



Still Looking for a Great Summer Family Vacation?

Here's a Summer Camp the Whole Family Will Enjoy

Get Everyone Unplugged and Outside to Connect with Nature

How come kids are the only ones who get to have fun at summer camp and what about teenagers who think they are too old to go to camp? The [Family Nature Summit](#), is a vacation “camp” experience like no other, with outdoor exploration and adventure **for all family members**. During the day, kids enjoy educational and fun activities with their peers surrounded by nature. Adults pursue their own outdoor interests with hikes, classes and field trips. Round out your day with evening entertainment appealing to all ages.

Best of all, unlike camps that “rough it”, after spending the day with Mother Nature, you come home to a hearty and healthy dinner, a hot shower, and a soft bed.

The Summit is held for one week every summer at different locations around the country renowned for their exceptional natural beauty. **In 2015 the Summit is being held on the shores of beautiful [Lake Junaluska](#) in the [Great Smoky Mountains](#) of North Carolina from June 27-July 3.**

This year the Summit is lucky to have two nationally renowned faculty on the staff. Whether he’s singing about catfish, pontificating on possums, extolling the virtues of dandelions, telling wild snake tales, or wailing out a jivey harmonica tune, [Doug Elliott](#) provides an unforgettable multifaceted cultural tour of North America’s back country.

In addition to a lively evening program full of storytelling, belly laughs and wood-chuckles, Doug will be leading groups on nature rambles around the area, checking out many edible, medicinal and otherwise useful plants and how they can be used for food and medicinal purposes in our everyday lives. His daily workshops, one for the kids and one for adults, will demonstrate how to craft stories from nature, incorporating personal experience, family reminiscences, folklore, natural history, mythology and humor. Doug infuses all his programs with a lively collection of stories, songs and outrageous personal adventures.

[Donald Davis](#) was born in a Southern Appalachian mountain world rich in stories. He says he “didn’t learn stories, I just absorbed them.” Doug will regale the group with tales learned from a family of traditional storytellers who have lived on the same Western North Carolina land since 1781. An evening with Donald may include gentle fairy tales, simple and silly Jack tales, scary mountain lore, ancient Welsh and Scottish folktales, and his own true-to-life stories of his own neighbors and kin.

Donald is a graduate of Duke University Divinity School and is a retired Methodist minister. He’s served as a featured story teller at the Smithsonian Institution and the World’s Fair, is a prolific author of books and tapes, and appeared as guest host for NPR’s *Good Evening* program. Wilma Dykeman with the *New York Times* said, “**I could have listened all morning to Donald Davis...his stories often left listeners limp with laughter at the same time they struggled with a lump in the throat.**”

Other highlight from this year’s summer Summit include:

- Award-winning author of several books about the area, will be leading hikes in the [Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#).
- Historical rambles in Cataloochee, one of the largest and most prosperous settlements in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Many of the buildings have been preserved for visitors to see
- Teen overnight camping trip at the Balsam Mountain Preserve Campground
- Rafting, kayaking or duckie trips on the Nantahala River for older junior naturalists, teens, young adults and adults
- Learn about the re-introduction of elk in the national park
- Youth participating in the [Race4Birds](#) program
- An owl prowl and “green-eyed spider” hunt one evening
- Noted local birder from the area leading birding classes
- Try your hand at primitive skills and bark basket making with stone tools
- Junior Naturalists create “Art on the Trail.” Make a sketch, put the image on a clay tile and we’ll fire it in a kiln
- Stream studies and condition of local waterways
- Plein air bird painting class
- Interpretive float trip on the French Broad River along the shores of the Biltmore Mansion
- Family Barn Dance one evening with professional caller to get our feet stomp’n!
- Community service project building a handicap-accessible native plant garden on the grounds of the Lake Junaluska Conference Center
- Editor of [Ranger Rick](#) , award-winning children’s wildlife magazine published by the National Wildlife Federation, joining the Summit to present Summit kid’s contest to win subscriptions to Ranger Rick and join the youth groups for a lively discussion of all things wild
- Introduction of the Craig Tufts Educational Scholarship winner who is attending the Summit as the winner of a nature-focused essay contest. Craig Tufts was the chief naturalist for the National Wildlife Federation for more than 20 years and each year the Scholarship Fund grants an award to one young person to attend the Family Nature Summit. Craig’s devotion to getting children outside – learning from nature and having fun—was fundamental for him and this scholarship was established in his memory as part of his legacy to children everywhere.

Originally organized by the National Wildlife Federation over 40 years ago, this legacy event is now entering its 9th successful year run by an independent non-profit and volunteer-driven organization. The Summit is popular with singles, couples, and family members of all ages, including grandparents. A Summit vacation is a unique experience which is why Summiteers return year after year to connect with nature, re-unite with old friends, and make new ones. Learn more about the 2015 Family Nature Summit and register to attend at FamilyNatureSummits.org

Note to Editors and Writers: If you would like to interview a past Summiteer about their Summit experience, or someone registered for this year’s Summit, let us know and we can connect you with a Summiteer in your area or anywhere in the U.S.

Media Contact: Mary Burnette, MaryBurnette@aol.com