

"Alum Cave Trail has so many unique natural and historic features," said Trails Supervisor Tobias Miller. "Our crew is working alongside the park's cultural and natural resource managers as we plan the restoration to insure that features are protected as we improve trail durability and safety."

Hikers can still reach Mt. Le Conte, LeConte Lodge, and the Le Conte Shelter by using one of the other five trails to the summit. The Mt. LeConte Lodge and Mt. Le Conte backcountry shelter will remain open and can be accessed from any of these other routes during the Alum Cave Trail closure. The Boulevard, Bull Head, Rainbow Falls, Trillium Gap, and Brushy Mountain trails all lead to Mt. Le Conte, but trailhead parking is limited. Carpooling is encouraged. Day hikers should also consider enjoying other trails offering stunning views such as Chimney Tops Trail, Forney Ridge Trail to Andrews Bald, or the Appalachian Trail from Newfound Gap to Charlies Bunion.

Trails Forever is a partnership program between Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Friends of the Smokies. The Friends have donated \$500,000 to support the program, in part through the generosity of the Knoxville based Aslan Foundation. The Trails Forever program provides the opportunity for a highly skilled trail crew to focus reconstruction efforts on high use and high priority trails in the park including the recently restored Chimney Tops Trail and Forney Ridge Trail. The program also provides a mechanism for volunteers to work alongside the trail crew on these complex trail projects to assist in making lasting improvements to preserve the trails for future generations.

For more information about the Alum Cave Trail closure, please visit <http://www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/alum-cave-closure-faqs.htm> where you can find answers to frequently asked questions and updates on the trail restoration.