

In the spring of 1775, Daniel Boone and thirty axmen hacked a footpath from Long Island (in present-day Kingsport) through the rugged mountains of Scott and Lee Counties to Cumberland Gap. During the next twenty years, over 200,000 people followed their dreams along that narrow footpath to Kentucky, opening the door to the American West. That path is known today as The Wilderness Trail.

This goal of this Institute is to rediscover that Trail by offering to educators the opportunity to "travel it" again with new understanding. Providing on-site, hands-on learning opportunities for area teachers, this course will offer a cross-curricular perspective by exploring the challenges encountered by these early pioneers to the frontier of Southwestern Virginia and by the native peoples who fought to protect their homeland from encroachment by European settlers. What did the forest look like in 1775? What wildlife flourished there that is now extinct? How did astronomy, physics, and mathematics figure into their everyday survival? How did these travelers make their clothes and prepare or preserve their food? And what is the significance of the letters and journals they left behind to chronicle their lives? These are just a few of the questions this Institute will seek to address.

Time and Place

The Institute will meet on Tuesday nights from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Cove Ridge Center at Natural Tunnel State Park from February 9 to April 27, 2010. In addition, participants will be required to attend two day-long Saturday classes on March 20 and April 10. Instructors for this course will include MECC staff, expert guest speakers, and first person historical re-enactors.

Class Requirements

Participants are required to attend all classes, including Saturday field trips, and to maintain reflective journal entries on each week's presentation. In addition, each participant will be required to complete an independent research project on some aspect of the Wilderness Trail, resulting in an SOL-compliant lesson plan that could be used in his or her own classroom. These lesson plans will be presented to the other participants during the last two classes of the Institute.

Registration

Enrollment in this Institute is limited and will be offered on a first come, first served basis. Please note that here are *two* steps in the registration process. 1) Participants must first reserve a place in the class by calling Megan France at Natural Tunnel State Park (276-940-1643) or by emailing her at megan.france@dcr.virginia.gov. 2) All participants must also register online or in person at Mountain Empire Community College between February 1 and February 8, 2010.

Credit and Tuition

Participants who complete the course requirements will receive three hours of recertification credit. Teachers in Lee County and the City of Norton who take this course have been pre-approved for recertification in any curricular area. Wise County teachers have been pre-approved for recertification in English and History only. Scott County teachers should check with their superintendant for approval.

Tuition for a three-hour course at Mountain Empire Community College is \$495. Participants should check with their individual school boards about reimbursement possibilities.