

bri

INSIDER

What to bring, what
to expect, and what
to do while at BRI.



Unicoi State Park
Helen, Georgia



What to Bring

Whether you're an over-packer or an under-packer, a few essentials for a more comfortable week at BRI many include the following (some will be dependant on if you are flying or driving):

- Sunscreen and bug spray
- Camp/Folding chair for sitting at the Picnic & around the fire pit
- Umbrella, just in case
- Bathing suit and water shoes, if you plan on tubing in Helen or other water activities at Unicoi Lake
- Cash for activity fees, silent auction, giving bushes, cash bar, and BRI merchandise
- Food you can't live without (i.e. specialty coffee, dairy free creamers, alcohol, chocolate, kale, artisanal cheese, bubbly water, etc.).
 - Reminder: the conference includes only 2 meals . Unicoi does have a restaurant and a small Tavern on-site but consider bringing additional food for breakfasts, lunches, snacks if you'd like some variety.
 - Helen is also just a short drive away for dining and grocery options, if you want to stop on your way into the park.
- Comfortable clothes (we're a casual group)
 - Many Ridgers pack business casual wear for the General Sessions and casual or athletic wear for the afternoon activities.
 - Average temperature in Helen during July is upper 80's in the day and upper 60's overnight
- Comfortable shoes - there is a fair amount of walking between sessions, activities, and lodging.
- A jacket or sweater for cold conference rooms.
- Your own bath and hair products.
- Refillable water bottle and travel coffee mug
- An iron - If you must, bring one with you.
- Themed attire for the President's Ball (NOT required, but highly encouraged) for dinner and dancing.
 - Black and/or white festive, fancy party attire for this New Year's Eve style "Party Like It's 99!" event.

Find the Helpers!

If you need support or have questions during the BRI experience, here are some options:

- **If you have food allergies or specific requests or would like to request any other accommodations, please:**

- Email us before the conference: info@blueridgeleaders.org
- Alert us at Check-in
- Connect with our Logistics Coordinator Allison Gant on-site
- Request support from the Unicoi food service staff

- **If you need medical attention:**

BRI Check-in table has access to first-aid kit; contacts for Unicoi first-responders (AED, CPR)

- **Northeast Georgia Physicians Group Urgent Care**

About 15 minutes away

Location: 2578 Helen Highway, Cleveland, GA ; phone: [706-348-4280](tel:706-348-4280)

Hours 8 AM to 7:45 PM

- **Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) – Gainesville:**

The nearest major, full-service regional hospital is about 30 miles south of Helen.
Location: 743 Spring St NE, Gainesville, GA

- **Other support during the Institute:**

- Seek out anyone with a Board Member ribbon on their name tag and ASK
- Seek out our Logistics Coordinator (Allison Gant)
- Use the GroupMe app to ask for carpools to the grocery, fridge space to share from any of the cabin dwellers, find folks to have a meal with, wrangle a group to go zip lining, seek a small group discussion about handling a runaway Board Chair - anything you'd like!



What to Expect

As a nearly 100 year-old organization, BRI has some unique traditions that carry us through our time together.

Networking & Sharing

Intentional time before the General Sessions to visit and connect, a Talent Show on the most welcoming stage in the world, The BRI News which may (or may not) report the facts, maybe some huggin, definately some singing and a tremendous dose of joy!

The Red Shawl and Song

BRI has a tradition of singing a song at the conclusion of each gathering. This tradition still continues today.

*Oh, that little ole red shawl.
That little ole red shawl.
That little ole red shawl my mother wore. It
was tattered, it was torn.
It showed signs of being worn.
That little ole red shawl my mother wore.*

BRI Salutation

BRI has an official call and response used by members. We use this during official gatherings to greet each other individually or as a crowd attention getter. This is a way to identify "Ridgers" to each other when in any setting.

Greeting: Hi-De-Hi!

Response: Ho-De-Ho!



Freshperson Cohorts

First-time attendees are gathered into a cohort called Freshpersons.

These folks are Freshpersons for the length of the conference. Freshpersons complete service tasks throughout the conference week as a way to get to know other members. The cohort completes a skit for the annual talent show as a bonding ritual. At the conclusion of the conference, Freshpersons graduate to become full members of the BRI.

Fundraising

During the Institute, you will have the chance to support our mission through fundraising efforts that could include our Annual Silent Auction, daily Giving Bushes, a Wine Pull at the Ball and/or our participation in our Sustaining Donor Program. These gifts allow BRI to operate year-round and underwrite our Scholarship Program.





What To Do

In addition to the morning learning sessions, thought-providing speakers and other professional development opportunities, there are many optional renewal activities offering a refreshing change from our usual everyday routines. Almost all of the activities are open to everyone including BRIGs (BRI families and guests). Activities are a great way for Ridgers to connect with one another outside of the more formal sessions - laughing, playing, competing, and celebrating together.

BRI coordinated activities are noted in the conference booklet along with times, contacts, and any additional fees required for participation.

There are some things you can bring to participate in BRI coordinated activities.

- Props, musical instruments, etc. for your Talent Show performance or just sitting around the fire pit strumming at BRI After Dark.
- Hiking shoes, water shoes/bathing suit
- CASH, checkbook, or credit card to pay for participation in activities.

If you still have questions, contact us at info@blueridgeleaders.org.