

Fall Creek Falls Environmental Education Center



Fall Creek Falls Environmental Education
2009 Village Camp Road
Pikeville, TN 37367

Welcome to Fall Creek Falls' Environmental Education Program!

Fall Creek Falls State Park has long been recognized as the crown jewel of Tennessee's state park system. At 26,500 acres, Fall Creek Falls is one of the largest of Tennessee's state parks and one of the more ecologically and culturally rich areas of its size in the state. In the spring of 1996, the Environmental Education Center was developed to facilitate the educational mission of the park through its vast natural resources by offering a low cost, high quality overnight field trip for schools groups. With awareness of the psychological, developmental, and physical benefits of outdoor education on the rise, this is the perfect time for your school to build a partnership with the only extended stay environmental education program in the Tennessee State Park System! Call us today to take advantage of your greatest natural resource, Fall Creek Falls State Park.



Program Options

All Fall Creek Falls Environmental Education Center programs are designed to support applicable National Science Education Content Standards and Tennessee Science Curriculum Performance Indicators. The typical 2 ½ -day trip consists of 4, \$4 per student day programs and 1 complimentary night program.

Core Programs

Forest Ecology/Geology Hike to the Base of Fall Creek Falls

Enjoy a 3-mile hike from the Nature Center to Fall Creek Falls and back. While on the hike, one can observe the 2 types of forest indigenous to the Cumberland Plateau, native herbs, and geological features common to the area. Environmental problems facing the Cumberland Plateau today, as well as the results of land usage in the late 19th and early 20th centuries will be discussed. Observe plant, animal, and fungal communities on the plateau top; and witness the change in community structure throughout the descent into the rich, moist environment of Fall Creek Gorge.

Native Americans and Pioneers

Canoe to a rock shelter and learn about the Native Americans and pioneers that used this area. This program discusses how these settlers survived with the materials and resources of the Cumberland Plateau. If conditions are unfavorable for canoeing, this program can be altered to include a hike or an indoor discussion.

Natural Bridge Excursion

Observe the changes in plant and animal communities while hiking from the sandstone layers to the underlying limestone layers at the bottom of Cane Creek Gorge. This hike passes through old farm land acquired by the park and features a natural bridge formed from a collapsed cave.

Aquatic Ecology

Introducing students to aquatic biology at an early age is sure to inspire curiosity! This program is designed to teach students how to take a qualitative sample of aquatic invertebrates, identify them, and make predictions about water quality from their samples. To reinforce the importance of data collection and record keeping with interested groups, we may also record water temperature, stream flow, and the stream profile.

Night Hike

A quiet walk in the dark around the golf course is a great way to observe nocturnal life and the night sky. Many students from populated areas never experience night time without street lights and heavy road noise. Fall Creek Falls State Park Golf Course is a great place to have this experience. Groups frequently encounter deer, raccoons, fox, frogs, snakes, etc. on the night hike.

Alternate Programs

Trash to Treasure

Use everyday household trash to make a new treasure!

Nature Games

A variety of games can be played such as the Web of Life, Come Here Deer, and Nature Jeopardy. Some of these can be played inside the lodge, and some involve the whole class in an outdoor setting.

Marbles

Various marble games date back 5,000 years. This is a culturally significant game to play indoors during inclement weather.

Orienteering

Students will be introduced to basic map and compass skills in a classroom setting. Afterward, they will learn to pace distances, shoot azimuths, and read bearings by participating in various compass exercises.

Scavenger Hunt

While working in teams, students will perform a scavenger hunt that helps inspire and connect them to nature through their senses. They will be encouraged to see, touch, and smell things that they might otherwise not be inclined to explore.

Reptiles & Amphibians

Explore the world of our native reptiles and amphibians. Learn how to identify some of our native snakes, and become familiar with the habits and traits of many species. Also, learn about our amphibians' and reptiles' ecological importance and life cycles. This program is normally included with the Aquatic Ecology program, but can be separated if desired.

Team Building

Team building helps relieve anxiety and tension while encouraging creativity and improving self-esteem. It allows for face-to-face communication and encourages students to trust each other.

Outdoor Skills

We will discuss basic outdoor information that everyone should know before venturing into the woods such as; knot tying, the 10 essentials, leave no trace, hiking safety and etiquette.

Customized Programs

Fall Creek Falls' staff will be happy to develop a program block specifically for a school group to emphasize the teacher's current classroom studies if it is within the park's resources to do such. Please discuss customized programs with the Environmental Education Coordinator as early in your planning as possible.

Alternate Night Programs

(Please check for availability well in advance)

Astronomy – Learn to identify some key components of the night sky and understand how the constellations “move” according to the seasons. This program is highly weather dependant.

Campfire – This program is great for large groups. Learn about Native American and Pioneer history, local legends, and other tales. If raining, stories may be told indoors by a fireplace or candlelight.

Reptiles and Amphibians – The reptiles and amphibians program may be used as a night program if desired.

Spiders – Spider programs may be available seasonally and can be an interesting alternative to a night hike when the weather conditions are poor.



Lodging Options

Group Lodge 1

Group Lodge 1 is the most popular lodging location for school field trips. It sleeps 100 people on 2 dormitory style levels. It also has 4 separate rooms for teachers and chaperones, lots of space for students to play during free time, and a separate building with a kitchen for serving catered meals, cooking, providing indoor programs, etc. This lodge costs \$200 per night or \$5 per night per person if over 40 students participate (only students are charged for lodging).



Group Lodge 2

This is the best location for smaller groups. Group Lodge 2 sleeps 32 people in 2 separate buildings which are perfect for separating boys and girls. There is a driveway and campfire ring between the 2 buildings. Each building is equipped with its own kitchen, bathrooms, and covered patio that can be used for serving meals on rainy days. This lodge costs \$160 per night.



Youth Camps 1 & 2

For a more rustic experience, try 1 of the 2 youth camps. All heat and air is provided by nature through screened windows, but the cost is a real bargain! Youth Camp 1 sleeps 100 people scattered about in separate cabins that sleep 6 - 8 people each. Youth Camp 2 sleeps 150 people in the same format. Both of these camps have plenty of room for free time and are somewhat isolated from other park visitors. Youth Camp 1 costs \$110 per night or \$2 per person over 55 people. Youth Camp 2 costs \$140 per night or \$2 per person over 70 people.



Inn, Cabins & Campgrounds

Other lodging locations that may interest some school groups are the Inn, Cabins, and Campground. Use of these areas may be cost prohibitive, but feel free to inquire about these options. Participants have used all of them successfully.



Meal Options

Fall Creek Falls Inn Restaurant

Catered meals are provided by Fall Creek Falls Inn Restaurant. The restaurant strives to provide healthy, well balanced meals for students and will provide meals for individuals with special dietary needs at no extra charge if advance notice is given. The catered meal cost is \$20 per day (3 meals), and is delivered to the school's lodging location. The restaurant management prefers that any groups smaller than 30 people drive to the Fall Creek Falls Inn at scheduled meal times to eat off of the buffet.

Provide Your Own

Participants are welcome to utilize the kitchen at their lodging location to provide their own meals if they have adequate staff to do such. This option will reduce the cost of the typical 2-day trip by \$40 per person.



Figure Your Bill

For a standard 2 ½ day stay, the cost will be \$66 per student (includes meals, programs, and lodging) and \$40 per teacher or chaperone (charged for meals only). A 5-day stay will cost twice that of the 2 ½ day stay. Groups that are too small to meet the base cost of the chosen lodging location or have customized their trip may have a different cost per student.

An electronic bill calculator that serves as an invoice will be e-mailed to the school coordinator. This calculator is designed to automatically adjust the bill according to student number, teacher and chaperone number, program choices, lodging location, meals, etc. This tool may be used to experiment with different scenarios in order to plan the best trip for a group. We must receive payment in two separate checks. One goes to Fall Creek Falls Inn for meals, the other goes to Fall Creek Falls E. E. Center for programs and lodging.

Note for Large Groups

Any group over 56 total people will have transportation difficulties. The park has 1 van that will carry 14 people. Park staff will only carry 14 passengers in one trip. Any school with a large group should encourage chaperones to come prepared to assist with transportation of students between various programming destinations. Alternating departure times has worked well for some large groups but the trip will flow more smoothly for schools that are able to assist with transportation.

Accurate Count Please

It is understand that some students might become ill or have other obligations. Schools will be given a 5% differential. Please provide an accurate count two weeks before your arrival. It is the school's responsibility to contact the E.E. Center Coordinator if your number of participants changes.

Grants

Grants may be available to help pay for your E.E. Center Trip. For information visit the following websites:

Tennessee residents

<http://eeintennessee.org/core/item/topic.aspx?s=0.0.114.37935&tid=85010>

Georgia residents

<http://www.eeingorgia.org/net/content/search.aspx?s=0.0.68.4863&keyword=grants>

Alabama residents

<http://www.eeinalabama.org/>

Prepare for the Trip

Prepare students for the Fall Creek Falls learning experience well in advance! The students' expectations and interests upon arrival will play a vital role in the success of the trip.

Classroom

Prepare your students conceptually in the classroom by introducing or reflecting on studies of Tennessee history, Tennessee geography (specifically the Cumberland Plateau and Appalachian Mountains), geologic concepts such as the 3 major types of rock, and any relationships that can be drawn between the prescribed curriculum and the natural world in your local area.

Physical Demands

Students should expect to hike several miles in variable terrain at Fall Creek Falls State Park. The Forest Ecology/ Geology Hike to the Base of Fall Creek Falls, for example, subjects students to a 600 ft. combined elevation change at the mid-point of the hike. This could be difficult for students that are not used to walking on a regular basis.

Teacher Responsibilities

Teachers will be responsible for 1 of the nightly activities, free time between programs, serving food, caring for the students during the night, preparing them each day for activities, and caring for the lodge during the stay. It is required that at least 1 chaperone travels with each group on every program. Program staff will function as guides only. Staff will not normally engage in disciplinary action and have been authorized to stop any program if control becomes inadequate.



Get The Trip Started!

- Reservations at (423) 881-5708
- E-mail a completed registration form to E. E. Center Coordinator
- Mail the \$200 deposit with the school's tax-exempt to:
Fall Creek Falls State Park
Attention E. E. Center Coordinator
2009 Village Camp Road
Pikeville, TN 37367
- Develop schedule with E. E. Center Coordinator



Pre-Departure Checklist

- Read and review the E. E. Center Guide with adults and students
- Arrange transportation
- Collect appropriate forms from students: Fall Creek Health History, Release of Liability, permission slips, etc.
- Discuss what to bring and not to bring with students * plan for the weather
- Appoint an adult in charge of distributing any medications
- Gather lesson material and supplies
- Bring your checks and your bill sheet to settle payments with the Park

Sample Schedule

Day 1

- 11:00AM Check In
- 12:00PM Lunch
- 1:00PM Group 1 Native Americans and Early Pioneers
Group 2 Aquatic Ecology
Group 3 Forest Ecology and Geology Hike to FCF
Group 4 Natural Bridge Excursion
- 5:00PM Dinner
- 7:00PM Night Hike

Day 2

- 7:00AM Breakfast
- 8:15AM Group 1 Natural Bridge Excursion
Group 2 Native Americans and Early Pioneers
Group 3 Aquatic Ecology
Group 4 Forest Ecology and Geology Hike to FCF
- 12:00PM Lunch
- 1:00PM Group 1 Aquatic Ecology
Group 2 Forest Ecology and Geology Hike to FCF
Group 3 Natural Bridge Excursion
Group 4 Native Americans and Early Pioneers
- 5:00PM Dinner

Day 3

- 7:00AM Breakfast
- 8:15AM Group 1 Forest Ecology and Geology Hike to FCF
Group 2 Natural Bridge Excursion
Group 3 Native Americans and Early Pioneers
Group 4 Aquatic Ecology
- 12:00PM Check Out

Check-In Procedure

Upon arrival, proceed directly to the selected lodge or camp. Park staff will be available for check-in at that location. Call or visit the Park Headquarters or the Inn and a Park Ranger will assist if the correct area cannot be located.

Headquarters: 1-800-250-8611

Fall Creek Falls Inn: (423) 881-5241

24 hour Emergency Number: (423) 881-5241

Nearest Hospital: Erlanger Bledsoe (423) 447-2112

Group Lodge 1: (423) 881-5747

Group Lodge 2: (423) 881-5778



Check-Out Procedures

Kitchen

- Clean all counter tops and shelves
- Check coolers and freezers for cleanliness
- Empty all trashcans
- Sweep, vacuum, and mop floors
- Clean ashes from fireplace (Lodge 1 or Youth Camps)

Dormitories

- Be sure all mattresses are on top bunk
- Be sure all floors are free of litter
- Sweep and vacuum floors and stairways

Restrooms

- Remove all old soap from sinks and showers
- Check and clean all shower stalls
- Check and clean all commodes, urinals, and stall walls
- Clean and wipe dry all sinks and mirrors
- Sweep and mop floors
- Remove all trash and empty all containers

Outside

- Remove all litter



What to Bring

Groups will be outside most of the time so wear appropriate clothing for the weather! Even if the days are warm the nights can be cool on the Plateau.

Necessities

- Sleeping bag or blankets/sheets/pillow
- Towels and washcloths
- Soap, toothbrush, deodorant, any gender specific necessities
- Several pairs of long pants
- 1 shirt per day
- 1 long sleeve sweatshirt
- Warm hat, coat, gloves, etc
- Raingear – poncho or jacket
- 1 pair of pajamas
- 1 set of underwear per day
- 1 pair of tennis shoes
- 1 old pair of shoes or sandals (not flip flops) to get wet/muddy
- 1 pair of sturdy shoes or boots for hiking
- 3 pairs of socks, preferably wool or synthetic fiber
- 1 daypack
- Reusable water bottle or canteen
- Plastic bag for muddy clothes
- Flashlight with new batteries
- Prescription drugs and any other needed medications should be handled according to school policy

Optional items to bring

- Camera
- Bandanna
- Flip Flops to wear at the Lodge
- Hat
- Pony tail holders or other hair accessories
- Insect repellent
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Spending money (money for food stop on return trip home)

What Not to Bring

Leave at Home

- Radios
- Electronic games
- Tape players/CD players
- Jewelry
- Knives of any form or fashion
- Fireworks or firearms (no weapons or explosives of any kind)
- Tobacco, alcohol, drugs



Directions



Nashville: Follow I-40 East to Cookeville. Follow Hwy 111 south through Sparta and Spencer. Exit on Hwy 284 east and continue on until entering the south entrance. Go straight for Lodge 2 or the youth camps; turn right for Lodge 1.

Murfreesboro: Follow Hwy 70s through Woodbury to the Hwy 70s bypass in McMinnville, or take I-24 east to Hwy 55 in Manchester and follow Hwy 55 to the Hwy 70s bypass in McMinnville. Follow the bypass to Hwy 30 east. Travel about 10 miles and turn right on Baker Mountain Road. Follow Baker Mountain Road until it crosses Hwy 111. Go straight onto Hwy 284 east and continue into the south entrance. Go straight for Lodge 2 or the youth camps; turn right for Lodge 1.

Chattanooga: Follow Hwy 27 north toward Dayton to Hwy 111 north. Go north on Hwy 111 through Dunlap, and turn right onto Hwy 284 east at the Fall Creek Falls State Resort Park sign. After entering the south entrance of the park, go straight for Lodge 2 or the youth camps; turn right for Lodge 1.

Knoxville: Follow I-40 west to Hwy 101 in Crossville. Exit at Hwy 101 south, and follow it to Hwy 30. Turn right onto Hwy 30 west and follow it to Hwy 284 west. Turn left onto Hwy 284 and continue through the north entrance of the park. When the four-way stop is reached, go straight for Lodge 2 or the youth camps; turn left for Lodge 1.

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