



Nantahala Outdoor Center to Host Annual Guest Appreciation Festival with a Spooky Twist!

Bryson City, NC – October 22, 2025 – Nantahala Outdoor Center (NOC) invites guests to celebrate the end of the adventure season at its **Guest Appreciation Festival (GAF)**, taking place **October 24 at 11 AM through October 26 at 8 PM**.



Photo Courtesy of NOC

For more than 30 years, GAF has been a can't-miss mountain tradition bringing together paddlers, outdoor enthusiasts, and local makers for a weekend of adventure, community, and unbeatable deals. This year's edition adds a haunted twist, with spooky fun, eerie décor, and plenty of ways to celebrate Halloween, NOC-style.

Weekend Highlights
Used Gear Market

Friday 2–7 PM | Saturday 9 AM–7 PM | Sunday 8 AM–Until Close

Discover treasure among the “Used Gear Graveyard,” featuring 20+ vendors selling everything from boats and PFDs to hiking and biking gear. *(All vendor spaces are currently filled; join the waitlist at noc.com/events/gaf for openings.)*

Used NOC Raft Sale

Friday & Saturday 9 AM–5 PM | Sunday 8 AM–Until Close

Own a piece of NOC history with a limited selection of 8-man and 5-man rafts retired from NOC's commercial fleet. Prices drop daily until they're gone — if you dare to wait!

Artisan & Witchy Market

Friday 2–7 PM | Saturday 9 AM–7 PM | Sunday 8 AM–Until Close

Shop handcrafted art and goods from regional makers at this hauntingly charming market of local talent. (*Vendor spaces are currently full; join the waitlist online.*)

Outfitter's Store End-of-Season Sale + Flash Tattoos

Score major markdowns on outdoor gear and apparel during the Outfitter's Store sale and tent pop-up, and get "river ink" with outdoor-themed flash tattoos by award-winning artist **Amberly Cook** (Saturday & Sunday upstairs in the store). Be sure to stop by the Asheville Tea Company booth for a taste of locally crafted blends.

NRC Kayak Cross Throw Down

Witness the action at the Nantahala Racing Club's inaugural GAF Kayak Cross event!

Competitors will launch from the ramp above Founder's Bridge and race through World's Hole in a fast-paced bracket format with upstream and downstream gates and a mandatory roll zone.

Registration available [HERE](#).

Live Music

Friday 3–6 PM | Saturday 11 AM–6 PM

Enjoy free live performances from regional favorites including **Christina Chandler, Laura Thurston, and Nick & Brew**.

Spooky Fun & Family Activities

Celebrate Halloween mountain-style with a costume contest in the Backyard of Big Wesser, face painting, and trick-or-treating across campus stores, with candy and surprises hidden in every corner.

Partner & Guide Recruitment Booths

Learn how to join the outdoor industry! Connect with **Cataloochee Ski Resort, SOLO**, and **NOC Raft Guide School** at the Partner & Recruitment Booths by Big Wesser and Founder's Bridge.

Join Us at GAF 2025

From the Used Gear Graveyard to haunted happy hours, the 2025 Guest Appreciation Festival promises a weekend packed with spirit, savings, and adventure.

For a complete schedule and registration links, visit www.noc.com/events/gaf.



Photo Courtesy of NOC

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About Nantahala Outdoor Center

Nantahala Outdoor Center is the nation's largest outdoor recreation company with operations spanning Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Over a million guests visit NOC annually to embark on a diverse collection of more than 120 different river and land-based itineraries, learn to kayak at NOC's world-renowned Paddling School, travel abroad with NOC's Adventure Travel program, test the latest outdoor gear and shop at its LEED-certified flagship retail stores or enjoy NOC's resort amenities such as its three restaurants and multi-tiered lodging. The New York Times has recognized NOC as the "Nation's Premiere Paddling School," "The Best Place to Learn" by Outside, and as "One of the Best Outfitters on Earth" by National Geographic Adventure.