



# Smoky Mountains Hiking Club

P O Box 51592 Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

June 2017

## NATIONAL TRAILS DAY – 21<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL AT WORKDAY June 3 – Saturday

Join us to celebrate this 24th Annual National Trails Day. It will be SMHC's 21st annual NTD event! We will meet early at Sugarlands Visitor Center and carpool to the Smokies crest for trail work. The day will be capped by a picnic where we can brag about our day's work. Please bring work gloves in addition to normal hiking gear; no open-toed shoes please. Please see [www.smhclub.org](http://www.smhclub.org) for more information, and to download and submit the registration form ([NTD2017 Registration Form](#)) as soon as possible. **Pre-registration is required in order to plan work teams. Meet at Sugarlands Visitor Center (bus parking lot) at 7:30 AM** (unless your team is instructed otherwise). Contact: Don Dunning, [ntd2017@aol.com](mailto:ntd2017@aol.com), 865-705-2154.

## RAMSEY CASCADES June 4 – Sunday

The Ramsey Cascades Trail has re-opened! It remains one of the most iconic hikes in the Smokies and affords a view of one of the highest waterfalls accessible by trail in the Park. We will parallel the Middle Prong, then Ramsey Prong by trail, gradually ascending a total of 2,200 ft. The last mile or so is rockier, but the reward is the beautiful falls, cascading over Thunderhead sandstone, with the headwaters originating high on Mt. Guyot, and plunging over 90 ft at the falls. Hike: 8 miles, rated moderate. Meet at **Comcast on Asheville Highway <see list>** at 8:00 am, or at Ramsey Cascades Trailhead at 9:15 am. Drive: 80 miles RT {@4¢=\$3.20}. Leader: Diane Petrilla, [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com), 931-224-5149.

## WEDNESDAY HIKE: BRADY MOUNTAIN SEGMENT/ GRASSY COVE SECTION CUMBERLAND TRAIL June 7 – Wednesday

The Brady Mountain segment of the Cumberland Trail will include a beautiful ridge-line hike with a panoramic view over Grassy Cove at Brady Bluff overlook. We will also pass through Brady Arch, and turn around at Lost Overlook. Hike: 8 miles, rated moderate. Recommend wearing convertible or lightweight long pants due to brushy trail. Meet at **Lowes, 1800 Roane St. Highway, Harriman, TN <see list>** at 8:00 am. Drive: 60 miles RT {@4¢=\$2.40}. Leader: Diane Petrilla, [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com), 931-224-5149.

Visit our website: [www.smhclub.org](http://www.smhclub.org)

SMHC Newsletter Editor: Don Dunning 865-705-2154

Send hike write-ups & photos to: [dedz1@aol.com](mailto:dedz1@aol.com).

Please include preferred contact method (email, phone).

## SUGAR RUN AT CUMBERLAND GAP NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK June 10 – Saturday

We'll hike the mile or so up the steep ridge out of the Cumberland Gap campground area, by the old, now closed, Skylight cave, to the ridge trail, where we'll almost immediately drop down the other side on the delightful Sugar Run Trail. This trail follows a good-sized creek, Sugar Run, to the bottom of the ridge on the north side. We'll pick up the Old Harlan Road to the Fort McCook trail, where we'll regain the altitude we lost, stopping by several civil war sites along the way up. At the Pinnacle we'll rejoin the Ridge Trail back to the Lewis Hollow Trail and back to our cars. Hike: about 8.5 miles, rated moderate. Meet in the parking lot of **Outback Steak House on Merchants Drive <see list>** at 8:30 am. Drive: 120 miles RT {@4¢ = \$4}. Leaders: Lori Hill, [LLH4@rocketmail.com](mailto:LLH4@rocketmail.com), and Steve Hill.

## CANNON CREEK FALLS OFF-TRAIL June 10 – Saturday

Hatsy O'Brien, the protagonist in Jenny Bennett's novel *Murder at the Jump-Off*, notices her eventual heart-throb, Donald MacIntyre, for the first time striding boldly across a ledge spanning the big cascade on Cannon Creek in the upper reaches of Greenbrier. Attempts to reach the 100-foot Cannon Creek cascade, perhaps the largest double-drop waterfall in the Smokies, is aptly described by Ray Payne in the 1987 issue of the *Handbook* with the succinct warning, "They don't get much harder!" Notwithstanding Ray's fair warning, on June 10<sup>th</sup> the Club will venture to the site of the opening setting of Jenny's novel and visit the ledge where Donald MacIntyre once strode across the waterfall. The hike is 3 miles off-trail with a 4,300-foot climb requiring extensive rock-hopping and 11 miles on-trail. **Pre-registration with leaders is required for this strenuous off-trail hike.**

Leaders: Greg Harrell, [GSHarrell@milligan.edu](mailto:GSHarrell@milligan.edu), 865-719-0173, and Ken Wise, [kwise@utk.edu](mailto:kwise@utk.edu), 865-310-7764.

## "WEDNESDAY" HIKE ON TUESDAY: GREGORY BALD June 13 – Tuesday

For those who may not be able to go on the weekend June 18 hike to Gregory Bald, this may be an alternative! This is a classic hike at the right time of year to see the fabulous flame azaleas on Gregory Bald. We will hike up Gregory Ridge Trail to the Bald and back. Hike: approx. 11 miles, rated moderately difficult. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** at 7:30 am (NOTE EARLIER TIME). Drive: 70 miles RT {@4¢=\$2.80}. Day change due to bicycling in Cades Cove on Wednesdays, and time change to take into account the low speeds around Cades Cove Loop, and length of the hike.

Leader: Diane Petrilla, [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com), 931-224-5149.

## GREGORY BALD AND THE AZALEAS June 18 – Sunday

The first time that I ventured up to Gregory Bald to see the Azaleas my breath was taken away twice. Every year, flower lovers and enthusiasts from all over make the trek up to Gregory Bald to visit the stunning populations and varieties of Azaleas. Taking the Gregory Ridge Trail to get there, we will get to enjoy beautiful streams and several lovely footbridges along the way. Once on the bald we will enjoy approximately 10 acres of amazing grassy meadows and spectacular views of Cades Cove to our north. We will enjoy a long leisurely lunch while hikers explore and soak up the relaxing views. The hike is a challenging and rewarding 11 miles rated moderately difficult. Meet at the **Alcoa Food City <see list>** ready to leave by 8:00 am. Drive: 70 miles RT {@4¢=\$3 suggested gas contribution for the carpool drivers}.

Leaders: Billy Heaton, [bheaton8@yahoo.com](mailto:bheaton8@yahoo.com), (865)924-0095 and Diane Petrilla, [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com), 931-224-5149.

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## EASY HIKE: RICH MOUNTAIN TRAIL TO JOHN OLIVER CABIN AND ICE CREAM June 18 – Sunday

We will park at the entrance to Cades Cove to walk the 2.8 roundtrip to the John Oliver cabin and back. Other options will be ice cream at the camp store/gift shop and possibly hike on the 0.8 mile Pine Oak Nature Trail that starts from Section C in the campground. Hike: 3 to 4 miles, rated easy. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** at 1:00 pm. Drive: 56 miles RT {@4¢=\$2.25}.

Leader: Priscilla Clayton, [sigmtngirl@earthlink.net](mailto:sigmtngirl@earthlink.net), 865-966-4142 or 865-255-8711.

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## ROAN MOUNTAIN BACKPACKING WITH HARVEY BROOME GROUP OF SIERRA CLUB June 24-25 – Saturday-Sunday

Our destination, the Roan highlands, will provide a welcome respite from the summer heat, although we will have to earn it. We'll take the little used Overmountain Victory Trail from Hampton Creek Natural Area to its intersection with the Appalachian Trail at Yellow Mountain Gap, where we'll turn left to gain the summit of Little Hump. We have several options for camping: on the top of Little Hump, in the gap between Little Hump and Big Hump, or on Big Hump, depending on the weather and group's energy level. We'll gain about 2500 feet. This hike is more difficult than it first appears. The first 2 miles are through exposed cattle fields and can be brutally hot. Most of the elevation gain is concentrated in the last 3 miles or so, making for some difficult hiking, especially with full packs. Water sources are few and far between. We'll return the way we came. Total hiking distance over two days is about 11 miles, +/-, depending on where we camp. Rated difficult due to elevation gain. Total driving distance is about 240 miles round trip. Please note that this is a joint hike with the Harvey Broome group of the Sierra Club. **Pre-registration with the trip leaders is required for this trip, so please contact the trip leaders to learn the meeting place and time.**

Leaders: Brad Reese, [bradktn@gmail.com](mailto:bradktn@gmail.com) and Rob Davis.

### In Memoriam: James Lewis Botts, 1928-2017

We regret to report that longtime SMHC member Jim Botts passed away on May 6. Jim was one of the leaders of the SMHC in the 1960s and 1970s, and served as president in 1973-1974. He was a member of the Conservation Committee for many years, and served as SMHC's representative to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. Jim worked at ORNL as a chemist for many years before retiring in 1993. He was an avid hiker, horseman, and woodworker, and was very active in his church. Our deepest sympathy goes to the family.

### In Memoriam: Ronald Eugene Kirkham, 1939-2017

Local artist Ron Kirkham passed away May 9, 2017 at age 78. Ron volunteered his talents, assisting SMHC with designs for the 2005 Southern Highlands ATC Biennial (see page 4) and the SMHC Appalachian Trail brochure. Ron was an integral part of the Knoxville arts community with a 50-year career in advertising. Our deepest sympathy goes to the family.

**MEETING PLACES:** **Alcoa Food City** = On right between 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> stoplight (on Hall Rd., TN 35), a block before Big Lots. [Map Link](#). **Comcast on Asheville Hwy** = From Exit 394 ramp off I-40 go left (east) on Asheville Hwy, US-11E/25W/70, to signal light at top of hill; turn right, down into Comcast lot, 5720 Asheville Hwy; park to left of entry, about 2 lanes over toward the exit end of lot. [Map Link](#). **Lowes at 1800 Roane State Hwy, Harriman** = From I-40 Exit 350 take TN-29S/Pine Ridge Road 0.3 mi, turn right on Broadway of America, to Justin Drive. [Map Link](#). **Outback Steakhouse on Merchants Drive** = From Exit 108 off I-75, Merchants Drive, go west towards Clinton Hwy. Park in front part of large lot at Outback Steakhouse (314 Merchants Drive), near McDonalds. [Map Link](#).

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Kevin Buchanan, [kbuck27@gmail.com](mailto:kbuck27@gmail.com), 865-202-4416, 3001 Tanglewood Drive, Sevierville, TN 37876  
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Christy Volland, [christyvolland@yahoo.com](mailto:christyvolland@yahoo.com)

### COMING EVENTS – JULY 2017

8 Saturday	AT Maintenance
9 Sunday	Drinkwater Pool Off-Trail
15 Saturday	Mt Sterling/Baxter Creek
22 Saturday	Max Patch to Roaring Fork Shelter
29 Saturday	Mt LeConte via Boulevard & Alum Cave

## FOR THE RECORD

### Panther Branch/North Old Mac Trail Wildflowers 4/8/17

Fourteen members started the hike with temps in the upper 40's. As we started Panther Branch trail we were greeted by Emory Falls with a tremendous amount of water flowing. We soon warmed up ascending the trail and were greeted by many wildflowers. To name a few: crested dwarf iris, several types of trilliums, wild oats, little brown jugs, wild geraniums, trout lily and phlox. Most of these flowers were found on the Panther Branch trail. Prior to starting the hike a drawing was held for a gift of a Smoky Mountain Hiking Club shirt. Number nine was very happy his number was drawn. New friendships were made and old friendships were rekindled. What a good way to spend a beautiful spring day!!!

Billy Heaton and Lynda Brian

### Porters Creek Wildflowers 4/15/2017

On the Saturday before Easter two leaders and one guest hiked Porters Creek. We visited the former Hiking Club cabin and other historical sites before crossing the bridge over Porters Creek into the profusion of flowers--trillium, Canada violets, wild ginger, phlox, and more. Past Fern Falls we found a rock with five jacks-in-the-pulpits perched on it. On the way back to the car we met many groups and families - we were glad we started early.

Doris Gove and Claudia Dean.



### Middle Prong and Greenbrier Ridge 4/22/2017

After a number of obstacles including the closure of Sugarland Mountain Trail which changed the hike's destination, the illness of the original co-leader which required a last-minute adjustment, and a long-range soggy weather report which resulted in a diminished amount of enthusiasm for navigating unbridged creek crossings, four members arrived at the meeting place. After much discussion, we drove to the Middle Prong Trailhead in one car and made the decision to do an out and back to the AT. Once on Greenbrier Ridge Trail, however, the skies became quite dark bringing a few sprinkles, so we ate a somewhat hasty lunch before turning around, a good distance from the AT junction. We had an excellent day in spite of the variation from the original plan. The rain never came down in earnest, the cloud cover kept us cool, and we were able to introduce one of our hikers to the hidden falls on Middle Prong. Because of the recent rains, both Middle Prong and the falls were especially lively. An added bonus was the number of showy orchises and Jack-in-the-pulpits we saw on the trail. Our total hike was about 10 miles.

Mary Anne Hoskins and Claudia Dean



### Porters Creek to AT via Dry Sluice Gap OT 4/22/2017

Predictions of potential rain and thunderstorms and flash flood warnings were not sufficient to deter a group of ten plus four minus two minus four plus four from making this historic club hike. Under grey skies and light sprinkling of rain, two groups started up the Porter Creek Road together. The first group of ten comprised the official club hike roster. A second group of four were club members who would hike with us but follow the east branch of Porters Creek to the AT instead of our path to the AT via the branch going up toward Dry Sluice Gap. Two of our original ten hikers decided to turn around at the campsite on Porters Creek and the remaining twelve of us battled rising waters and interesting creek crossings before entering a beautiful wide valley of trilliums and fringed phacelia. At the last branch of Porters Creek, our four club friends departed us. From there we had a long steep climb to the AT, where we rested and watched the clouds gather for the impending rain to come. After a steep decent down Dry Sluice Gap and back to the Porters Creek Fork, we heard shouts and finally footsteps and were reunited with our four wandering explorers. Their trip found them climbing a long cascade of such reported beauty that the club will need to explore that route at a future date. From there we descended quickly back to the cars, getting a bit wet but satisfied with the days' accomplishments.

Brian Worley

### Eagle Creek Backpack 4/29-30/17

We started out on a beautiful day with 3 hiking up Lead Cove trail which some of the group had no problem with, backpacks and all. There was a nice cool breeze blowing and lots of spring wildflowers in bloom to enjoy during breathers. A wonderful sight to behold was 4 horses with 2 riders carrying large loads of mulch up to the Spence Field Privy. (No offer made to carry packs for us). Great work Don! At the top we stopped for lunch at Spence Field shelter with great views of nearby peaks. After lunch, we started down the very steep Eagle Creek trail which was covered with wildflowers. The trail is much less used than the other side of the mountain. Eventually it levels off a bit and the creek starts growing. We follow an old RR grade much of the rest of the way and cross swift Eagle Creek about 15 times before reaching camp at CS89. The creek was up a bit based on the submerged moss line. Several hikers were passed going the other way but nobody else at CS89. The fourth member of the group was supposed to meet us after hiking over Shuckstack but he decided not to attempt the last few Creek crossings and stayed by the lake at CS90 where a big fishing group was stationed. The hike out on Sunday was another wonderful day. After a few more crossings the trail is a little less exciting but just as scenic. Three went out in the Lakeshore trail past the historic cars and on to a pre-positioned modern car. The fourth had decided to hike back up Eagle Creek and down to the starting point. A great weekend in the Smokies.

Tim Bigelow and Steve Dunkin



### SYNCHRONOUS FIREFLY VIEWING: May 30 – June 6

Please be alert to temporary parking and access restrictions at SVC and Elkmont during this event.

### ELKMONT TRAIL CLOSURE SCHEDULE UPDATE

As described in the April and May newsletters, work is underway in the Elkmont Historic District to preserve 4 structures and to remove 29 structures.

The Park announced on April 28 that all structures planned for demolition this spring along the Little River Trail have been removed, and the Little River Trail has reopened without restrictions. The Jakes Creek Trail will be closed to all use from the trailhead to the junction with the Cucumber Gap Trail Monday through Friday until further notice. All campsites and shelters in the backcountry will remain open and can be accessed via any routes that do not utilize the closed section of this trail. During this closure, access to the river near the structures also will be restricted. The Jakes Creek Trail will be open on Saturdays and Sundays throughout the work project. This work also will pause during the synchronous firefly viewing event, and the trail will be fully accessible during that time. For the latest information, please contact the Backcountry Office at 865-436-1297.

### NEWCOMER TO HIKING WITH SMHC?

Some hints: Our 'difficulty ratings' are gauged to SMHC members with some experience with our hikes, not to the general public, nor to sometime or flatland hikers who are all likely to find our 'easy, moderate, or difficult' seem to under-rate the difficulty. Always be prepared for worse weather (wetter, colder) than expected. Wear adequate boots. Bring rainwear, water, spare food. Each carpool rider should reimburse driver about 4¢ per mile. Doubts? Call a leader.

\*\*\*And please note: No dogs or firearms are permitted on any Club hikes, whether inside or outside of GSMNP\*\*\*

### SPECIAL EVENT: TOTAL ECLIPSE ON AUGUST 21

On August 21, 2017, a total solar eclipse will be visible along a 70-mile wide path across the United States from Oregon to South Carolina. The western half of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park will fall under the path of totality for this eclipse. The Park will be organizing public viewing events at three locations: Clingmans Dome, Cades Cove, and Oconaluftee.

Clingmans Dome trailhead parking area will be converted to a special ticketed event site for experiencing the eclipse. Tickets for the Clingmans Dome event are already sold out, but additional tickets may become available due to cancellations (<https://www.recreation.gov>). Clingmans Dome Road will be closed on Sunday, August 20, and Monday, August 21, to accommodate this special event.

Viewing sites at Cable Mill in Cades Cove and the Oconaluftee Visitor Center will be free, but vehicle access to these sites may be closed when parking becomes full or roads become congested.

Visitors may view the eclipse from other areas of the Park on your own, although the Park Service may decide to close access some areas on August 21 to reduce gridlock, which may include Newfound Gap and Cades Cove.

For more information, see

[www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/2017-solar-eclipse.htm](http://www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/2017-solar-eclipse.htm).

### RAINBOW FALLS TRAIL REHABILITATION PROGRAM BEGINS MAY 8, 2017

Great Smoky Mountains National Park, in partnership with the Friends of the Smokies, has begun a 2-year trail rehabilitation project on the Rainbow Falls Trail under the Trails Forever endowment program.

The trail will be closed May 8, 2017 through November 16, 2017 on Monday mornings at 7:00 a.m. through Thursday evenings at 5:30 p.m. weekly. Due to the construction process on the narrow trail, a full closure is necessary for the safety of both the crew and visitors. The trail will be fully open each week on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday and on federal holidays. The parking lot at the Rainbow Falls trailhead area will be closed May 8 through June 15, Monday through Thursday, to facilitate heavy re-construction of the trailhead area where several trails intersect. After June 15, the parking lot will be open so users can access the Old Sugarlands Trail and the Trillium Gap Trail connector trail.

The Trails Forever crew will focus rehabilitation efforts on several targeted locations along the 6-mile trail to improve visitor safety and stabilize eroding trail sections. Rainbow Falls Trail is one of the most popular trails in the park leading hikers to Rainbow Falls and Mt. Le Conte. The planned work will improve overall trail safety and protect natural resources by reducing trail braiding and improving drainage to prevent further erosion. Hikers can still reach Mt. Le Conte, LeConte Lodge, and the Le Conte Shelter by using one of the other four open trails to the summit. The Mt. LeConte Lodge and Mt. Le Conte backcountry shelter will remain open and can be accessed from any of these other routes during the Rainbow Falls Trail closure. The recently restored Alum Cave Trail along with Boulevard, Trillium Gap, and Brushy Mountain trails are all open and lead to Mt. Le Conte.

Trails Forever is a partnership program between Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Friends of the Smokies. The Friends have donated over \$1,000,000 to support the program, in part through the generosity of the Knoxville based Aslan Foundation. The Trails Forever program provides the opportunity for a highly skilled trail crew to focus reconstruction efforts on high use and high priority trails in the park including the recently restored Alum Cave Trail, Chimney Tops Trail, and Forney Ridge Trail. The program also provides a mechanism for volunteers to work alongside the trail crew on these complex trail projects to assist in making lasting improvements to preserve the trails for future generations.