

# EXPLORE VIRGINIA'S

HIGHEST PEAKS.  
WILDEST ADVENTURES.  
COOLEST SMALL TOWNS.



VISITSMYTHCOUNTYVA.COM

(276) 646-3306

# ANNUAL EVENTS

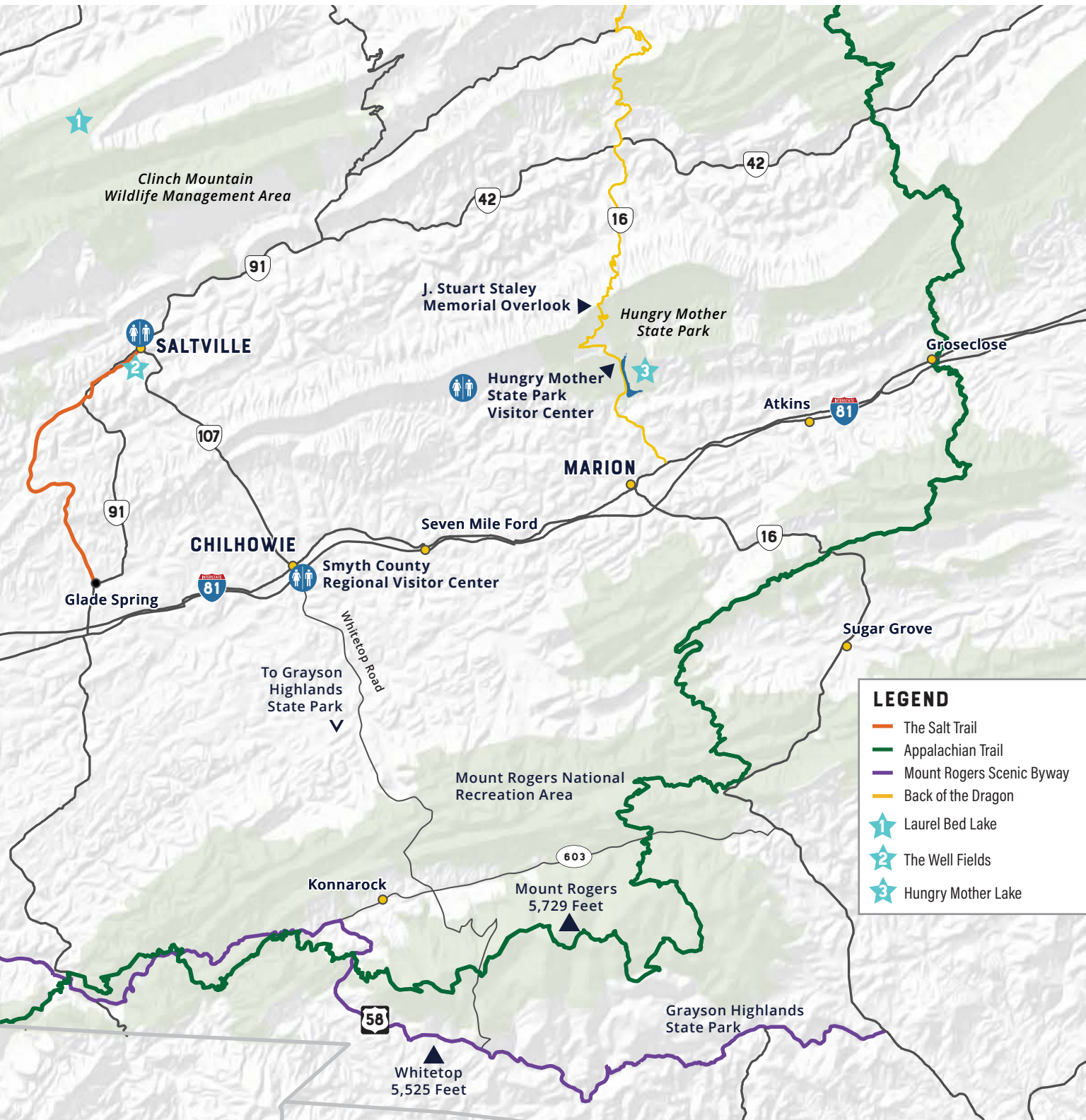
Song of the Mountains	1st Saturday of the month, year-round	The Lincoln Theatre
Woolly Day	Last weekend of January	Museum of the Middle Appalachians, Saltville
Whitetop Mountain Maple Festival	Last weekend of March	Whitetop Community Center
Marion Cruise-Ins: Cool tunes & Classic Cars	3rd Saturdays, May - October	Marion Farmers Market
Chilhowie's Music in the Park	3rd Fridays, May - October	Chilhowie Town Park, Chilhowie
Whitetop Mountain Ramp Festival	2nd weekend in May	Mt. Rogers Volunteer Fire Hall
Mount Rogers Naturalist Rally	February, May, August, & October	Blue Ridge Discovery Center, Konnarock
Wayne Henderson Guitar Festival	3rd weekend of June	Grayson Highlands State Park
Saltville Fireman's Bash	1st Saturday in July	Saltville Town Commons
Red, White & Bluegrass	July 4th	Riverbend Park, Marion
Hungry Mother Arts & Crafts Festival	3rd weekend in July	Hungry Mother State Park
"Hungriest Mother" Festival & Food Challenge	3rd weekend in July	Downtown Marion
Rich Valley Fair & Horse Show	July/August	Rich Valley Fairgrounds, Saltville
Saltville Labor Day Celebration	Labor Day weekend	Downtown Saltville
Chilhowie Apple Festival	Last full weekend in September	Downtown Chilhowie
Whitetop Sorghum Molasses Festival	1st Sunday in October	Mt. Rogers Volunteer Fire Hall
Appalachian Heritage Festival	2nd Saturday in October	Hungry Mother State Park
Marion Downtown Chili Championship	2nd Saturday in October	Downtown Marion
Mountain-Do Triathlon	3rd weekend in October	Hungry Mother State Park
Halloween Madness	Saturday closest to Halloween	Downtown Marion
Scarecrow Lane	2 weeks leading to Halloween	Downtown Marion
Merry Marion	1st weekend in December	Downtown Marion

*Plus!*

**Music in the Park** at Hungry Mother SP, Fridays in season  
**Monday Night Jams** at The Henderson  
**Friday Night Jam** at Palmer Mill, Saltville

**Marion Farmers Market**, Saturday mornings in season  
**Chilhowie Farmers Market**, Thursday afternoons in season  
**Marion 1st Fridays Merchant Walk & 2nd Friday ArtWalk**

# AREA MAP





Make  
**FAMILY MEMORIES  
TO LAST A LIFETIME.**



## FAMILY FUN IN THE MOUNTAINS



**Make family memories to last a lifetime.** Outdoor adventure, exciting history, world famous musical heritage, and good old-fashioned fun await amid breath-taking vistas and quirky small towns packed with personality.

Get the whole gang active in the great outdoors! Hike family-friendly trails among wild ponies at **Grayson Highlands State Park**. Split your time between sandy beaches and mountain vistas at **Hungry Mother State Park**.

Spark young curiosity by exploring Smyth County's rich history and culture! See a woolly mammoth and find out how

salt played a crucial role in the Civil War at the **Museum of the Middle Appalachians** in Saltville. Stop by **Blue Ridge Discovery Center** and learn all about the rich biodiversity of your majestic surroundings while planning your next adventure.

Experience the county's rich musical heritage at the historic **Lincoln Theatre** in Marion.

If current culture is more your family's style, a vibrant community of artists, artisans and musicians make the options too plentiful to list, from fine art galleries to farmers' market booths, and from nationally broadcast musical performances to impromptu bluegrass jams.

When it's time to cut loose and have fun, you won't have far to look! Cool down in Saltville's **Hardy Roberts Memorial Wave Pool** or the new splash pad at the **Marion Water Park**. Plan an evening of putt putt, arcade games, and a movie at **Park Place Drive-In Theater**.

Or, slow the pace with a stroll down **Main Street** in Marion and soak in the charming, vibrant small town atmosphere. Sample some treats at **Hester's Country Store and Fudgery**, browse a vintage toy store, and take a photo in front of Marion's LOVEwork.



## ADD SOME ALTITUDE TO YOUR ADVENTURE



*Set against the backdrop of the highest peaks in Virginia, Smyth County is your basecamp for outdoor fun*

**DAY 1:** Kick off your adventure with a scenic drive to **Skulls Gap Overlook** near Chilhowie. This small overlook packs a punch, offering panoramic views and the trailhead for the extensive Iron Mountain Trail. Make a stop at **Blue Ridge Discovery Center**

in Konnarock, then head back to Chilhowie to stroll the boutiques and antique stores of the newly restored historic district.

**DAY 2:** You're in for an exhilarating and challenging hike to Molly's Knob, located in **Hungry Mother State Park**. The reward is worth the climb, with nearly 1000 feet of elevation gain on this 1.6 mile hike to the top. You'll be mesmerized by the mountain views at the summit, and enjoy catching your breath on the two benches welcoming hikers who met the challenge. Afterwards, make your way to **downtown Marion** for dinner, or a pint at **36° Fifty Brewing**.

**DAY 3:** Head over to the historic town of **Saltville** to explore the **Well Fields**, the only inland saline marshes in Virginia. Free birding and history guides are available at the Museum of the Middle Appalachians. Pack your kayak to explore nearby Laurel Bed Lake, or take a stroll on the Salt Trail, a converted rail-trail that begins in the heart of downtown Saltville.

**DAY 4:** Set your sights on the highest peak in Virginia with a hike to Mount Rogers (5,728 ft). Start your summit-bagging quest in **Grayson Highlands State Park**. The hike to the top will lead you through mountain meadows with wild ponies, rocky outcroppings and highland balds. Pack a picnic lunch, then recharge on the way home with ice cream at **The Farmhouse Market** in Sugar Grove.

❖ **BONUS:** Check off Virginia's second highest peak with a visit to nearby Whitetop Mountain!





## AUTHENTICALLY APPALACHIAN



**Small-town charm and southern hospitality** are where Smyth County shines. Here, you'll find farm-to-fork food, artwork, local spirits, and handcrafts that are distinctly Appalachian.

In local music venues, traditional old time music sits comfortably next to its cousins: bluegrass and country. Get a front row seat to the heritage music at a recording of the famous PBS series **Song of the Mountains** at **The Lincoln Theatre in Marion**, or sit in on a weekly Friday Night Jam at Palmer Mill in Saltville.

For those who want to get hands-on, visit The Wayne C. Henderson School for Appalachian Arts. Named after world

famous luthier Wayne Henderson, it offers immersive classes in Appalachian craftsmanship. Build a guitar or fiddle, or learn letterpress, pottery and quilting. Music lovers of all kinds should check out the event calendar during their visit to Smyth County for summer concert series in **Chilhowie's Town Park** and **Downtown Marion**, among others.

The beauty of our mountains have historically fostered the ingenuity of free spirits and artisans. In Marion, you'll find a fusion of traditional styles and contemporary arts at **The Ford Studios**, and a cooperative of regional artists who make their home at The **Appalachian Spirit Gallery**. Our bustling weekly farmers markets in Chilhowie and Marion are a great place to browse local arts and crafts, and sample homemade goodies!

You'll find culinary artists crafting the region's bounty and traditional food items into their menus at local restaurants. Enjoy a farm tour, or pick up farm products straight from the source at **Laurel Springs Farm Mercantile** in Marion.

For a taste of authentic Appalachia, sample the moonshine at **Highlands Distilling Company**, made with a traditional recipe and distilling methods. The local libations are expertly crafted at **36° Fifty Brewing**, where you'll find an impressive selection of craft beers, while **Davis Valley Winery & Distillery** offers a refined winery experience at its hilltop tasting room.

# SMALL TOWNS, BIG HISTORY

*Smyth County's communities are packed with history that you can still experience today.*

## CHILHOWIE

A historical marker notes that Chilhowie was once the westernmost point of the United States. Pronounced Chil-how-whee, a Cherokee word meaning "valley of many deer," the town became a stagecoach stop along the famous **Wilderness Road**, a trail originally forged by herds of buffalo, then officially blazed through the Cumberland Gap by Daniel Boone. Officially incorporated in 1913, Chilhowie still boasts beautiful turn of the century architecture in the recently **restored historic district**, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Don't miss the exhibits at the **Smyth County Visitor Center**, located in the historic H.L. Bonham House.

## MARION

Marion is a certified National and Virginia Main Street Community. Enjoy the vibrant downtown with a self guided walking tour from the **Smyth County Historical**



**Society & Museum** on Main St. Be sure to pop inside **The Lincoln Theatre**. Originally built as "the finest movie palace in the region," it now offers live performances in a

gorgeous Mayan Revival style theatre. Pop-culture lovers will be excited to know Marion also played a crucial role in the development of Mountain Dew.

Nearby **Hungry Mother State Park** was built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Head to the Discovery Center to learn more about its history, then book a stay in one of the original CCC cabins!

## SALTVILLE

Saltville can lay claim to over 30,000 years of history, from prehistory through the modern industrial age, including



two major Civil War battles fought over the saltworks here. The natural salt deposits not only attracted prehistoric mammals, they've also made this town a popular eco-destination. Birders flock to the saltwater marshes of the Well Fields, and hikers enjoy the unique canyons of the nearby **Channels Natural Area Preserve**. Head to the **Museum of the Middle Appalachians** to view the bones of prehistoric mammals and learn how the American chemical industry began in Southwest Virginia.

# THINGS TO DO

## APPALACHIAN SPIRIT GALLERY

144 W. Main St., Marion VA 24354

276-759-3890 | [appalachianspiritgallery.com](http://appalachianspiritgallery.com)

Gallery showcasing regional and local artists; open late 2nd Fridays with live music on the porch.

## THE BACK OF THE DRAGON

Route 16 from Marion to Tazewell

276-646-3306 | [backofthedragon.com](http://backofthedragon.com)

World-famous driving route extending across 3 mountain ranges and 260 curves. Stop at the new Staley Memorial Overlook for stellar views.

## BLUE RIDGE DISCOVERY CENTER

6402 Whitetop Rd., Troutdale VA 24378

276-388-3155 | [blueridgediscoverycenter.org](http://blueridgediscoverycenter.org)

Nature center featuring interpretive displays, accessible trails, guided hikes and programs for all ages.

## THE FORD STUDIOS

103 Pendleton St, Marion, VA 24354

276-781-3406 | [thefordstudios.com](http://thefordstudios.com)

Working artist studios & gallery inside a historic Ford dealership. Make & take workshops.

## HARDY ROBERTS MEMORIAL WAVE POOL

416 Panther Ln., Saltville VA 24370

276-496-7779 | [saltville.org/wave-pool](http://saltville.org/wave-pool)

Nicknamed "Mammoth waves," a refreshing way to enjoy the fun of the ocean without leaving the mountains.

## HOLSTON HILLS GOLF COURSE

1000 Country Club Road, Marion VA 24354

276-783-7484 | [holstonhillsgolf.com](http://holstonhillsgolf.com)

Clubhouse, 18-hole championship golf course, tennis facility and swimming pool situated on 300-acre site along the Holston River.

## HUNGRY MOTHER OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

760 Walkers Creek Rd., Marion VA 24354

276-378-7286 | [hungrymotheradventures.com](http://hungrymotheradventures.com)

Virginia's longest, highest and fastest zip line, plus float trips down the Middle Holston River. New: mini zipline!

## HUNGRY MOTHER STATE PARK

2854 Park Blvd., Marion VA 24354

276-781-7400 | [dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/hungry-mother](http://dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/hungry-mother)

One of Virginia's oldest and finest state parks, centered around a 108-acre lake with sandy beach. Swimming, camping, cabin rentals, boat rentals, hiking, and year-round events.

## THE LINCOLN THEATRE

117 E. Main St. Marion VA 24354

276-783-6093 | [thelincoln.org](http://thelincoln.org)

Beautifully restored 1927 "Mayan Revival" theatre hosting year-round music, performances and films. Home of the Song of the Mountains PBS series.

## LONG NECK LAIR

7530 Lee Hwy, Rural Retreat, VA 24368

276-698-2079 | [longnecklair.com](http://longnecklair.com)

Pet an alpaca! Located on the Appalachian Trail. Alpaca farm offering tours, classes and farm shop.

## MARION WATER PARK

110 E Chilhowie St, Marion, VA 24354 | 276-378-5034

Newly renovated pool and splashpad offers fun for the whole family. Day passes available.

## MOUNT ROGERS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

Pat Jennings Visitor Center | 3714 Highway 16, Marion, VA 24354

276-783-5196

200,000 acres of beautiful, biodiverse mountain wilderness. Stretch your legs and get oriented at the Visitor Center, offering info, picnic area, and Two Ponds Nature Trail.

## THE MUSEUM OF THE MIDDLE APPALACHIANS

123 Palmer Ave., Saltville VA 24370

276-496-3633 | [museumofthemiddleappalachians.org](http://museumofthemiddleappalachians.org)

Unique geology, artifacts and fossils from 30,000 years of history, including full size replicas of ice age mammals and historical exhibits on Saltville's significant Civil War battles and past as a company town.

## PARK PLACE DRIVE-IN AND MINI GOLF

301 Park Blvd., Marion VA 24354

276-781-2222 | [parkplacedrivein.com](http://parkplacedrivein.com)

First-run movies every weekend in season, as well as hand-dipped ice cream and miniature golf course.

## SALTVILLE GOLF COURSE

422 Panther Lane, Saltville VA 24370

276-496-7779 | [saltville.org](http://saltville.org)

Nine-hole regulation length golf course built in 1920, designed by Olin Matheson.

## THE SALT TRAIL

118 Palmer Ave., Saltville VA 24370

276-496-5342 | [saltville.org](http://saltville.org)

Originally a railroad used to ship salt from Saltville, now a multi-use recreation trail that runs approximately 11 miles from Saltville to Glade Spring, VA.



## SETTLERS' MUSEUM OF SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

1322 Rocky Hollow Rd., Atkins VA 24311

276-686-4401 | [settlersmuseum.com](http://settlersmuseum.com)

Outdoor museum tells the story of the people who settled the mountains southwest corner of Virginia, and how its unique culture was developed, with 1890s School and Farm.

## SMYTH CO. MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

123 E. Main St., Marion VA 24354

276-783-7286 | [smythcountymuseum.org](http://smythcountymuseum.org)

Preserving and protecting the history of Marion and Smyth County, history exhibits, genealogy and interpretive programs.

## WAYNE C. HENDERSON SCHOOL OF APPALACHIAN ART

203 N. Church St, Marion VA 24354

276-706-4010 | [thehenderson.org](http://thehenderson.org)

Explore the lutherie, letterpress shop, and gallery spaces, or register for a weeklong instrument-building workshop, or drop in art class.

## WELL FIELDS RECREATION AREA

Lake Drive, Saltville VA 24370 | 276-496-5342

The waters of these wetlands are brackish, providing the only inland saline marshes in Virginia, with spectacular birding and wildflowers. Stroll the Helen Williams Barbrow Interpretive Trail.

## Tastes & Tours

### 36 FIFTY BREWING

120 N Chestnut St, Marion, VA 24354

276-706-8550 | [36fiftybrewing.com](http://36fiftybrewing.com)

Marion's hometown brewery, featuring craft beers for any palate!

### CHILHOWIE FARMERS MARKET

Farmers Market Pavilion, Hwy 11 | 276-276-646-3232

Fresh produce, plants, arts & crafts.

Thursday afternoons in season.

### DAVIS VALLEY WINERY & DISTILLERY

1167 Davis Valley Rd., Rural Retreat VA 24368

276-686-8855 | [davisvalleywinery.com](http://davisvalleywinery.com)

Winery & distillery offering tours and tastings, gift shop and patio with sweeping mountain views.

### HIGHLANDS DISTILLING CO.

1200 Hwy. 16, Marion, VA 24354

276-782-0932 | [highlandsdistillingco.com](http://highlandsdistillingco.com)

Tour the distillery and sample hand-crafted whiskey, bourbon, moonshine and gin.

## MARION FARMERS MARKET

Corner of Cherry & Town Streets, Downtown Marion

276-378-5029

Produce, meats, baked goods and crafts. Saturday mornings in season, plus special holiday and winter market schedules.

## SALT OF THE EARTH FARMS

261 Gillespie Hollow Rd, Saltville, VA 24370 | (423) 914-4130

Pick your own blackberries & more. Open seasonally.

## Guided Excursions

### HOLSTON VALLEY ANGLERS

276-698-5665 or 276-780-7468 | [holstonvalleyanglers.com](http://holstonvalleyanglers.com)

Guided fishing trips on South Holston River, Watauga River, South Fork Holston River and Laurel Bed Lake. Wading, half day float trips or all-day trips available.

### MARION OUTDOORS

276-242-2825 | [marionvaoutdoors.com](http://marionvaoutdoors.com)

Biking & bikepacking adventures; hiker shuttle services.

### MATT REILLY FLY FISHING

(434) 996-4067 | [mattreillyflyfishing.com](http://mattreillyflyfishing.com)

Fly fishing experiences specializing in trophy trout, musky and smallmouth bass.

### WHITE BLAZE OUTDOORS

276-356-7068 | [whiteblazeoutdoors.com](http://whiteblazeoutdoors.com)

Guided excursions for the whole family including waterfalls, salamander/nature hikes and Grayson Highlands ponies. Half-day, full day and overnight.

*Smyth County's dining scene is vibrant and varied, including mom & pop diners, cafes and bakeries, and farm to table restaurants. With more than 36 independently owned restaurants, you'll be sure to find something to please your palate.*



SCAN ME

*See more at:*

[VISITSMYTHCOUNTYVA.COM/EATLOCAL](http://VISITSMYTHCOUNTYVA.COM/EATLOCAL)

Feel the  
**WANDERLOVE CALLING  
YOU TO EXPLORE.**

## PLAN A PERFECT ROAD TRIP

*Wanderlust is defined as a strong desire to travel, but here in Virginia, we call that feeling WanderLove. We've compiled a list of adventure-filled stops to add to your next road trip.*

### Bag A Peak Without Leaving Your Car

Head out on the **Mount Rogers Scenic Byway** for gorgeous mountain foliage, stopping at some of Southwest Virginia's gems like **Grayson Highlands State Park** and **Blue Ridge Discovery Center**. Take a side trip up Rt. 600 to reach the summit of Whitetop Mountain (Virginia's second highest peak). No hiking required!

### Tackle hairpin curves on The Back of the Dragon

Head north from Marion on Rt. 16, known as **The Back of the Dragon**. Popular with motorcyclists and driving enthusiasts, the Dragon boasts 438 curves in 32 miles. Be sure to stop at the Staley Overlook just a few miles north of **Hungry Mother State Park**, for breathtaking views of Rich Valley.

### Nosh on Nostalgia at Retro Eateries

For classic road trip fare, visit the famous **Dip Dog Stand**, where they've been serving up onion rings, shakes, and iconic Dip Dogs since 1957. In Saltville, grab a footlong hotdog at the beloved **Buck's Drive-In** and grab a seat at a picnic table next to a local. There's plenty of sweet treats available at Hester's Country Store & Fudgery, or treat yourself to hand-scooped ice cream and a movie at **Park Place Drive-In**.



### Feel the Love

Virginia is for Lovers, and Smyth County is home to two of the iconic Virginia LOVEworks. Popular for its seasonal decorations, the **Smyth County Visitors Center LOVEwork** is located in front of the historic H.L. Bonham House. The **LOVEwork in downtown Marion** is located in Hurricane Alley just off of Main Street, inviting visitors to stop and share some love with their favorite people.

# AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO SMYTH COUNTY

*We asked locals to tell us their favorite places to take visitors. Some may surprise you!*

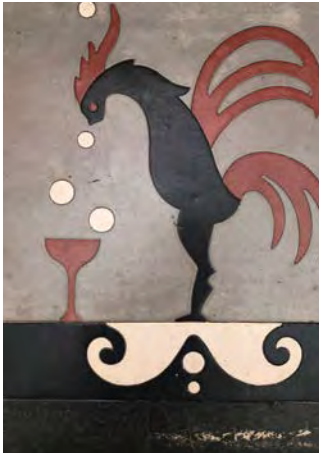
Just south of Marion is the **Octagon House**, built in the shape of - you guessed it - a perfect octagon. A non-profit foundation is slowly restoring this unusual antebellum home. The building is not safe to enter, but interpretive signs tell its fascinating story.

Head to Saltville to meet Woolly the animatronic mammoth, and her sidekick Lil' Salty. She's usually hanging around the **Museum of the Middle Appalachians**, but the last weekend of January, she heads to the Town Commons for Woolly Day, to predict whether there will be 8 more weeks of winter.

Take a behind the scenes tour of **The Lincoln Theatre**, one of only three existing Mayan Revival-style theatres in America.

Discover hidden trails with less traffic. A short gravel trail starts at the **Smyth County Visitor Center** in Chilhowie, to the delight of passing motorists looking to stretch their legs. At its west end, it crosses the Holston River via an elevated footbridge to end in Town Park. This hidden trail is worth a visit - it even inspired a poem by a passing traveler!

Whether you call it a hellbender, a mud puppy or a snot otter, you've got to check out this gentle giant of the amphibian world at **Hungry Mother State Park**. Despite its somewhat terrifying name, hellbenders are not dangerous. In fact, they are actually a threatened species due to pollution and habitat loss. Meet Hungar the Hellbender at the Discovery Center in the park, and learn how you can help protect native species.



The murals were painted by the scandalous artist and flapper, Lola Poston. Bonus: walk next door to the **General Francis Marion Hotel**, where Lola might have enjoyed a cocktail. The black rooster mosaic was a code during Prohibition, letting guests know they could order alcohol.

Just outside of Saltville, Big Tumbling Creek offers numerous waterfalls, plus superb trout fishing in the deep rocky pools. Note: the waterfalls are managed by Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, and requires a current fishing or boating license to access, even if you don't fish.





*Explore More*

VISITSMYTHCOUNTYVA.COM  
(276) 646-3306

info@visitsmythcountyva.com

Smyth County Regional Visitor Center  
408 Whitetop Road, Chilhowie VA 24319

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