

The newsletter of
Great Smoky Mountains
Institute at Tremont
Summer/Fall 2014

Walker Valley

Reflections

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www.gsmit.org

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Relationships: The Heart of the Matter

A number of months ago, I settled down to live in a house on the Middle Prong of the Little River. As the weeks have passed, the cold hard ground and dark wintry nights have given way to verdant beds of ferns and evening skies shimmering with fireflies. The other night someone asked me what has been the biggest surprise about life at Tremont. I paused for quite some time. The more I reflected the more I realized... what has surprised me the most is the very same thing that drew me to this valley. Relationships. I had eagerly accepted the invitation to join Tremont Institute after I met the team and personally experienced the relationships that make this place what it is. Yet, I am still surprised, awed and humbled by the depth of sincerity and dedication inherent in the relationships.

Over breakfast with school groups, I have listened as teachers explain the personal journey that brought them to Tremont. For some, it is their 15th year in a row, for a few it is their third time this year, and for others today is their very first wake-up in Walker Valley. They tell me how they fundraised, encouraged nervous parents, and navigated many other challenges to get to Tremont. The thing is, they are not bragging nor complaining. They are simply explaining, matter-of-factly, their experience at Tremont Institute is so special, so necessary, that all these things simply have to be done to make it possible, so they do them. To me, this devotion to their students is humbling and is a portrait of a true champion, an education hero.

A number of weeks back I sat with some professors who had brought their college students to Tremont for the week. We stayed up late, listening to the river as we shared our passions and aspirations for how we believe that Tremont can and will change the world for the better. We had only known each other for a few hours, yet the goodbyes and the hugs were long, deep and sincere.

One morning this summer I joined our Citizen Science team as they were bird banding on campus. Among the participant volunteers was a family who had three generations in tow, the mother, a small daughter, and the grandmother. What a wonderful testament to the ability of nature to nurture relationships across the decades.

Over the past months I have met many different people with various organizations around the Smokies. They have taken me to lunch, sent me warm handwritten notes, and hosted me at local events. While most of these folks did not yet know me, they have made me feel sincerely welcome as a neighbor, a colleague, an ally, and a member of the Smokies' community. Their support of Tremont Institute makes our mission possible, and it is built on generosity, reciprocity, and an earnest belief that Tremont Institute is capable of changing the world for good.

During family camp, one of the parents came up to me while I was chatting with a Tremont teacher naturalist. I knew this dad had a small hiking accident earlier in the day so I quickly asked how he was feeling. While I was eager to know about his health, he said he was fine and quickly started explaining how wonderful the week had been. His joy and excitement washed over us like a wave. Hoping to not embarrass the Tremont naturalist standing with us, but wanting to make sure I knew, he explained that in all his years as a school-teacher, he had never known such talented and passionate people as those who work at Tremont. His unbridled joy was due in large part to the Tremont staff team. They had inspired him and helped him make a true connection to this place during his first visit to the Smokies.

Having spent time with all of these inspirational folks over the past months, I can unequivocally say their connection to nature is infectious, and their connection to each other is palpable. Before coming to Tremont, my last position required me to travel up to eight months a year all over the planet. One thing I came to know for sure: it's not just about where you go, it's also about who you go with! It's about relationships. Here at Tremont Institute, relationships are the heart and essence of every person's experience. I hope I never get used to the awesomeness of these relationships. I want to affirm and cherish them, here in Walker Valley.



Jen Jones, PhD
President & CEO
Great Smoky Mountains
Institute at Tremont

Jen developed a passion for nature while growing up in Melbourne, Florida. Her interest in conservation policy led her to South Africa for six years including research in Tembe Elephant Park. She has traveled, lived and worked in more than 30 countries and protected areas from Glacier National Park in Mon-

tana to Tadoba Tiger Reserve in India. She completed her BS at the University of Florida and a PhD in Conservation and Society from the University of Pretoria. She has more than 13 years of expertise in experiential education, served as a Visiting Professor at Williams College in Massachusetts and holds an appointment as a Visiting Associate Professor with Virginia Tech's Center for Leadership in Global Sustainability. Jen enjoys flatwater kayaking, veggie gardening, and playing with the critters.

Getting to the Next Level in Professional Development

Teachers need a lot of hours of professional development each year. We are proud to offer several opportunities for teachers that incorporate a wide selection of topics and resources, but also can provide long-term support and a network of like-minded educators to correspond with.

Emily Julian



Teacher Escape Weekends September 6-7 and September 13-14, 2014

These weekends bring new and veteran Tremont teachers together to learn from each other and to learn more about our programs. This makes the perfect introduction to Tremont programming for a teacher that is considering it, because they get to know the facilities, meet the staff, and experience the lessons. There is also ample opportunity to network with veteran teachers who have learned ways to get the most out of the experience.

Whether you are a veteran teacher needing a shot in the arm or a new teacher needing ideas and time-tested lessons, we like to think we have something to offer. We take teacher professional development seriously and like all of our educational programs, they are serious fun!



Tennessee Environmental Education Association (TEEA) Fall Conference Sept 26-28, 2014

TEEA members are outstanding educators from across the state who are dedicated to going above and beyond by using environmental education with their students and trying to make learning happen outside when possible. The conference will bring over a hundred formal and non-formal educators together to share best practices in education that

engage students with their world. The weekend will be full of educational sessions, exhibits, field trips, networking and resource-sharing opportunities that push the boundaries of using the outdoors as the setting for inquiry learning, STEM education, scientific investigation, and all of the multidisciplinary tools that environmental education offers.

"We are excited to have Tremont host our 2014 conference," said TEEA President Ramona Nelson. "We all look forward to getting back to the Smokies, a crown jewel of the National Park system. Environmental Education crosses all disciplines and provides an opportunity for students to gain an understanding of and appreciation for our natural world. Classroom teachers and other educators are invited to join us for this fantastic conference."

We will be highlighting exceptional teachers and schools in Blount County, as well as showcasing the best outdoor classroom in the Southeast, Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Shamoonies Win Smokies Scavenger Hunt

Another lively group participated in the 7th annual Smokies Scavenger Hunt this year. Thirty teams tested their knowledge and their attention to detail in this 25-hour challenge which consisted of 75 Smokies-related questions and activities.

Who dared to climb Mount Le Conte for the extra 200 points? How many teams set up camp in a backcountry site and brought photo evidence to prove it? How many miles of visibility would be required to see Tellico Lake from Look Rock Tower? And where do you find answers to all these questions?

Join us next year to learn something new and challenge the Shamoonies as scavenger hunt champions! **SAVE THE DATE AND TELL YOUR FRIENDS - MARCH 21, 2015**

Heather Davis



Amanda Haynes



SANCP Graduate Spotlight: Nannette Enloe



Article by
Dawn Dextraze
Teacher Naturalist

Nannette's history with the Tremont area started long ago. In the summer of 1950, she was a camp counselor at the Girl Scout camp that used to be here. During that time, she was also a student at Maryville College. Maryville College created the Education Center that is now Tremont. She remembered her time spent in Walker Valley fondly and was excited to visit again, so after quite some time, she started hiking with Tremont's Road Scholar (formerly Elderhostel) hiking week. She has attended that program for six years now.

While she was hiking at Tremont, she learned of the Southern Appalachian Naturalist Certification Program (SANCP) and decided to take the Plants course in 2012. She wanted to learn more about the woods that surround her home, so she picked the subjects she was most excited about and took those classes first. After she completed six of the eight courses, she decided to complete the certification. This extended her interest to other subjects. She took the forest ecology class last and felt that it helped her put everything she had learned in its place. Nannette graduated from the program last year and shortly afterwards gave a very generous donation to Tremont.

I had the pleasure of interviewing Nannette to learn more about her experiences with SANCP, and this is what she had to say:

1. What aspect of SANCP was most meaningful to you? What do you tell others about your experience?

The biggest thing is that it is a real field study. You aren't just reading it in books. You are really out there doing it. The staff is right there, knowledgeable, friendly and cooperative. They are really good at what they do and make it interesting. You get the feeling that we are all in this together. We will find out new things and enjoy learning together. It's such an important part of learning—sharing in those experiences. One thing leads to another and you learn more than you anticipated learning.

2. Why do you think programs like SANCP are important?

The more knowledge and experience we have in the out-of-doors, the better care we take of it. We do a better job of stewardship. Knowledge of Great Smoky Mountains National Park is important, so we know how to do our part to take care of it.

3. Did you learn anything about yourself and your abilities during the SANCP program?

So often we think we know about natural history but when we get into the real knowledge of any facet of nature, we realize we are not at the stage we thought we were. There is so much to learn. I knew enough to know I didn't know anything at all when I started taking these classes. I always appreciated God's earth but these experiences have opened my eyes to its wonder.



GSMIT Archives

4. Is there anything else you would like to share about any Tremont programs?

I want to say a big thank you for all that the staff put into the programs to make them continue.

What is the Southern Appalachian Naturalist Certification Program?

The Southern Appalachian Naturalist Certification Program (SANCP) is a eight-course program designed to help you become a better naturalist, communicator, and land steward by learning the ecology and natural history of the southern Appalachian Mountains.



www.gsmiit.org/SANCP.html
(865) 448-6709

Core Classes

Interpretation
Naturalist Skills
Plants
Birds
Reptiles & Amphibians
Aquatic Natural History
Southern Appalachian Ecology
Mammals

Advanced Classes

Winter Woody Plant ID
FUNGI in the Smokies
Wilderness Survival
Advanced Birding



GSMIT Archives

Music Videos + Tremont = What?!



Article by
Caleb Carlton
Media & Outreach
Specialist

We're redefining what it means to have an "environmental education experience" at Tremont. While all of the traditional elements remain, we added a little something extra

into the equation for five of our five-day school groups this spring: music videos. That's right, five of our school groups this spring elected to create a science/natural history music video with us during their stay at Tremont. Within an already-packed schedule full of lessons, hikes and campfires, these schools worked for countless hours with me throughout the week to learn more about a selected topic, write a lyrical story about the topic, record those lyrics over music, storyboard a music video and, finally, film the music video.

All of that in between 13-hour days of Tremont activities, from Monday evening until Friday morning.



Emily Julian

If you're thinking that we're slightly crazy for trying to make these videos week after week, you're spot on! With each new week of the project, I find myself wondering how in the world we are ever going to get everything done in four days. However, by the time Friday rolls around, we've done it—a testament to the imaginative genius and boundless energy of youth.

Why exactly are we going through all of the time and effort to make music videos with our school groups and summer campers? The benefits of the project are numerous. Here are a few of them:

1. Creating the music videos deepens the Tremont experience for participants and connects them to nature on a very personal level. The process shows that nature and science can be culturally relevant, fun (even thrilling), inspiring and empowering.

2. The music videos provide teachers and students with visual evidence of their trip to Tremont to take back to school and into their communities. By making and sharing the videos, students become ambassadors for science, nature, education and creative expression.

3. The power of nature and Tremont's work is extended beyond the few days spent in the Smokies by students, teachers and campers. In preparing for the videos, I am doing several video conferences with classrooms so as to begin the creative process and guide students in their pre-trip research of our selected topic. After the trip, when I'm putting the video together, I am often again in contact with students and teachers to keep them involved in the entire process. In doing so, we are extending the impact of the enthusiasm for learning and desire to actively participate in the educational processes that students pick up on while at Tremont.

4. We are bringing our take on science/environmental education into the classroom. Each music video involves one or more topics that can be tied to and support or introduce many core grade-level concepts and standards. By using our music videos during the learning process in the classroom, teachers are utilizing resources that are engaging, fun, culturally relevant and created by students. As we continue to create more videos, we'll be covering more and more concepts, creating a library of resources for use throughout the school year, across all grade levels. Eventually, our goal is to create curriculum in support of the videos.

In a time of chronic standardization and privatization of education, our music videos make a strong statement about the essentialness of personalized experiences and creative liberty in the forming of a well-rounded, educated and empowered young mind.

Discover the value of our music video project for yourself by visiting www.themiddleprongpress.com/music-vids.html.



CSMIT Archives

Meet Tremont and Crosscutting Concepts, Part II



Article by
John DiDiego
Education Director

Let's try a free association exercise.
I say "Patterns", you say,
" _____ "?

As the son of a textile designer, my first thoughts were my dad's colorful sample fabrics . . . artsy stuff. Probably a lot of you were in that same arena. What if I told you that like Cause and Effect, Patterns is one of the crosscutting concepts in the Next Generation Science Standards?

Patterns span disciplines

Now imagine a biologist, poring over data related to distribution of, say, Louisiana waterthrush nesting sites—What is she looking for? Patterns—some relationship in the data that suggests something hidden—a new meaning that can be pulled out, studied, analyzed, and finally added to what we know about bird nesting habits.

Now imagine any engineered structure or machine. It won't take long to recognize patterns—in bridge spans, building facades, even in the mechanisms in watches—more patterns.

Okay, so there are patterns in the natural and the built environments. So what?

Well, if we want students who can compete on the global stage in science and engineering, we need teachers who can help them develop the skills and habits of a scientist or engineer. One of those habits is discerning patterns.

"Patterns exist everywhere—in regularly-occurring shapes or structures and in repeating events and relationships. For example, patterns are discernible in the symmetry of flowers and snowflakes, the cycling of the seasons, and the repeated base pairs of DNA." (p. 85*) It is in such examples that patterns exist and the beauty of nature is found. "Noticing patterns is often a first step to organizing phenomena and asking scientific questions about why and how the patterns occur." (p. 85*)

But it's not just about science and engineering—artists, writers, historians, physicians all must be adept at seeing and using patterns. It's about thinking deeply and making sense of the world around us.

Nature's language

Ancient peoples noticed patterns—especially those natural patterns in the seasons and weather that were critical to their survival. Some of nature's patterns are so obvious and repeat in so many settings, it's hard not to take note. Think of the branching patterns of streams, branches on a tree, branching veins and arteries. Each of these patterns serves a function. It's the critical-thinking mind that asks the questions, "What is that function? How does it work? Why THIS type of branching?"



GSMIT Archives

At Tremont, we encourage students to observe, notice, pick out patterns in the natural world. Then, let the questions begin. As we monitor a maple tree's seasonal changes, we have the opportunity to note for patterns over time, from one year to the next. When Black-throated Green Warblers arrive earlier in spring from year to year, that is a pattern in time, over the span of decades, which might NOT be obvious to the casual observer, but using scientific rigor and patient data collection, the pattern eventually emerges.

Patterns as fingerprints



Sometimes patterns are a fingerprint, revealing the identity of a resident of our woods. Wood-boring beetles leave intricate galleries under the bark of their host tree. A tree's branching pattern can point to the species of tree. The patterns of leaves or needles on a twig give clues to the identity of the tree. When we take students out on our Trees are Tremendous class, they become detectives, looking for these details. That way, they realize that they are not having to memorize some set of facts about

trees, they are learning to recognize trees as having particular habits and traits, just like a good friend or a favorite uncle. Those habits and traits? Yep, they're patterns.

Looking for and recognizing patterns is an important life skill, applicable to many disciplines and fields of study. All of the crosscutting concepts share this broad application, and at Tremont, we are excited to help teachers explore these concepts in new ways that make sense to students, and encourage them to become more critical thinkers as they strive to understand their world.

This is part of a series on Tremont and the Next Generation Science Standards' seven crosscutting concepts:

1. Patterns
2. Cause and effect: Mechanism and explanation.
3. Scale, proportion, and quantity.
4. Systems and system models.
5. Energy and matter: Flows, cycles, and conservation.
6. Structure and function.
7. Stability and change.

*NRC (2012). A Framework for K-12 Science Education: Practices, Core Ideas, and Crosscutting Concepts. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.



SAVE THE DATE

September 14

5-8PM

Tremont's Homecoming Celebration

Join us for a party in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. We'll have music from Boogertown Gap, nature exhibits from our knowledgeable teaching staff, and a silent auction including books, gift cards, and pieces from local artists. And all that's before dinner even starts! You'll enjoy a delicious BBQ dinner from Miss Lily's Cafe and our new President & CEO will share her vision for Tremont's future.

Visit www.gsmit.org/Homecoming.html
to reserve your seats today!
Or call (865) 448-6709.



Sign up
online
→

A Love of Learning and a Generous Spirit

Joseph Strickland, Jr.

October 8, 1981-January 20, 2014



I first met Joe while he was a part of the Southern Appalachian Naturalist Certification Program at Tremont. I was teaching the course on Birds of the Smokies. He was quiet and smart with a real twinkle in his eye.

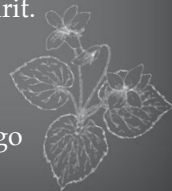
Joe was a lover of learning and a generous spirit. After completing his naturalist certification, Ken Voorhis asked him to come back the next year to help teach botany. He did more than that. Joe created a key to the genus *Viola* in the Smokies. All of the dozens of violets, keyed out in minute detail. Joe loved learning and sharing, or interpreting for others. This type of key captured his careful attention to detail, his knowledge of botany, and puts it into a format that makes it useful and accessible to others. Ken Voorhis described Joe that weekend, teaching students how to use the key, crouched in the spring leaf litter, craning his neck to peer at the base of a violet leaf.

I have come to know that Joe had so many talents and experiences, that he remained fearless and uncowed by cancer, and truly an inspiration through his suffering. Joe is someone we can learn from, and aspire to be like in one way or another. Life is short, get out there and beat around and enjoy this place like Joe did!

A lover of learning, and a truly generous spirit.

We miss him.

—John DiDiego



Boogertown Gap

Tremont Partners with Maryville College

Maryville College and Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont have a long, rich history. In fact, Maryville College created and operated Tremont Environmental Education Center in cooperation with the National Park Service from 1969-1980, long before Tremont became the independent non-profit you know today as Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont.

In April 2014, Maryville College and Tremont Institute signed a partnership agreement to renew and revitalize that partnership. We look forward to working together for many years to come.

Tremont President & CEO Jennifer Jones and Maryville College President Tom Bogart sign partnership agreement.



Maryville College and the
Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont
partner together to provide educational
and research experiences that *celebrate*
ecological and cultural diversity,
foster stewardship,
and *nurture appreciation* of
the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. 🍁



Welcoming New Faces at Tremont

In addition to Jen Jones joining us as our President & CEO, Tremont also hired the following talented and enthusiastic individuals. Take a look, and next time you are in the Smokies be sure to say hi to these smiling faces.



Mark Burns
Development Director



Elizabeth Davis
Teacher Naturalist



Wendy Lineberger
Director of Food Services



Amanda Moeller
Cook



Dalton Read
Maintenance Assistant



Wanda Richards
Cook

This is What It's All About

The following quotes were taken from thank you notes written by students.

"I wanted to thank you for letting us go on the solo hike, for that was the first time that I truly felt connected to nature."

"Something that I remember from this trip is the 8-mile hike. It was so challenging, but I conquered it."

"Tremont was really special to me. There are so many activities that I will remember. I will always remember the waterfall. I had never seen one before, and it was amazing."

"My science teacher took our class and another school to experience science in a brand new environment and discover things we never have before. I want to thank the whole Tremont staff for everything they have taught me. Even now just the little things, I can look at and say, 'Hey we did something like that at Tremont.' The whole idea of just being able to go out and do things I'm not used to and meet new people and actually have an outstanding time! My absolute favorite part of our trip was the 8-mile hike through the mountains. Just being able to discover such amazing life that I never knew existed."

Overall, I just want to say that I am so grateful and thankful to have gotten this opportunity with my friends and teachers, and you guys are the ones who made this all possible!"

Contact us today to bring your students and see first-hand the impact a Tremont trip can make.

Tremont Store Item Spruce Flats Falls Bandana Map

3-in-1

Coming
Soon!



1. **a bandana** - Great for keeping your head covered, the hair out of your face or the sweat out of your eyes!
2. **a map** - This bandana features a map to Spruce Flats Falls which is rarely found on park maps or hiking books. Keep wandering in the RIGHT direction.
3. **a keepsake** - Hand-drawn by our summer artist-in-residence Debora Ahmed, the bandana is not only functional, but also a beautiful memento of your trip to Tremont.

Awards, Publications and Recognitions

Music Video Project

Our "All The Salamanders" video made in-house by students from Maplewood Richmond Heights and Media & Outreach Specialist Caleb Carlton was an official selection of the 2014 Colorado Environmental Film Festival. View the video at <http://www.themiddleprongpress.com/all-the-salamanders.html>

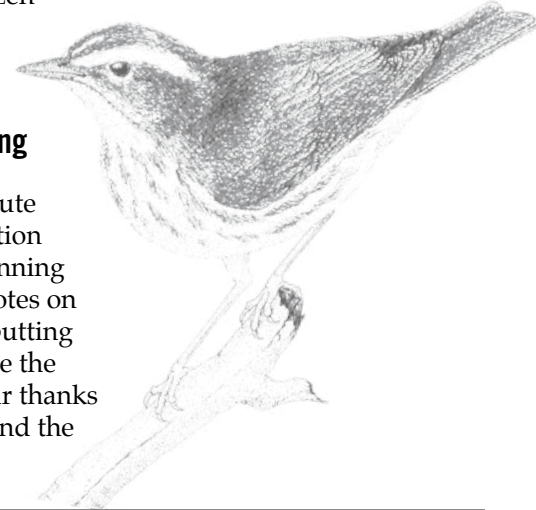
"Wild Ideas" podcast featuring Tremont's music video project is available for download at <http://podcast.wildernesscenter.org/>.

Writing

Jeremy Lloyd, special programs coordinator and author of *A Home in Walker Valley*, won an EcoArts Award in Literature (www.ecoartsawards.com). He also wrote an article for *Sierra* magazine (Sept/Oct 2014): "Explore: Great Smoky Mountains" as well as one for *Camp Business* magazine (Sept/Oct 2014): "Citizen Science is for Everyone".

Carlos C. Campbell Memorial Fellowship Grant

Tiffany Beachy received the Carlos C. Campbell Memorial Fellowship grant from the Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association. The \$5,000 grant funded a portion of our Louisiana Waterthrush project.



First Tennessee Foundation's 150 Days of Giving

Thanks to help from many of you, Tremont Institute has received \$5,000 from First Tennessee Foundation as part of their 150 Days of Giving campaign. Winning required Tremont to have the most cumulative votes on one day, and June 27, 2014 was our day! We are putting our winnings to good use and are grateful to have the opportunity to reach even more students this year thanks to the generosity of First Tennessee Foundation and the dedication of our voters.

School Programs at Tremont - Tell a Teacher! Tell a Friend!

Imagine the Smokies as your classroom. It's hard to ignore lessons on wildlife when you're holding it in the palm of your hand. If you have experienced the difference a Tremont trip can make in your school year, tell a teacher you know about us. Call us to chat about dates and options. Give your students the chance to experience the outdoors.

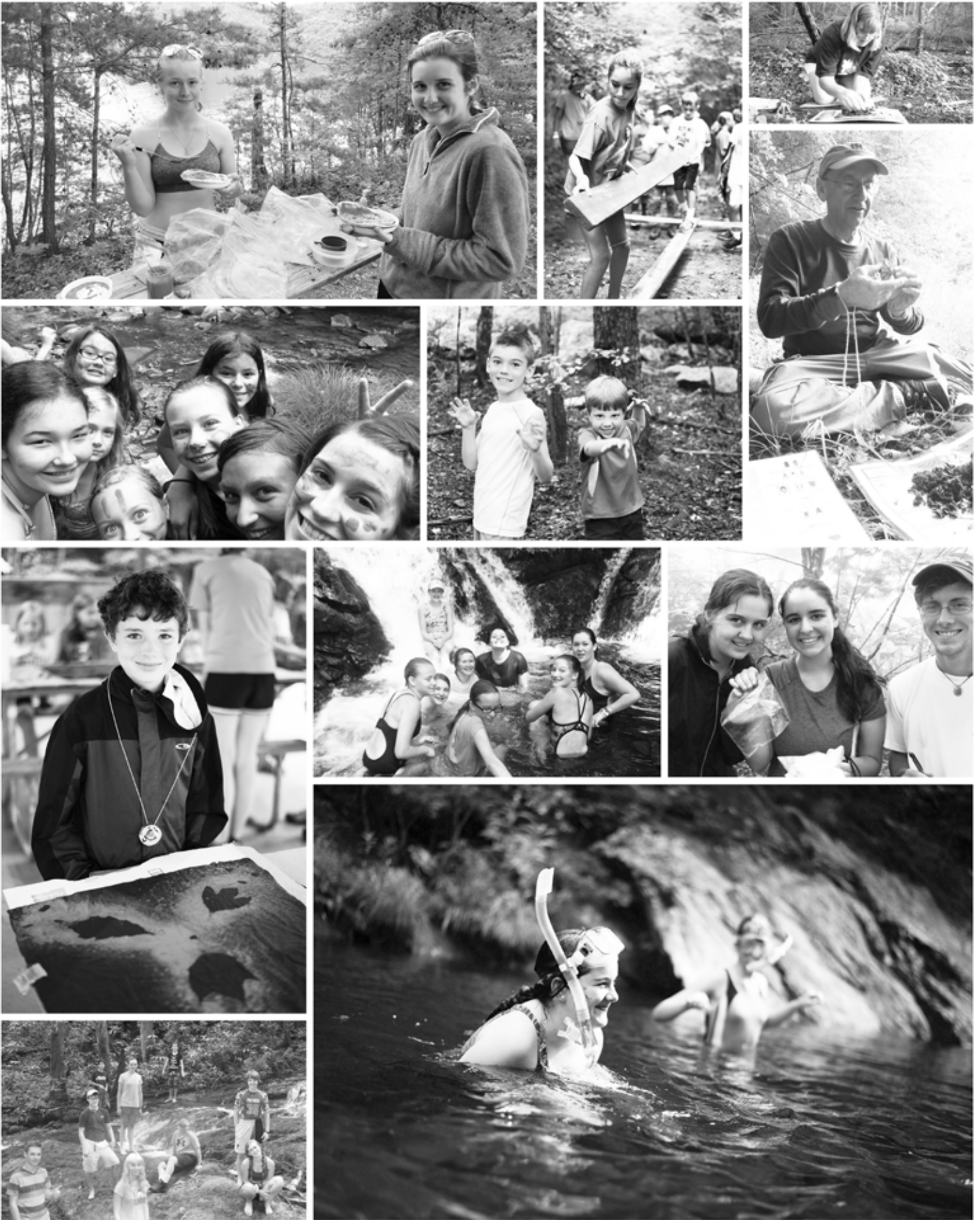
A few reasons why Tremont is the best choice for a field trip:

- **National park setting** – the only residential education center located in the park
- **Teacher development** – low-cost professional development during the school year and summer to ensure the best possible trip outcomes for your students
- **Citizen Science** – real opportunities for you and your students to take part in ongoing field research
- **Formal evaluation results** – a two-year external evaluation shows long-term student gains from attending our programs
- **Time-tested curriculum** – with over 40 years of experience, we offer a diverse selection of classes that meet state & national curriculum standards and are proven to get kids excited about learning
- **STEM** – Tremont is dedicated to keeping our programs relevant and connected to your curriculum and instruction needs. STEM educational focus and its project-based learning model, are important components we are integrating into our programs and teacher trainings.



Want to know where to start? Call Jennie, our school programs coordinator, at (865) 448-6709 or email her at jennie@gsmit.org.

Summer in the Smokies 2014



Our Newest Citizen Science Project—Otter Spotter



Article by
Tiffany Beachy
Citizen Science Coordinator

When you think of the charismatic megafauna of the Smokies, those large and highly visible creatures that everybody comes to the mountains to see, what

comes to mind? Certainly black bears, elk, white-tailed deer, and wild turkeys spring into my imagination as I see myself inching my way slowly around Cades Cove.

But there are others thriving in these hills who have gone largely unnoticed for decades, except by a handful of fly fishermen. We're starting to observe more of these furry, playful hunters as they take up residence in our clear, cold streams. Who are they? ::cue dramatic music:: Enter the River Otters!



Rick Vollbrecht

Who doesn't like an otter? They are impossibly adorable, cunning, quick, sleek, and intriguing creatures. We are naturally drawn to an animal that appears to spend much of its time at play.

In addition, they are important aquatic predators and have a vital positive impact on the streams they occupy, increasing fish and mussel diversity, contributing to water quality, redistributing nutrients, etc.

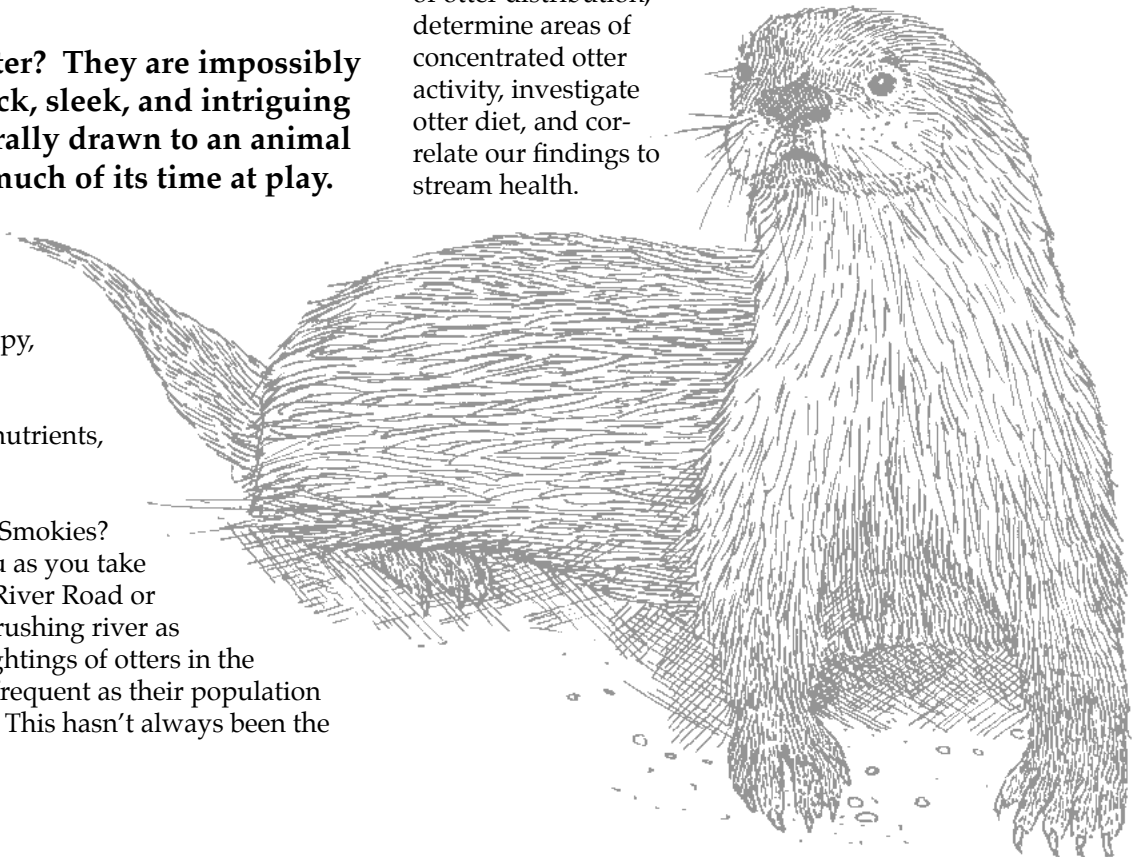
But have you seen one in the Smokies? Chances are, they've seen you as you take a leisurely drive along Little River Road or stop to admire the bubbling, rushing river as you hike to Abrams Falls. Sightings of otters in the Smokies are becoming more frequent as their population has grown to a healthy level. This hasn't always been the case.

River otters were eliminated from the Smokies by the early 1900s due to habitat destruction and uncontrolled trapping for their valuable fur. The last reliable sighting of an otter in the park was of one individual in Cataloochee in 1936, just after the national park was established. Serious consideration was given to reintroducing the river otter in the 1960s, but it wasn't until 1986 that a reintroduction program began in earnest.

The Park Service is mandated to protect and preserve native species. So when a species is eradicated due to human activity, the Park Service's responsibility is to restore that species if possible. Over the course of eight years, 137 otters from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Louisiana were trapped and released into various drainages in the Smoky Mountains. Initial monitoring efforts showed that the otters took well to their new homes, but no long-term monitoring program was established.

The otters have quietly lived and reproduced here, protected from trapping and slowly filling their niche as top predator in our mountain streams. Today they are believed to be present in every drainage of the Smokies, but we don't know how many there are, how exactly they are distributed, what they eat, etc. That's where Tremont comes in!

We have formed an all-star collaborative team with Maryville College and Great Smoky Mountains National Park to plan out a new citizen science project aimed at collecting baseline data on our otter population in the Smokies. Our goals are to develop an accurate picture of otter distribution, determine areas of concentrated otter activity, investigate otter diet, and correlate our findings to stream health.



We are also interested to learn more about beaver distribution in the park since we are beginning to see more evidence of their presence. Volunteers will adopt sections of stream to visit regularly, be trained to identify otter and beaver sign, look for and record the presence of these two aquatic mammals, and submit that data for inclusion in a large dataset that will ultimately provide answers to many important ecological questions regarding otters and beaver within the park.

How do you know otters or beavers are present if you don't see them? In addition to searching for tracks and gnawed trees, you look for scat along the shoreline. Mammal scat is one of the methods wildlife biologists use to survey the presence, abundance, density, genetic diversity, and overall health of a particular species. River otters tend to form latrine sites, where they regularly go to defecate, so it is relatively easy to find these collections of scat on top of large boulders or logs along the stream.

How will we study their diet? Just like any mammal, remnants of what they eat show up in their scat. So volunteers will have the pleasure of collecting scat samples for analysis.

River otter scat may contain flecks of crawfish exoskeletons, fish scales, or even hellbender bits. Otters are very opportunistic, so they will tend to eat whatever is most available seasonally throughout the year. For this reason, they are excellent keystone predators in our river ecosystem.

Getting excited yet? Imagine taking a walk along a mountain stream—now imagine taking a stroll with PURPOSE. You may even be fortunate enough to observe the antics of our local riverdogs!

Stay tuned....

If you are interested in learning about opportunities to volunteer for our citizen science program, visit our website to sign up for the Citizen Science Volunteer email list: <http://www.gsmit.org/CitizenScience.html>.



*More info
online*

Food Waste Hall of Fame

Emphasizing the reduction of food waste has always been an important lesson at Tremont. But, over the years, we realized that the importance of our message could be lost in the competition to have zero food waste.

Our revamped food waste program de-emphasizes the zero part. Now every school is listed on the Food Waste Hall of Fame and receives a certificate showing their school's waste—pounds per person per meal. We continue to solicit tips from students on how they can reduce food waste and encourage them to continue the trend when they return home.



CSMIT Archives

Here are the schools and other groups from 2013-2014 school year and their impressive efforts in reducing food waste:

A.M. Yealey Elementary School (0.131)
Amana Academy (0.055)
Berrien County Math and Science Center (0)
Berry College Middle School (0.03)
Camp Quest (0.0184751)
Central Middle School (0)
Cherokee Bend Elementary School (0)
Cherokee Middle School (0.04)
Christian Academy of Knoxville (0.05)
Clayton-Bradley Academy (0.044)
Coalmont LEAPS (0.014)
Concord Christian School (0.0265)
Cornerstone School (0.00178)
DeSoto Youth Advisory Council (0.0052)
Eagleton Middle School (0.0037)
Episcopal School of Knoxville (0.06)
Fairview Elementary School (0.04)
Gamble Montessori High School (0.0085227)
Grace Christian Academy (0.097)
Harpeth Hall (0.053)
Hewitt-Trussville High School (0.00063)
Hickory Valley Christian School (0)
Holley Navarre Middle School (0.006)
Holy Comforter Episcopal School (0.014)
Hume-Fogg Academic High School (0.005)

Immaculate Conception Cathedral High School (0.0059)
Jones Valley Elementary School (0.004)
Knox Doss Middle School (0.03)
Lebanon Special School District (0)
Lenoir City Middle School (0.0142)
Maplewood Richmond Heights Middle School (0.005)
McDowell Early College (0.0016)
Merrol Hyde Magnet School (0)
Montessori Academy (0.00598)
Moody High School (0)
Moore Traditional High School (0)
Norris Middle School (0.05)
Oak Hill School (0.01)
Oak Mountain Academy (0)
Oakland Steiner School (0)
Old Trail School (0)
Oliver Springs Middle School (0.00705)
Oxford High School (0.023)
Pi Beta Phi Elementary School (0.044)
Porter Elementary School (0.036)
Portland Christian School (0.07)
Prospect Elementary School (0.02)
Rainbow Community School (0.0059)
Randolph School (0.0075)

Rockford Elementary School (0.022)
Rockwood Middle School (0.057)
Rockwood School District Trip 1 (0.05)
Rockwood School District Trip 2 (0.03)
Rockwood School District Trip 3 (0.047)
Rockwood School District Trip 4 (0.038)
Rockwood School District Trip 5 (0.057)
Russellville High School (0.004)
Ruth Patrick Science Center (0)
Seymour Community Christian School (0.008)
Shelbyville Middle School (0.013)
St. Luke's Episcopal School (0.022)
St. Mary of the Lake School (0)
Station Camp Middle School (0.02)
Sycamore School (0)
Tate's School of Discovery (0.013)
Union Grove Elementary School (0.0059)
Visitation Academy (0.025)
Walland Elementary School (0)
Weatherly Heights Elementary School (0.013)
West End Middle School (0.01)
Woodlawn School (0.00069)
Woods Charter School (0.0052)
Wydown Middle School (0.0083)

Susan Cooper - Why Give to Tremont?

The mountains, particularly the Smoky Mountains, took up residence in my heart when we first camped there during my childhood. I have always held on to those memories of nature's beauty and serenity. In my last year in college I could no longer put off fulfilling the long-dreaded science requirement and to my surprise I actually enjoyed biology, even though I ended up pursuing business. During my career I had the opportunity to travel the globe and everywhere I went I explored the ways that nature and people came together to shape culture. A weekend photography course at Tremont rekindled my appreciation for the park and I realized that I didn't have to leave to explore... what I enjoyed so much around the world was right here at home.

I have longed to participate in learning experiences such as the Southern Appalachian Naturalist Certification Program. I have come to realize that with a little more of the right encouragement when I was younger I would have pursued the natural sciences. That is just what Tremont does—it is an organization that creates an environment where children and adults can see nature through the lenses of science, art and physical activity.

I sponsored two nieces in Tremont's summer programs and despite the fact that at the end of one camp session the then-8-year-old announced that she'd "had enough nature for a while," she never forgot her time there. Both young women are now studying biology, geology and microbiology in college and those Tremont weeks were part of the reason they both chose to study science.

The management of any residential educational program requires capital investments in many forms—creativity, vision, service and money. The physical plant is only part of the expense. There will always be children who could benefit from Tremont but their families can't afford to send them. It is my hope that my contributions can support the larger mission of GSMIT—connecting people to nature. Places like the park contain clues to our history; they nurture our minds and spirits in the present and hold the keys to our future on the planet.



That is just what Tremont does—it is an organization that creates an environment where children and adults can see nature through the lenses of science, art and physical activity.
- Susan Cooper



The following pages contain 2013 annual report information for Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont. To many, these will be only names and numbers in a long list, but each line reflects the history of the past year in Walker Valley. This history includes more teaching moments, more smiles, more ideas, more firsts, more challenges, and more life than could ever be explained in just a few pages. We urge you to look first at these numbers to get a glimpse of what happens here, and then speak with someone who has attended to get the real story of the impact that Tremont has year after year. Thank you making 2013 another memorable one!

PARTICIPANTS

	2013	2012
Youth Program	4,228	4,659
Adult Programs	1,293	1,169
Volunteer Hours	2,676	2,312
Park Visitors	10,551	10,927

FINANCIAL

	2013	2012
Program Fees	\$1,156,411	\$1,164,145
Net sales in store	\$64,188	\$60,882
Total support income	\$235,435	\$187,634
Other	\$344,188	\$264,586
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,800,222	\$1,677,248
EXPENSES	\$1,484,680	\$1,435,760
Endowment	\$1,829,659	\$1,500,352
Financial Aid	\$72,189	\$80,566

Colleges and Universities at Tremont During 2013

East Carolina University
Maryville College
North Carolina State University
Penn State

Purdue University
Texas A&M University
University of Missouri-Columbia
University of Georgia

Virginia Tech
Western Illinois University

School Groups at Tremont During 2013

A. M. Yealey Elementary School (Florence, KY)	Hume-Fogg Academic High School (Nashville, TN)	Rainbow Mountain Children's School (Asheville, NC)	St. Mary of the Lake School (New Buffalo, MI)
Appalachian Explorers (Weaverville, NC)	Immaculate Conception Cathedral High School (Memphis, TN)	Randolph School (Huntsville, AL)	Station Camp Middle School (Gallatin, TN)
Bernheim Middle School (Shepherdsville, KY)	Jones Valley Elementary (Huntsville, AL)	Rockford Elementary School (Rockford, TN)	Sycamore School (Indianapolis, IN)
Berrien County Math & Science Center (Berrien Springs, MI)	Knox Doss Middle School at Drake's Creek (Hendersonville, TN)	Rockwood Middle School (Rockwood, TN)	Tate's School of Discovery (Knoxville, TN)
Berry College Middle School (Mount Berry, GA)	Knoxville Adaptive Education Center (Knoxville, TN)	Rockwood School District (Wildwood, MO)	Union Grove Elementary School (Friendsville, TN)
Boyd Christian School (Mc Minnville, TN)	Knoxville Adventist School (Knoxville, TN)	Russellville High School (Russellville, AL)	Visitation Academy (Saint Louis, MO)
Cedar Springs Homeschool Group (Knoxville, TN)	Lebanon Special School District (Lebanon, TN)	Scottsboro City Gifted Program (Scottsboro, AL)	Weatherly Heights Elementary School (Huntsville, AL)
Cherokee Bend Elementary School (Birmingham, AL)	Lenoir City Middle School (Lenoir City, TN)	Seymour Community Christian School (Seymour, TN)	Woodlawn School (Davidson, NC)
Cherokee Middle School (Kingston, TN)	Macdonald Intermediate School (Fort Knox, KY)	Shelbyville Middle School (Shelbyville, IN)	Woods Charter School (Chapel Hill, NC)
Christian Academy of Knoxville (Knoxville, TN)	Maplewood Richmond Heights Middle School (Saint Louis, MO)	Spring City Middle School (Spring City, TN)	Woodward Academy (Atlanta, GA)
Coalmont School LEAPS (Coalmont, TN)	McDowell Early College (Marion, NC)	St. Luke's Episcopal School (Mobile, AL)	Wydown Middle School (Saint Louis, MO)
Concord Christian School (Knoxville, TN)	Merrol Hyde Magnet School (Hendersonville, TN)		
Cornerstone School (Ocala, FL)	Montessori Academy (Mishawaka, IN)		
Crestwood School (Paris, IL)	Montessori Academy at Sharon Springs (Cumming, GA)		
Eagleton Elementary (Maryville, TN)	Norris Middle School (Norris, TN)		
Eagleton Middle School (Maryville, TN)	Oak Hill School (Nashville, TN)		
Episcopal School of Knoxville (Knoxville, TN)	Old Trail School (Bath, OH)		
Fairview Elementary (Maryville, TN)	Oliver Springs Middle School (Oliver Springs, TN)		
Grace Christian Academy (Knoxville, TN)	Oxford High School (Oxford, AL)		
Harpeth Hall School (Nashville, TN)	Pi Beta Phi Elementary School (Gatlinburg, TN)		
Hewitt-Trussville High School (Trussville, AL)	Porter Elementary School (Maryville, TN)		
Hickory Valley Christian School (Chattanooga, TN)	Portland Christian School (Louisville, KY)		
Holy Comforter Episcopal School (Tallahassee, FL)	Prospect Elementary School (Seymour, TN)		
	Purcell Marian High School (Cincinnati, OH)		



Ken Voorhis

THANK YOU 2013 GIFTS

to the many generous individuals, organizations, and companies who supported Tremont in 2013. Without you, we would not be able to serve the thousands of students and adults each year in this special place.

\$30,000-\$50,000

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Kensley Baker

"I would like to thank the staff at Tremont for so graciously allowing our school to experience the incredible essence that is nature. ... I have become more in touch with myself, my beliefs and the beautiful world around me."

—high school student

Gifts given in honor of

Evelyn Bryant
David & Sandy Martin

Hank Dye
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Ken Wright
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Kenneth Wright
Anon, Gene Roberts

Volunteers in 2013

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.

Michael Adams
Caleb Albert
Kyle Albert
Danielle Anders
Josh Anders
Kathryn Anders
Meeghan Anders
Meghan Baker
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Kade Parker
Davis Parker
Robyn Parker
Pat Parr
Caleb Parton
Caitlin Parton
Chainla Parton
Mike Peterson
Emilia Pickett
Paul Pickett
Hannah Pifer
Noah Pifer
Mac Post
Halley Pritchard
Jacob Pritchard
Tracie Pritchard
Zachary
Pritchard
Carolyn Pullias
Kelly Rafferty
Alisa Reagan
Heike Reagan
Vickie Reddick
Colleen Riley
Taylor Rinehart
Deborah Roberts
Herb Roberts
Carolyn Rogers
Olena Rurenko
Richard Ryburn
Brin Sakson
Laurel Sakson



Volunteers continued

Lineah Sakson
RJ Sakson
Stone Sakson
Gar Secrist
Keane Secrist
Richard Secrist
Spain Secrist
Hannah Sharp
Kim Simpson
Michelle Simpson
Dionysi Siopsis
Iasmi Siopsis
Maria Siopsis
Toly Siopsis
Sandy Sgrillo
Duncan Small
Laurel Small
Sarah Small
Catherine Smith
Kyle Smith
Maddie Smith
McKenzie Smith
Sarah Smith

Dennis Sput
Bryan Stache
Holly Stache
Norma Stache
Bill Steiner
Becky Stephens
Charlene Stewart
Douglas Stewart
Abby Stock
Bella Stock
Melissa Stock
Silas Stock
Anna Stowe
Anna Stowe
Jaynie Stowe
Matt Stowe
David Styles
Jared Svensen
Debbie Talbot
Don Taylor
Kathy Taylor
Aiden Tester
Martha Thompson

Andy Troutman
Debbie Troutman
Kestrel Troutman
Alycia Truett
DeeDee Turaski
Lily Turaski
Steven Turaski
Terry Useton
Jeannie Van Winkle
Jennifer Vermeuler
Terry Webb
Frank Whetstone
Stacy Whetstone
John Wilbanks
Kathy Wilbanks
Caleb Williams
Amy Wilson
Justine Wilson
Kristen Wokanick
Channing Wright
Justice Wright

Autumn Brilliance Photo Workshop in Great Smoky Mountains National Park



Will Clay

This will be Will Clay's final year leading the Autumn Brilliance Photography Workshop. (However, he will be teaching photography master classes at Tremont each August and January.) As the baton is passed to Tom Vadenais, this year will feature a retrospective of Will Clay's work, with a special focus on the evolution of a master landscape photographer over 40 years.

There will be demonstrations on Photoshop techniques, close-up techniques, and wildlife photography. And, of course, the concluding critique session of work completed during the workshop. In addition to the presentations and demonstrations, there will be an emphasis on photographing in the field, one-on-one instructional interactions with instructors, free time for those who want to do some work on their own, and an optional photographic trip to Cades Cove. The workshop is designed for all levels of expertise, from serious beginners and beyond. Program lasts from Friday afternoon to Monday mid-morning.

Dates: October 24-27, 2014

Cost: \$611

Register: www.gsmit.org/fallphoto.html



Sign up
online
←



Hidden Beauty Photography Contest

WINNERS

1st Place
Spiritual Journey
by **Mary Thames**

2nd Place
Morning Dew
by **Latta Johnston**

3rd Place
Mystical Spruce-Firs
by **Andy Drinnon**

Facebook Favorite
Frozen
by **Tarah Green**

Judge critiques and honorable mentions can be viewed at www.gsmit.org/photocontest.html.



Program catalogs are available by contacting our office: www.gsmit.org (865) 448-6709 mail@gsmit.org

STAFF

teacher/naturalists

Dylan Amerson
Kensey Baker
Muriah Bottemiller
Elizabeth Davis
Dawn Dextraze
Casey Franklin

citizen science coordinator

Tiffany Beachy

school program coordinator

Jennie McGuigan

special program coordinator

Jeremy Lloyd

program specialist

Mary Dresser

education director

John DiDiego

food service

Linda Hatcher
Amanda Moeller
Wanda Richardson
Emy Willison

food service assistant manager

Nola Austin

food service director

Wendy Lineberger

grounds & facilities

Sam Crowe
Dalton Read

grounds & facilities manager

Doc Johnson

registrar/assistant office manager

Julie Brown

media and outreach specialist

Caleb Carlton

marketing manager

Heather Davis

development director

Mark Burns

sales

Linda Vananda

sales manager

Gary Carpenter

finance manager

Mike Gross

human resource/office manager

Charlene Stewart

president & ceo

Jen Jones, PhD

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