

2017
Donor Salute

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Mission Statement

The mission of Friends of Great Smoky Mountains National Park is to assist the National Park Service in its mission to preserve and protect Great Smoky Mountains National Park by raising funds and awareness and providing volunteers for needed projects.

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



It is difficult to summarize in an annual report comprised of names and numbers the impact that your contributions make inside Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Even the photos included here cannot completely tell the story of one year in America's most visited national park, or capture the spirit of thousands of people who have invested in its preservation and protection.

The year 2017 brought the historic total solar eclipse to the Smokies, with thousands viewing the celestial occurrence from Cades Cove to Clingmans Dome. Donations to Friends of the Smokies supported educational and interpretive activities at locations throughout the Park, and these events streamed live to a wider audience through NASA's website.

Last year also saw the return of one of Friends of the Smokies' most popular events – the Cades Cove Loop Lope – after a seven-year hiatus. We thank Superintendent Cash and the staff of Great Smoky Mountains National Park for allowing us to bring back this rare opportunity for 500 runners to race along the Loop Road in Cades Cove early on a November Sunday and enjoy this remarkable place for a few hours without vehicle traffic on the road. We are also excited that it is becoming an annual event.

For the Park's fiscal year in 2017, which ran from October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017, with your help Friends of the Smokies provided \$1,499,413 to fulfill a broad range of needs. Each year our Needs List from the Park is broken down into several major categories, including Resource Management and Science (things like controlling hemlock woolly adelgid), Resource Education (programs like Parks as Classrooms), Parkwide Volunteer Programs, Facilities Management (the Trails Forever work at Rainbow Falls Trails is one example), and Resource and Visitor Protection (funding for the Cades Cove Bicycle Patrol and other visitor safety initiatives).

You will find highlights from our 2017 Needs List throughout this report, and I hope you will be inspired to continue supporting Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

With Gratitude,

Jim Hart



LETTER FROM SUPERINTENDENT CASSIUS CASH

Dear Friends,

Twenty-five years ago, people who love this park saw a need. They actively turned that great need into an opportunity that has now enabled thousands of people to help take care of this very special place. Their passion led to a movement that helped shape and define stewardship of Great Smoky Mountains National Park through the creation of Friends of the Smokies. As the Superintendent, I am honored that you have chosen to be a part of this movement to help us care for the remarkable stories, diversity, and experiences that these mountains hold for us and future generations.

Through your support as donors and members of Friends of the Smokies, you've helped us preserve historic structures, educate children, repair trails, and protect the forests, rivers, air, and wildlife that make up these beautiful mountains. In 2017, your support also helped us host the largest special event in park history as people from across the world gathered in the park to view the Great American Total Solar Eclipse. Over 15,600 people attended eclipse events offered at our visitor centers and over 47,000 visitors entered the park to view the eclipse on August 21st. Another 26,000 people watched the live broadcast of the Clingmans Dome event in partnership with NASA, and another 6 million people watched the event online from across the world via the NASA 360 broadcast. The Smokies has long been a place where memories are made and, through your support, we were able to provide another once-in-a-lifetime experience for visitors.

In 2018, we look forward to several milestone events and celebrations. Notably, we are celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the Trails Forever partnership with Friends of the Smokies which has enabled us to complete multiple signature trail rehabilitation projects including renovation of the Forney Ridge Trail, Chimney Tops Trail, Alum Cave Trail, and Rainbow Falls Trail (which is slated for completion later this year). We look forward to expanding the reach of this program across the trail system in the Smokies as we embark upon the next ten years. We are also celebrating the 20th Anniversary of discovering life in the Smokies through the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory. Through this program and our partnership with Discover Life in America, we've hosted over 1,000 researchers from across the world to help us record nearly 20,000 species of life in the park, including nearly 1,000 species new to science. We've used this opportunity to help create science learning opportunities for over 200,000 students, 6,500 teachers, and 1,000 volunteers who are helping us better understand and care for the rich biodiversity of the Smokies.

As we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Friends of the Smokies, I invite you to continue on this journey with us in caring for this remarkable place. The need still exists, and we have hard work ahead of us. I continue to be inspired by the dedication of our supporters and advocates. It is indeed great to have Friends!

**Thank you,
Cassius M. Cash**



20 YEARS OF 'GET ON THE TRAIL WITH FRIENDS AND MISSY'

“It’s hard to believe we celebrated our 20th year of hosting the ‘Get on Trails with Friends and Missy’ hiking series in October 2017. Besides being a fitness/health initiative, the hikes have definitely been a Friends of the Smokies’ signature event. The series is also is a ‘Friend Raiser’ as I’ve made so many good friends from this program. It’s great seeing others who now hike together every month after meeting on one of our hikes. ‘The mountains are calling and I must go’ is so true. We are blessed to have Great Smoky Mountains National Park in our backyard. Their beauty and diversity draws us back, since once you start hiking most are ‘hooked’ on a wonderful healthy hobby.” *Missy Kane, hike leader and organizer of the series for two decades, as well as an Olympian, member of the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame, and award recipient from the President’s Council on Fitness*



Pictured here is Missy with retired National Park Service retiree Ray Sellers who has volunteered with Friends of the Smokies since the organization was founded, including sweeping Get On the Trail hikes

Get On The Trail By the Numbers:

Dollars Raised \$187,000

Friends Made 1,000 donors/hikers

“The fact that “Get on the Trail with Friends and Missy” is celebrating its 20th anniversary is a tribute to Missy’s tireless devotion to the Smokies and hiking as a component of maintaining a healthy life style. Over the years, she has shared the park with more than 1,000 hikers who have contributed \$187,000 towards park needs. We are so grateful to Missy for conceiving of the hiking series, her willingness to plan and execute it, and for all the hikers she has introduced to the Smokies!” *Jim Hart, President, Friends of the Smokies*



Last year saw the return of a very popular event – the Cades Cove Loop Lope – which only occurred once before in 2010. The Loop Lope offers both a 5K course as well as a 10 Mile race that traverses the entire Cades Cove Loop Road from start to finish. We are very grateful to Superintendent Cash and his entire management team for allowing us to host this event once again.

When registration opened on August 1st for the 2017 race, all 500 available spots were filled that day. The participants were also extremely thankful to have the chance to run the race on a beautiful Sunday morning in November.



“Cades Cove is a special place to my family because that was the only place we would vacation to as me and my brothers grew up.

My parents would attach our out-dated pop-up camper to my dad’s truck, we would cram ourselves, and our bikes into the truck and take off to the Smokies for as long as my dad could take off work. As soon as we got to The Cove, my parents would unload our bicycles and me and my brothers would take off through the camp ground finding other kids our age to play with for the few days or week that we were there. We would race around the loop, play in the creek, and go to the general store to get ice cream (usually free because the ladies in the store loved me and my brothers like we were their children). At the end of our vacation we would sadly pack our stuff and silently go back home, anticipating our next trip to Cades Cove.

This would happen 2-3 times a year if I remember correctly (as a kid it seemed like we almost lived there). Cades Cove feels as much a part of my family as does the house that me and my brothers grew up in.

I say all that to show how much The Cove means to us. And to have this race was something that brought back all those memories for me, and it was a great experience having almost my entire family there.

I can only pray that it becomes an annual event. If it does, you can guarantee the Culwell Family will be there every year!”

– Jeremiah Culwell, who placed 5th in his age group at the 2017 Cades Cove Loop Lope. He is pictured here with his wife Ashley.

CADES COVE LOOP LOPE 2017

All of us at Friends of the Smokies are thankful to the runners, the volunteers and our sponsors who made this race an unforgettable experience. We are indebted to Dave Black and Joni Alexander of the Knoxville Track Club for their expertise and time in helping us plan and organize the race.

The Cades Cove Loop Lope will return again on Sunday, November 4, 2018.



Left to Right – 10 Mile Course Runners Pat Lawley, Billy Culwell & Steven Smith



5 K Course Participants Debbie Smit, Kathy Jo Culwell, Amy Culwell, & Ashley Culwell



We Salute You

Friends of the Smokies thanks each and every donor who supported the preservation of Great Smoky Mountains National Park last year.

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Arconic Foundation

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\$400,000+

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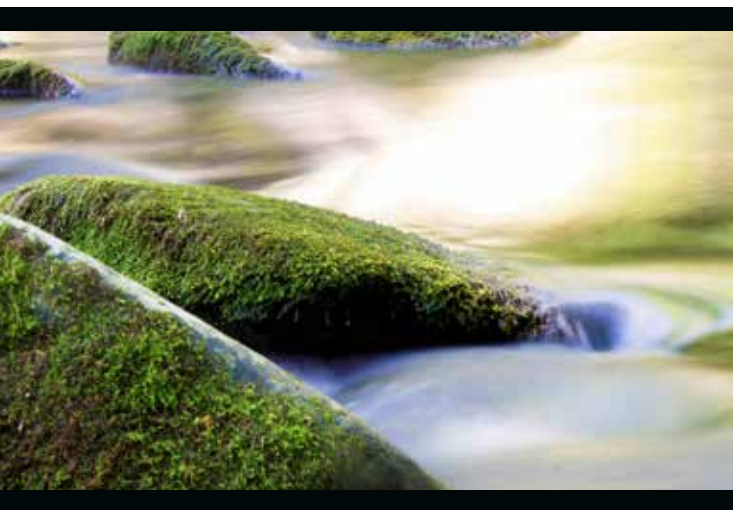
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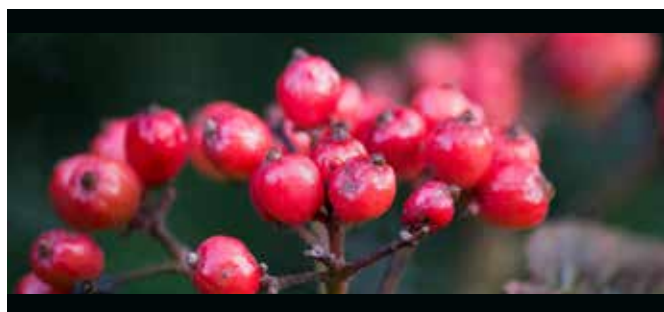
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Honor and memorial gifts to Friends of the Smokies are a treasured way to recognize loved ones and mark special occasions. Those remembered and honored through gifts to help preserve and protect Great Smoky Mountains National Park in 2017 are listed here.

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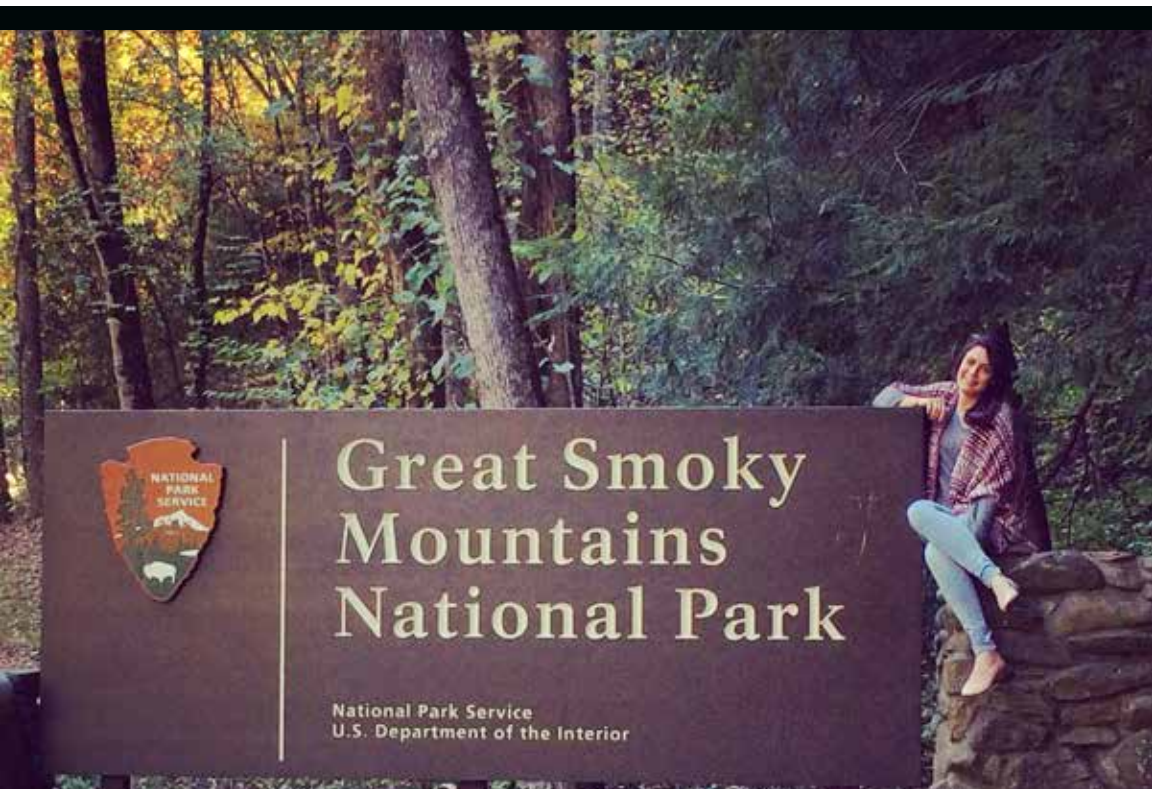
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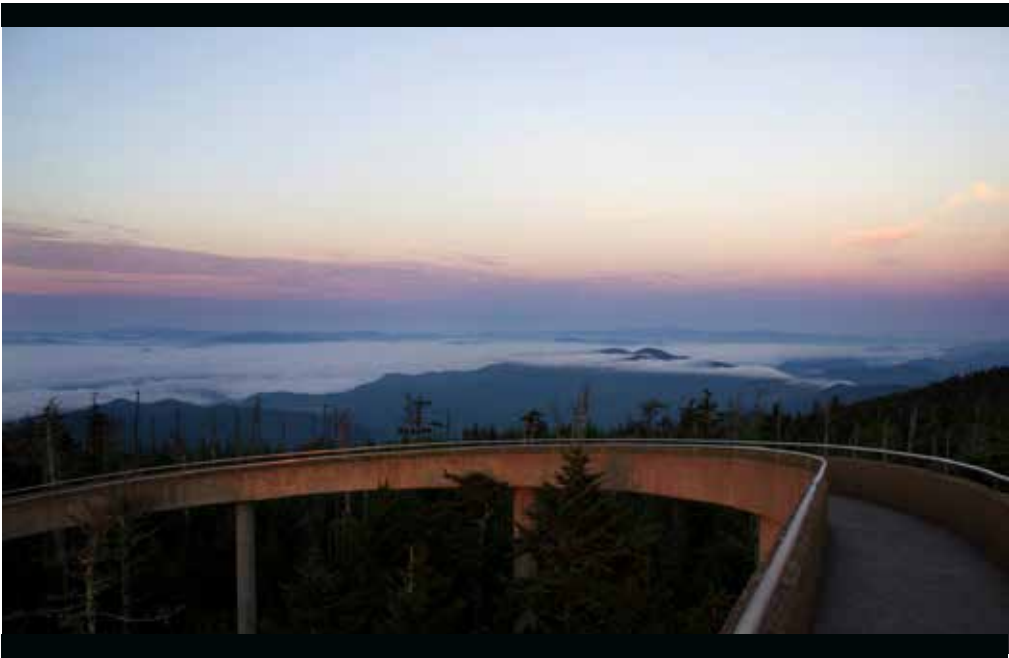
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Thanks to the photographer

Our 2017 photos were taken by Kenna Livingston.



The following endowments were established through the generosity of outstanding champions of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

As of December 31, 2017 the endowment balances were as follow:

Trails Forever Endowment	\$5,866,697
- Tom Cronan Pathfinder Fund	
- Margaret Stevenson Fund	
- Foothills Striders	
Kathryn McNeil Educational Endowment	\$1,376,042
Elaine Gibson Endowment.....	\$2,166,630

The board of directors and staff of Friends of the Smokies sincerely thank **Lindsay Young and the Aslan Foundation** of Knoxville for the \$2.3 million challenge grant which created the **Trails Forever Endowment** in 2008. The match was accomplished with the help of the friends and family members of **Tom Cronan and Margaret Stevenson** and many others who gave with the vision of revitalizing trails like Alum Cave, Forney Ridge, Chimney Tops, and Rainbow Falls.

Kathryn McNeil was a founding board member of Friends of the Smokies. Shortly before her passing, she challenged Friends of the Smokies to match a new \$600,000 gift, creating an endowment to fund a full-time, year round Parks as Classrooms Resource Education Ranger position. In 2000, she and Voit Gilmore donated their mountain home and 535 acre property to Great Smoky Mountains National Park, which today is known as the Appalachian Highlands Science Learning Center at Purchase Knob. It is where the endowment-funded ranger position serves.

Upon **Elaine Gibson’s** passing, Great Smoky Mountains National Park’s leadership team learned of her bequest to help take care of our park’s greatest needs.

In calendar year 2017, Friends of the Smokies provided **\$1,448,230** to Great Smoky Mountains National Park to fund critical projects and programs. Here you will find some highlights of Park successes that could not have happened without your support!

COOK CABIN REHABILITATION

Walking into the backcountry of Little Cataloochee is also a trip back in time. There you'll find log cabins more than 100 years old that, while still charming, are showing their age. Contractor Sean Perry of Asheville, North Carolina found them, too, and realized that he and his company, The Hands of Sean Perry, possessed the skills and expertise to help the National Park Service repair and restore these aging structures.

Sean worked through Friends of the Smokies North Carolina Director Anna Zanetti and the Park's historic preservation staff to identify a priority project. They chose Cook Cabin, and Sean's crew donated \$6,000 in in-kind labor to replace the porch flooring. They spent a week in May 2017 working under the guidance of the park historic structure specialist. Friends of the Smokies contributed \$9,300 in materials to complete the work.



Photo credit: Sean Perry

In 2018, Sean Perry and his team are rehabilitating another Cataloochee historic gem, the Palmer House Barn, with generous financial support from Rich & Leigh Pettus.

Photo credit: Sean Perry



SOLAR ECLIPSE

On August 21, 2017 a total solar eclipse plunged parts of Great Smoky Mountains National Park into a midday twilight. The leadership team in our national park captured the opportunity to educate and engage thousands of park visitors and their families at Cades Cove, Oconaluftee Visitors Center, and Clingman’s Dome. In order to present a world-class experience for this once-in-a-lifetime event, Friends of the Smokies provided \$21,000 to assist with bus transportation for participants to and from Clingman’s Dome, to secure expert presenters like emcee Emily Calandrelli and NASA astronaut Soichi Noguchi, and to provide musical and theatrical entertainment.



Photo credit: Sam Hobbs

TRAILS FOREVER REHABILITATION OF RAINBOW FALLS TRAIL

In 2017 the Trails Forever crew began tackling Phase I of the rehabilitation of the popular Rainbow Falls Trail. Leader Josh Shapiro provided the following series of before and after photos which highlight the problems hikers encountered along the Rainbow Falls Trail before the Trails Forever crew began their work, and demonstrate the quality craftsmanship and engineering employed by the team in the solutions to extensive erosion and trail surface issues. Their problem-solving skills make the hiking experience safer and more enjoyable for everyone who will trek to Rainbow Falls or Mount Le Conte along this route.

Volunteers can work alongside the Trails Forever crew at Rainbow Falls from May through October. Pre-registration is required. Visit <https://friendsofthesmokies.org/trailsforever/volunteer/> for more information becoming a Trails Forever volunteer.



2017 Park Needs Fulfilled



BEFORE - Along the Rainbow Falls Trail, an example of trail trenching with exposed roots and no drainage, before the problems were addressed by the Trails Forever crew.

AFTER - The same section of trail, showing locust log steps constructed over the exposed roots, with an associated water bar to prevent water from running down the new steps and causing further erosion and trenching. This solution created safe footing while protecting the tree and its roots.

BEFORE - Rocks where a trail should be!

AFTER - Rocks removed, and trail tread sloped out to prevent water from pooling on the trail.

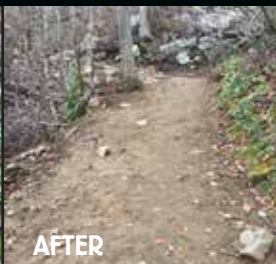


BEFORE

AFTER



Members of the American Conservation Experience who worked as seasonal members of the Trails Forever Crew



BEFORE - Trail trenched and eroded in the middle.

AFTER - To address the trail trenching and erosion, the crew removed the outside berm and added the soil to the center of the trail, which was next sloped and compacted to improve the trail tread. Drainage was incorporated above the area to prevent further erosion.

BEFORE - Another section of "trail" with erosion-exposed roots and rocks.

AFTER - The team built a system of rock steps, pavers, and water bars to create sustainable drainage in this area where none existed.



BEFORE

AFTER



BEFORE - An heavily eroded section of Rainbow Falls Trail.

AFTER - The crew built a stone staircase and attached a water bar at the top to establish sustainable drainage and prevent future water damage to the trail.

Special Thank You to Our Volunteers

The Staff of Friends of the Smokies is deeply appreciative to our volunteers for giving their time and talents to help us accomplish our mission and make the reach of our donors' dollars go farther and work harder.

The Friends of the Smokies Board of Directors

Cades Cove Loop Lope Volunteers - Craig Alexander, Danny Bernstein, Dewey Clark, Sally Clark, Richard Cox, Emili Drozdowski, Kim Fry, Maria Guenther, Phyllis Henry, Greg Hoff, Robin Jenness, Billy Jones, Regina Kinton, Olivia Law, Richard Law, Michael Livingston, Sam McGroom, Kathy Nash, Paige Pointer, Bill Stokes, Jeanne Wykert

2017 Evergreen Ball Committee - Clay Aalders, Victor Agreda, Judy Akers, Andi Anderson, Heather Anderson, Hester Beecher, Tracey Belmont, Wendy Bennett, Janette Burgin, Tim Chandler, Sam and Jody Curtis, Stephanie Daniel, Nancy Daves, Brandy Downing, Harvey Gray, Pam Harmon, Pam Harris, Kevin and Cheryl Hill, Christine Hoyer, John and Jo Iacovino, Meredith James, Seth and Sally Judd, Amye King, Meredith Kuester, Bill and Mary Beth Maddox, Camille Matlock, Cindy Mayfield, Pace McCamy, Ariana Moore, Angelia Nystrom, Andrea Reyes, Butch and Rebekah Robertson, Darsi Sirknen, LeaAnne Williams

2017 Evergreen Ball Trailblazers

Friends Across the Mountains Telethon Volunteers - Gretchen Alcorn, Jay & Sandra Aldrich, Alexandra Box, Gwen Boyles, Ellie Burbank, Sue Callaway, Bill Carroll, Billy Carroll, Tase' Cash, Vonda Cash, Katie Collier, Debbie Dossett, Jan Evridge, Evelyn Faller, Mary Grace Friar, Tom Friar, Alicia Griego, Cathy Guarnacci, Karen Hancock, Debbie Harless, Linda Haun, Kelley Headrick, Phyllis Henry, Tyler Helton, Emily Jones, Will Karnes, Caroline Lamar, Cheryl Light, Bruce McCamish, Lisa McMahan, Jimmy Morgan, Caroline Noblin, Dawn O'Sickey, Sandra Parrott, Leslie Reeves, Pam Scott, Debra Smith, Trish Turner, Marita Vornehm, Gary Wade, Crystal Watson, Bill Williams, Jack Williams, Eileen Wilson

2017 Get On the Trail with Friends & Missy Volunteers - Logan Boldon, John Clayton, Dan Davis, Ed Fleming, Anderson Gass, Bill Gober, Doris Gove, Wally Houston, Jeremy Lloyd, Ray Sellers, Mike Wetzel, Julie Whitted

2017 Greenbrier Barn Party Volunteers

Neighbors in the Foothills Host Committee - Sara & John Berry, Marty Callaway, Chelly & Kevin Clayton, Sue & Joe Dawson, Cindy & Joe Emert, Carolyn Forster, Rachel & Gerald Gibson, Phyllis & Herb Handly, Virginia & Doug Hardwick, Ed Harmon, Denia & Bob Lash, Sharon & Fred Lawson, Kimberly & Kevin Proffitt, Martha & Don Sundquist, Becky & Joe Swann, Nan & Tom Taylor, Debbie & Richard Way, Mary Beth & Charles West, Ruth & Steve West, Kahren & Andy White

Special Thank You to Our Volunteers

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Tennessee Office Volunteers – Melinda Baumunk, Ellie Burbank, Lenore Collyer, Jim Goddard, Regina Kinton, Laura Kryder, Don & Ann Luckett, Doc & Susan Morrow, Ray Sellers, Marita Vornehm, Toby Wagner, and Eileen Wilson

We Appreciate Our Sponsors

Special events raise funds to help preserve and protect Great Smoky Mountains National Park. They also help us reach new audiences and engage volunteers. Our sponsors are key to the success of our fundraising events, and we are so thankful for their support.

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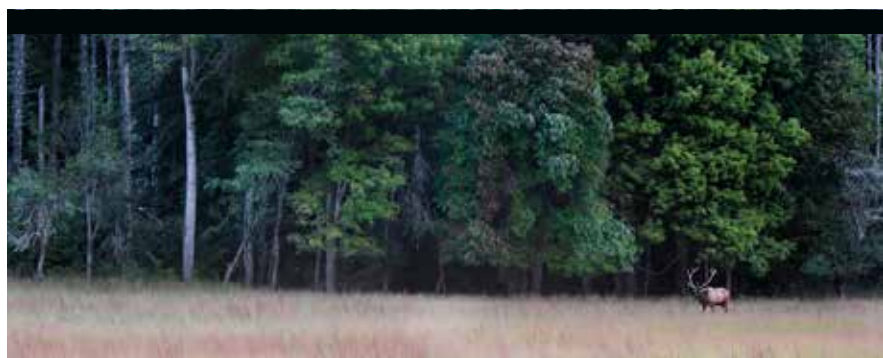
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Gary & Sandy Wade, Jack Williams, Mark & Kristin Williams,
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The amounts presented here are derived from audited financial statements of Friends of Great Smoky Mountains National Park for years ending December 31, 2017 and December 31, 2016. There are slight variances in figures due to rounding. Copies of the complete audited financial statements of Friends of Great Smoky Mountains National Park are available upon request as well as on our website.

Statement of Financial Position		
Year Ended	December 31, 2017	December 31, 2016
Current Assets		
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$ 7,759,559	\$ 6,611,581
Prepaid Expenses	\$ 47,649	\$ 35,816
Accounts Receivable	\$ 211,187	\$ 192,499
Pledges receivable	\$ 300	\$ 6,134
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	\$ 8,018,695	\$ 6,846,030
Investments	\$ 9,071,333	\$ 7,788,235
Long Term Pledges Receivable, net of current portion	\$ -0-	\$ 633
Equipment Net of Depreciation	\$ 58,779	\$ 63,167
Other Assets		
Beneficial interest in assets held by others	\$ 238,883	\$ 214,084
Cash surrender value of life in-surance	\$ 9,226	\$ 9,095
Deposits	\$ 275	\$ 275
TOTAL OTHER ASSETS	\$ 248,384	\$ 223,454
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 17,397,192	\$ 14,921,519

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$ 51,685	\$ 4,491
Deferred Revenue	\$ 275,095	\$ 179,148
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$ 326,780	\$ 183,639
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	\$ 2,718,634	\$ 2,403,322
Temporarily restricted	\$ 6,287,149	\$ 4,749,447
Permanently restricted	\$ 8,064,630	\$ 7,585,112
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$ 17,070,413	\$ 14,737,881
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$ 17,397,192	\$ 14,921,519

Statement of Activities		
SUPPORT & REVENUE		
Contributions & grants	\$ 2,500,863	\$ 3,973,051
Less amounts designated by donors for other organizations	(\$ 1,060)	(\$ 10,750)
Tennessee license plate reve-nue	\$ 416,907	\$ 374,151
North Carolina license plate revenue	\$ 465,820	\$ 453,860
Special events (net of direct expenses)	\$ 391,941	\$ 351,680
In-kind contributions	\$ 73,953	\$ 74,888
Other income	\$ 540	\$ 1,738
Investment income net of ex-pense	\$ 192,515	\$ 229,285
TOTAL SUPPORT, REVENUE AND OTHER	\$ 4,041,479	\$ 5,447,903
EXPENSES		
Expenses (park projects and related support)	\$ 1,669,232	\$ 1,123,260
Management & general	\$ 356,665	\$ 335,132
Fundraising	\$ 497,175	\$ 489,488
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 2,523,072	\$ 1,947,880

FRIENDS OF GREAT SMOKY
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