



# Clan Matheson Society

REVISED & RESCHEDULED DUE TO COVID-19

**Working Agenda for 2021 International Clan Gathering  
Grandfather Mountain Highland Games – North Carolina, USA  
Thursday, July 8 – Sunday, July 11, 2021**

This Working Agenda is intended to help Mathesons/Mathiesons/Mathisons (and other derivations of the name) and supporters from around the world make plans to join the Chief, his family, and our Matheson Clan Society leaders and kinsmen for our first formal gathering and parliament since the 2014 Clan Gathering in The Scottish Highlands. As you know, our Gathering was postponed from July 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and cancellation of the 2020 Grandfather Mountain Highland Games. As such, Chief Sir Alexander Matheson of Matheson invites all Matheson's to join us in "The North Carolina Highlands" at the 2021 Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in Linville, North Carolina (USA).

*The 2021 Grandfather Mountain Highland Games are ON with an approved Covid-19 plan in place! The Chief and his family are planning to attend and looking forward to meeting Matheson's from North America! We are hopeful that international travel restrictions will be lifted soon given the pace of vaccinations and public mood, so we hope you will come join us this July in North Carolina!*

The North Carolina Highlands will likely remind you of the Scottish Highlands, though more forested. Season 4 of "Outlander" may provide some flavor. The area will provide a wonderful family holiday location for you to experience the natural beauty of The Carolinas with abundant outdoor activities such as camping, hiking, whitewater rafting, mountain stream and lake fishing, golf, historic sightseeing—and our main attraction, the preeminent Scottish Games in the USA – *The Grandfather Mountain Highland Games (GMHG)*. With a 5-6 hour drive, you could also visit the beautiful Carolina Coast and plenty of other tourist destinations!

Our Chief will serve as the Honorary Chief for the 2021 Games, therefore profiling our Clan Matheson for the rescheduled 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Grandfather Mountain Highland Games. We were 80+ strong marching into Edinburgh Castle for the 2017 Tattoo and we are hoping to overwhelm the field at Grandfather Mountain in 2021! So, come meet your Chief and his family and connect with your Scottish heritage as well as introduce your children and grandchildren to their cultural heritage and far flung kinsmen. There will be plenty of activities for all ages! Also...we need volunteers, especially from the USA to help with logistics.

The new web site for the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games is now open for individual/family entry ticket purchase and scheduling. Visit [www.gmhg.org](http://www.gmhg.org) for more information about the games and location, as well as links to familiarize yourself with places to stay that fit your travel plans and budget. We recommend planning early! Also, please let your

Branch Lieutenants know of your plans so they can coordinate your Branch attendance and information flow back to our planning committee.

Covid-19 vaccines should be widely distributed by June and we certainly hope that you will consider securing a vaccine before joining us.

### **Registration and Games Logistics:**

The GMHG website is where you MUST go to pre-register for entry to the games and their events. 2021 Games registration and advance tickets are now available. <https://gmhg.org/ticketing-and-registrations/>

The Games are held at MacRae Meadows, Grandfather Mountain. There is insufficient on-site parking for the thousands that attend the games, so off-site parking in Linville (3 miles down the mountain) is provided with regular and convenient shuttle buses.

### **Air Travel and Distances:**

International/National Flights: Closest international airport is Charlotte, North Carolina (NC) (call sign “CLT”), which is 91 miles south of Blowing Rock, NC. A short, scenic, easy drive. Washington, DC (Dulles International- “IAD”) is 400 miles north.

Regional Flights: Raleigh-Durham Airport (“RDU”) is 189 miles due east of Blowing Rock, NC. and Knoxville, TN airport (“TYS”) is about 170 miles to the west.

Driving distances from main centers and some other possible holiday destinations for you to extend your stay:

|   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Atlanta, Georgia – 280 miles              | Charlotte, NC – 91 miles      |
| Washington, DC – 420 miles                | New York City – 622 miles     |
| Nashville, Tennessee – 170 miles          | Chicago, Illinois – 662 miles |
| Orlando, Florida (Disney) – 609 miles     | Charleston, SC – 294 miles    |
| Denver, CO – 1,478 miles (21.5 hrs drive) | Williamsburg, VA – 350 miles  |
| The Outer Banks, NC – 394 miles           | Ashville, NC – 82 miles       |

### **Recommended Lodging:**

There are abundant places to stay and types of facilities. You will want to have your lodging booked early, but we found no problem finding suitable lodging in 2018 just 30-days prior to the Games. We are planning to center our Matheson Clan activities in the charming town of Blowing Rock, which we felt provides the best alternatives for us to host an offsite Matheson Clan Parliament and Gathering, with a Southern/Appalachia Barbeque dinner on Saturday afternoon/evening. **The Green Park Inn** will provide a room block of up to 40 rooms at discounted rates for Clan Matheson Guests. The web site is [www.greenparkinn.com](http://www.greenparkinn.com) However, you must call their USA reservations number (+1 828.414.9230) directly in order to book through our room block. We recommend this location for its convenience and pricing.

Camping: Grandfather Mountain has camping and RV sites, but they book very early and you will have to act fast. Ed Matheson and his family have established “Matheson Corner” at the Grandfather Mountain Campground (see Google Maps). There are other nearby camp grounds, some with cabins, as well. Most can be found by doing a web search.

Hotels, Motels, Inns, B&B's: Wide choices available depending on your budget and desire to be close to the Games. We recommend looking at the towns of Blowing Rock, Banner Elk, and Boone which would allow 15-40 minute drives to/from Grandfather Mountain. However, we are hoping our group will center itself in Blowing Rock to maximize our time together outside the Games and to reduce driving. See town of Blowing Rock visitors center web site: <https://blowingrock.com/>

Home and Condo Rentals: Airbnb and VRBO home rentals are plentiful and again for any budget. Please focus your search along NC Route 221 (and its parallel scenic Blue Ridge Parkway) between Grandfather Mountain and Blowing Rock to ensure easiest possible access and reduced mountain road driving. It is 16.5 miles from Blowing Rock to Grandfather Mountain, MacRae Meadows.

### **What to Bring:**

It goes without saying that we would like to be well turned out in Matheson Tartan at the Games, especially: The Thursday evening Torchlight Ceremony and Calling of Clans; our 3 hospitality tents at the Games; the Clan Parliament and Gathering evening event Saturday; and, especially Sunday's closing Parade of Tartans. The Clan Matheson UK website has an article by David Mathieson on proper highland dress. It takes time to order and make kilts if needed, so plan accordingly.

July in the North Carolina Highlands can be variable and unpredictable. Generally warm during the day (think 80+ degrees Fahrenheit) and can be cool in evenings (55-70 degrees F). It is the mountains, and summer storms can roll through as well. Grandfather Mountain stands tall at 5,945 feet, with MacRae Meadows at about 4,000'-- so prepare accordingly.

More information will be made available regarding Clan Matheson merchandise that we are ordering. Stay tuned.

### **Preliminary Schedule (<https://gmhg.org/schedule> ):**

#### Thursday, July 8, 2021

7:00 PM "*The Bear*" – For those interested, the first 800 hearty souls to register (separately) will run a 5-mile footrace with 1,568 feet of elevation to assault Grandfather Mountain. Register separately and in Spring 2021!  
<https://thebearrace.com/>

9:00 PM "*Torchlight Ceremony*" – This is a moving, well attended Opening Ceremony as clans are called and each clan lights its torch. This would be our first official event that you would want to attend. We will have two Clan Matheson tents and will provide our own Clan Matheson registration. We would expect a few wee drams to be poured as part of that welcome. Food vendors will be open and we are planning a welcome reception with The Chief and his family. Arrive by 7:30 PM to enjoy fellowship and greet each other.

#### Friday, July 9, 2021

9:00 AM – 4:00 PM – Games officially open with opening ceremonies including our Chief, highland competitions, and festivities. Matheson Tents will be our central meeting point. Clan Society registration check in available.

We note that you are free to spend as much time as you like at the Games. Consider sightseeing or enjoy other activities.

6:00 PM – *Informal Clan Matheson Gathering*. To Be Determined but likely to be at MacRae Meadows camp ground at Matheson Corner.

6:30 – 11:00 PM – *Celtic Rock Concert* at MacRae Meadows. A wonderful evening family event (register separately).

Saturday, July 10, 2021

6:30 AM – *Mountain Marathon* – one of the toughest in the country! Register early if interested.

7:30 AM – 12 Noon – Games open and we expect a ceremony with Chief Alexander

4:30 PM – 10:00 PM – *Clan Matheson Parliament & Gathering* in Blowing Rock at The Green Park Inn. This will include a Clan Parliament for official business followed by Clan Gathering and BBQ Dinner. Advance Registration at \$75/adult and \$30/child under 14.

6:30 – 10:30 PM – *Celtic Jam* at MacRae Meadows for those interested (register separately) in heading back down to MacRae Meadows.

Sunday, July 11, 2021

8:00 AM to 1:00 PM Games open and *Parade of Tartans* where Matheson's assemble and march behind the massed pipe bands with the Chief. We will want as many Matheson's as possible at this closing ceremony dressed in tartan for occasion. Farewells & Dismiss. Closing ceremonies are 4:00 PM for those that last.

Please complete the attached RSVP and Registration Form and return to planning committee at [gathering2021@clanmatheson.org](mailto:gathering2021@clanmatheson.org)

We hope you will join us.

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