

Walker Valley REFLECTIONS

The newsletter of Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont • Fall 2009

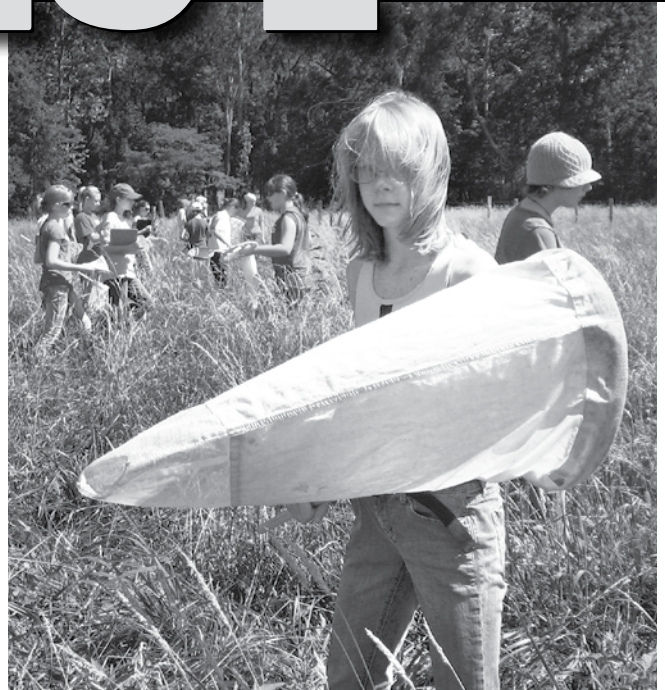
A LASTING IMPACT

By Jeremy Lloyd, senior teacher/naturalist

"This is the best camp ever."

I overheard these words as parents were arriving to pick up campers on the last day of Discovery Camp. The boy who said them was talking to himself and seemed unaware of my presence as he passed by me in the dining hall. It's not easy to tell what difference residential environmental education programs such as Tremont's make in the lives of people, but for this boy it made all the difference in the world.

I felt lucky to be a witness to it. We were fortunate to hear a few other testimonials this summer from participants to Tremont programs. Here are a few:



MARY SILVER

- A woman who attended our Science Teacher Institute told us that the atmosphere here at Tremont was inspiring and reminded her how important teachers are and why they do what they do. At the end of a long, exhausting school year, she felt more focused and rejuvenated by the end of the week thanks to her time here.
- A father who wrote to tell us his son had a great time at camp also told us

what happened when he entered his local library in Alabama wearing a Tremont 40th anniversary shirt: a woman who'd attended camp at Tremont as many as twenty years ago told him she remembered it as one of the best weeks of her life.

- A grandmother emailed to explain why her grandson wasn't attending camp this year: he had a job with the Green Corp working on an organic farm,

helping to clean National Forest land and improving fish habitat. "I can't thank you enough for your scholarship program that has enabled me to be able to afford to send him to Tremont for the past few years," she wrote, adding that since she wasn't able to do so herself, sending him to Tremont was her way of taking him camping.

- A mother wrote us telling about her daughter who was a different person

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From the Executive Director

Tremont Environmental Education Center Assured

Maryville College has been granted use of the \$1 million former Tremont Job Corps Center as an environmental education center. Maryville College President Joseph Copeland said, "the proposed utilization of the Tremont Job Corps facility will produce maximum return to the citizens of this area on the substantial investment already made for facilities and equipment. It will make possible the enrichment of the educational programs at all levels, from elementary to college. Above all the relating of classroom education to the environment can only have a positive effect in increasing awareness in all participants in the programs of the critical needs confronting us all in our use of human and natural resources in the years to come."

The center will be operated on a non-profit basis, the initial cost being about \$20 per pupil per week, the money being provided by parents of the child or by the school system which sends the class to the center.

Maryville College made its proposal to the National Park Service. To help speed the paperwork Governor Buford Ellington gave the needed approval of the proposal. In Washington, Senator Howard Baker Jr. led the way in cutting through the red tape resulting from several departments of government sharing responsibility for the equipment and facilities at Tremont.

—Excerpts from "Tremont Environmental Education Center Assured"
Maryville-Alcoa Daily Times, September 30, 1969 front page story

This news story is on the first page of a scrapbook at Tremont that Elsie Burrell, one of Tremont's founders, began forty years ago when environmental education programs at Tremont had their beginnings. Following in the scrapbook, interspersed with more news articles and in Miss Elsie's printing, are yearly lists of the schools in attendance, the date they came, number of students, and teachers and grade level.

In reviewing those lists there are familiar names of schools or those that represent them today that are still bringing their students to Tremont in 2009. Rockford, Sam Houston, John Sevier, Chilhowee View, Pi Beta Phi, Linden, Elm Grove, Glenwood, Woodland, and Highland View to name a few.

The first students who attended Tremont are now in their 50s. They are leaders and workers and teachers and members of communities around the world. They are legislators and voters who are making decisions related to natural areas and parks and the environmental issues we face.

Speaking to the importance of our programs for young people, someone once reminded me that, "a sixth grader votes in six years!" Some have pursued careers in natural resources and credit the Tremont experience as a turning

point in their career decisions. They work for the National Park Service, state and national forest and wildlife agencies, the Nature Conservancy and as teachers and environmental educators.

Former staff member Jan Yeager, who now lives in Alaska and works with river conservation, recently met a Student Conservation Association leader who was doing environmental education on one of the rivers she was working on. After following the "where are you from" dialog to its conclusion Jan and this young woman realized that they were both at Tremont at the same time a number of years back, Jan as a teacher naturalist and the SCA leader as a sixth grade student. There, in an out of the way place in Alaska, these two shared special memories of the Smokies and their shared experience there and love for wild places.

The impact of forty years of changing lives by connecting people and nature in Great Smoky Mountains National Park is truly tremendous. On the park's 75th anniversary and Tremont's 40th we hope you will continue to stand with us as we continue this important work.

Ken Voorhis
GSMIT Executive Director

Passing on a Passion

By Jarrett Beecher, environmental education summer intern

My eyes started to water, but I wasn't cutting onions nor was I watching the end of Disney's *The Fox and the Hound* this time.

Emotions were stirring about inside me as tears uncontrollably accumulated. They were on the verge of breaching my eyelids, but I quickly wiped at the corners of my eyes to save my cheeks from drowning at the closing campfire of Family Camp. I've cried many times, but the few tears I shed that night were the most evocative tears of my life.

One by one, campers from ages five to 75 openly reflected upon their week spent at Tremont. They shared their deepest thoughts, feelings and most memorable moments during the course of the week. I couldn't believe what I heard.

Genuine, heart-felt words filled the Council House, and one person's words in particular hit my heart. Her words were the culprit of my tears. I will never forget what Mrs. Susan Hind shared and how moving her words were to me.

"My most memorable moment of the week happened today. I was elated to learn about fly-fishing with Jarrett and was able to cast my fly-rod for the first time," said Susan, a grandmother and local resident of Townsend who attended my 'Fish, Flies and Fun' program with excitement, and with a fly-rod in hand that she brought from home. Establishing an appreciation for the park's river inhabitants, as well as sparking an interest and understanding of fly-fishing, were the goals of the three-hour program I created from scratch.

After hearing her words, I almost lost it. I wasn't wiping away tears of grief and sorrow. Instead, I was wiping away tears of joy and fulfillment. I felt like a child who received the gift they've been wishing for all year long on Christmas Day. Her words were a gift that made me feel alive and appreciated. This warm, tingling sensation of satisfaction swarmed over me like a fresh mountain breeze because my purpose at Tremont had come full circle.

When I came to Tremont, I had one goal in mind. More than anything, I desired to pass my passion for fly-

bamboo fly-rod he bought at a garage sale hooked me at an early age. Fly-fishing has been a part of my life since the age of nine when all I caught were trees. After years of patience and practice coming up to the mountains on family vacations, trees started turning into trout. My bud of interest that started 12 years ago bloomed into a passion. I came to Tremont this summer hoping to bud interest and inspire like my father had done for me by simply casting his fly-rod.

When working with kids, you never know if what you are trying so hard to pass on will ever take a strong hold and anchor within them. All you can do is hope. I know I have at least sparked an interest in fly-fishing for many throughout the course of the summer, but what I did for Susan was different. She made me realize something. From her, I realized that I had the capability to inspire and change lives both young and old. I had touched her life and she in turn had touched mine.

This is why the Tremont experience has been so meaningful. Having the unique opportunity to create and teach something I love and pass it on to others has been a dream come true. I have changed lives and brought the art of fly-fishing back to life. There is no greater feeling in the world than that and I can go back home knowing I made a difference during my time at Tremont. I can only hope my passion for fly-fishing has impacted the lives of those who have come to Tremont this summer and that my passion will live on with them.



CHARLES ALLEN PINDERGRASS

Girls In Science Camp

By Mary Silver, teacher/naturalist

Two girls crouch in thick moss, breathing the spicy scent of the spruce-fir forest as a Winter Wren's song fills the mist around them. One of them is a homeschooled student from rural Alabama, the other lives in inner-city Nashville, and they are searching for creatures whose exclusive habitat is the highest elevations of the southern Appalachians. Examining a snail they've found on a wet log, they notice that its shell is much shinier than those they've seen elsewhere in the Smokies.

They bring it to the park scientist who is accompanying their group today, and she explains that the difference in the shells is a matter of chemistry: this snail species uses protein to construct its shell, whereas a duller shell indicates the use of calcium. In these high country forests, the scientist tells the girls, more and more protein-dependent snails have been found in recent years. Snails that rely on calcium seem to be on the decline. Birds that eat the snails, in turn, are struggling to find enough calcium to produce strong eggshells.

More girls from the group have gathered now, as the park scientist describes where this threat to the forest originates. Conversation touches on the vulnerability of mountaintops to air pollution, the sources and impacts of acid deposition, and ways that the average preteen can prevent further damage to this living community. By lunchtime, the group has covered the basics of food webs, nutrient cycling, and the importance of habitat diversity, not to mention some tree and salamander identification. It's the peak of summer vacation, and here in this fairytale forest the girls are totally engrossed in concepts they may have dreaded learning about in school.

For the 24 rising eighth graders who were

selected for Tremont's first-ever Girls In Science Camp, this trip to the high country was just one day out of a week spent exploring the role of science in the Smokies this summer. Generously sponsored by Toyota and offered in partnership with the national park, the camp was designed to help fill an educational gap that opens as girls reach late middle school and begin to lose interest in science.

Girls in our group this year came to Tremont from counties surrounding the park and from as far away as Utah and Colorado. Some have planned for years on becoming scientists when they grow up, while a few were losing academic confidence. One girl was hoarse for a day after shrieking when she came upon a snake; another

grabbed (and was bitten by) a fairly large Northern Water Snake the moment she saw it. As diverse as they were in background and experience, all of the girls brought a lively curiosity, a flair for being goofy, and energy that never seemed to fade.

They needed all of that, too, throughout the adventure-filled week. A few glimpses of the girls in action would reveal that Girls In Science Camp was a balance of serious field science, outdoor exploration, and the best kind of middle school humor. Besides the snail survey, the trip to the high country involved some solo time along the spine of the Smokies as well as a hilarious game of dueling charades. While working with a park

ranger on a study comparing the insect diversity in fields of native versus non-native grasses, we took time out for blackberries and edible flowers. The group helped band songbirds, monitor salamanders, and teach songs to the younger Discovery Campers. One night they even helped break up a traffic jam in Cades Cove by yelling at a black bear until it ran off into the woods: all of the tourists put away their cameras, climbed back over the fence to their cars and slowly drove away, as our girls congratulated themselves for keeping the bear wild.

By the end of the week we had hiked on the Appalachian Trail, snorkeled in the Middle Prong, worked with several different scientists on ongoing park studies, and stalked microscopic tardigrades through the wilderness of a dish of water. Just before the closing campfire on our final evening together, we gathered to compile a species list for the week: it covered nearly 100 different organisms, and each brought back a unique memory. Red-spotted Newt, I wrote on the whiteboard, and the girls were knee-deep in a mucky pond reflecting the sunset. Sourwood, and they were chewing its leaves like candy. Definite Tussock Moth caterpillar

was the strange little guy they had nicknamed "The Sparta Worm" and carried around in a bug box for an afternoon,

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MARY SILVER



MARY SILVER

Tremont's First Solar Workshop a Success

By Michelle Key, public relations specialist

Tremont presented our first ever Solar Energy Workshop on Tuesday, June 30, 2009. Members of our staff were joined by presenters from Green Earth Services, the Tennessee Valley Authority, Sevier County Electric, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and Liles Acres Organic Farm, who spoke to over 30 attendees about all angles of solar energy and home efficiency. Employees from Alcoa, whose Alcoa Foundation provided the grant that made Tremont's solar array a reality, were also in attendance.

Executive Director Ken Voorhis started off the workshop with some information on Tremont's own array, discussing why it was installed and how it relates to Tremont's mission. Participants then heard from Sam Crowe, Tremont's facilities manager, who discussed Tremont's own experience setting up a solar array and getting the power generated returned to the Sevierville power grid.

Ed Zubko of Green Earth Services took the floor next for a discussion of the "Nuts & Bolts" of solar. Participants learned how energy collected by a solar panel can be sent back to a residence or local power grid. He also talked about the materials needed to build a solar array housing and creating a solar setup that will stand up to time and weather conditions.

Jenny Wright from TVA's Green Power Switch program and Louis Harkleroad of Sevier County Electric then discussed other options for green energy and conservation. Wright discussed how programs like Green Power Switch provide options for using green energy even for those not ready to install solar panels on their

homes. "There are green options for all levels of investment," Wright told the crowd. Harkleroad then made the point that "efficiency is key." The power generated from any sort of green energy is best used in a home that is otherwise energy-efficient.

Jeff Christian of Oak Ridge National Laboratory Buildings Technology Integration Center then expanded on ways to accomplish that efficiency. Christian shared his experience building near-zero energy homes that cost around \$1/day to power. The average American home costs closer to \$5/day. "Every single home in America should be on the path to sustainability," Christian told the group.

The final presenters of the day were Russell and Sheri Liles of Liles Acres Organic Farm. They shared their own experience, having the first solar array in Maryville installed three years ago. The Liles' use their own array not only to power their organic farm, but also as a teaching tool for the community. Russell Liles made the point that "people don't think twice about buying a car that they'll only use for a few years, but the same amount of money can bring you zero energy cost."

During the question and answer session that followed, participants learned about the physical placement requirements for solar arrays, and also about TVA's available \$1,000 incentive for eligible green projects. More information on available incentives for green projects nationwide can be found online at <http://www.dsireusa.org/>.

A Lasting Impact

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when she got back from camp. She was more self-confident, felt more at one with nature, and had built long-lasting friendships. This mother wrote, "During her rebellious years, her week at camp made her more relaxed and easy to live with. I know this sounds like I am trying to butter your program up, but in a way I guess I am. I wouldn't have kept bringing her up to the mountains if I didn't believe she benefited from your program. She is now working at the Nantahala Outdoor Center out of Bryson City, North Carolina for

the summer. She is also in college majoring in art and photography. Where do you think she got her love of photography? From pictures taken on the trails during her camp days. So you see, my children have truly benefited from your camps."

- Tremont leaves an impact on staff, too. Mickey Larkins returned for his eleventh season as a summer teacher/naturalist. If I'm not mistaken, that's more summer seasons teaching Discovery Camp, supervising campers overnight in the dorm, and leading hikes than anyone else in Tremont's history. This fall Mickey becomes

president of the Tennessee Environmental Educator's Association.

The first boy mentioned above had a range of adventures during his Tremont experience—getting to camp out in the woods, swim in a mountain river, learn how to light fires, make cordage, build shelters, and learn firsthand knowledge about squirrels, salamanders, snakes, trees, and birds. Experiences like these not only form memories that will last a lifetime but change lives—and can maybe even change the world.

Stories from the Trail

By Christina McCoy, teacher/naturalist

Every summer, Tremont becomes a sanctuary for teenagers to escape from the hustle and bustle of their electronically driven lives. It is their time to sit by the river and watch the water passing over rocks, it is their time to hike underneath the ancient hemlock trees, and it is their time to just be. However for us, teacher/naturalists at Tremont, summer means weeks of planning, countless staff meetings, and the ability to improvise a song or game at any time.

Needless to say, it can be stressful, but once the campers arrive and you get that environmental education buzz, the blood pressure drops and you see yourself regressing to your former self as a 12-year-old. I grew up camping and hiking, and while still considering myself “new” to the Smokies, I wanted the opportunity to explore more of this amazing park. So I felt blessed to be able to lead two backpacking trips this summer.

My first backpack trip was Wilderness Adventure Camp, a four-day and three-night excursion. For most of our campers, it was



their first experience in the backcountry. Our route was one that you can see from the Cades Cove Loop, Gregory Bald. It was prime blooming time for flame azaleas, it has great views of Cades Cove, and we were hiking a mountain—what more could you ask for! Gregory Bald was my motivation and I knew it would be the highlight of our journey. Our trip started how most trips start; uncomfortable because we were carrying

everything we needed for the next few days on our backs. Soon, Mother Nature had some punches of her own that we had to roll with; we got rained on every day. Our second campsite we had to improvise by setting up a tarp in the rain using hiking poles so that we could set up our tents and our homes wouldn't get soaked.

Our group could feel the weather beginning to ruin the group's ideas about what our trip would be. Instead, we changed our attitudes and enjoyed what the rain could bring; we went up to Gregory Bald close to sunset.

The rain had stopped, the fog was encompassing the bald and the orange, pink, and red colors of the flame azaleas were gorgeous. We ate crisp apple-shaped green galls, and deer were unsuccessfully concealing themselves in the midst of the fog. We kept smiling because we were walking in the clouds!

We had an evening reading from *Out Under the Sky of the Great Smokies*, by Harvey Broome, who had traveled to Gregory Bald many times. As I started to read, I realized he was talking about our experience that we were having at that exact moment! Yet again, Mother Nature surprised us and gave us a night that we will always remember.

My second backpacking trip was spent with Teen High Adventure, a seven-day and six-night trek. Stress was becoming

my middle name, but as soon as we stepped onto the comforting ground of our first trail, all worries melted away. We were destined for 57 miles in seven days, climbing two mountains, crossing countless streams, and waiting for nature to guide us in our adventures! On our trip we were often the only folks on the trail and at campsites we had really stepped into the wilderness. We started our trip with Old Settlers Trail, a

cultural and historic trail with standing chimneys, moss-covered rock walls, and barns dating back to 1867. For the campers, this meant singing songs like "Old McDonald", "BINGO", and "She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain".

It just made sense for them to understand their surroundings in musical form. One evening at our campsite we were surprised with a sunset where the red shoots of light filtered through the forest creating the illusion of a forest fire, or to the



campers, a spaceship landing.

The next morning we were peacefully enjoying our peanut butter and jelly bagel breakfast when we were interrupted by a very hungry and very motivated black bear. It took all 10 of us screaming "GET OUTTA HERE!" for 10 minutes for him to get the point. We met gracious fellow backpackers on the Appalachian Trail that handed out beef jerky to our obviously meat-deprived hikers.

We decided on our 11-mile day to hike one more mile to get to the summit of the Mt. Cammerer and see the views from the fire tower.

On our second to last day, our water filter and our stove both called it quits, but we were still all smiles because we had a supportive group and knew that Swallow Fork Trail would take us to our last mountain to climb.

Our last night was at Mt. Sterling—my motivation for this trip was getting to the top of the tall, rickety fire tower and seeing the whole crest of the Smoky Mountains. When we reached it, we knew that all the miles and sweat were worth it for this view.

The last morning, three campers, my co-leader, and I woke up to watch the sunrise; the clouds wispily moving over ridges and valleys were breath taking. Yet again, nothing could top this feeling because this time I was above the clouds... smiling upon the Smoky Mountains and thinking to myself, *I love my job.*

Family Camp: A Week to Remember

By Kate Selby, summer teacher/naturalist

On June 28th, a special program began at Tremont. While we usually start the week with campers being dropped off by parents or adults arriving and meeting friends their own age, this week we had the full spectrum of ages: from kids in kindergarten to grandparents. Family Camp is a unique week at Tremont because it gives a chance for people of all ages to grow closer to those they love and meet new friends as well. It also gives a chance for staff here to work with all ages all at once, which can be daunting, but rewarding as well.

Throughout the week, Tremont offers a variety of activities which can be enjoyed by families sticking together or by members breaking off into different groups to get to know some new faces. But this week, though the programming was unique and the participants were eager, what struck me most were the connections I was able to witness among and between families.

As a summer teacher/naturalist, I am only here for just over two months, so I always feel like I'm learning something new about the Smokies or Tremont. But because the summer moves so quickly, it is sometimes hard to slow down enough to really appreciate the programs I get to be a part of.

In some ways, Family Camp was no different—the six days our participants were here went by like a whirlwind. However, seeing grandparents and parents and children interacting with one another in this beautiful place made this week more poignant for me than many others.

Even something simple like lifeguarding at the swimming hole and watching three generations play in the water there helped me to reconsider the importance of not only environmental education, but simply taking time to be outside.

The week was packed full of nature activities, evening programs, campfires, and hikes. Often, I was conscious of the necessity of tailoring activities to the youngest audience so that everyone could participate.

I expressed this concern to one parent, saying that because I felt some of the programs were a little “kiddy,” maybe next year we should give the adults a ride into town to have a dinner out and some “adult time.”

She replied that I had it all wrong—the reason she had come here with her family wasn't to have a vacation away from her kids, but to spend more quality time with her family. She told me that as both of her kids became busier with sports and she and her husband with their jobs, it was

increasingly hard to find time to be together. I guess coming to Tremont was a conscious decision made by this family to set aside time for each other.

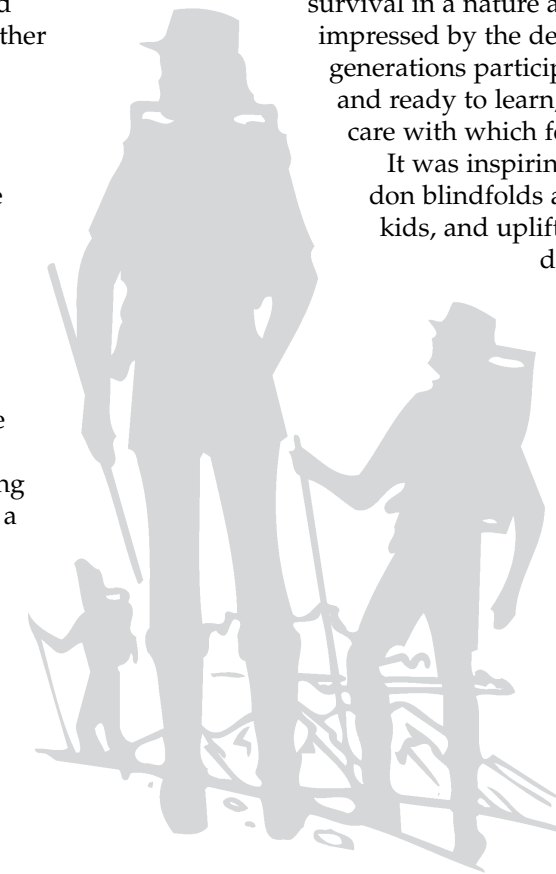
That commitment to family and to keeping the bonds between one another strong was what I witnessed throughout the whole week. Parents were repeatedly game for whatever silly activity we suggested they participate in, and kids were respectful and mature when the programs took a more serious tone. It seemed that family members of all ages were able to come more toward common ground; kids were given the chance to act grown up, and parents to act like kids.

And the connections made were not only within families. I often saw groups of kids wandering around campus together, and I was touched by the efforts older teens made to include younger children. I'm sure there were some disagreements that I didn't notice, and I know this makes Family Camp sound like a fairy tale, but in some ways, it was. It is not very often in our society that groups of people come together and willingly turn off their cell phones, laptops, and TVs and jump in a river or go on a hike together. I was proud to be a part of something that seems a little bit too good to be true.

When we were biking around Cades Cove, taking an evening stroll, and learning about wilderness survival in a nature activity, I was continually impressed by the degree to which all the generations participating were fully present and ready to learn, and by the patience and care with which folks regarded one another.

It was inspiring to see parents willingly don blindfolds and be lead around by their kids, and uplifting to watch a daughter doing yoga with her mom. At the final campfire, it was

great to pass the antler (a Tremont tradition) to hear what each person found meaningful in the week. I loved listening to little stories about a favorite fishing class, or a great hike, or a new friend made that won't be forgotten. I think, though, the most important thing was a common thread throughout all the comments: that it was nice, this week, to be together in the woods.



Trees to Trout

Tremonster Tips Fly-Fishing the Smokies

By Jarrett Beecher, environmental education summer intern

If you can catch a trout on a fly-rod in the Smokies, you can catch a trout anywhere, but catching trees and a whole lot of nothing are the usual for most fly-fishermen visiting the park. Coming up empty handed after a day fishing the streams here leaves anglers scratching their heads, discouraged and disappointed. I remember those days and how hard it was to catch my first trout in the Smokies. After years of experience, I have figured out the puzzle and now catch many of these wild mountain trout. I'd like to share a few tips to help your day on the water go from nothing to something.

The trout here are wild and have survived because they are wary. They have many natural predators to deal with and to them you are one of those predators. If a trout detects a potential threat or anything that seems suspicious, they will head straight under a rock to hide in an effort to stay alive.

Now that we know the trout here are spooky, how can we cater our approach to land these trout? Basically, if the trout can see you or your shadow, expect a big zero for the day. Use your surroundings and stay low. Kneel or lean behind rocks instead of standing straight up in the middle of the river.

Those who make long casts and slap their floating fly-line on the surface send the trout right into hiding. When you find an area where trout may be holding, don't let your floating fly-line drift over the area. If the trout see this they will sense something is fishy.

Avoid long casts. Instead, concentrate on short casts. The longest cast you should use is 20 feet and that is stretching it. When you make these short casts, it enables a drag free drift and keeps you from snagging up in trees. I recommend using a nine foot leader line. Success will come by sneaking up and using short casts.

The drift is very important and is what I consider the major factor that will entice a trout to strike your fly or not. Trout usually sit in an area all day watching things flow past in the current. When something is not moving at the same rate of speed as the current, they know not to strike.

If your fly drifts with the speed of the current for as long as possible, you will start catching more trout. Focus your energies on getting a perfect drift by keeping your floating line off the water. Only have your fly and a fraction of your fly-tippet (leader line) on the water. The drift is much more important than matching the hatch. If you master the drift, you will land lots of trout and have more productive days.

Before you have the opportunity to make the perfect drift, one must know where to cast. Trout feed along foam lines. Don't cast your fly into the rough raging white water at the start of a run. This will not produce. Instead, drift your fly along both edges of the fast water and in small pockets of calmer water. In these areas, the current is slower and large

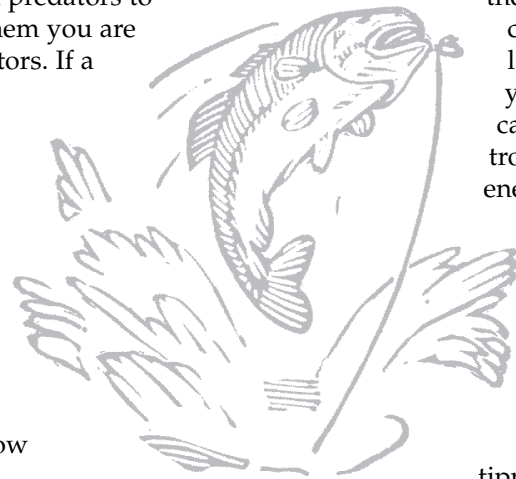
bubbles of foam usually accumulate and float on the surface. These are trout feeding lanes. Trout like to conserve their energy and don't want to waste their energy swimming up into the rough current to feed when they can feed in an area that requires much less exertion.

There are over 700 miles of fishable trout streams in the park and there are 2,000 to 4,000 trout per square mile of stream. Knowing this, another key to success is to keep moving. Never stay in one spot for a prolonged period of time. If you make three or four good drifts in a pocket or run where fish are holding without getting a strike, move on upstream.

Last, make a game plan before you enter the water. Think of fly-fishing here as a game of chess. Find your runs and pockets. Look for the foam lines. Figure out the best way to get that perfect drift without being seen. Look for large rocks that can be used to sneak up and be undetected by the trout. Look overhead.

If there are lots of tree branches overhead make use of a side arm cast. Flip over rocks and see what types of critters are living in the stream that trout might be feeding on. Know the location of the sun and position yourself so that your shadow does not impose the area where you are casting. If you have a well thought and effective strategy before making a move you will usually come out a victor.

These are a few techniques I have learned from others and on my own over the years. They work very well here in the Smokies and I hope you think through them before hitting the water next time. But like everything in life, becoming a successful fly-fisherman here or anywhere comes from time, practice, patience, and experience.



Early School Days in Walker Valley

By Jeremy Lloyd, senior teacher/naturalist

Below is an excerpt from the new book about the Tremont area, A Home in Walker Valley by Jeremy Lloyd. This book can be purchased in the Tremont store.

Before the turn of the twentieth century, the residents of Walker Valley didn't consider themselves "mountain folks" because so far as they knew everybody lived the way they did. Children probably didn't covet things enjoyed by city children because they may not have been aware that such things even existed.

One thing Will Walker knew they should have, however, was a proper education. The problem was that the nearest school lay seven miles away. So Will traveled 22 miles—a long distance back then—to Maryville to pay a visit to the Blount County school board. Someone more prideful might have refused to ask for help, but nothing would stop Will from lobbying for a school in Walker Valley. One imagines that his imposing stature and striking features might have played a role in administrative officials taking his request seriously.

Self-taxation had funded public education in Tennessee since 1845. By around 1900, however, funds for a new school in Blount County were too few. Thus Will's request was passed along to the Tennessee Federation of Women's Clubs which had recently created a department to combat illiteracy among mountain residents. Affiliated organizations as far away as Ohio raised the first \$50 toward a teacher's salary for the Walker Valley Settlement School. The school opened for a two-month summer

term in 1901 and was taught by Andrew Dunn.

A new teacher from Cincinnati arrived the following summer. Frederic Webb and his mother Emilie, who'd fallen in love with the place during a visit, would make Walker Valley their home in the summers of 1902 and 1904. In the interim Fred attended seminary. The urbanite noted in his journal that few sounds were audible except those made by cowbells, children, and the roar of the river. "The sound of neither a steam-whistle or church-bell had ever penetrated these mountains," he wrote. At night it was a very dark place, the only light coming from fireplaces peppering the area. Along with education Fred hoped also to provide a spiritual light for the residents of Walker Valley.

The community experienced a series of "firsts" when the pair of strangers arrived in the summer of 1902. The Webbs arrived on horseback. Emilie's dog Dewey, riding like a circus monkey on her lap, was the first pet that many residents had ever known anyone to own. Likewise had few people ever seen a washboard, clothespins, or graniteware cooking utensils. Upon seeing a bright red lampshade for the first time, one little girl asked, "Miss Webb, what kind of bloom is that?"

Will set aside land and furnished lumber for the construction of a cottage, which he and Fred set about building. Small with two rooms, it was the first dwelling in the valley to have two porches, doors with locks, and a floor made of sawed lumber. It was listed by the Department of Education as the first "teachorage" in the United States.

Girls in Science Camp

continued from page 4

feeding it maple leaves. And Winter Wren—that was the long, sweet, mysterious trill they'd heard through the darkness of the spruce-fir forest high in the mountains.

"You know," said one girl as we waited

for parents to arrive the following morning, "I won't fail eighth grade, especially not after this. Next year you should offer this camp to girls going into the ninth grade."

As much as I would love to have the exact same group back at Tremont, I'm already looking forward to meeting and exploring the Smokies with a new bunch of rising eighth

graders during the summer of 2010. If you know any seventh grade girls who are ready to discover just how much fun real field science can be, direct them to our website. We'll be accepting applications until March 19!

In the mountains,
there is friendship.

I will always
remember
The sound of
children's laughter.

Where the river
runs, I slept.

Where the trees
stand, I worshipped.

Where we have
wandered, may
Humans always
preserve
And protect.

In the mountains,
there is peace.

I will always
remember
Our Tremont family.

*—By Carol Brophy,
teacher and 2009 Smoky
Mountains Family Camp
participant.*

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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!

October

Teacher Escape Weekend

October 3-4

Cost: \$50 per person.

Fall Hiking Elderhostel

October 11-16

Explore these ancient mountains with daily hikes through breathtaking scenery while watching the spectacular colors progress throughout 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: \$513 per person.

SANCP*—Southern Appalachian Ecology

October 16-18

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: \$260 per person.

Women's Fall Backpack

October 23-25

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 our 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: \$260 per person.

Autumn Photography Workshop

October 23-26

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: \$555 per person.

November

SANCP*—Naturalist Skills/Mammals

November 6-8

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. Cost: \$260 per person.



Legacy of Tremont Fall Hike

November 14

Experience the fall color by hiking to Rich Mountain! Limited to 15 people, so register early! Led by Ken Voorhis. Cost: \$15 per person.

January 2010

Teacher Escape Weekend

January 9-11

Cost: \$50 per person.

Get an early start on 2010...visit www.gsmit.org/calendar for Tremont's 2010 calendar of events and go ahead and register today!

*Southern Appalachian Naturalist Certification Program

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