

Heart of Appalachia region

UNPLUG With lodging options ranging from lakefront cabins to lodge rooms to yurts, **Breaks Interstate Park** is ready and waiting to help groups unplug from the day-to-day stresses of life. Mixing nature and relaxation with adrenaline and awe, the park offers hiking, paddling, zip lining and views that earned it the nickname "Grand Canyon of the South."

EXPERIENCE During the spring and fall months, **Southern Gap Outdoor Adventure's elk viewing tours** have a 100% success rate. Part of a restoration project, the herd tends to stay around the prime habitat they were re-introduced to. Enjoy the included box dinner at sunset, overlooking the mountains in the distance.

CONQUER Bring your own car or motorcycle or rent a Polaris Slingshot from **Back of the Dragon Welcome Center** or **Trailhead Resort** and take on the 235 curves that make up the Back of the Dragon. For the thrill seekers and the young at heart alike, the 32-mile scenic route attracts drivers and riders from all over the world.

TAKE IT EASY A valley that lies at an impressive 3,074 feet in elevation, **Burke's Garden** lies in a massive bowl that has collapsed in on itself over time. Here, groups will find a slower pace. Horse-drawn buggies are often spotted on the country road that winds through the rolling farmland that makes up the garden. At **Mattie's Place**, visitors are treated to baked goods and sandwiches piled onto homemade bread. After a meal like that, tourgoers may wish to rent a bike to enjoy a slow journey through the picturesque countryside.

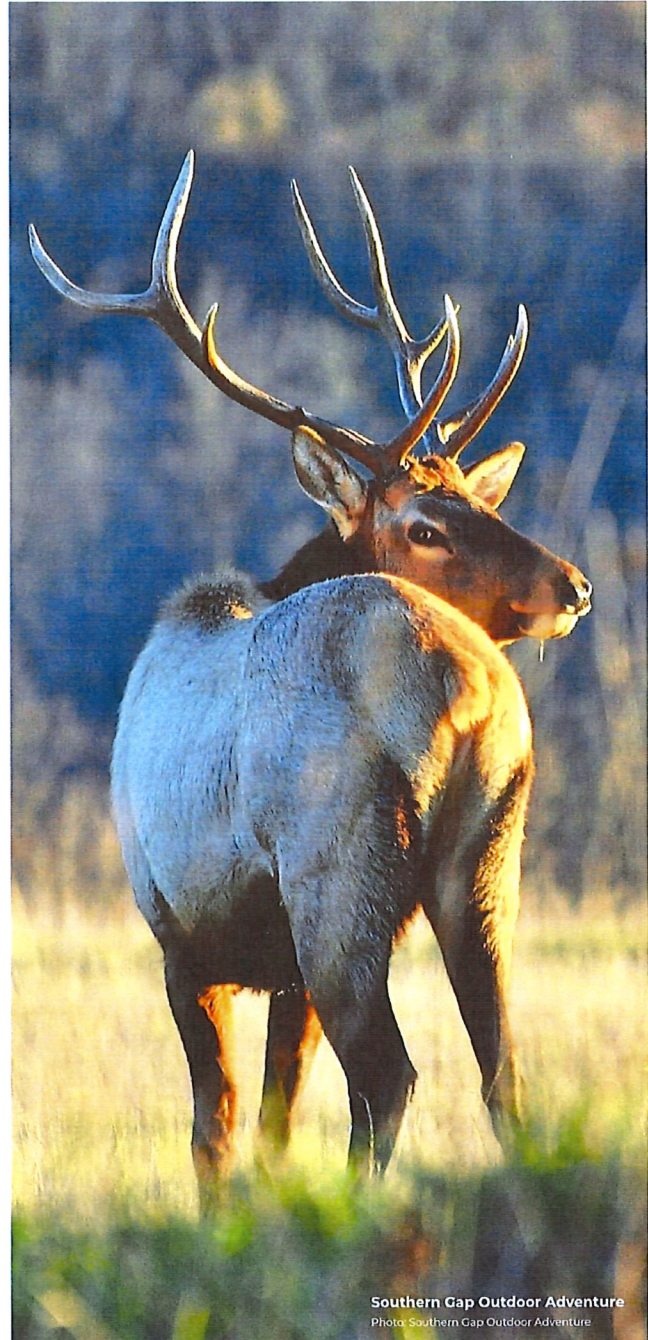
EXPLORE The **Pocahontas Exhibition Mine** is open for tours seasonally. While touring this authentic coal mine, groups will stroll about half a mile at a leisurely pace while hearing the stories of days gone by and admiring the various fossils on the ceiling of the mine. Recently opened and serving up menu items such as the "Coal Dust Cheesecake" is the **Ole No. 3 Restaurant and Bar**.

ASK

Heart of Appalachia Tourism Authority

276-762-0011

heartofappalachia.com



Southern Gap Outdoor Adventure
Photo: Southern Gap Outdoor Adventure



SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

Blue Ridge Highlands and Heart of Appalachia

Bristol

State Street in downtown Bristol is the state line between Tennessee and Virginia. Brass markers with “Tennessee” on one side and “Virginia” on the other side are set in the center of the street in the downtown. Tour the Birthplace of Country Music Museum. Other must-see downtown attractions are the Bristol Train Station, the Paramount Center for the Arts, the NASCAR and Country Music murals, the Veterans War Memorial in Cumberland Park and the “A Good Place to Live” sign. A variety of shops and restaurants are also part of the downtown scene. Bristol Motor Speedway, known as The Last Great Colosseum, is a world-famous half-mile NASCAR racetrack. At press time, track tours were not available.

discoverbristol.org



Paramount Center for the Arts
Photo: Virginia Tourism Corporation (Virginia.org)/Sarah Hauser

Big Stone Gap

Novelist John Fox Jr. immortalized Big Stone Gap — his hometown — in his 1908 novel *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*. In the summer, the Trail of the Lonesome Pine Outdoor Drama is produced in Big Stone Gap. See the early days of the coal boom and bust come to life. Delve deeper into coal mining history at the Harry W. Meador Coal Museum. Tour the historic home of Fox, the June Tolliver House, the 101 Historic Traincar and the Lonesome Pine School and Heritage Museum.

For stunning views, head to the Powell Valley Scenic Overlook to see the entire valley that houses Big Stone Gap. Author Adriana Trigiani grew up in Big Stone Gap in the 1970s and wrote and directed the 2015 movie adaptation of her novel *Big Stone Gap*. The movie was filmed entirely on location in Big Stone Gap. Check out filming sites around town and in the visitor center, sit in the booths where the diner scenes were filmed.

276-523-2303, bigstonegap.com



Powell Valley Overlook
Photo: Virginia Tourism Corporation (Virginia.org)/Kyle La Ferriere