

*Walker Valley*

The newsletter of  
Great Smoky Mountains  
Institute at Tremont  
Spring/Summer 2016

# Reflections

## IN THIS EDITION

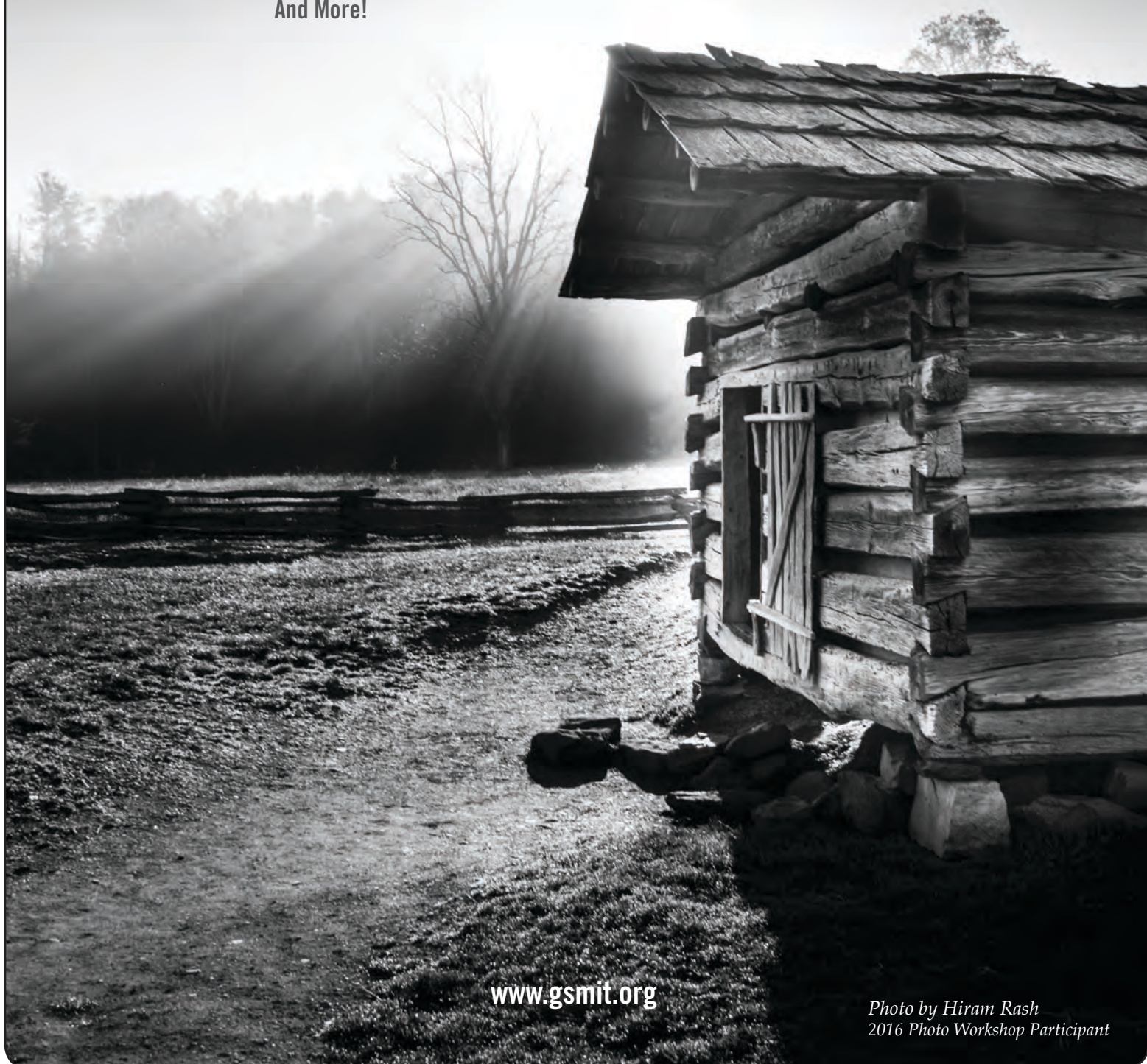
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And More!



[www.gsmiit.org](http://www.gsmiit.org)

*Photo by Hiram Rash  
2016 Photo Workshop Participant*



## Tremont As An Idea

We have a big 'classroom' here in the Smokies—500,000 acres of forests, streams, meadows, mountaintops, and more. As the National Park Service celebrates its centennial anniversary, we are thankful for this park, a place that inspires, educates, and conserves our natural and cultural landscapes. Nurturing a 'sense of place' is a core part of Tremont's mission, and the Smokies provide a truly special setting.

'Sense of place' encompasses more than just a physical location and the natural world therein. A sense of place includes an emotional and intellectual experience. It is developed when we personally link geography and environment to history and people, both past and present. A sense of place is fundamentally grounded in human experience based on feelings of connection and identity. A sense of place is about relationships, with nature and with each other. Relationships are the heart of the matter. Tremont impacts the lives of thousands of people each year because of our place in the Smokies, but also because of the people—the entire Tremont team and greater family of Tremont participants, partners, and supporters.

Embracing a 'sense of place' also involves behaviors, our everyday practices based on an ethic of how we believe we ought to live. This principle of stewardship is another component of the Tremont mission; we hope our learners take home new memories, new scientific insights, and new skills, as well as a promise to themselves to act with increased thoughtfulness and purpose regarding their connection to nature.

During this 100th anniversary year of the National Park Service, I have been moved to moments of deep reflection. In contemplating the work of Tremont, I have come to sense that in addition to being about place, people, and practice, Tremont represents something even more far-reaching, more grand and profound. Tremont exists as an idea. It is an idea that can be present in our everyday lives beyond the Smokies. It is an idea that urges us to marvel in the nature around us on a daily basis; an idea that continuously stokes a passion for lifelong learning; an idea that compels us to recognize opportunities for hands-on science in our own backyards. Tremont embodies an idea that inspires us to strive for happy and healthy communities in all of our places.

Envisioning Tremont as an idea that people take home from their time in the Smokies also has me reflecting on possibilities for how Tremont as an organization might reach beyond the boundaries of the park to influence, shape, and impact our communities. Are there additional opportunities for us to share our spirit, our passion and our expertise with teachers, youth, community leaders, and folks who may never get to visit the park? Is there a need, nay a responsibility, for Trem-

ont as an idea to reach beyond the borders of the national park? If so, should Tremont Institute help fulfill this need and what might that look like? For now, this is simply a thought exercise as I ponder the coming 100 years. These are questions that challenge each of us to think in new and creative ways regarding our role in creating the future we wish to see.

The national parks have famously been called 'America's best idea.' They are places that inspire, educate, and invite us for recreation, a word which literally means to recreate, to restore, to renew one's self. As an education organization rooted in a national park—our focus of practice and inspiration—Tremont as an idea suggests the power of the Smokies can extend beyond 500,000 acres of formally protected land. As an idea, Tremont can be part of our daily lives and help direct our life's journeys, wherever they may lead.



Article by  
Jen Jones, PhD  
President & CEO



Tiffany Beachy

# The Experience Your Smokies Class of 2016: Ready to Lead

In 2012, to coincide with and honor the centennial anniversary of the National Park Service (NPS) in 2016, Tremont Institute brought together a group of soon-to-be high school students that would graduate the same year the NPS turned one hundred. We called it the “Experience Your Smokies Leadership Class of 2016.” That summer, I led a backpacking trip through the Smokies for the initial members of the class, five rising freshmen—two from North Carolina, three from Tennessee—who lived in communities surrounding the national park.



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During that first summer together, those five freshmen discovered a deep love for the Smokies by spending extended time in the backcountry. We splashed in waterfalls, struggled up steep ascents to mountaintop vistas, discovered salamanders, encountered black bears, and wandered our way through five adventurous days in the wild forests. We struggled through long days with heavy packs, endured torrential downpours, and

fought the elements to spark fire by which we could dry our sopping socks. Along the way, the class members formed deep bonds with one another as they shared in, and sometimes struggled through, experiencing the wilds of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

By the end of that first week, the class was excitedly laying plans for the next adventure the following summer, eager to experience more of the park and further challenge themselves. “How awesome,” I thought at the end of that first week, that these budding teenagers would be exploring this national park with one another for the next four years.

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Flash forward through most of those four years, and here we are in 2016. Erin, David, Bella, Aiden, Sterling, and Kristian (we added one more member) have matured into outstanding young adults. Each will be graduating high school in 2016. Around the same time, they’ll come together for a final experience in the Smokies as the Class of 2016. After more than a dozen experiences together, they’ve seen more of the park in a few years than most will in a lifetime. They’ve explored the cultural and natural history of

these mountains, assisted field scientists with research, shadowed NPS employees from several different departments, and spoken publicly about their experiences.

Today, when I speak with any of these young adults, I am in awe of their passion for, knowledge of, and commitment to our national parks system and the values behind it. These six have grown from wide-eyed kids in the woods to impassioned and articulate young leaders, set to take on the world for themselves this year. To me, it’s clear that Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Tremont Institute have inspired, empowered, and educated the members of the Class of 2016 over the last four years. Now, we move into the second century of the National Park Service with six young leaders who are ready to inspire and educate the next generation, each equipped with a deep-running love for the Smokies.

Here’s to the next one hundred years of national parks and the leaders who will continue to protect and share these special places with future generations—looking at you, Erin, Aiden, Sterling, David, Bella, and Kristian!



Article by  
Caleb Carlton  
Media & Outreach  
Specialist

GSMTI Archives





## The Next Hundred Years

In case you haven't heard, the National Park System turns one hundred years old this year. We hope you'll join us in celebrating the birth of the National Park Service this August 25.

The words that brought the parks into being make for worthwhile reading. Broadly speaking, the Organic Act mandated the agency "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and wildlife therein, and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." That last phrase—"future generations"—is what informs everything we do on a daily basis here at Tremont.

*"to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and wildlife therein, and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations"*

Educating kids and adults alike about the importance of preserving this place lies at the very heart of our mission.

National parks were a relatively new idea back at the turn of the 20th century. Nobody knew whether they would succeed. A handful of parks already existed, but a guiding vision for how to manage them—and an agency to carry that vision—did not. Of course the parks turned out to be wildly (pun intended!) successful. Nobody who lived back then knew how immensely important parks would become for sustaining the natural world as well as people.

Just who is to be thanked for bringing the national parks about? Is it the 42nd Congress, which passed the Act of March 1, 1872 that established Yellowstone National Park? Is it John Muir, who inspired many through his passionate writing? Is it Henry David Thoreau, who said "In wildness is the preservation of the world"? Is it even John Calvin, who in the 16th century drew on the Old Testament for the care of all Creation?

All of the above, of course, and others as well. No one stood alone but was a link in a chain. For us today, it's a good reminder that although particular individuals may look like solitary heroes, what has greater impact in the long run is the act of many people working to transform culture and bring about positive changes.

The transformation brought about by the creation of national parks was powerful. The revolutionary notion of setting aside land to be wild—an American-born idea and one we should be so very proud of—did not stay in America for long. Now there are 1,200 national parks or equivalent preserves in more than 100 nations around the globe.

All of this reminds me of a story you've likely heard if you've been a part of the Tremont Experience. Almost a century ago, before the founding of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, logging companies razed 75% of the Smokies forests to the ground. During this time land was set aside for a Girl Scout Camp, which would later become the Tremont campus. One day, scouts learned that loggers were going to blast apart their favorite boulder on the river. Loggers showed up the next morning with dynamite, but the Girl Scouts showed up there first. They sat on the rock all that day, and the next, and the next, until the loggers agreed to leave it be.

But the story doesn't end there. Fast forward to 1994, and again to 2003, when floodwaters visited the valley raising the river to extraordinarily high levels. Girl Scout Rock, which is situated at the head of Girl Scout Island, diverted waters around the island much like the bow of a ship. Topsoil was saved rather than being washed away, which is what would have happened had the rock been dynamited. Trees, plants, birds and people were thus able to flourish on the island.

Little did the Girl Scouts know that by saving a single rock they were really saving an entire island.

National parks function in many ways like Girl Scout Rock. People didn't know in 1916 what parks would mean to us today. Biodiversity, Aldo Leopold's conservation ethic and endangered species were concepts that did not yet exist. But neither do we know today what role parks may play in the future.

Yet we do know this: we need to preserve our parks and manage them with care. Future generations are depending on us, and the work of instilling a love for them in young people who will someday pass it on to their children begins today.

All of which is to say that we're excited about the next one hundred years of the National Park System here at Tremont. The task of connecting people and nature has never been more important. It's hard to think of a better setting than the parks to do just that. Happy centennial to the national parks!



Article by  
Jeremy Lloyd  
Special Programs Coordinator

# Welcoming New Faces at Tremont

## A Meal to Remember



Whether you just returned from an all-day hike, or spent the morning catching salamanders, nothing caps the experience quite like a home-cooked meal in the Tremont dining hall. Over the years, we have served up rest, renewal, inspiration, and smiles for all ages in the wonderful meals carefully conceived and prepared by our friendly food service staff. Staff, students, and

adult guests all agree that mealtime is crucial to the Tremont experience.

Shaping that experience since November 2015 is our new Chef/Manager of Food Services, Charice Davis. She comes to us with a breadth of experience, including 25 years in restaurant and kitchen management, but also years of work in the juvenile justice system, and a deep connection to and love of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Why, she and her husband Gary were married at LeQuire's Overlook in Cades Cove to prove the point!

She started cooking as a girl in her mother's kitchen. One funny story she tells is how she became the chef at Parkside Grill purely by accident. She cooked a special dish one afternoon in place of the fish taco special that was planned. After her Director tasted it, he changed her role in the company on the spot from front of house to a role where she created all daily specials and seasonal menus. Once she saw how excited everyone was and how popular these dishes were, she was hooked.

Charice has big plans for our food service, working towards preparing more and more of our meals from scratch, and including more fresh veggies. We have always tracked food waste that students leave on plates, and now we have started tracking and reducing kitchen waste as well.

Some interesting tidbits about Charice in case you are here for Staff Trivia during a meal this year...she was raised in Las Vegas, has had both a goat and pig as family pets, she sat on stage with Barry Manilow, and once even bowled in the White House!

We ask you to help us welcome Charice into our wider Tremont family—next time you are in Walker Valley and catch a whiff of bread baking, or a pot roast simmering, you can be sure Charice had something to do with it. She's hooked on cooking, and we're hooked on her!



Article by  
John DiDiego  
Education Director

*Next time you are here in Walker Valley,  
be sure to say hi to these new folks at Tremont Institute!*

## In the Store

**Corrine Mauger**  
Sales Manager

**Gail Amatangelo**  
Sales Assistant

## In the Kitchen

**Julie Hatcher**

**Joshua Wright**

## In the Field

**Chris Wandell**  
Teacher Naturalist

**Emily Stein**  
Teacher Naturalist

**Kelly Lecko**  
Teacher Naturalist

**Lydia Reese**  
Teacher Naturalist

*Learn more about our professional faculty and staff  
on our Web site at [www.gsmit.org/staff.html](http://www.gsmit.org/staff.html).*

## Farewell Friends

Two of our lead teacher naturalists are heading off for new adventures outside the Smokies. Everyone at Tremont will miss their enthusiasm and expertise. Please join us in wishing them well.



**Dawn Dextraze**  
At Tremont since 2010



**Kensey Baker**  
At Tremont since 2013  
(& as an intern in 2010)

# Metamorphosing Our Monarch Tagging Program



Article by  
Tiffany Beachy  
Citizen Science  
Coordinator

What do you do when you have more to accomplish than one person has the capacity to achieve? You harness the power of dedicated volunteers!! In my five years at Tremont Institute, one of my

biggest lessons so far has been recognizing the surpassing value of volunteers. The old saying, 'Many hands make light work,' rings true again and again.

But I'm not the only one to benefit from this arrangement just because we're getting work done—involving volunteers in this way clearly supports our mission of connecting people to nature! A family forms close bonds as they monitor stream salamanders, a retired teacher looks forward to quiet walks to his phenology plot throughout the seasons, and a college student gains valuable field research skills that will aid her in her career.

This past fall, we took the responsibility level of our volunteers to the next level. For the first time, we increased our capacity tenfold by training top notch volunteers to represent Tremont Institute as public monarch tagging facilitators. This self-dubbed team of Monarch Monsters spent many hours in the fields of Cades Cove, teaching fellow volunteers about monarchs, their plight, and the story of their migration and facilitating joyful frolics for people of all ages. This is true citizen science in action!

Another new addition was our very first volunteer Monarch Registrar, the hardworking Juli Rigell! She spent MANY hours steadfastly plugging away at signing up the masses, communicating details, etc. Our new online registration system worked remarkably well, stream-lining the process for everyone.

We have much to celebrate! Most of all, this was another good year for migrating monarchs in this area. We had one weekend where we caught almost 50 monarchs a day! That's a considerable change from the paltry 25 total monarchs that we tagged in 2013. We are hopeful that our little friends will have more good years like this, and healthy wintering populations, so that they can rebound over time. Keep planting milkweed!

## Check out these numbers for Monarch Madness 2015:

- 228 monarchs tagged in the National Park
- Over 300 volunteers frolicked in Cades Cove in September and October
- Monarch Monster team logged over 400 hours facilitating public Monarch tagging days
- Now that's pretty awesome! A HUGE thank you to Wanda DeWaard for helping to train our Monarch Monster team! And three cheers for the Monarch Monsters!

## 2015 Monarch Monster Team:

Stacey & Frank Whetstone  
Angelique & Garrett Hickman  
Melissa, Georgia, & Chloe Gunter  
Clare Dattilo  
Terry Uselton  
Mac Post  
Stephanie, Ethan, Luke, Kristi,  
& Moses Bowling  
Aimee & Mallory Davis



Check out [MonarchWatch.org](http://MonarchWatch.org) and [Journey North](http://Journey North) (<https://www.learner.org/jnorth/>) for more information about monarchs and to keep up with their migration.

## Second Tremont Monarch Tag Found in Mexico



Cheryl Womble

Every autumn, as part of our citizen science programming, volunteers scour the fields of Cades Cove for monarch butterflies. In 2015, we tagged over 200 monarchs with tiny, identifying stickers on the underside of a wing, and sent them on their migration to Mexico (where

they winter). The tagging of monarchs helps scientists to monitor the migrating populations and better understand how these butterflies are able to travel such immense distances. Taggers' names are recorded just in case their monarch is found and reported elsewhere. Because of the

sheer number of monarchs that spend the winter in small, forested reserves in Mexico, finding a tagged individual is like finding a needle in a haystack.

On October 5th, 2015, a 6-year-old volunteer, Chesney, gingerly placed a tag on a male monarch in Cades Cove. We were elated to find out that Chesney's monarch not only made it to Mexico, but was found and reported by a local guide! Tag #TNJ057 traveled over 2,000 miles on the wing of that monarch, and came to rest in the Santuario El Rosario, in Michoacán, Mexico.



## Award-Winning Citizen Science



Tremont's Citizen Science Coordinator, Tiffany Beachy, along with Great Smoky Mountains National Park's Susan Sachs and Paul Super received the **Achieving Relevance through Public Engagement and Resource Stewardship** award from the National Park Service.

This award reflects the strength of Tremont's partnership with Great Smoky Mountains National Park in the realm of citizen science, specifically through our joint phenology project. There are 28 plots inside the national park with eight of those located at Tremont. Data is recorded in the Nature's

Notebook portal of the National Phenology Network. The project has been highly successful in engaging the public in science by enlisting over 100 volunteers to regularly monitor plots. This level of commitment encourages a long-term sense of ownership in the project and the lands involved. Volunteers not only monitor, but also train new volunteers and often become advocates for Tremont, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and conservation.

### So What is Phenology?

Tiffany calls it the "-ology for every day." It's the study of cyclic and seasonal natural phenomena, especially in relation to climate and plant and animal life.

## Smokies Scavenger Hunt

Thank you to the 32 teams of adventurous, smart, competitive, enthusiastic people that came out on March 21st for our 8th annual Smokies Scavenger Hunt. Congratulations to all who played and enjoyed Great Smoky Mountains National Park on a beautiful day! The top three teams won certificates to come back and spend time at Tremont Institute, and everyone was included in the drawing for door prizes from our generous sponsors.

### THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!



Appalachian Bear Rescue

Janet & Tim Bigelow

Debbie Claypool

Great Smoky Mountains Outfitters

Little River Trading Company



Top 3 Teams Based on Scores 2016

1st - Shamoonies

2nd - SCB Scavengers

3rd - Shining Rock Falcons



**SAVE THE DATE**  
**May 24, 2017\***

\*Date is tentative.

## Naturalist Certification Graduates

Please join us in congratulating the 2015 graduates of Tremont's Southern Appalachian Naturalist Certification Program.

Shirley Andrews

Libby Gilley

Julie Labhart

Robin Paris

Dedra Scherer

Lois Snow

Marci Spencer

John Terrell

Anita Thomas

Julie Whitted

*"There is a real emotional, spiritual, and personal connection that builds here --- not just with the huge body of environmental studies but with the natural world itself. There's a growth of mind, of course, but also, a deeper sense of place and belonging in the world as one grows in self. They identify with their personal niche in the greater scheme of life." - SANCP graduate*

*"The workshop provides a starting place to answer new questions." – workshop participant*

# Content or Content?



Article by  
Chris Wandell  
Teacher Naturalist

Whenever I find myself with a few spare moments at work, I check to see who might need my help. So I make my way to my supervisor Jennie's office. As she thinks deeply to outline a task, another voice

beckons from the other side of the bookcase.

Heather is our Marketing Manager who shares an office space with Jennie. It is her voice I hear with a familiar request, "Hey, I can always use some content."

So when someone as endearing as Heather calls to you through a bookcase, you have to do two things: be sassy... and help them out.

I've been struggling for a few days, trying desperately to come up with something that would instill a deep understanding of the universe and potentially move my audience to tears, but alas I have been thus far unable to think of such words.

Until last night.

I woke up out of a half-asleep world to jot down "content, content, content".

You see, content is an interesting word because it's an adjective and a noun, both of which have different meanings and similar pronunciation.

It's an adjective that describes a person as happy or pleased. Like when my student scores a touchdown during free time, gets the answer to a question nobody else knew, or takes an "accidental" dive into the stream, only to rise out with a triumphant roar.

It's a noun to describe a subject or a physical substance. It's the information about the rules of that game, of what a touchdown actually means. It's the baseline knowledge that allowed them to answer that question. It's the fact that

they are actually supposed to be measuring the turbidity (clarity), pH, and dissolved oxygen of that water because it's a state curriculum standard.

Many of my students think that school and learning in general is all about informational content. It's all numbers, scientific terms, and proper usage of a graduated cylinder.

On the other hand, free time is all about the happy version of content. It's about being pleased with what you're doing and finding a good balance between going fast and intensive, versus taking your time and curling up with a good book.

## Which is more important?

I've had hundreds of conversations with hundreds of teachers about that basic question. *What are they looking for with their trip to Tremont? What do you want to get out of this class? I see your goals are having fun and building an appreciation for nature, what does that mean to you? And what about you, Ms. Smith? Your goals are learning geologic history for seventh grade prep, and gaining familiarity with tools for measuring water chemistry; should I leave some time for a game?*

Some teachers say "sure, we can learn a little, but I want my students to just be comfortable in nature."

Others shake their heads and say, "the reason our principal lets us take this trip is for the science, so go as heavy on that as you can."

Many others say, "can we do a little of both?"

**A lot of it boils down to one question...**

## Why are you here?

And that only spurs more...

Why did you come here that first time?

Why do you keep coming back?

How do you get your chaperones on board?

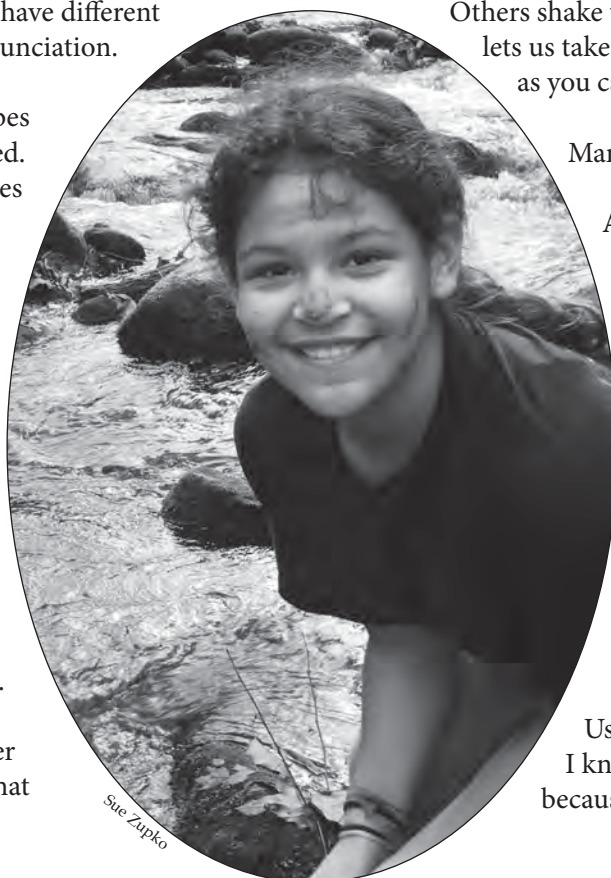
What do the students remember?

Why did you pick Tremont?

Why do I do what I do?

Usually those questions have many answers. I know at least the last one does. I do what I do because there's a distinct rush when you can see the

*continued on page 9*



Sue Zupko



light click in a student's head about something they'd been struggling to understand up until that day. It's a pleasure to be allowed and encouraged to know as much as possible and share that with another person. I'm part of the most knowledgeable team I've ever met, and it's my job to learn. **I do it for the content.**

At the same time, I do what I do because it's the most exhaustingly incredibly enjoyable career I have ever imagined. I do it to see the look on a student's face when they cover themselves in rock paint; I live for the moments when a student sees a Pileated Woodpecker for the first time. For those moments where I can't even believe an owl just landed six feet in front of me. **I do it for the content.**

So naturally, it's a balance.

*Alright, you "accidentally" fell into the river. Why'd you fall? What was that rock covered with? Why was that stretch of water faster? And dude, I'd give that dive a solid six out of ten.*

*That is probably the biggest salamander I've ever seen in my entire life! Why do you think it's so big? What's it been eating to get that size? Can you tell me what kind it is?*

*That roaring? Yeah, it does mean we're close to a waterfall. Is this the first time you've seen one? Why do you think you don't find any back home? How does that big straight drop even form?*

I offer you a challenge. When you come to Tremont, consider this question:

**Content or Content... or Both?**

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## Margaret Epperly - Why I Give to Tremont Institute

Margaret Epperly



I first became aware of Tremont in the early 90's, through a magazine which advertised photography workshops around the country. I had lived in North Carolina since 1979, but had never gone over the mountains to the Smokies.

My first photography workshop at Tremont was a wonderful, almost magical experience

and the many subsequent workshops have been just as great. They are always well organized with agendas which are planned to take full advantage of our time there and highlight the opportunities the park offers. The quality of instructors has always been superb and they do their homework to ensure that participants are at the right place for sunrise and the right place with the right light for many other outings.

I grew up in West Virginia, in a small town where we were free to explore a place called "Big Rock" and you could hike

and climb and play in the creek and use your imagination. I feel that same freedom and sense of joy whenever I attend a workshop at Tremont. From the knowledgeable staff to the talented cooks who provide our yummy meals, everyone seems to have a love of what they are doing and an appreciation of where they get to work.

I've always been impressed with the quality of participants that the adult workshops attract. There is traditionally a great mix of people and there seems to be an instant trust and camaraderie amongst everyone attending. Perhaps it's just that atmosphere of joy that permeates the environment. Occasionally an adult workshop has overlapped with another one which has young school children participating. In those instances, the eagerness on their faces and their innocence has been contagious. As a child, I was always fortunate to be able to attend camps, whether it was Girl Scouts, science camp or band camp. I don't have children myself and am so thankful that through my gifts, I can help the many programs improve and enable the children of others to come to Tremont who may not otherwise have the means to attend a program. -Margaret Epperly

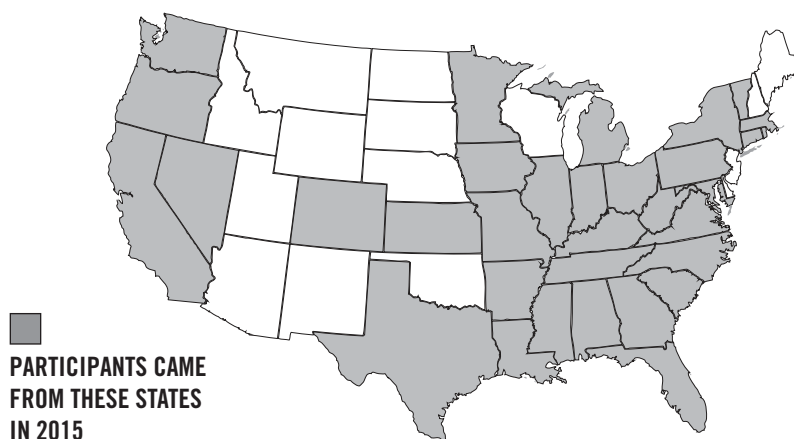
## give financial aid

If you would like to support students attending Tremont programs, consider donating. There is an application process for school groups and summer youth to receive funds that are allocated for aid and raised during the year. Without your help, hundreds of students would have missed coming to Tremont. Help us get more youth outside in 2016!

# A Quick Look at 2015



Hosted **adults and youth** from **34** states



Teacher Naturalists taught **3,518** students  
from **81** school groups

**70%** of participants received some  
type of financial aid to attend  
This includes scholarships, discounts, & grants.

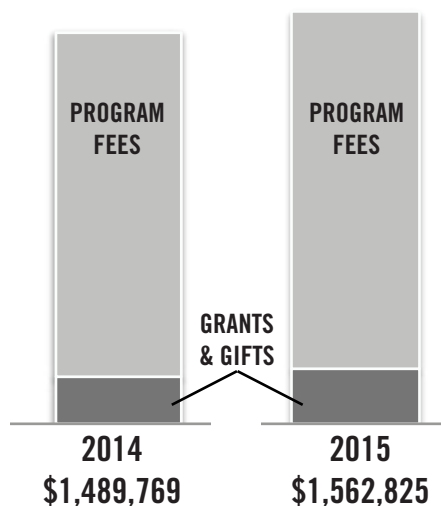


**30+** In addition to school group experiences,  
Tremont led 30+ adult & family programs

**10** Celebrated graduates from the Southern  
Appalachian Naturalist Certification Program

Tremont participated in **58**  
community outreach events

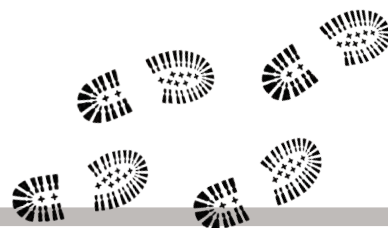
Including Outdoor Knox Fest, Rotary Club Meetings, Ijams Hummingbird Festival, TN Environmental Education Association conferences, UT Knoxville's Early Learning Institute, etc.



volunteers worked  
**3,318**  
hours for Tremont

Projects included citizen science, painting campus signs, moving gravel, organizing curriculum, representing Tremont at community booths, washing dishes, raking leaves and more!

Tremont participants hiked more than **44,000** miles.





# Volunteers in 2015

Without our loyal volunteers, we would not be able to operate at Tremont. From monitoring a salamander plot to working in our wildflower garden, our volunteers make a profound difference, and we thank them for their dedication and many hours of service.

Bond Almond  
Burke Almond  
Elizabeth Almond  
Kimberly Almond  
Gail Amatangelo  
Joe Amatangelo  
Mark Andrews  
Shirley Andrews  
David Antonelli  
Phil Antonelli  
Alan Archer  
Betsy Archer  
Jamie Archer  
Brian Aylward  
Gina Baker  
Karetza Beckner  
Nancy Biddle  
Warren Bienlenberg  
Janet Bigelow  
Larry Bolt  
Christy Bowling  
Ethan Bowling  
Luke Bowling  
Moses Bowling  
Stephanie Bowling  
Deb Bowman

William Christensen  
Hannah Christian  
Rosemarie Cirira  
Debbie Claypool  
Glenn Claypool  
Priscilla Clayton  
Virginia Cooten  
Jose Cortes  
Shirley Crisp  
Steve Crosslin  
Weldon Crow  
Margaret Cumberland  
Hannah Cummings  
Jim Cunningham  
Lena Cunningham  
Charles Cuthbertson  
Margie Cuthbertson  
Tim Cuthbertson  
Annabel Dattilo  
Clare Dattilo  
Oliver Dattilo  
Aimee Davis  
Mallory Davis  
Will Davis  
Carmina De Guia  
Amy Delaplaine

Debbi Exberger  
Ron Faulkner  
Alice Fisher  
Sterling Fisher  
Heather Floan  
Michael Floan  
Carolyn Franks  
Nelda Friffith  
Chuck Garten  
Angelia Gibson  
Nate Gibson  
Netsanet Gibson  
Owen Gibson  
Will Gibson  
Robin Goddard  
Sandra Gordan  
Teri Graman  
Bereket Graves  
Fisher Graves  
Harrison Graves  
Marshal Graves  
Meagan Graves  
Laura Greene  
Nelda Griffith  
Brienne Griggs  
Ethan Griggs

Shelly Huskey  
Hunter Hutson  
Tabatha Hutson  
Bill Irby  
Pat Irby  
Andrew Irvine  
Jamie Irvine  
Will Irvine  
Abby Jackson  
Pam Jackson  
Rob Jackson  
Caleb Jernigan  
Kelly Jernigan  
Kyla Jernigan  
Michael Jernigan  
Dave Johnson  
Elin Johnson  
Steve Johnson  
Dave Johnston  
Navia Johnston  
Bekah Joyal  
Sarah Joyal  
Jason Jurkovic  
Josie Jurkovic  
Rose Jurkovic  
Tracey Jurkovic  
Janet Kasper  
Alice Kellogg  
Jacob Kesterson  
Adolph King  
Sharon King  
Dan Klingensmith  
Aaron Klingensmith  
Bruce Koopika  
Davin Kovalchik  
Jill Kovalchik  
Emily Kraeske  
Julie Labhart  
Jinean Latham  
Ken LaValley  
Blake Lawson  
Patria Leath  
Dick Ledyard  
Asler Letterman  
Claire Letterman  
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Hollis Letterman  
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John Luttrell  
Maegan Luttrell  
Ryan Luttrell  
Tanja Luttrell  
Emma Lyons  
Richard Lyons  
Stacey Lyons  
Corbin Marine  
Glenn Marshall  
Carrie Mayer  
Emily Mayer  
Bob McAndrews  
Tim McGrath

Sam McGroom  
Dakota McMahan  
Daniel Metcalf  
Hannah Metcalf  
Joshua Metcalf  
Karen Metcalf  
Sarah Metcalf  
Eleanor Mimbs  
Emmie Mimbs  
Alex Moeller  
Isabella Morstatt  
Josef Morstatt  
Leslie Morstatt  
Donald Mossman  
Jay Mowell  
Kim Mowell  
Wesley Mowell  
Gary Neibert  
Nancy Noble  
Douglas Ott  
Ed Owens  
Pat Parr  
Ray Payne  
Emilie Perez  
Bailee Phagan  
Brandon Phagan  
Bryana Phagan  
Leanne Phagan  
Emily Pickett  
Paul Pickett  
Mac Post  
Frances Presnell  
Al Rabenold  
Denise Rabenold  
Sam Rabenold  
Sarah Rabenold  
Scott Rabenold  
Seinait Rabenold  
Suri Rabenold  
Kelly Rafferty  
Saeed Rahmanien  
Ann Ramsey  
John Ramsey  
Michele Ramsey  
Randall Reagan  
Suzannah Reagan  
Vickie Reddick  
Kelli Reyna  
Scarlett Reyna  
Mike Richardson  
Juli Rigell  
Josie Riley  
Sean Riley  
Tina Riley  
Jama Rinehart  
Taylor Rinehart  
Herb Roberts  
Deborah Roberts  
Carolyn Rogers  
Paul Rogers  
Judy Rosenberry  
Jessica Rutgerson  
Karlee Rutgerson  
Wyatt Rutgerson  
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Elisabeth Sandlin

Michael Sandlin  
Tatiana Sandlin  
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Spain Secrist  
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Stacy Whetstone  
Debbie Whitaker  
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Kathy Wilbanks  
Nancy Williams  
Susan Williams  
Wanda Williams  
DiAnne Wilson  
Joan Worley  
Seth Worley



Tiffany Beady

volunteers worked  
**3,318**  
hours for Tremont

Sofie Griggs  
Zachary Griggs  
Addison Grimm  
Chloe Gunter  
Georgia Gunter  
Melissa Gunter  
Dorothy Haislip  
Heather Hatcher  
Glenn Hathaway  
Janet Hathaway  
Walter Hedge  
Lesly Henaushot  
Jane Herbert  
Minde Herbert  
Sam Herbert  
Alex Heslep  
Jacob Heslep  
Paula Heslep  
Angelique Hickman  
Garrett Hickman  
Donna Higdon  
Steve Higdon  
Ryan Hintz  
Thom Hobbs  
Ron Hoffman  
Sherry Hoffman  
Robert Holman  
Boyd Hopkins  
Joy Hopkins  
Amelia Horton  
Claire Horton  
Erin Horton  
Tom Howe

Kimber Bradbury  
Dawn Bradley  
Josiah Bradley  
Jennifer Brehm  
Nevin Brown  
Susan Brown  
David Bryant  
Lee Bryant  
Shea Bryant  
Mark Burns  
April Byrge  
Maureen Cairns  
Riley Cassidy  
Vicki Christensen

Charlene DeShea  
Wanda DeWaard  
Dawn Dextraze  
Sally Dickie  
Mario DiDiego  
Michele DiDiego  
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Marie Erickson  
Whitney Erickson  
Caroline Erikson  
Erin Erikson

## THANK YOU 2015 GIFTS

to the many generous individuals, organizations, and companies who supported Tremont in 2015. Without you, we would not be able to serve the thousands of students and adults each year in this special place.

### \$20,000-\$50,000

Alcoa Foundation  
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Jaime Cepeda  
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Ray Colclough  
Eli Condie  
Michael Crawford  
Charice Davis  
Heather Davis  
Saundra Deighton  
John Dickenson  
Katherine Dickinson  
Larry & Beth Dicus  
Thomas & Kathy Dittmaier  
Donald & Carolyn Dougall  
Don Dunning  
Jody Dyer  
June Eastvold  
Chuck & Patti Edwards  
Galal El-Sayad  
Karen Ellingson  
Darrel Ellis

Margaret Epperly  
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Paul Erwin  
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Keith Goff  
Meredith Goins  
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Bill Phelps  
Giesela Pierce  
Uma Plambeck  
Mary Porter

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Robert Ramger  
Robert Reily  
Tina Riley  
David Roark  
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Elizabeth Rogers  
Gary & Karyn Rolfe  
Frank Ross  
Rotary Club of East Cobb  
Harold Roth  
Bill Schneider  
Ann Schuur  
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Richard & Spain Secrist  
Gar Secrist  
Raymond Sellers  
Brenda Sellers  
John Sheffield  
David & Judy Shuck  
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Amy Sliger  
Pete & Dotty Smith  
Penny Smith  
Mark & Janet Snyder  
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Café 4  
Campbell Party Rentals  
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Wilderness at the Smokies  
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Biltmore Estate  
Bistro by the Tracks  
Blue Ridge Mountain Sports  
Mark Burns  
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**George Fry**  
Georgiana Vines  
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**Mark Gibson**  
Jim & Georgie Whitley  
  
**Ellen Hardwick**  
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**Dr. Elsie Quarterman**  
Kim Sadler  
  
**Arthur & Margaret Stupka**  
Maryann Stupka

## Gifts given in honor of

**Caleb & Jaima Carlton's Wedding**  
Mary Dresser  
  
**Mr. & Mrs. Bill Cobble**  
Jim & Natalie Haslam II  
  
**Mary Dresser**  
Nannette Enloe  
  
**Hank Dye**  
Gary & Martha Scudder  
  
**Mark Epperly**  
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Gregg & Tracy Price  
  
**Bill Varner**  
Shannon Harper  
  
**Nathan & Heather Zeiger**  
Jerome & Rozanne Zeiger

## In Memory



Jack Williams

### Karen Ballentine

*Karen was a long time champion and friend of Tremont. Over her many years of service as Education Branch Chief for Great Smoky Mountains National Park, she made a lasting impact on thousands of lives. Her spirit and passion for education will survive through a scholarship in her name that will help connect kids to nature. To date, friends, family, and co-workers have contributed more than \$8,400 to the Karen Ballentine Scholarship.*

## In Honor



Benjamin Drummond / Sara Joy Steele

### Ken Voorhis

*Tremont's former executive director of 29 years is featured in the centennial edition of Smokies Life. Ken Voorhis has been named one of the Top 100 People of the Smokies. Pick up the current issue to read more about Ken and others who have made the Smokies great!*



## Board Member Spotlight - Bill Cobble

Believing strongly in the value of an endowment fund, Bill and his wife Donna have opened their home, a stunning 250-acre farm, for the past five years to host Tremont's most successful yearly fundraiser. Thanks to the Cobbles, guests will once again gather at Marblegate Farm in June to share Tremont's vision with others.



Jack Williams

In the late 90's, Tremont was moving out from under the wing of the Great Smoky Mountains Association to become a separate non-profit institute. Tremont needed a Board of Directors to champion the cause, to raise money, to provide direction

on this new adventure, and that board needed a leader.

Former Tennessee Supreme Court Justice Gary Wade tells the story of how Bill Cobble came to be the first board president for Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont.

At the time, Bill Cobble was recruiting for a board position for the Knoxville Zoo, and he believed Gary Wade was the man for the job. Cobble called Wade asking him to serve on the zoo board. However, Wade was reluctant to accept due to other board commitments he was currently working.

Cobble persisted, and Wade had an idea which turned into the "best trade [he] ever made." Wade agreed to join the zoo board if... Cobble would chair the board of a place called Tremont.

Cobble agreed and took the lead in what would be crucial planning years for the institute. He hosted the first board retreat and brought in a facilitator who helped identify the clear vision for Tremont. He was instrumental in getting commitments from key donors and centered the Tremont vision.

"There's no question that absent Bill's leadership, the Tremont board would not have the profile, programming and prestige it did in those beginning days," says Wade.

Since that day, Bill Cobble's work for Tremont and the thousands of students who cross the bridge to campus has sustained and helped build the organization.

Bill Cobble exemplifies an active board member by not only being present, but also by continually pushing to keep Tremont financially stable while evolving programs to fit the next generation of needs.

Thanks to Bill Cobble for decades of service, an unwavering commitment to moving Tremont forward and for taking a chance all those years ago.

*Gary Wade is currently the Vice President and Dean of Lincoln Memorial University's Duncan School of Law and previously served as Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court.*

*Bill Cobble retired as CEO and owner of Cobble Staffing Companies and was the founding President of Tremont's Board of Directors.*



## School Groups in 2015

A. M. Yealey Elementary School (KY)  
 Berrien County Math & Science Center (MI)  
 Central Middle International School (IN)  
 Cherokee Bend Elementary School (AL)  
 Cherokee Middle School (TN)  
 Christian Academy of Knoxville (TN)  
 Clayton-Bradley Academy (TN)  
 Concord Christian School (TN)  
 Cornerstone School (FL)  
 Daisy Scout Troop 20847 (TN)  
 Deshler High School (AL)  
 Eagleton Elementary (TN)  
 Ellis Middle School (TN)  
 Emerald Youth Foundation/  
 JustLead Program (TN)  
 Episcopal School of Knoxville (TN)  
 Fairview Elementary (TN)  
 Faith Christian School (SC)  
 Follow the Child Montessori School (NC)  
 Frazier Elementary School (TN)  
 Girl Scout Troop #20044 (TN)  
 Glen Este High School (OH)  
 Grace Christian Academy (TN)  
 Harpeth Hall School (TN)  
 Hickory Valley Christian School (TN)  
 Holy Comforter Episcopal School (FL)

Hume-Fogg Academic High School (TN)  
 Immaculate Conception Cathedral  
 High School (TN)  
 J. Graham Brown School (KY)  
 Jones Valley Elementary School (AL)  
 Lebanon Special School District (TN)  
 Lenoir City Middle School (TN)  
 Lonsdale Elementary School (TN)  
 Maplewood Richmond Heights  
 Middle School (MO)  
 Maryville College "Great Smokies  
 Experience" (TN)  
 McDowell Early College (NC)  
 Mead Montessori School (TN)  
 Menlo Middle School (GA)  
 Merrol Hyde Magnet School (TN)  
 Montessori Academy at Edison Lakes (IN)  
 Moody High School (AL)  
 Moore Traditional High School (KY)  
 Nashville School of the Arts (TN)  
 Norris Middle School (TN)  
 Ocean Lakes High School (VA)  
 Old Trail School (OH)  
 Oliver Springs Middle School (TN)  
 Oxford High School (AL)  
 Pepperell High School (GA)

Pi Beta Phi Elementary School (TN)  
 Pope John Paul II High School (TN)  
 Rainbow Community School (NC)  
 Randolph School (AL)  
 Rockford Elementary School (TN)  
 Rockwood Middle School (TN)  
 Rockwood School District (MO)  
 Sayre School (KY)  
 Seymour Community Christian School (TN)  
 Shelbyville Middle School (IN)  
 St Anne Catholic School (VA)  
 St. Luke's Episcopal School (AL)  
 Station Camp Middle School (TN)  
 Sycamore School (IN)  
 Tate's School (TN)  
 Trinity Christian School (FL)  
 Union Grove Elementary School (TN)  
 Valley Springs Middle School (NC)  
 Visitation Academy (MO)  
 Walland Elementary School (TN)  
 Walton High School (GA)  
 Weatherly Heights Elementary (AL)  
 West End Middle School (TN)  
 Woodlawn School (NC)  
 Woods Charter School (NC)

## Colleges and Universities at Tremont During 2015

Bowling Green State University (OH)  
 Maryville College (TN)  
 Mississippi State University (MS)  
 University of Georgia (GA)  
 Virginia Tech (VA)  
 Purdue University (IN)  
 Penn State University (PA)  
 Western Illinois University (IL)  
 East Carolina University (NC)  
 North Carolina State University (NC)  
 Texas A&M University (TX)  
 University of Missouri-Columbia (MO)



GSMIT Archives



GSMIT Archives

## partner with us

Tremont has a long history of partnering with colleges and universities. We work closely with faculty to customize programs and tailor curriculum so students may achieve specific learning objectives in their particular field of study. Many of our programs are organized around a central theme. Our expertise and passion enables us to work with professors and students from across a wide range of disciplines, ranging from wildlife to anthropology, to art and creative writing, to environmental policy and law, and more.

The **Natural Resources College Consortium** dives deep into resource management issues related to the national park. Held each August, participating schools include the University of Georgia, Purdue-North Central, and Virginia Tech. Enrollment for this program is open to students regardless of university affiliation. This consortium may potentially have room for additional schools to participate. Interested professors are encouraged to make enquiries. **Contact us at (865) 448-6709.**

## Upcoming Events

### SUMMER YOUTH

#### JUNE

- 13-18 Discovery Camp I
- 13-18 Girls in Science Camp
- 13-18 Wilderness Adventure Trek I
- 27-July 2 Backcountry Ecological Expedition I
- 27-July 2 Discovery Camp II
- 27-July 2 Wilderness Adventure Trek II

#### JULY

- 5-10 Backcountry Ecological Expedition II
- 5-8 Firefly Camp
- 18-23 Discovery Camp III
- 18-28 Field Ecology Adventure
- 18-28 Teen High Adventure
- 25-31 Maryville College  
Great Smokies Experience

### ADULT & FAMILY

#### JULY

- 7-10 Adult Backpacking
- 11-16 Smoky Mountains Family Camp

#### AUGUST

- 1-3 Aquatic Natural History
- 3-5 Reptiles & Amphibians

#### SEPTEMBER

- 4-9 Fall Hiking Road Scholar
- 23-25 Southern Appalachian Ecology

#### OCTOBER

- 2-7 Fall Hiking Road Scholar
- 14-16 Women's Fall Backpack
- 21-24 Autumn Brilliance Photography  
Workshop

#### NOVEMBER

- 4-6 Mammals
- 4-6 Survival Skills
- 12 Annual Volunteer Work Day

### CITIZEN SCIENCE

Citizen science happens year-round at Tremont. Participants and volunteers have the opportunity to contribute to scientific research conducted within the national park. Resulting data are shared with collaborating scientists and park resource managers, as well as the general public. Check [www.gsmit.org/CitizenScience.html](http://www.gsmit.org/CitizenScience.html) to see what's happening in Walker Valley this season. Popular volunteer projects include bird banding in June/July and monarch tagging in late summer/early fall.



Tiffany Beachy



Gar Secrist

### HOMEcoming CELEBRATION

Looking for a great way to enjoy the park this fall? Join us for our annual Homecoming Celebration. The event combines food, friends, and fun to raise money for our scholarship fund. Email [heather@gsmit.org](mailto:heather@gsmit.org) to be added to our bi-weekly newsletter list to learn more in the coming months.

**DATE ANNOUNCED SOON**

## teacher escape weekend

You are invited to join us for a weekend in the Smokies where we will share ideas and plan your upcoming Tremont experiences. This short retreat is fitting for both returning teachers as well as those interested in bringing students to Tremont. Escape to the mountains and return home energized and excited for next semester.

#### WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- Food, lodging and instruction
- Incredible SAVINGS to you and your students
- Preparation for cooperative teaching with our staff
- Activities enhance learner outcomes
- PD hours & network with other professionals
- NEW! - Sessions designed for veteran & new teachers

## 2016 dates:

### Aug. 27-28 and Sept. 17-18

**Sign up today to reserve your spot to guarantee  
YOUR school's discounts!**

**Need more info?**

Call Jennie McGuigan at (865) 448-6709 or visit  
[www.gsmit.org/tew.html](http://www.gsmit.org/tew.html)

**relax and enjoy a weekend in the smokies!**



## Program Spotlight: Photography Workshops

*"Thanks for such a wonderful weekend. The surroundings are glorious and I learned so much from the instructors. But it truly is the staff at Tremont that make it such a special experience. I am made to feel so special and so connected with the earth when I'm there, and I'm inspired to be a better person by spending time with people like Elizabeth and Tiffany. They don't just go through the motions, they love what they do and that makes all the difference. So thank you to all of you for providing me with such experiences. They refresh my spirit, they rekindle my passion for the beauty of the world and my heart is so much more peaceful."*

**- Jane Palmer, Workshop participant 2015 & 2016**



**JOIN THE FUN**  
**This could be you!**

**Spots are still  
available for our  
Autumn Brilliance  
Photo Workshop**

**October 21-24, 2016**

Photo by Tom Vadnais,  
Photo Workshop Instructor



Photo by Gregory Hurst, Fall Workshop 2015



Photo by Greg Artis, Spring Workshop 2016

**SHARE THE FUN - Tell your friends, family,  
and photo clubs about Tremont workshops!**

## Campus and Store Updates



Heather Davis



Heather Davis

Stop in and see our recently updated entryway. Our maintenance team has repainted, refloored and installed several new additions like this lovely banner featuring a background photo by Jane Palmer, one of our workshop participants. While you're here, take a peek in our store. Tremont store manager, Corrine Mauer, has been rearranging and adding new products since she started in early 2016.



## experience

We have a variety of programs for all ages and abilities. We are known most often for our school programs, but our calendar is full of options for adults, youth, and families. Options include naturalist classes, photography workshops, family camp, professional development, and summer camps.

**For more information, call us at (865) 448-6709 or email [heather@gsmit.org](mailto:heather@gsmit.org) to request a program catalog.**

*"I had the pleasure of coming to Tremont in December, as a chaperone with Cherokee Middle School.*

*I just wanted to take a second to let you know what an amazing trip this was for both of us. My son, and his classmates, had experiences that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.*

*For me, it was great to take a trip down memory lane and remember all the good times that I had at camp so many years ago. As an avid outdoorsman and someone who cares deeply about the Great Smoky Mountains, it was so nice to see the children experience, and enjoy, being outside and active in such a special place.*



Heather Davis

*I can't say enough wonderful things about your staff and everything they did to make this such a wonderful experience. It was truly a pleasure to spend time with a group of people who so clearly love what they do, and are so good at it. As someone who knows all too well that administrators are only as good as the people around them, I can honestly say that you have an amazing team in place."*

- David Bolling

David came to Tremont with his school 30 years ago, and in 2015 returned as a chaperone for his son Carter's Tremont experience.



Amy Wilson

Citizen Science - Bird Banding  
David, Angelique & Garrett "Fireball" Hickman

## volunteer

Could you give one day a month to helping Tremont Institute? Consider supporting Tremont by donating your time as a regular volunteer. There are many opportunities to pitch in. Contact us today to share your skills and know that every moment you put into Tremont gives someone the opportunity to live and learn in this beautiful place.

Volunteer opportunities include planning special events, representing Tremont at community events, assisting in the office or the kitchen, moving gravel, making fire starters, collecting donations, and more.

**To find your place among the dedicated Tremont volunteers, email [heather@gsmit.org](mailto:heather@gsmit.org).**



Heather Davis

Tremont Booth at Maryville College Cirque du Science  
Volunteer, Joan Worley and Education Director, John DiDiego



Jen Jones

Thanks to a clothing grant from Columbia Sportswear our teaching staff is looking sharp while out on the trails!



GSMIT Archives

Spring Road Scholar Hiking Week

## What did you enjoy most?

*"The hikes, for sure. A year ago, I never would have imagined that I could get out and do something like this. The fact that I could keep up well also surprised me. Being able to prove to myself that I can do things like this means a lot to me. I am in a much better place than I was last year, and being able to do things like this shows I'm capable of more than I ever thought."*  
*-college senior  
 spring outdoor recreation consortium participant*



Sue Zapko

Weatherly Heights School Group Checking In

## connect

Sometimes you can't be here with us. That's okay! You can still connect with Tremont Institute.

**Continue reading our printed newsletter.** Share some info with a friend. The next edition will arrive later this year.



**Have you signed up for our bi-weekly newsletter?** If not, be sure you do. We'll keep you up to date on what's happening here at Tremont, and send reminders about how you can get involved when the time is right for you.  
[www.gsmit.org](http://www.gsmit.org)



**Have you watched our videos?** The feeling you get from dipping your toes in the Middle Prong can never be duplicated by simply watching the river flow from your computer screen, but on an every day work week, it's the next best thing. Take a break and enjoy the scenery from wherever you may be.  
<https://vimeo.com/channels/tremont>



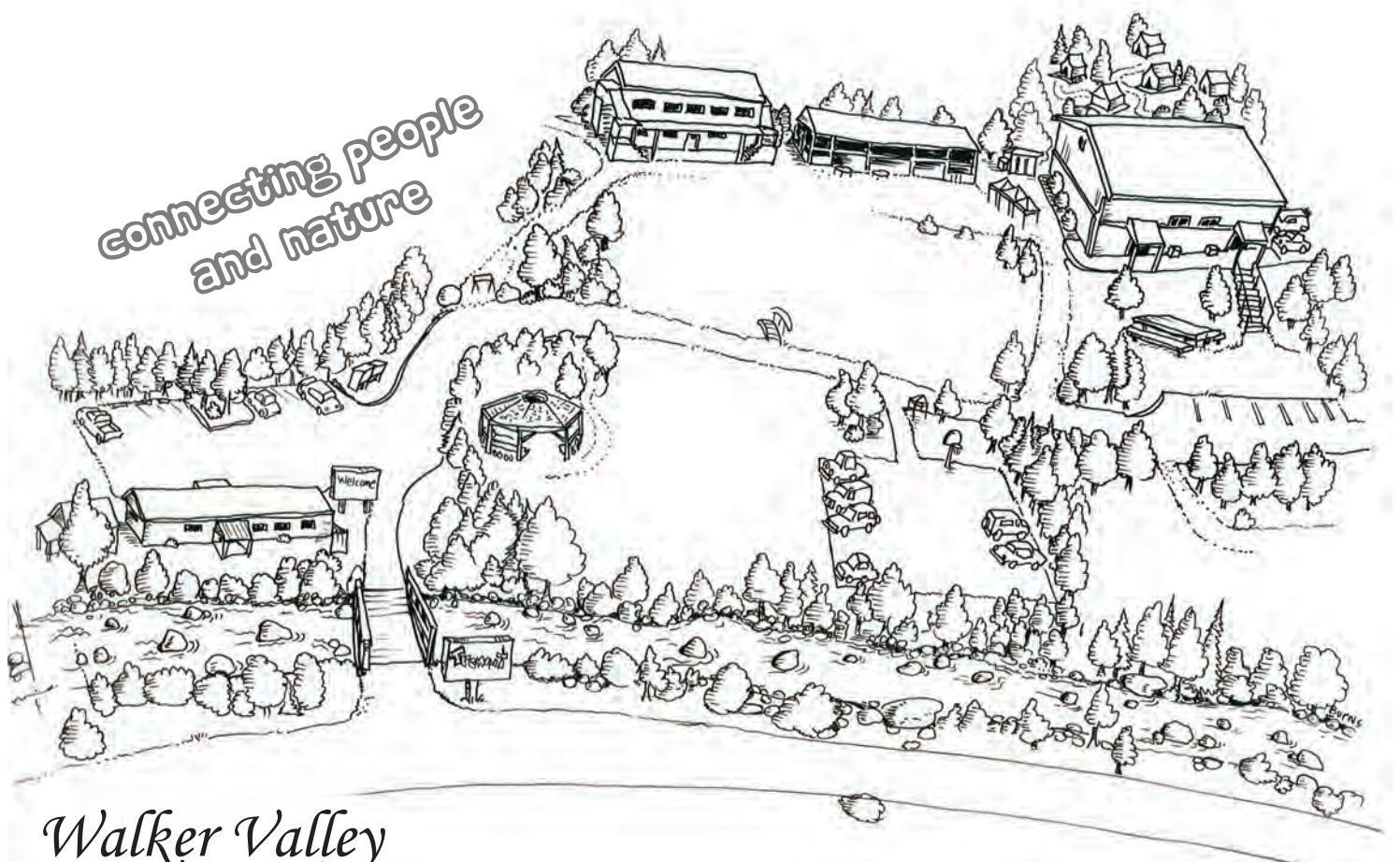
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[www.facebook.com/GSMITremont](https://www.facebook.com/GSMITremont)





**GREAT SMOKY  
MOUNTAINS  
INSTITUTE AT  
TREMONT**

Great Smoky Mountains National Park  
9275 Tremont Road  
Townsend, TN 37882



*Walker Valley*  
**Reflections**

The newsletter of  
Great Smoky Mountains  
Institute at Tremont

*Spring/Summer  
2016*

Visit [www.gsmit.org](http://www.gsmit.org) or call (865) 448-6709 for more information.