

RALEIGH, N.C. — The glories of autumn are timeless. Brilliant foliage, crisp mornings and brilliant blue skies make the season a treasured time for travelers to immerse themselves in its beauty. Those who journey to [North Carolina](#) to revel, reflect or refresh their spirits can amplify the experience with these new dimensions of fall.

Take in the colors of the Appalachian Mural Trail

Beyond the arresting views of the overlooks, the Blue Ridge Parkway links dozens of vibrant murals and outdoor murals. The new Appalachian Mural Trail guides leaf peepers and color seekers to cultural treasures depicting history, heritage, music and legends in a dozen counties. The murals are mapped at www.muraltrail.com, which also posts a selection of selfies.

Hit the new Fire Mountain Trails in Cherokee

From the trailhead near the Oconaluftee Indian Village, bikers and hikers can head out on a new 10.5-mile trail system in the Great Smoky Mountains. Color-coded for different skill levels, the Fire Mountain Trails offer single-track and wider sections, berms, rock gardens, solid climbs and downhill runs. [Bryson City outfitters](#) have bikes for rent. visitcherokeenc.com

Toast craft beverage at State Fair public house

For the first time, visitors to the N.C. State Fair will be able to purchase flights of beer and wine. At the new Our State Public House, award-winning pours from 40 breweries and 40 wineries will be available. The new attraction is sponsored by Our State magazine in partnership with the North Carolina Craft Brewers Guild and the North Carolina Wine and Grape Council. The fair runs Oct. 12-22. www.ncstatefair.org

Watch the whirligigs spin in Wilson

After years of fund-raising, restoration and landscaping, the Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park celebrates its grand opening Nov. 4-5 during the North Carolina Whirligig Festival. Work on the 2-acre park, the new home for 31 of Simpson's wind-driven sculptures, began before the artist's death in 2013. Let your gaze follow the whirligigs as reach to the sky and catch the gleam from the meticulously placed reflectors. www.wilsonwhirligigpark.org, whirligigfestivalnc.org

Pick a pumpkin at 50th annual art and pottery show

Prepare to be dazzled at Cedar Creek Gallery in Creedmoor. Start with the Glass and Pottery Pumpkin Patch and continue to Joyce Fritz's insect-inspired jewelry. Over two weekends (Oct. 6-8 and Oct. 14-15), artists will demonstrate glassblowing, woodturning, metalsmithing, raku firing and pottery making. Music and food trucks complete the picture. www.cedarcreekgallery.com

Race a woolly worm at 40th annual festival

Woolly worms report for duty near the foliage peak in Banner Elk. Celebrants at the 40th annual Woolly Worm Festival will choose a fuzzy caterpillar to race up a string. The width of the winning woolly worm's rust-colored stripes will foretell the severity of the coming winter. Other festive activities will unfold against the scenic mountain backdrop at the Oct. 21-22

event. www.WoollyWorm.com

Site the kites at 30th annual coastal event

Dragons, sky skimmers and quad line kites will rise in mass ascensions at the 30th annual Carolina Kite Festival, which unfolds Oct. 28-29 at Atlantic Beach. Candy drops, kite building for kids and team flying are part of the festivities. birdsandkites.com

For more information and inspiration, head to VisitNC.com.

###

CONTACT:

Eleanor Talley
919-447-7783
eleanor.talley@VisitNC.com

Stacey McCray
704-552-6565
mccray@lgaadv.com

<https://media.visitnc.com/2017-09-22-New-Elements-Anniversaries-Heighten-Fall-Fun>