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NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Southern Gap Elk Fest Set for October 24-26

GRUNDY, VA (OCTOBER 3, 2024) – Southern Gap Elk Fest will get underway later this month with three days of events featuring music, mountain games, elk tours, a mountain arts showcase, the traditional Wild Game dinner and more. This year's festival is planned October 24-26, 2024.

Guided elk tours, bonfire storytelling, a mountain arts showcase, an ATV Sasquatch Hunt, mountain games, kids inflatable rides, pond fishing, a petting zoo, axe throwing, hay rides, chain saw carving and blacksmithing demonstrations, pumpkin painting, a pie baking contest, music, a pickin' post and more will be featured during the festival. Coal Canyon will headline the music with opening music by Flat Out Blue at the festival on October 26.

Educational workshops will be offered on wildlife and birding to benefit area seventh grade students, who will be visiting the festival on Friday, October 25, 2024. Workshops on birding, the elk restoration project and more will also be offered Saturday to festival goers.

All of the events will be held at indoor and outdoor locations surrounding the Southern Gap Visitor Center at 1124 Chipping Sparrow Road, Grundy, VA.

Admission to daily festival events is free, however, there are fees for guided elk viewing tours, the ATV Sasquatch Hunt and the wild game dinner. Sign-ups for the elk tours are limited on each of three tours to be offered during the festival and are first come, first serve. The fee is \$10 for the tours planned on Friday, October 25 at 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. and on Saturday, October 26 at 7 a.m. No meal is provided. Pets are not allowed on the tour. Reservations must be made in advance on site at the visitor center or by calling 276-244-1111. Lodging and camping are available on site, as well as in the nearby Town of Grundy.

The overall Elk Fest event is hosted by Buchanan County Tourism, Southern Gap Outdoor Adventure, SWVA Sportsmen's Club and the SWVA Coalfields Chapter of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

Additional sponsors include Noah Horn Well Drilling; the Boys and Girls Club of Central Appalachia; CNX Foundation; Southwest Virginia Professional Insurance; Legacy Bank; the Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce; Spearhead Trails; and the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources. Additional sponsors are still being added.

The festival fun starts Thursday, October 24 with the ever-popular wild game dinner hosted by the Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce. Wild game served will include deer, elk, rabbit and pheasant. Chicken will also be offered with two sides, a bread item and dessert. Wild game dishes available will include deer quesadilla, elk sliders, rabbit stew and roasted pheasant with Alabama White Sauce. Contact the chamber at 276-935-4147 for information on ticket availability. Tickets are limited and are approached sold-out status.

A short auction, organized by the Southwest Virginia Sportsmen's Club, will follow the dinner.

Arts entries will be accepted in the Mountain Arts Showcase, sponsored by Legacy Bank, on Friday, October 25. The showcase will feature the original art of adults and children in painting, photography and miscellaneous arts categories. Entries will be accepted until 5 p.m. on Friday, October 25, with judging taking place Saturday. Festival attendees will have an opportunity to choose a fan favorite by voting throughout the day Saturday – up until 2 p.m. – for their favorite work of art.

Registration for the ATV Sasquatch Hunt on Spearhead Trails' Coal Canyon and Ridgeview Trails will open on October 25 and the hunt will end on Saturday, October 26 at 3 p.m. Registration fee is \$20 per machine. Sasquatch hunting will be allowed during daylight hours Friday when the trail system is open and on Saturday until 3 p.m. Additional details related to the hunt will be released prior to the event. The winner will be announced at Saturday's awards ceremony. You must be present to win.

The Pickin' Post, sponsored by Southwest Virginia Professional Insurance, will be offered Friday, October 25 from 12 noon to 8 p.m. and throughout the day Saturday, October 26. There is no fee to participate or to watch. Any musicians who would like to play are encouraged to come and play.

Bonfire storytelling, sponsored by the CNX Foundation, will begin at 8 p.m. on Friday, October 25. Storytellers may register in advance by emailing info@sgadventures.com and are being sought now.

Food trucks will be on site all day Friday and Saturday. A variety of vendors will also be set up from 12 noon to 8 p.m. both days.

A full day of events will be on tap for Saturday, October 26. A guided elk viewing tour – the final one of the festival – will be offered at 7 a.m. The Sasquatch ATV hunt continues as trails open again at daylight and the hunt continues to 3 p.m. The winner will be drawn later in the day at the 6 p.m. awards ceremony.

The Kids Zone, sponsored by the Boys and Girls Club of Central Appalachia, will also open at 10 a.m. and will remain open until 6 p.m. on Saturday. An inflatable slide, bungee jump, and pumpkin painting are among the activities. Trout fishing will also be available. The Little Critters Travelling Petting Zoo will be open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Chainsaw carving demonstrations by the Mason Dixon Boys, sponsored by Noah Horn Well Drilling, will be offered from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Also from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., 865 Axe Throwing will offer festival goers a chance to test their skills at axe throwing.

Hayrides will be offered at the top of the hour from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday.

A variety of workshops and classes are planned on Saturday and include those on birding; the history of the elk restoration project in Buchanan County; and more to be announced. The workshops will be held in the Southern Gap Visitor Center.

Area cooks entering the pie baking contest are asked to have their pies at the visitor center by no later than 1 p.m. on Saturday. All types of pies are eligible to be entered into the contest. Judging will begin promptly at 1 p.m.

Fan favorite voting in the Mountain Arts Showcase continues until 2 p.m. on Saturday.

In the field beside the visitor center, mountain games including a tug-of-war, a stone toss, egg and spoon race and a three-legged sack race will get underway from 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturday. Cornhole will be available to Elk Fest participants to play throughout the day.

The festival will conclude with an awards ceremony at 6 p.m. on Saturday and entertainment by Coal Canyon and Flat Out Blue. While there is no fee to attend the concert, voluntary donations will be accepted at the door to benefit Elk Fest 2025.

For additional information about Elk Fest, interested persons may call the Southern Gap Visitor Center office at 276-244-1111 or email info@sgadventures.com or call the Buchanan County Tourism Office at 276-312-5033 or email info@WildBuchanan.com to request a vendor application.

For festival updates, follow the elk fest page on Facebook, or log on to sgadventures.com.

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