

KNOXVILLE HISTORY PROJECT

BIRTH OF A NATIONAL PARK IN THE SMOKIES: A TWO-DAY EDUCATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

FRIDAY, JULY 26 AT THE EAST TENNESSEE HISTORY CENTER

Free Admission. Registration required. Option to pre-order lunch.

9:30 a.m. Coffee Reception

10:00 a.m. Welcome Remarks

10:15 a.m. **CHOOSE FROM OPTION A or B**

“Option A” - Downtown Conservation Walking Tour: Where turning points in the park movement events actually happened

Take a stroll around downtown with **Laura Still of Downtown Walking Tours** for an informative interpretive tour of the locations of pivotal events during the Smokies park movement of 1923-1935, including the sites of the founding of the Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association (and of the much-later fistfight between two of the park’s most famous leaders); what remains of the bank where governors and Smokies leaders received the critical Rockefeller grant; the hotel where Smokies advocates met with Department of the Interior officials; the building where Amelia Earhart stayed when she came to see the Smokies; and other sites of mass meetings and private conferences—plus one familiar but surprising building where some famous early conservationist leaders lived. Still is the author of *A Haunted History of Knoxville* and several essays in KHP’s *Knoxville Lives* series. (NOTE: This same tour is offered again on Saturday morning but with Jack Neely leading the tour. When registering, please select only one walking tour to allow others to participate. Thank you.)

Option B - The Local Esprit de Corps: Knoxville leaders & explorers of the Smokies

Presented by Paul James. A look at some of the determined captains of industry, automobile pioneers, and lawyers who created a sustainable grassroots movement; plus, some of the outdoor enthusiasts who blazed trails, served as trail guides for visiting officials, took photographs and created posters and maps. Together these men and women fostered a passion for the Smokies within the Knoxville community and beyond that continues to this day. James serves as the director of publishing and development for the Knoxville History Project and is the author of this event’s accompanying booklet, as well as the author of *Ijams Nature Center*, and co-author of *Downtown Knoxville* with Jack Neely.

11:45 a.m. Break

Noon

The Queen City of the Mountains: How a crowded, noisy, sooty city helped deliver to America one of its most beautiful national parks

Keynote address presented by Jack Neely. From the annual celebration of the mystical Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains to the number-crunching lawyers, bankers, and businessmen of Gay Street’s office towers, Knoxville played a critical role in making the national park happen. Historian, author, and executive director of the Knoxville History Project, Neely will discuss the birth of the Smokies within the context of the national park movement—also considering Knoxville’s own unique history, and why it happened here.

Jack Neely is a longtime journalist whose award-winning column, “Secret History,” appeared in *Metro Pulse* for more than 20 years. He’s author of numerous books, including, *The Tennessee Theatre: A Grand Entertainment Palace*, *Market Square: The History of the Most Democratic Place on Earth*, and *Knoxville, Tennessee: This Obscure Prismatic City*, *Knoxville: The Curious Visitor’s Guide*, *Knoxville’s Old City: A Short History*, and many others.

1:30 p.m.

Break

2:00 p.m.

A Remarkable Duo on Mount Le Conte: Paul Adams and his legendary faithful companion Smoky Jack

Presented by Ken Wise. In 1925, Paul Adams, a young outdoorsman and naturalist from Knoxville, purchased a trained police dog to be a companion and security guard while developing the first formal campsite on Mt Le Conte. Complete with custom leather saddlebags, Smoky Jack more than earned his keep during the couple’s year on the mountain peak. Wise, a retired UT Professor, is the author of *Hiking Trails of the Great Smoky Mountains*, and editor of two books based on Paul Adams’ journals, *Mount Le Conte* and *Smoky Jack*.

3:15 p.m.

Break

3:30 p.m.

Godfearing, Hustling, Successful, Two-fisted Regular Guys: Crossing state lines in the 1920s

Presented by Daniel S. Pierce, Ph.D. Great Smoky Mountains National Park encompasses trails and arresting views in both Tennessee and North Carolina. Political visions and pressures from logging companies during the Smokies park movement in the 1920s often created sharp tensions as well as warm camaraderie across state lines. The Mountain South Distinguished Professor of History at University of North Carolina in Asheville, Pierce is the author of several Smokies books, including *Great Smokies: From Natural Habitat to National Park*, and co-author of *Illustrated Guide to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park*.

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“Option B Part 1” - In the Heart of the Mountains: Author and photographer Laura Thornburgh’s passion for the Smokies

Presented by Janine Winfree. Author Laura Thornburgh is best known for her 1937 guidebook *Great Smoky Mountains*, but her interests extended far beyond tourism. Her passion for both the beauty of the mountains and the culture of its people inspired Thornburgh to share stories and photographs of the Smokies with the world. Winfree is the assistant audiovisual archivist for the McClung Historical Collection and author of a biographical essay on Thornburgh in KHP’s publication *Knoxville Lives V*.

11:00 a.m. **“Option B Part 2”- Exploring Smokies History from Home: Recommended books and digital collections**

Presented by Paul James. A brief review of some of the key books on the history of the Great Smoky Mountains that cover the park movement and the adventures of Knoxville’s outdoor enthusiasts. Plus, a look at the fascinating Smokies digital collections currently online.

11:45 a.m. Break

Noon

On the path of Benton MacKaye: An Appalachian trail hiker passes through the Smokies en route to Maine

Presented by David Brill. In 1921, Benton MacKaye published a planning document calling for creation of a long-distance footpath along the Appalachian “skyline.” Sixteen years later (as MacKaye moved to Knoxville to work for TVA, and also to begin discussions that led to the creation of the Wilderness Society) the Appalachian Trail was complete, stretching more than 2000 miles from Georgia to Maine. In 1979, MacKaye’s realized vision enticed hiker Brill to follow the AT’s white blazes from end to end. In traversing 72 miles through Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Brill followed in the footsteps of some early park stalwarts, including Harvey Broome, Carlos Campbell, and members of the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club. Brill’s articles have appeared in more than 30 national magazines, and he is the author of five nonfiction books, including *As Far as the Eye Can See: Reflections of an Appalachian Trail Hiker* and *Into the Mist: Tales of Death and Disaster, Mishaps and Misdeeds, Misfortune and Mayhem in Great Smoky Mountains National Park.*

1:30 p.m.

Break

2:00 p.m.

Mountain Sketches: Artists inspired by the Great Smokies

A panel discussion with Jack Neely, Stephen Wicks and Steve Cotham. Several notable local and visiting artists such as James Cameron, Charles C. Krutch, Robert Lindsay Mason, Mary Grainger, and others were inspired by the mountain peaks visible from Knoxville before and during the Smokies park movement. Stephen Wicks is the curator at the Knoxville Museum of Art; Steve Cotham is the retired manager of the Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection.

3:30 p.m.

Finale: Join us for a slice of anniversary cake in our wrap-up social hour to celebrate the anniversary of the Smokies Park movement.

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The Knoxville History Project is an educational nonprofit with a mission to research, preserve, and promote the history and culture of Knoxville, Tennessee. Join us online at KnoxvilleHistoryProject.org for stories, podcasts, downloadable walking and driving tours, and much more.

KHP deeply appreciates the support and generosity of our sponsors to underwrite the costs of this program, and for the help of our partnering organizations to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Smokies park movement.

Mount Le Conte Peak
Presenting Sponsor



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