



Big South Fork Visitor Guide

2012

The official newspaper of
Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area



Cultural Resources - Historic Structures



Welcome from the Superintendent

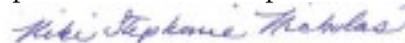
Welcome to the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area! There have been a number of facilities improvements in the park over the past year. For example we remodeled the Kentucky Ranger Station in Stearns and now are able to provide seven day a week visitor contact service in that community between Memorial Day and Labor Day. The Kentucky Bookstore has been moved down to the Blue Heron Interpretive Center so that we can provide increased ranger staffing in the park. We completed the first year of a four year plan to renovate the Bandy Creek Visitor Center; stop in the bookstore and see some of the changes.

Out in the backcountry we have completed some site restorations to improve visitor safety and reduce environmental threats to the ecosystem. Economic stimulus funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act allowed us to plug 39 abandoned oil and gas wells and close 29 abandoned coal mine openings in the park. All the work was done by local contractors and the more than 2 million dollars of mitigation work was done with a 100% safety record.

We know that continuously maintaining and improving park facilities is important. A recent National Park Service report showed that last year more than 650,000 visitors spent \$26.6 million in Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area and in nearby communities. That spending supported more than 375 jobs in the local area. Most of the spending and jobs are related to lodging, food, and beverage service (52 percent) followed by other retail (29 percent), entertainment and amusements (10 percent), gas and local transportation (7 percent) and groceries (2 percent).

Whether this is your first visit to the Big South Fork or you have come a dozen times, the entire park staff and I hope you have a wonderful time exploring the park and the Cumberland Plateau. Come visit us often!

Sincerely Yours,
Superintendent Niki Stephanie Nicholas



2012 Special Events Calendar

All events are Eastern Time.

Spring Planting Festival - April 28

9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Join in a celebration of spring at a 1920s era farm. Demonstrations of horse and mule drawn equipment, plowing, planting, dulcimer music, farm animals and tasks of the homemaker will be presented throughout the day at Bandy Creek and the Lora Blevins homeplace. Craft demonstrations and sales items will also be available.

Astronomy

Paul Lewis from the University of Tennessee will be presenting astronomy programs with the help of astronomy volunteers (weather permitting).

May 26 - Solar Viewing - Bandy Creek - 3:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m.

May 26- Astronomy - Bandy Creek - 9:00 p.m.

June 23 - Astronomy - Bandy Creek - 9:30 p.m.

August 18 - Astronomy - Bandy Creek - 9:30 p.m.

October TBA - Solar Viewing - Bandy Creek - 3:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m.

October TBA - Astronomy - Bandy Creek - 8:30 p.m. Fall Astronomy Day.

National Trails Day - June 2

Volunteers will be working throughout the park on hiking, biking, horse and multiple-use trails. National Trails Day is held each year throughout the United States on the first Saturday in June. Thousands of volunteers participate in work projects in national areas, parks and forests. If you would like to volunteer, contact Wally Linder for further information at (423) 569-2404, ext. 321 or online at www.americanhiking.org.

Daily and Evening Programs

Memorial Day through Labor Day

Throughout the summer months 15 minute programs will be held daily at Blue Heron Mining Community and at Bandy Creek Visitor Center. Evening programs will be offered at Blue Heron and Bandy Creek Campgrounds on Saturdays. These programs will feature different natural, cultural or recreational topics of the area. Program schedules with exact times and locations will be posted at Bandy Creek Visitor Center, and at Blue Heron Interpretive Center.

Storytelling Festival - September 15

Dulcimer Workshop

Bring your own dulcimer and learn to play a tune. Beginners' sessions will be held on the hour beginning at 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. and again at 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. A limited number of dulcimers will be on hand for the public's use. Please sign up the day of the classes.

Craft Workshops

Learn about some old time crafts of the region through classes, demonstrations and sales. Crafts offered may include candlewicking, wood carving, needle felting, survival skills and basket making. Registration for classes will be on Saturday morning. Classes will be scheduled throughout the day beginning at 10:00 a.m. and ending at 5:00 p.m. Some classes are up to four hours in length. To check on classes that will be offered call Bandy Creek Visitor Center at (423) 286 -7275.

Haunting in the Hills Storytelling Presentations

1:00 p.m. Family Oriented Stories
3:00 p.m. Special Local Tellers
5:00 p.m. Knoxville Area Dulcimer Club Concert
6:30 p.m. Bluegrass Music
8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Ghost Stories

National Public Lands Day - September 29

This is another opportunity for people to get involved with the park. Volunteers will be working on hiking, biking, horse and multiple-use trails. Public Lands Day is an annual event traditionally held on the last Saturday in September. Thousands of volunteers participate in work projects in national areas, parks and forests. If you would like to volunteer, contact Wally Linder for further information at (423) 569-2404, ext. 321 or online at www.publiclandsday.org.

Cumberland Heritage Month - October Saturdays - Blue Heron Mining Community

Enjoy a different cultural heritage activity each Saturday in October. Demonstrations and presentations might include blacksmithing, woodworking, spinning, old timey toys, dulcimer music, pioneer history, and coal mining displays. Activities will be located at the Blue Heron Depot and surrounding area. Times and schedules will be announced.

All Interpretive Programs are Subject to Change.

All events are Eastern Time.

Contact Bandy Creek Visitor Center at (423) 286-7275 (PARK) or the Blue Heron Interpretive Center at (606) 376-3787 or (606) 376-5073 for program details.

For special events information check on page 8.

Parks on the Internet

Most national park areas have a web page, and camping reservations for many parks may be done online. To find more information about camping and park facilities, special events and programs that each National Park Service area has to offer, use www.nps.gov. Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area's page may be directly accessed through www.nps.gov/biso. Find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @BigSouthForkNRR.

For more park information scan the QR code with your smart phone to see our webpages.



On the Cover: Oscar Blevins homeplaces (top left), Lora Blevins homeplace (top right), Corn crib with Cliff Thacker blacksmith demonstration (right), Charit Creek Lodge (bottom right), Blue Heron Coal Tipple (bottom left), and General Slaven barn (center). National Park Service Photos taken by Sue Duncan and Angie Graham.

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General Information

Tennessee -

Bandy Creek Visitor Center

(423) 286-7275 (PARK)

The Bandy Creek Visitor Center is open 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. November through Memorial Day. Memorial Day weekend through October the hours are 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.

The visitor center and its restrooms are accessible to mobility impaired visitors. One or more rangers are trained, to some degree, in sign language.



Kentucky -

Blue Heron Interpretive Center

(606) 376-3787 and (606) 376-5073.

The Blue Heron Interpretive Center is open April through October. Call for times and days of operation. The offices are closed November through March. Restrooms are available and handicapped accessible. Park rangers will be at the contact station when the Big South Fork Scenic Railway is in operation.

The scenic train ride into Blue Heron is fully accessible to individuals with mobility impairments. Blue Heron offers accessible restrooms and is partially accessible to individuals with mobility impairments (some steep grades and steps exist).



Campgrounds

Bandy Creek and Blue Heron campgrounds have designated mobility impaired accessible sites for families and groups. Restroom facilities are also handicapped accessible. Water and electric hook-ups are available at both campgrounds. Alum Ford in Kentucky is also handicapped accessible, but restrooms are primitive and there is no water or electric hook-ups.

Overlooks and River Access

East Rim and Honey Creek Overlooks in Tennessee and the Devils Jump Overlook in Kentucky are accessible to individuals with mobility impairments. Leatherwood Ford river access offers handicapped accessible trails and restrooms.

Backcountry Camping

Backcountry camping is allowed in Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area. **Backcountry permits are required** to camp in the backcountry overnight. The permit provides valuable information in case of an emergency. There are no designated campsites, but there are rules that indicate where you can and cannot camp. Rangers may check backcountry campers for permits. Visit the Bandy Creek Visitor Center or Blue Heron to obtain a permit. Backcountry permits may also be purchased online at www.nps.gov/biso/planyourvisit/online-backcountry-permits.htm. Please contact (423) 286-7275 for more information.

Permit fees are as follows:

1 - 6 people	\$5.00
7 - 12 people	\$10.00
13 - 18 people	\$15.00
19 - 24 people	\$20.00
25 - 30 people	\$25.00

A yearly permit is available for \$50.00. In addition to the visitor centers, see the following list of vendors for authorized backcountry camping permits.



Kentucky Vendors

Big M's Discount	(606) 376-8500
Fastway Marathon	(606) 376-2364
One Stop Chevron	(606) 376-9200
Sheltoewe Trace Outfitters	(606) 526-7238

Tennessee Vendors

Bandy Creek Stables	(423) 286-7433
Big South Fork Hitching Post	(931) 752-4230
Buckhorn's	(423) 569-9452
Big Orange Country Store	(423) 569-5010
Five Star Market and Deli	(931) 863-3354
Henbos BP	(931) 879-9734
Miller's General Store	(423) 286-3737
Rogers Automotive	(931) 879-7909
Rugby Commissary	(423) 628-5166
Scott County Welcome Center	(423) 663-4556
Stop N Go Market, Elgin	(423) 627-4100
Zenith Stables and Horsecamp	(931) 879-5252

River Information

The Big South Fork of the Cumberland River is a free flowing river. Sections of the river are calm enough for beginners while other parts are more challenging and have exciting whitewater. Peak times for river use are in the spring and sometimes late fall or winter. There is only one commercial company which provides equipment and trips for canoeing and rafting the river. If you are planning a river trip with your own equipment and expertise, please check in at the Bandy Creek Visitor Center to file a trip plan, register for overnight river trips, and obtain information that will help you have a safe trip. The website for current stream flow information is: <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/tn/nwis/current/?type=flow>.

Permitted Outfitters

Sheltoewe Trace Outfitters - River Trips
P.O. Box 1060
Whitley City, Kentucky 42653
1-800-541-RAFT or (606) 376-5567



Southeast Pack Trips, Inc. - Horseback Trips

299 Dewey Burkes Road
Jamestown, Tennessee 38556
(931) 879-2260

Saddle Valley - Horseback Trips

350 Dewey Burkes Road
Jamestown, Tennessee 38556
(931) 879-6262



Hitching Post General Store - Horseback Trips

Highway 297
Jamestown, Tennessee 38556
(931) 752-2888

Concessionaires

Bandy Creek Stables - (423) 286-7433 -
<http://www.bandycreekstables.net>

Big South Fork Scenic Railway - (800)-462-5664
<http://www.bsfsry.com>

Charit Creek Lodge - (931) 879-2776 -
<http://www.charitcreeklodge.com>

Eastern National - (423) 286-7275 -
<http://www.eparks.com/store>

Station Camp and Bear Creek Horse Camps - (423)
569-3321 - <http://www.bigsouthforkhorsecamps.com>.

Blue Heron Snack Bar Operation Hours

April - Thursday and Friday - 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. ET.
Saturday - 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET.

May - September - Wednesday through Friday - 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. ET. Saturday and Sunday - 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET. Holiday Mondays from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. ET.

October - Tuesday through Friday - 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. ET. Saturday and Sunday - 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET.

Safety Facts

Keep safe and enjoy your trip to Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area by following these precautions:

- (1) Be aware that there are poisonous snakes (copperheads and timber rattlesnakes), ticks, chiggers, and poison ivy found here. Be cautious as you hike the trails or use the backcountry. Always use a flashlight when walking at night to avoid stepping on a snake.
- (2) Plan ahead and leave information about your trip with someone at home.
- (3) **Backcountry camping permits are required.** These provide information to park rangers in case of emergencies. **Obtain a permit online, at a park visitor center or at any of the vendors mentioned above.**
- (4) Store all food, food containers and coolers out of reach from wildlife. Hang food in the backcountry so bears cannot reach it. A copy of the food storage regulations can be obtained from the visitor centers or the campground kiosks.
- (5) Ticks and chiggers can cause irritating itchy bumps and sometimes a rash. Other insects like gnats, deer flies and mosquitoes can also be a nuisance while camping, horseback riding or hiking. Ticks can carry diseases. Protect yourself and your pets by using an insect repellent. Check yourself after being outdoors to remove ticks.



Emergency Numbers

For emergency assistance dial 911 or:

Tennessee

Bandy Creek Visitor Center

(423) 286-7275 (PARK) -
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time daily.
Memorial Day through Labor day -
8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time daily.

Scott County Hospital, Highway 27, Oneida, TN
(423) 569-8521

Scott County Ambulance, Oneida, TN
(423) 569-6000

Scott County Sheriff
Huntsville, TN
(423) 663-2245

Jamestown Regional Medical Center
W. Central Avenue, Jamestown, TN
(931) 879-8171

Fentress County Ambulance
(931) 879-8147

Fentress County Sheriff
Jamestown, TN
(931) 879-8142

Kentucky

Blue Heron Interpretive Center

(606) 376-3787
(606) 376-5073
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time -
April through November.

McCreary County Ambulance
(606) 376-5062

McCreary County Sheriff
(606) 376-2322

Campgrounds

Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area offers three campgrounds (Bandy Creek, Blue Heron, and Alum Ford) operated by the National Park Service and two horse campgrounds (Station Camp and Bear Creek) operated by a concessionaire. Bandy Creek Campground and Station Camp Horse Camp are located in Tennessee. Blue Heron, Alum Ford and Bear Creek campgrounds are located in Kentucky. Holders of Senior and Access Passes are entitled to a 50% discount for campsites at Park Service operated campgrounds. Discounts do not apply at the concession operated horse camps.

Bandy Creek Campground

Bandy Creek Campground is open year round. Sites may be reserved April 1 through October 31 online at www.recreation.gov or by calling 1-877-444-6777. Although a reservation system is in place, campers are still welcome on a first-come, first-served basis for unreserved campsites. It is always a good idea to call the Bandy Creek Campground at (423) 286-8368 before arriving. The campground does fill up during holidays and special events. Check-in for the campground is at the entrance station kiosk.

From November 1 through March 31, campsites are only taken on a first-come, first-served basis. During this time campers self-register by filling out an envelope from the entrance station, picking their site and then placing the fee into the provided envelope. Drop the envelope into the fee collection box at the campground entrance station.

Areas B, C and D offer 98 sites which have electric/water hookups. Area A offers 49 tent sites. Restroom/bathhouse facilities are located in areas A, C and D which have hot showers and are handicapped accessible. By the end of the 2012 season all restrooms/bathhouses in the campground will be mobility impaired accessible. Once completed, there will be a total of three accessible campsites in area A, one campsite in area C, four campsites in area D and one campsite in each group camp.

Bandy Creek sites in areas B, C, and D are \$22.00 for water/electric hookups per night and \$19.00 for tents per night in Area A. Although Area A has no electric hook-ups, RVs, pop-ups, and horse trailers are permitted in sites A1 – A12. Sites A13 – A49 are restricted for tents only.

Bandy Creek Group Area E-1 and E-2 are for large groups of 25 or more. E-1 offers 19 individual sites and E-2 offers 16 individual sites. These sites do not have electric/water hookups. The group areas offer a covered pavilion with electric/water and a cooking area. A fire ring for campfires is available. Separate bathhouses for each area offer hot showers. The cost is \$75.00 minimum charge per night for up to 25 persons, plus \$3.00 for each additional person. Reservations can be made for the group camp up to one year in advance by calling 1-877-444-6777 or by going online at www.recreation.gov.

Blue Heron

Blue Heron Campground sites may be reserved from April 1 through October 31 by calling 1-877-444-6777. Blue Heron is closed during the winter season. Blue Heron offers 45 sites, with one site designated as accessible to mobility impaired individuals. Restroom facilities are also handicapped accessible. There is a fire ring and a dump station provided. Sites are \$17.00 per night with water/electric hookups. Although a reservation system is in place, campers are still welcome on a first-come, first-served basis for unreserved campsites. For additional information call (606) 376-2611.

Alum Ford

Alum Ford is a primitive campground and offers seven campsites with a vault toilet facility. No drinking water is located at this area. The fee is \$5.00 per night. For additional information call (606) 376-5073. Alum Ford also has a boat ramp but, due to Lake Cumberland draw-down, the boat ramp is not usable at this time.

Horse Camps

Both Station Camp and Bear Creek are operated by a concessionaire. There are water and electric hookups plus a tie out area for four horses at each site. The bathhouses have hot water showers. For more information about the horse camps or to make reservations, call (423) 569-3321.

Horseback riders staying at Bandy Creek Campground need to make separate reservations for their horses at Bandy Creek Stables. The stables are located a short distance across the road from the campground. Paddocks and stalls are available for rent. For more information about Bandy Creek Stables, please call (423) 286-7433 or go online to www.bandycreekstables.net.



The Bandy Creek Pool

By Letitia Casada,
Supervisory Visitor Use Assistant

Built in 1988 by the Army Corps of Engineers, the Bandy Creek pool is a rare amenity for a National Park Service campground. The complex contains a main pool, wading pool, accessible restrooms, outdoor shower, volleyball court, playground, and picnic shelter. The pool is open to campers as well as non-campers daily from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The hours are 10:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. ET. The daily use fees are based on age:

Adults 13 years and older: \$3.00
Children 6 to 12 years: \$2.00
Children 5 years and under: FREE

All Bandy Creek pool patrons must pay at the campground entrance station and obtain a ticket in order to enter the pool area. Wristbands will only be available to season pass holders. Season passes are available for purchase by families and individuals. The family season pass covers up to six family members and is good through Labor Day weekend for a one-time fee of \$35.00. Individual passes are \$25.00. Wristbands may be replaced if damaged or if a receipt is presented for the original purchase.

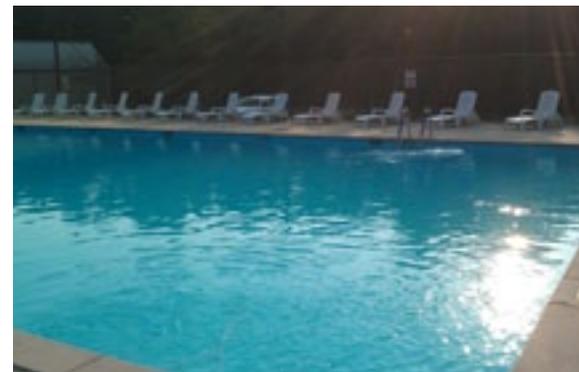
After-hour pool rentals can be made depending upon availability. The pool may be rented up to three hours after closing. Pool rental includes the picnic shelter, swimming pool, wading pool, restrooms and a lifeguard. Additional lifeguards may be needed depending on the number of persons using the pool. For groups with more than 25 persons, a Special Use Permit (SUP) is required. In order to obtain an SUP, please call (423) 569-2404 ext. 267, Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Payments must be received at least one business day prior to the planned event.

AFTER-HOURS RENTAL FEES

One hour (7:30 to 8:30):
\$25.00 for up to 25 persons
\$75.00 for 26 to 50 persons
\$100.00 for 51 to 75 persons
\$110.00 for 76 to 100 persons

Two hours (7:30 to 9:30):
\$40.00 for up to 25 persons
\$110.00 for 26 to 50 persons
\$140.00 for 51 to 75 persons
\$175.00 for 76 to 100 persons

Three hours (7:30 to 10:30):
\$65.00 for up to 25 persons
\$150.00 for 26 to 50 persons
\$195.00 for 51 to 75 persons
\$260.00 for 76 to 100 persons



America the Beautiful

National Parks & Federal Recreational Lands Pass



ANNUAL PASS

America the Beautiful - National Parks & Federal Recreational Lands Annual Pass photo will be replaced each year. A Federal Lands photo contest is held each year. The grand prize winning image will be featured on the subsequent year's annual pass. Information on the current contest for the 2012 annual pass image can be found at www.sharetheexperience.org. The annual pass sells for \$80.00 and is good for one year from date of purchase. The pass covers entrance fees at National Park Service and other federal areas. The pass can be purchased at federal recreation sites that charge entrance or standard amenity fees.



SENIOR PASS

The Senior Pass replaces the Golden Age Passport. Golden Age Passports will continue to be honored. The Senior Pass sells for \$10.00 and is good for life. Any permanent resident of the United States 62 years or older may purchase the Senior Pass. This pass covers entrance fees to federal areas. Camping and guided tour fees are discounted 50% for cardholders. The pass can be purchased at federal recreation sites that charge entrance or standard amenity fees.



ACCESS PASS

The Access Pass replaces the Golden Access Passport. Existing Golden Access Passports will continue to be honored. The Access Pass is free. Any age U.S. citizen or permanent resident who has medical proof of a permanent disability can apply. The Access Pass covers the entrance fees to National Park Service and other federal areas. Camping and guided tour fees are discounted 50% for cardholders. The pass can be obtained at federal recreation sites that charge entrance or standard amenity fees.



Hunting Seasons

Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area does allow hunting during regular state seasons. Check with the Bandy Creek Visitor Center or at Blue Heron for maps of the safety (no hunting) zones and regulations. Hunters must be licensed in the state in which they will be hunting. It is the hunter's responsibility to know where the state lines are in the backcountry.

Kentucky Big Game Hunting Seasons

Deer Archery - Zone 1-4: Third Saturday in September through third Monday in January.

Deer Muzzleloader - Zone 1-4: Two consecutive days beginning the fourth Saturday in October and seven consecutive days beginning the second Saturday in December.

Deer Modern Gun - Zones 1-2: 16 consecutive days, beginning the second Saturday in November. Zones 3-4: 10 consecutive days, beginning the second Saturday in November.

Deer Youth Hunt - Zones 1-4: Two consecutive days beginning the third Saturday in October.

Boar - Wild hogs may be taken during open deer season and during the extended hog season. The extended hog season runs from the end of big game season in January and continues through February 28. Hunters must have a valid hunting license and a Big South Fork hog permit during the extended hunt.

Big South Fork NRRRA is in Zone 4.

For exact dates, contact Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, 1 Game Farm Road, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601, (502) 564-4336. Website: www.fw.ky.gov.

Tennessee Big Game Hunting Seasons

Permanent Opening Dates

Quail and Rabbit - Second Saturday in November.

Squirrel - Fourth Saturday in August.

Deer/Archery - Last Saturday in September.

Deer/Gun - Saturday before Thanksgiving.

Deer/Juvenile only - First Saturday and Sunday in November.

Boar - Wild hogs may be taken during open deer season and during the extended hog season. The extended hog season runs from the end of big game season in January and continues through February 28. Hunters must have a valid hunting license and a Big South Fork hog permit during the extended hunt.

For exact dates, please contact Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Region III, (931) 484-9571 or 1-800-262-6704 and Region IV, (423) 587-7037 or 1-800-332-0900 in Tennessee. Website: www.tnwildlife.org. Check Kentucky and Tennessee hunting guides for small game seasons.

Lost and Found

Report any lost items to rangers at Bandy Creek Visitor Center in Tennessee or at Blue Heron Interpretive Center which is found in Kentucky. Found items should be turned in at Bandy Creek, Blue Heron or either campground kiosk.

Big South Fork Bookstores

If you are looking for information and unique items concerning Big South Fork, check out the bookstores located at Bandy Creek Visitor Center and Blue Heron Interpretive Center. The bookstores are operated by Eastern National, a non-profit cooperating association founded in 1947 and authorized by Congress to work with America's national parks and other public trusts. The mission of Eastern National is to provide quality educational and interpretive products to the public.

The bookstores will be going through some changes in 2012. They will have a new look and some new items too! Look for sales of discontinued items as we bring in new books and crafts to replace them. Look also for a change in location of our Kentucky bookstore to Blue Heron Interpretive Center (Mining Community Depot).

Eastern provides a variety of unique items that will enhance your visit. Items offered for sale include maps, trail guides, books of local interest and unique craft items. By purchasing an item from the bookstore, you are supporting Big South Fork. Eastern returns a percentage of its profits to use for promoting the historical, scientific and conservation activities of the National Park Service. Among other projects, these donations are used to fund publications such as this newspaper. Membership in Eastern National entitles you to a discount on merchandise and helps support the programs of the National Park Service. For more information about Eastern National or to become a member, visit www.EasternNational.org.

Any item you see in our bookstore can be ordered by mail. Mail orders must include a personal check made payable to "Eastern National". All items are subject to applicable tax, shipping and handling charges. Call (423) 286-7275 or write to Eastern National Bookstore, 4564 Leatherwood Road, Oneida, Tennessee 37841 for more bookstore information.



JUNIOR RANGER PROGRAM

Big South Fork has a Junior Ranger book and a cool cloth patch for you to earn for your jacket or book bag. Kids from age 4 to 12 are invited to use this book to explore Big South Fork with Oscar, the river otter. Many activities will help you learn about animals, plants, rocks, rivers and a coal mining town.



In addition to completing your book, you will be encouraged to explore the park by hiking a trail, riding a horse or a bicycle or paddling on the river. After successfully completing the Junior Ranger Program, you will receive a badge and a certificate to hang on your wall.

Come by one of the visitor centers and pick up your free Junior Ranger book today!

Fee Free Weekends at Big South Fork

Rough economic times call for economical fun, and you can't beat America's 397 national parks for family time, fresh air, and opportunities to learn about our great country. Every day there are more than 200 national parks that never charge an entrance fee. Find one close to you at www.nps.gov.

April 21 through 29, 2012, is National Park Week. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced that 397 national parks will have free admission during National Park Week. Normally, 146 of 397 national parks charge entrance fees ranging from \$3.00 to \$25.00. In addition to the free fees, parks will be offering family friendly activities and special promotions. Check out the website at www.nps.gov/npweek.

Although Big South Fork does not collect entrance fees, we do have use fees. The park will have fee free days for backcountry camping, swimming pool use, and camping at Alum Ford Campground. Permits will still be required, but there will be no charge. The following dates are the official fee free days of 2012:

January 14 -16 Martin Luther King Jr. Weekend

April 21 - 29 - National Park Week

June 9- Get Outdoors Day

September - National Public Lands Day, September 29, 2012

November 10 -12 - Veterans Day weekend



WHERE DO RANGERS "RANGE"?



By Frank Graham, Retired Chief of Visitor Protection (pictured left)

Visitors to National Park Service areas often wonder where park rangers go in a given day. Of course every day is different, which is one of the nice things about being a ranger. In general, rangers go everywhere. At Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, there are a wide

variety of places to patrol in order to protect the public and the resources of the park. Big South Fork has almost 125,000 acres to roam around in and a huge variety of recreational activities available for the public. With so much area to patrol, rangers have to be versed in many different types of "ranging" and they must have a high level of expertise mastering many skills.

Big South Fork has over 150 miles of horse trails throughout the park. Patrolling by horseback is essential. The park currently has two horses, Ed and Pistol, that are used for patrol. They reside at the Oscar Blevins farmstead near the Bandy Creek Visitor Center. The horses need to be fed and watered every day even when they aren't being used. Keeping our horses properly cared for is one of many ranger responsibilities. Our well trained horses are friendly around people. When you see a ranger on horseback, talk to the ranger about their horse. The park horses love attention. Ask the ranger if you may pet their horse.

Fire Is Natural

By Tommy Barnes, Park Ranger

For many years we were taught at an early age by Bambi, Smokey Bear and others that fires burning in the woodlands are bad for the forest. This was the official policy for almost 100 years in the United States, and all fires were to be suppressed as soon as possible. The goal was to have every fire out by 10 a.m. the next day.

Through years of scientific research, we have learned that fire is an essential, natural process. It has helped shape our woodlands for thousands of years and is important for the survival of many plants and animals. Fires remove the layers of dead and down trees, leaves and other vegetation from the forest floor that can inhibit plant growth and recycles the nutrients back in to the environment. Fire also increases the diversity of plant and wildlife habitat; some plants such as American Chaffseed has disappeared from the park because they need fire to reproduce.

Research tells us that prior to human settlement, the fire history of the Southern Appalachian Region was a pattern of small low intensity fires interspersed over the landscape at irregular intervals with occasional large fires.

The frequency at which fires occurred increased with the arrival of humans about 10,000 years ago. European settlers used fire to clear land and facilitate farming and grazing in to the early 1900s. The 10 a.m. Policy of fire suppression began to develop

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With over 100 miles of hiking trails in the area, it is not uncommon to see a ranger out hiking trails with their boots muddy and their backpack full. Since rangers are responsible for the safety of our visitors, a ranger's backpack will have more items in it in addition to food and water. Rangers will have a radio, GPS, EMS gear and other items used to protect themselves or to help lost and injured visitors. Many of our rangers are trained as EMTs and can provide a lot of help to an injured visitor with a minimum of equipment. The next time you see a ranger walking down the trail, stop and talk a minute as rangers love to talk to visitors.

In addition to the traditional ways of traveling around the park, rangers also use specialized equipment such as ATVs, bikes, rafts, canoes, kayaks and even power boats. While most visitors go venturing around the park during good weather and day time hours, rangers have to be able to go out in the worst weather and in the middle of night if problems arise. Rangers will tell you that they enjoy traveling around the park. Most will admit, however, that it isn't fun going out in the middle of a dark, cold, snowy night looking for someone who is lost because they didn't have a map. Still part of the reason rangers do the work they have chosen is the satisfaction of helping someone in a time of need.

The park being so large, you might wonder if a ranger knows the whole park. The truth is that it is hard for even rangers to know everything about everywhere. To that end, park management has divided the park into more workable pieces. The most obvious division is between Kentucky and Tennessee. Rangers are primarily assigned to each of these areas known as districts. The ranger's job

around 1910. By 1933, the policy was in full effect and the number of fires each year decreased dramatically.

Today we see the effects of the 10 a.m. Policy in the unnatural accumulations of fuels found in much of our forests. We know now that, when paired with the right terrain and weather conditions, this dense build-up of vegetation leads to fires that burn hotter, last longer, and spread faster. As a result, these fires become difficult to manage and can threaten areas of residential development. In some areas the excess vegetation and lack of fire is affecting the diversity of plant and animal life.

In 2004 the Big South Fork NRRRA completed a Fire Management Plan and began a long term project to restore the role of fire in the ecosystem. The park uses controlled burns to reintroduce fire into the natural landscape. These controlled burns are fires that are intentionally set by park staff when weather conditions are most likely to recreate the low intensity fires that have occurred naturally in this region for thousands of years.

During the spring of 2012, park fire crews will be conducting a series of controlled burns varying in size from 38 to 2080 acres at several locations throughout the park. A crew of 25 - 35 firefighters, several fire engines and a helicopter will be on hand for each burn.

The Darrow Ridge controlled burn is located on the western edge of the park in Fentress County Tennessee. Portions of the controlled burns are located

is to know the whole park, but know their district even better. Since even a district can be more than 50,000 acres, we have divided the park into even smaller units called sub-districts. These 15,000 - 20,000 acre chunks are where the rangers try to concentrate their knowledge. They patrol the roads, trails, boundaries, and any place people might travel. They become familiar with the terrain, the wildlife and the resources of these sub districts. In essence, they become the park expert for this area. It may take a year or more to get really familiar with the sub-district, but the extensive knowledge pays off when there is a problem.

So the next time you see a ranger out in the park, stop for a moment and ask them "where have you ranged today?" You might be surprised at their answer.



Rangers Jimmy Barna and Kristy Slaven perform multiple duties during the course of a day.

in McCreary County Kentucky and in Scott and Fentress Counties in Tennessee. The project encompasses approximately 520 acres. The Gobblers Knob A&C and Gobblers Knob B controlled burns are located on the northwestern edge of the park near the Tennessee/Kentucky state line. The Gobblers Knob A & C project encompasses approximately 2465 acres, and the Gobblers Knob B project encompasses approximately 3334 acres.

Please contact the park's visitor center at 423-286-7275 for the latest information on the current status of the prescribed burns and associated closures.



Firewood Ban In Effect

By Marie Kerr, Botanist

Big South Fork NRRRA has issued a ban on firewood of all hardwood species (non-coniferous) coming into the National Area from outside the following counties: Fentress, Morgan, Pickett and Scott counties in Tennessee, and McCreary County in Kentucky. Non-coniferous firewood brought into the park from outside of these counties is prohibited, unless it is bundled and stamped with a USDA, State of Kentucky, or State of Tennessee stamp, certifying that the wood meets USDA Heat T314-a treatment standard. Firewood brought in from within the five aforementioned counties will be permitted.

Why Ban Firewood?

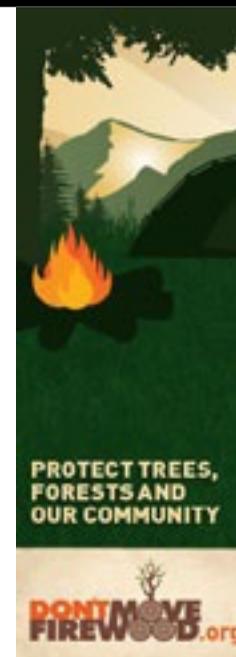
Many people are familiar with chestnut blight which, after an accidental introduction to North America around 1900, wiped out virtually all mature chestnut trees from their historic range in the southeast by 1940. This devastating blight is caused by fungus that is thought to have been accidentally introduced to North America through imported chestnut lumber or chestnut trees. The purpose of the National Area ban on outside firewood is to prevent the introduction of insects and diseases that are known to be causing similar devastation to tree stands throughout the United States. The transport of infected firewood has proven to be one of the most common ways that insects and diseases are spread to live trees.

Two species in particular are of great concern to the National Area. Emerald ash borer has decimated ash trees throughout the northeast and is rapidly spreading south. Tens of millions of ash trees have already been killed or are heavily infested by this pest. Heavily infested trees may die after 3-4 years of infestation. Another pest, the walnut twig beetle, carries a fungus that causes thousand cankers disease in walnut species. Walnut trees infected with the fungus usually die within 3 years of initial symptoms.

Beyond the National Area's desire and intent to simply save trees from invasive pests and diseases, we are also bound by both federal and state regulations that govern the movement of non-coniferous species of trees out of quarantined areas. In 2010, both Kentucky and Tennessee enacted emergency legislation that quarantines counties with confirmed presence of emerald ash borer and/or thousand cankers disease, and regulates movement of firewood out of quarantined counties.

How Can You Help?

Please help us stop the spread of harmful insects into the area by heeding the firewood ban while visiting the park. Visitors may gather firewood, at no cost, from within the National Area, or can obtain firewood from any of several local firewood vendors within the five aforementioned counties. For more information about firewood restrictions, call the Bandy Creek Visitor Center at (423) 286-7275 or campground staff at (423) 286-8368.



Firewood is available for purchase at the Bandy Creek Stables.



Land Reclaimed at Legacy Mineral Extraction Sites



By Todd Knoedler, Geologist, and Tom Blount, Chief of Resource Management

In June 2010, work began to plug and reclaim 53 oil and gas wells in Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, in TN and KY. This high-profile effort is the largest undertaking of its kind in the history of the NPS, and represents one of the most important mitigations of threat to visitor safety and resource protection currently ongoing in the eastern U.S. The 53 wells to be plugged are *orphaned*, mean-

ing no responsible party has been identified and the wells were simply abandoned.

Above ground, most of the well sites are little more than a rusty pipe sticking out of the ground and the occasional abandoned storage tank or pump jack and refuse. These wells are a hazard to visitor safety. Many of the wells leak natural gas at the surface, which is combustible and displaces breathable air. Below ground, these orphaned wells present a number of problems which could threaten groundwater. The Big South Fork of the Cumberland River is considered a Tier III Outstanding National Resource Water under the Clean Water Act, which mandates protection of water quality. Although there are no current indications of subsurface mixing, plugging is important to protect water resources. Plugging of leaking wells also reduces air pollution. An analysis of the air quality issues at Big South Fork indicated that 56 tons per year of volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions from open casings and shut-in wells would be eliminated by the current plugging projects.

In addition to the 53 oil and gas wells being plugged, 37 coal mines were closed between June 2010 and June 2011. These mines presented a safety hazard to visitors due to integrity failure (collapse), poor air quality, and confined space hazards. Mines that presented suitable habitat for bats and other fauna were fitted with gates that precluded entrance by park visitors but allowed bats and other animals to pass easily. Other mines were closed permanently using polyurethane foam (PUF) technology. PUF is chemically similar to the material found in TUFF-Stuff® window and penetration sealant. PUF was applied alternately

with local stone in the adit portal to plug the mine. A drainage pipe was installed at the base of the closure to allow condensate and meteoric water to escape thus preventing water pressure behind the plug. The portal was completed by applying 3-6 feet of natural fill to restore the appearance of the natural landscape and to protect the cured PUF material from ultraviolet radiation.

The Big South Fork region has an extensive extraction history. Coal mining began here in the late 1800s, and Big South Fork is also home to the first commercial oil well drilled in the United States. In 1818, the Martin Beatty well was drilled in search of brine for salt extraction. Instead, drillers hit a pressurized oil bearing zone. At that time, crude oil had no value as an energy source. The oil was shipped to Europe for its assumed medicinal value. This well has been plugged to protect visitors and park resources, but the site's surface features were allowed to remain intact to preserve the historical value of this site.

There are still active oil and gas wells in the park. Coal mining is no longer permitted, but certain coal mining features within the park boundary are relics of history that are being preserved for their cultural value, such as the Blue Heron Mining Community.

Funds made available from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act enabled the NPS to plug 39 of the orphaned wells and all 37 mines. The remaining 14 wells are being plugged through other funding in a joint venture with the State of Tennessee.



Spring Planting Day Festival Saturday, April 28, 2012

Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area will be hosting its Twelfth Annual Spring Planting Day on Saturday, April 28, 2012, at Bandy Creek and the Lora Blevins homeplace. Celebrate the heritage of farming life on the Cumberland Plateau with a planting day festival. Come join park neighbors, volunteers and park staff as they demonstrate the many skills and tools that were once so commonplace here on the plateau and important to a subsistence farming community.



Featured Events

- Draft horse and mule drawn plowing demonstrations.
- Gardening, herb lore, wood working, blacksmithing, basket weaving, hand spinning and lye soap making.
- Farm animal petting zoo for children. Junior Ranger activity booklet.
- Craft demonstrators and sales of traditional items.
- Displays of women's life, planting and old woodworking tools, along with historical photographs of past residents of the area.
- Antique tractor and farm equipment display.

If you have equipment dated from the 1930s through the 1960s and would like to participate, please call for details.

• Music presented by the Knoxville Area Dulcimer Club.

The event will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Everyone is invited to attend this free event. Food will be available for purchase from a vendor or bring your picnic lunch and enjoy the day. For further information call (423) 286-7275.

Use the QR code on the left with your smart phone to view our webpage.

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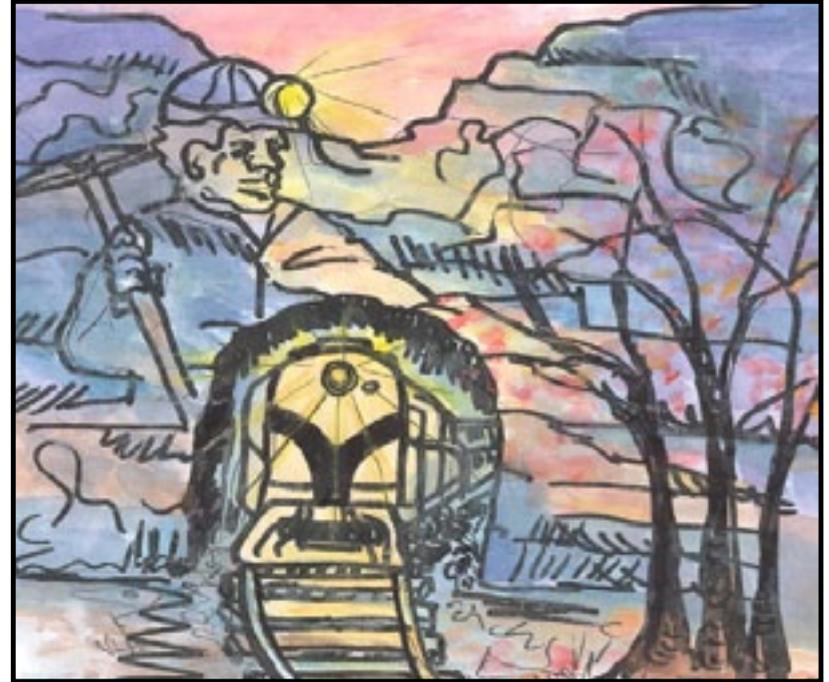
Photos courtesy of Angela Graham.



Blue Heron Ghost Train

Saturday, September 8, 2012

7:00 p.m. ET, Stearns, Kentucky Depot



You are invited to join the National Park Service and the Scenic Railway for an evening of ghostly storytelling entertainment.

The Second Annual Blue Heron Ghost Train is sponsored by Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area in cooperation with the Big South Fork Scenic Railway, McCreary County Library and the McCreary County Performing Arts Council

Train Fares: \$12.00 - Adults, \$6.00 - Children 12 and under
Programs are free at Blue Heron. Persons driving to Blue Heron should arrive by 7:30 p.m.
Contact Big South Fork NRRRA (423) - 286-7275 (www.nps.gov/biso) or the Scenic Railway at (606) 376-5330 (www.bsfsry.com)

Twentieth Annual Storytelling Festival Haunting in the Hills



Saturday, September 15, 2012
Big South Fork NRRRA - Bandy Creek Field

- 10:00 a.m. Folk Art Workshops, Demonstrations and Sales
- 1:00 p.m. Family Oriented Storytelling
- 3:00 p.m. Local Tellers
- 5:00 p.m. Dulcimer Concert
- 6:30 p.m. Bluegrass Music
- 8:00 p.m. Ghost Stories guaranteed to thrill and chill listeners of all ages.



Featuring Nationally Known Storytellers

Come join us for a full day of fun and activities. Free and open to the public. For further information contact Bandy Creek Visitor Center at (423) 286-7275.



Cultural Heritage Days

Enjoy October Saturdays at the Blue Heron Coal Mining Community in celebration of the area's cultural heritage. Each Saturday a different activity or event will be presented. Handspinning, candle wick embroidery, old timey toys, blackpowder rifle firing, woodworking, blacksmithing, dulcimer concerts and coal mining programs are just a few of the events presented by park staff and volunteers. All events are free to the public and everyone is invited to attend. Times and dates of these events will be announced prior to each Saturday in October, or call: (606) 376-5073 or (606) 376-3787.



NPS Photos: Top Left clockwise Volunteer Sam Perry, Park Ranger Howard Duncan, Park Ranger Sue Duncan, Volunteer Rita Perry, Volunteer Mack Davenport, and Park Guide Jessica Moore.

Teacher - Ranger - Teacher



Top: Tracy shows Thomas Walker, a student at Oneida Elementary School the old timey toys display and lets him hold Blizzard, the snow corn snake (bottom photo).

By: Tracy Spain, Teacher -Ranger - Teacher
Like any public school teacher, I spent the last month of school counting down the days until summer break. My excitement revolved around my 2011 summer plans, different from any other summer I had experienced before. I was about to embark on a journey that took me behind the scenes in the Big South Fork National River & Recreation Area as a park ranger! Best of all, I'd don the familiar gray and green uniforms I had grown to recognize at any park!

Many national parks around the country choose to hire a teacher for 8 weeks during the summer through the Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) program. As a ranger, the TRT assists with programming, helps at the visitor center, and shadows other rangers to broaden their knowledge of the park service. The teacher brings to the park a perspective of how best to present materials to children. The TRT may find common ground between state standards and programming the park may have to offer. Likewise, the ranger aspect can be taken back to the classroom in the fall. I encourage my students to explore and enjoy the Big South Fork, recycle whenever possible, and I remind students there are many career opportunities that might meet their interests.

In April 2012, I will wear my coveted park uniform to school during National Park Week. During that week, I will spend time promoting use of the Big South Fork and other national parks. Travel opens our eyes to a whole new world beyond just our city, county, and state boundaries. I am richer for all the travel experiences I have had in America's National Parks, and my goal is to make that real for my students as well.

Big South Fork will give another educator the opportunity to participate in the Teacher to Ranger to Teacher program in 2012. The park signs an agreement with a local public school district to allow a teacher to work as a park ranger during the summer.

Our busy lives are often filled with distractions to the point of losing sight of what really matters. Often, today's children spend so much time inside, kids don't even know what's in their own backyards. In order to preserve our natural and cultural heritage for future generations, we as adults need to share our knowledge, experiences and enthusiasm with children, the future caretakers of America's special places. That's what Teacher to Ranger to Teacher is all about.

Hiding Right Out In the Open: Immature Insects

By Bill Herman, Park Guide

Do you know countless kinds of insects and their close relatives occupy about every nook and cranny throughout this park? Many of these amazing creatures are in plain view for all who take the time to look. But few people really take the time to get a closer look into the secret world of many of these fascinating mini-beasts, and fewer still know what they are seeing. Discussing all of them would clearly be an impossible task. This article will bring to light a few snippets of information about the bizarre lives of two common ones that visitors often encounter on the trails and occasionally ask about. Armed with this information, my hope is the curious observer will have a better idea of where to look and what to look for when wandering in the woods.



Left: Frothy spittle mass on eastern white pine caused by an immature spittlebug. Herbert A. 'Joe' Pase III, Texas. Forest Service. Bugwood.org.
Right: Spittlebug Nymph Lacey L. Hyche, Auburn University. Bugwood.org.

Foam Sweet Home: The Spittlebug. As you roam up and down this park's wonderful trails in late spring and early summer, especially in fields and along a forest's edge, you may encounter what looks like a little white frothy masses of "spit" clinging to the foliage of numerous plants. Historically, people had assumed these conspicuous spittle accumulations were caused by the perspiration of the plant itself, snake spit, or possibly spider spit. While others may have simply blamed previous trail-users for these superficially repulsive spit-like globules. The true explanation is actually much more interesting!

The next time you see one of these easy-to-find blobs of foam take the time to reach down and carefully push the suds-like material aside to reveal a nymph (immature stage) spittlebug. This plant-feeding bubble-maker doesn't bite, so go ahead and let one crawl on your finger. Then you can return the critter back to its cozy foam home. If you are patient, sit and wait for it to pierce the plant stem and begin feeding again. Watch the nymph make more bubbles and once again shield itself from drying out and the hungry jaws of its numerous enemies. One last thought. It's not really spittle; the foam is the by-product of its waste. The liquid is actually secreted from the other end.



Adult gall midge laying eggs on maple leaf. Wikimedia. org.



Above: Large oak-apple gall caused by tiny immature wasp. Steven Katovich, USDA Forest Service. Bugwood.org

Lumps and Bumps: The Gall Makers. Many an observant visitor is often intrigued when they see a strange and mysterious outgrowth on a plant. Known as a plant gall, this weird structure is the result of any one of thousands of species of invading organisms that enter plants and stimulate abnormal growth within plant cells. The causative organisms include, but are not limited to, a myriad of immature arthropods (insects and mites), mistletoe, fungi, viruses, and bacteria. The rapid growth of a unique gall provides a home, food, and protection for the invading organism. While galls occur on the majority of plant life, many are very well hidden and difficult to identify. Below are listed a few examples of some galls you can easily spot on plant life along woodland trails.



Left: Eyespot galls on red maple caused by a small immature midge fly. Steven Katovich, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org. Bladder galls (center) and spindle galls (right) on maple leaves caused by a small immature midge mite. Ohio State University. Extension Photo.

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Confirmed in Big South Fork

By Brett Baker and Rebecca Houser, Biological Science Technicians

Hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) was first detected on hemlock trees in the Blue Heron area of Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area in October of 2010. Since then, HWA has been detected in four additional stands within Big South Fork, three on park land and one on the Scott State Forest inholding in the Bandy Creek area. The park intends to complete chemical treatment of all five known infestations by the end of 2011. Based on infestations in nearby regions, managers expect the number of infested stands to increase at a rate that will soon outpace their resources to treat trees. Since hemlock stands comprise nearly 13 percent (16,000 acres) of the Big South Fork's total 123,000 acres, protection of all hemlocks is not feasible. Therefore, strategies are currently being developed to save as many hemlock trees in Big South Fork as possible.

The hemlock woolly adelgid is an aphid-like insect that threatens the health and sustainability of eastern and Carolina hemlock trees throughout their native ranges in the Eastern United States. It was introduced to North America from Asia in the 1920s, found in the Eastern U.S. in 1951, and spread throughout much of the south. Though they are very tiny (less than 1/16 inch long), populations of HWA have devastated thousands of acres of hemlock trees, leaving ghostly gray stands of dead hemlock in their wake. Eastern and Carolina hemlock trees that become infested with HWA are expected to die within 3-5 years if not treated in some manner.

In the spring of 2011, park staff started actively treating infested hemlock stands in Big South Fork with an insecticide called imidacloprid. Two methods of treatment, stem injections and soil application, have been used so far. For stem injections, the chemical, in a concentrated liquid form, is injected directly into the trunks of individual hemlock trees. This method requires drilling into the trees and then injecting them with the chemical via specialized equipment. For soil applications, a powdered form of the chemical is mixed with water then applied to the soil at the base of the tree. This method requires removing small amounts of soil (enough to expose fine roots in the soil), pouring the appropriate amount of chemical directly into the exposed soil, then replacing the soil. The amount of chemical poured around the base of each tree is very small, usually one ounce of chemical for every inch of diameter, depending on the desired dose. In both application methods, the chemical is taken up by trees and transported throughout, eventually reaching the needles where HWA ingest it as they feed. Imidacloprid, which can stay active in trees as long as 5 years, has proven to be very effective for control of HWA. Hemlock trees selected for treatment at Big South Fork will be scheduled for cyclic treatments at intervals of 3 to 5 years.

Managers at Big South Fork intend to continue to implement an aggressive, yet pragmatic, HWA-treatment program within the park, with the intent of protecting a diverse mixture of hemlock community types across a wide range of sites (conservation areas) located throughout the park. Conservation areas will vary in size and type and will be prioritized based on a number of factors including visitor and employee safety (i.e. protection from falling dead hemlocks), protection of threatened or endangered species



Left: Confirmed case of Hemlock Woolly Adelgids from Big South Fork. NPS Photo. Right: Predatory beetle feeding on Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. USFW photos.

habitat, preservation of historic landscapes, preservation of a variety of representative hemlock community types, preservation of popular trails, camping areas and scenic views, and similar criteria. In the next several months, managers will be working on several different aspects of the treatment project, including: searching for additional infestations; creating maps of conservation areas and known HWA infestations; exploring other techniques for the control; and coordinating volunteer activities and public education events. For further information on identification, detection or treatment of HWA, or if you are interested in volunteering to help search for and/or treat HWA, please contact Marie Kerr, Botanist, at (423) 569-2404, ext. 251.



Above Top: Biotech Justin Coffey places water soluble bag filled with imidacloprid in a mixing jug. Bottom: Biotech Justin Coffey applies liquid imidacloprid to the base of hemlock.



Sharing the Outdoors with Black Bears

By Howard Duncan, Branch Chief, Interpretation
Big South Fork is home to a healthy but relatively small population of black bear. Bear sightings occur infrequently throughout the year. If you are lucky enough to spot one of these forest residents, the encounter is likely to be brief as the bear moves on to its preferred habitat. Bear sightings are becoming more frequent. As the bears continue to explore their surroundings, they are being seen well outside the boundaries of Big South Fork.

The goal of the National Park Service is to provide an environment where bears can live with minimal interference from humans and humans can enjoy the many recreational opportunities the Big South Fork has to offer. By using good judgment and common sense, humans can share the area with minimal intrusion on the bear population.

One of the biggest problems faced by park staff is dealing with bears that have become accustomed to human food. Bears that have access to human food soon lose their fear of people and frequently become nuisance animals. This situation is not good for bears or people. Instead of foraging for natural foods, bears learn to associate human scent with a food opportunity. These bears may display aggressive or destructive tendencies.

It is important that food in any form be kept away from bears and that a clean campsite is maintained. To a bear, "food" may be any item that has a scent. This may include items that you may not consider food, such as canned goods, drinks, soaps, cosmetics, toiletries, trash, ice chests (even when empty), grills and items used for preparing food. Horse feed and other animal feeds must also be stored properly as they will attract bears and animals such as raccoons and opossums. Information on proper food storage techniques is available at park visitor centers and campgrounds. Food storage regulations are strictly enforced in park campgrounds and throughout the park.

It is extremely rare for black bears to be aggressive towards humans. They will usually run away or hide from people to avoid contact. Please report any bear related incidents that have resulted in personal contact, injury or property damage. You may call the Bandy Creek Visitor Center at (423) 286-7275 or call the Wildlife Hotline at (423) 569-2404, Ext. 505.

Unique Ecosystems - Cobble Bars and Rockshelters



Cobblebar habitat that supports the "river scour prairie" vegetation. Upper right: Cumberland Rosemary (*Conradina verticillata*) found on the cobblebars. Lower Right: Cumberland sandwort (*Minuartia cumberlandensis*) which is found in the sandstone rockshelter habitats.

By Brett Baker, Biological Science Technician

Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area resides on the Cumberland Plateau of Tennessee and Kentucky in one of the most biologically diverse regions anywhere in the world. There are many unique natural features and ecosystems that occur in Big South Fork, two of the most unique of which are cobble bars and sandstone rock shelters. These two features are home to a number of rare plant species, including some that grow nowhere else.

Cobble bars are open exposures of bedrock, cobble, or gravel located along large rivers. The cobble bars in Big South Fork support a very unique vegetation type called "river scour prairie". Each year, the cobble bars are "scoured" by multiple flood events which eliminate species that cannot tolerate such disturbance and leave behind a unique assortment of plant species that have adapted to frequent, high-volume flooding, including many drought-resistant grasses, herbs and low shrubs. Among several dozen rare species that grow on cobble bars, one of the most notable is Cumberland rosemary (*Conradina verticillata*). It looks similar to the rosemary you may be used to seeing and smells similar to it as well. It grows in small clumps, with needle-like leaves and flowers that are usually purple, although white flowers can occur. Cumberland rosemary has been federally listed as a threatened plant since 1991.

River scour prairies are extremely rare and in significant need of preservation. There are only an estimated 500 acres of river scour prairie left in the world, most of which occur on cobble bars in Big South Fork and our sister park to the south, Obed Wild and Scenic River. Threats to the cobble bar ecosystems in both parks include changes in natural flood cycles, urban development, the trapping of sand by upstream impoundments and non-native invasive plants. The species mimosa (*Albizia julibrissin*), multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) and Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*) are examples of invasive plant species that have been identified in recent cobble bar surveys. To better understand

potential threats to cobble bars and detect ecosystem trends, the Appalachian Highland Inventory and Monitoring network is conducting long-term monitoring of cobble bars found at Big South Fork and Obed Wild and Scenic River.

Rock shelters are shallow, cave-like openings, generally found at the base of bluffs or cliffs. They are formed by erosion and weathering over a long period of time. Many trails within the park pass by these rock houses, such as the Middle Creek Nature Loop which is a nice 3.5 mile hike. Rock shelters were used for "homes" and protection from the wind and rain by the indigenous people of this area. Longhunters and early European settlers utilized them for temporary shelters. They were in some cases used as secluded sites for producing moonshine. Rock shelters are extremely important sites that warrant protection from human disturbance, as they house archaeological materials that provide clues about early inhabitants. Humans occupied the Upper-Cumberland Plateau as early as 12,000 years ago and the Cherokee Indians were known to live in this area by the late 1700s. Around this time, Euro-American settlers had come into the area. The Litton/Slaven Farm Loop, a 5.9 hike, takes you to a good example of a Cumberland Plateau farmstead. At first farms dominated the area, but eventually coal and timber extraction would overtake that. Now, oil and gas are the main resources extracted and rock shelters are only occasionally visited by hikers.

A unique plant species to this ecosystem is the Cumberland sandwort (*Minuartia cumberlandensis*). It only grows in sandstone rock shelters, below the drip line on the wet sandy ground and is a federally listed endangered species. So far, it has only been identified in five counties in Tennessee and one county in Kentucky. It is a small, perennial herb, which means that it lives for more than two years. It has small white flowers that bloom during the summer from early July to August. Like Cumberland rosemary, it also faces numerous threats to its survival. Digging, camping and making fires in

the rock shelters are disturbances which are very hazardous to the Cumberland sandwort. Logging is another threat to this plant because the Sandwort requires a cool, dark, humid environment. Removal of trees that are close to its habitat can eliminate much needed shade that keeps the habitat cool. Currently, the Tennessee Department of Conservation and the National Park Service monitor known populations of Cumberland sandwort to detect trends in abundance and distribution.

To help preserve our cobble bars, rock shelters, and other unique habitats, along with the many beautiful, rare and endangered plants they support, please observe them from a distance and do not disturb them. Stay behind fencing and on marked trails so that their populations can thrive, with the hopes that one day they may be abundant enough to be removed from threatened or endangered species lists. Taking pictures is a great way to enjoy them without harm. This will preserve them for future generations to enjoy. If you are interested in learning more about the native vegetation of Big South Fork, please contact Marie Kerr, Botanist, at 423-569-2404, ext. 251.

Help protect archeological sites and habitats for threatened and endangered species.

Don't camp or build fires in rockshelters or along the cliffs.



Resource Protection Hotline Available

In order to increase the number of backcountry "eyes and ears" helping protect the park's valuable and often irreplaceable resources, a Resource Protection Hotline has been established.

Any park visitor or neighbor who witnesses what they believe to be an illegal activity such as digging arrowheads, poaching wildlife or harvesting plants is encouraged to call the **Resource Protection Hotline at (423) 569-2404, ext 505**. All information will be treated confidentially. No name or phone number will be required; however, persons wishing to leave contact information may do so.

It Started With a Gum Tree

By Lynn Thornton, Park Guide

If you plan to ride the Big South Fork Scenic Railway, you will travel to downtown Stearns, Kentucky—a town that takes you back to another time when coal was king. It was there underneath a black gum tree that this town was created.

Justis Stearns, a Michigan lumberman, began purchasing land in Tennessee in 1899. He also purchased 25,000 acres of land in Whitley County, Kentucky (now McCreary County) for the development of his lumber and coal industries.

On a rainy, spring day in 1902, William Alfred Kinne (Mr. Stearns' representative) met Nashville attorney E.E. Barthell at Pine Knot, Kentucky. Together they rode to the gum tree tie yard of the Cincinnati and Southern Railway. While sitting upon a railway timber waste dump beneath that gum tree, they drew up articles of incorporation for Stearns Coal Company, Stearns Lumber Company, the Kentucky and Tennessee Railway, and the town named after Justis Stearns.

Shortly after, the actual construction of the town began. A general store (No. 1) was built with the Stearns Company offices on the second floor. The first hotel and houses were constructed using lumber shipped from Luddington, Michigan.

In 1903, the first electric band saw mill in the nation was constructed in Stearns. More importantly, the first load of Stearns coal was shipped out of the town of Barthell. A carnival was brought into Stearns to celebrate the momentous occasion—a tradition that continued throughout the twentieth century. Progress continued. Store No. 1 expanded in size to carry its name brand merchandise. A new frame school was built, and in 1907 the Stearns Company moved its office to a brand new building on the hill (now the Stearns Museum). A second hotel replaced the first which burned during a labor dispute in 1907. In 1912 the town of Stearns lost out to Whitley City as the county seat of the newly formed McCreary County. Stearns continued to grow, however, by building a new opera house to show silent movies in 1919. The dirt road from the railroad to the office building was paved with brick and a new brick school was completed in the 1920s. It is said that the bricks came from the Robbins, Tennessee brick yard. A golf course was constructed during this time that was just minutes from the office building. Eventually the local movie house upgraded to sound. A swimming pool and clubhouse were built near the golf course using funds from the Works Progress Administration.

By 1929 the Stearns Coal Company was producing one million tons of coal becoming the second largest coal producer in Kentucky. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, Stearns persisted through difficult times and kept its people on the job 1-3 days per week in order to keep everyone working.

Stearns would prosper again during the WWII years—a time when the nation needed record amounts of coal for the war effort. The story would be different after the war. The world had changed and coal was no longer king, having been replaced by greater needs for oil and gas. People were no longer living in small towns, but were relying on automobiles to take them to their homes in the suburbs. Towns like Stearns were disappearing.

By 1965 the pool room was demolished, the brick hill paved over, and store No. 1 was sold into private hands. The Stearns Hotel was razed in 1975, and the Stearns Company sold out to Blue Diamond Coal that year. Its land holdings eventually became part of Daniel Boone National Forest and Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area.

The town you see today is a part of the McCreary Heritage Foundation. The Foundation's main goal is to preserve this historic coal town which was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988. The buildings are original but their purposes have changed. Instead of company stores, there are craft and gift shops, a barbershop, and restaurant. Inside Store No. 1 are the Big South Fork Scenic Railway depot and ticket office, fudge and gift shop, and a restaurant. The Stearns office building now houses the Stearns Museum.

Progress is being made in the restoration of an original Stearns steam engine. There are plans being formulated for the continued preservation and restoration of the town.

And as for the gum tree...the original has been gone for many years. Another one stands in its place, growing strong in almost the same spot. Hopefully, it will be around to witness the story of Stearns' next 100 years.



THE OLD GUM TREE AND STORE ONE

Civil War Sesquicentennial -150 Years

A Dark and Dangerous Time

By Howard Duncan,
Branch Chief, Interpretation



The coming of 1862 brought about a change in the attitude of many in the "Borderlands" region of Tennessee and Kentucky. The excitement of secession in June of 1861 disappeared with the defeat of Confederate forces at the Battle of Mill Springs in January, the fall of Forts Henry and Donelson in February and the Union victory at Shiloh in April. With Nashville occupied by Union forces, the realization that the war would not end with a quick Southern victory hit home.

While major battles took place around the region, the war on the Cumberland Plateau was not one of the large battles or mass movement of troops. The local population was terrorized by guerilla bands, outlaws and the settling of personal vendettas. The war in the Borderlands of the Cumberland Plateau was one of intense personal convictions. The area was divided by loyalties both north and south with many citizens just wanting to be left alone. The war was personalized to the degree that the people killing each other often knew their victims by name. The first shots fired and the first casualties of the war in Tennessee occurred in nearby Travisville in late September of 1861 in what was then part of Fentress County (now Pickett County). The grave marker of one of those killed is inscribed with the name of his assailant.

The area was without any form of law or civil order during most of the war years. In 1862 all civil government collapsed in the counties of the Upper Cumberland region. Courts did not meet, laws were not enforced by local sheriffs, taxes were not collected and schools were not in session. Even churches disbanded or were split by personal differences. In many counties, courthouses were burned, destroying land records and other valuable legal documents. Scott County officially passed a proclamation in 1861 during the American Civil War to secede from Tennessee and form the Free and Independent State of Scott in protest of Tennessee's separation from the Union. In fact, the county didn't officially rescind its act of secession until 1986.

The Civil War was absolutely devastating to the people and the economy of the region. Crops were destroyed, food and livestock were stolen and commerce ended. No one felt secure in their homes. Men were killed from ambush by marauding bands of outlaws and guerilla fighters. Many families chose to leave the area entirely, never to return. Even in their isolation, the people of the Big South Fork were not spared these terrible depredations. The next three years were to be times of hunger and fear.





Angel Falls Overlook. Photo by Chuck Summers

The Inland Sea

By Sherry Fritschi, Park Ranger

Forget about the natural sandstone arches, cliffs, the river and forest. Are you longing for a trip to the beach where you can walk in the sand? Relax. You are there, right here at Big South Fork. All it takes is a bit of imagination, a geology lesson and a time machine.

According to geologists, millions of years ago, a shallow inland sea covered the land that would become this park. It deposited many layers of sediment that accumulated until they were thousands of feet thick. Can you imagine being a grain of sand or a seashell in the bottom layers? The weight and pressure above compressed and hardened the particles into limestone. Erosion will eventually expose this layer, but for now, it's mostly hidden.

Many cliffs in the park have a black seam of coal. It formed from dead trees, plants and animals. Most plants cannot tolerate salt water so how did the trees that became coal survive in the brine? A geological event doesn't neatly occur all at once and go away forever. The inland sea would sometimes grow in size, killing plant-life as it flooded land. Then the water receded, possibly drying up for long periods of time. When the soil was finally right, seeds and spores carried by the wind might land in the abandoned sea bed and take root. Next, the land might flood again, killing the trees. These cycles of land being flooded then drying up could have lasted thousands of years. The dead rotting goo thickened and compressed until it turned to coal. Clay that was deposited on top of the coal turned into shale. Deposits above the shale became the sandstone

that eroded into the marvelous cliffs, rockshelters, columns and stone arches that make Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area the natural wonder that it is today.

Next time you're at an overlook, clear your head, look across the gorge and imagine it not being there. The river and streams that will help carve it don't exist yet. It's a long time ago, and the inland sea is gently lapping the shoreline. In the water you can find ancestors to modern mollusks, clams and snails.

Now, close your eyes. When you open them, the sea is gone. Tectonic plates beneath the earth have collided and earthquakes rumble. The Cumberland Plateau rises and the land is slowly etched by ancient waterways full of aquatic insects, fish and amphibians. Stay long enough and you might see giant reptiles. Watch out! You can't run and hide in the nearest rockshelter, because it doesn't exist yet. Wait a minute! You don't either.

I don't know how you're feeling, but I'm definitely out of my comfort zone. I want to go back to the future which happens to be now at Big South Fork. Are you on board? Everybody, close your eyes, count to three and click your heels together. Look! Over there are Twin Arches surrounded by the green forest that most of us humans have probably taken for granted for far too long.

You're on your own now. Take a fresh view of the park. If you happen to find fossils in the streams or river, remember that it is against the law to remove them. Besides, if you did, nobody else could experience the thrill of discovering them and embarking on a journey to the inland sea.

Buried Treasure

By Brenda Deaver, Park Guide

Do you enjoy digging in your garden? Are you detail oriented? Does ancient history intrigue you? If you answered yes to these questions, then you might consider a career in paleontology. The work of paleontologists opened a window so that we could discover the plants and animals that lived on the earth billions of years ago. Fossils, the preserved remains or traces of something that was once living, can give us valuable clues about climate changes and how some organisms have changed over time to better suit their environment.

A fossil can be the actual thing like teeth, hair, bones and shells. They can form when the hard parts of an organism are replaced with other minerals, such as petrified trees. Fossils may be something that was made by the animal while it was living and hardened into stone. Trace fossils, the most common type of fossil, might be burrows, tracks or coprolites, better known as animal "poop."

In geological time, the Pennsylvania Period was a time of tropical, humid climate and lush forests. At the same time that coal was being formed, other fossils were created. The Big South Fork area, especially in Kentucky, is rich with interesting fossils. Two of the most common ones are *Lepidodendron* and *Calamites*.

The Ground Pine that you see on the forest floor today is a 6-8 inch miniature relative of a prehistoric scale tree that reached over 100 feet high a million years ago. *Lepidodendron* is famous for its unmistakable scale-like bark. The root system was anchored by several shallow running branches called *stigmaria*. A sand cast of the root is often mistaken for petrified wood. Club mosses are also a part of this group.

Related to the modern horsetail, *Calamities* grew to heights of forty feet and actually looked something like a pine tree. The branches were arranged concentrically around the trunk in rows and spaced several feet apart. Composed mostly of pithy reed-like tissue with the strength of a rolled-up newspaper, they tended to fall over very easily. In sandstones, this plant is usually seen as casts of the hollow trunks and stems.

National parks are great places to see and learn about fossils. There are currently more than 220 that preserve them. You can visit a National Park Service web site and download a Junior Paleontologist Activity Book designed for ages 5 - 12. Always remember that fossils and rocks are protected in our national parks. Never remove or disturb them. <http://www.nature.nep.gov/geology/paleontology>



Lepidodendron trees had scale-like bark (foreground). The root structures from this tree are called *stigmaria* (behind).



Calamites fossil. This plant was related to the modern horsetail. Photos by Brenda Deaver

Charit Creek Lodge

By Jessica Moore and Dustin Beaty, Park Guides

Visitors to the park often ask about Charit Creek Lodge and its name. Charit Creek got its name from a local legend that tells of a young girl named Charity who lived there and drowned while crossing the stream after rain caused the creek to rise.

According to oral histories, a group of long hunters set up camp at the confluence of Charit Creek and Station Camp Creek in the late 18th century. The group of long hunters included some individuals who would eventually settle in this area. Among these were Slavens and Smiths. The hunters used this location as their “hunting station” or base of operations, and this large tributary of the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River has been called Station Camp Creek from that time on.

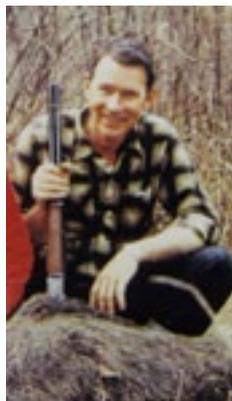
Deed records show that the first owner of the Charit Creek and Station Camp Creek property in 1824 was Burdine Young. The property was noted as being “improved” by 1832, which at that time generally meant that a structure had been built. Undoubtedly, this is where Mr. Young settled his wife.

William Tackett is recorded as the deed holder in 1848, and the property was probably later sold to Anderson Smith who had title to this parcel in 1853. A few years later the property was bought by Ali Hatfield and eventually was owned by William Riley Hatfield (1824-1894). According to some oral histories, W.R. Hatfield was a son of Devil Anse Hatfield of Virginia who left because of the Hatfield and McCoy feud and relocated here after purchasing the Tackett property; according to other oral histories W.R. Hatfield was really the son of a McCoy. W.R. died here in 1894. A few years later his wife, Elizabeth Burke-Hatfield (1831-1910), sold out around 1895-1896 and moved to the Oklahoma territory.

Owners of the Charit Creek/Station Camp Creek confluence property include:

- Burdine and Anderson Young (1824-1832)
- Ali Hatfield (1832-1848)
- William Tackett (1848-1853)
- Anderson Smith (1853-?)
- W.R Hatfield and Elizabeth Burke-Hatfield lived there until 1895.
- Issac King
- Jonathon Burke
- John Blevins (Owner 1920-1937) built barn and corn crib
- Kirk Phillips (Owner 1937-1962)
- Joe Simpson (Owner 1962-1982)

The last landowner of the property was Mr. Joe Simpson who turned the old farm into the Parch Corn Hunting Lodge. Joe Simpson substantially altered the main cabin and added other structures. Joe operated a successful business from this location for almost twenty years before selling the property to be included in Big South Fork.



Astronomy - Big Skies Over Big South Fork

By Paul Lewis, Director of Astronomy Outreach and Education, Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Tennessee

Big South Fork will be hosting four astronomy programs in 2012. There are several interesting astronomical events that will be happening in our universe this year which we'd like to highlight.

The planet Mars has long been the most mysterious traveler among the stars in our skies. Since the 1970s we have sent spacecraft after spacecraft in attempts to reveal its secrets. We have had considerable success especially in the last decade or two. As we continue to “sweep the dust away” to reveal more hidden treasures, we await the arrival of the latest robotic researcher to begin its mission. Mars Science Laboratory, renamed Curiosity, was launched November 26, 2011. Hopefully Curiosity will have a successful atmospheric entry and landing on Mars on August 5, 2012.

Mars will be opposite the Earth from the sun on March 3, 2012. At that time it will be closest to Earth. Opposition is the ideal time to launch a mission to Mars. It is also the best time to observe the red planet from Earth. There are some dark and light contrasting features on Mars that we will try to share with you through our telescopes. We will be observing both Mars and Saturn this summer from the Bandy Creek Visitor Center through July and mid-August. Saturn will be at opposition on April 15 and will be in the sky almost all night for the rest of April.

Another program topic will be about the 35 years of amazingly successful science and imaging provided by the Voyagers I and II spacecraft launched in 1977. They are still sending data back to our home world and will for many more years to come.

In August 2012, the ever popular Perseid Meteor Shower should be better than ever. The moon phase will be a bit more favorable than last year. We will have a waning crescent moon on the night of August 12 - 13 when the meteor activity peaks. We could see as many as 90 meteors per hour. Geminid meteor observing conditions will be nearly perfect this year in December on the night of 13 - 14 as the moon will be new on the night of the 13th. And remember, clear dark skies and appropriate clothes are the main ingredients for a successful meteor watch. Good luck viewing these events!

Mars will certainly be the topic for one of the evening programs this year. Hopefully, the Mars Science Laboratory will have a successful atmospheric entry and landing on Mars on August 5, 2012. Perhaps there will be some great news and discoveries to talk about in October when we meet for the last time in 2012.



Paul Lewis (left) and volunteer Joe Campbell set up solar observing at Bandy Creek. NPS photo.



Above: Picture of Charit Creek or hog farm from 1967 handbill.



Charit Creek as it looks today.

Bring your binoculars with you for our star parties this year. You'll be amazed at the things you can find with them. We will be happy to help you learn to find some of the easier binocular objects. There are a number of star clusters and a few galaxies that are fairly easy if you know just where to look. You can even see some of the moons of Jupiter, but that opportunity comes in the last quarter of 2012 unless you stay up really late or get up really early.

There are so many wonderful activities to participate in at Big South Fork. Don't stop just because the sun goes down. The “big dark skies” over the Big South Fork await you!



Spotlight on Volunteers

Sam and Rita Perry

By Debby Zimmerman, Park Guide

Volunteers in Parks are people of all ages who spend anywhere from a few hours per week to several months per year working for the park. Volunteers work to complete jobs that permanent and seasonal employees cannot accomplish. They provide a service that often would go unattended or incomplete. These valuable and well appreciated people are essential to the park. Many willingly come to pitch in and lend their helping hands. Volunteers are found throughout the many departments within the park. Many serve on trails and maintenance crews, natural resources and camp ground hosts. Many share their skills with the public by demonstrating their talents and skills at special events.



Sam and Rita Perry are from McCreary County, Kentucky, and have been volunteering for over 22 years sharing their skills with visitors. They started by helping with pioneer encampments held at Bandy Creek and Blue Heron demonstrating skills of pioneer cooking, woodworking and pioneer life.

Sam is a native of Kentucky. He has a BA and a MA from Eastern Kentucky State College (Eastern Kentucky University) and is a Korean War veteran. He worked for the U.S. Forest Service from 1965 until 1994 in various locations such as the Heber Job Corps in Arizona and Jacobs Creek Job Corps in Bristol, Tennessee, and Pine Knot Job Corps in Stearns. Sam retired from the Forest Service in 1994. His job consisted of general instruction of basic educational needs to achieve a GED.

Sam is a published author of short stories. Some of his work includes the book entitled "South Fork Country". He has just finished up his latest book entitled "Bridge Builder".

Rita is originally from the state of Illinois. She has been involved with the Girl Scouts of America for 40 years which has taken her from Arizona to McCreary County, Kentucky. Rita achieved her Practical Nursing license in 1961. She worked in a hospital for 3 years before becoming a member of VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) which is a domestic Peace Corps. She eventually came to Pine Knot Job Corps as a LPN through the VISTA organization.

Sam and Rita meet in McCreary County during a Christmas gift delivery to the Blue Heron Community. They married in 1968. They have two daughters. The oldest daughter has a degree in wildlife biology and works for the U.S. Forest Service's Mark Twain National Forest. The youngest is an RN with the US Air Force. Sam and Rita are founders of the Christian Care Center Food Pantry in Whitley City, Kentucky, and have assisted with the Literacy Program in McCreary County, Kentucky. They are both very active in civic interests in their community.

Sam demonstrates woodworking and pioneer skills for the Big South Fork during special events. His handy work can be seen at the Oscar Blevins Farm. He led a group of 30 volunteers as they built 30 feet of paling fencing at the historic home site. He also constructed 8 feet of paling fencing at the Lora Blevins farm. This is located beside the old house. Rita demonstrates and teaches candlewicking and pioneer cooking for Big South Fork during special events. The Perrys do an excellent job

representing the park and presenting their skills and talents to visitors. We at the Big South Fork cannot thank them enough for their service and devotion throughout the years. They play a huge role in making visitors' experiences positive and enjoyable.

If you have a special interest or skill that you want to share and would like to participate in the Volunteers in Parks program, please contact Sue H. Duncan, Volunteer Coordinator, Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, 4564 Leatherwood Road, Oneida, Tennessee (423)286-7275 (PARK).



Sam and Rita Perry pictured above. Right: Sam demonstrates making paling fence at Spring Planting Day in 2009. Below: Rita demonstrates candlewicking and pictured with her display.

VOLUNTEER FOLLOWS CONSERVATION ETHIC - GIVING BACK TO GET AHEAD

By Amber Hamblin, SCA Volunteer

In today's economy, hands-on internships can make a real difference for young professionals – and those same young people can make a real difference through national service. That's why Amber Hamblin, an intern with the Student Conservation Association (SCA), arrived at Big South Fork NRRRA to develop an Advanced Junior Ranger Program booklet to highlight the park's natural, cultural, and historical resources.

Amber, 22, of Oneida, Tennessee, is one of more than 4,200 SCA members helping to protect and restore America's public lands each year. The SCA is the only national organization that develops tomorrow's conservation leaders by providing high school and college students with conservation service opportunities in all 50 states, from urban communities to national parks and forests. More than 50,000 young people have served with the SCA since 1957, and as needs outpace budgets, the efforts of SCA members are more important than ever.

SCA members hone a "conservation ethic" through their service, to the benefit of both the land and the individual. SCA experience leads a majority of members to become lifelong stewards and 60 percent of SCA interns go on to lead successful careers in the conservation field.

The SCA is a nationwide conservation force of college and high school-aged members who serve America's parks, forests, refuges, seashores and communities. For more than 50 years, the SCA's active, hands-on practice of conservation service has helped to develop a new generation of conservation leaders, inspire lifelong stewardship, and save the planet. The SCA is a non-profit headquartered in Charlestown, New Hampshire, with regional offices in Washington D.C., Oakland, Pittsburgh and Seattle. For more information on volunteer opportunities, visit www.thesca.org.



SCA Amber Hamblin holding an eastern glass lizard.

Cultural Places of Big South Fork

By Dustin Beaty and Jessica Moore,
Park Guides

Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area offers several areas of interest for those seeking historical and cultural information. Before the establishment of Big South Fork in 1974, there were many communities within the area. Each of these communities has their own interesting stories to tell.

Visitors often ask where they can see these historic structures and areas. Below is a list of some of the easiest sites that can be accessed. By visiting these areas in the park, visitors are able to have a vivid picture of the hardships many families endured while living in this remote area. Most of this information can be found on the park website at <http://www.nps.gov/biso>. Please visit the Bandy Creek Visitor Center or Blue Heron Mining Community for directions to these sites and for more areas of interest not mentioned in the article.



OSCAR BLEVINS FARM

Oscar Blevins was a farmer that owned a small farm near Bandy Creek, a tributary of the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River, in what is now the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area in Tennessee. He lived here with his wife and son from the 1940s until 1979 when his farm was purchased for inclusion in the newly established Recreation Area.

Oscar was very sad over losing his farm and after being "bought out" he moved to another farm near Allardt, Tennessee. He continued to mourn the loss of the family farm until he died in 1988.

Visitors today may see the Oscar Blevins farm and home site by completing a 3.6 mile loop trail near Bandy Creek. There you can see the original log house built in the 1880s and the more modern frame house finished in 1950.



BLUE HERON

Blue Heron, also known as Mine 18, is an abandoned coal mining town and was a part of the Stearns Coal and Lumber Company's past operation. The Blue Heron mines operated from 1937 until December 1962, when operations were no longer profitable. During that time, hundreds of

people lived and worked in this isolated community on the banks of the Big South Fork River. When the Stearns Coal and Lumber Company abandoned Blue Heron in 1962, the buildings were either removed or began decaying due to the natural elements. As a result, there were no original buildings standing when the community was "re-created" by the Corps of Engineers in the 1980s. The only original structure left standing was the coal tippie.

Built as an outdoor museum, the new structures are open, metal shells of buildings, referred to as "ghost structures" built on the approximate site of the original buildings and were made as close to the original size and orientation as possible.



YAMACRAW BRIDGE

The Yamacraw Bridge was built by the Kentucky & Tennessee Railway in 1907. This is a unique bridge for several different reasons. Yamacraw Bridge was one of the first poured concrete spanning bridges; it has five concrete arches. Bridges similar to this were only being constructed in Europe at the time. This design was brought over to demonstrate that it could be accomplished. The last train crossed over this bridge in 1949. People still cross over this bridge on Highway 92 in Kentucky today.



BEATTY OIL WELL

The Betty Oil Well was the first oil well in Kentucky and the first flowing well of importance in America. Finding this oil well was an accident. According to Willard Rouse Jillson, Sc. D. a geologist and engineer, Martin Beatty, who was acting for the Saltville copartnership, leased the 727 acre tract to Marcus Huling and his associate, Andrew Zimmerman. They both wanted to drill for salt brine.

This well was located on a stream that is known today as Oil Well Branch. Oil Well Branch is about 1 mile from the mouth of Troublesome Creek. Here in the spring of 1818, they began to drill with what was known as a "spring pole rig". In the late fall, probably near the end of November, a heavy black oil was encountered at "approximately two hundred feet."

The Betty Oil Well flowed up to 100 barrels per day for several days after it was immediately found. The flow gradually declined and finally ceased, probably due to the reduction of the gas and rock pressure.

JOHN LITTON/GENERAL SLAVEN FARM

John Litton built his home at the head of Fall Branch. The original log cabin as well as the barn was constructed of poplar logs. Near the homestead, several rock shelters are fenced off with wooden boards; these rock shelters were used as hog pens, according to Tom Des Jean, an archeologist at Big South Fork.



John Litton passed away in 1935, the remaining family moved and the home site was left abandoned until General Slaven's family took residence in 1946. Although the children grew up and moved on, General and his wife, Did, lived here until 1979 when the land was acquired for Big South Fork. The home never had electricity or running water.

Today visitors can access the John Litton/General Slaven Farm via a 5.9 mile hiking trail out of the Bandy Creek Campground.

ZENITH

Just a few miles off of Tennessee Highway 52, outside the town of Allardt, once laid a town that was known as Zenith. Zenith was a mining camp for the Webb Hammock mines (1920s and 1930s) and the Marlow mine that opened and then closed during the 1940s. The camp grew into a small mining town and like many other towns during the 1930s it was built up around a railroad. The town consisted of a store, school house, company office, and the company houses. The railroad was the Oneida and Western and it traveled from Jamestown to Oneida passing through several other communities as well as the town of Zenith.

In the Zenith mines, cannel coal, a top quality coal was mined. It was considered by some to be "the richest coal in the country." Trouble began in Zenith in the 1930s and continued into the 1940s. Several shootings occurred in connection with a series of strikes. When the Oneida and Western railroad was abandoned in 1954 the mines at Zenith closed for good.

Today, none of these structures remain, but if you have a keen eye you can still find where these structures were. You can still see foundation remnants of the gravity-flow water tank. Zenith today can be accessed by automobile. The Oneida and Western railroad bed can be explored by hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding. Whichever method you choose to explore Zenith, you can expect to see the free-flowing North White Oak Creek, massive boulders, wildlife, and beautiful scenery.