

# Spring in the Smokies

[www.gerlachnaturephoto.com](http://www.gerlachnaturephoto.com)



*Figure 1 Spring at Big Creek*

with John Gerlach and Dixie Calderone

April 19 – 25, 2020

Few places rival the diversity of spring in the Great Smoky Mountains. The forest begins to awaken from its winter slumber in early April and comes to a full-blown eruption of wildflowers by the third week in April. Many species of trilliums, jack-in-the pulpit, fringed phacelia, wild geranium, dwarf crested iris, and numerous other wildflowers carpet the forest floor. Ferns emerge among the fresh green mosses and mountain streams and waterfalls are fully flowing. Come join like-minded nature photographers and be inspired by incredible sunrises and sunsets from the highest mountains in the Smokies. There are so many subjects, and during our week together we will lead you to a multitude of enchanting subjects in gorgeous locations.



*Figure 2 Dwarf crested iris is abundant spring flowers that make super subjects when growing in the ferns.*

There is no doubt that you will get the best wildflower and mountain stream photography the Smokies can offer. We have extensive experience in the Smoky Mountains, and we are experts at photo techniques that will greatly enhance your images. Learn close-up methods such as focus stacking, simple and precise exposure strategies, composition the artful way, and the use of main and fill flash to truly enhance your macro images.

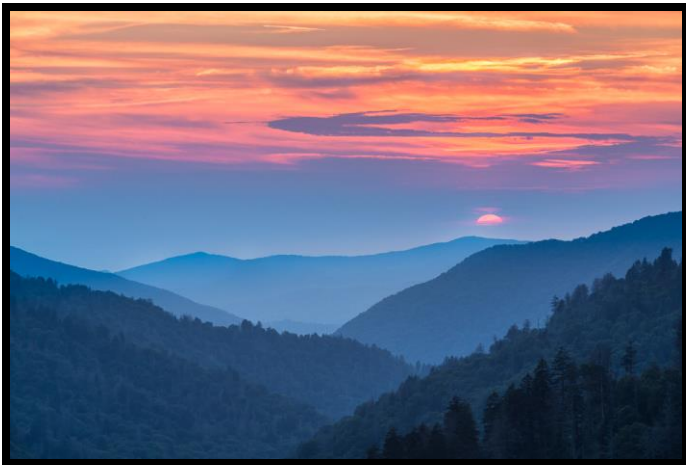


*Figure 3 Trilliums of several species are plentiful*

Our workshop takes you to exciting locations where you are sure to find magnificent subjects to photograph. We show you how to select prime photo prospects from the chaos of nature. Then we demonstrate how to shoot superb images with high-quality techniques that anyone can learn and master. When in the field we spend 100% of our time helping you

take pictures with your equipment. We help you use your equipment to best advantage, and on occasion, we demonstrate certain equipment and techniques like focus stacking, fill-flash, main flash, and live view shooting strategies.

To ensure that instruction is complete, informative, and helpful, the group size is limited to only twelve (**12**) participants.



*Figure 4 Sunset from the Morton Overlook*

John presents detailed instructional image programs on exposure, close-up photography, and flash. The materials contained in the programs are suitable for beginners through professionals. We kindly critique your images during the week and present a showing of each

participant's best images made during the week.



*Figure 5 This mill is fascinating to photograph, and from this angle, focus stacking is the way to cover the depth. We teach you how to do this awesome technique.*

John presents a program featuring the images he has made during the past year. This popular part of the workshop is an excellent way to show you the new things John has discovered about nature photography. Lately, John and Dixie has been doing plenty of focus stacking for unlimited depth of field with the sharpest aperture (f/8) on the lens for both landscape and close-ups, floating blind images of ducks and shorebirds that puts John eye-to-eye with these beautiful creatures of nature, hummingbirds with multiple flash, wildlife images from his photo tours to Kenya using a new autofocusing technique, and spectacular

landscapes of the Grand Tetons and Bryce Canyon.



*Figure 6 With favorable weather, we plan to welcome the sun at dawn on famous Clingmans Dome where you easily see why this area is called the Smoky Mountains.*

We ask each of you to bring a dozen digital images or prints from home to share with the group. Although this is optional, it's an effective way for us to see where you have been. If you would like a critique of your images, just ask and we will gladly do this for you. We eat, breathe, and sleep nature photography at each workshop, but that doesn't mean it's all work and no play. We take our field trips at a leisurely pace, so there is time to relax and enjoy the beautiful Smokies. We may even get a little silly at times, but then laughter and humor add to the workshop experience.





*Figure 7 Learn to use LED lights to illuminate objects such as the inside of this cabin at dawn.*

Participating in this nature photography workshop is both a super way to improve your nature photography and to learn about nature. It is a wonderful "learning vacation!" It's always a pleasure to share experiences and knowledge with other nature photographers. We believe in taking our field trips at the times we are normally out capturing our own images. Therefore, we take field trips every morning, generally beginning at least an hour before sunrise, and stay out until late morning. Getting up for our early morning field trips isn't going to be as tough as it sounds after you see the first magnificent sunrise from Clingmans Dome.

Evening field trips begin in late afternoon, depending on the day's destination, and we

always stay out for the sunset if the weather allows.



*Figure 8 On a cool rainy day, often fogs forms in the valley providing wonderful opportunities at the high viewpoints such as Morton's Overlook.*

We'll conduct most of our instructional programs – exposure, close-ups, and advanced flash techniques – during the middle of the day because the light isn't normally the best for photography. All mornings and evenings are reserved for field trips.

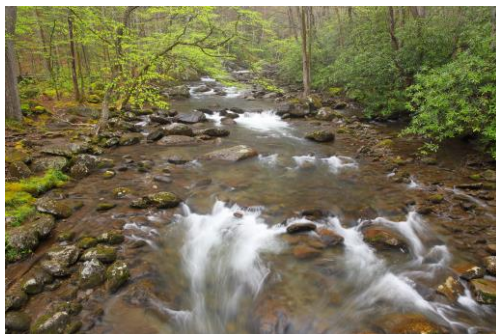




*Figure 9 Notice John Gerlach is holding his hand in front of the lens. That means he is stacking the scene and photographing his hand before and after shooting the stack marks the images to be stacked.*

## Field Trips

Field trips are 3-4 hours, so we can shoot many great nature images while learning many effective photo techniques. We'll visit scenic overlooks, moss-covered forests, flowing streams, waterfalls, wildflowers, and more of the incredible Smoky Mountains where subjects abound. We'll car-pool on each field trip.



*Figure 10 While most of our favorite shooting spots are close to the parked car like the Greenbriar River, other do require some hiking.*

## Physical Abilities

This is a nature photography workshop, so participants must be physically able to participate with the group. While there will not be any “extensive” hiking, there will be some moderate hiking of up to three miles per day over uneven terrain. Most sessions will not require more than normal physical exertion, but we wish to show participants some of the most beautiful areas of the wilderness. You must be able to navigate down stream banks, hike slightly elevated trails and carry your equipment. Please know your abilities and if you have any questions about the physical nature of these workshops do not hesitate to ask.



*Figure 11 Cosby Creek - scenes with depth benefit greatly from the focus stacking technique we will teach you!*

## Digital Photography

We use a computer and large screen television to view your images. Give us a copy of your images on a jump drive to let us view them. Bring a laptop computer to allow you to review your images during the week!



*Figure 12 Mingus Mill offers plenty of photo subjects.*

## Meals

We eat many meals as a group, but mealtimes are highly variable. The weather dictates our field trips. Meals must be worked in around photography. We'll eat breakfast as a group after the morning field trip. All other meals depend on our schedule. Since predicting the weather in these mountains is difficult, we'll have to see what happens. In all cases, when we go to restaurants, everyone orders off the menu and pays for their meal then. Nobody has ever gone hungry, nor lost weight during our workshops. But we do work our meals around taking beautiful images, not the other way around!



*Figure 13 Wildflowers are abundant in the spring! I especially like the painted trillium.*

## Non-participating Spouses

As we are being headquartered in Gatlinburg, non-participating spouses are encouraged to attend. While participants are in the field, non-participating spouses will have ample time to explore Gatlinburg. We encourage you to visit [www.gatlinburg.com](http://www.gatlinburg.com) to learn about all that this gateway to the Smokies offers. Non-participants can attend our classroom sessions, but due to extremely limited parking at many field locations, non-participating spouses cannot join field trips as we must keep the number of vehicles to as few as possible.



*Figure 14 Pink Lady's-slippers are likely subjects.*

## **Workshop Dates**

**April 19 – 25, 2020**

### **When the Workshop Starts and Ends**

The workshop begins Sunday at 4:00 P.M. at the Greystone Lodge on the River. The initial meeting begins in the hotel lobby. The program ends after the final shoot on Friday evening. Weather permitting, however, there may be a Saturday morning sunrise shoot.

### **Tuition**

Tuition for the workshop is \$1,250. A \$300 deposit is required now to hold your space in the workshop. The deposit is refundable, less a \$50 service fee, until January 1, 2020. After January 1, the \$300 deposit becomes non-refundable, unless we can refill your space on such short notice (minus the \$50 service fee). Tuition includes all classroom and field instruction. Meals, lodging, and items of a personal nature are not included.

### **Lodging**

Our workshops are based at the Greystone Lodge, but participants may stay at other locations of their choice. Staying near or at the Greystone Lodge will be advantageous for



early morning meetings before traveling to our sunrise and other locations. You must make your own hotel reservation; lodging is not included in the tuition.



*Figure 15 Sunrise at Clingman's Dome*

## **Travel and Equipment Information**

After making a reservation, we'll send you pre-departure information describing photographic equipment and the clothing most suitable for the workshop.





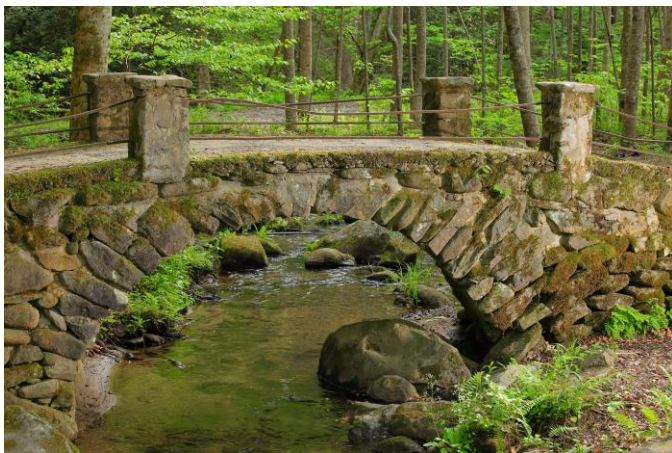
*Figure 16 A six-shot focus stack captures the depth in this dwarf crested iris perfectly!*

## Getting to Great Smoky Mountains National Park

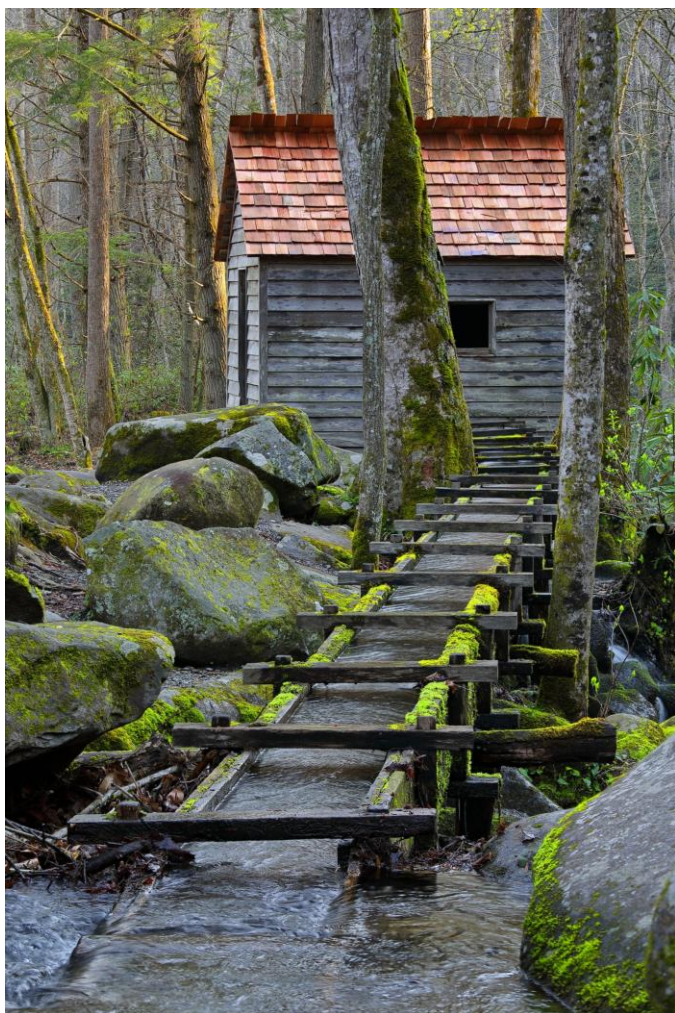
Since most workshop participants drive to the Smokies, we rely on carpooling. For those participants flying in, you should choose either the Knoxville McGhee Tyson Airport (TYS), which is only about 45 miles from Gatlinburg or the Asheville (North Carolina) Regional Airport (AVL) and that is about 54 miles driving distance. There are car rental companies at both airports. We recommend renting a car because it's convenient to have your own wheels. If you wish to rely on carpooling, you can get a taxi at the airport. The fee for a taxi ride to Gatlinburg from the Knoxville Airport is about \$85 one-way.

Please join us for a solid week of being fully immersed in nature and photography!

We are looking forward to seeing you this spring!



*Figure 17 Gnome Bridge makes a fine subject on a dark day. Flash lit up the bridge to separate it more from the darker surroundings!*



*Figure 18 Nine images were shot at different focus distances to sharply focus this scene of the Old Mingus Mill. We will teach you how to shoot the stack in the field and process the stack of images with Helicon Focus. It is awesome*

***To Enroll:***

*Please contact us first to make sure space remains available in the workshop. The group size is limited to twelve providing a super experience for everyone.*

***Contact:***

***Dixie Calderone***

***812-350-0799***

***John Gerlach***

***johngerlachphotography@gmail.com***

***208-320-0951***

*We can take a credit card over the phone or you can send a check to:*

***John Gerlach***

***2632 N. Marr Road***

***Columbus, IN 47203***

*Make the check payable to: John Gerlach Photography*