



Smoky Mountains Hiking Club

P O Box 51592 Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

August 2017

WEDNESDAY HIKE: MINGUS CREEK TO DEEPLow GAP TO COOPER CREEK TRAILS August 2 – Wednesday

For this hike, we will walk past the historic Mingus Mill, 2 cemeteries, and climb about 1500 ft in 2.9 miles to the junction with Deepflow Gap at an elevation of 3620 ft (cooler!). We will follow Deepflow Gap Trail 2.6 miles along Cooper Creek, turning around at the junction with Cooper Creek Trail. Hike: about 11 miles RT, rated moderate. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** at 8:00 am or at Mingus Mill parking area at 9:45 am. Drive: 130 miles RT {@4¢ = \$5.20}.

Leader: Diane Petrilla, petrillad@gmail.com, 931-224-5149.

WEDNESDAY HIKE: TENNESSEE GULF TRAIL MARTHA SUNDQUIST STATE FOREST August 9 – Wednesday

Have you ever wondered if there were any hiking trails in the Martha Sundquist State Forest, between TN and NC on I-40? Surrounded on three sides by the Cherokee NF, the Tennessee Gulf trail was completed in 2010. The trail follows Brown Gap Creek for a very pleasant walk in the woods, with a starting elevation of about 2400 ft and modest elevation gain. Hike: about 8 miles RT, rated moderate. Meet at **Comcast on Asheville Hwy <see list>** at 8:00 am. Drive: 130 miles {@4¢ = \$5.20}.

Leader: Diane Petrilla, petrillad@gmail.com, 931-224-5149.

APPALACHIAN TRAIL MAINTENANCE August 5 – Saturday

The August 5th work trip will coincide with the ATC's Konnorock Crew work in the Nantahala National Forest. This crew is typically made up of volunteers from across the country and often includes members of other trail associations. This annual crew is utilized to build treadway structures and construct new trail segments. This year's project is a 1/4 mile long relocation near the Brown Fork Shelter north of Stecoah Gap. The hike to the worksite 2.4 miles from the Stecoah Gap parking lot with a strenuous half-mile climb. This is a great opportunity to learn some new skills from trained ATC crew leaders and help build a new section of trail. The crew will be on location July 27-31 and Aug 3-7. You may also car camp with the crew near Stecoah Gap for any number of nights if you would like. Meet at the **Maryville Walmart on Hwy 411 <see list>** at 7:00 am to carpool, or meet at Stecoah Gap at 8:30 am. Drive: 110 miles RT {@4¢ = \$4.40}. Participants will need to wear sturdy footwear and bring work gloves, lunch, snacks, and plenty of water. If you have a hardhat and/or safety glasses, please bring those as well. Leader: Franklin LaFond 678-464-3380 ox97GaMe@aol.com.

BREAKNECK RIDGE TO THREE-FORKS OFF-TRAIL August 12 – Saturday

From the bridge near the end of Straight Fork Road, we will climb by trail to Hyatt Bald near McGee Spring then follow a faint manway out Breakneck Ridge before turning off into a steep quarter-mile plunge through a rhododendron-infested gulch and then angle off on a tortuous wend through blowdowns, brier thickets, and more rhododendron to reach the Big Pool at Three Forks, arguably one of the most attractive landmarks in the Smokies. We may return to McGee Spring by hiking Right Fork upstream. Total distance is around 11 miles but will feel like more since it is partly off-trail. The off-trail portion is rated difficult. **Pre-registration with leaders is required for this off-trail hike.** Leaders: Ken Wise, kwise@utk.edu, 865-310-7764; and Mike Harrington, mike_harr@bellsouth.net, 865-765-4604.

ELECTION PICNIC AT TWIN CREEKS PAVILION August 19 – Saturday

Please join us for the Annual Election Picnic at the Twin Creeks picnic shelter off Cherokee Orchard Road. Please bring a dish and/or dessert to share along with any needed serving utensils. You can also bring plates, utensils and cups to help reduce waste if you can, and lawn chairs to sit on if you like. The picnic will begin at 12:00 pm, and will be followed by the election of the 2018 Board of Directors at 1:00 pm. SMHC and Social Committee members will provide paper and plastic goods, iced tea, water, lemonade, and ice. The Program Committee will have the 2018 hike listing on hand for you to sign up to lead a hike or two next year. Come enjoy this amazing setting and wonderful fellowship! A hike on the Twin Creeks trail will be led by Tim Bigelow before the picnic at 9:30 am; this trail goes through some fire ravaged areas and past historic structures, 3.8 miles RT. Thanks to the Social Committee for organizing this event.

Directions: From Gatlinburg, turn at traffic light #8 onto Historic Nature Trail – Airport Road. Drive until you reach Cherokee Orchard Road and continue straight. Turn right onto Twin Creeks Research Lab Access Road. Follow signs to the Twin Creeks picnic pavilion. [Map Link](#).

Contact: Priscilla Clayton, sigmtngirl@earthlink.net, 865-255-8711; or Mary Alice Porter, mmcporter@juno.com.

CHARLIES BUNION August 6 – Sunday

Originally known as "Fodderstack", it was Horace Kephart who got this extremely popular rock outcropping put on a government map as Charlie's Bunion. From the New Found Gap parking area we will begin our hike travelling north on the AT. Approximately four miles in we will arrive at our destination. Here we will enjoy lunch and amazing panoramic views of Mount LeConte, Greenbrier Pinnacle, Mount Kephart, the Jump Off, the Sawteeth and the beautiful Porters Creek Valley below. Will return the way we came with the option of taking a short side trip to the Jump Off. Hike: 8 miles RT, or 9 miles if we visit the JumpOff, rated moderate. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** ready to leave by 8:00 am, or at Newfound Gap at 9:00 am. Drive: 100 miles RT {@4¢=\$4}.

Leader: Billy Heaton, bheaton8@yahoo.com, 865-924-0095.

Visit our website: www.smhclub.org

2018 SMHC HIKE LEADERS – HANDBOOK INPUT

All hike leaders for SMHC hikes during 2018 should submit a brief description of their hike to the SMHC Handbook Editors as soon as possible. Brevity would be appreciated; florid prose can be saved for the newsletter hike description. Please submit your hike descriptions no later than September 30 to George Ritter (rittergeo@gmail.com) and Ken Wise, (kwise@utk.edu).

**EASY HIKE: SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD HIKE
August 20 – Sunday**

The Smoky Mountain Railroad operated between downtown Knoxville and Sevierville between 1909 and 1961. The entire route was scouted in 1967 by members of the SMHC as a possible greenway route. We will walk some segments of the route and look for historic remnants of the days when the line was operational. This hike will include part of a new section and also the section between Charter Doyle and Gary Underwood parks. Hike: about 3 miles total. We will arrange for return transportation for those that don't want to hike out and back. No hills to cover but uneven terrain can be expected. Wear sturdy shoes or boots. Meet at **Charter Doyle Park <see list>** at 5100 Martin Mill Pike in South Knoxville at 8:00 am.
Leaders: Tim Bigelow, bigelowt2@mindspring.com, 865-607-6781; and Michael Vaughn, Mvaughn@knowledgegy.net.

**SPENCE FIELD AND ROCKY TOP
August 26 – Saturday**

This challenging hike will take us from the bottomlands of Cades Cove up to one of the three summits of Thunderhead Mountain known as Rocky Top. We will take the Anthony Creek Trail up 3.5 miles and then access the Bote Mountain Trail. From there it is another 1.7 miles to beautiful Spence Field. Having crossed foot bridges and passed through pine forests and a spruce/fir ecosystem, it will be time for a well-deserved lunch. Here at 4,920 feet elevation, we will absorb spectacular views of Fontana Lake and endless distant mountains. Our last 1.5-mile ascent will lead us to Rocky Top. Bring your binoculars; you can see Clingmans Dome from here. Or pull out your smart phone and record a stunning 360-degree memory. The hike is 14 miles, rated difficult. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** at 8:00 am or at the Anthony Creek trailhead at 9:00 am. Drive: 60 miles RT {@4¢=\$2.40}.
Leaders: Steven Miller, samiller71@rocketmail.com, 865-318-9882; and Billy Heaton, bheaton8@yahoo.com, 865-924-0095.

MEETING PLACES: **Alcoa Food City** = On right between 3rd & 4th 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](#). **Charter E. Doyle Park** is at 5100 W Martin Mill Pike, Knoxville, TN 37920. [Map Link](#). **Maryville Walmart** = On Hwy 411 S between Market Pl and Legends Way, 2410 Hwy 411. Meet near fuel center [Map Link](#).

Candidates Nominated for the 2018 Executive Board

President.....Brian Worley	Historian...Ken Wise
Vice President....Billy Heaton	Director....Pete Berntsen
Treasurer.....Tim Bigelow	Director....Steve Dunkin
Recording Sec...Brad Reese	Director....Jean Gauger*
Mmbrship Sec...George Ritter	Director....Diane Petrilla*
Comm Director...Cindy Spangler	Director....Will Skelton

*New to the Board.

Please plan to attend the Election Picnic on August 19 at the Twin Creeks picnic pavilion.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Akhalesh & Veenita Bisaria, 865-405-7829,
Aklalesh.Bisaria@StrategicIPS.com,
515 Conkinnon Drive, Lenoir City, TN 37772
Neil Snepp, neilsnepp@comcast.net, 281-797-3808,
1029 Hilltop Lane, Kodak, TN 37764

COMING EVENTS – SEPTEMBER 2017

2 Saturday	Anakeesta Ridge and Landslide Scar
9 Saturday	AT Maintenance
10 Sunday	Middle Prong/Lynn Camp Prong/ Miry Ridge/Panther Creek
16 Saturday	Breakneck Ridge to Three Forks OT
23 Saturday	Goshen Prong – Little River Trail
30 Saturday	Boogerman Trail Loop

CONGRATULATIONS FRANK MARCH

Congratulations to SMHC member Frank March for receiving the Southeast Regional Individual Service Award from the National Park Service. Frank volunteers every weekend at the Sugarlands Visitors Center information desk. Frank also has documented all 150 cemeteries located within the Park, and this information has been compiled into a book published by GSMA.

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***

SMHC Newsletter Editor: Don Dunning 865-705-2154

Send hike write-ups & photos to: dedz1@aol.com.
Please include preferred contact method (email, phone).

FOR THE RECORD

National Trails Day: 21st Annual AT Work Day 6/3/2017

The 21st Annual Appalachian Trail Work Day in Great Smoky Mountains National Park was held on Saturday, June 3, 2017, in celebration of National Trails Day. This annual event is coordinated by the Friends of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the Southern Regional Office of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Smoky Mountains Hiking Club, and Great Smoky Mountains National Park. This year, approximately 100 volunteers contributed more than 600 hours of labor to accomplish important trail maintenance and improvements over approximately 20 miles of the Appalachian Trail within the GSMNP. This is the largest single workday of the year and enables the completion of important maintenance and improvements to the AT that otherwise would not be possible. We greatly appreciate the support of our generous donors and sponsors, including TVA, REI, Uncle Lem's, Little River Trading Company, Mast General Store, River Sports Outfitters, Food City, Cash Hardware, and Froschauer Catering.



Ramsey Cascades

6/4/2017

Fifteen hikers, including 10 members and 5 visitors, headed up the newly re-opened Ramsey Cascades Trail on a somewhat overcast Sunday morning. As always however, lush mountain greenery, tumbling waters of Middle Prong and Ramsey Prong over huge creek boulders, and the three famous old growth tulip poplars on the trail, wrought their "Smokies magic" for everyone. Several of the visitors were "flatlanders" from Florida, but were strong and amazing hikers! One of our hikers was 7 months pregnant, and just as fit! The cascades were full, and rain started just as we finished lunch there. Below is a photo of part of the group standing on the new bridge built by the NPS to replace the one that was destroyed by blowdowns and weather. We all were so appreciative of the Park's work and workmanship!

Diane Petrilla and Steve Hill



Cannon Creek Falls Off-Trail

6/10/2017

On an overcast Saturday in June, fifteen of the usual suspects convened at the Porters Creek trailhead to judge for themselves whether Greg Harrell and Ken Wise were sufficiently competent to lead a group hike up Cannon Creek. For the first five hours, hikers found themselves wading deep pools, climbing waterfalls,

negotiating slick boulders, and clambering over fallen tree boles before reaching the towering Cannon Creek Falls where each were required to inch fearfully along a narrow ledge extending across the mid-point of the falls. At this point, we were well within a mile of Le Conte Lodge, nevertheless, yet another five hours were consumed wading more deep pools, climbing more waterfalls, negotiating more steep boulders, and clambering over more fallen tree boles, but on a markedly steeper scale, before reaching a massive cliff face just beneath The Boulevard. After climbing around the cliff, the group filed along The Boulevard for a brief visit to the lodge, then started the long trudge down the Trillium Gap and Brushy Mountain trails to the parking lot where our cars were waiting impatiently for our return.

Greg Harrell and Ken Wise



Gregory Bald

6/18/2017

Fourteen hikers (11 members and 3 visitors) gathered at the Gregory Ridge Trailhead on this lovely day to ascend 3000 ft in 5.5 miles to Gregory Bald and the flame azaleas this year. This was a tough and steep climb, especially after the first 2 miles of trail. We had one challenging blow down to navigate, involving dropping packs and poles and crawling or inching our way under or over the very long and large tree trunk that had fallen. After what seemed like an endless climb, we still had .6 miles and 400 more feet to go at the junction of Gregory Ridge Trail and Gregory Bald Trail, to get to the Bald itself. The reward however, was the Bald, with many azaleas in bloom in a montage of colors of pink, orange and red. We had a brief rain shower on top, but the skies soon cleared. Our lunch spot was a gentle slope that looked out onto stunning views of Cades Cove and beyond. The hike down was thankfully easier, and still beautiful. Enjoyed this fun group of hikers very much!

Diane Petrilla and Doris Gove



TRAIL CLOSURE UPDATES

Jakes Creek Trail and Little River Trail in the Elkmont Historic District are now open without restrictions, following completion of demolition work to remove 29 structures in the Elkmont Historic District. The Rainbow Falls Trail continues to be closed every week on Monday through Thursday until November 17, 2017, for a 2-year trail rehabilitation project under the Trails Forever program. For the latest information on Park closures, please contact the Backcountry Office at 865-436-1297.

TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE ON AUGUST 21 – REMEMBER CLINGMANS DOME ROAD CLOSURE

On August 21, 2017, a total solar eclipse will be visible along a 67-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. A total solar eclipse occurs when the moon passes between the sun and the earth, blocking out the light from the sun and casting a shadow across the planet. Due to the movement of the sun and moon, the shadow will travel across the ground at 1600 miles per hour, so that totality will last only about 2 minutes in the Park. You will need to bring special protective glasses to safely view the 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. All tickets for the Clingmans Dome event are already sold out, and Clingmans Dome Road will be closed to all access from 11:00 pm on Saturday, August 19, through the evening of Monday, August 21, for this eclipse event. No overnight parking will be allowed at the Clingmans Dome parking area or at pull-offs, parking areas, and trailheads along the road during this time period. The road will be closed to all motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists. During this road closure, all trails, campsites, and shelters in the backcountry will remain open, but backpackers should carefully consider the road closure when planning their itineraries. All vehicles must be cleared from Clingmans Dome Road by 11:00 pm on Saturday, August 19.

Clingmans Dome Road is the only park road closed for the solar eclipse event, but park visitors should be prepared for high volume traffic across all park roads on Monday, August 21. Vehicles cannot stop in the roadway and must be parked only in designated parking areas. If roads become congested or cause a safety concern, rangers may temporarily close them to additional inbound traffic until after the eclipse to reduce traffic congestion and allow access for emergency response. Visitors should expect temporary road closures throughout the day.

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 may decide to close access some areas on August 21 to reduce gridlock, which may include Newfound Gap and Cades Cove.

While the western half of the park lies within the path of totality, there are limited roads and parking areas available for travel. The risk of traffic jams and road closures is likely to increase throughout the morning of August 21. Managers suggest that visitors plan ahead to find the right eclipse experience for their situation. Many communities outside of the GSMNP are hosting special events to observe and celebrate the celestial phenomena and those locales may be a great alternative for locals or travelers not wanting to risk traffic congestion in the Park.

For more information, see www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/2017-solar-eclipse.htm. An interactive map is available at http://go.nps.gov/GRSM_ECLIPSE, where backpackers can see which campsites are within the path of totality. The last total solar eclipse in the southeastern US was in 1970 along the Carolina coast, and won't occur again until 2045 in Alabama and Mississippi.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE – 2018 FEDERAL BUDGET PROPOSAL INCLUDES DRASTIC CUTS

The President's budget proposed for fiscal year 2018 (October 2017 through September 2018) includes drastic cuts to trail maintenance programs for federal lands; the proposed budget for trails and federal agencies that manage and maintain trails on federal land fails to include resources for even the most basic necessities to maintain and manage these critical resources.

- Funding for U.S. Forest Service trail maintenance would be cut by 84% from \$77M to \$12M; this is clearly contrary to the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act, which was passed with bipartisan support last year to reduce the maintenance backlog of 156,000 miles of trails in the National Forests.
- The National Park Service faces a 72% cut to trails programs, and a 13% cut overall, the largest cut since World War II.
- The Fish and Wildlife Service faces a 75% cut to trails programs, with no funding for land acquisition or recreation access.
- The Bureau of Land Management trails budget would be cut by 91%, which would drastically affect visitor services, maintenance and care of trails and trailheads, grounds maintenance, campground access, river and trail access, and interpretive resources.
- Volunteer and nonprofit organizations would not receive funding to maintain trails such as the Appalachian Trail.
- The Land & Water Conservation Fund would be cut by 84%, which could endanger hikers, bikers, and equestrian trail users as they use roads with motorized vehicles to bridge gaps in trails.

The proposed budget cuts would severely harm the outdoor recreation economy which generates more than \$50 billion annually and the livelihood of almost 2 million Americans. You may wish to communicate your opinions to your elected representatives to let them know why trails and outdoor recreation are important to you and urge them to oppose these draconian budget cuts and encourage adequate funding for these programs. [excerpted from American Hiking Society news releases]

Your editor notes that perhaps we should be grateful for gridlock, such that passage of this, or any, budget seems unlikely!

SUPPORT SMHC THROUGH THE KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM

Please consider helping to support SMHC by participating in the **Kroger Community Rewards Program**. Participation in this program by SMHC families has declined significantly over the recent past. The reason for this decline may be the fact that this program requires participants to renew their selections each year. If you would like to help, you can register online at www.krogercommunityrewards.com. You will need to enter your name and address, your Kroger Plus Shopper's Card Number, and the SMHC "NPO Number" which is **92545**. Please watch for more information in next month's newsletter.