

**GREAT SMOKY
MOUNTAINS
INSTITUTE AT
TREMONT**

connecting people and nature

2026 PROGRAM CATALOG



**ADULT & FAMILY • SUMMER YOUTH • SCHOOL PROGRAMS
TEACHER DEVELOPMENT • COMMUNITY SCIENCE**

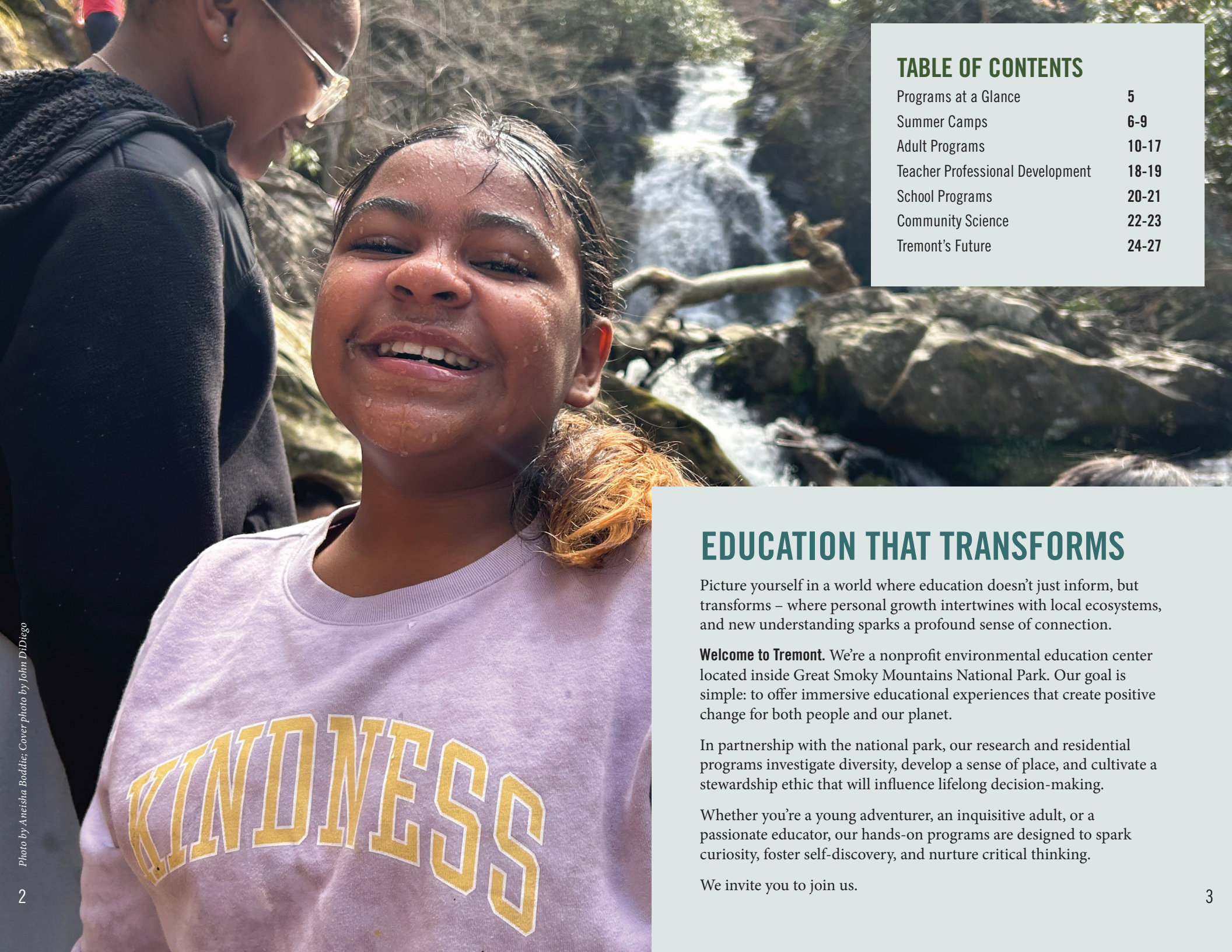


Photo by Anetisha Boddie; Cover photo by John DiDiego

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EDUCATION THAT TRANSFORMS

Picture yourself in a world where education doesn't just inform, but transforms – where personal growth intertwines with local ecosystems, and new understanding sparks a profound sense of connection.

Welcome to Tremont. We're a nonprofit environmental education center located inside Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Our goal is simple: to offer immersive educational experiences that create positive change for both people and our planet.

In partnership with the national park, our research and residential programs investigate diversity, develop a sense of place, and cultivate a stewardship ethic that will influence lifelong decision-making.

Whether you're a young adventurer, an inquisitive adult, or a passionate educator, our hands-on programs are designed to spark curiosity, foster self-discovery, and nurture critical thinking.

We invite you to join us.

WELCOME TO THE SMOKIES!

As Acting Superintendent of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, it is my honor to welcome you to some of the most rewarding experiences we offer for learners of all ages through our Outdoor School partner, Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont. These immersive programs advance the park's Resource Education mission to connect people to this special place while cultivating lifelong relationships with the natural world. The memories created at Tremont now span several generations. What a legacy!

Park rangers and volunteers with the National Park Service provide a variety of educational experiences for school children and park visitors throughout the year. Our partner Tremont's residential environmental education programs expand upon those opportunities, deepening the connections between history, diversity, beauty and wonder in the Smokies. Through these multi-day experiences, participants have the opportunity to fully immerse themselves in this incredible natural laboratory, one of the most diverse ecosystems in the temperate world. As we discover more about the world around us, we end up discovering much about ourselves.

We invite you to explore the forests and waters of these ancient mountains with us. Thank you for supporting Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont and their efforts to transform the lives of thousands by introducing scores of teachers and young people to the Smokies, who might not otherwise have had the opportunity.

We hope you enjoy your stay in the heart of Great Smoky Mountains National Park and that you will be inspired to return again soon.

Charlie Sellars, Acting Superintendent
Great Smoky Mountains National Park



ADULT & FAMILY

JAN 4-11	Wilderness First Responder Course
JAN 23-25	Wilderness First Responder Refresher
JAN 30-FEB 1	SANCP: * Naturalist Skills
JAN 31	SANCP: Winter Woody Plant ID
FEB 7	Seasons of Connection: Forest Stewardship
FEB 13-15	SANCP: Skills for Sharing Nature
FEB 13-15	SANCP: Likin' Lichens
MAR 14	Seasons of Connection: Wayfinding
APR 10-13	Springtime in the Smokies Photography Workshop
APR 20-24	Sierra Club: Springtime in the Great Smoky Mountains
MAY 8-10	SANCP: Plants of the Smokies
MAY 8-10	SANCP: Birds of the Smokies
JUN 6	Seasons of Connection: Survival Skills
JUN 15-19	Naturalist Week: Summer Camp for Adults
JUN 19-21	SANCP: Reptiles and Amphibians
JUN 30-JUL 3	Firefly Camp
JUL 6-11	Smoky Mountain Family Camp
JUL 31-AUG 2	SANCP: Aquatic Ecology
SEP 19	Seasons of Connection: Seasonal Rhythms
SEP 19-26	Plein Air Smokies
SEP 25-27	SANCP: Naturalist Skills
SEP 25-27	SANCP: Southern Appalachian Ecology
OCT 1-4	Women's Fall Backpack
OCT 11-16	Sierra Club: Autumn Glory in the Smokies
OCT 21-25	Tremont Writers Conference
OCT 30-NOV 2	Autumn Brilliance Photography Workshop
NOV 6-8	SANCP: Mammals
NOV 6-8	SANCP: Geology

* SANCP: Southern Appalachian
Naturalist Certification Program

SUMMER YOUTH

JUN 8-13	Discovery Camp I
JUN 8-13	Wilderness Adventure Trek I
JUN 8-13	Girls in Science
JUN 15-20	Trout Adventure Camp
JUN 22-27	Discovery Camp II
JUN 22-27	Wilderness Adventure Trek II
JUN 22-27	Backcountry Ecological Expedition
JUN 30-JUL 3	Firefly Camp
JUL 6-11	Smoky Mountain Family Camp
JUL 13-23	Teen High Adventure
JUL 9-20	Great Smokies Experience

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

APR 11	Schoolyard Escape
AUG 15-16	Teacher Escape Weekend I
AUG 29-30	Teacher Escape Weekend II
SEP 12-13	Teacher Escape Weekend III



Ephraim Besse

Register online at gsmit.org



John DiDiego



Tyler Thomas

KICK OFF A LIFETIME OF ADVENTURE

OVERNIGHT SUMMER CAMPS IN GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

Discovery Camp

June 8-13 & 22-27 | \$893

This is a classic summer camp in the Smokies experience: splashing in the swimming hole, making new friends around the campfire, and discovering the magic of playing outdoors. Ages 9-12.

Girls in Science

June 8-13 | Price varies based on need

Join other curious campers for the adventure of a lifetime, getting up close and personal with critters, plants, and the forces that shape our natural world. Learn through first-hand experience, and meet other women who have made a career out of their love for the outdoors. Apply by March 15. Ages 12-15.

John Thurman Trout Adventure Camp

June 15-20 | \$550+

Gain an appreciation of cold-water conservation through the sport of fly fishing. Campers will learn fly casting, tying flies, and secrets of fishing in mountain streams from experienced mentors. Financial aid is available through Trout Unlimited. Ages 12-16.

EVERYONE BELONGS AT TREMONT

We believe every child should have the chance to explore, discover, and grow in the Smokies – no matter their walk of life or family's financial situation. If cost is a concern, our scholarships can help make camp possible for your child. Visit gsmit.org/financial-aid to learn more.

Want to help a kid come to Tremont? Make a gift to our scholarship fund to give a child their own life-changing adventure at gsmit.org/donate.



Elizabeth Davis

BACKCOUNTRY EXPERIENCES

Wilderness Adventure Trek – June 8-13 & 22-27 | \$992

Learn the skills necessary to plan and enjoy a safe, successful backpacking trip with Tremont's experienced hiking guides. Before you know it, you'll be climbing a mountain, carrying everything you need to survive in the wilderness for four days and three nights. Ages 13-17.

Backcountry Ecological Expedition

June 22-27 | \$1,045

Travel to relatively undisturbed areas of the park to conduct field experiments and record your scientific observations. You'll explore creeks and hollows in search of the next organism new to the park – or even to science! Ages 13-17.

Teen High Adventure – July 13-23 | \$1,917

Spend six nights and seven days backpacking in the national park's beautiful backcountry. You will be amazed at the skills and confidence you gain from this wild adventure. Ages 13-17.

EARN COLLEGE CREDIT

Maryville College Great Smokies Experience – July 9-20

Hike, paddle, and explore in the mountains while learning about biodiversity and environmental stewardship. Students spend half of their time at Tremont, and the other half living on campus at Maryville College. For rising high school juniors and seniors, this once-in-a-lifetime experience offers the most fun you can have while earning three credit hours in environmental studies. For pricing and registration, visit gsmit.org/gse.

CAMP ISN'T JUST FOR KIDS

Naturalist Week: Summer Camp for Adults

June 15-19 | \$1,111

Whether you're a beginner or advanced naturalist, you'll learn from nature, deepen your connection to the natural world, and develop your outdoor skills at this one-of-a-kind summer camp for adults. Ages 18+.

FAMILY CAMPS

Firefly Camp

June 30-July 3 (Choose one, two, or three nights) | \$106+

Children and their grown-ups enjoy games, forest exploration, stream wading, campfire songs, and magical firefly displays at dusk. This popular camp fills fast, so sign up early! Ages 4-8 with adults of any age.

Smoky Mountain Family Camp

July 6-11 | \$691+

Let us host your family vacation in the Smokies! With so many options like hikes, swim time, nature activities, crafts, music, and more, the hardest part will be deciding how you want to spend your week together during this all-inclusive adventure. Ages 4+ with adults of any age.

Register online at gsmit.org



The **Southern Appalachian Naturalist Certification Program (SANCP)** is a field-based learning journey that gives you the skills to interpret, understand, and share the rich natural and cultural history of the southern Appalachians. Whether you're starting with one class or aiming for full certification, you'll join a community of learners guided by Tremont faculty, guest researchers, and National Park professionals.

Complete all eight core courses to earn your certificate from the University of Tennessee – or take individual classes that pique your interest.

Chrissy Donadi

EXPLORE LIKE A NATURALIST

NATURALIST CLASSES & CERTIFICATION

SANCP Core Courses | \$555 per course

Naturalist Skills

Jan. 30–Feb. 1 & Sep. 25–27

Step into the role of a naturalist and uncover the techniques that bring the outdoors into sharper focus.

Skills for Sharing Nature – Feb. 13–15

Engage others in the wonder of the outdoors to inspire curiosity and meaningful connection.

Birds of the Smokies – May 8–10

Immerse yourself in the vibrant world of birds, learning to identify species by sight, sound, and behavior.

Plants of the Smokies – May 8–10

Connect with native plants up close. Recognize species by their traits and uncover their ecological role.

Reptiles & Amphibians – Jun. 19–21

Explore streams, wetlands, and forest floors to get to know salamanders, frogs, snakes, lizards and turtles.



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

Aquatic Ecology – Jul. 31–Aug. 2

Wade into streams and wetlands to investigate the life thriving beneath the water's surface.

Southern Appalachian Ecology

Sep. 25–27

Make big-picture connections between geology, climate, flora, and fauna to deepen your understanding of the southern Appalachians.

Mammals – Nov. 6–8

Follow tracks, listen for calls, and observe behaviors that reveal the hidden lives of the Smokies' mammals.

Want a sample of all our SANCP classes? Check out **Naturalist Week: Summer Camp for Adults** on page 9.

SANCP Electives

Winter Woody Plant ID – Jan. 31 | \$99

Identify trees and shrubs even when leaves are long gone, using bark, buds, and branch structure as your guide.

Likin' Lichens – Feb. 13–15 | \$555

Get eye-level with lichens to uncover their fascinating forms, survival strategies, and role as indicators of environmental health.

Geology – Nov. 6–8 | \$555

Trace the story of the Smokies written in stone – from ancient sea floors to uplifted peaks – and see how geology shapes every living thing here.

Learn more about our plans for the second campus at tremontfuture.org

ADULT PROGRAMS AT TREMONT'S SECOND CAMPUS

Be among the very first to learn, explore, and connect at Tremont's second campus in Townsend. **Seasons of Connection** is a limited series of hands-on workshops for adults, led by Tremont's expert educators. Discover new skills, deepen your relationship with the land, and help shape the future of Tremont's newest campus.

Forest Stewardship with Elizabeth Feb. 7 | \$90

Learn to read the winter forest, care for hemlocks, and use traditional tools as you deepen your skills in forest stewardship and contribute to the health of our second campus.

Wayfinding with Kathleen Mar. 14 | \$90

Build your navigation skills while exploring our new campus. In this guided orienteering adventure, we'll cover the basics of taking bearings, reading topographic maps, and interpreting the landscape.

Survival Skills with Kristen Jun. 6 | \$90

Learn to work with the land to meet your needs in the wild. Build shelter, spark fire by friction, and practice the adaptability and resourcefulness that make outdoor survival possible.

Seasonal Rhythms with John Sep. 19 | \$90

Slow down and spend a restorative day immersed in the rhythms of the season. Through guided observation, field journaling, and simple sketching, you'll explore the connections between the natural world and your own life.

Scott Hughes



FIND YOURSELF IN THE SMOKIES BACKCOUNTRY

HIKING & BACKPACKING EXCURSIONS

Women's Fall Backpack

Oct. 1-4 | \$648

Enjoy early fall with a group of adventurous women on the trail and around the campfire. Join two experienced naturalist guides on a three-day beginner-friendly backpacking adventure through the Smokies backcountry. Beginner and seasoned hikers are welcome.

Springtime in the Great Smoky Mountains

Apr. 20-24

Autumn Glory in the Smokies

Oct. 11-16

Experience the Sierra Club National Outings Program with the added benefit of Tremont's expert naturalists. Spend your days hiking some of the Smokies' most scenic trails, and your evenings enjoying Appalachian storytelling, traditional music, and nature programs. Beginner and seasoned hikers are welcome. For pricing and registration, visit gsmit.org/sierra-club.

WILDERNESS EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONDER

Wilderness Emergency Medical Responder Course

Jan. 4-11 | \$1,060

Don't be caught unprepared when an emergency strikes on trail. Led by instructors from Roane State Community College, this program meets the Tennessee Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and national registry standards for First Responder training.

Wilderness Emergency Medical Responder Refresher

Jan. 23-25 | \$613

This program satisfies the requirements for the renewal of your First Responder certification. It is also an excellent review of wilderness medical information and skills.

Ask about our **Louise Barber Scholarship** for first responder courses.

TAP INTO AN ENDLESS STREAM OF INSPIRATION

Plein Air Smokies

Sep. 19-26

Watch art come alive in the Smokies. Plein Air Smokies brings twenty talented artists into the open air to capture the park's beauty on canvas. Throughout the week, take in public painting demonstrations, join the fun by creating your own piece during the Quick Draw competition, and browse or purchase original works at the Collectors Celebration. Want to be part of the featured artist lineup? Applications will be accepted in early 2026.



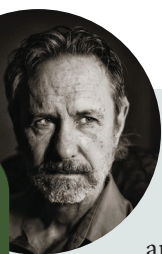
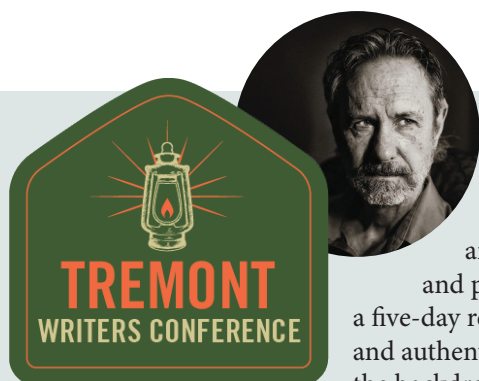
Springtime in the Smokies Photography Workshop

Apr. 10-13 | \$1,025

Our photography workshops feature renowned photographers such as Tom Vadnais, Steve Zigler, Susan Milinkovich, Dan Thompson, and Rich Rings guiding you through the best photo spots in the Smokies. Whether you are a beginner or a professional photographer, you will benefit from one-on-one assistance and helpful critiques during these energizing weekend workshops.

Autumn Brilliance Photography Workshop

Oct. 30-Nov. 2 | \$1,025



Tremont Writers Conference Oct. 21-25 | \$1,811

Join acclaimed author Ron Rash and a team of renowned writers and professional park educators for a five-day retreat rooted in inspiration and authentic connection. Set against the backdrop of Great Smoky Mountains

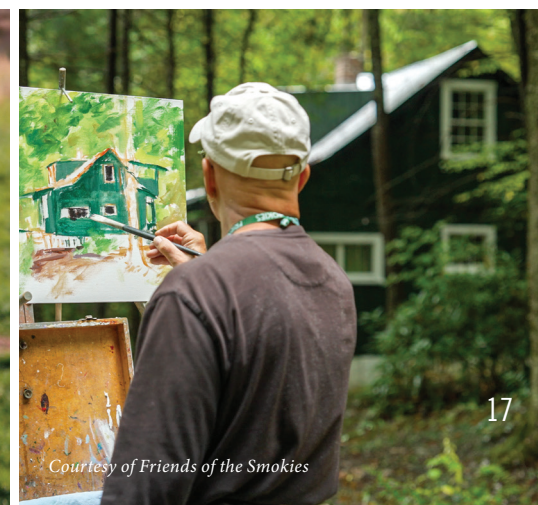
National Park, this intensive experience offers focused workshops in fiction, nonfiction, or poetry – each led by an accomplished author in the field. Applications will be accepted in early 2026.



Valerie Polk



Susan Milinkovich



Courtesy of Friends of the Smokies



David Bryant

BRING A LITTLE TREMONT TO YOUR CLASSROOM

From our 55+ years of experience, we know that immersive, inquiry-based learning fosters greater engagement, connections between concepts, and lesson retention. That's why we offer professional development opportunities for educators to feel more confident using experiential teaching methods in their own classrooms and outdoor spaces.

We envision school communities where:

- ✓ **Outdoor experiential education is integral and frequent**
- ✓ **Teachers and students share curiosity around classroom content and the world**
- ✓ **Deep student-teacher relationships are foundational**



Rich Bryant



Rich Bryant

EDUCATOR WORKSHOPS

Teacher Escape Weekends

Aug. 15-16, Aug. 29-30 & Sep. 12-13 | \$99

This retreat highlights the power of experiential learning and empowers educators to use the outdoors as a teaching tool. Teachers will gain new educational strategies, share best practices, and engage in experiential learning as a community of practice.

Schoolyard Escape

Apr. 11 | \$40

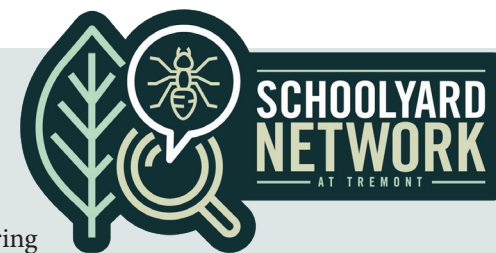
Join Tremont's education team for a single-day workshop at a Knoxville school to explore teaching standards applied in an outdoor setting, try out new activities to take back to your schoolyard, and build connections with other like-minded educators.

Schoolyard Consultations | Flexible dates and pricing

Work alongside Tremont staff to design a customized schoolyard walkthrough or workshop for your educators. We'll show your staff how to harness the power of outdoor teaching and learning, while also aligning to curriculum standards and reinforcing classroom concepts.

FIND SUCCESS IN THE SCHOOLYARD NETWORK

Join our virtual network of peer educators contributing resources, sharing field-tested best practices and success stories, and offering support for schoolyard learning. **The Schoolyard Network** is free for educators across the country. Learn more at gsmit.org/schoolyard-network.



We strive to offer these opportunities at a low cost to teachers.
Thank you to Arconic Foundation for supporting this work.

SCHOOL TRIPS TO THE SMOKIES

At Tremont, education is immersive. It's about stepping beyond conventional boundaries, venturing into the outdoors, and igniting a cascade of inquiries. This isn't just learning – it's a dynamic process of engaging with the world.

Our distinctive approach involves residential trips spanning 3 to 5 days, during which students become inhabitants and explorers of the national park. Guided by an accomplished faculty of dedicated educators, our curriculum aligns with academic standards, imparting not just skills and knowledge, but also nurturing inquisitiveness and critical thinking.

What we do:

- ✓ Engage teachers and students through hands-on experiences
- ✓ Help students build critical thinking skills, scientific literacy, and a love for learning
- ✓ Challenge teachers and students to develop personal and meaningful connections to the land and to each other
- ✓ Model best teaching practices through cooperative teaching
- ✓ Immerse participants in the biodiversity and beauty of Great Smoky Mountains National Park

SCHOLARSHIPS & FINANCIAL AID

We strive for our experiences to be accessible to all, regardless of financial means. Tremont provides financial aid and scholarships to schools in need, and can share successful fundraising strategies that other schools have used to reduce costs. Visit gsmit.org/financial-aid to learn more.

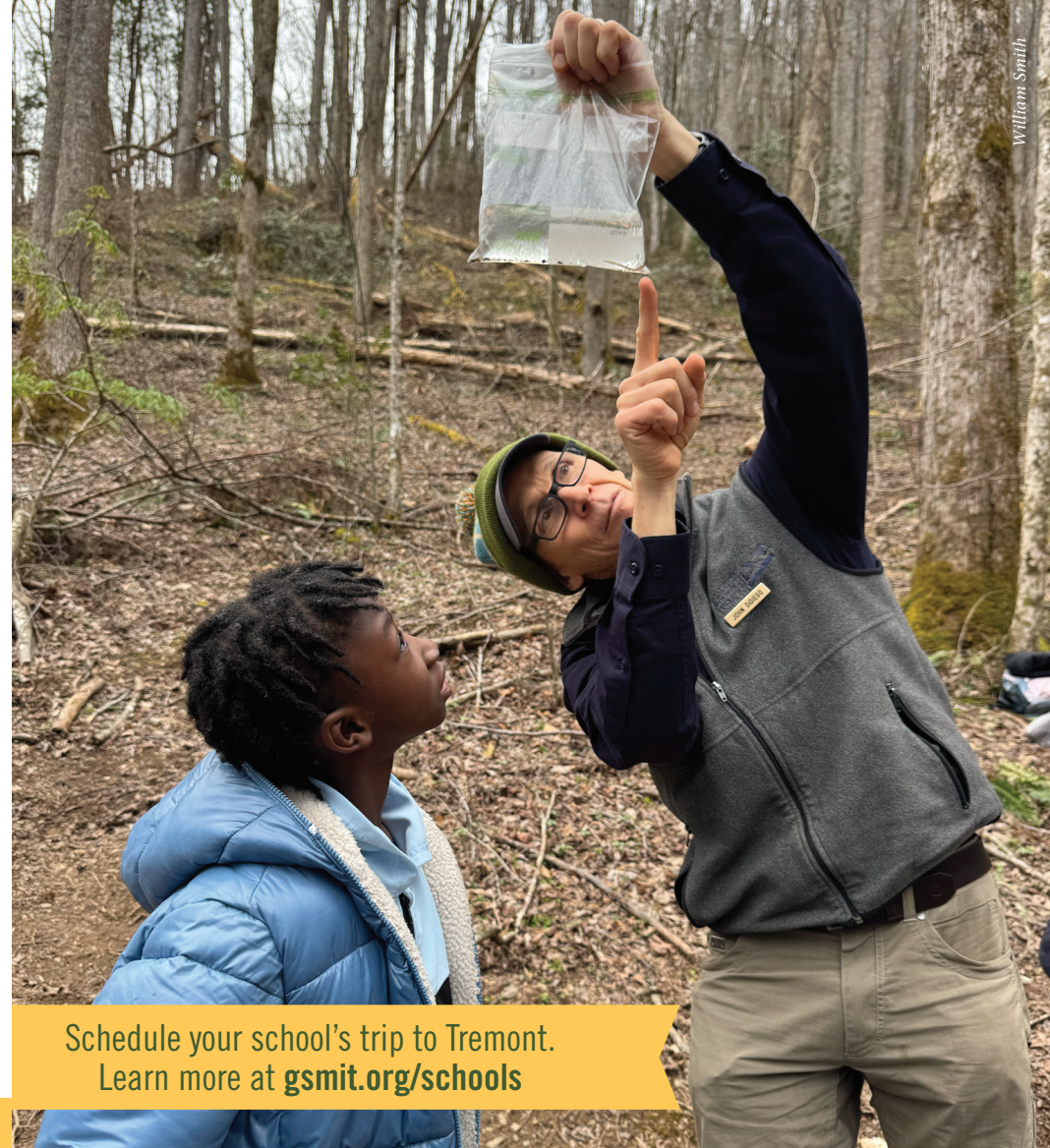
Sponsor a student's trip to the Smokies.
Visit gsmit.org/donate to make a gift to our Scholarship Fund.



Rich Bryant



Paul Ruhlberg



William Smith

Schedule your school's trip to Tremont.
Learn more at gsmit.org/schools

COOPERATIVE TEACHING

Cooperative teaching is a team-teaching approach that provides opportunities to connect subjects and standards from the classroom to hands-on lessons at Tremont. When teachers team up with Tremont faculty to practice experiential education techniques, they gain confidence and are more likely to transfer those skills back to the classroom and schoolyard.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

Increased student learning

Student-teacher bonding

Teacher support for experiential education



Rich Bryant

WE'RE TURNING CURIOSITY INTO CONSERVATION

Public participation in scientific research connects people to nature through careful, intentional observations of ecosystems. What could be more fun than getting to know our fellow species up close and personally while documenting important data that can be used to protect the places we love?

Community science brings participants and volunteers together with research partners including:

- Discover Life in America
- National Park Service
- Institute for Bird Populations
- National Phenology Network
- Monarch Watch

PROJECTS INCLUDE:



PHENOLOGY
MONITORING



OTTER
SPOTTER



MONARCH
TAGGING



AMPHIBIAN
MONITORING



BIRD
BANDING

CONTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY SCIENCE RESEARCH

Most community science projects require training and a long-term commitment, though many only require a few hours each month. If you're interested in joining our team of dedicated volunteers, email science@gsmit.org.

OTHER WAYS TO VOLUNTEER

Throughout the year, our dedicated volunteers assist with a variety of activities such as event planning, friend-raising, fundraising, and maintenance projects. If you want to get involved, explore our volunteer opportunities at gsmit.org/volunteer.

Explore our findings in our interactive community science report at gsmit.org/community-science



SUPPORT LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCES IN NATURE

Whether they visit as part of a school group, summer camp, or adult class, our program participants form deeper connections to nature and each other while gaining a fuller understanding of their place in our world.

Our community of supporters value our mission and understand the importance of place-based learning in the Smokies. Your contributions directly impact our ability to provide scholarships and financial assistance to those in need and sustain our day-to-day operations – bringing to life Tremont’s work of shaping the next generation of nature’s stewards and champions.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Scholarships create opportunities for youth to experience the wonders of the Smokies when they otherwise couldn’t afford it. This could support an individual camper or a school group.

GO FUND

The GO Fund makes our work possible by supporting behind-the-scenes operations. This includes tools to keep our buildings safe and clean, nutritious meals for guests, staff training and much more.

Donate online at gsmiit.org/donate or send a check by mail to 9275 Tremont Road, Townsend, TN, 37882.



To learn more about supporting Tremont through our endowment fund, planned giving, stock donations, corporate sponsorships, or shopping give-back programs, contact our Development Director, Megan Womack, at megan@gsmiit.org or 865.448-6709 x24.

Kathleen Reilly



Hennebery Eddy Architects

Take a virtual tour of our second campus
at tremontfuture.org

EXPANDING OUR IMPACT

We have a vision where people of all ages come to imagine new possibilities for themselves and for the planet. To achieve this, we are embarking on an ambitious journey to build a second campus that will serve as a world-class education center, providing unparalleled learning opportunities for all.

Our second campus will be regenerative, expanding our program capacity and the audiences we serve, while using forward-thinking technologies and innovative land management to model possibilities and inspire and empower people to build healthy connections to nature. We’re excited to begin offering new adult programming on this campus this year – learn more on pages 12-13.

We plan to show what is possible when we build with intention – places that inspire connection with each other and the natural world.



for a second campus that connects

Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont

EXPLORE NATURE IN YOUR OWN OUTDOOR SPACES

Virtual Naturalist Week – June 15-21

Step outside and see your world in a new way. This free, all-ages event offers daily virtual activities led by Tremont's naturalists, plus the Level Up Challenge – your chance to explore your surroundings, notice hidden patterns, and earn prizes for your curiosity – from wherever you are!

OUR CAMPUS

Our campus is in Walker Valley, a historically rich section of Great Smoky Mountains National Park and part of the ancestral homeland of the Cherokee. Surrounded by miles of trails, a rushing river, and a half million acres of mountains and forests, we have the perfect playground for discovery.

We can house up to 135 people on site and have a full kitchen staff serving three hot meals per day.

This year, we're welcoming you to join us at our second campus, located just outside the national park in Townsend, Tennessee. Learn more on pages 12-13.

STOP BY AND SAY HELLO

Start your next Smokies trip at the **Tremont Visitor Center**. Our friendly staff can offer local tips, share expert knowledge, and help you choose the perfect hike for your next adventure.

Browse our curated gift shop for Smokies books and field guides, locally made goods, outdoor gear, and trip mementos. Every purchase supports Tremont's environmental education programs, bringing students, teachers, and families into the national park to learn, explore, and grow together.

OUR PEOPLE

Our faculty and staff bring decades of experience teaching at Tremont, in classrooms, and at other centers around the country. They are here not just to teach, but to walk alongside you, sharing stories, skills, and a love for the Smokies that deepens with every program.

Throughout your stay, you'll be welcomed by warm, attentive educators who create safe, supported adventures for every skill level, ensuring you feel both confident and inspired in the outdoors.



ADD US TO YOUR FEED

Keep the Smokies in your feed year-round. Follow Tremont for stunning nature photos, behind-the-scenes glimpses of our programs, and tips for connecting with the outdoors wherever you are.



SIGN UP FOR TREMONT NEWS

Our monthly newsletter shares new and upcoming programs, nature stories, and opportunities to get involved, so you'll always know what's blooming, migrating, or sparking curiosity in the Smokies. Sign up at gsmi.org/newsletter.

"When you join us in the Smokies, you step into a place where you're cared for, welcomed, and free to rediscover the wonder of the world around you. You're invited to come as you are, and leave with a full heart, a rested spirit, and a deeper connection to the wonders our world has to offer."

Catey McClary, President & CEO

Explore our impact at
gsmi.org/annual-report

**GREAT SMOKY
MOUNTAINS
INSTITUTE AT
TREMONT**

9275 Tremont Rd.
Townsend, TN 37882
(865) 448-6709

*In partnership with Great Smoky Mountains National Park,
we help connect thousands of people each year to nature
through in-depth, experiential education programs.*

