

Wilderness Adventure Trek Background Information

GOALS

- To provide an introductory backpacking experience in America's premiere eastern wildlands
- To educate teens about the wildlife, natural ecosystems, and biodiversity of the Great Smoky Mountains.
- To provide an enjoyable, adventurous, educational and safe outdoor experience.
- To provide teens with essential knowledge of wise, conservation-based outdoor living skills, including the principles of Leave No Trace.
- To help teens develop a value system and lifestyle more in harmony with the earth.
- To inspire teens about environmental ethics and wilderness conservation.

THE WILDERNESS

Great Smoky Mountains National Park offers tremendous opportunities to learn about a diverse and beautiful part of the Earth. These mountains are estimated to be 600 million years old and are now one of the most diverse temperate regions in the world. The Smokies are known for their breathtaking views, clear mountain streams, abundant wildlife and variety of plants. The park has some of the highest peaks in eastern North America with 16 peaks over 6,000 feet in elevation. In this wilderness there are old growth forests, more species of trees than in all of Northern Europe, more vascular plants than in any other national park, and the largest concentration of salamander species in the world, not to mention abundant deer, black bears and bird life.

SPENDING 4 DAYS IN THE WILDERNESS

Wilderness Adventure Camp provides a unique opportunity for teens to become immersed in the wilderness for longer than a weekend camping trip. It will be a fun yet challenging experience, both mentally and physically. You'll be

expected to contribute your energy not only to the task of hiking, but also to group-living needs, such as preparing meals, filling water bottles, setting up tents, cleaning up campsites, etc. A positive attitude open to new experiences is a MUST.

The Tremont staff with whom you'll be spending a week in the backcountry are professional naturalists who live in these mountains and know them well. They are knowledgeable in a wide array of natural history subjects and outdoor recreation skills and bring many interests and talents to share with you this summer.

Our living environment emphasizes cooperation, friendship, fun, concern for others, and love of people and nature. We try to illustrate these messages in everything we do. When you are not out on the backpacking trip you will be staying in a dormitory with the other Wilderness Adventure Campers, some of whom may become friends for life.

You will have many opportunities to discover how to feel at home in the outdoors, and, at the same time, to learn new ways you can help to protect our home, the earth.

CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT

Our staff will inspect all clothing and equipment each camper brings for the backpacking trip. They will make the final decision about what will be taken on the trip based on their experience backpacking in the Smokies. This is done so that each participant will have the most enjoyable, comfortable and safe trip possible.

You do not need to own everything on the list. Please feel free to rent equipment, buy used items or borrow from friends anything on the packing list (except boots!). Make sure all items are comfortable and "worn-in."

Remember to bring clothes you will *not* be wearing on the trail. Two nights will be spent in the dormitory at Tremont (one night before and one night after the trip). Any clothing you will not be taking on the backpacking trip can be left in the dormitory. Please refer to the **What to Bring** list regarding the specific equipment we want your child to bring with them, as well as any questions you have regarding any of the equipment items.

Don't forget to read the WHAT TO BRING list!