



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the **Southern Appalachian Naturalist Certification Program: Aquatic Ecology!** Whether this is your first course or eighth course, we hope this is one of many weekends we'll learn and practice naturalist skills together as we gain knowledge about the Great Smoky Mountains. Please read this letter in full, as it contains information about our new procedures related to [COVID-19](#).

This course will engage you with an overview of the unique ecology of aquatic systems in the southern Appalachian Mountains, particularly as it relates to Great Smoky Mountains National Park, through lecture, discussions, field trips and most of all, first-hand experience. Topics will include aquatic macroinvertebrates, fish, habitats, stream health, and conservation issues. Field trips will include visits to examples of the most common aquatic systems. We will have a fabulous time and get very wet!

Get ready! You have registered for an intense three days during which we will cover material and skills that most people receive in a semester-long class. If you think this sounds ambitious, you are right! In order to accomplish our goals it is necessary for you to do some homework, in the form of readings, to give you the background information needed to take part in discussions and build your toolkit of skills. See *Preparation* below. We will keep lecture time to a minimum in order to have ample time learning skills and practicing them in the field.

Instructors:

I am pleased to be your instructor for this workshop along with Erin Canter. Visit our website to learn more about me and the rest of our [faculty](#).

Arrival and Departure:

Our check-in has been modified due to [COVID-19](#). Plan to arrive at Tremont on Monday between 4:00 and 5:00 pm in order to have enough time to move into the dorm and meet other participants before our 6:00 pm evening meal. A staff member will be at the gate to direct you to the check-in station where you will have your temperature taken; if no one is at the gate to greet you, follow the instructions for late arrivals.

Late arrivals: If you arrive after 5:00 pm, please park in the lot across from the gate, walk past the gate across the bridge, up the service road, stay to the right of the green dormitory building, and proceed to the open-air Pavilion where you will find the check-in station. If you expect to arrive late, please call 865-448-9732 ext. 23 and leave a message with your expected arrival time. The program will end around 3:00 pm on Wednesday.

Weather:

The average daily high temperature during this time of year is 88 degrees F., and the daily low is around 61 degrees F. here in Walker Valley. Come prepared for warm and humid weather. Bring a rain coat! The Smokies are a very wet and humid climate and you can *expect precipitation in one form or another* at some point during your stay here.

Logistics:

Please read our COVIDSafe guidelines and let us know if you have any questions or concerns. In order to slow the spread of COVID-19, please bring a mask and wear it when social distancing is impractical. Please also read the “Your Visit to Tremont” link for important packing information. Along with your readings, linens, and toiletries, you may want to bring a mattress pad to ease the firm mattress and perhaps a bedside lamp if you are a late-night reader. If you’d like to bring a camp chair for the outdoor classroom you may find that more comfortable than the provided benches. Please bring clothes that you don’t mind getting wet and closed-toe shoes for wading and swimming. If you don’t own any we have a few pairs of old tennis shoes to loan, but bringing some that are sure to fit is ideal. Also bring a notepad and pencil and any field guides you like. Sturdy walking shoes/boots, sunscreen, and a hat are also important for your comfort. *Note: though wifi is available in the Activity Center, we invite and encourage you to unplug for the weekend.* Learn more about our [food](#) and [facilities](#). Please note that food is not allowed in the dorm.

Preparation:

Please read the attachments emailed to you in advance of the course, and watch [this short video](#). It is important that you read and reflect on this in order to prepare for the class. The more you become acquainted with concepts and vocabulary ahead of time the better! If you are a novice, reading related sections in a biology text and/or exploring on-line resources will be helpful and will assist you in being involved in discussion.

Please remember to fill out the sack lunch order form you received via email.

A special offer just for YOU...

You will receive a copy of *Guide to Aquatic Insects and Crustaceans* during the weekend. Also, during the weekend, you will receive a 15% discount on any merchandise you purchase from our gift shop—this is a great deal!

I hope this information is helpful to you in planning for your upcoming visit to Tremont. Please tell a friend about us so that they too can learn about the wonders of the Smokies. If you have further questions, please feel free to call.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Davis
Field Program Specialist

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