

NEWS RELEASE

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**Haywood TDA & Town of Maggie Valley Announce
Inaugural Smoky Mountain Elk Fest**

Maggie Valley, NC – The Haywood County Tourism Development Authority (HCTDA) and the Town of Maggie Valley are proud to announce that the newly created Smoky Mountain Elk Fest will take place September 13th – 15th, 2019 at the Maggie Valley Festival Grounds.

The creation of an event to celebrate the reintroduction of the Elk to the Great Smoky Mountains has been discussed for years and has finally come to be. The Smoky Mountain Elk Fest will be a family-friendly event with a focus on conservation of the elk and the elk habitat. The Festival will also feature activities such as educational hikes, elk tours, creekside demonstrations, kids' activities, wildlife artists and crafts, cultural performances and plenty of great food and music.

Tom Berry, a Commissioner of the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, has a keen interest in seeing to the growth and protection of the now increasing elk population. Mr. Berry stated that with the growth and expansion of the elk herd come interaction issues, like being where they are not wanted. The elk need protection and this event is a way to raise awareness and funds to help with these issues.



The Smoky Mountain Elk Fest has garnered the support of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, The Conservation Fund, the Maggie Valley Sanitary District, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians, the National Parks Conservation Association and the Maggie Valley Chamber of Commerce.

A portion of the net proceeds from the Smoky Mountain Elk Fest will be used to support projects that benefit elk management and habitats within Haywood County and the Qualla Boundary.

For more information on the Smoky Mountain Elk Fest go to www.smokymtnelkfest.com.

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Welcome to Haywood County, North Carolina, boasting 46 of the most scenic miles of the Blue Ridge Parkway and authentic Appalachian history, culture, and natural experiences. Along with its picturesque beauty, Haywood County and its five towns of Maggie Valley, Waynesville, Lake Junaluska, Canton and Clyde offer year-round activities and events centered around farm fresh food, unique heritage, an eclectic music and art scene, and of course, the wildly natural great outdoors. No matter what experience you choose, we guarantee that your stay here will stay with you! For more information visit www.visitncsmokies.com or contact the Haywood County Tourism Development Authority at 800-334-9036