

The North Carolina Arboretum Explores the Mysteries of Darkness as Part of New *In the Dark* Exhibit, Open January 26 – May 12

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (December 31, 2018) – The North Carolina Arboretum, a 434-acre public garden located just south of Asheville, will uncover the mysteries of the dark as part of its new exhibit, *In the Dark*, open daily beginning Saturday, January 26, through Sunday, May 12, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. inside the Baker Exhibit Center. Developed by the Cincinnati Museum Center, this interactive traveling exhibit delves into dark environments and the unique ways that animals, plants and humans adapt to areas with little to no light.

From a forest diorama of the Great Smoky Mountains to a re-creation of a Kentucky limestone cave, *In the Dark* features five immersive zones that enable visitors to experience the darkness of many unseen worlds. Through mechanical displays, life-size animal models and informational panels, families will learn and uncover what thrives beneath the soil, under the sea, in the shadows of the night and within other dark settings.

“We really wanted to shed ‘light’ on a subject that can often be overlooked and unseen,” shared Clara Curtis, senior director for mission delivery at The North Carolina Arboretum. “This exhibit really gives visitors a chance to immerse themselves into the sights, sounds, smells and sensations of several dark ecosystems, while learning about the science and history of darkness in our natural world.”

As part of the exhibit, visitors can crawl inside a giant bat head, experience life as a termite, explore the worlds of bobcats, skunks and cicadas, as well as learn how birds and bats find their way flying at night. “There is really something for everyone to discover in this exhibit,” continued Curtis.

As part of the exhibit, the Arboretum will host several evening events for its members and guests, including:

- **Owl Prowl, Saturday, February 23, 6 – 8 p.m.**
Learn about these amazing creatures of the night and prowl through the woods while discovering owls' habitats, behaviors and language. This family-friendly event will feature hands-on activities, including an owl pellet dissection, nighttime guided hikes through the Arboretum property, educational programming and a live owl presentation.
- **Bat & Moth Party, Saturday, April 13, 8 - 11 p.m.**
Stay up late for science! Learn how to use a special "bat detector" to hear and identify the high-frequency sounds bats emit while they echolocate their prey. See how black lights can attract moths and other nocturnal insects. At 9 p.m., adults are invited to attend a special presentation to learn how to create a “mothing” set-up, as well as the general taxonomy of moths and other nocturnal insects, before heading outside to view these organisms.
- **What Goes HOP in the Night!, Friday, May 10, 8 - 10 p.m.**
Visitors will discover which amphibians are more active at night, while also enjoying local brews and tasty treats. Open to adults and children, this fun “HOPportunity” will showcase how to identify frogs by their nocturnal sounds, as well as offer animal demonstrations with different frog and salamander species. A guided evening hike through the Arboretum will focus on the sounds of gray treefrogs and other species.

All evening events for *In the Dark* are free, however, online registration is required and standard non-member parking fees apply. A five-dollar per person suggested donation is welcomed and will help support The North Carolina Arboretum Society. Children must be accompanied by an adult during all activities. For more information on *In the Dark*, please visit www.ncarboretum.org.

The North Carolina Arboretum is located off the Blue Ridge Parkway at Milepost 393. From I-26, take Exit 33 and follow Blue Ridge Parkway signs for two miles to the entrance ramp. Please visit www.ncarboretum.org for parking fees and hours of operation.

Exhibit support for In the Dark is provided in part by The North Carolina Arboretum Society, Asheville Citizen-Times, Gasperson Moving & Storage, Hilton Asheville Biltmore Park, RomanticAsheville.com Travel Guide and Smoky Mountain Living Magazine.

About The North Carolina Arboretum

Each year more than 500,000 visitors experience the Arboretum's gardens, trails, exhibits and plant shows, educational programs, demonstrations and lectures. The Arboretum's ability to meet its mission and enrich the visitor experience is made possible by a community of supporting resources – from members, volunteers and staff to state and local funds, tribute gifts, grants and community partners.

The central mission of The North Carolina Arboretum, an affiliate institution of the 17-campus University of North Carolina System, is to cultivate connections between people, plants and places. A standard \$14 per vehicle parking fee is required for non-members. Special events and after-hours activities may require additional fees. For more information, please call (828) 665-2492 or visit www.ncarboretum.org.

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