

## ANIMAL BIRTHDAY PARTY JUNE 13 AT GRANDFATHER MOUNTAIN

Written by Landis Wofford, Grandfather Mountain  
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June 13 marks a special day at Grandfather Mountain. The Grandfather habitat staff has prepared a birthday celebration for the animals, providing programs and games for the Mountain's guests as well as birthday treats for Grandfather's furry and feathered residents. "The Animal Birthday Party is an opportunity to celebrate all the animals' birthdays at once," said Animal Habitats Manager Christie Tipton. "We all love the animals and want to give them a well-deserved special day."

The habitat staff has planned a full day of activities on the Mountain. Children can make a birthday card for the animals, which will be put on display in the underwater viewing area of the otter habitat. There will be games, prizes and the opportunity to receive a free slice of birthday cake for all who attend. Guests will also get the opportunity to test their knowledge about all the species of animals at Grandfather Mountain for prizes at the Nature Museum.

Grandfather will offer a Behind the Scenes Tour from 10:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. at a special rate of \$20 per person. Tour participants will get to see where the cougars and otters sleep overnight, meet black bears that are not commonly on display, learn the ins and outs of what it takes to care for the animals year-round, observe a training session and learn why the animals call Grandfather Mountain home. Participants must wear closed-toe shoes and can make a reservation in advance by calling 828-733-8715 or register on June 13 in the Museum Gift Shop.

At 12:30 p.m., guests are invited meet in front of the Fudge Shop for an Owl Encounter. During the program, the Mountain's knowledgeable Naturalist staff displays live screech and a barred owls, discussing each specific owl as well the natural tendencies that make these two birds unique.

Many of the animals that are brought to Grandfather are rescues that can no longer survive in the wilderness. The oldest is Morely, the golden eagle. Morely is more than 30 years old and has lived at Grandfather Mountain since 1984. The youngest is Luna the two-year-old otter who arrived at the Mountain in November 2011. The Mountain's wildlife habitats are home to black bears, otters, cougars, deer and a golden eagle.

The final scheduled activity of the Animal Birthday is at 2:15 p.m. when the habitat animals receive enrichments.

"The animals will get a very special treat that they don't commonly get, something they really enjoy," said Tipton. "This year is the first year we are actually letting children help decorate the enrichments before going around and watching the animals get them."

All birthday party events, except the Behind the Scenes Tour, are included in regular park admission. A full schedule of the day's activities can be found at [www.grandfather.com](http://www.grandfather.com)

The Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation is a not-for-profit corporation established to preserve Grandfather Mountain, operate the nature park sustainably in the public interest,

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provide an exceptional experience for guests, and inspire them to be good stewards of the earth's resources. For more information, visit [www.grandfather.com](http://www.grandfather.com) or call 800-468-7325.