



## Branch Out Event Waivers and Policy Agreements

All Branch Out event participants (or their designees) are required to indicate they've read, understand and agree to GSMA's waivers, policies, and fitness/endurance requirements during the registration process.

**Event Rating:** I understand that this event will travel at a group pace. I understand that most events require walking on uneven surfaces with trip hazards such as exposed roots and rocks. The conclusion of the day could be earlier or later than the designated time depending on multiple factors, including changes in programming, weather, hiking ability of the group, and educational opportunities encountered along the way.

**Photo/Video Release:** I understand and agree that Great Smoky Mountains Association and/or hired guides may use photos and/or video images of me taken during this trip for promotional purposes to support Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

**Cancellation/Refund Policy:** I understand that Great Smoky Mountains Association operates on a limited budget and is unable to issue refunds for my non-participation of a scheduled event. Instead, I agree my payment will constitute a tax-deductible donation to the Great Smoky Mountains Association Legacy Fund. Events travel rain or shine and follow Great Smoky Mountains National Park Service policies for weather and road conditions. Should an event be cancelled by GSMA or NPS, I am entitled, though not obligated, to request a full refund of my registration fee.

**Liability Waiver:** My registered guests and I assume the entire responsibility, understand and accept that Great Smoky Mountains Association events could involve risk, danger and hazards. I release Great Smoky Mountains Association, its officers, directors, members and contracted event leaders from all liability for accidents, injury, illness, or loss of property for myself and/or my dependent(s). I confirm that I am physically capable of participating in the described scheduled event. I will alert my guide to any allergies, diseases, physical limitations, injuries or physical conditions that could be aggravated by activity while participating in the Great Smoky Mountains environment.

**What to Bring:** I understand I am responsible for my own comfort during this event. In addition to plenty of water, an appropriate amount of food for your comfort and comfortable hiking shoes, I agree to dress in layers, bring a backpack and rain gear. I agree a personal first-aid kit and trekking poles may be helpful as well.

**Parking:** I understand that if I intend to drive a vehicle into Great Smoky Mountains National Park and park it in one place for more than 15 minutes, I will be required to purchase a parking tag for the duration of my stay. I also understand that parking may be limited or unavailable, and that GSMA recommends carpooling when available.

For more information about the Park it Forward program, [click here](#).



## Activity Rating Scale and Personal Endurance Agreement



**Easy:** At this Branch Out session, you will have a relaxed experience requiring little or no physical activity.

**Distance:** 0 – 1 mile

**Settings:**

- Fairly flat trails
- Slow, walking pace
- Frequent stopping to discuss the surroundings
- Seating available
- This event features an accessible surface that makes it possible for individuals of all levels of ability to enjoy an outdoor experience.



**Easy Active:** At this Branch Out event, you will have a light-impact experience requiring some physical activity.

**Distance:** 2 – 5 miles

**Settings:**

- Uneven trails
- Potential hazards, including exposed roots, downed trees, and rocks
- Potential wildlife presence, including large fauna, insects, and snakes
- Water crossings with water about ankle deep



**Moderate:** At this Branch Out hike, you will have a medium-impact experience requiring some extended periods of physical exertion.

**Distance:** 5 – 8 miles

**Settings & Terrain:**

- Mountainous trails
- Some steep ascents and descents.
- Potential hazards, including exposed roots, downed trees, and rocks
- Potential wildlife presence, including large fauna, insects, and snakes

**Personal Considerations:**

This Branch Out event is designed for hikers who:

- are comfortable with extended periods of exertion
- can independently navigate physically challenging and unplanned situations
- are comfortable climbing over or under trees and crossing waterways
- possess the skills and gear required to be safe on the trail, even during inclement weather



**Strenuous:** At this Branch Out hike, you will experience intense physical exertion and difficult hiking.

**Distance:** 9+ miles

**Settings & Terrain:**

- Remote, backcountry areas
- Mountainous terrain
- Steep ascents and descents.
- Potential hazards, including exposed roots, downed trees, and rocks
- Potential wildlife presence, including large fauna, insects, and snakes

**Personal Considerations:**

This Branch Out event is designed for experienced hikers who:

- are comfortable with extended periods of exertion
- can independently navigate physically challenging and unplanned situations
- are comfortable climbing over or under trees and crossing waterways
- possess the skills and gear required to be safe in the backcountry, even during inclement weather

**My Fitness/Endurance:** Based on the event rating, I hereby attest that my level of fitness and personal ability to endure the event's potential physical requirements.