



EXPLORERS CLUB

Newsletter

JULY 2025

2025 SEASON
ISSUE I



FOREST
INSPIRED
NATURE
DISCOVERY™



EXPLORERS CLUB NEWSLETTER

Dear Explorers Club Families,

Thank you for being such an important part of this program. We truly appreciate your support, your communication, and the trust you place in us. It means a lot to see families so engaged and invested. Every Explorer brings their own energy and spirit to the group, and it's been a real privilege to get to know each one of them.

We're looking forward to the adventures ahead and all the new places we'll explore together. As we visit these natural spaces, we'll continue to talk with the Explorers about how to move through them with care. Respecting the environment is a core part of what we do, and we'll be practicing the principles of Leave No Trace so that we help protect the wild places we enjoy.

After each trip, we'll be sending out a short newsletter with updates, photos, and highlights. We hope it gives you a good window into what your child experienced and learned. Thank you again for being part of this. We're excited for what's to come!

Diogo & Jorge

Diogo DeAssis & Jorge Marín

Explorers Club Coordinators
FIND Outdoors





Upcoming Trips

JUL 26

Cradle of Forestry
"Connecting with Nature"

AUG 2

Fly Fishing
"Dispose of Waste Properly"

SEP 6

Rock Climbing
"Durable Surfaces"

SEP 20

Panthertown
"Respect Wildlife"

OCT

Overnight Camping
"Be Considerate to Others"
(Date to be determined)



CLUB DE EXPLORADORES

A look back at least year

El Club de Exploradores (Explorers Club) has led over 90 young adventurers on more than a dozen excursions through Pisgah National Forest. We hiked, climbed, and swam, learning along the way about *Leave No Trace* principles and the natural beauty just beyond our backyards. In partnership with local organizations, non-profits, and businesses, we explored the outdoors in new and meaningful ways. These experiences help our club members see for themselves that “these forests belong to you too!”

Explorers Club is a free, bilingual outreach program for middle school aged students in Transylvania County and surrounding areas, providing opportunities to go on adventures in Pisgah National Forest.

YOUR ENTHUSIASTIC AND DEDICATED WORK IS INVALUABLE, BOTH FOR PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL CARE AND FOR THE PRACTICAL BENEFITS OF CONTACT WITH NATURE.

– LOURDES CAROLINA INOA
PAST EXPLORERS CLUB PARENT



PAST EXPLORERS CLUB MEMBERS

Leave No Trace Principles

The Leave No Trace principles are a set of guidelines that help us enjoy the outdoors responsibly while protecting the natural world for future generations. At their core, these principles encourage mindfulness and respect for the land, wildlife, and other visitors. Whether hiking, camping, or exploring, the goal is to minimize our impact and ensure that nature stays as wild and beautiful as we found it.



1 Plan Ahead and Prepare

Being prepared helps ensure safety and minimizes damage to natural areas. Know the rules, weather, and terrain before you go.

2 Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

Stick to established trails and campsites to avoid damaging fragile ecosystems. Choose rock, gravel, or dry grass when setting up camp.

3 Dispose of Waste Properly

Always clean up after yourself. Throw away trash in the right place and leave nature cleaner than you found it.

4 Leave What You Find

Leave rocks, plants, and other natural objects as you found them. Avoid disturbing historic or cultural artifacts.

5 Minimize Campfire Impact

Use a camp stove when possible and keep fires small. Only build fires in designated areas and burn only small sticks found on the ground.

6 Respect Wildlife

Observe animals from a distance and never feed them. Secure food and trash to prevent attracting wildlife.

7 Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Keep noise levels down and yield to others on the trail. Respect the experience of those seeking peace and solitude.

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KAYAKING THE FRENCH BROAD RIVER

We kicked off our season with a brand-new adventure, made possible by the generous support of **Headwaters Outfitters**. For our first outing of the year, Explorers had the chance to kayak and snorkel right here in the French Broad River. Headwaters donated a guided trip for our group, and we couldn't have asked for a better way to start things off.

Our guide, Danielle, led us through the basics of kayaking and made sure everyone felt safe and supported as we got on the water. For many of our Explorers, this was their first time paddling, and she did a great job helping them get the hang of it.

We also partnered with **Oxbow River Snorkeling** for a closer look beneath the surface. Kevin from Oxbow met us at the river and introduced the group to river snorkeling; something totally new for most of us. He brought a calm, curious energy that helped make the experience approachable and fun.

We'd also like to thank Jessica from Headwaters, who played a big role in organizing the day behind the scenes. As Operations Director, she helped bring all the moving parts together and made sure the trip could happen.



Safety First

We began our day at the **FIND NEST** with a short safety video that covered the basics of kayaking and water safety. It helped set the tone for the day and gave everyone a general idea of what to expect. Once we arrived at Headwaters, our guides gave a more hands-on safety talk and answered questions about the equipment, the river, and how to stay safe while paddling and snorkeling. The guidance was clear and easy to follow, which helped the group feel prepared and ready to start the day.



Explorers gear up for their first trip!

At every event, safety is something we plan for long before the day begins. Our staff are First Aid and CPR certified, and we bring multiple fully stocked first aid kits and sunblock to every outing. We check our gear, stay aware of weather conditions, and communicate clearly with all participants. These steps allow us to focus on what really matters: helping our Explorers try new things, stay engaged, and enjoy the outdoors with confidence. A safe day is a fun day, and that is always our goal.



Danielle teaches the Explorers about safety on the river.

More Memories



Jace is feeling accomplished



Soliana & Rowan spot tiny minnows



...and away we go!

Although a few Explorers felt a bit unsure when we first started, they quickly gained confidence as they practiced paddling and steering their kayaks. With support from our guides and encouragement from their peers, everyone found their rhythm on the water. It was rewarding to see how fast they adapted and began to enjoy the experience.

Our group paddled an 8-mile stretch of the French Broad River. This section is rated Class I, meaning it has a gentle current and very few obstacles, making it ideal for beginners. The slow-moving water gave everyone a chance to focus on learning the basics of kayaking without feeling rushed or overwhelmed.



▲ Keilah & Vivan confidently paddling their kayaks ▼

Lincoln, Sebastian & Kirill pose for the camera

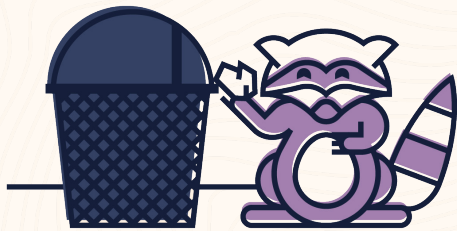


The scenery along the river made the trip memorable for everyone. The forested banks, clear water, and peaceful surroundings created a beautiful backdrop for the day. Whether it was a first-time paddle or a familiar route, the river welcomed each Explorer with plenty to see and enjoy.



Snorkels Up!

Just before lunchtime, we stopped at a wide, calm section of the river where the water was clear and deep in some areas. This made it a great place for both snorkeling and swimming. The group took a break from paddling to cool off, float around, and enjoy the water. For many of our Explorers, this was their first time swimming in a river like this, and they were excited to jump in and explore.



We were especially on the lookout for darters, aquatic invertebrates, and the eastern hellbender, a large and salamander that only lives in clean, cold rivers. Kevin explained how these species are indicators of river health and how their survival depends on us keeping the water clean. This connected directly to the Leave No Trace principles, reminding us that even small actions like leaving rocks in place or packing out trash can make a big difference.

Kevin from Oxbow River Snorkeling helped us get ready for the snorkeling portion of the day. He passed out masks and snorkels, gave a quick overview of what to look for, and guided the group into the deeper spots where fish and other river life like to hide. With his help, Explorers started spotting small fish darting between rocks and noticed patterns in how the riverbed changes from place to place.



▲ MATTHEW, JACE & SEBASTIAN
COLLECT GEAR FROM KEVIN



▲ LINCOLN SPOTS A BIG ONE



▲ KIRILL DEMONSTRATES PROPER DIVING TECHNIQUES



▲ ROWAN, KEILAH & SOLIANA ENJOY THE COOL RIVER TEMPS

Wrapping it up...

By the end of the day, our Explorers had paddled miles, snorkeled in deep river water, and learned firsthand about the wildlife that depends on clean, healthy ecosystems. Many faced new challenges and came out of the experience with more confidence, curiosity, and a better understanding of what it means to care for the places we explore

We are incredibly proud of how our Explorers showed up, supported one another, and stayed engaged throughout the entire trip.

We're grateful to Headwaters Outfitters and Oxbow River Snorkeling for making this adventure possible, and to all the families who helped get their Explorers ready for the day. This was just the beginning of our season, and we can't wait to see where the next trip takes us.

▼ (BACK TO FRONT) JORGE, SOLIANA, ROWAN, VIVIAN, KEILAH, DIOGO, LINCOLN, SEBASTIAN, KIRILL, JACE, MATTHEW & LAUREN



*THIS IS THE MOST AMOUNT
OF FUN I'VE EVER HAD OUTSIDE!*

**- VIVIAN
2025 EXPLORER**



More Memories

Sebastian looks for aquatic life



Vivian enjoying a dip in the river



In Other News...



AUG 9, 2025

Every year FIND Outdoors has the great honor of celebrating **Smokey Bear's Birthday** here at the Cradle of Forestry. Help us celebrate his 81st Birthday!

Join us at the Cradle of Forestry as we celebrate Smokey Bear on his 81st Birthday! We'll be celebrating from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. including:

Smokey Bear meet & greet Obstacle Course
Smokey Bear Story Time Crafts & Activities
Food Trucks

Admission is free of charge for this special event.

Location: Cradle of Forestry in America, 11250 Pisgah Hwy, Pisgah Forest, NC 28768



SEPT 25, 2025

National Public Lands Day is also a "Fee-Free Day"—one of only five days a year when entrance fees are waived at national parks and other public lands. Enjoy the Cradle of Forestry for FREE this day!

Come explore our exhibit hall, film, gift shop and over 3 miles of paved hiking trails featuring seven historical buildings from the time of the first forestry school in America.

SOCIAL MEDIA

In addition to leaving no trace, you can make a difference by simply liking the FIND Outdoors Instagram page and following us and each of our managed sites on Facebook. At each of these social media channels, we offer engaging information which you can share with others and bring attention to our mission of stewardship, educational opportunities for all and exceptional outdoor experiences.

@FINDOUTDOORS



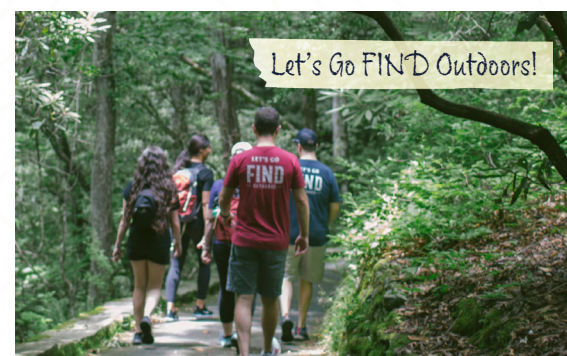
REMINDERS

Please make sure your Explorer brings their orange Explorers Club backpack to every trip, with their Adventure Journal packed inside. They should also wear their purple Explorers Club shirt each time we meet. These items help us stay organized and build a sense of team and identity during our outings. Wearing the shirt is especially important, so please help your Explorer remember to put it on before each trip.



LEARN MORE!

To learn more about FIND Outdoors and for a complete list of events, please scan this QR code or visit gofindoutdoors.org/events.



THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 EXPLORERS CLUB PARTNERS

Our community sponsors play a vital role in helping FIND Outdoors bring people together. Through their generous support of events, these partners help us create meaningful outdoor experiences, foster environmental stewardship, and strengthen connections across the region.

We're grateful for their continued investment in our mission!



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