



Dear Friends,

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

Over the course of the weekend, we'll discuss charismatic megafauna as well as smaller species that are often overlooked. Expect to become familiar with a variety of issues that mammals face here in the national park and throughout the eastern United States. *Don't* expect to actually see many mammals, since most are nocturnal and all are outstanding at avoiding humans. *Do* expect to gain new skills in observing the landscape and figuring out how animals behave by tracking and reading their sign. We promise it will be a fun-filled learning experience.

Get ready! You have registered for an intense weekend during which we will cover material and skills that many 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 complete a **homework** assignment in the form of readings before your arrival (more info below). You will also receive *Mammals of the Smokies*, published by Great Smoky Mountains Association. Throughout the weekend, indoors lecture time will be balanced with learning and practicing observational skills. Individual presentations and an assessment will round out the weekend.

**Instructors:**

I am pleased to be your primary instructor for this workshop. Visit our website to learn more about me and the rest of our [faculty](#). You can learn about Wanda DeWaard, who will be teaching tracking, at the bottom of the course schedule.

**Arrival:**

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. When you arrive, head to the Gift Store at the Main Office for name tags and check-in. You can then pull up to the pavilion to unload your belongings if you are staying on campus. Please move all vehicles to the blacktop at the bottom of the hill before dinner.

Late arrivals: If you arrive after 5:00 pm, please park on the blacktop across from the activity center next to the field. We will give you your nametag and check in materials in the pavilion.

[Explore the full course schedule here.](#)

**Weather:**

The weather here can be cool in November. The average daily high for November is usually 61° F and the average daily low 37° F. Keep in mind that some activities may take you through higher elevations which can sometimes be 15° F or cooler. 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. Also bring warm clothing since we want to maximize outdoors time.

**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.

Also please read the "[Your Visit to Tremont](#)" document 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.

Bring a notepad and any field guides you like including *Plants, Ferns, Birds of the Smokies*, and others you've acquired through the Southern Appalachian Naturalist Certification Program. They will come in handy this weekend! Sturdy walking shoes/boots, outdoor clothing, and a hat are a must for personal 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.

**Readings:**

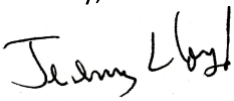
Please read the homework assignments for this course in advance. Doing so is crucial to helping you understand much of the material covered during the course and they will give you the background information necessary for taking part in discussions and building your toolkit of skills. Some material therein will be a part of your assessment at the end of the course. The readings are *Of Bears, Boars, and Chestnuts* by Rose Houk, and *Coyote Intelligence* by Paul Rezendes — [you can find the readings here](#).

**A special offer just for YOU...**

You will receive a copy of *Mammals of the Smokies* 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,



Jeremy Lloyd  
Manager of Field Programs and Collegiate Studies

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS INSTITUTE AT TREMONT  
9275 Tremont Road  
Townsend, TN 37882  
Phone: 865-448-6709 Fax 865-448-9250  
[www.gsmit.org](http://www.gsmit.org) ~ [mail@gsmit.org](mailto:mail@gsmit.org)