

THE WILDERNESS WATCH

April 2026

Earth Day Social & Chapter Chartering



Join us for the inaugural Smoky Mountains Wilderness Watch Earth Day Social & and Chapter Chartering Event.

Thursday April 23rd from 6–8pm at the Balsam Mountain Inn.

Social is open to the public and free of charge...

Native Brook Trout Habitat

The upheaval caused by Hurricane Helene was particularly hard on the Southern Appalachian Brook Trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*).

Once abundant across the region for which it is named, the fish has lost roughly 80 percent of its range since 1900. Because the animal is so sensitive to pollution and temperature changes, biologists...



Smoky Mountains Wilderness Watch



Our mission is to rewild, protect and conserve habitat creating a more livable landscape for humans and wildlife.



Earth Day Social *continued*

...with a cash bar and light snacks available.

Western North Carolina is one of the fastest growing regions in the Southeast, putting extraordinary pressure on our forests, wetlands and wildlife corridors.

Over the last couple of decades we have lost over 1.2 million acres of forest statewide, and another 5 million are projected to be lost over the next 2 decades.

Without action on our part countless wildlife species will lose the places they depend on to survive.

So come and meet the Smoky Mountains Wilderness Watch and North Carolina Wildlife Federation leaders to learn more about our plans and objectives, for only together can we

Keep the Smoky Mountains Wild!

Smoky Mountains



Wilderness Watch



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Native Brook Trout *continued*

...consider it a bellwether for the region's forests and streams.

Now, climate-induced vacillations between extreme rain and long, dry months when streams run lower and warmer further threaten the Southern Appalachian brook trout.

Our goals are to:

Conserve, enhance and restore wild Brook Trout populations that have been impacted by habitat modification, non-native species and other population level threats.

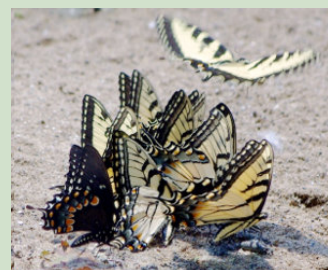
Encourage partnerships among government agencies, private land owners and other stakeholders to seek solutions to environmental and ecological threats.

Develop and implement educational programs to raise public awareness about the challenges that wild Brook Trout populations are facing.

Develop support for program designed to enhance and restore wild Brook Trout populations throughout their historical Smoky Mountains range.

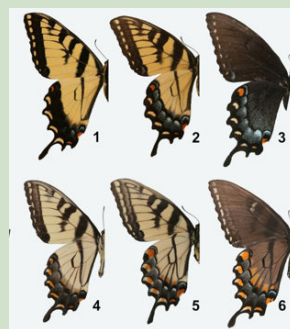
Meet NC's State Butterfly: The Eastern Tiger Swallowtail

These large, black or yellow beauties are hard to miss as they start circling overhead in the spring. They're out looking for red or pink flowers, such as milkweed, coneflower, Joe Pye weed, wild cherry and lilac, which are their preferred nectar sources in both urban and rural areas. Since the females (*papilio glaucous*) can be either yellow or black, they can be distinguished from the males by their distinctive shimmering blue spots on their lower wings. A group of "puddling" swallowtails – a congregation usually seen absorbing crucial nutrients on mud, damp gravel or shallow puddles – is generally males.



These colorful tigers feed on a wide variety of nectar-producing flowers but require native trees for their egg deposits. Common egg-laying sites are the leaves of tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) and black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), in addition to white ash (*Fraxinus americana*), ironwood (*Carpinus caroliniana*), sweet bay magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*), and members of the willow family (*Salix* sp.) You may be lucky enough to spot a chrysalis a couple of weeks after one of their visits.

Residential development which takes place after the initial clear cutting of native forests generally populates the area with hybrid and non-native trees that offer few benefits to swallowtails and other species. Reintroduction of native shade trees will provide both



shelter from bad weather and predator protection. It's always a good practice to plant native.

Females: 2, 3, 5 & 6
Males: 1 & 4