



GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK  
FIVE DECADES OF AMERICAN LANDSCAPES

RICHARD MACK  
*Foreword by Steve Kemp*



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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED WITH LOVE TO MY DAUGHTER SARA AND SON SAM WHO HAVE TRAVELED MANY TRAILS WITH ME, INCLUDING THE ONES IN THE SMOKIES. MAY THEIR LOVE OF NATURE BE PASSED DOWN TO THE GRANDKIDS.

Cover Image: LITTLE RIVER, NOVEMBER 2008

Back Cover Image: DEEP CREEK OVERLOOK, NOVEMBER 2008

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Because of its abundance of wildlife, Cades Cove is nicknamed “the Serengeti of the South.” All day, every day, cars and pickup trucks loaded with wildlife watchers troll the 11-mile loop, all eyes peeled for white-tailed deer, wild turkey, bear, beaver, otter, and coyote. More often than not, especially mornings and evenings, their efforts are rewarded.

The place name begs explaining. A “cove” in the southern Appalachian vernacular is a valley surrounded by mountains. “Cades” can likely be traced to “Kate,” the daughter of Cherokee Chief Abram, who lived in a village downstream from the cove beside his namesake stream. The Cherokee visited Cades Cove frequently because of the rich variety of wildlife and edible and medicinal plants.

The cove owes much of its richness to its geology. Whereas most of the Smokies bedrock is sandstone or siltstone, Cades Cove has a less acidic limestone floor. This “sweeter” soil supports a plethora of flora which is responsible for attracting wildlife, and, during the early 19th century, attracted the attention of white settlers.

The latter stole into the Cherokee-owned valley around 1820 and very soon flourished. By 1850, 685 people lived there. Their farms produced corn, wheat, barley, cotton, and vegetables. Soon there were white-steepled churches, country stores, water-powered grist mills, an industrial iron forge, and herds of livestock that could be summered on mile-high meadows above the cove.

All of this gradually came to a close when the land was purchased for the national park, officially established in 1934. However, a variety of historic buildings have been faithfully preserved, from the John Oliver cabin (home of the first family of white settlers) to the Cable grist mill.

As a fortuitous result, visitors to Cades Cove today are treated to a rare blend of human history, wildlife viewing opportunities, and scenic splendor.



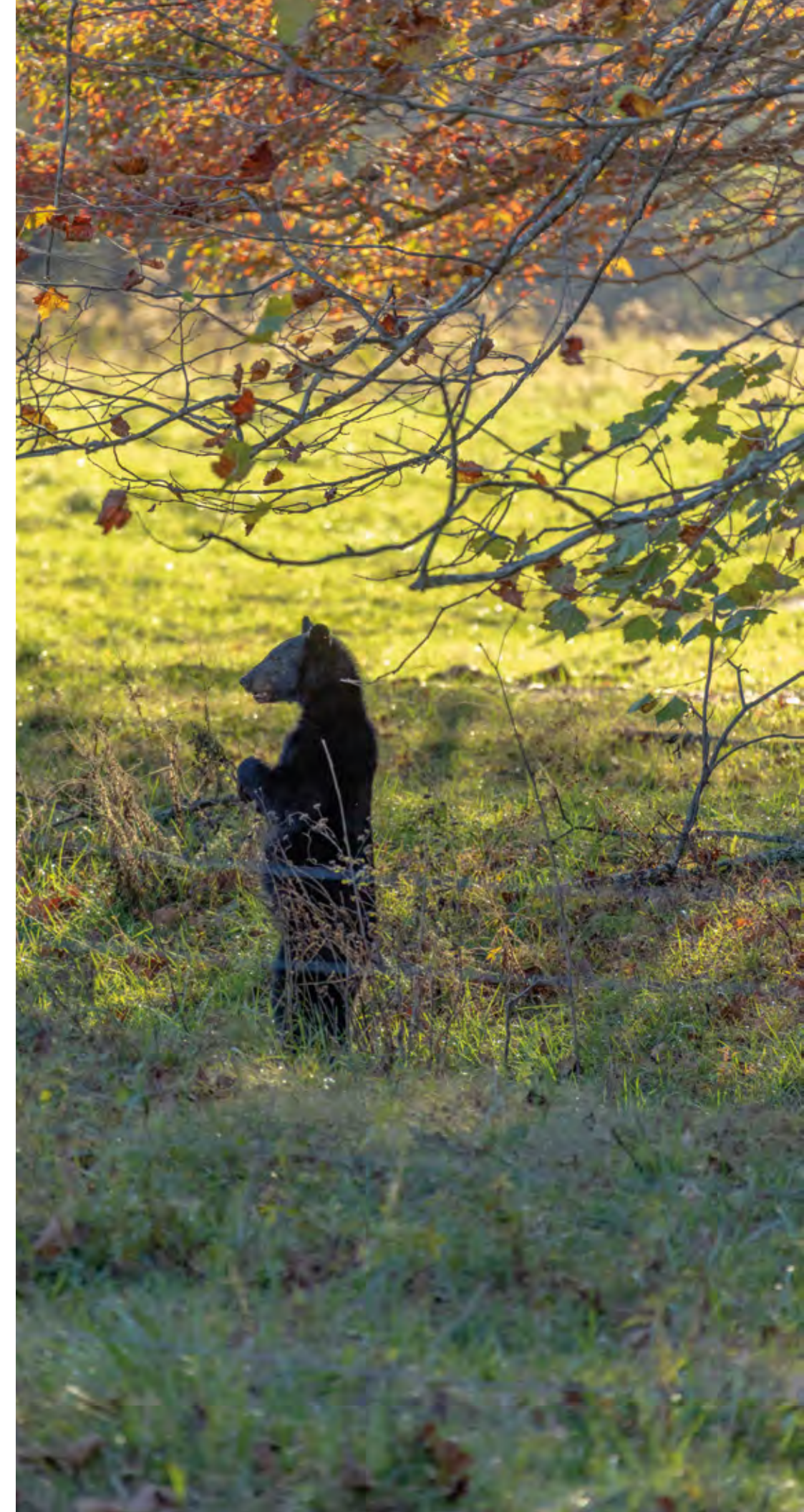




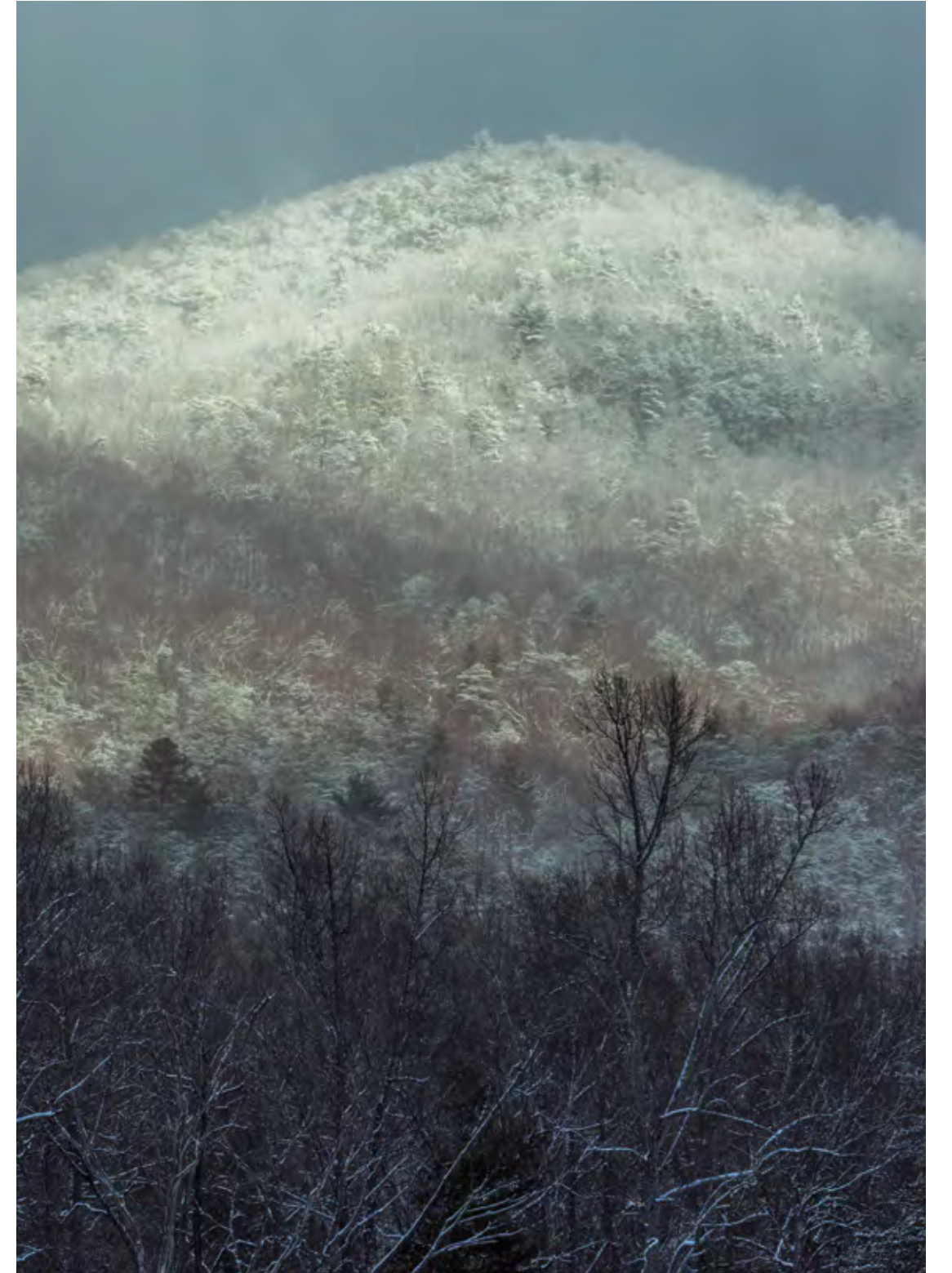








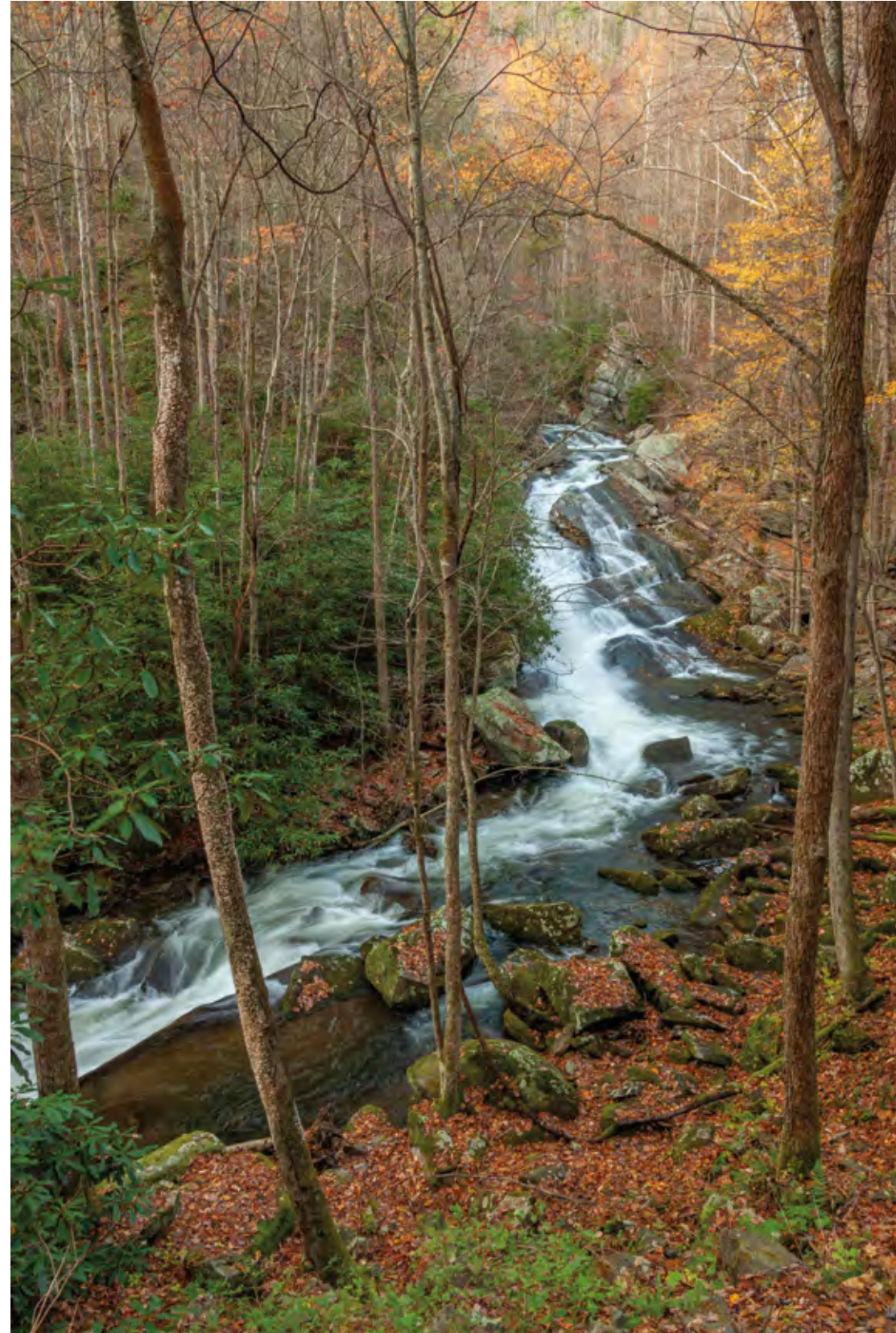












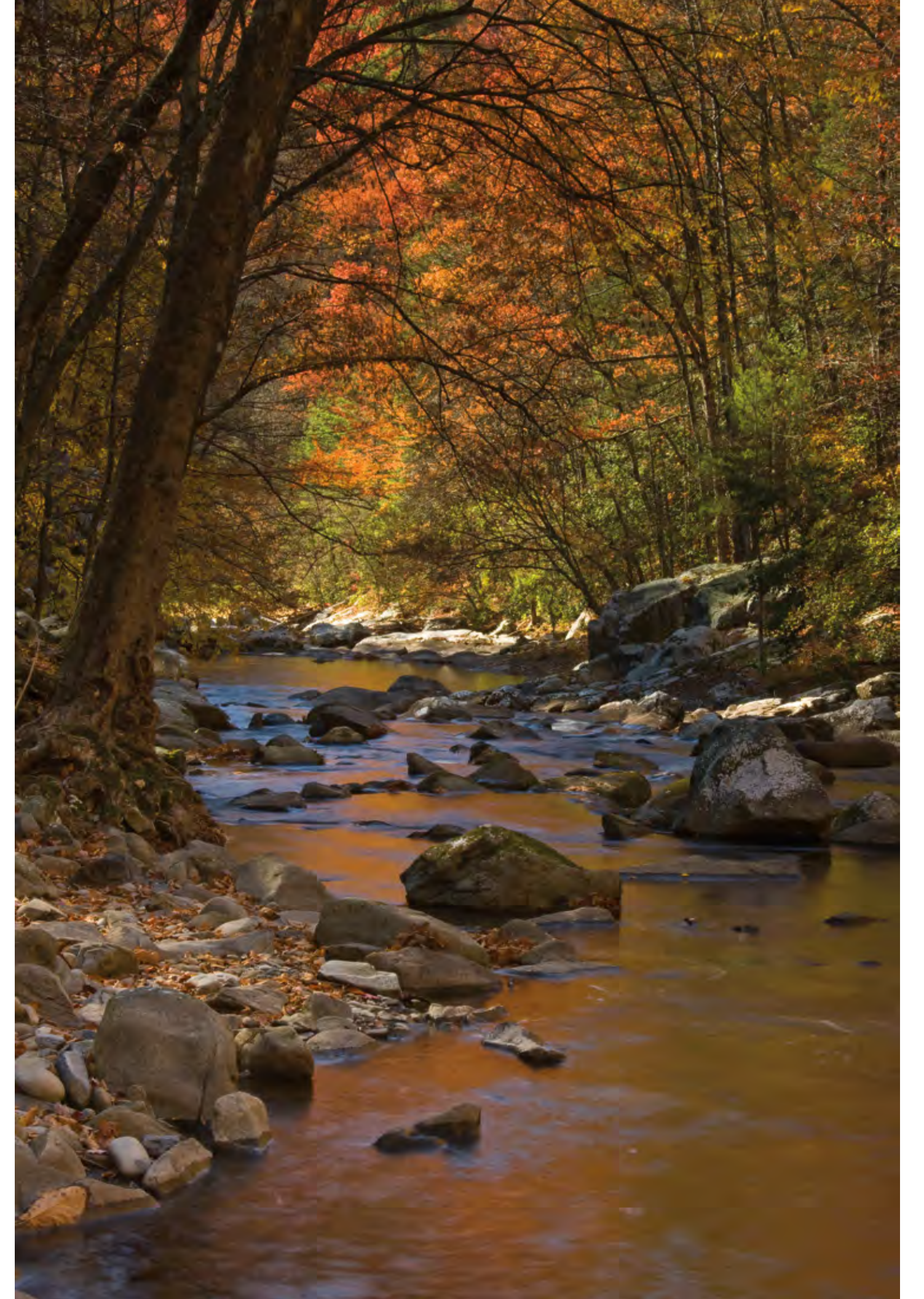








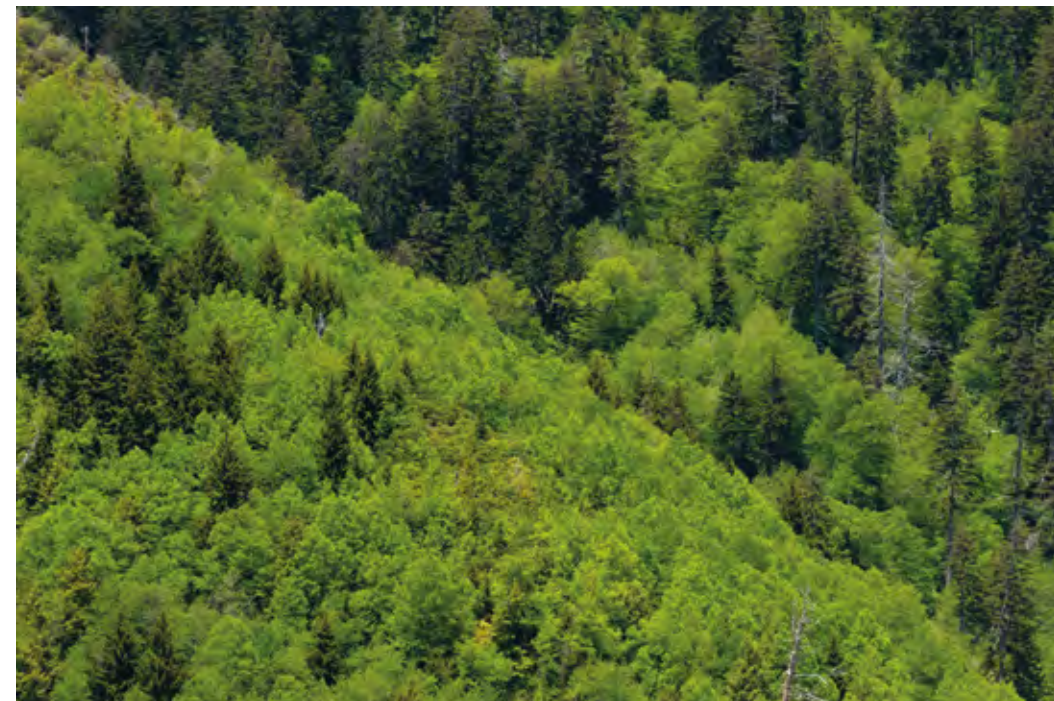












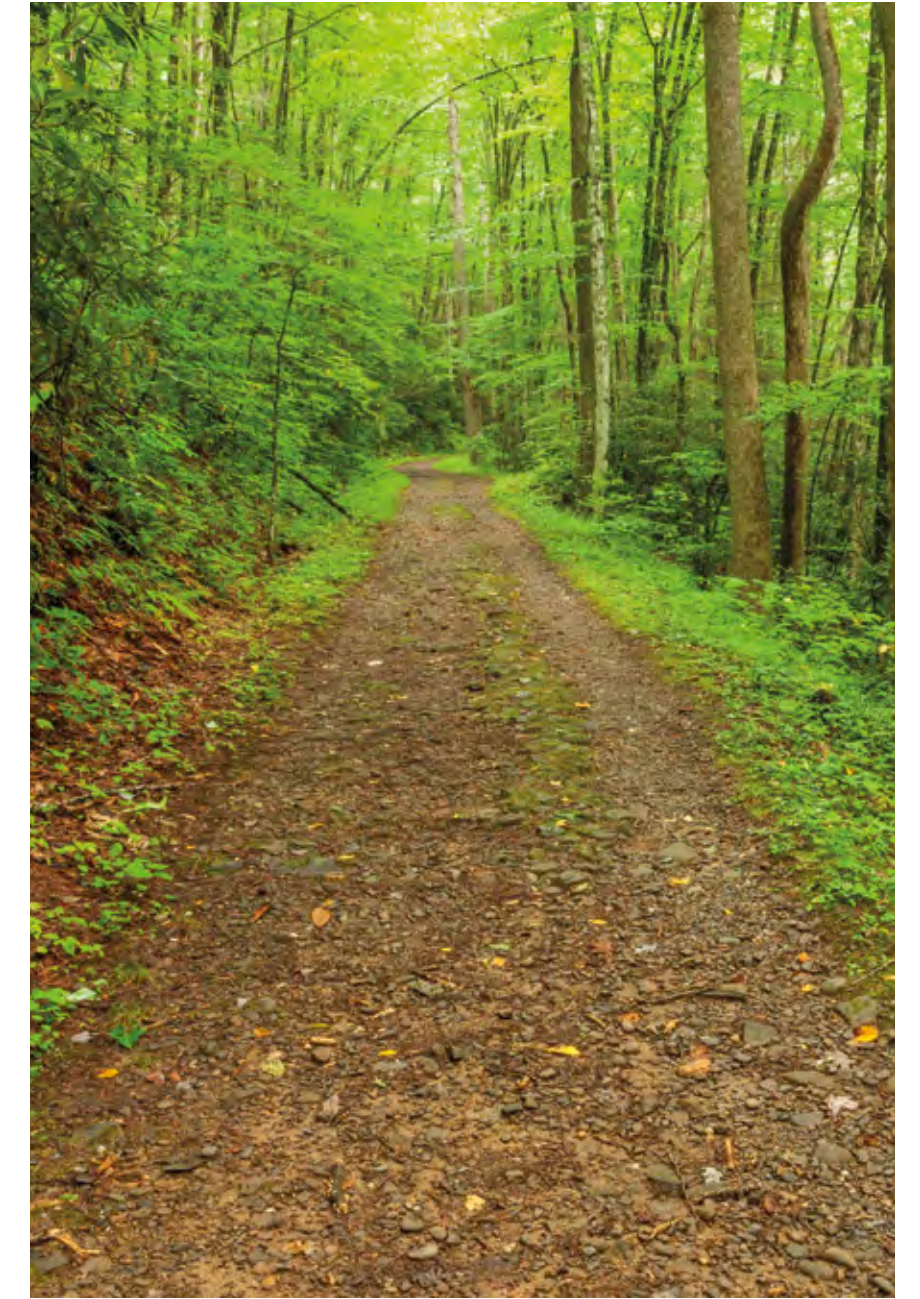
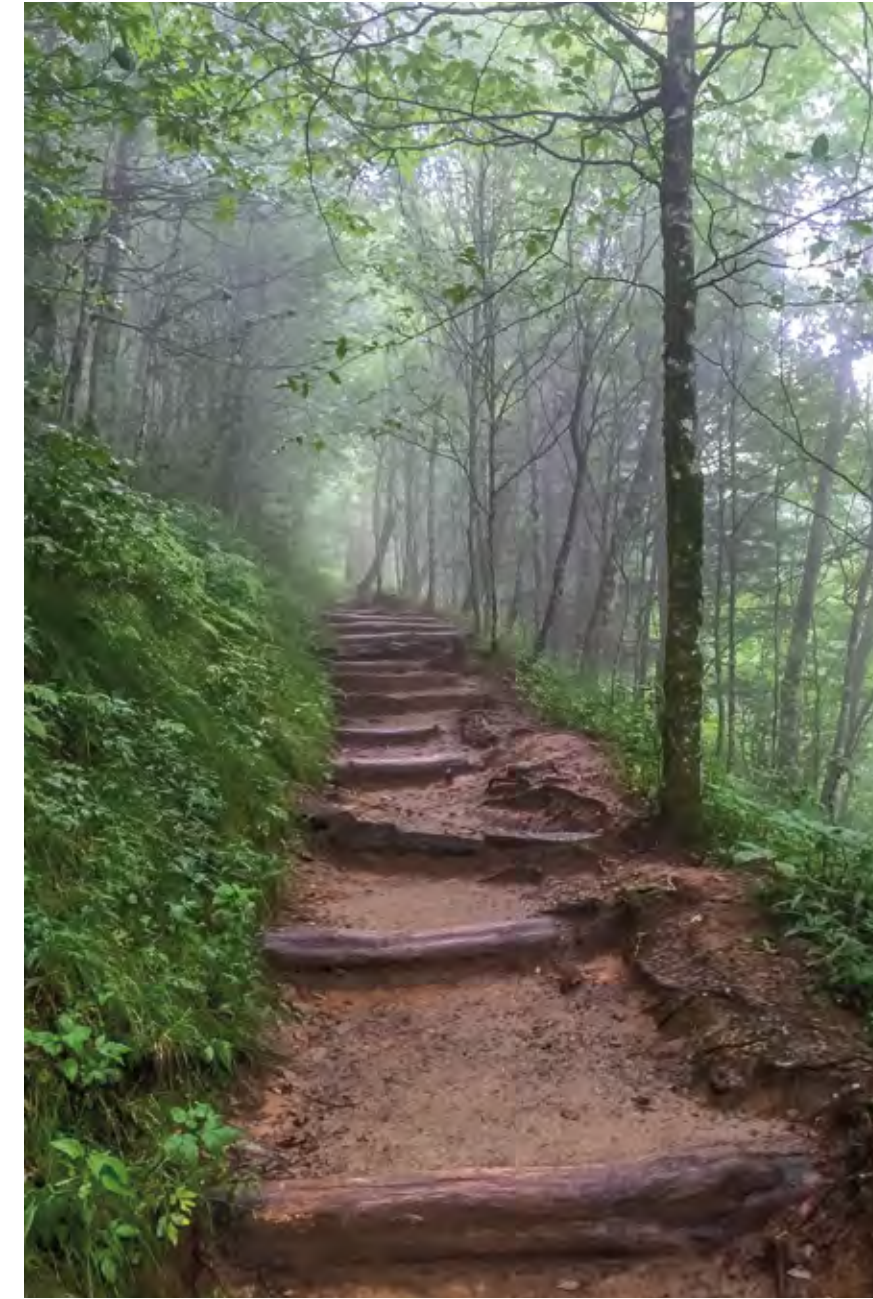
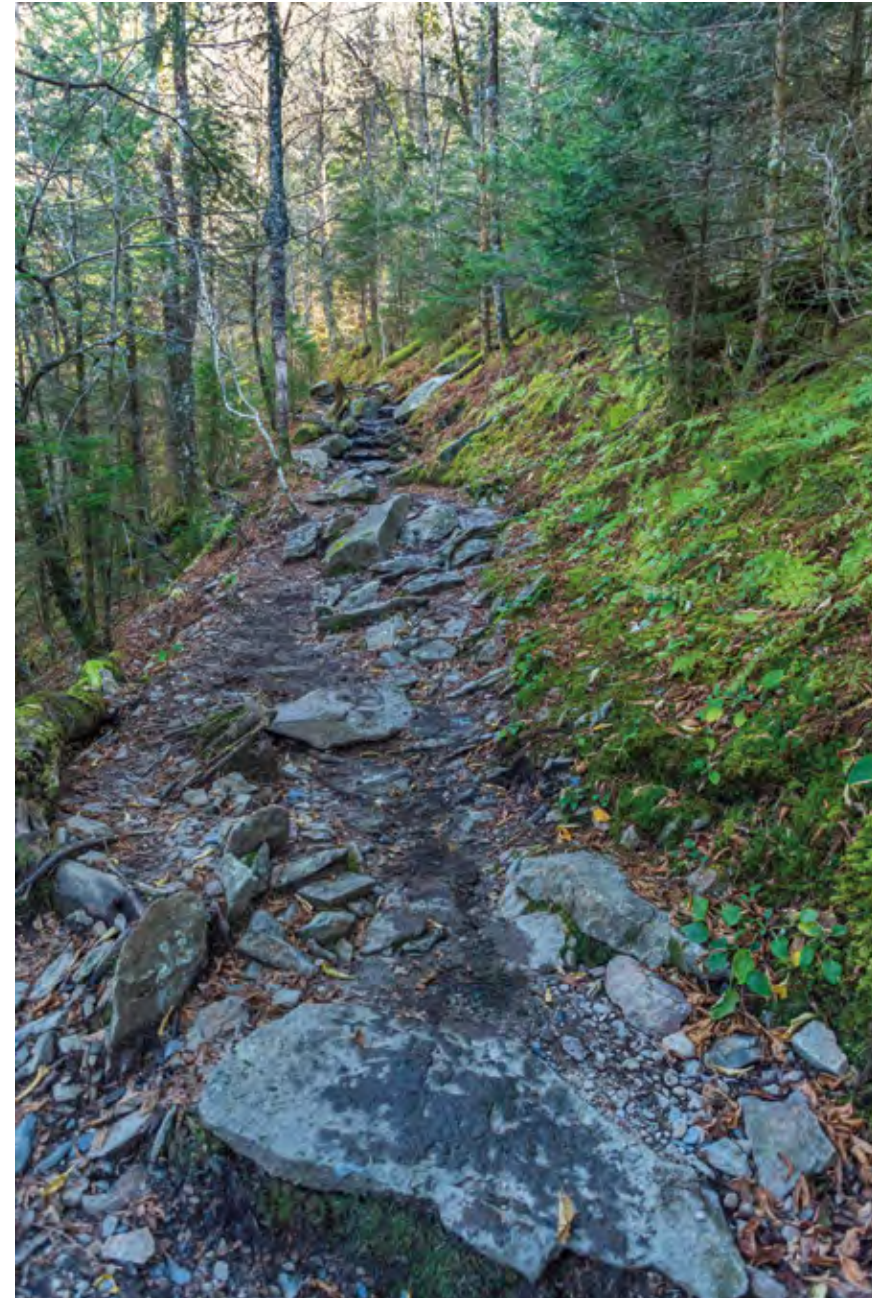




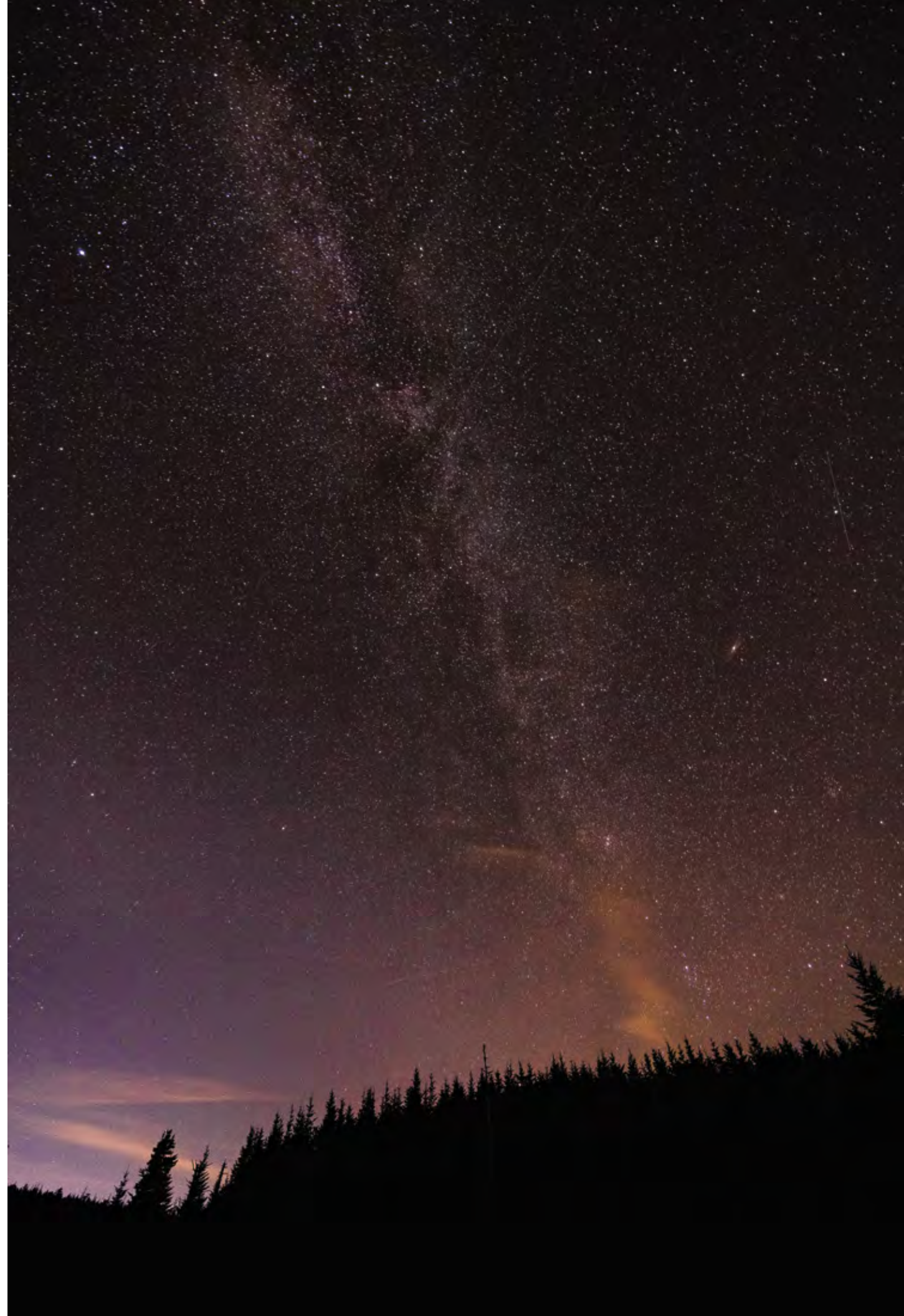












MILKY WAY CLINGMANS DOME OCTOBER 2022

SUNSET, WEST PRONG LITTLE PIGEON RIVER VALLEY JUNE 2008









# OCONALUFTEE

SUNRISE, DEEP CREEK OVERLOOK *JUNE 2008*

Although more of Great Smoky Mountains National Park lies in the state of North Carolina than Tennessee, the southern, or Carolina side of the range is often neglected by visitors. Much of the reason for the imbalance is simple geography. Traveling from the immediate north or west, the Tennessee side of the Great Smokies is the first major outcrop of the Appalachians that one encounters. Coming from the south or east, travelers first meet the Blue Ridge Mountains, which are a major destination unto themselves and a substantial barrier to reaching the south side of the Smokies.

In other words, the Carolina Smokies are mountains surrounded by mountains. Even in the heavily populated East, even in the transportation crazy 21st century, they are a long day's journey from just about everywhere.

Yet the journey is supremely worth the effort. Just by turning off the popular Blue Ridge Parkway onto mile-high Balsam Mountain and Heintooga Ridge, you can enjoy some of the best panoramic views and cool July breezes in the southern mountains.

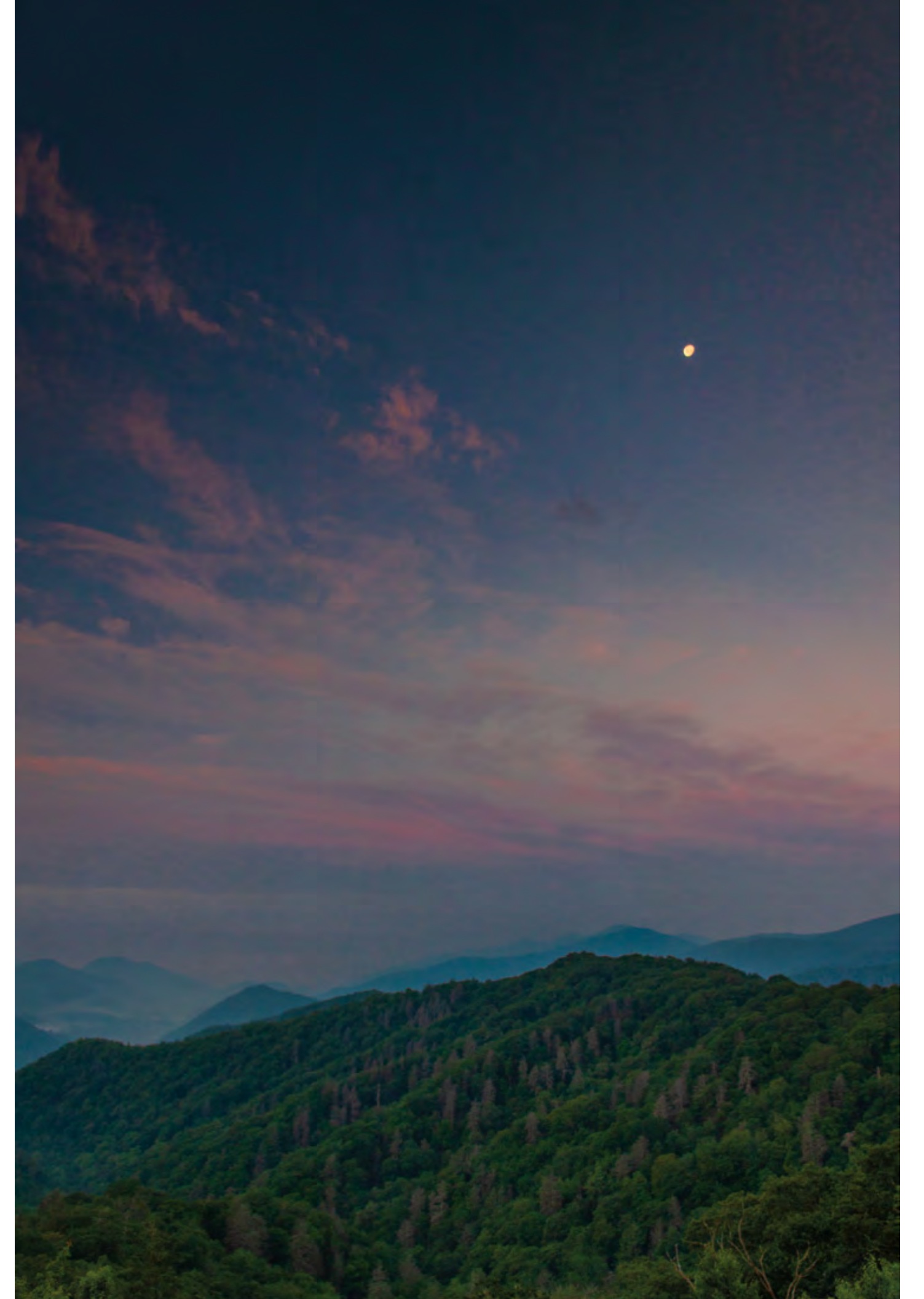
Even more remote is the Fontana Lake region. The very large, clear lake at the center of this area serves as the park boundary. A short boat ride takes you off the beaten path to places like Hazel Creek and Eagle Creek, revered by anglers and rich in 19th century mountain history.

The Deep Creek area is just outside the pleasantly Mayberry-esque town of Bryson City. Deep Creek is one of the loveliest of many lovely Smoky Mountain streams. Its tributaries offer hikers a variety of loop trails and glittering waterfalls to enjoy.

The storied Oconaluftee River runs swift and wide through the Carolina Smokies, providing haven for rainbow and brown trout. As it prepares to exit the Smoky Mountains, it wends near two sites of special historic interest. First, the Mountain Farm Museum with its precious collection of log buildings and occasional historic demonstrations, then the Cherokee Indian Reservation with its impressive American Indian museum and quality arts and crafts galleries. Together the sites relate a tantalizing story of life in mountains surrounded by mountains lived by people tenacious and ingenious enough to thrive.







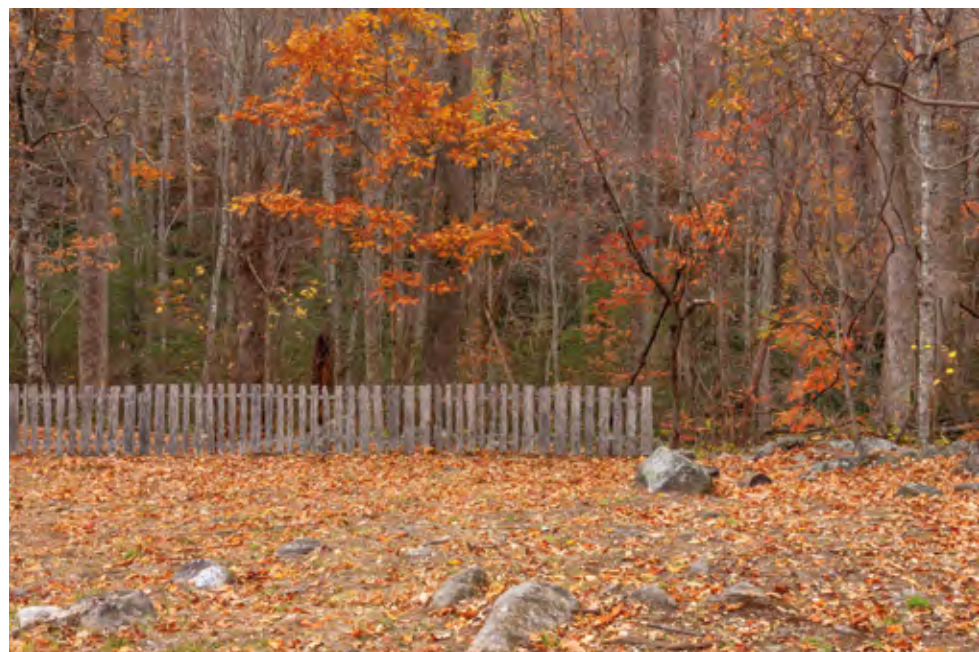




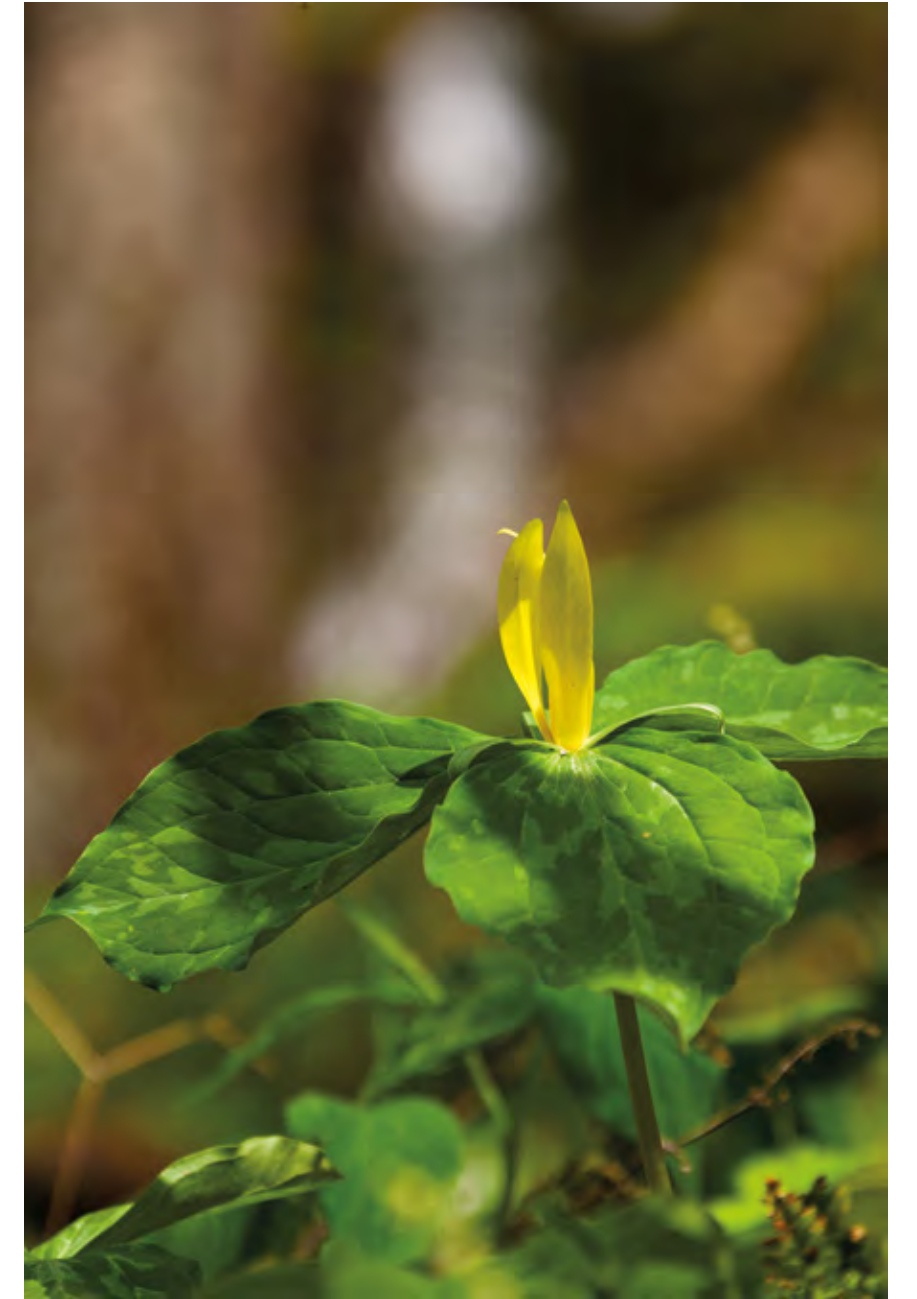
























This book was first printed in 2008. This is the third edition of this award-winning book and includes 55 new images and revised text. Below are listed just a sampling of the awards garnered by photographer Richard Mack and writer Steve Kemp.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park has a chameleon-like quality, capable of revealing both subtle and some not-so-subtle changes to the discerning eye. For five decades, award-winning photographer Richard Mack captured the various vistas found in the United States' most visited national park. From the top of Balsam Mountain to the fields of Cades Cove, this exquisite collection of images spans nearly 50 years and showcases the immense diversity found within Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Noted writer and long-time resident Steve Kemp introduces each section of images, providing an insider's perspective that elevates the story unfolding through the photographs—whether it's the hard-scrabble life along Roaring Fork or the history of the Native Americans along the Oconaluftee River.

Yet it is the captivating images themselves that will draw you back time and again. Richard's view of the park—from the bold seasonal displays to the subtle hues of wildflowers—is exhilarating. His fresh views of familiar landscapes and off-the-beaten-path areas like Cataloochee and Noland Creek are transformed through his artistry, allowing us to witness each area of the park at the pinnacle of its beauty.

*"Richard has a sensitivity for light that's pretty rare. He can coax a richness out of landscapes and low light conditions that you don't see other photographers experiment with. His photographs have an emotional depth that is superior to a lot of other work. It's the best large format photography book we've ever been able to offer our visitors."*

- Steve Kemp

Interpretive Products and Services Director, Emeritus  
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