

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

Synchronous firefly viewing

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

This year, firefly viewing at the Elkmont Campground area of Great Smoky Mountains National Park will be from June 4 through June 11.

Every year in late May or early June, thousands of visitors gather near the popular Elkmont Campground to observe the naturally occurring phenomenon of *Photinus carolinus*; a firefly species that flashes synchronously. Access to the viewing area is provided by shuttle from the Sugarlands Visitor Center. A parking pass is required for all vehicles wishing to attend the event and can be purchased at the website recreation.gov.

Visitors will park at the Sugarlands Visitor Center, where they'll board shuttle busses, provided in partnership with the City of Gatlinburg. The cost will be \$1 round trip per person, as in previous years, and collected when boarding the shuttle.

The shuttle service will be the only transportation mode for visitor access during this period, except for registered campers staying at the Elkmont Campground. Visitors will not be allowed to walk the Elkmont entrance road due to safety concerns.

The park will hold back 85 passes for each day to accommodate individuals who did not learn of the need to pre-purchase tickets. The 85 passes will go on sale on-line at 10:00 a.m. the day before the event and will be available until 3:30 p.m. on the day of the event or until the passes are all reserved.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.