

# BUILDING FOR A BETTER FUTURE




GREAT SMOKY  
MOUNTAINS  
INSTITUTE AT  
TREMONT



**KEYSTONE  
CAMPAIGN**

*for a second campus that connects*





**“You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference and you have to decide what kind of a difference you want to make.”**

**— Jane Goodall**

## **BUILDING FOR A BETTER FUTURE**

At Tremont, we deeply believe that connection to place and to each other enriches our lives and strengthens our communities. **We all belong in nature**, and we succeed in our mission when we facilitate inclusive outdoor learning that contributes to each participant’s sense of belonging in the outdoors and the Great Smoky Mountains.

Tremont has over 50 years of expertise in helping people discover the natural world around them. We embrace the idea of nature as not that which is untouched by humanity but where all life thrives. As such, we work each day toward a thriving planet for all. We envision our community enhanced by lifelong learners in pursuit of wonder and curiosity about the world around them. We envision an education system that integrates nature-based, outdoor learning as fundamental to the success and health of its students – where youth regularly and frequently engage with local and national parks throughout their formal education. We envision a workforce that embraces the possibilities of our future, taking inspiration from nature and seeking innovative solutions to some of our society’s biggest challenges.

**We have a vision where people of all ages, through a connection to the world around them, come to imagine new possibilities for themselves and for the planet.**

**To achieve this vision, we are embarking on an ambitious journey, our Keystone Campaign, to establish our second campus and build an unparalleled education center that increases our impact and provides transformative learning opportunities for youth and adults.**



## FROM THE CEO

Tremont's mission drives my passion, and I am so grateful to do this work in East Tennessee. As CEO, I carry the responsibility of ensuring Tremont's forward-thinking approach to education is given a world-class stage, where we succeed in increasing access to the benefits of nature. I genuinely believe that the work we do each day leads to a better future and happier, healthier people.

I believe this because I have the good fortune to witness outdoor learning improving lives. When I see a group of students hunched along a stream investigating the smallest details of a salamander, paying attention in new and remarkable ways, I see the world coming alive and expanding before them. Around the campfire, when I hear the impassioned stories of growth and revelation from a day spent under the forest canopy, I know the impact will extend well beyond this valley and their time at Tremont. These learning experiences in nature ground us in place, but most importantly, they allow us to share our joy with others, connecting us in the process.



*Cathy McClary*

In today's society, we spend our lives increasingly indoors. This is negatively affecting our physical and mental well-being. Yet, we have the chance to revisit our relationship with nature, and, in turn, to gain from this connection. This is our goal, and this is our work. Tremont's education programs are uniquely positioned to increase access to these benefits.

Research tells us that when children learn outdoors, their test scores, behavior, attention, social skills, and confidence improve. When people learn outdoors, they experience decreased stress and increased physical activity leading to healthier outcomes. This campaign is ambitious, but the impact is clear. We will grow our capacity. We will reach individuals through new and sustained partnerships and programs. We will build a world-class education center. We will model a better future. And together, our success will show that when we create buildings that are good for people,

for our planet, and for our shared prosperity, our vision for a better future is possible because it exists right here in East Tennessee.



## OUR HISTORY

Since 1969, Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont has shared the wonders of nature with hundreds of thousands of youth and adults in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. A private non-profit 501(c)(3), Tremont operates through a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service to provide immersive overnight programs that connect people to nature and to each other.

We've endured challenges to our programs: blizzards, fires, floods, and a pandemic. Yet, we've proven resilient because people choose Tremont as a place to find inspiration and healing in the outdoors.

In recent years, we've celebrated increased visitation to the Smokies. Our programs, put on hold during the pandemic, have resumed, and we are challenged to meet the growing demand for our programs. For many reasons, we cannot expand our current footprint within the protected boundaries of the National Park. Instead, our solution is to grow into two distinct but interrelated campuses just minutes apart.



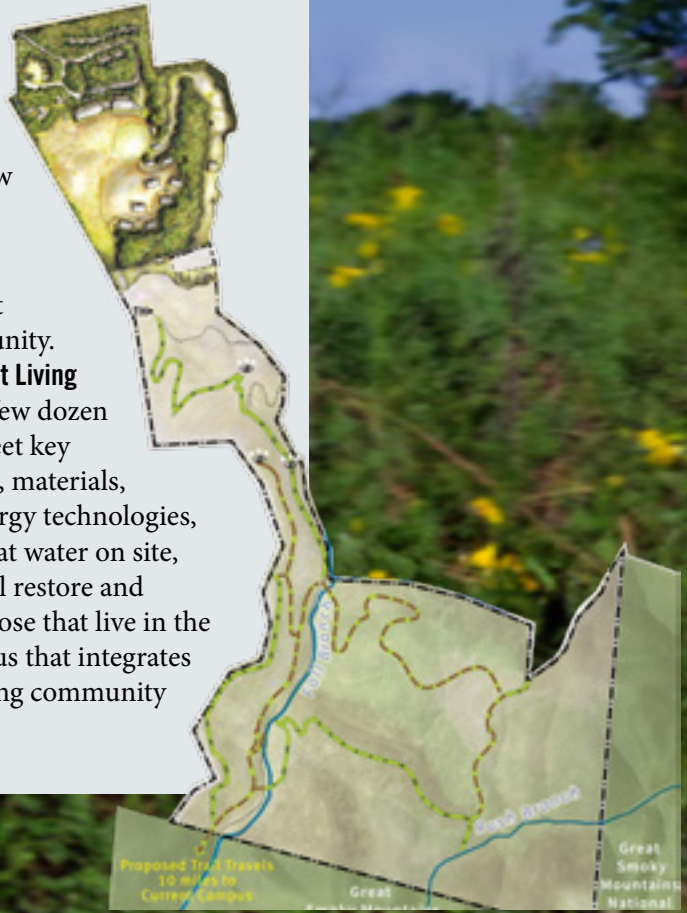


Photo by Nathan Haun

# OUR FUTURE

In 2019, Tremont purchased 194 acres in Townsend, Tennessee, bordering Great Smoky Mountains National Park, increasing our capacity for existing programs and opening pathways for new programs, participants, and partnerships.

On this land, we are building an education center that doesn't just do less bad for the environment but positively impacts the environment and our community. We aim for our second campus to be **Tennessee's first Living Building Challenge certified project** and one of only a few dozen nationwide. To achieve this certification, we will meet key imperatives to promote the responsible use of water, materials, and resources. We will feature innovative, clean energy technologies, generating more electricity than we use. We will treat water on site, putting clean water back into the watershed. We will restore and preserve critical habitat on our land to benefit all those that live in the shadow of the Smokies. Our success will be a campus that integrates built and learning environments to support a thriving community living in balance with the natural world.





## THE JOURNEY AHEAD

Reaching our bold vision will take time, and we are making progress. Starting with Phase One, we have designed indoor and outdoor education spaces to serve daily visitors, overnight school groups, and adult retreats in groups of various sizes. The flexibility allows us to meet the individual needs of each group, providing unique learning opportunities for all.

**In our Keystone Campaign, we seek to raise \$27 million to complete Phase One.** Your support in this campaign will bring our pioneering Phase One designs into reality. We will build a place where people feel greater joy, new awareness, and connection. A place where people live and learn together. A place that is a beacon of hope and inspiration for our region.



## THE EAST TENNESSEE ADVANTAGE

East Tennessee is home to a vibrant and prosperous economy, world-renowned research facilities, nationally-ranked higher education institutions, and our nation's most visited and biodiverse national park. Our region is a collaborative ecosystem rich in innovation, creativity, and forward-thinking practices that seek to pass on a better world to our children. Tremont will meet the moment of our time and join us together in pursuit of a stronger future for all.





## KEY BENEFITS OF THE SECOND CAMPUS

**More students** will participate in experiential programs like those already offered on our campus within the National Park

Youth and adults will benefit from **new day program offerings**, not currently available at Tremont. These provide pathways for workforce development and learning opportunities in sustainability, STEM, green building, ecology, food systems, and more.

New **adult programs** will bring together groups for immersive experiences. Corporate and board retreats, small group gatherings, and others will benefit from a campus designed with workspaces that promote creativity and collaboration, and from facilitated exploration of nearby outdoor areas.

More individuals and schools needing **financial aid** will receive tuition assistance, increasing access to the benefits of time spent in nature.



Total participants (increase from 6,000 to 25,000 per year)



Residential participants (increase from 130 to 228 per night)



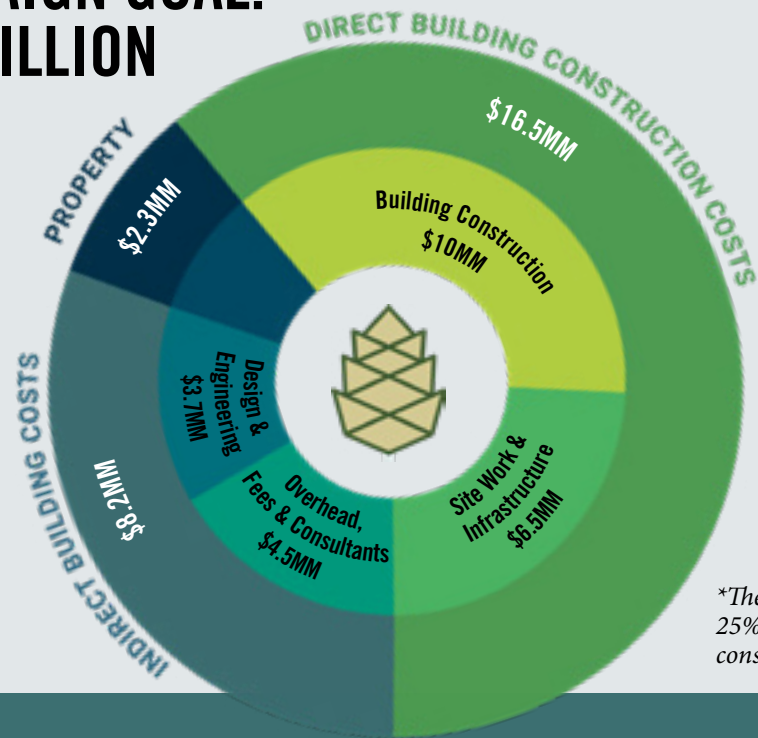
## A Living Campus

The future campus achieves the **Living Building Challenge**, an ambitious set of requirements that promotes the responsible use of resources and materials, while demonstrating sustainable and equitable practices on a net-positive campus.

The Living Building Challenge requires that buildings address seven key focus areas. Hear how our staff connect to these imperatives at [tremontfuture.org/lbc](https://tremontfuture.org/lbc).



# CAMPAIGN GOAL: \$27 MILLION



*\*These estimates include +/- 25% contingencies for design, construction, and estimating.*

## Naming Opportunities

Your investment in this campaign will bring our vision into reality, shaping Tremont's future and, more specifically, our campus. As part of our capital campaign, there will be many ways to honor your support through naming opportunities for buildings, classrooms, gardens, trails, and gathering areas. If you are interested in learning more, please contact us.

## KEYSTONE CAMPAIGN SPECIFICS

As we launch this campaign, our first priority will focus on the design and engineering work and property overhead to ensure our project is shovel ready. The campaign is estimated to take up to five years, and the subsequent funding will enable the construction of buildings and necessary infrastructure.

Campus features include:

- A central gathering building that includes classrooms, a conference space, a commercial kitchen, and a dining hall for 100 people
- Two dorms with 4 rooms that sleep 8 (full occupancy at 64 people)
- Two dorms with 6 rooms that sleep 2 (full occupancy of 24 people)
- Multipurpose open-air structures including a pavilion and Council House
- Maintenance shop
- Staff housing (adaptive reuse of existing brick home with an additional unit)
- Parking, roads, electric vehicle charging stations
- Land improvements for agriculture, forest farming, and recreation
- Water treatment infrastructure for storm and wastewater systems

Explore the full vision for the second campus at [tremontfuture.org/master-plan](http://tremontfuture.org/master-plan).



## Why the "Keystone Campaign?"

A keystone species, like hemlocks and bears in the Smokies, hold ecological significance and impact the success of other species in their ecosystem. Like these species, Tremont will play a pivotal role in our region's thriving relationship between its people and natural resources.





Photo by Erin Rosolina



Photo by Cindy Boling

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*This campaign would not be possible without the support and guidance of Tremont's dedicated Board of Directors.*

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## WAYS TO GIVE

We invite you to be a part of our journey. When you choose to support the Keystone Campaign, you are investing in critical education for our future.

Gifts can be made in a variety of ways:



Online at  
[tremontfuture.org](http://tremontfuture.org)



By check mailed to:  
9275 Tremont Road  
Townsend, TN 37882



Planned gifts  
and bequests



Securities and  
stock transfers



Matching gifts  
through your  
employer

In addition to one-time gifts, we welcome pledges of support that can be given over time.



An architectural rendering of the Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont building. The building features a modern design with dark, gabled roofs and light-colored wood paneling. It is situated in a lush, green landscape with rolling hills and a field of wildflowers in the foreground. The scene is set during a vibrant sunset, with the sun low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the entire scene. The sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds in shades of orange, pink, and blue. The overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

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In partnership with Great Smoky Mountains National Park, our mission is to deliver experiential learning for youth, educators, and adults through programs that promote self-discovery, critical thinking, and effective teaching, and leadership. We believe that education creates lasting positive change for people and our planet.

From our home in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, our research and residential programs investigate the diversity that sustains all life, develop a sense of place, and cultivate a stewardship ethic that will influence lifelong decision-making.