gaddis
Cory Gilbertson
Diana Gilbertson
Elijah Gilbertson
Jonah Gilbertson
Robin Goddard
Melba Harmon
Hannah Harper
Steven Hicks
Janice Hoffman
Grant Johnson
Tim Josey

Bekkah Joyal
Corrie Joyal
Jan Joyal
Sarah Joyal
Suzannah Joyal
Jonathan Key
Will Kilgore
Courtney Malone
Apache Mason
Bonny Millard
Summer Morris
Cierra Northcote
Kade Parker
Davis Parker
Robyn Parker
Julie Reggio
Juli Riegell
Taylor Rinehart
Gar, Keane, & Richard
Secrist
Marsha Sega
Connie Smith
Dana Soehn
Davis Soehn

Grant Soehn
Heath Soehn
Margot Spore
Alicid Sumeriski
Kasey Sumeriski
Lane Utterback
Megan Van Son
Jeanie Vanwinkle
Christy Walsh
Tom Walsh
Imelda Wegworth
Randy Wegworth
Summer Wegworth
Cindy Werner
Micki Werner
Harley White
Kathy Wilbanks
Emma, Mason, &
Tammy Worley
Grayson, Mark,
Presley & Wendy
Yount
Andy Zimmerman



HOMEcoming

SEPTEMBER 14, 2008
5:30 P.M. TO 8:30 P.M.
TREMONT CAMPUS

Join your friends and
other Tremont alumni for
an evening of food and
fun in the mountains!

Tickets are \$50 per person
and help support Tremont's
annual fund. A limited
number of tickets (200) are
available so call (865)
448-6709 or e-mail [mail@
gsmnit.org](mailto:mail@gsmnit.org) to register today!

- Casual attire
- Rain or shine
- Adults only please
- Limited seats available
- Parking is limited, please
carpool

LEARN MORE AT:

www.gsmnit.org/homecoming

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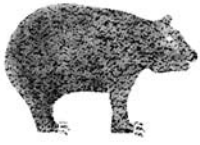


EVENT SPONSORSHIP:



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Looking Ahead

Visit www.gsmit.org, call 865-448-6709, or e-mail mail@gsmit.org for more information on any of our offerings!

September



Tremont Homecoming

September 14, 5:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

Join us in celebrating Tremont and our alumni! See page 10 for all the details!

Cost: \$50 per person.

October

Teacher Escape Weekend (see sidebar)

October 3-5

Cost: Free for teachers who attend Tremont with their school (after \$50 refundable deposit).

Women's Fall Backpack

October 10-12

Experience the beauty of the Great Smoky Mountains firsthand on a three-day backpacking adventure. We provide all the information, food, and gear (except sleeping bag) for your excursion. This is a safe, educational, and enjoyable way to learn about backpacking in the Smokies. Participants must be in good physical condition and be able to hike 5-8 miles a day in rugged, mountainous terrain.

Cost: \$245 per person.

Fall Hiking Elderhostel

October 12-17

Explore these ancient mountains with daily hikes through breathtaking scenery while watching the spectacular colors progress through out the week. Hikes will be 5-13 miles in length, making this program strenuous. In the evenings, enjoy a fine meal, followed by Appalachian music and tales, programs on mountain wildlife, or stories around the campfire.

Cost: \$475 per person.

Autumn Photography Workshop

October 17-20

Spend a weekend with photographer Willard Clay as he shares the splendors of fall in the Smokies. Field sessions and lectures designed for intermediate to professional photographers will cover the use of light, composition, landscape photography, close-ups, and how to find the "right" picture.

Cost: \$540 per person.

SANCP*—Southern Appalachian Ecology

October 24-26

This course provides an overview of the unique ecology of aquatic systems in the Southern Appalachian Mountains, particularly as it relates to Great Smoky Mountains National Park through discussion and field trips. Topics will include aquatic macroinvertebrates, habitats, conservation issues, etc.

Cost: \$250 per person.

SANCP*—Plants

October 24-26

Delve into the incredible diversity of plants found in the Southern Appalachians! We'll make it easy to learn botanical terms, plant taxonomy, and plant identification. Students will participate in several field classes during which they will investigate particular plant communities, learning the plants common to those communities. Emphasis is given to plant distribution and communities and practice with keys and field guides. You never knew botany could be so fun!

Cost: \$250 per person.



Legacy of Tremont Fall Hike

October 25

Experience the Fall color by hiking to Rich Mountain! Limited to 15 people, so register early! Led by Ken Voorhis.

Cost: \$15 per person.

November

SANCP*—Naturalist Skills/Mammals

November 7-9

Naturalist Skills provides an historical survey of the study of natural history and its practice as conducted by a naturalist. Students will learn the naturalist traditions, observation techniques, journal keeping, and the tools of a naturalist.

Explore the diversity of mammal species in the Southern Appalachian Mountains with a focus on the management practices used within Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Emphasis will be given to general natural history of each species, including but not limited to: distribution, associations, reproduction, status, conservation, research methods, etc. Adjunct faculty will include resource management professionals from Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the University of Tennessee.

Cost: \$250 per person.

January 2009

Teacher Escape Weekend (see sidebar)

January 9-11

Cost: Free for teachers who attend Tremont with their school (after \$50 refundable deposit).

Get an early start on 2009...visit www.gsmit.org/calendar for Tremont's 2009 calendar of events and go ahead and register today!

*Southern Appalachian Naturalist Certification Program

Tremont Teacher Workshops

How would you like to come to Tremont for FREE with your school group plus earn a discount for every student you bring? You can, by attending one of the pre-approved workshops!

These workshops are designed to familiarize teachers to the campus and staff plus highlight curriculum/lesson opportunities. It is a great way to meet other teachers, receive help planning your upcoming trip, and get away to the Smokies for a fun weekend!

Teacher Escape Weekend

October 3-5, 2008 and January 9-11, 2009

Cost: FREE, however a \$50 deposit is required to register, but will be refunded when you attend with your school group.

For more information about these workshops, visit our Web site at www.gsmit.org, e-mail mail@gsmit.org or call (865) 448-6709.

STAFF

teacher/naturalists

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Nathan Daniel
Mike Matzko
April Morris
Mary Silver
Kim Wagner

summer teacher/ naturalists

Mickey Larkins
Lindsay Menard

environmental education summer interns

Avery Kelly
Mollie Klepack
Craig Lazzar
Rachel Rasmussen

ATBI teacher interns

Amanda Hendricks
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summer research interns

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

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Tremont is updating our database. Would you please review your information below and let us know of any changes? Reach us at mail@gsmiit.org or (865) 448-6709.

Program brochures are available by contacting our office: www.gsmiit.org • (865) 448-6709 • mail@gsmiit.org

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