

# 2023 WILDFLOWER PILGRIMAGE

## TOUR/RATING DESCRIPTIONS

RATING DESCRIPTION	
1. <i>EASY:</i>	MOSTLY DRIVING WITH LITTLE TO NO WALKING. ANY WALKING WILL BE SHORT DISTANCE ALONG EVEN TERRAIN.
2. <i>MODERATE:</i>	LONGER WALKING IS REQUIRED TO SEE AREAS OF INTEREST AND MAY ENCOUNTER SHORT SECTIONS OF GENTLE TO MODERATE UNEVEN TERRAIN.
3. <i>DIFFICULT:</i>	LONG WALKING DISTANCES AND/OR VERY RUGGED TERRAIN. HIKERS SHOULD BE EXPERIENCED. HIKING SHOES NECESSARY.
4. <i>EXTREMELY DIFFICULT:</i>	VERY RUGGED TERRAIN AND ROCKY TRAILS. HIKERS MUST BE EXTREMELY FIT AND DISCUSS TOUR PARTICIPATION WITH LEADERS. STURDY HIKING BOOTS ARE REQUIRED.

## FRIDAY TOURS

### FRIDAY TOUR #1

*ALL BIRDING TOUR: CANAAN VALLEY AND SENECA ROCKS*

RATING: 1-2      TOTAL DRIVING MILES: 70      TOTAL WALKING MILES: 3

An early morning departure will provide birding experiences in Canaan Valley, Seneca Rocks area, and on Dolly Sods. We will walk the floor of Canaan Valley looking for marsh and farm field birds such as swamp sparrows, alder flycatchers, willow flycatchers, bobolinks, and meadowlarks. We will drive to the canyon rim for high mountain thrushes and warblers while walking among mixed spruce/maple/birch forest and rhododendron. This is one of the few locations of breeding Swainson's thrush in West Virginia. We could also see and/or hear winter wren, blackburnian warblers and black-throated blue warblers. We will then travel to the valley of North Fork of the South Branch of the Potomac River at Seneca Rocks. We will bird the lowlands for cerulean warblers, both black-billed and yellow-billed cuckoo species, white-eyed vireos, orchard orioles, Baltimore orioles, American redstarts, and Louisiana waterthrushes. A search of the river may turn up a few breeding common mergansers amongst an assortment of warblers, flycatchers, and vireos. We will enjoy a picnic of our packed lunches together in the Seneca Rocks Visitors Center. After lunch we will travel back to Blackwater Falls via Dolly Sods stopping at Table Mountain Pine habitat to search for pine warblers and worm-eating warblers. Traveling up the Allegheny Front we will stop at early succession areas looking for golden-winged warblers and chestnut-sided warblers. We make one more stop in the Dolly Sods area to search for veeries, Canada warblers and northern waterthrushes. Given the variety of habitats we will encounter, this trip should provide participants with a lengthy trip bird list and opportunities to see some quite localized breeding birds. Restrooms available at Seneca Rocks Visitors Center.

### FRIDAY TOUR #2

*SINKS OF GANDY – SPRUCE LAKE – SPRUCE KNOB (EPIC RANDOLPH COUNTY)*

RATING: 2      TOTAL DRIVING MILES: 140

This tour will showcase many of the beloved and epic places in the Randolph County highlands. The trip will leave Blackwater Falls State Park and travel south to Job. From Job, the caravan will continue to Whitmer and eventually leave the paved road onto a gravel road along Gandy Creek. Following Gandy Creek, we will make a quick stop at Swallow Rock to

experience a mountain stream and the unique rock formation. Some quick roadside exploration along the route for wildflowers should yield some usual rich forest beauties. The first major stop will be at the Sinks of Gandy, an iconic cave that offers a short easy half-mile hike to the entrance through a farm field. A brief history and local lore will be discussed. Skirting the field is a high elevation spruce swamp forest, home to some rare plants. The Sinks cave entrance offers an opportunity to photograph one of the most renowned places in WV. Lunch will be at the grassy lakeside shore along Spruce Knob Lake. Bring a blanket or towel to sit on. After lunch the tour will end up at Spruce Knob, the highest point in WV. An easy quarter-mile trail takes hikers out to an observation tower with spectacular views. Backtracking our route to Job, (if time allows) we will plan to stop at Still Hollow Distillery for an opportunity to see one of WV's newest and highly acclaimed businesses. Wildflowers will be sporadic and best opportunities will be on the roadside stops and around the Sinks of Gandy. Restrooms (pit toilets) will be available.

### **FRIDAY TOUR #3**

#### ***DOLLY SODS WILDERNESS HIKE: ROHRBAUGH PLAINS/ WILDLIFE TRAILS***

**RATING: 4 DRIVING MILES: 60 HIKING MILES: 4.5**

Our drive takes us south on Route 32 through Canaan Valley. Approximately two miles south of Canaan we turn left onto Laneville Rd. and continue to the Rohrbaugh Plains trailhead on top of Dolly Sods. The trail is not a loop trail and one vehicle will have to be left at the Wildlife Trail trailhead. The hike begins through a mixed Red Spruce/deciduous woodland where we will be greeted with a variety of bird songs; mostly warblers - Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Ovenbird, Yellow-rumped, and Magnolia. This trail is rocky at times and eventually becomes a mixed hardwood/evergreen forest. Lunch will be at the Rohrbaugh Plains vista looking south through the Red Creek Valley and west toward Rocky Point (Lion's Head). The vista is one of the best scenic overlooks in West Virginia. The return hike is on the Wildlife Trail, a mostly open trail traveling through several meadows and bordered by deciduous woodlands. There will be opportunities for wildflower and bird identification, however, this tour's primary focus is the spectacular beauty of Dolly Sods.

**Hiking shoes/boots are required. Appropriate rain gear is required.** There will be restroom facilities available at the Dolly Sods Picnic Area before the hike.

### **FRIDAY TOUR #4**

#### ***CRANESVILLE SWAMP***

**RATING: 2 TOTAL DRIVING MILES: 90 TOTAL WALKING MILES: 3**

Travel US Route 219 to Oakland, MD, and follow country roads on the WV/MD border to find the Cranesville Swamp Nature Preserve managed by The Nature Conservancy. At Cranesville Swamp wind, water, mountain geology and temperature have created a beautiful and rare "frost pocket" (low area that collects moisture and cooler temperatures) reminiscent of Canadian environments. Eastern hemlock, red spruce, and larch are some of the few trees in the acidic boreal bog. The northern relict wetland complex also supports a wide variety of smaller plants such as goldthread, trailing arbutus, gay wings, several sundews, cranberry, several ferns, and many mosses. Nineteen diverse wetland communities are home to such birds as blackburnian, magnolia, and chestnut-sided warblers, alder flycatcher, golden-crowned kinglet, indigo bunting, and saw-whet owl. We'll explore the boardwalk trail in the northern section of the swamp, and then venture off the trail into the seldom visited southern part of the swamp. There we'll find giant hemlock trees shading beautiful spring seeps along the boggy creek. Restrooms are available at Oakland and "Facilitrees" are available at Cranesville Swamp.

### **FRIDAY TOUR #5**

#### ***RAINSHADOW & SHALE BARREN***

**RATING: 2 TOTAL DRIVING MILES: 90**

We will travel WV Route 93 over the Eastern Continental Divide to the rain shadow country. We will stop at Greenland Gap Preserve to view unique geology, several wildflowers, and listen to a wide assortment of birds. Departing Greenland Gap Preserve, we will follow Patterson Creek Road (CR 11) to US Route 50 for approximately 13 miles to Burlington, where we will follow Headsville Road three miles to Larenim Park, the site of the Barrens. We will view cactus and other unusual dry habitat plants. Some of these exist only on the shale barrens and are called "Shale Barren Endemics." Also, we will tour the Larenim Arboretum created by Dr. Melvin Brown. Restroom facilities are available at the park. We will return to Blackwater Falls

via US Route 50.

**FRIDAY TOUR #6**

***WILDFLOWERS, BREEDING BIRDS AND VERNAL POOLS***

**RATING: 2 TOTAL DRIVING MILES: 50**

One of the most diverse habitats in the area is the Upper Dry Fork. We will travel through Davis and Canaan Valley to Dry Fork. After crossing the Dry Fork River, we will survey an abundance of wildflowers and ferns along the cliffs and floodplain and search for unique mole salamanders. While visiting an old farm site along the river, we'll observe a swampy area with an active vernal pool. View a variety of nesting birds including hawks and warblers.

**FRIDAY TOUR #7**

***CANAAN LOOP TO TABLE ROCK***

**RATING: 3 TOTAL DRIVING MILES: 35 TOTAL HIKING MILES: 2.5**

Depart Blackwater Falls State Park and travel Route 32 South toward Canaan Valley to turn onto Canaan Loop Road (unpaved Forest Road 13). Drive 10 miles through Canaan Mountain Backcountry to the Table Rock trailhead with several stops en route that will include discussion of the geology. First stop is the former fire tower locale to look at wildflowers. Next is a ¼ mile round trip trail through a lovely Conifer forest underlain with moss covered logs and rocks. Third is for seeing indigenous plants in the wetland bisected by the road. Birds en route include those of wetlands and highlands, such as winter wren, hermit thrush, and possibly Swainson's thrush. Lunch is along the banks of North Fork of Red Run. Highlight of the tour is the last stop - a beautiful panoramic view of the valley - reached by 1.2 miles of a gentle to moderate uphill trail through Northern Hardwood forest. If the trail is wet, some places require walking on tree roots at the edges of the path. Caution is necessary at the overlook due to the drop off and crevices. This is an out and back drive because the last four miles into Blackwater Falls State Park are not passable by car. Hiking boots and walking sticks are recommended. Restroom facilities are provided by Mother Nature.

**FRIDAY TOUR #8**

***FERNOW FOREST: EMPHASIZING BIRDS AND WILDFLOWERS***

**RATING: 1 TOTAL DRIVING MILES: 50**

The 3,640 acres of typical Appalachian forests near Parsons known as Fernow Experimental Forest is a beautiful flower garden and peaceful paradise with an unusual combination of at least 100 herbs, wildflowers, trees, and shrubs found on a wide variety of soils and elevations. Deciduous forest birds as well as others found in eastern forest types may be found. Canada warbler, Louisiana waterthrush, scarlet tanager, rose-breasted grosbeak, and Acadian flycatcher are often encountered. A good all-weather gravel road provides public access. Restroom facilities are available in Parsons.

**FRIDAY TOUR #9**

***JENNINGSTON - GLADWIN***

**RATING: 1 TOTAL DRIVING MILES: 46**

Visit a forgotten corner of West Virginia where the wildflowers bloom in secret hollows and three rivers join the Dry Fork to cut a gorge through the Allegheny Mountains. We will see globally rare plants in limestone glens and witness a profusion of wildflowers in spectacular natural beds. In addition, the tour stops briefly to visit a ghost town and an historic tree nursery. We will have plenty of time for leisurely exploration at each of six stops, since wildflowers and birding sites are all are within 100 yards of the road. Mother Nature provides restrooms on this tour.

**FRIDAY TOUR #10**

***BLACK FORK: FERNS, EPHEMERALS, AND AVIFAUNA***

**RATING: 1 TOTAL DRIVING MILES: 50**

This tour will emphasize the ferns and birds of the Black Fork and Lower Dry Fork area but will also include other plants, trees, and shrubs. The road follows the river and is rich and diverse with a lush fern population which makes comparison of different species easy. This is one of our favorite places to observe ferns and commonly provides over 20 species depending on the progress of spring. Identification of birds and their songs will be given. Lower Dry Fork is located on the river road below Fernow Forest. We will leave the lodge and travel north on WV Route 32 to Thomas where we will turn left onto US Route 219 south to Parsons. There we will pick up CR 219/7 in Parsons between the bridges and travel to the Fernow intersection.

The tour will be along the Black Fork and Lower Dry Fork. Mother Nature will provide restroom facilities. Lunch will be enjoyed along the river.

**FRIDAY TOUR #11**

***MOSSES EXTRAVAGANZA AND AURORA PROJECT AT CATHEDRAL STATE PARK***

**RATING: 2 TOTAL DRIVING MILES: 50**

Travel north on US Route 219 to Silver Lake then WV Route 24 to US Route 50 and west to Cathedral State Park which has been entered in the National Registry of Natural History Landmarks by the US Department of Interior/National Park Service. The park contains a majestic stand of virgin hemlock and hardwoods, which includes the largest hemlock known in Eastern North America. A walk through the centuries-old trees inspires a cathedral-like reverence. Participants on this tour will use hand lens to explore ferns, wildflowers, and non-vascular plants while the ecology of Cathedral State Park is discussed. There will also be a visit and tour of the Brookside Farm which is adjacent to Cathedral State Park. The area was once part of a large 19<sup>th</sup> Century summer resort community and now consists of restored historic buildings, including a general store that now houses the Aurora Area Historical Society and the Brookside Inn. Good birding opportunities exist on this tour. The ecology of Cathedral State Park will also be discussed. Lunch will be at the park and restroom facilities are available.

**FRIDAY TOUR #12**

***RED CREEK TRAIL FOR WILDFLOWERS AND BIRDS***

**RATING: 2 DRIVING MILES: 56**

This trip has one stop, the Laneville Trail Head to the Red Creek Trail in the Dolly Sods Wilderness. At Davis take WV Route 32 east through Canaan Valley. After several large road cuts, turn left at the small, brown Dolly Sods Wilderness sign onto Laneville Road which takes us to the trail head. The entire day will be along this trail with plenty of wildflowers and birds to see and identify. Folklore and natural history of wildflowers will be emphasized as well as edibility, medicinal use, and poisonous qualities of selected plants. There are many species of birds to see and hear. The trail is mostly level and walking distance is 3 miles round trip for those who want to walk. Others can find ample wildflowers and birds closer to where the cars are parked. Lunch will be on a large flat rock along Red Creek, at the beginning of Little Stonecoal Trail. Weather permitting; this is wonderful place to cool off in the stream. Restroom facilities will be available before and after hike. Waterproof boots are recommended.

**FRIDAY TOUR #13**

***WILDFLOWER IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP & NATURAL HISTORY OF WILDFLOWERS***

**RATING: 1-2 TOTAL DRIVING MILES: 24 WALKING MILES: 1**

This tour meets in the Conference Room of the Lodge. The morning will be spent discussing various characteristics of wildflowers which will help us in our identification. After lunch we will put into practice what we have discussed in the morning session when we travel along Forest Service Road 80 at the end of Freeland Road in Canaan Valley. An elevation change of 1,000 feet will occur in a relatively short distance - from the Freeland Trail Boardwalk in the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge (elevation 3,000 feet) to the top of the mountain in the Dolly Sods Wilderness (elevation 4,000 feet). There will be plenty of wildflowers and birds to see and identify. The major emphasis on this trip will be the folklore and natural history of the plants we find. The edibility, medicinal use, and poisonous qualities of many plants will be discussed. Restroom facilities available at the lodge.

## **SATURDAY TOURS**

### **SATURDAY TOUR #1**

#### ***SPARROWS OF WEST VIRGINIA***

**RATING: 3-4      TOTAL DRIVING MILES: 66      HIKING MILES: 4**

This will be the quintessential wetlands and grasslands birding trip. There are 11 species of new world sparrows regularly breeding in WV; more than any other family of birds except the wood warblers, and the Blackwater/Canaan Valley areas are the best place in state to see them all. To begin we will drive to the most remote and least visited part of the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge (CVNWR). Habitat here includes little-visited wetlands, early-successional meadows, and hardwood forest. This tour gives us a great chance to find difficult to see breeders like American bittern and mourning warbler. We will have good opportunity to study the differences between alder and willow flycatcher. Northern harriers frequently are seen here in one of their few breeding areas. And, of course, we have sparrows. If we are lucky, we will see and hear such rarities as clay-colored, vesper, and Henslow's sparrows all in this section. Other sparrows and warblers will also be well represented. After the morning session in the remote wilds of the CVNWR, we will enjoy a boxed lunch together at the Blackwater Falls Trading Post and briefly explore the trails on the park where we will hopefully add dark-eyed junco to our sparrow list. Pine siskins, purple finches, and maybe even a Nashville warbler could also be found. We will finish the day in CVNWR on Freeland and Beale Roads looking to find vesper and Henslow's sparrows if we didn't happen upon those species on the valley floor. A note on difficulty rating: Participants will need to be prepared to ford a small stream and hike up a hill from the valley floor to take full advantage of the birding opportunities. Stream depth is often only a few inches deep but, depending on rainfall, can be shin to knee high. Restroom facilities available at the Blackwater Falls Trading Post.

### **SATURDAY TOUR #2**

#### ***HIKE TO CHIMNEY TOP – NORTH FORK MOUNTAIN***

**RATING: 4      TOTAL DRIVING MILES: 100      HIKING MILES: 5.5**

Participants will caravan from Blackwater Falls State Park south on Route 32 to Harmon, east on Route 33 to Seneca Rocks then 16.5 miles north on Route 28/55 to Smoke Hole Road. At this point we will cross the South Branch River on the Smoke Hole bridge and drive another two miles to the Landis Trail parking area and trailhead. This iconic hike starts along Smoke Hole Road in Grant County. The drive should take less than one hour. At the Landis trailhead the group will gather and prepare to hike 2.7 miles up North Fork Mountain. This should be a good opportunity to hear and see many songbirds (especially warblers) returning for the season. The forests are mostly comprised of chestnut oak and mountain laurel so the wildflowers may be sporadic. The hike starts out with a gentle slope and as it gets more steep we will walk at a slower and deliberate pace, talking more about the forest community and the conservation values of this mountain landscape. The trail gets rocky near the top and **hiking boots are required**. Once the trail tops out on the top of the mountain, there is a short (flat) walk to the iconic Chimney Top rocks with a spectacular view down into the South Branch valley and across to the Dolly Sods plateau. The hikers will have lunch at the Chimney Top Rocks, providing more time to soak up this view and unique geologic rock formation. Following lunch we will hike down the "nose" of North Fork Mountain and, at the bottom, shuttle drivers back to the vehicles. This trip is very strenuous and the highlight is witnessing the beautiful geologic formation outcropping on the North Fork cliffs. No restroom facilities available except the familiar "facilitree".

### **SATURDAY TOUR #3**

#### ***CANAAN VALLEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE HIKE: BEALL NORTH AND Idleman's Run Trail***

**RATING: 3      TOTAL DRIVING MILES: 20      HIKING MILES: 3.5**

Heading south on Route 32 into Canaan Valley, we turn left onto Cortland Road. In 2.3 miles we turn left onto Coffman Lane. At the end of the lane is the Beall Trails parking lot. The Beall North trail traverses a mix of open meadows with some wetlands and deciduous woodlands allowing us to examine a large variety of plants. The work of the National Wildlife Refuge to expand American Woodcock habitat makes possible a diversity of plants and birds which changes every year. Part of the trail borders the Blackwater River. The trail is mostly level with moderate (and one short steep) elevation changes. The birding should be excellent with the beautiful songs of Hermit Thrushes possible along the entire way. A nice variety of warblers

are expected. After lunch we will travel to nearby Idleman's Run Trail off Forest Service Road 80 for a more botanical/wildflower walk. Idleman's Trail is 0.4 miles, sloping uphill the entire way as it follows picturesque Idleman's Run. It is notable for the interesting plants we can encounter and even on the road back downhill interesting plants and birds are found. **Hiking boots/shoes and rain gear are recommended.** Facilities are the only restrooms available.

#### SATURDAY TOUR #4

##### *LIMESTONE HIGHWAY HERITAGE BOTANY*

**RATING: 4      TOTAL DRIVING MILES: 70      TOTAL HIKING MILES: 4**

Observe a dazzling display of spring wildflowers and Coberly Sods limestone while traversing the lower slopes of Shavers Mountain. We will leave the lodge and travel south on WV Route 32 to Harmon and then take a slight right onto US Route 33 west towards Elkins driving approximately 17 miles to Stuart Memorial Road. Stuart Memorial Road will take us to Coberly Sods to Limestone where we can see Running Buffalo Clover in a richly diverse pastureland. From this area, we will drive to Bickle Knob Observation tower where we will lunch before heading to Bear Heaven, if time allows. Bear Heaven will reveal painted trillium and halberd-leaved violet as well as interesting boulder formations. If time allows, we will also visit the Otter Creek trailhead for spruce, hemlock, and rhododendron, and peek at a high elevation cotton grass fen. No Restroom facilities will be available.

#### SATURDAY TOUR #5

##### *OTTER CREEK WILDERNESS HIKE*

**RATING: 2-3      DRIVING MILES: 45      WALKING MILES: 1-3**

At Davis take WV Route 32 west 2 miles to Thomas. Turn left on US Route 219 south and drive 13 miles to junction with WV Route 72 (near Parsons). Turn left and take WV Route 72 eastward to Hendricks. Continue eastward approximately 2 miles to a parking lot for the Otter Creek Wilderness area. Follow the hiking trail 1/3 mile down to a suspension bridge across Dry Fork River and then continue along Otter Creek. Only the first part (1/4 mile) of the trail after the bridge will be difficult walking. This section contains many plant species endemic to moist limestone habitat. We should see many types of violets and ferns (such as walking fern), as well as orchids, (at least two species), and columbine. The trail continues for up to one mile past this unique area. A variety of floodplain birds and typical spring ephemerals will be observed. Lunch is along the creek. Other stops may be made. Restroom facilities available in Parsons.

#### SATURDAY TOUR #6

##### *FERNOW FOREST: EMPHASIZING BIRDS AND WILDFLOWERS*

**RATING: 1      DRIVING MILES: 50**

The 3,640 acres of typical Appalachian forests near Parsons known as Fernow Experimental Forest is a beautiful flower garden and peaceful paradise with an unusual combination of at least 100 herbs, wildflowers, trees, and shrubs found on a wide variety of soils and elevations. Deciduous forest birds as well as others found in eastern forest types may be found. Canada warbler, Louisiana waterthrush, scarlet tanager, rose-breasted grosbeak, and Acadian flycatcher are often encountered. A good all-weather gravel road provides public access. Restroom facilities are available in Parsons.

#### SATURDAY TOUR #7

##### *YELLOW BIRCH AND BLACKWATER RIVER TRAILS*

**RATING: 2      DRIVING MILES: 34      WALKING MILES: 1.75**

A 35-minute drive south on WV Route 32 will take us to Canaan Valley State Resort Park where we will take the Blackwater River Loop Trail: a 0.75 mile walk with great views of Canaan Valley, luxuriant lichens and bryophytes cloak trees, boulders, and limestone rocks (resembling tombstones) that support a distinctive flora. In the diverse forest and wetland habitats we will observe varied wildflowers, birds, and trees. Lunch will be a picnic by the Nature Center. After lunch, we will return to Blackwater Falls State Park via WV Route 32 and County Road 29/1 and park at the Gentle Trail or across the road in the Service Area. Our afternoon walk will be on the first half-mile of the Yellow Trail (Allegheny Trail) in a shady hemlock-hardwood forest with mossy sandstone boulders. The trail emerges from deep shade onto a boardwalk running along the edge of a large, delightful Sphagnum (peat moss) wetland or fen, with abundant cranberries and cottongrasses. Our return will be either by backtracking or walking along the road (downslope and to the right) to the parking area, just a few minutes'

drive from Blackwater Falls Lodge. Restroom facilities are available at the Nature Center.

**SATURDAY TOUR #8**

***BLACKWATER FALLS/CANAAN VALLEY GEOLOGY WORKSHOP AND FIELD TRIP***

**RATING: 2      DRIVING MILES: 30      HIKING MILES: 1**

This hands-on workshop provides an overview of West Virginia's geology and the specifics of the Blackwater Falls/Canaan Valley area. During the workshop, we will look at details in the rock layers to determine how West Virginia became the Mountain State. Next, we will identify the state's most common minerals and rocks, and how they weather. The evidence revealed in the rocks will tell us if their original sediments were laid down in a swamp, a stream, an ocean, a tidal flat, etc. During the afternoon field trip of easy walking around Blackwater Falls State Park, Canaan Valley Resort State Park, and the Canaan Valley area, we will look for clues in the rocks and fossils to key into the area's 300+ million-year-old history. Restroom facilities are available.

**SATURDAY TOUR #9**

***DOLLY SODS DRIVING TOUR***

**RATING: 2      DRIVING MILES: 60**

Drive through Canaan Valley to Lanesville with a stop to view bobolinks. Proceed to Dolly Sods – an area of unique northern relic communities such as heath barrens and bogs. After several short stops we will then hike to the Alder Run bog and lunch at the Red Creek Campground. See wildflowers at lower elevations in Canaan Valley as well as several locations at ca. 4000' on Dolly Sods and a stop to view shooting star in Jordan Run Valley. Restroom facilities are available.

**SATURDAY TOUR #10**

***LOWER GLADY FORK TRAIL***

**RATING: 2      DRIVING MILES: 46      HIKING MILES: 2**

Leave the park and drive to WV Route 32 in Davis and follow to Back Hollow Road, then Back Hollow Road to WV Route 72 to Jenningston Road to Jenningston. Cross the Dry Fork River and turn right onto Gladwin Road and drive to Gladwin. There might be one or two stops along the way depending on the flora availability at the hike destination. The hike will begin at Lower Gladly Creek from Gladwin and proceed upstream for approximately two miles, see numerous flowers including showy orchids and yellow lady slippers as well as ferns. Pilgrims are likely to see Yellow-throated warbler, Black-throated blue warbler, and Hooded scarlet tanager as well as other bird species. Hiking boots and wading shoes are recommended as one feeder creek will be crossed/waded during the hike. There are no restroom facilities available.

**SATURDAY TOUR #11**

***RED SPRUCE BOGS AND VERNAL POOLS***

**RATING: 2      TOTAL DRIVING MILES: 35**

Depart Blackwater Falls State Park and travel Route 32 South toward Canaan Valley to turn onto Canaan Loop Road (unpaved Forest Road 13). Travel approximately 10 miles through Northern Evergreen Forest with wetlands, mosses, ferns, highland birds, and vernal pools. Descend from an elevation of 3,800 feet into a Northern Hardwood Forest with changing plant and animal communities, including species of orchids and native wildflowers. Lunch beside Red Run, a beautiful native trout stream. The last 4 miles of Canaan Loop Road into Blackwater Falls State Park is not passable by car so this drive will be out and back. There are no restroom facilities available.

**SATURDAY TOUR #12**

***PLANTS & BIRDS: FLOOR TO CEILING***

**RATING: 2      DRIVING MILES: 34      HIKING MILES: 0.4**

This trip will take participants from the floor of Canaan Valley to the lofty ceiling overlooking it all. We will begin along Freeland Road with stops at spring-fed, balsam wetlands. Continuing uphill just a little, we will spend time in the rich, edge habitat of grassland and forested slope, with a side visit to a more wooded wetland area. Not far up Forest Road 80 is Idleman's Run Trail, a 0.4-mile loop that traverses the deciduous woods along Idleman's Run (time permitting we will explore this area). After a few more northern hardwood, forest-interior stops on the way up, we will top out on Dolly Sods at the edge of the red spruce habitat that once covered the entire Valley. The emphasis of this trip is to visit a wide variety of habitats harboring a nice

assortment of wildflowers and birds while traveling a relatively short distance with a 1000-foot elevation change. Likely bird species include bobolink, several sparrow possibilities, northern harrier, and American Kestrel in the lowlands; forest interior breeders such as rose-breasted Grosbeak, ovenbird, and Hooded Warbler along the way up; and mountaintop species such as blackburnian warbler and golden-crowned kinglet at the top. Along the way, we will listen closely for Valley specialties such as Canada Warbler and winter wren. There are no restroom facilities available.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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Please note that changes or modifications to the described tours are a possibility due to variations in weather conditions, road conditions and other circumstances beyond our control. Our goal is always to maintain the high-quality experience participants are accustomed to and any changes will reflect that goal.