



***MORE KIDS
IN THE WOODS***



MORE KIDS IN THE WOODS – ROAN MOUNTAIN OUTDOOR PROGRAM 2009

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The **Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy** (SAHC), a nonprofit regional land trust (<http://www.appalachian.org/>), is working with partners to offer (1) several outdoor youth activities and (2) an Ecologist Internship. During 2008-2009, SAHC was awarded a **More Kids In the Woods (MKIW) grant** from the **U.S. Forest Service** to support activities that promote direct involvement of youth in the outdoors.

In brief, the main focus of program is to provide opportunities for youth to have direct experiences in nature. The activities will allow youth to explore and “get their hands dirty” as they handle or observe various plants and animals, restore habitat through a community service project, or hike and observe the sights, sounds and peace of nature. It is the hope of the sponsors that youth will have positive outdoor experiences. Activities are designed with the intent of providing an educational foundation which fosters future generations of naturalists and outdoor enthusiasts who value the protection of natural resources, as well as enhancing the mental and physical health of today's youth.

II. OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

--Several outdoor activities will be offered in 2009, **see list below**.

--Activities are sponsored by a many local conservation and land management agencies and organizations that protect natural resources in the Roan Mountain area. Individual sponsors are noted below with each activity.

--All activities will take place in the Roan Mountain area of eastern TN and western NC.

--Activities are open to all youth (individuals or those associated with a defined youth group). Emphasis is placed on reaching youth within a 40 mile radius of Roan Mountain. Youth groups include, but are not limited to, summer school programs, boy scouts, girl scouts, home-schoolers, church groups, community groups, 4-H groups, and environmental or science based clubs. Ages targeted are between 5 – 18 years. Some activities will be limited to certain ages, depending on the type of activity.

--Parental participation is encouraged, as programs are often very informative for the parents.

--Adult supervision must be provided by either the designated group leaders or parents who bring youth to the activity. In other words, parents are not allowed to drop youth off at the activity and leave, unless they are affiliated with the attending youth group and have made arrangements with group leaders prior to the activity.

--Transportation to and from activities is the responsibility of the group leaders and parents.

--Of notable mention, the Cloudland High School ECO Club has partnered with the Boone Watershed Partnership and adopted two streams where they conduct long-term water quality monitoring.

--*How do you sign up for an activity?*

(1) Pick an activity that you are interested in. Youth can participate in more than one activity; however, depending on demand, activities may be limited to two per group.

(2) Contact MKIW Program Coordinator to determine if the activity has already filled up with youth participants. Reservations for an activity are required. Activities will be offered on a first come first serve basis.

(3) Work with MKIW Coordinator to schedule the activity date. If there is no date assigned to the project, you can *suggest a date*. If there is a tentative date assigned to an activity and it does not work with your current youth group schedule, you can *suggest a different date*. In each case, the coordinator will work with the group leader and activity sponsor to coordinate a date that works.

Contact:

Nora Schubert

MKIW Program Coordinator & SAHC Stewardship Ecologist

(423)741-2967 or nora_schubert1@hotmail.com

III. ECOLOGY INTERNSHIP

--One competitive Ecology Internship will be offered to a local high school student, again this summer. The intern will assist SAHC's Stewardship Ecologist with a variety of projects including bird surveys, grassy balds management, trail renovation, rare plant monitoring, salamander surveys, and MKIW activities. The intern will have the opportunity to meet and network with a variety of conservation agency and organization personnel and learn about their roles in protection of natural resources in the Roan Mountain area. This position will be filled by May 31.

IV. HOW TO PREPARE FOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

--Most activities will span a **full day**.

--**Be prepared to get dirty and possibly wet** during the time in the outdoors. Remember the purpose of activities is to give youth direct hands-on experiences.

--**Wear appropriate outdoor attire** such as **old clothes, long pants and sturdy hiking shoes**. If participating in water-based activities, bring an **extra pair of old closed toe shoes (NOT sandals) and shorts**. Shorts should be in addition to long pants.

--Be prepared for all types of weather conditions. **Bring sunblock and hat** for protection from sun. **Bring rain gear** and several **layers of clothing** including a **jacket** in your **day backpack** for protection from rain and changing temperatures in the mountains. Bring these items regardless of the weather forecast for the day, given you will be in high mountain terrain.

--All field equipment (stream waders, binoculars, field guides, building materials, management tools) will be provided by the sponsoring agency or organization

--**Bring a bagged lunch, snacks and plenty of drinking water**. We will be eating lunch outdoors at the activity site.

ACTIVITY LIST 2009

Fish Survey & Aquatic Insect Sampling

Date – June 5

Sponsor - Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency fisheries biologist

Location – Doe River

Agenda – Assist with fish survey using electro-fishing techniques, and sample aquatic insects. Learn about fish ecology in the Southern Appalachian mountain streams, as well as fish monitoring and management techniques.

Invasive Plant Removal Work Day

Date - must schedule by June 14 (prior to plants setting seed); *suggest a date*

Sponsor - Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy ecologist

Location - Hwy 143 and Carver's Gap vicinity

Agenda - Help control the spread of invasive Garlic Mustard. We will hand pull Garlic Mustard from the upper reaches of Hwy 143. Learn why nonnative plant control is important, how to recognize various nonnative plant species, and how to best control some of these species.

Beginners Bird Hike & Bird Box Repair

Date – June 20

Sponsor – Tennessee Ornithological Society-Bristol Bird Club & Tennessee Ornithological Society-Elizabethton Bird Club

Location – Hampton Creek Cove State Natural Area

Agenda – Learn some basic bird identification skills and how to use binoculars. Learn to identify some of the more common bird species as you hike. Learn about general bird migration and general bird biology. Help repair and replace old bird boxes on the property.

Trail Clearing Work Day

Date – *suggest a date*

Sponsor – Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy ecologist

Location – Hampton Creek Cove State Natural Area

Agenda – Help clear the 1.5 mile Birchfield Trail during the early growing season. The work site is located in a high elevation cove forest along a beautiful mountain stream. We will clear the trail for the summer hike season using rakes and hand-held pruners. Learn to identify some of the early summer wildflowers adjacent to the trail.

Fish Structure Construction, Salamander Bio-blitz & Small Mammal Survey Setup

Date - Tentatively set for July 10; *suggest a different date*

Sponsor - U.S. Forest Service - Cherokee National Forest biologists

Location - Panther Branch Creek

Agenda - Build fish structure in high elevation mountain stream to enhance fish habitat, conduct salamander bio-blitz in nearby aquatic and terrestrial habitats, and assist with setting small mammal traps in prep for small mammal survey. Learn about the ecology of various fish, salamander, and small mammal species inhabiting the Southern Appalachian mountains.

Small Mammal Trapping & Habitat Restoration Work Day

Date – Tentatively set for July 11; *suggest a different date*

Sponsor – U.S. Forest Service - Cherokee National Forest biologists

Location – Panther Branch and Tom’s Branch

Agenda – *Early morning*: Assist with small mammal trapping survey. Check small mammal traps for captures. *Afternoon*: Assist with cutting brush to restore wildlife opening for small mammals and grassland birds. Learn about the ecology of small mammals and grassland birds.

High Elevation Community Ecology Hike along Appalachian Trail

Date – Tentatively set for July 22; *suggest a different date*

Sponsor – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service representative

Location - Summit of Roan Mountain Massif, Carver’s Gap to Grassy Ridge

Agenda - Hike a 4 mile round trip along the Appalachian Trail across the summit of the Roan Mountain Massif from Carver’s Gap to Grassy Ridge. Enjoy 360 degree views across the TN and NC mountains. Learn about protecting bio-diversity, high elevation communities (the Fir-Spruce Forest, Grassy Balds, and Rock Outcrops), and great naturalists in history. And, meet the goats browsing on the balds and learn about the Baa-tany Goat Project.

Fish Survey & Salamander Bio-blitz

Date – Tentatively set for July 25; *suggest a different date*

Sponsor – U.S. Forest Service - Cherokee National Forest biologists

Location – Bill’s Creek

Agenda - Assist with fish survey using electro-fishing techniques, test water quality, and search nearby aquatic and terrestrial habitats for salamanders. Learn about the various fish and salamanders species inhabiting the Southern Appalachian mountains, water quality indicators, and fish monitoring and management techniques.

High Elevation Community Ecology Hike along Appalachian Trail

Date – September 12

Sponsor – Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy ecologist

Location - Summit of Roan Mountain Massif, Carver’s Gap to Grassy Ridge

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Grassy Balds Restoration Work Day

Date – must schedule between mid-July and late September; *suggest a date*

Sponsor - Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy ecologist

Location - Summit of Roan Mountain Massif

Agenda - Assist with woody plant removal in the grassy balds community atop the Roan Mountain Massif. Hike the Appalachian Trail across the high elevation grassy balds community to the work site. Enjoy 360 degree views into the TN and NC mountains and learn about high elevation communities and land protection efforts in the Roan Mountain area. Visit the goats browsing at the site of the Baa-tany Goat Project.

Trail Renovation Work Day (on National Public Lands Day)

Date - September 26

Sponsor - Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation ecologist

Location - Hampton Creek Cove State Natural Area

Agenda – Assist with trail renovation on a beautiful high elevation state natural area. Hike 2 miles of trail and learn basic trail renovation skills. Also, learn about various ecologically important stewardship activities, such as efforts to restore a native brook trout stream and early successional habitat for rare bird and small mammal species.

Role of Fire / Smokey Bear Program

Date – *suggest a date*

Sponsor - U.S. Forest Service - Cherokee National Forest biologists

Location – Roan Mountain State Park

Agenda – Learn about the role of fire in our natural environment, as well as fire management and fire control techniques. Use of Forest Service fire equipment and techniques will be demonstrated.

Salamander Survey Setup - Work Day

Date – *suggest a date*

Sponsor – North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission biologist & Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy ecologist

Location – Carver's Gap to Roan High Bluff Overlook

Agenda – Assist with setup of salamander study plots which will be used to monitor salamanders. We will hike to designated study sites in high elevation forests, search sites for salamanders, place cover boards, and collect field notes on habitat characteristics. Learn about salamander ecology and high elevation vegetation communities of the Southern Appalachian mountains.

Note: This activity will be limited to a small youth group.

Potential activities yet to include:

Flyfishing Workshop

Nature Photography Workshop

Soil & Watershed Program