



**NEWS RELEASE
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Ralph Stanley II to Headline Southern Gap Elk Fest in October

GRUNDY, VA (JUNE 15, 2021) -- Planning for the Southern Gap Elk Fest is well underway for the event planned October 13-16, 2021. Ralph Stanley II and the Clinch Mountain Boys will headline Saturday night's music at the festival which begins on Wednesday, October 13th with a Wild Game Dinner sponsored by the Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce.

The four-day festival event is hosted by Buchanan County Tourism, the Southern Gap Visitor Center, Southern Gap Outdoor Adventure, SWVA Sportsmen and the SWVA Coalfields Chapter of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, with additional sponsorship from Noah Horn Well Drilling and the Boys and Girls Club of Central Appalachia.

Guided elk tours, bonfire storytelling, 3D archery, turkey calling and elk bugling exhibitions, 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, chain saw carvings, basket weaving, music, an open mic night and more will be featured.

Educational workshops will be offered on beekeeping, photography and wildlife tracks.

All of the events will be held at indoor and outdoor locations surrounding the Southern Gap Visitor Center. Opportunities to sponsor or become involved in the event are available now.

Admission to daily festival events will be free, however, there are fees for guided elk viewing tours, the Stanley concert and the wild game dinner. 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, bear, buffalo and pheasant among other wild game. Additional sides and desserts will also be featured. Last year's event was sold out, so those making plans now to attend should reserve their tickets as soon as they become available later this year. Announcements will be made in the newspaper and on both the Southern Gap Outdoor Adventure and Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce Facebook pages.

A live auction featuring select items will be hosted by the Southwestern Virginia Coalfields Chapter of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation on the same night as the dinner.

Thursday, October 14 will feature guided elk viewing tours. Spaces on the tours must be reserved in advance and once registration is open, tours will be first come, first serve. Food trucks will be on site all day and a variety of vendors will also be set up. Mike Roberts, from the Ward Burton Wildlife Foundation, will return to talk to this year's festival goers about wildlife photography.

Registration for the Great Pumpkin ATV Hunt 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 20 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.

Entries for the Mountain Arts Showcase featuring the original art of adults and children in painting, photography and miscellaneous arts categories will be accepted until noon on Friday, October 15, with judging taking place Friday evening prior to the showcase display on Saturday.

A full day of events will be on tap for Saturday, October 16. Guided elk viewing tours, the Mountain Arts Showcase where festival attendees will have the opportunity to choose a fan favorite by voting throughout the day for their favorite work of art; a Kids Zone area; turkey calling and elk bugling exhibitions; and mountain games including a tug of war skirmish and stone toss will be among the day's offerings.

The festival will conclude with an awards ceremony and the entertainment by Stanley. 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.'

Arts and crafts vendors are now being sought. 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.

Festival sponsors are also being sought. Sponsorship levels include: Elite, \$1,500; Presenting, \$750; Team, \$250; or Friend of Elk Fest 2021, \$100-\$249. For a sponsorship application or additional sponsorship information, the same numbers listed above may be called.

For festival updates, follow [@WildBuchanan](#) or [@sogapadventure](#) on Facebook and Instagram, or log onto WildBuchanan.com; or sgadventures.com.

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