



Fall 2009

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Southern Appalachian Naturalist Certification Program: Southern Appalachian Ecology Weekend! We hope this will be one of many weekends we will spend together learning naturalist skills and gaining knowledge about the Great Smoky Mountains.

During this weekend our focus will be on the ecology of the Southern Appalachian Mountains. The physiogeographic characteristics of these mountains have created an amazing diversity of plant communities. By the end of the weekend you will have become familiar with the particular ecology of a good number of them. It's going to be a fun-filled learning experience.

Get ready! You have registered for an intense weekend during which we will cover material and skills that most people receive in a semester-long class. If you think this sounds ambitious you are right! In order to accomplish our goals it is necessary for you to do some homework, in the form of readings, to give you the background information needed to take part in discussions and build your toolkit of skills. We plan to keep lecture time to a minimum and actually work on learning skills and practicing them. See the tentative schedule of events for an idea of what the weekend looks like.

Instructor: Your instructor for this course will be Tremont's Executive Director, Ken Voorhis.

Arrival and Departure:

Plan to arrive at Tremont on Friday, Oct. 16th between 3:00 and 5:00 PM, giving you opportunity to move into the dorm and meet other participants before our 6:00 evening meal. The program will end after lunch on Sunday, Oct. 18th.

Weather:

The weather here is usually pleasant in October. Over the past five years, the average daily high for October was 74° F. and the average daily low was 42° F. here in Walker Valley. Keep in mind, however, that some activities may take you through higher elevations, which can sometimes mean a difference of 15° F. cooler temperatures or more. Rain gear is always necessary here in the Smoky Mountains. Please bring it along.

Logistics & Homework:

Please read the "Your Visit to Tremont" link for important packing information. Along with your readings, linens and toiletries, you may want to bring a mattress pad to ease the firm mattress and perhaps a bedside lamp if you are a late-night reader. Please bring binoculars if you own a pair. If you don't own any we have a few pairs to loan. Also bring a notepad and pencil and any field guides you like. Sturdy walking shoes/boots, outdoor clothing, and a hat are also important for your comfort. For your homework, please read the 'Forests of the Smokies' found at the link on the webpage and the two readings that are being mailed to you.

Health & Waiver Form: Please print this form, fill it out, and either mail it or bring it with you. This must be filled out and turned in to us in order for you to participate in the program.

I hope that this information is helpful to you in planning for your upcoming visit to Tremont. Please tell a friend about us so that they too can learn about the wonders of the Smokies. If you have further questions, please feel free to call.

Sincerely,

John DiDiego
Education Director

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS INSTITUTE AT TREMONT
9275 Tremont Road
Townsend, TN 37882
www.gsmit.org ~ mail@gsmit.org