

February 2017

Dear Friends,

Thank-you for registering for our **Likin' Lichens Workshop** at Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont! We hope you are looking forward to a fun and adventure-filled weekend together exploring nature in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. This special program is funded through a partnership with the National Park Service.

We will explore the mysterious world of lichens; they are part fungus, part algae, and all beautiful and fascinating. You will learn to identify lichens, various human uses for lichens, lichens' role in the ecosystem and ways to use them to bio monitor for air quality. As with all Tremont programs, this weekend workshop will be largely field based, so be ready to be outside!

You will be sharing the dormitory with other curious naturalists in our *Naturalist Certification Program: Interpretation, a Teachable Art*. Visit our program page (<http://www.gsmi.org/sanpc.html>) to learn more about these exciting programs to gain even more specialty skills in southern Appalachian ecology and interpretive techniques. We hope this is one of many weekends we will spend together as we seek naturalist skills and knowledge.

Instructors:

Instructors for the weekend will be Jennifer Love, Susan Sachs and Jennie McGuigan:

Jennifer Love is the STEM coordinator for Macon County Schools and has been teaching science and math in North Carolina for many years. She has been studying lichens for close to 10 years and is participating in the Lichen ATLAS program in Georgia helping to map all the lichen species distribution in Georgia.

Susan Sachs is the Education Coordinator for Appalachian Highlands Science Learning Center at Purchase Knob and long time Park Ranger for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Apart from leading teacher workshops focused on hands-on science education, she focuses on integrating park science and education with a focus on creating curriculum-based citizen Science projects for school programs.

Jennie McGuigan is the School Program Coordinator at Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont (GSMIT) & will be your host for the weekend. She has over 25 years of experience in formal and non-formal classrooms, 7 of those at GSMIT. She focuses much of her time on training the teaching faculty at GSMIT, constructing standards-based curriculum, embedding brain-based pedagogy in programming, and leading teacher workshops that train not only in content, but in dynamic pedagogical routines.

Arrival and Departure:

Plan to arrive at Tremont on Friday, February 17th 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, February 19th.

Weather:

It may help you to know that over the past five years the month of February has been characterized by an average daily high of 54° F, and an average daily low of 28° F. Come prepared for cold early mornings and cold, wet afternoons. You will be outdoors for periods of time, so be prepared with rain gear and layers. The Smokies are a very wet and humid climate; expect that it will rain or snow at some point during your stay here. Rain gear is always necessary in the Smokies. We will carry it at all times.

Logistics:

Please read the "Your Visit to Tremont" booklet (see link) for important packing information. Along with linens and toiletries you may want to bring a mattress pad to ease the firm mattress. (Please note that food is not allowed in the dorm.) You also may want to consider bringing some additional items with you for this weekend such as binoculars, notepad and pencil, field guides, and camera. Rain gear, waterproof boots, and a hat are also important to your comfort. Note – for your convenience, our activity center is equipped with wireless internet connection, however it is not very fast.

Health/Waiver Form:

Please fill out the Health/Waiver Form and bring it with you to turn in upon check-in. If you have special dietary needs, or anything else we should be aware of in advance, please send in your form ahead of time.

Lichen information:

Backyard Nature website has a nice collection of lichen information with other links – this will give you a great introduction to the topic which we will review and augment during the weekend. <http://www.backyardnature.net/lichens.htm>

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 can learn about the wonders of the Smokies. If you have further questions, please feel free to call.

Sincerely,



Jennie McGuigan
School Program Coordinator