



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the **Southern Appalachian Naturalist Certification Program: Southern Appalachian Ecology**. 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 procedures related to [COVID-19](#).

Our focus is the ecology of the Southern Appalachian Mountains. The physio-geographic characteristics of these mountains have created an amazing diversity of plant communities in them. By the end of the weekend, you will have become familiar with the particular ecology of a good number of them. It's going to be a fun-filled learning experience.

Get ready! You have registered for an intense weekend during which we will cover material and skills 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, which will give you the background information needed to take part in discussions and build your toolkit of skills. Lecture time will be kept to a minimum so we can learn and practice these skills.

Your 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:

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 class schedule here.](#)

Weather:

The average daily high for September is 82 degrees F. and the average daily low is 56 degrees F. here in Walker Valley. However, some activities will take place in the higher elevations, which can sometimes mean a difference of 15 degrees cooler temperatures or greater. 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](#) found on our website 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.

Homework:

Please read the following materials ahead of time — doing so is crucial to helping you understand much of the material covered during the course. Some material therein will be a part of your assessment at the end of the course.

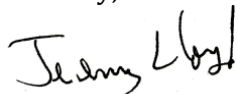
- Selection from *Great Smoky Mountains National Park: A Natural History Guide* by Rose Houk and excerpt from *Hollows, Peepers & Highlanders* by George Constantz. ([Read both at this link.](#))
- [Forests of the Smokies](#) by Amber Parker

A special offer just for YOU...

You will receive a copy of *Trees 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! *Please note our gift shop will be open on arrival day only.*

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 & Collegiate Studies

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