

NATURAL CHIMNEYS PARK

and Campground

Mt. Solon, Virginia

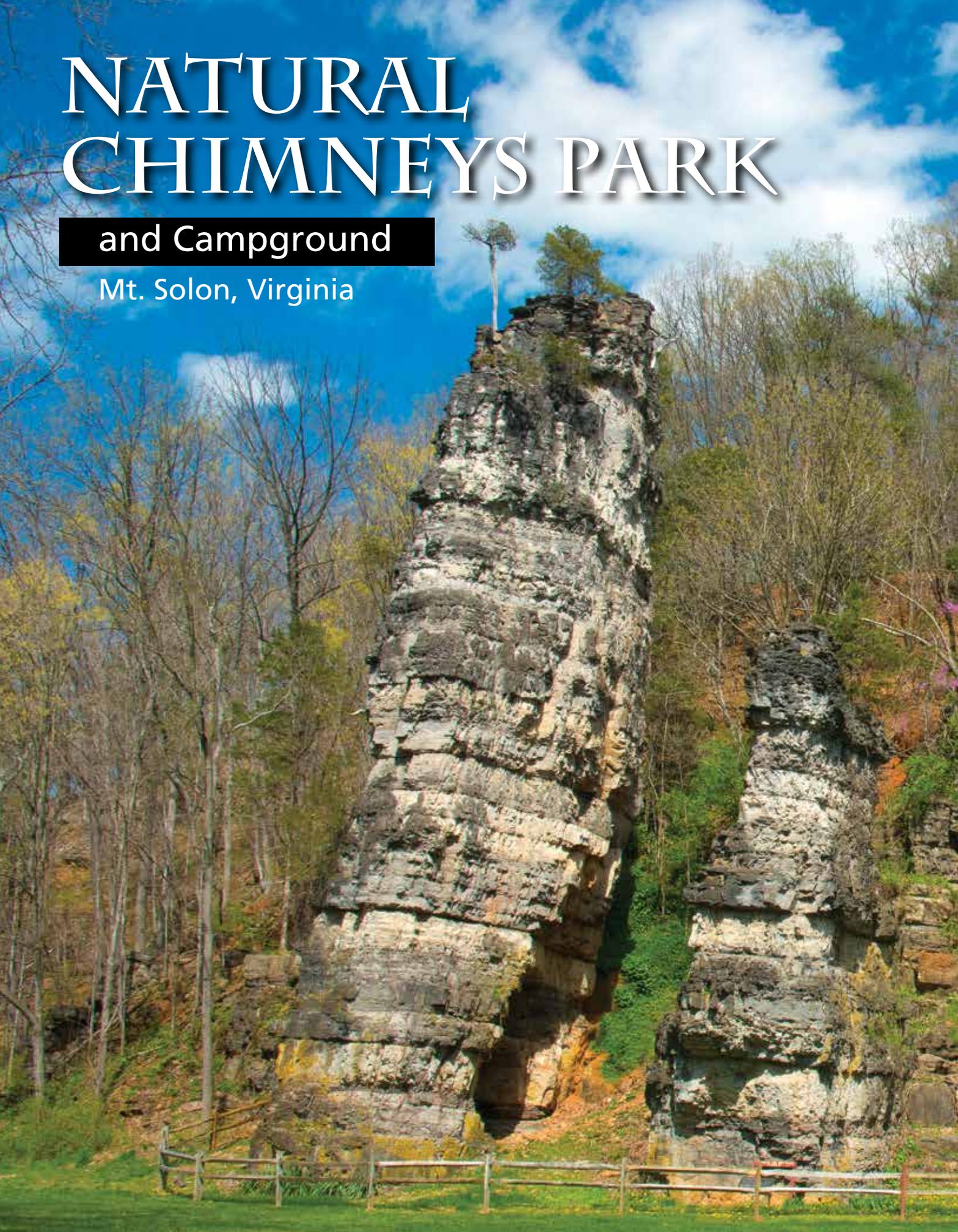




Photo by Lance C. Bell

The Cyclopean Towers

The natural chimneys have aroused imaginations for two centuries. Artists, poets and gentlemen of the romantic era have added to the strangeness of this natural wonder by giving the chimneys poetic names like “Vulcan’s Forge” or by likening them to Greek and medieval architecture. For a time the name “Cyclopean Towers” was applied to the chimneys, but this was later dropped in favor of “Natural Chimneys,” which was in common local usage.

Natural Chimneys is a natural rock structure and park located near Mt. Solon in Augusta County, Virginia. The rock “chimneys” formed from limestone that began to accumulate and harden into stone about 500 million years ago in the Paleozoic Era when the region was under water. Over time, enormous upward pressures of magma and widespread geologic upheaval, which created the Appalachian Mountains, combined with erosive forces of water and destroyed weaker layers of stone. Eventually, this created the seven Natural Chimneys that tower as much as 120 feet above the pastoral terrain of the Shenandoah Valley, offering onlookers a sight unrivaled in majesty. Viewed from one angle, the formations resemble enormous chimneys standing in bleak contrast to the greenery of the Valley. Take a few steps, though, and the chimneys are transformed into the massive turrets of a foreboding medieval castle.

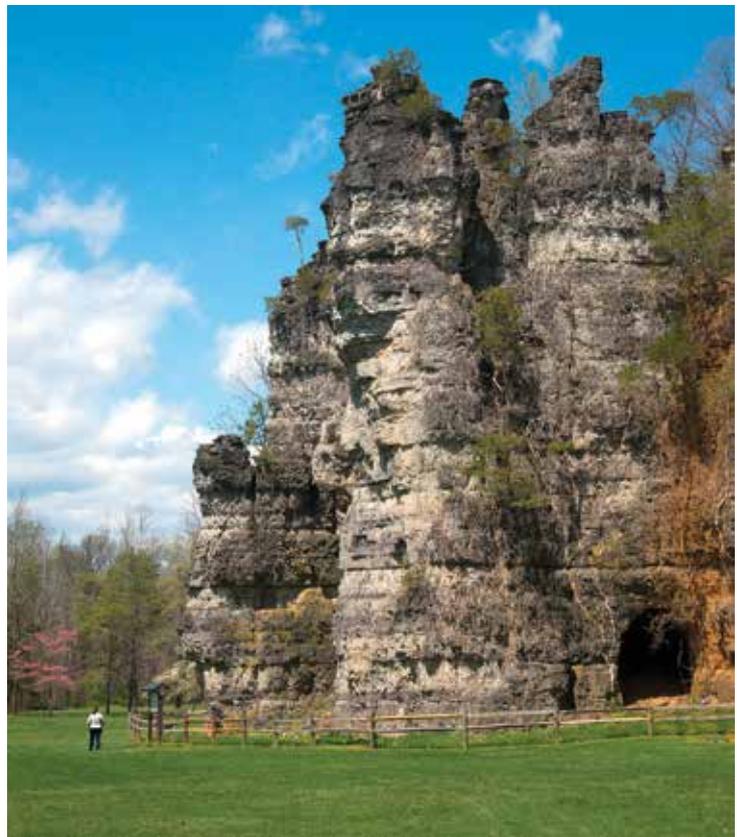
Natural Chimneys Park, along the North River, has a thirty by twenty-eight foot performance stage situated on the south end of the lawn of the Natural Chimneys that creates a dynamic environment for performances and special events, four picnic shelters available for rental, a 145 site family-oriented campground with water and electrical hook-ups, a pool, playground and hiking trails. The campground also has a separate section for primitive/tent campers with rather large, spacious sites. Camping is available in season, on a ‘first come, first serve basis,’ by advanced reservation or walk-ins/drive-ins.

www.naturalchimneys.net

Some annual events held at Natural Chimney’s Park are:

**Stone Tower Glenn Renaissance Faire –
June 27-28, 2015 • www.therenlist.com/fairs/stone-tower-glenn-renaissance-faire**

Natural Chimney’s Park is the perfect back drop for the annual Stone Tower Glenn Renaissance Faire. Emerging from the myst ascending from the Glenn, rise the spires of the Ancient Castle that gives unto this magical place its name, Stone Tower Glenn. The majestic towers look over the brilliant white tents of the Faire below. Festive music complements the joyful sounds of laughter and merriment, while the aromas of delicious foods drift through the



merchant tents filled with wondrous wares. Marvel at the archers from the Greenwood as they demonstrate their skills from lands far and near. Array thyself in your favorite garb and join us for a weekend of amazing performers, games to test your skills, and more wonders than can be enjoyed in a single day.

**Third annual Red Wing Roots Music Festival –
July 10-12, 2015 • www.redwingroots.com**

A family-friendly celebration of multiple stages with dozens of high-quality national and regional bands, kids events and activities. Plenty of no frills tent camping is available on site.

**194th National Jousting Association Tournament –
August 15, 2015 • <http://nationaljousting.com>**

The park also hosts one of the largest and oldest jousting tournaments in the eastern United States. The jousting tournament, known as “America’s oldest continually held sporting event,” is enjoyed annually, on the third Saturday of August. This tradition has made Mt. Solon home to the National Jousting Association, and the National Jousting Hall of Fame is housed within Natural Chimneys Regional Park. Since the annual tournament started in 1821 the track has been moved around Natural Chimneys Park four times. The current track has been used for the past 25 years. Augusta County owns the property and maintains the facility.

Jousting has been practiced in the United States since the 17th century. Tournaments are also held in Maryland, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia.



National Jousting Association Tournament.
photo courtesy Virginia Tourism Corporation



Scenes from the Stone Tower
Glenn Renaissance Faire:

A young family enjoys the lively
tunes of the Masquerade Ball.

Above right: Adain, one of the
horses of the Daughters of Epona,
greet two young maidens.

Right: The Maidens Three share
their lore of song and rhyme upon
the Glenn.



From the North: On Interstate 81,
take Exit 240, Mt. Crawford/Bridge-
water. Turn right onto Friedens
Church Road (Rt. 257). Turn left on
Rt. 42 to Mossy Creek Road. Turn
right onto Natural Chimneys Lane.

From the South: On Interstate
81, take Exit 220, toward US 11/
Staunton. Turn left onto US 250,
Churchville Avenue. Turn right on
Rt. 42. Turn left onto Moscow Loop.
Turn left onto Natural Chimneys
Lane.