

ROAD SCHOLAR

Fall 2017

Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont, where we have been conducting Road Scholar (Elderhostel) programs in the national park 1986. We look forward to spending a week with you full of fellowship, learning, beautiful scenery, adventure and delicious food!

Below you will find a good deal of information NOT contained in the packet sent to you by Road Scholar. Please read it thoroughly! We also ask you to fill out the Travel Plans & Waiver (Tremont document) and **send it to us** directly by **September 22**. This is NOT the form that you filled out for Road Scholar. But if you haven't already completed the Participant Information Form found at the back of the packet sent to you by Road Scholar, please do so now. (This can also be done online.)

Plan to **arrive** here on **Sunday, October 8** between 3:00 and 5:00 PM for check-in. There will be time to settle into the dorm before dinner, which is served at 6:00 PM.

If you're arriving by plane or bus, the Knoxville airport is 45 minutes from us. The nearest bus service is one hour away in Knoxville. We can arrange a shuttle pick-up provided you request it in advance on your Travel Plans & Waiver (Tremont document). Shuttle fee is \$40 round trip for the airport and \$50 round trip for the bus station, *payable in advance to Tremont*.

Should you choose Tremont as your taxi service from the airport, we cannot guarantee pick up at the exact time of your arrival. Some period of waiting is virtually guaranteed. Pick-ups generally take place between 1:30 and 5:00 PM. In order to make as few airport trips as possible, we generally wait until three or more participants have arrived before we make a pickup. If you wish instead to hire an independent taxi service from the airport, you are responsible for making those arrangements yourself. In this event, please make note on the Travel Plans & Waiver form that you are traveling by automobile.

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 hikes will take you through higher elevations, which can sometimes mean a difference of 15° F. cooler temperatures, or more. Also, the Smokies are a very wet and humid climate; *you should expect that it will rain at some point during your stay here*. Rain gear is always necessary in the Smokies. We will carry it at all times.

In addition to items on the packing list Road Scholar provides, you may choose to bring any of the following items:

- trekking poles for stream crossings and rocky trails
- reading lamp—to use in our dormitory after “lights out”
- mattress pad—our dormitory beds are firm!

- extra blanket for the dormitory
- adult beverages—the nearest place to purchase wine is Maryville, TN, 25 minutes away

Lodging:

We're sorry but **individual rooms are not available in our rustic, bunkroom-style dormitory. The dormitory is separated by a men's side and a women's side.** (Toilets and showers are separate.) Sheets, a blanket, a pillow, towels and washcloths will be provided for you. If you have any concerns regarding these particular items, please feel free to call. We ask that you please store any personal food items in your vehicle and do not bring food into the dorm.

Cell phone service is generally not available in the mountains. However, we do have a landline available for your use in our Activity Center, where wifi is usually available as well.

Schedule:

Please note that the schedule included in the Road Scholar packet is tentative. A final schedule will be made available for you upon arrival. You will have three hikes to choose from each day. **All hikes are challenging and are rated moderate to strenuous. Hikes are generally between 5 miles minimum to about 13 miles in length.** Occasionally, a hike will have a theme (examples: geology, cultural history, wildflowers, etc.). Be forewarned: the most challenging hikes have early morning departure times to help ensure a timely return back to campus. Trails with flat ground virtually do not exist in the Smoky Mountains! **Expect steep uphill and downhill hiking, rocky terrain, and river crossings with or without bridges even on hikes rated "easy."** We will take a moderate pace. Our purpose is to learn about the Smokies by interpreting the natural and cultural history along the way. We want it to be a safe and enjoyable experience for you. Drive times to trailheads vary between 15 minutes to 1 hour in length.

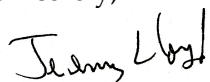
In the evening, we'll relax at Tremont with dinner followed by a short program or presentation. Appalachian songs and stories, an evening around the campfire, and Smoky Mountain natural and cultural history are a few examples of our evening offerings.

The program **ends on Friday, October 13** following breakfast. The return shuttle to the airport and bus service will be offered at this time. We apologize, but lodging will not be available prior to or following the program dates.

PLEASE NOTE: **September 22** is the deadline for us to receive your Travel Plans & Waiver.

Please contact us with any questions you may have. We look forward to sharing with you the beauty and adventures of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Sincerely,



Jeremy Lloyd
Special Program Coordinator

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