

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the **Southern Appalachian Naturalist Certification Program: Mammals!** Whether this is your first or eighth course, we hope this 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 essential information for your visit to Tremont.**

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 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 signs. It will be a fun-filled learning experience, full of discovery and wonder.

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! To accomplish our goals, you must do some homework in the form of readings, which will give you the background information needed to participate in discussions and build your naturalist toolkit. Indoor lecture time will be balanced with learning and practicing observational skills, and the weekend will be rounded out with individual presentations and an assessment.

Instructor:

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 and staff](#).

We will be joined by Wanda DeWaard for a portion of the program. Wanda has shared Earth Kinship and Environmental Awareness with people of all ages and a wide variety of backgrounds in community groups, schools, colleges, camps, environmental centers, and teacher conferences since 1974. She holds a Masters's degree in Recreation and Environmental Education and has directed youth and family programs all over the United States as well as in Canada and Germany. Currently, Wanda works as an outdoor educator in the Great Smoky Mountains area. Anything and everything in the natural world brings out her enthusiasm and contagious sense of fun. She can be contacted at Earthkin@bellsouth.net.

Arrival and Departure:

Plan to arrive at Tremont on Friday between 4:00 and 5:00 pm 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 Visitor's Center 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 dining hall area.

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

Parking Passes

Valid parking tags are required on any vehicles parking for longer than 15 minutes inside Great Smoky Mountains National Park as part of the Park it Forward program; this includes when parked at Tremont. **Please purchase your parking tag in advance, not when you arrive.** Click here to [purchase your daily or weekly pass online](#). All revenue will stay in the park to provide sustainable, year-round support focusing on improving the visitor experience, protecting resources, and maintaining trails, roads, historic structures, and facilities. [Learn more about Park it Forward.](#)

Weather – Be Prepared:

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 - be sure to bring warm clothing and dress in layers. Bring a raincoat! 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 [latest COVID-19 guidelines](#) prior to your trip and let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

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.

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 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](#).

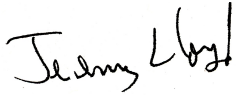
Last but Not Least...

We offer a 15% discount to all program participants in our Visitor's Center during the workshop.

Please note that the store will only be open on arrival day.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeremy Lloyd". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Jeremy Lloyd
Manager of Field Programs & Collegiate Studies
jeremy@gsmmit.org