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**For Immediate Release**

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**Blue Ghost Tours Cancelled at Cradle of Forestry**

**Pisgah Forest, NC** – The Cradle of Forestry, in consultation with the US Forest Service, has made the decision to cancel this year’s “In Search of the Blue Ghosts” tour due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of the timing of the blue ghost phenomena, the tour will not be rescheduled for 2020.

“It’s a decision that we realize disappoints the community,” says Clay Woolridge, Cradle of Forestry Operations Manager, “but it’s a necessary step to follow protocol and make sure our staff, volunteers and especially our attendees remain safe and healthy.” The tour typically lasts over the course of 15 days in May and June as the fireflies emerge and begin the mating process.

The yearly event is one of the largest fundraisers of the year for the Cradle and FIND Outdoors, the local nonprofit that operates the site in cooperation with the Pisgah Ranger District. “Proceeds provide critical and operational support for us,” Woolridge explains, “We depend on this revenue in order to then provide future programming and hold our yearly special events and spread the word about the Cradle site.”

Started in 2017 as a small gathering to enjoy a leisurely night hike around the Cradle, staff soon discovered that they had an enormous population of *Phausis reticulata*, or blue ghost fireflies. Like small fairies using their blue lanterns to light the way on a warm summer night, the males of the species hover several inches over the forest floor shining a blueish light to search for the females hidden deep in the leaf litter. “The effect is like nothing I’ve ever seen before,” explains Adam DeWitte, Director of Education for FIND Outdoors, “It’s so amazing that we can feature not only our incredible past at the Cradle, but a natural phenomenon of enormous magnitude.”

While disappointed by the cancellation, the Cradle of Forestry is so excited to offer the public three opportunities to help to continue supporting the Cradle and its mission of conservation education throughout the rest of the season.



**1. If you've purchased tickets to this year's blue ghost tour, consider using your registration fee as a donation.**

You can choose to donate the cost of your ticket to benefit the Cradle of Forestry. Your donation is fully tax-deductible and will go a long way in sustaining the Birthplace of American Forestry and make sure future blue ghost tours are offered. If you would like to donate your ticket fee, you don't need to do anything and the donation will be applied.

**2. Purchase one of this year's commemorative posters on the blue ghost firefly.**

Commissioned by Trevett's Design in Columbia, SC, this year's posters are a limited commemorative set featuring the lingering blueish glow of the small firefly that has been the focus of generations worth of folklore and myth. You can purchase the posters and more at [www.theforeststore.com](http://www.theforeststore.com).

**3. Make a special donation to the Cradle of Forestry**

By making a gift today, you can help lessen the impact of COVID-19 on our mission of educational, recreational and interpretive opportunities about forest resources, natural history and the Cradle of Forestry in America and set the stage for many more programming opportunities in the future. Please make your gift here: [www.cfaia.org/get-involved/](http://www.cfaia.org/get-involved/) and show your support!



“With the public’s continued support, the Cradle of Forestry can recover from this challenge better than ever,” Wooldridge concludes. “We’re excited about what the future holds for our nonprofit and serving the public as soon as possible.”

### About FIND Outdoors

FIND Outdoors, formerly Cradle of Forestry in America Interpretive Association, is a 47-year-old 501(c)(3) nonprofit with headquarters in Pisgah Forest, NC at the entrance to Pisgah National Forest. FIND’s mission promotes educational, recreational and interpretive opportunities about forest and water resources, natural history, and the Cradle of Forestry in America. FIND Outdoors serves approximately 800,000 visitors each year with over 150 educational and recreational programs, special events, and tours, and manages 21 recreation, education and camping facilities in North Carolina, Georgia and Indiana; offers to the public environmental education programs and forest-related gifts, educational books and other resources; and provides partnership opportunities for the health, safety and education of all forest users on local and regional public and private lands.