



Smoky Mountains Hiking Club

P O Box 51592 Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

November 2017

WEDNESDAY HIKE: LOW GAP TO MT CAMMERER FIRE TOWER November 1 - Wednesday

Let's take a slow and steady climb up Low Gap trail and the AT to the Mount Cammerer Fire Tower. The reward will be outstanding views, and hopefully we will still see some beautiful fall foliage. Hike: 11.2 miles, rated difficult due to elevation gain of 3336 ft. Meet at **Comcast on Asheville Highway <see list>** at 8:00 am or at Cosby Campground hiker parking at 9:00 am. Drive 120 miles RT {@4¢ = \$4.80}.

Leader: Pat Watts, watts_at_home@yahoo.com, 901-487-7941.

APPALACHIAN TRAIL MAINTENANCE November 4 - Saturday

The November AT work trip will take place along the A.T. from Davenport Gap toward the Mt Cammerer Fire Tower. We will work to return the trail tread to its proper location and improve water drainage in the area. The work will require cleaning water bars and drainage features on the trail along with brush removal. The section of trail from the trailhead to the shelter was worked on in October and we will continue above where that group stopped. Participants will need to dress for the weather and bring work gloves, lunch, and water. Hike: ~5 miles, rated moderate. Meet at **Comcast on Asheville Hwy <see list>** at 8:00 am. Drive: 100 miles RT {@4¢ = \$4}.

Leader: Steve Dunkin, jsdunkin@roaneschools.com, 865-202-3286.

LAUREL FALLS / COVE MOUNTAIN November 5 - Sunday

Our hike begins on the Laurel Falls Trail which will lead us to the 60-ft falls. We then climb through old growth forest past the Little Greenbrier Trail intersection. A left turn leads to an old fire tower and the summit of Cove Mountain. The trail parallels the park boundary as we head down to the Sugarlands Visitors Center. Along the trail, we will see scars from the November wildfires. This car shuttle hike is 12 miles, rated moderately difficult. Meet at **Comcast on Asheville Hwy <see list>** at 8:00 am or at Sugarlands Visitor Center near restrooms at 9:00 am. If meeting at Sugarlands, please let leader Cindy Spangler know in advance. Drive: 90 miles RT {@4¢ = \$3.50}.

Leaders: Cindy Spangler, spangler@utk.edu, 865-776-1301; and Ramsey Roth, roth.smokieshiker@gmail.com.

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

MIDDLE PRONG / LYNN PRONG / MIRY RIDGE / PANTHER CREEK November 11 - Saturday

This long but lovely loop hike starts out on the wide Middle Prong trail, ascending beside the beautiful stream, boulders and cascades from which it gets its name. We reach Miry Ridge via Lynn Camp Prong after a total ascent of 2500 ft. After another 300 ft or so, we reach the highest point of this hike on Dripping Springs Mountain. Miry Ridge will hopefully afford some views of ridges beyond. At Jakes Gap we will pick up Panther Creek to descend back to Middle Prong, with a number of wet crossings. Although it may be chilly, please bring water shoes for the crossing at Panther Creek. Hike: 14.9 miles, rated Difficult. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** at 8:00 am, or at Middle Prong trailhead at 8:45am. Drive: 50 miles RT {@4¢ = \$2}.

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

HANGING VALLEY NEAR NOLAND CREEK OFF-TRAIL November 18 - Saturday (corrected date)

This hike is a moderate to strenuous off-trail excursion into Hanging Valley, one of the loveliest coves on the North Carolina side of the Smokies. Beginning where Canebrake Branch flows under the famous Road-to-Nowhere, the hike will follow old road grades almost all the way into the little Hanging Valley. Old home sites will be passed on the way and one will be found in the valley. After exploring Hanging Valley and enjoying lunch, we will go east for a short distance to a small gap, picking up and following an old road into the Peachtree Creek drainage where more home sites are found. The hike eventually emerges onto the Road-to-Nowhere near the point where Peachtree Creek flows under the road. Since the leaders of this hike are from North Carolina, those from Tennessee will carpool and meet the leaders along the Road-to-Nowhere at Peachtree Creek, exactly a half-mile past the Park entrance sign. Total hike is about 5 miles. Tennessee hikers contact coordinator Ken Wise, kwise@utk.edu, 865-310-7764. **Pre-registration for this off-trail hike is required – please contact the leaders for meeting place and time for this hike.**

Leaders: Clyde Austin III, iceaxe@suddenlink.net, 252-527-0146 and Cindy McJunkin mcjfive@aol.com, 828-712-9646.

EASY HIKE: WILL SKELTON GREENWAY November 19 - Sunday

Let's gather for a late Fall walk along the Holston River on the Will Skelton Greenway. Meet at the **Ijams Nature Center <see list>** (near the Visitors Center, 2915 Island Home Ave, Knoxville, TN 37920) at 1:00 PM. Hike: About 5 miles, rated easy. (Please remember that dogs are not allowed on SMHC hikes.)

Leader: Cindy Spangler, spangler@utk.edu, 865-776-1301.

Visit our website: www.smhclub.org

BIRD MOUNTAIN LOOP AT FROZEN HEAD November 24 - Friday

Need or want to work off some Thanksgiving Day calories? Join us the day after Thanksgiving and hike the Bird Mountain Loop Trail in Frozen Head State Park. We will take the Lookout Tower Trail about 4 miles to the intersection of the Bird Mountain Trail. Turning left we will now be on the Cumberland Trail, the Frozen Head Segment. As we travel southwards on the CT we will pass beside a unique geologic formation known as Castle Rock. A little farther down the trail we will intersect with the North Bird Mountain Trail. Staying on the Bird Mountain Trail we will begin our descent back down Bird Mountain which includes 14 switchbacks. This hike will be around 10 pumpkin pie burning miles, rated difficult due to total elevation gain and loss. Meet at **Oak Ridge Books-a-Million/Gold's Gym <see list>** at 8:00 am. Drive 50 miles RT {@4¢ = \$2}.

Leader: Bruce Bunting, bbunting05@gmail.com, 865-300-2279; and Billy Heaton, bheaton8@yahoo.com, 865-924-0095.

WEDNESDAY HIKE: ELKMONT TO TREMONT November 29 - Wednesday

Let's hike from Elkmont to Tremont, taking the Jakes Creek, Meigs Mountain and Lumber Ridge trails. Hike: 10.4 miles, rated moderate. Car shuttle. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** at 8:00 am or at the Tremont Institute at 8:30 am. Drive: 46 miles RT {@4¢ = \$2}.

Leader: Pat Watts, watts_at_home@yahoo.com, 901-487-7941.

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](#). **Ijams Nature Center** = From I-40, take Exit 388A to James White Parkway, TN-158W, from James White Parkway, take exit toward Sevier Avenue/Hillwood Avenue, right on Island Home Avenue, to 2915 Island Home Ave; meet at the Visitors Center. [Map Link](#). **Oak Ridge Books-a-Million/Gold's Gym** = 310 South Illinois Avenue 3-1/2 traffic lights in, on left coming from Knoxville, opposite Walmart. Meet next to Illinois Ave. in front of Books-a-Million. [Map Link](#).

COMING EVENTS – DECEMBER 2017

1 Friday	Buck Bald Sunset/Full Moon Hike
9 Saturday	Installation Dinner
10 Sunday	House Mountain
16 Saturday	Roaring Fork Road Ramble OT
23 Saturday	Rich Mountain Loop

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

Anakeesta Ridge Landslide Scar Off-Trail 9/2/2017

On a day Hurricane Harvey was sending cheerful greetings of strong winds and a steady drizzle of cold rain to the Smokies, fifteen of the Club's usual suspects gathered for a leisurely visit to a large landslide scar adorning the south slope of Anakeesta Ridge. The original plan had entailed an easy trek up and along a spur ridge and then a climb down the face of the scar. At the trailhead, the leaders diverted the group into Walker Camp Prong for an ankle-deep wade upstream to an intersecting tributary, which, in turn, afforded access to a long and formidable scar forming the east face of Anakeesta Knob. Cold and unabating rain augmented the excitement of scaling the steep water-slickened rock face, though the accompanying mists blocked visibility, denying any views of the stupendous depths all around. All reached the top in good spirits and, after a brief, cold respite on the ridgeline, the group soon discovered that descending the wet slick south face offered its own challenges. Greg Hoover performed admirably in planning and organizing the day's adventure. As the designated sweep, Greg Harrell was, to no one's great surprise, a noticeable disappointment, though he did point out that the group took five hours to hike slightly more than a mile and a half.

Greg Hoover and Greg Harrell



Mouse Creek Falls via Big Creek Trail 9/2/2017

A beautiful cool and somewhat misty morning, nine of us (5 members, 4 visitors) hiked the 4.2-mile easy hike along Big Creek to the bridge and back. Along the way we saw spectacular cascades, including Midnight Hole at 1.5 miles, and the 45-foot Mouse Creek Falls at 2 miles. While there were not as many wildflowers as we would find in the spring, we did see Hearts-a-Busting and Jewel Weed.

Betty Glenn



West Prong Loop**9/10/2017**

This hike was originally scheduled to be a loop from Middle Prong to Lynn Camp Prong to Miry Ridge and Panther Creek. However, the Park began closing roads early on this day in anticipation of the winds and weather from Hurricane Irma, including Tremont Road leading back to our trailhead. In spite of this, six determined hikers met at the locked gate near the Tremont Institute and quickly planned an alternative hike. We hiked West Prong to Finley Cane, Turkey Pen Ridge, Schoolhouse Gap, Bote Mountain and back West Prong. The entire loop was about 13.9 miles. We had a perfect and beautiful day with cool temperatures and sunshine. Although small, the group was very congenial and a delight to hike with on this day before worse weather was expected to set in. We all sent thoughts and good wishes towards friends and family we know in Texas and Florida.

Diane Petrilla and Eric Sundstrom

**Snake Den Loop****9/16/2017**

Nine members and 2 visitors enjoyed a great day in Cosby, and NOT shackled to the UT v FL football game! Perfect weather, strong and convivial hikers, and a huge rattler made for a memorable day!

Cindy Spangler

**Boogerman Trail Loop****9/30/2017**

Twelve hikers enjoyed a crisp start on this loop hike. A new bridge at the second creek crossing was greatly appreciated. Boogerman is a pleasant walk. The area was not logged and some large trees remain. Had lunch before heading out Big Fork Ridge. Walked through Cataloochee to our cars. Unfortunately, we did not see any Elk but heard them bugling in the woods.

John Smiley & David Smith



NOTE TO HIKE LEADERS: PLEASE DO NOT PUBLISH LOCATIONS OF WILDFLOWERS IN GSMNP

Sadly, theft of wild flowers is a significant problem in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. While we know that SMHC hikers would never be guilty of such vandalism, the Park has asked that the specific location of wild flowers should never be published or posted to social media. Apparently, individuals troll social media, discover specific locations of flowers and go dig them up. It's sad that we are no longer able to share this information so freely.

HIKERS NEEDED TO ASSIST ATMC WITH INVENTORY OF WINTER TRAIL CONDITIONS

Next February, the AT Maintainers Committee will need some assistance from strong hikers. Anticipating storm damage over the winter between Fontana and Wesser, we need a trail inventory so that we can plan our blowdown removal work the first Saturday in March. It will take three hikes to cover all 30 miles but all three are easily hiked as car shuttles. So, we hope to get six volunteers to do it. They would be asked to send us a report listing the size and location of blowdowns. If you are interested, please contact George Ritter rittergeo@gmail.com or Diane Petrilla petrillad@gmail.com. The "dragon" rarely freezes; it traverses relatively lower elevations.

ADDITIONAL HIKE LEADERS NEEDED FOR SMHC 2018 HIKE SCHEDULE

The SMHC hike schedule for 2018 is complete, but we still need hike leaders for the following hikes:

- Mon, May 28: Memorial Day Joint Hike with Carolina Mountain Club. Hike leaders will decide on a route. We will put the prospective leader in touch with CMC.
- Sun, Oct 7: Blue Heron Loop in the KY part of BSFNRRRA, a moderate hike of 7 miles.
- Sat, Oct 13: Chimney Tops/Spicewood Loop at FHSP, moderate 9-mile hike.
- Sat, Oct 27: Andrews Bald/Forney Creek down to see the old steam-tube boiler. There's a very short, level, off-trail stroll on an old RR bed to reach the boiler. Explicit directions are available.

Handbook descriptions have been written, all we need are a few more stout-hearted hike leaders. Please contact George Ritter at rittergeo@gmail.com to volunteer or get additional information.

PARKING AT SUGARLANDS VISITOR CENTER

Hikers meeting at Sugarlands Visitor Center are requested to park any vehicles left at SVC throughout the day in the small parking area northwest of the main parking area or in the bus parking area southwest of the Visitor Center building. Short-term parking in the main parking area is, of course, still acceptable. Thank you very much for your consideration of other visitors at SVC.

CHIMNEY TOPS TRAIL REOPENED!

Great Smoky Mountains National Park officials reopened the Chimney Tops Trail to a newly developed observation point starting Friday, October 6, 2017. The entire trail has been closed to the public since the Chimney Tops 2 Fire event occurred in late November 2016.

"We are excited to complete the work on the Chimney Tops Trail in time for the fall color season in Great Smoky Mountains National Park," said Acting Superintendent Clay Jordan. "We understand that many people have a strong emotional tie to the Chimney Tops Trail and its reopening has been a priority for moving forward in our recovery from the fire event."

The extended closure of the trail allowed the park's trail crew to design and develop a section of the trail which will provide a safe and sustainable gathering area for hikers to enjoy beautiful views of Mount LeConte and the Chimney Tops pinnacles. The top most 0.25-mile section of trail to the Chimney Tops pinnacles themselves, though, was heavily damaged by the fire and will remain closed until further notice due to the significant safety concerns that exist.

"While the upper section of trail and rocky pinnacles are not safe for visitors to explore at this time, restoring access to the trail allows us to enjoy the rehabilitation investment made to the trail by the Friends of the Smokies' Trails Forever Program in 2014, and also ensures the Chimney Tops Trail will remain a destination for visitors to enjoy a true Smoky Mountain hiking experience," added Acting Superintendent Jordan.

The funding for this trail project came through donations made by individuals from all across the country to the Friends of the Smokies' Fire Relief Fund. This fund was established in response to the outpouring of public support to aid in the rehabilitation and repair of park areas impacted by the fire.

Chimney Tops Trail is traditionally one of the most popular trails within Great Smoky Mountains National Park. It provides a short, but steep climb through mature forested areas with multiple bridge crossings over rushing mountain streams and spectacular mountain vistas. With this reopening, visitors can continue to enjoy most of the trail.

Visitors hiking the trail must remain within the open section and not explore beyond the closed area at the trail's termination due to significant environmental damage and safety concerns. The former trail past the closure point continues to slough off the side of the steep slope due to ongoing erosion of rocks and soil. Park staff will be monitoring the closed section of trail and the Chimney Tops throughout the upcoming season as rain, freeze and thaw cycles, and wind events continue to change the landscape. If in the future the ground is determined to be safe and stabilized enough for sustainable trail construction, the park will consider trail rehabilitation of this area.

For more information about the current park trails and facilities, see: <https://www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/temproadclose.htm>.
[From GSMNP News Release, dated October 3, 2017.]

SUPPORT SMHC THROUGH THE KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM

There is an **easy** way to show your support for the efforts of SMHC members who maintain over *100 miles* of the Appalachian Trail, including 15 trail shelters. All it takes is **a few minutes of your time** to enroll. **It costs you nothing**, but a fraction of your Kroger purchases will be returned to SMHC. From personal experience with a high school's participation in this program, it is amazing how the rewards can add up if large numbers of folks participate. SMHC's experience in the first year was that a few members signed up, and early returns were good, but folks failed to re-enroll, and numbers have dwindled. Kroger distributes up to **\$375,000 quarterly** to all registered programs. Imagine if even half of our 600 hiking club members enrolled!

Here's a simple How To Guide:

If you shop at Kroger even occasionally, you likely have a Kroger Plus Card. If so, you must go online to www.Kroger.com and choose "Community" from the pull-down menu:

1. If you have not created an account for your Plus Card, do so first.
2. Go to the "Community" section of your Account Information and enter the SMHC NPO number **92545**.

That's all. It takes 7 - 10 days for your enrollment to become active. The good news is that Kroger is making a change soon that will end the requirement to re-enroll annually, so your choice of SMHC will last as long as you choose. Of course, your child or grandchild might persuade you that his or her marching band is more deserving, but you can change back to SMHC after she or he graduates. It's your choice, but rest assured that the maintainers will utilize every dollar for our continuing efforts along the AT. Your choice of SMHC (or other community organization) will be printed at the bottom of your Kroger receipt for your convenience.

NOTE: The Smoky Mountains Hiking Club and its Executive Board maintain a strictly non-commercial status for the club and its activities. By providing information on the Community Rewards Program, SMHC in no way endorses or advertises the Kroger Company.