



©Lynda Richardson/DGIF

2018 VOWA FALL ELK TOUR – September 28 & 29, 2018

Excitement is in the air, or maybe it's the bugling I hear, but we've got an exciting trip lined up for the membership this fall — a tour in southwestern Virginia to view the state's growing elk herd

DATES: Sept 28-29, 2018 (rooms available on 27th and 30th too)

BOOK NOW to reserve your spot on the elk tour and get your room reservations!!! For reservations call: (276) 865-4413 X3201. When you make your reservations tell them you are with the VOWA elk tour visit. I arranged this with Vicki Swiney at Breaks Interstate Park (yswiney@breakspark.com). If you have any problems, Vicki's number is: 276-865-4413 X3203. Make sure to book the elk tours with your rooms to guarantee a seat as the tours fill up fast!

When you call to reserve a room, mention you are a VOWA member. This will put you in one of two lodges with 12 rooms each, **Hemlock** and **Golden Rod**. These lodges are close to the restaurant. The restaurant will be open! I believe the reservationist will fill one lodge with VOWA members first and then work on the second as more people call in to book rooms. The majority of rooms have two double beds but there are two rooms with a king. Each room has a coffee maker and refrigerator but no microwave. **NO SMOKING** in these rooms but the Dogwood Lodge a little ways down the hill has smoking rooms. Smokers should obviously request those rooms. All rooms are \$79.95 per night. Please pay when you make your reservation. There is a 10% discount for military personnel, anyone with an AAA membership, and/or if you are 62 or older. Again, members should make sure they mention they are VOWA members and should request one of these lodges, how many nights they want to stay, and if they want to book a Friday and/or Saturday elk tour then as well. That way you can pay for everything in one charge. There are also camping opportunities and cabins on the lake are available.

Elk tours gather and prepare to leave the park by 4:45 on Friday and Saturday. The Saturday elk tour is almost totally booked as of today and there is only one per

day. (Elk tours are only on Friday and Saturday) The elk tour is \$30.00 per person and includes a bagged lunch such as a chicken salad crescent sandwich, apple, chips, chocolate chip cookie, and bottle of water. I am guessing you can request something different, if needed, or you could bring your own drink. There are picnic tables at the elk site on top of the “mesa” as well as Port-O-Johns. It takes 30 minutes to reach the site and the tour is 3 hours. Travel is by school bus but there will be opportunities for photography and every tour has seen elk though it isn’t guaranteed. Other wildlife includes deer, coyotes, foxes, cottontails, and various bird species. There will be a guide for each trip. It is suggested to wear dark colored clothing and no perfume or cologne. Do not plan to take any flash photos either. **DO NOT FORGET TO BRING YOUR CAMERAS, LONG LENSES, AND/OR BINOCULARS!!!**

Since the bus only holds 32 people I would highly suggest booking seats when one books a hotel room. There are many other activities as well such as a zip line over the rim of the “Grand Canyon of the South” from 10AM to 5PM Wed-Sunday. Check out their website for further information: <http://www.breakspark.com/>

IN ADDITION:

On Saturday, Sept 29, we have a planned lunch time gathering and two programs in the banquet room next to the restaurant at the lodge. The room will be open at 11:30 AM to 2:30 PM and you can bring your lunch into the room to eat and listen to the speakers. I encourage folks to eat lunch before the speakers begin to keep disruptions to a minimum. You can buy from the restaurant or bring your own lunch. Our speakers will be David Kalb, Elk Project Leader for DGIF, (12:30 - 1:30) and Leon Boyd, DGIF Board member and elk advocate who worked with the local community and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation to facilitate bringing elk to Virginia (1:45 - 2:30.) This should be a great program making for some great stories! And... elk viewing in the evening for photographs to accompany your story.

I can hear those elk bugling now!!! Enjoy! Lynda