



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the **Southern Appalachian Naturalist Certification Program: Naturalist Skills!**

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 weekend will focus on learning and practicing skills that will connect you to nature in significant ways. We will take inspiration and tips from the rich history of naturalist-explorers, learn to use a journal as a place to capture observations and grow, and share our wonder and curiosity with each other as we probe the secrets of the world around us.

Instructor:

I am pleased to be your instructor for this workshop. 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 Friday 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 early afternoon on Sunday.

Weather – Being Prepared:

The average daily high for September is 82 degrees F. and the average daily low is 56 degrees F. here in Walker Valley. 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. We also ask that you bring a small backpack to be hands-free and a water bottle to stay hydrated while out on the trail.

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 read the "Your Visit to Tremont" link for important packing information. Along with your linens and toiletries, you may want to bring a mattress pad to ease the firm mattress, plus a bedside light or headlamp 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. You may want to consider bringing some additional items with you for this weekend such as binoculars, hand lens, notepad and pencil, field guides, and camera. *Note: wifi is available in the Activity Center, but 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 that were emailed to you in advance of the course. While most of the courses in this certification series focus on specific taxonomic groups, e.g. Birds, Mammals, *this* is the course where you will learn and hone the skills we use to study those groups—the skills of being a naturalist. It begins with noticing details in the natural world. Spend some time sitting, drawing, writing, and just being still in nature, and come ready to share your experience and take your skills to the next level!

Lastly, we are offering you a 15% discount in our bookstore during the workshop. Please note that the bookstore will only be open Friday 4:00pm-5:30pm.

I hope that this information is helpful to you in planning for your upcoming visit to Tremont. If you have further questions, please feel free to call or email.

Sincerely,

Logan Rosenberg
Manager of Youth Programs
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