



**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Media Contact: Matthew Fields -- 276-312-5033**

Southern Gap Elk Fest Set October 13-16

GRUNDY, VA (SEPTEMBER 28, 2021) – The Southern Gap Elk Fest will get underway in two weeks with four days of events featuring music, mountain games, elk tours, a mountain arts showcase and more, planned October 13-16, 2021.

Ralph Stanley II and the Clinch Mountain Boys will headline Saturday night's music at the festival on October 16. The Stanley concert is sponsored by the team of Branch Builds/VMDO Architects/Quesenberry/Terra Tech Engineering.

The festival opens Wednesday, October 13 with an already sold-out Wild Game Dinner sponsored by the Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce.

The overall event is hosted by Buchanan County Tourism, Southern Gap Outdoor Adventure and the Visitor Center, SWVA Sportsmen 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; Branch Builds/VMDO Architects/Quesenberry/Terra Tech Engineering; Coronado Coal; Southwest Virginia Professional Insurance; West River Conveyors and Machinery; Mountaineer Farms; Hillcom; Mountain Suzuki; Legacy Bank; the Woods, Water and Wildlife Foundation; the Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce; and the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.

Guided elk tours, bonfire storytelling, a youth archery tournament, wild game calling demonstrations, a mountain arts showcase, the Great Pumpkin ATV Hunt, mountain games, a petting zoo, a rock wall, an inflatable obstacle course for kids, pond fishing, a BB Gun range, hoverball, chain saw carving, basket weaving, music, an open mic night and more will be featured.

Educational workshops will be offered on beekeeping, photography, birding, basket weaving and more.

All of the events will be held at indoor and outdoor locations surrounding the Southern Gap Visitor Center.

Admission to daily festival events will be free, however, there are fees for guided elk viewing tours, the Stanley concert, the Great Pumpkin ATV Hunt, the Haunted Forest and the wild game dinner. Sign-ups

for the elk tours are limited and are first come, first serve in advance on site at the visitor center beginning Wednesday, October 13 at 9 a.m. and throughout the festival. Lodging and camping are available on site, as well as in the nearby Town of Grundy.

The festival fun starts Wednesday, October 13 with the wild game dinner hosted by the chamber. Dinner attendees will have the opportunity to sample wild game foods including deer, elk, buffalo and pheasant, among other wild game. Additional sides and desserts will also be featured.

A live auction featuring select items will be hosted by the Southwest Virginia Sportsmen on the same night as the dinner. Proceeds benefit the club's habitat management programs.

Thursday, October 14 will feature guided elk viewing tours at 6 a.m. and 5 p.m. Sign-ups continue in the visitor center. Food trucks will be on site all day and a variety of vendors will also be set up from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Also on Thursday, arts entries will be accepted in the Mountain Arts Showcase, sponsored by West River Conveyors and Machinery and Legacy Bank. The showcase will feature the original art of adults and children in painting, photography and miscellaneous arts categories. Entries will be accepted until noon on Friday, October 15, with judging taking place Friday evening.

Registration for the Great Pumpkin ATV Hunt, sponsored by Hillcom, on Spearhead Trails' Coal Canyon and Ridgeview Trails, including Trail 15 to the Breaks Interstate Park will open on October 14 and the hunt will end on Saturday, October 16. Pumpkin hunting will be allowed during the daylight hours when the trail system is open. Participants will find specially marked pumpkins on the trail and will exchange them at the visitor center for a raffle ticket for a one in 11 chance to win. There is a limit of one pumpkin per person. The finder of the specially marked "Great Pumpkin" will receive two raffle tickets. The winner will be announced at Saturday's awards ceremony and you must be present to win.

At 6 p.m. on Thursday, October 14, Open Mic Night, sponsored by Southwest Virginia Professional Insurance, will be held. Participants may register at info@sgadventures.com. There is no fee to participate or to watch. The event will conclude at 9 p.m.

Friday, October 15 events will again feature guided elk tours at 6 a.m. and 5 p.m. The Great Pumpkin ATV hunt trails open again at daylight and the hunt continues to dusk. Vendors will be on site from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

A variety of workshops and classes are planned and include one offered by Mike Roberts, who will return to talk to this year's festival goers about wildlife photography from 1 to 2 p.m. The workshop will be held in the Southern Gap Visitor Center.

A birding seminar gets underway from 2 to 3 p.m. to be followed by a beekeeping seminar from 3 to 4 p.m. A basket weaving classed will be offered from 4 to 5 p.m.

Bonfire storytelling will be held from 8 to 9 p.m. Storytellers may still register by emailing info@sgadventures.com. Stargazing, dependent on weather conditions, will be offered from 9 p.m. to 10 p.m. From 9 to 11 p.m. the Haunted Forest will be offered in the SGOA barn area. Admission will be \$10 and proceeds will benefit the Shop with a Cop program.

A full day of events will be on tap for Saturday, October 16. A guided elk viewing tour – the final one of the festival – will be offered at 6 a.m.

The trails will open at daylight as the Great Pumpkin Hunt continues. The event ends at 3 p.m. and all pumpkins found must be turned in by then. The winner will be drawn later in the day at the 6 p.m. awards ceremony.

Mountain Arts Showcase entries will be on display throughout the day and festival attendees will have an opportunity to choose a fan favorite by voting throughout the day – up until 3 p.m. – for their favorite work of art.

Vendors will be open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

A kids zone will open at 10 a.m. and close at 6 p.m., featuring a rock climbing wall; inflatable rides, sponsored by the Boys & Girls Club of Central Appalachia; Little Critters Petting Zoo; a kids fishing pond, sponsored by Coronado Coal; hoverball; and a BB gun range.

Chainsaw carving demonstrations will be featured throughout the day from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

A youth archery tournament will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Hayrides will be offered from noon to 5 p.m.

In the visitor center, a wild game calling demonstration will be held from 1 to 2 p.m. and at 2 p.m. in the field beside the visitor center, mountain games including a tug-of-war, a stone toss and a three-legged sack race will get underway. Horseshoe pitching and 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 the entertainment by Stanley which begins at 7 p.m. Admission is \$5.

Stanley has had two Grammy nominations on previous albums he recorded with Rebel Records. In 2002, he earned his first Grammy along with his father Dr. Ralph Stanley for their collaboration with Jim Lauderdale on 'Lost in the Lonesome Pines.' Stanley II has proven to be an accomplished songwriter and has six solo albums under his belt, along with the highly acclaimed duet album with his father titled 'Side by Side.'

Star gazing will be held weather dependent from 9 p.m. to 10 p.m. after the concert concludes and the Haunted Forest to benefit the Shop with a Cop program will again be offered from 9 p.m. to 11 p.m., weather dependent.

Arts and crafts vendors are still being accepted. To reserve a 12 foot by 12 foot space, 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 @WildBuchanan or @sogapadventure on Facebook and Instagram, or log onto WildBuchanan.com; or sgadventures.com.

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