



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Brayden Benkiel-Robinson | 919-670-7666 | Brayden@gofindoutdoors.org

Join us for a Free Lecture on the History of Appalachian Balladry

Brevard, NC, 10/9/2026— Generations ago, deep in the southern Appalachian Mountains, parent and child sat knee to knee, passing down stories of love and loss, murder and violence, heartbreak and betrayal, community and history. This art form, the most studied and arguably respected musical tradition in the Appalachian region, is the ballad. Today, these stories continue to be passed down, breathing continued life into our shared culture and history.

On **Thursday, October 15th**, FIND Outdoors is proud to invite the public to the **free Stewards and Storytellers Learning Series** entitled **"Keeping the Tradition Alive: The Art of Appalachian Ballads"**.

The lecture will be presented by **Donna Ray Norton and William Ritter**, eighth-generation Appalachian Storytellers who are carrying forward one of the oldest surviving oral traditions in the United States. Norton is the founder and leader of The Nest of Singing Birds and host of the monthly Old Marshall Jail Ballad Swap.

Join us to learn about the history and distinctive style of Appalachian ballad singing through live examples and discussion, the stylistic quirks and storytelling traditions that make these songs unique, as well as the reasons singers developed these approaches.

The event opens at 5:30 PM, and the lecture will begin promptly at 6:00 PM.

Tickets are free thanks to support from Self Help Credit Union, but RSVP's are made at www.gofindoutdoors.org and are encouraged. The event is open to the public and includes two complimentary alcoholic beverages and light snacks. Drinks are made available through generous support from Oskar Blues.

On **October 24th**, the Nest of Singing Birds will take the stage at the **Cradle of Forestry in America** and bring the region's eeriest folklore to life at the very birthplace of American forestry. This Halloween-inspired event will feature spooky storytelling in one of the most historic venues in Western North Carolina. **Tickets are on sale now at www.gofindoutdoors.org/folklore**

The FIND Outdoors NEST is located at 49 Pisgah Hwy, Suite 3, Pisgah Forest, NC. FIND Outdoors proudly provides the NEST to aligned partners and organizations to interface with the community and provide means for collaboration. To request the space, please fill out the form on the FIND Outdoors website.

About FIND Outdoors:

FIND Outdoors is a 501(c)(3) outdoor recreation nonprofit that centers forest education and stewardship. Based in Pisgah Forest, FIND Outdoors has been stewarding public lands for over 50 years, with a vision to create a lasting community of appreciation for the outdoors. Learn more about FIND and ways you can be involved at www.gofindoutdoors.org/about.



Stewards & Storytellers
Presented by Self Help Credit Union

OCT 15, 2026

**"Keeping The Tradition Alive":
The Art of Appalachian Ballads**

Traditional ballads have been passed down for generations, carried not by sheet music but through memory, family, and community. In this workshop, participants will explore the distinctive style of Appalachian ballad singing through live examples and discussion. They will learn about the stylistic quirks and storytelling traditions that make these songs unique, as well as the reasons singers developed these approaches.

**Donna Ray Norton
& William Ritter**
Featured Speakers

**FREE
EVENT!**

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