

ANNUAL SPRING NATURE RALLY

APRIL 10 & 11, 2026

@ STANDING STONE STATE PARK

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Spring weather is always unpredictable. Please check the local weather forecast before you leave home and prepare to join us, rain, snow, or shine, for a day of learning about the natural beauties here at Standing Stone State Park. Other items to consider bringing along: sturdy shoes/boots, comfortable clothes, sunscreen, flashlight, jacket, water, field guides, binoculars, and snacks.

Information booth and the Go Green booth will be located in front of the Park Recreational Hall. Please be sure to arrive early for the sessions that you are interested in. See schedule for more information on each session. All programs are FREE!!

Thank you all, and we hope you enjoy your stay/visit with us at Standing Stone State Park!

FRIDAY, APRIL 10TH

03:30 pm **Information Booth & Go Green Booth Open** – *Booths located in front of Park Recreational Hall.*

04:00 pm **Wildflower Hike and Photography Lesson:** Join George Wallace, nature photographer and wildflower enthusiast, for a moderate hike along a section of the Lake Trail, behind the Overton Lodge. Along the way you will learn about some of the wildflowers you see and then will receive helpful hints on how to capture the beauty of those beautiful wildflowers we have blooming in the park. You can also visit George's website at: <https://whatsbloomingnow.com>. *Meet in front of the Park Recreational Hall & be prepared to carpool to the Overton Lodge. (1.5 hrs.)*

05:00 pm **Kids Zone! Arts & Crafts:** Join Meg Guy, Area 5 Interpretive Ranger, for some nature themed arts and crafts! Supplies will be provided. *Meet at Shelter #1 (1 hr.)*

06:00 pm **Tennessee's Birds of Prey:** Join Dustin Crowell, Area 1 Interpretive Ranger, for this live presentation on birds of prey. Many birds of prey may be shown, possibly including a Bald Eagle! *Meet inside the Park Recreational Hall. (1 hr.)*

07:00 pm **LIVE! "Colors & Contrast":** Join Bob Tarter, Wildlife Biologist and Owner of Animalogy (formerly NHECM) for this live presentation of various animals. He will discuss the different color patterns within the Animal Kingdom and how they use colors to get attention or stay hidden. Animals we are expecting: South American Tricolor Hognose Snake, Straw-colored Fruit Bat, Black and White Tegu, & Eurasian Eagle Owl. No pets allowed in the rec. hall during the show. *Meet inside the Park Recreational Hall. (1 hr.)*

08:00 pm Snakes of Standing Stone State Park & Meet the King: Join Jonathan Williams, Standing Stone State Park Ranger, for a PowerPoint presentation about some of the snakes you may find in and around Standing Stone State Park. After the presentation, you will have the opportunity to meet and touch our most famous “employee” and the “King” of Standing Stone State Park, “Elvis” the Corn Snake! *Meet inside the Park Recreational Hall. (1 hr.)*

SATURDAY, APRIL 11TH

07:30 am Information Booth & Go Green Booth Open – *Booths located in front of Park Recreational Hall.*

08:00 am Early Birding: Join John Froeschauer, retired Tennessee State Parks’ Ranger & Naturalist, on an early morning walk through the park to look for, listen for, and learn about some of our early arriving migrant and resident birds. *Meet at Shelter #1 & be prepared for a possible carpool and hike to the site(s) of John’s choice. (2 hrs.)*

08:00 am Standing Stone State Park History Presentation: Join Shawn Hughes, Standing Stone State Park Manager 2, for a talk and PowerPoint presentation on the history of Standing Stone State Park. *Meet inside the Park Recreational Hall. (30 mins.)*

08:30 am Nature’s Architects - Beaver Edition: Join Jackson Sutton, Standing Stone State Park Ranger, for a brief discussion about our fellow mammalian architect, the American Beaver, before going on an adventure in hopes of seeing one. Seeing a beaver dam, lodge, and their signs is almost guaranteed. *Meet at Shelter 1 & be prepared for a carpool and hike to the site(s) of Jackson’s choice. (1-1.5 hrs.)*

09:00 am Easy Annual Wildflower Hike: Join Holly Taylor, Area 4 Interpretive Ranger, for an easy roadside wildflower hike along Beach Road. This is a phenomenal chance to learn about and see many of our spectacular native wildflowers. *Meet in front of the Park Recreational Hall & be prepared to carpool to the Overton Lodge. (1.5 hrs.)*

09:00 am Survival Session! Edible Wild Plants Workshop: Join John Ford, retired Assistant Unit Operator at the Kingston Fossil Plant with the TVA, for a lecture and hike through the park to learn how to properly identify a variety of the region’s edible and poisonous plants. Mr. Ford is a host/leader of Edible Wild Plants Workshops annually and is retired from the U.S. Army after 20 years of service. During his time of service, Mr. Ford spent 17 years in Special Operations and his last assignment was with the Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape School at Camp Mackall, NC. *Meet inside the Park Recreational Hall for the presentation, before going on a moderate hike. (2 hrs.)*

10:00 am Fungal Foray: Join Kristen Garrison, Rock Island State Park Interpretive Ranger, and an amateur mushroom enthusiast, as we reveal how our entire world is intertwined with fungi. Learn about their critical role in our forests, and how they seem to be the secret puppeteers of life. *Meet below park dam at Shelter #5 for a short lecture, before going on an easy to moderate hike. (2 hrs.)*

10:00 am Kids Zone! Arts & Crafts: Join Ashley Woolbright, Standing Stone State Park Manager 1, for some nature themed arts and crafts! Supplies will be provided. *Meet at Shelter #1 (1 hr.)*

10:30 am Tennessee's Birds of Prey: Join Dustin Crowell, Area 1 Interpretive Ranger, for this live presentation on birds of prey. Many birds of prey may be shown, possibly including a Bald Eagle! *Meet inside the Park Recreational Hall. (1 hr.)*

12:00 pm Fishes of Tennessee: Join members of the American Fisheries Society Student Subunit at Tennessee Tech, to learn about and see some of our native fish species from Mill Creek. They will cover many aspects from field techniques, equipment used, and will bring an aquarium to show the live fishes caught. *Meet below park dam at Shelter #5. (Will be set up for approx. 1.5 hrs. so feel free to come and go during that time span.)*

01:00 pm Caves of Tennessee: Join Chuck Sutherland, a local caver and photographer, who is a member of the local Upper Cumberland Grotto and lifetime member of the National Speleological Society, for a talk and PowerPoint presentation on caves in Tennessee. *Meet inside the Park Recreational Hall. (1 hr.)*

Immediately after presentation- Field Trip to Slippery Slit Cave (Limited to 5 people! Ages 15+): Registration for the field trip is required prior to the event. Carpool with Chuck to the trailhead of Slippery Slit Cave in Standing Stone State Forest. Helmets will be provided, but you will need to bring your own light. The moderate hike is less than 2 miles roundtrip but be prepared to be muddy and wet. (The field trip will be cancelled if inclement weather.) *(Approx. 2.5 hrs.)*

01:00 pm Dazzling Butterfly Hike: Join John Froeschauer, retired Tennessee State Parks' Ranger & Naturalist, on a walk to learn about the various types of butterflies inhabiting the park. *Meet at Shelter #1 & be prepared for a possible carpool and hike to the site(s) of John's choice. (2 hrs.)*

01:00 pm Standing Stone's Trees: Join Russell Fulcher, Standing Stone State Forest Forester, for a hike to learn about the trees found in the park. Along the way, Russell will share some simple tricks to identify the most popular trees. Tree pollination, tree biology, and forest ecology will also be discussed. *Meet at Shelter #2 & be prepared for a possible carpool and hike to the site(s) of Russell's choice. (2 hrs.)*

01:30 pm Stream Search: Join members of the American Fisheries Society Student Subunit at Tennessee Tech, for an aquatic invertebrate sampling of Mill Creek. This field session will cover many aspects from field techniques, equipment used, and species identification. *Meet below park dam at Shelter #5. (Approx. 1.5 hours)*

02:00 pm Rockin' with Fossils Join Dr. Philip Smartt, Professor of Park Management at the University of Tennessee at Martin and some of his students, for an interactive program to explore the different rocks and fossils of the Standing Stone area! There will be an opportunity to look at and examine different samples! *Meet at Shelter #1. (1 hr.)*

02:00 pm History and Ecology of Southeastern Grasslands: Join Vero Tessier, Interior Low Plateau Coordinating Ecologist, to learn about how various types of grasslands played a role in the historic landscapes and present-day ecology of the Southeast, how our landscape has changed since colonization, and what the Southeastern Grasslands Institute is doing to reverse the trend of grassland biodiversity loss in our region. *Meet inside the Park Recreational Hall. (1 hr.)*

02:30 pm Kids Zone! Pelts & Skulls: Join Aaron Parkey, Standing Stone State Park Ranger, for an educational hands-on presentation of various animal pelts and skulls. Do you think you can identify them all before being told? *Meet at Shelter 2. (30 mins.)*

03:00 pm Moderate Annual Wildflower Hike: Join Holly Taylor, Area 4 Interpretive Ranger, for a moderately challenging wildflower hike along the Jordan Spur Trail. This is a phenomenal chance to learn about and see many of our spectacular native wildflowers. *Meet in front of the Park Recreational Hall. (1.5 hrs.)*

03:00 pm Spring Wildflowers of the Upper Cumberland: Join Eli Harris, for an educational PowerPoint presentation regarding some of Tennessee's beautiful wildflowers. *Meet inside the Park Recreational Hall. (1 hr.)*

04:00 pm Wildflower Hike and Photography Lesson: Join George Wallace, nature photographer and wildflower enthusiast, for a moderate hike along a section of the Lake Trail, behind the Overton Lodge. Along the way you will learn about some of the wildflowers you see and then will receive helpful hints on how to capture the beauty of those beautiful wildflowers we have blooming in the park. *Meet in front of the Park Recreational Hall & be prepared to carpool to the Overton Lodge. (1.5 hrs.)*

04:00 pm Snakes of Tennessee & Touch-a-Snake: Join Dr. Joshua Hall, Assistant Professor of Biology at Tennessee Technological University, for a live, first-hand look at some of Tennessee's most exceptional, yet misunderstood, creatures. Immediately following the presentation, stay for the opportunity to touch some live snakes! *Meet inside the Park Recreational Hall. (1.5 hrs.)*

06:00 pm LIVE! "Colors & Contrast": Join Bob Tarter, Wildlife Biologist and Owner of Animalogy (formerly NHECM) for this live presentation of various animals. He will discuss the different color patterns within the Animal Kingdom and how they use colors to get attention or stay hidden. Animals we are expecting: South American Tricolor Hognose Snake, Straw-colored Fruit Bat, Black and White Tegu, & Eurasian Eagle Owl. No pets allowed in the rec. hall during the show. *Meet inside the Park Recreational Hall. (1 hr.)*

07:00 pm Insects of the Dark: Join Jonathan Williams, Standing Stone State Park Ranger, for a presentation regarding some of our nocturnal insects. After the presentation (pending weather conditions) we will go to Shelter 1, in which a black light will be used in hopes of bringing various species to us. *Meet inside the Park Recreational Hall. (1.5 hrs.)*

08:00 pm Night Sky: Join Michael Hodge, Pickett CCC Memorial State Park Ranger, to learn some stories about the night sky and how to identify the constellations. Ranger Hodge will also set up a telescope to view some of the celestial wonders. *Meet below park dam at Shelter #5. (1 hr.)*

