

Coming Again: Winter Hike Week in the Smokies

January 19-22, 2017, Sponsored by SEFTC

Many of you have in past years enjoyed the winter hiking experience during Wilderness Wildlife Week in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The tradition continues. Under the auspices of the Southeastern Foot Trails Coalition (SEFTC), the second annual Winter Hike Week will be held January 19-22 in Pigeon Forge, TN.

Several hikes ranging from easy to strenuous will be held each day, beginning on Thursday, the 19th, and concluding on Sunday, the 22nd. Participants are urged to arrive on Wednesday afternoon, if possible, to take advantage of the full hike schedule. All hikes will be led by hike leaders familiar with the GSMNP trails. There is a \$25 charge by SEFTC for the event, whether you are there one day or all days. This goes to fund SEFTC's hiking and foot trails program. The SEFTC will hold its annual meeting for SEFTC board members and leadership council members on Saturday. For those not participating in that meeting, a full hiking schedule is provided Saturday.

For all the details and to register please go to the **Southeastern Foot Trails Coalition** website <http://www.southeasternfoottrails.org> then on the opening page click on the icon in the upper right for the "Winter Hiking Event" to access information and registration.

If winter hiking in the Smokies is new to you, it is actually not that strange. For some it is even the preferred season, with the smallest crowds. Ice and snow is usually not a problem, with significant snow collection mainly at the highest elevations. Usually January hikers can hike most days at lower elevations, where most of our treks occur. Should heavy snows occur, alternative low elevation flatter hikes may be substituted.

SEFTC is planning for well over a hundred people for this event. In 2016 SEFTC held this event successfully for the first time, and plans to make it an annual January occasion.

So make your special winter hiking plans now for the January 2017 SEFTC Winter Hike Week in America's most visited national park by going to the SEFTC website and registering and reserving your inn or hotel room as instructed there.