

The logo for the Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont, featuring the text "GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS INSTITUTE AT TREMONT" in a bold, sans-serif font, stacked vertically within a dark green rectangular background.

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the **Southern Appalachian Naturalist Certification Program: Aquatic Natural History!** Many of you are returning for another course and we hope this will be one of many occasions in which we will spend time together learning naturalist skills and gaining knowledge about the Great Smoky Mountains.

This course will engage you with 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 lecture, discussions, field trips and most of all, first-hand experience. Topics will include aquatic macroinvertebrates, fish, habitats, stream health, and conservation issues. Field trips will include visits to examples of the most common aquatic systems. We will have a fabulous time and definitely plan to get wet!

Get ready! You have registered for an intense three days 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. See *Readings and Homework* below. We will do our best to keep lecture time to a minimum and actually work on learning skills and practicing them in the field.

Instructors

Your instructor for the course will be Teacher Naturalist, Gar Secrist, who is looking forward to creek crawling with you!

Arrival and Departure

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

Weather

It may help you to know that on average, daily high temperatures for this time of year are 88° F, and daily lows are around 61° F here in Walker Valley. Come prepared for warm and humid weather. And of course, rain gear is always necessary here in the Smoky Mountains. Please bring it along.

Logistics

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 clothes that you don't mind getting wet and closed-toe shoes for wading and swimming. If you don't own any we have a few pairs of old tennis shoes to loan, but bringing some that are sure to fit is ideal. Also bring a notepad and pencil and any field guides you like. Sturdy walking shoes/boots, sunscreen, and a hat are also important for your comfort.

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 needs, dietary (go to <http://www.gsmit.org/Food.html> for more specifics), medical, or otherwise, please send in your form ahead of time. It will be challenging to accommodate special dietary needs if they are not communicated to us in advance. This form must be filled out and turned in to us for you to participate in the program. Please note that food is not allowed in the dorm.

Readings & Homework

We will email a reading assignment before the start of the class. It is important that you read and reflect on this in order to prepare for the class. The more you become acquainted with concepts and vocabulary ahead of time the better!

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

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Readings and Homework

The SANCP has attracted a wide variety of individuals some of whom have a significant background in natural history and others for whom all of this is very new. The level of pre-course reading that you do to be prepared for the course may vary as well depending on where you are on that spectrum. If you are a novice, reading related sections in a biology text and or exploring on-line resources will be helpful and will assist you in being involved in discussion and allowing your instructor to spend minimal lecture time on the basics.

You will be sent a pre-course reading via e-mail after you register. It's important that you read and reflect on this in order to prepare for the class, so please read it all prior to class!

During the week we will also be offering you a 15% discount at our bookstore.