



# Smoky Mountains Hiking Club

P O Box 51592 Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

April 2018

## APPALACHIAN TRAIL WORK TRIP April 7 - Saturday

We will remove blowdowns from the trail within day-hike distance from trailheads. Our certified chain sawyers and/or crosscut sawyers will need assistance for limb lopping and removing cut brush from the trail. Specific work areas will be determined in March, based on locations with the greatest need. Participants need to be aware of the mountain weather forecast and bring appropriate clothing, work gloves, lunch, water, and perhaps a vacuum bottle of a hot beverage. Although returning to the trailheads before dark is anticipated, it is always a good idea to pack a headlamp or flashlight. Meet at the Sugarlands Visitors Center at 8:00 am. Participants will need to wear sturdy footwear and bring work gloves, lunch, snacks, and water. If you have a hardhat, ear protection, and/or safety glasses, please bring those as well. **Please pre-register with leader so that appropriate tools will be available and team assignments can be planned.**

Leader: Dick Ketelle, 678-464-3380, [rhketelle@comcast.net](mailto:rhketelle@comcast.net).

## THE ROCKY CRAG OFF-TRAIL April 14 - Saturday

The Rocky Crag traversed The Righteous Way is a classic off-trail adventure including wild wilderness, old manways, bearways, and lots of knife-edge ridge climbing to get your fill of air. This is a difficult off-trail excursion that will include the Porters Creek Trail, the lower part of the Dry Sluice Manway, Lester Prong, a very steep scramble up the side of Rocky Crag, and the exhilarating knife-edge ridge of the Rocky Crag. The climb will terminate at the ultimate summit of the Rocky Crag (known by some as the Real Bunion). After a short hike along the AT for a visit to the Tourist Bunion, we will return by the Middle Crag to Lester Prong and then out by the lower part of Dry Sluice Manway. Total hike, including the Porters Creek Trail segment, is about 11 miles (3.5 miles off-trail), 10+ hours, rated strenuous. **Previous off-trail experience required. Preregistration for this off-trail hike is required – please contact trip leaders to get details, including meeting time and place.**

Leaders: Greg Harrell, [GSHarrell@milligan.edu](mailto:GSHarrell@milligan.edu); and Tim Hernandez, [guitar83@juno.com](mailto:guitar83@juno.com).

## FROZEN HEAD STATE PARK WILDFLOWER HIKE April 8 - Sunday

Frozen Head State Park encompasses over 24,000 acres of wilderness and wildflower diversity. We will begin the hike by parking a couple of cars at the picnic area (our ending point) and shuttle folks about 1 mile to the trailhead. Typically, we will be able to enjoy dozens of species of wildflowers this time of year. Besides the wildflowers, on this year's hike (Panther Branch and North Old Mac Trails) we will enjoy waterfalls, footbridge crossings, cascades and cascade crossings, and an overlook with distant valley views. Hike: 6 miles, rated moderate. Meet at **Oak Ridge Books-a-Million <see list>** on S. Illinois Avenue ready to leave @ 9:00 AM. Drive: 50 miles RT {@4¢ = \$2}.

Leaders: Lynda Bryan, [ellymay2015@aol.com](mailto:ellymay2015@aol.com), 865-661-3117; and Jim Quick, [jqhiker37@aol.com](mailto:jqhiker37@aol.com), 865-660-3351.

## WHITE OAK SINK April 15 - Sunday

White Oak Sink, basically a basin surrounded by steep hills, is without a doubt one of the most popular wildflower hikes in the Smokies. In April each year this natural botanical garden comes alive with more than 40 varieties of native wildflowers. The name "Sink" comes from the caves that are found in the area, more like rocky sinkholes. Wildflowers, history, and geology will comprise our day. Hike: roughly 8 miles RT with a steep climb out of the Sink, rated moderate. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** at 8:30 am. Drive: 40 miles RT {@4¢ = \$1.60}.

Leader: Alan Sweetser, 865-938-7627; and Cindy Spangler, [spangler@utk.edu](mailto:spangler@utk.edu), 865-776-1301.

## WEDNESDAY HIKE: BRADLEY FORK TO CABIN FLATS April 11 - Wednesday

We saw SO many wildflowers on this hike last year, we'll try it again. In the Smokemont area of the Park, we will take the Bradley Fork Trail to the Cabin Flats Trail, and then follow that to Campsite 49 to enjoy our lunch by the water. We will return to the Smokemont campgrounds the same way. Hike: 9.2 miles rated moderate. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** at 7:30 am, Sugarlands Visitor Center at 8:30 am, or the Smokemont Campground parking at 9:15 am. *Be sure to email the hike leader if you plan to be at Sugarlands or at Smokemont so we'll know to look for you.* Drive: 126 miles RT {@4¢=\$5}.

Leader: Pat Watts, 901-487-7941, [watts\\_at\\_home@yahoo.com](mailto:watts_at_home@yahoo.com).

## WEDNESDAY HIKE: PORTERS CREEK April 18 - Wednesday

Not only will we see wildflowers on this classic spring hike, but we can also visit a cemetery, a house site, the former SMHC cabin, and the Messer barn. We will hike out the Porters Creek Trail to Campsite 31, passing Fern Falls on the way, and then return the same way. Hike: 7.2 miles, rated moderate. Meet at **Comcast on Asheville Hwy <see list>** at 8:00am or at the trailhead in Greenbrier at 9:00am. Drive: 80 miles RT {@4¢= \$3}. Leader: Pat Watts, 901-487-7941, [watts\\_at\\_home@yahoo.com](mailto:watts_at_home@yahoo.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\*\*\*

**SMHC Newsletter Editor: Don Dunning 865-705-2154**

Send hike write-ups & photos to: [deds1@aol.com](mailto:deds1@aol.com).

Please include preferred contact method (email, phone).

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

**SMHC PHOTO SHOW****April 20 - Friday**

Got some cool hike photos? Or some good pics of wildflowers? How about a slide show of a recent trip? Put 'em on a thumb drive and bring them to the annual SMHC photo show on Friday, April 20, from 7-8:30 or so. Or just come and enjoy some light snacks as we see what other hikers have been up to in the past year. It's also a great opportunity to bring a significant other or a friend to see if they might get inspired by some of the beautiful things we get to see on the trail. Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church, 9132 Kingston Pike in Knoxville. Park in the lot next to South Cedar Bluff, across from the Exxon station. We'll have signs or people stationed to guide you the right room. For more information contact Brad Reese, [bradktn@gmail.com](mailto:bradktn@gmail.com).

**LITTLE RIVER & ROUGH CREEK OUT AND BACK****April 21 - Saturday**

Because the Sugarland Mountain Trail continues to be closed due to the fire damage in 2016, we are offering an out and back hike in the same area. This lovely spring hike begins on the Little River Trail. We will follow the old logging road for 4.5 miles, passing alongside the four recently renovated vacation cabins of times gone by and the stunning rushing white waters of Little River. We'll make a left onto the Rough Creek Trail where we'll climb about 1500 feet over 2.8 miles to reach the Sugarland Mountain Trail and our lunch spot. We will return by the same route. Wildflowers should be at a premium on this hike and worth the trouble; however, because of the total mileage (~14.6), this hike is rated difficult. Drive: 70 miles RT {@4¢=\$3.50}. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** at 7:30 am.

Leaders: Mary Anne Hoskins, [mhoskins@utk.edu](mailto:mhoskins@utk.edu), 865-523-1051 and Debra Barton, [dgbarton@comcast.net](mailto:dgbarton@comcast.net).

**EASY HIKE: SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD TRAIL****April 22 - Sunday**

Hike about 2 miles total out and back along historic Smoky Mountain Railroad route in south Knoxville. Will include an SMR history discussion by Joe Holloway and a new segment built by Knoxville Parks and Recreation department. Meet at **Chester E. Doyle Park <see list>** at 5100 West Martin Mill Pike at 9:00 am. Leader: Tim Bigelow, [bigelowt2@mindspring.com](mailto:bigelowt2@mindspring.com), 865-607-6781.

**LITTLE CATALOOCHEE****April 28 - Saturday**

This will be a leisurely hike through the rarely visited Little Cataloochee Valley. Highlights include the Hannah Cemetery, Hannah Cabin, Dan Cook Cabin, and Little Cataloochee Baptist Church. Perfect for photography buffs. Hike is six miles with the option for more; rated easy by Club standards. Meet at **Comcast on Asheville Hwy <see list>** at 8:00 am. Drive: 138 miles RT (@4¢ = \$5.50).

Leaders: David Smith, [dcshiker@gmail.com](mailto:dcshiker@gmail.com); and Lois Esmark, [misse711@aol.com](mailto:misse711@aol.com).

**NEW BACKPACKER ORIENTATION****April 28-29 – Saturday-Sunday**

If you have an interest in starting or improving your backpacking skills this is your opportunity to get your toes wet on an easy weekend backpacking excursion. Several experienced backpackers with the SMHC will share their experience and skills with you on a relaxing overnight hike up Big Creek trail to Upper Walnut Bottoms (BCS 36). The hike up Big Creek is 6 miles on a gradually sloping trail. BCS 36/37 is one of the best backcountry campsites in the Park. Once we set up camp we can hike up to a wonderful cascade on Camel Gap trail (about 4 miles round trip) if we choose to do so. We will spend the afternoon and evening discussing shelter setup, cooking tips, fire building, backpack loading differences, etc. The event leaders have hiked all the trails in the Park and have extensive experience backpacking in the Smokies. This is designed as a fun and moderate hiking experience. Note: there is no privy at BCS 36. Participants must have access to their own backpacking gear, and must be able to hike 5 to 6 miles with a 30 to 40 pound pack. Contact Steve Dunkin to get a list of essential gear. Also, if you would just like to hike up to the site and back, email Steve and let him know. **Preregistration for this backpacking trip is required and attendance is limited due to campsite restrictions – please contact the leader to get more info, meeting time and place.** Drive appx. 120 miles RT {@4¢=\$5}.

Leaders: Steve Dunkin, [jsdunkin@roaneschools.com](mailto:jsdunkin@roaneschools.com), 829-202-3286; and Amanda and Adam Beal.

**COMING EVENTS – May 2018**

5 Saturday	AT Work Trip
6 Sunday	BSF Grand Gap Loop & Angel Falls
12 Saturday	Spence – Russell Field Loop
19 Saturday	Kuwahi Scar Off-Trail
19-20 Saturday-Sunday	Welch Ridge/Cold Springs Backpack
26 Saturday	Ace Gap
28 Monday	Joint Hike with Carolina Mountains Club

**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](#). **Charter E. Doyle Park** = 5100 W Martin Mill Pike, Knoxville, TN 37920. [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](#). **Oak Ridge Books-a-Million** = 310 South Illinois Avenue (same lot as Golds Gym) 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](#).

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

Paul McDonough, [paul.mcdonough@comcast.net](mailto:paul.mcdonough@comcast.net), 865-272-3956, 27 Riverside Drive, Oak Ridge, TN 37830

## FOR THE RECORD

### Bald River Falls

2/3/2018

13 members and 2 visitors travelled to the stunning Bald River Falls off the Cherohala Highway, and the Falls didn't disappoint! Roaring over large tiered rock outcroppings, the Falls were full, and tumbled about 90 ft. down, to join the Tellico River. The Bald River Trail in the Bald River Gorge Wilderness basically follows Bald River upstream, sometimes climbing high above the river level, sometimes walking right along it. The sound of water, soft pine needle covered trail, lots of green rhododendron, laurel and holly make this a very beautiful hike. We had lunch on a large rock outcropping with views of another large cascade, boulders and pools near our turn around point. This was a 10 mile in and out hike, with a great groups of hikers!

Diane Petrilla and Terry Nyenhuis



### Schoolhouse Gap/Turkeypen Ridge/Finley Cane/ Bote Mountain

2/7/2018

Six determined and dedicated hikers, all members, turned out for this 9 mile loop hike on a day when the weather forecast was for 100% chance of rain! What a group! In fact, it rained a little as we started up Schoolhouse Gap, but by the time we were on Turkeypen, the rain was gone, the rhododendron and laurel leaves were shiny, the pine needle covered trail lovely, and several normally small crossings were tumbling and full. We were even spared rain at lunch! Rain started back a bit on the last leg down Bote Mtn., but was quite tolerable, and all felt refreshed and well-exercised after this hike!"

Diane Petrilla and Dave Grab



### Elkmont to Tremont

2/10/2018

All-day rain, especially heavy in early afternoon, was the forecast for the day. With this in mind, the co-leaders and the three other hikers that showed up, were all agreeable to a Plan B. Instead of coming out to Tremont by Lumber Ridge Trail, this plan would let the hiking group finish up by coming out on Curry Mountain Trail to Metcalf Bottoms, thus shorting distance and time, and possibly avoiding the heavier rain that was on the way. After leaving Jakes Creek Parking area at Elkmont, the group in short time headed west on Meigs Mountain Trail. The small streams flowing across this trail were easily rock-hopped, but a couple of the larger crossings just west of Campsite #20 were more difficult due to increased water flow. After a short lunch at the Meigs Mountain/Curry Mountain trail junction, the hikers

headed out on Curry Mountain Trail, and then on down to Metcalf Bottoms. Despite the dreariness of the day there was little fog, with views to be had from the upper part of the trail of Cove Mountain to the north, and back to the east, more distant Mount LeConte. Plan B seem to be the best option for the day as the heavy rain that was expected began falling less than fifteen minutes after the hikers left Metcalf Bottoms.

David Starnes



### Timothy Creek Off-Trail

2/24/2018

After a discombobulated start due to a road closure on Hwy 416, 10 members in two groups rendezvoused on Old Settlers Trail shortly before heading off-trail up Timothy Creek. We saw a few early wildflowers, numerous homesites with some interesting relics, one building remnant with stacked logs still standing, some impressive stone walls and stacks, and a lot of evidence of wildlife activity in this area. It was a pleasant day for a hike in the woods with good company.

Ed Fleming & Hiram Rogers



### Cucumber Gap Loop

2/25/2018

Skies were very cloudy and rain seemed imminent as we started down Little River Trail w/our lone visitor. As we passed Huskey Branch the waterfall was flowing with all its glory due to the early morning storms. As we proceeded the skies cleared somewhat and the hike was rain free!! We saw early signs of spring with hepatica blooming profusely on a hillside. One of the small creeks along Cucumber was flowing swiftly but we rock hopped and slid along a log to reach the other side. As we made our way to Jakes Creek Burnt Mountain was very clear at 3,373 ft. Before returning to our vehicle we looked around at the remnants of the old remains of homes and chimneys at Elkmont many of which have been torn down and a few renovated. A good day on the trail and we were the sole hikers on the trail this day. We may have even recruited a new member to the club and a young person at that!!!

Lynda Bryan and Jim Quick



**Possum Creek Gorge, Cumberland Trail 2/28/2018**

Six very hardy members met on this day to do the Possum Creek Gorge section of the Cumberland Trail, just south of Soddy Daisy, TN. Using a car shuttle, we began our hike at the Heiss Mountain Road trailhead, hiking north 9.5 miles. This group was hardy because it rained 100% of the time, and this is a challenging trail, full of rock steps, steep ascents and descents, all very slippery! Still, a feat of trail workmanship went into this section! Big Possum Creek and Little Possum Creek were rain-swollen (and fortunately had excellent bridge crossings) and Imodium Falls was roaring with water. We passed Lain's Lane (named after a former SMHC President), Stack Rock and Ed's Crack. We also saw hepatica, rue anemone, and chickweed. In the second half of the hike, after Imodium Falls, normally easy creek crossings had become challenging with high and broad water, but all of these good-natured hikers waded across! We were glad to see the end of the trail (understatement) but also glad to have seen this marvelous section of the CT.

Diane Petrilla and Ron Brandenburg

**PARK COMPLETES SOLAR ENERGY PROJECT**

Great Smoky Mountains National Park has completed construction of a solar energy project at the Cable Mill Area in Cades Cove that will annually reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 23 tons and reduce fuel costs by \$14,000. The new array of 80 solar panels replace a diesel-fuel generator formerly used for power at the site which caused noise disruptions to park programs and the visitor experience to the historic landscape.

**HIGHWAY NC-28 UPDATE**

Hwy NC-28, which has been closed near Fontana, NC since a rockslide in December, was partially reopened on March 2. Traffic is reduced to 1 lane during the daytime hours while crews are working on drilling for the large rock net that will be installed. The impacted area is about 50 yards north of the Rainbow Falls cliffs. Work will continue for a few more weeks, but will not impact traffic traveling to and from the Fontana area.

**SMHC CONSERVATION CONTRIBUTIONS**

In 2017, SMHC membership dollars supported maintenance on 100 miles of the AT through the Smokies to the Nantahala Outdoor Center in NC. Financial support was also donated to the following regional advocacy groups:

**The Appalachian Trail Conservancy ([www.appalachiantrail.org](http://www.appalachiantrail.org))**

The ATC's mission is to preserve and manage the Appalachian Trail – ensuring that its vast natural beauty and priceless cultural heritage can be shared and enjoyed today, tomorrow, and for centuries to come.

**Cherokee Forest Voices (<http://cherokeeforestvoices.org>)**

Cherokee Forest Voice's mission is the restoration and preservation of biodiversity, improved protection of fish, wildlife, plants, soil and water resources, an increase in the size of existing Wilderness Areas, designation of additional Wilderness Areas, increased availability of nature-oriented recreation and the protection of scenic values.

**Cumberland Trails Conference ([www.cumberlandtrail.org](http://www.cumberlandtrail.org))**

The mission of the Cumberland Trails Conference is to build, acquire funding for, and promote the Cumberland Trail, under the auspices of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC). In addition to hiking, the Cumberland Trail helps to preserve the historical and cultural heritage of Tennessee, conserve natural resources, provide educational and recreational opportunities, and connect local communities.

**Foothills Land Conservancy (<http://foothillsland.org>)**

This organization is dedicated to protecting, preserving, and enhancing the lands and environments of the Southern Appalachian region and promoting the character of the land for the benefit of the general public, now and in the future.

**Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont (student scholarships)**

<https://www.nps.gov/grsm/learn/education/classrooms/tremont.htm>

This organization delivers experiential learning for youth, educators, and adults through programs that promote self-discovery, critical thinking, and effective teaching and leadership. They believe that education creates lasting positive change for people and our planet.

**The Sierra Club's Harvey Broome Group - Inspiring Connections Outdoors**

<https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/harvey-broome/ico-home>

This community outreach program provides opportunities for urban youth and adults to explore, enjoy and protect the natural world.

**Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy (<https://appalachian.org>)**

Since 1974, this Asheville-based organization has over 70,000 acres of unique plant and animal habitat, clean water, farmland and scenic beauty of the mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee.