TRAVE

Spend springtime 'On top of Old Smoky'

The sun dapples water rushing over ancient rocks, and white flowering degwood blooms under the green canopy of the forest. It's spring along the Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail in the Great Smoky If you go

Fork Motor Nature Great Smoky Mountains. You can stop many places along the trail and see the scenery from your car - the "motor" trail was designed todo just that. April is a great time to take the day-long drive to the Smoky Moun-tains, America's most-visited national park— more than 10 mil-lion visitors a year lion visitors a year

lien visitors a year make the journey. The park is popular because of its wild countryside and because it is game.com within a day drive of about two-thirds of the U. S. population.

Most travelers from Michigan would go down 1-75 to Knoxville, over 1-40 and down Tennessee 441 into Pigeon Forge.

Forge.

Pigeon Forge has boomed since
the advent of Dollywood; country
singer Dolly Parton usually
opens the spring and summer
season with a dinnertime parade

season with a dinnertime parade down the main parkway in Pigeon Forge.

Many tourists are forsaking the crowded town of Gatlinburg and staying in one of Pigeon Forge's 8,000 motel rooms.

Along Little River Road and out to the dramatic Sinks you can fish or pienic, hike, or watch for kayakers.

Beyond lies Cades Cove, a huge valley surrounded by the mountains; the one-way loop takes you past an old church and pioneer farms and grazing herds of deer. On the way there you might be lucky consult to see one

of deer. On the way there you might be lucky enough to see one of the park's 600 black bears.

Traversing the park by car doesn't take long; the drive from Gatlinburg to Cherokee takes about an hour or so, longer if you make the side-trip over to Clingman's Dome to see the highest point in the park. There, too, you will see extensive insect damage to the trees.

to the trees.

Much of the park is wilderness and hiking trails. Earthwalk Press's topo map is one of the best for getting around, and has great detail on park animals and blooming times for flowers.

conservation Web site is very helpful: npca.org. Other Web sites m rodsguide.com, a very good private site that has details on lodging and the park as well.

Another site, alithesmakles.com, is good because it links to dozens and dozens of

her sites.

The train ride site Ine train not site is gamr.com.
For places to stay try the Fairfield, the Holiday inn Express or Music Road Hotel, which has a quiet loca-tion and nice pool and

One worthwhile fun thing to do in the evening is to take in the dinner and show at the Dixie Stampede in Pigeon Forge. You are served a basic menl by a highly efficient staff, and at the same time treated to a horse

nservation osites easily and at the same time treated to a horse show, complote with trick riding and buckboard races. If you enjoy sophistication this might not be for you; but if you enjoy all-American entertain ment with a country flavour and a friendly North and South "com petition" thrown in, then ther site, ileas.com, is selt links to dozens of dozens of dozens of dozens of the park include the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue did the town of Cherokee, and their casino, the start of the Blue

Environmental threats

"Air pollution continues to be the biggest threat that the park and its visitors face, but a series of development issues along with inadequate funding are also

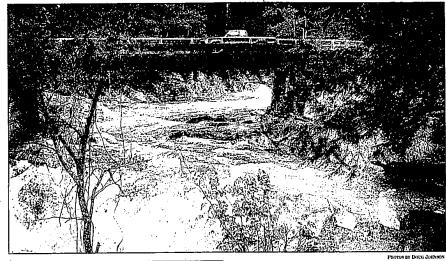
of development issues along with inadequate funding are also putting park resources at risk, said Greg Kidd, NPCA's Southeast associate director.

Coal-fired power plants are the largest source of emissions affecting the park. Ten years ago, the Department of Interior asked both Tennessee and North Carolina to examine new sources of air pollution since the park was greatly threatened by haze, smog, and acid deposits, according to a recent NPCA press release.

The park is nearly 70 years old, a legacy of both local citizons working to raise money, and John D. Rockefeller, who gave \$6 million to the cause.

million to the cause.

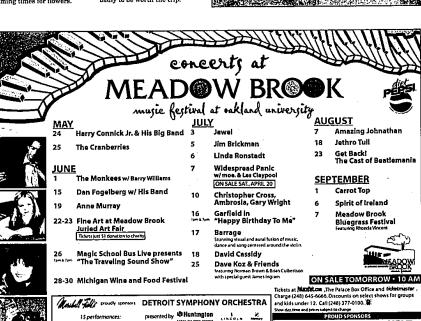
It might be a good idea to visit the park sooner rather than later, before it is damaged too badly to be worth the trip.



rushing water known as The Sinks (above) while the motor trail (below left) gives a close-up view of plenty of mountain streams, both big and small.Kayakers (below) love springtime in the Smokies because of the



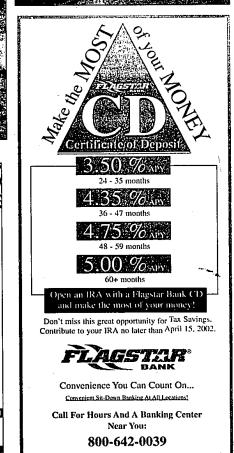




July 12-14; July 19-21; July 26-28; August 2-4; August 9-1.1

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