



Dear Friends,

Welcome to **Naturalist Week!** We're excited you will be joining us for this fun-filled, restorative and inspiring week of "summer camp for grownups." Whether you attended it or a different program, or you are brand new to Tremont, we look forward to living and learning alongside you in Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Past participants of Naturalist Week have shared that what was most important to them included building skills to better understand the natural world, fellowship with other participants, spending time in the Smokies, disconnecting from life's demands, and more. We've kept each one of these things in mind while structuring the week ahead.

Several **new** things will happen in 2024, plus old favorites such as wooden spoon-making. Guest naturalist Joe Gordon will join us, as will storyteller Elizabeth Rose. Concurrent sessions take place on Tuesday and Wednesday, and there are three hiking options on Thursday. All of our programs are designed to awaken your senses, expand your skillset, and deepen your connection with the Smokies and one another.

Expect to connect with nature and learn *from* it far more than you'll learn *about* it. Our goal is not to fill your head with facts. You'll often find us asking more questions than answering them. We believe curiosity and wonder are the keys to becoming better naturalists and better humans. Whether you're a beginner or advanced, expect to learn with your heart, head, and hands.

Below, you'll find important information for your trip, including the program schedule and packing suggestions.

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. **Please plan to purchase your parking tag in advance.** You can [purchase a daily, weekly, or annual pass online](#). Note that the Tremont visitors center will be closed on arrival day and thus parking passes will not be available for sale that day. All revenue stays 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](#).

Arrival and Departure:

Plan to arrive at Tremont on Monday between 3:00 and 5:00 pm in order to have enough time to move into the dorm and meet other participants before supper at 6:00 pm. **Upon arrival, drive past the Stop sign. The gift shop is closed on this day, so the check-in station will be located in the Pavilion.** After driving past the Stop sign, look for the gravel driveway on your left. You may drive up it to check in and unload your belongings if you are staying on campus. Please move all vehicles to the blacktop at the bottom of the hill after unpacking. *Late arrivals:* If you arrive after 5:00 pm, park on the blacktop across from the activity center next to the field. Then find us in the Dining Hall or Pavilion area.

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

Weather – Be Prepared:

According to our records, average daily high temperatures in June in Walker Valley are in the 80s (Fahrenheit) and the average daily lows are in the 60s. We will be outside much of the time, rain or shine. 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.

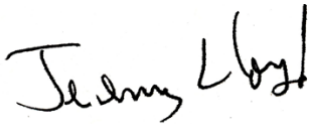
Please read the "[Your Visit to Tremont](#)" document for important packing information. Along with your linens and toiletries, you may want to bring a mattress pad to ease the firm mattress, plus a bedside light or headlamp if you are a late-night reader. If you'd like to bring a camp chair for the outdoor classroom, you may find that more comfortable than the provided benches.

Bring a notepad and any field guides you like - 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.

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@gsmiit.org