



For Immediate Release:

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**Tellico Wild: Explore our Big Back Yard!
A Weekend of Wilderness on the Cherokee National Forest
July 31st, August 1st and 2nd
Tellico Plains, TN**

Tennessee Wild is hosting a weekend of free outdoor activities to connect people to their public lands, and to support protecting special forest places while promoting the Tellico Region and Cherokee National Forest as the ideal destination for outdoor recreation in the southeast.

To get people active outdoors and connected to the Cherokee National Forest, Tennessee Wild invites you to join us for guided hikes into designated wilderness areas, or give a little back to our public lands on a trail crew for a stewardship project. Learn about the diverse flora and fauna of the forest on an interpretive hike or while snorkeling with expert USFS guides in Citico Creek. Get the hang of Stand Up Paddleboarding or flatwater kayaking or learn to take better pictures at our photography walk. Or... just take a deep breath and enjoy some time in the great outdoors - all **FREE OF CHARGE!**

Come learn why it's important to protect special places in Tennessee. The Tennessee Wilderness Act, currently awaiting a Senate vote, and introduction in the U.S. House of Representatives would safeguard nearly 20,000 acres of public land, expanding the Joyce Kilmer Slickrock, Big Frog, Little Frog, Big Laurel Branch, and Sampson Mountain wilderness areas and creating the new 9,000-acre Upper Bald River Wilderness Area right here in East Tennessee. Wilderness designation ensures clean drinking water for communities downstream, protects critical habitat for the abundant species of fish and wildlife of the forest, and offers first class outdoor recreation opportunities that are vital to the prosperity of small towns like Tellico Plains.

Friday, July 31st kicks off our 2nd Annual Tellico Wild with two full moon events: a sunset/moonrise group paddle on Indian Boundary Lake, and an overnight backpack to Bob Stratton Bald.

Saturday, August 1st and Sunday August 2nd, will be fun-filled days of outdoor activities that includes guided and interpretive hikes, trail stewardship, SUP and kayak instruction, Cherokee History and Heritage, snorkeling in Citico Creek, and two showings of the Hidden Rivers short films highlighting the wonders of our big backyard creeks, rivers and streams.

Date: Saturday, August 1st and Sunday, August 2nd, 2015 **Time: 9:00am**

Location: Cherochala Skyway Visitor Center, Tellico Plains, TN

All participants meet at the Visitor Center then carpool to the various trail heads.

* Due to group size limits, free registration at www.meetup.com/Tennessee-Wild is a must.

Saturday, August 1st

Guided and Interpretive Hikes:

- **Edible and Medicinal Plants - Falls Branch Falls - 3 miles RT, Rated Moderate**
Hike leader Holli Richey shares her love and knowledge of the plant world through her blog, teaching classes, and leading herb walks.
- **Herp Walk - Coker Creek Falls - 3 miles - Rated Easy**
This guided hike along beautiful Coker Creek will focus on Herpetology - finding and identifying native reptiles and amphibians.
- **Simply Better Pictures Photography Walk** - Tellico Plains Nature Trail - Rated Easy
No need for fancy equipment! This guided hike will have you taking pictures with your point-and-shoot or camera phone that you'll be proud to share. Join Jim Caldwell of the Overhill Shutterbugs for a photography clinic and you'll be on path to taking better pictures in no time. We'll explore simple tips and techniques that will turn your snapshots into masterpieces - or something like that.
- **Unicoi Turnpike Trail - Coker Creek - 2.5 miles, Rated Easy**
Walk through history on the oldest known travel path in the country. Part of the Trail of Tears during the removal of the Cherokee people in the 1800's, then the first toll road in America, hikers will walk where thousands have walked before.

Stewardship Trip - Brushing Jeffrey's Hell - 4 miles RT - Rated Moderate/Strenuous

This stewardship day led by SAWS - Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards will involve brushing annual vegetation growth from the trail corridor along the first two miles of the Jeffrey Hell Trail. Tools, safety instruction and personal protective equipment will be provided.

Stand Up Paddleboarding and Kayaking 101 - Indian Boundary Lake with Rock/Creek and Jackson Kayak

Learn the basics of SUP! - Standup Paddleboarding and/or Flatwater Kayaking with skilled instructors from Rock/Creek, Chattanooga. You'll learn how to get up on the SUP board, more importantly... STAY on the board and also basic paddling maneuvers on beautiful Indian Boundary Lake. All equipment and instruction is furnished by our friends at Rock/Creek. Beginners Welcome!

Snorkel Citico Creek - Citico Creek is one of the most biologically rich temperate creeks in the USA. It contains more species of fish than the entire Colorado River watershed! We'll explore the chilly water with wetsuit, snorkel and mask provided by the Forest Service. Expert guides will show you many species of fish, turtles, amphibians and other critters that live in mountain rivers and creeks.

Hidden Rivers Film Series - 3pm and 6:30pm at Tellico Grains Bakery, 105 Depot St.

Come see a new short film series on the vibrant rivers of East Tennessee and Southern Appalachia, showcasing the beauty of the Cherokee National Forest and the rivers, creeks and streams of the area. Presented by filmmakers from Freshwaters Illustrated.

(www.freshwatersillustrated.org - www.hiddenrivers.org)

Cherokee History and Heritage Presentation - 11am and 2pm at the Charles Hall Museum

Lamar Marshall, Cultural Heritage Director at Wild South, will present a 45 minute graphic PowerPoint presentation that covers the history, geography, ecology and lifestyles of the Eastern Cherokees from 1700 to 1840. Participants will view the Museum's collections of Cherokee artifacts including Cherokee jewelry, pipes, bowls, work tools, gaming pieces and much more.

Sunday, August 10th

Guided Hikes:

- **Bald River Gorge - 9 miles- Rated Moderate**
One of the most scenic trails in the area was once a railroad track for trains which hauled out the huge logs down to Tellico Plains during the early logging days. Now this beautiful gorge is protected as designated Wilderness, and the trees having regrown over the past 100 years since the last logging occurred are wondrous.
- **Simply Better Pictures - Tips, Tricks and Techniques, Rated Easy**
No need for fancy equipment! This guided hike will have you taking better pictures with your point-and-shoot or smartphone in no time. We'll explore simple tips and techniques that will turn your snapshots into photos that you'll be proud to share.

Stand Up Paddleboarding 101 - Indian Boundary Lake with Rock/Creek

Learn the basics of SUP! - Standup Paddleboarding with a skilled instructor from Rock/Creek, Chattanooga. You'll learn how to get up on the board, more importantly... STAY on the board and then do some basic paddling maneuvers on beautiful Indian Boundary Lake. All equipment and instruction is furnished by our friends at Rock/Creek. Beginners Welcome!

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Leave No Trace - Wilderness 101 Workshop - Learn about Leave No Trace principles and the basics of Wilderness from Bill Hodge, LNT Master Educator and Executive Director at Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards.

[Tennessee Wild](#) is dedicated to protecting wilderness on the Cherokee National Forest for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. We aim to educate the public about the benefits of wilderness and promote volunteerism and the sound stewardship of Tennessee's wild places. Passage of the Tennessee Wilderness Act will protect nearly 20,000 acres on the Cherokee National Forest by creating the Upper Bald River Wilderness Area and adding additional acreage to Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock, Big Frog, and Little Frog Wilderness areas in Southeast Tennessee, and to Sampson Mountain and Big Laurel Branch Wilderness areas in Northeast Tennessee. This act will create the first new wilderness in Tennessee since 1986.

This event is sponsored by the Tennessee Wild Coalition and its partners.



A schedule of events and more information can be found online at:
[Tennessee Wild](#), [Facebook/TennesseeWild](#) or at <http://www.meetup.com/Tennessee-Wild/>

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