



Smoky Mountains Hiking Club

P O Box 51592 Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

May 2018

APPALACHIAN TRAIL WORK TRIP May 5 - Saturday

We will start at Davenport Gap and work up toward the Mount Cammerer side trail. We plan to clean waterbars, inspect Davenport Gap shelter, trim vegetation, clear any manageable blow downs and perform light trail maintenance. A moderate hike of six to eight miles is typical. Meet at **Comcast on Asheville Hwy <see list>** at 7:30 am or Davenport Gap trailhead at 9:00 am. Drive: 120 miles RT {@4¢ = \$4.80}. Tools will be provided. **Please pre-register with leader so that appropriate tools will be available.**

Leader: Tim Bigelow, bigelowt2@mindspring.com, 865-607-6781.

BIG SOUTH FORK: GRAND GAP LOOP & ANGEL FALLS OVERLOOK May 6 - Sunday

We will begin at the Leatherwood Ford trailhead and follow the John Muir trail to the Angel Falls Overlook. The overlook will give us a spectacular view of the Big South Fork Gorge. From here, we start the Grand Gap Loop looking for spring wildflowers. We may see evidence of an old forest fire and will pass by the grave of a small child as we close the loop. Return is on the John Muir trail. Hike: 12.4 miles, rated moderate due to the length. Meet at **Outback Steakhouse on Merchants Drive <see list>** at 9:00 am or Leatherwood Ford trailhead at 10:30 am. Drive: 150 miles RT {@4¢ = \$6.00}.

Leader: Steven Miller, Samiller71@rocketmail.com, 865-318-9882.

EASY HIKE: TEN MILE GREENWAY May 10 - Thursday

Meet at the parking area east of **Wynnsong (AMC Classic 16) Cinema <see list>**, 200 North Peters Road, Knoxville, 37923 at 5:30 pm, for a 4-5 mile walk on one of Knoxville's premier greenways.

Leader: Cindy Spangler, spangler@utk.edu.

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).

SPENCE FIELD / RUSSELL FIELD LOOP May 12 - Saturday

This classic and challenging club hike will take us from the bottomlands of Cades Cove all the way up to the Appalachian Trail. We will begin at the Cades Cove day-use picnic area, working our way up the Anthony Creek Trail admiring spring wildflowers along the way. Crossing foot bridges and meandering through pine and oak stands, we will continue our climb to higher elevations, passing through hemlock forests and a spruce/fir ecosystem. Then at approx. 4900' we will reach the AT and the beautiful grassy meadows of Spence Field. Here we will enjoy our lunch while we soak up the views of Fontana Lake and distant mountains such as Thunderhead and Shuckstack. From there we will follow the AT south a couple of miles to the Russell Field shelter and then back down the mountain to Cades Cove to complete our hike. This hike is about 13.5 miles and rated difficult due to a 3000' elevation gain. Meet at the **Alcoa Food City <see list>** ready to leave at 7:30 am. Drive: 60 miles RT {@4¢ = \$2.40}.

Leaders: Billy Heaton, bheaton8@yahoo.com, 865-924-0095; and Ron Blessinger, rblessinger@msn.com, 865-465-7117.

WEDNESDAY HIKE: ACE GAP & BEARD CANE May 16 - Wednesday

We will hike the Ace Gap trail to the Beard Cane trail, 5.6 miles each way, with an elevation gain of 1569 feet. We will see the Pink Lady Slipper Orchids. Hike: 11.2 miles RT, rated moderate because of length. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** 8.00 am. Drive 40 miles RT {@4¢ = \$1.60}.

Leader: Malcolm McInnis, 865-675-6002, mcinnism@tds.net.

KANATI FORK / THOMAS DIVIDE / NEWTON BALD May 19 - Saturday

After a short car shuttle, we will start the climb up Kanati Fork. We should have wildflowers to distract us from the 2100' elevation gain. Once on Thomas Divide we have a nice high elevation hike. A short distance out the Newton Bald trail is campsite 52, a good place for lunch. Newton Bald is no longer bald but the trail is downhill to our cars. Hike is 11.4 miles, rated moderately difficult due to the initial climb. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** at 7:30 am or **Sugarlands Visitor Center** at 8:30 am. Drive: 130 miles RT {@4¢ = \$5.20}.

Leader: David Smith, dcshiker@bellsouth.net; and Cindy Spangler, spangler@utk.edu.

SMHC Program Committee Requests Your Help!

The SMHC Program Committee will meet in May to begin planning the 2019 calendar of events, and would love to have your suggestions. Also please consider volunteering to lead or co-lead a hike in 2019; we always appreciate new leaders. Please send your ideas for hikes or other activities to Brad Reese at bradktn@gmail.com.

WELCH RIDGE / COLD SPRINGS BACKPACK May 19-20 – Saturday-Sunday

We'll start at Clingmans Dome and check out the renovated observation tower and view Welch Ridge in the distance before starting downhill. We follow the AT to Welch Ridge trail. The Welch Ridge trail descends gradually along the ridge. We'll take a short side trip up to High Rocks and enjoy one of the best views in the area and check out the old observation tower cabin. Past High Rocks we start downhill on the Cold Spring Gap trail to Hazel Creek. We have several crossings of wide and swift Hazel Creek before arriving at Campsite 83 where we camp for the night. Sunday we plan to hike up the Bone Valley Trail to the Hall Cabin and back, which involves several more creek crossings. Then we hike out Hazel Creek trail past historic Procter and the Calhoun house. Past Procter, we will hike 4.4 miles on the Lakeshore Trail a bit up and down to Eagle Creek. We plan on catching the boat at Eagle Creek over to Fontana Dock where a car will be pre-staged for the drive back to Clingmans Dome. Hike: 16 miles Saturday and 9 or 13.5 Sunday. Rated **Difficult**. **Preregistration for this backpacking trip is required and attendance is limited due to campsite restrictions – please contact the leaders for more info, meeting time and place, and carpool arrangements.** Drive: 140 miles RT {@4¢ = \$5.60}. Leaders: Tim Bigelow, bigelowt2@mindspring.com, 865-607-6781; and Steve Dunkin, jsdunkin@roaneschools.com, 829-202-3286.

KUWAHI SCAR OFF-TRAIL May 20 – Sunday

(Please note change of date from Handbook.)

This off-trail hike will begin north of Clingmans Dome where we will descend east of Kuwahi Branch and north to an elevation of roughly 5,400 feet. We will then traverse to the west to enter the upper drainage of Kuwahi where a thousand plus foot rock slide was created several years ago as part of a major storm event. We will ascend the slide and enjoy incredible views along the way. Our off-trail outing will terminate by intersecting the AT. From there, depending on the time and interest of the participants, we may either return to the Clingmans Dome parking lot or walk south along the AT and enjoy additional views from Mount Buckley. Hike is approximately 3-4 miles with over 1,000 feet of climbing, rated difficult due to off-trail sections and some exposure. **Pre-registration with the leaders is required. The group size will be limited to 8, including the leaders.** Drive: 115 miles RT {@4¢ = \$4.60}. Leader: Mark Shipley, shipleymark57@gmail.com, 865-388-5261; and Hiram Rogers, hiramrogers@yahoo.com.

WEDNESDAY HIKE: RICH MOUNTAIN LOOP, INDIAN GRAVE GAP & CROOKED ARM TRAILS May 23 - Wednesday

We will hike the Rich Mountain Loop, Indian Grave Gap, and Crooked Arm trails, not necessarily in that order. Hike: 8.5 miles, rated moderate due to 1958 ft. elevation gain. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** 8.00 am. Drive: 60 miles RT {@4¢ = \$2.40}. Leader: Malcolm McInnis, 865-675-6002, mcinnism@tds.net.

Visit our website: www.smhclub.org

ACE GAP (AND BEYOND?) May 26 - Saturday

We will hike the Ace Gap trail along the northwest Park Boundary from Rich Mountain Gap. There will be occasional views of Tuckaleechee Cove and a few other sights including a cave entrance and possibly late wildflowers. The trail ends just past Ace Gap at the intersection of the Beard Cane Trail. If interest and stamina persist, we may add a few miles on Beard Cane trail and then return back the same route to Rich Mountain Gap. Hike: 11 (+3?) miles RT, rated moderate but longer hike mainly along the ridgeline. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** 8.00 am. Drive: 50 miles RT {@4¢ = \$2}. Leader: Tim Bigelow, bigelowt2@mindspring.com, 865-607-6781.

CATALOCHEE DIVIDE TRAIL TO PURCHASE KNOB Joint Hike With Carolina Mountain Club May 28 – Monday (Memorial Day)

Continuing a long tradition of a yearly hike with the Carolina Mountains Club, we have chosen a trail that should avoid crowds in the middle of the National Park on this holiday weekend, and start at a relatively cooler high elevation of 4100 ft. Most importantly, this is a beautiful trail, with frequent wildflowers and at the end, gorgeous open views at Purchase Knob of the western North Carolina mountains. In addition, this is a wonderful opportunity to meet or re-visit CMC friends and share our mutual enjoyment of the mountains. Our elevation gain is only about 900 ft. total. Hike: 9 miles RT, rated moderate. Meet at **Comcast on Asheville Hwy <see list>** at 8:00 am. Drive: 170 miles RT {@4¢=\$6.80}. Leaders: Diane Petrilla, petrillad@gmail.com, 931-224-5149; and Cindy McJunkin, mcjfive@aol.com, 828-712-9646.

COMING EVENTS – June 2018

2 Saturday	National Trails Day
3 Sunday	Haw Ridge Park
9 Saturday	Window Cliffs / Burgess Falls
9 Saturday	Roaring Fork Off-Trail
10 Sunday	Ramsey Cascades
16 Saturday	Gregory Bald via Twentymile/Wolf Ridge
23 Saturday	Bradley Fork to Cabin Flats
23-24 Saturday-Sunday	Backpack to Cabin Flats
30 Saturday	Meigs Creek - Curry Mountain Car Shuttle

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](#). **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](#). **Wynnsong (AMC Classic 16) Cinema / Ten-Mile Greenway** = 200 North Peters Road, Knoxville TN 37923. [Map Link](#).

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Suzan Murphy, smurphy@utk.edu, 865-567-3884,
4141 Forest Glen Drive, Knoxville, TN 37919
Masen Shreve, 865-742-3228,
701 Ridgelake Drive, Peachtree City, GA 30269

FOR THE RECORD

AT Work Trip 3/3/2018

Twelve members divided into 4 teams and set out from different points to remove a total of 21 blowdowns from the Appalachian Trail sections between Yellow Creek Gap and Locust Cove in Nantahala National Forest. These industrious maintainers also removed trash from Locust Cove, Brown Fork shelter, and Cody Gap; refilled mulch buckets at the Brown Fork privy; and rehabbed 0.3 miles of trail south of Stecoah Gap.

Franklin LaFond

Rich Mountain Loop 3/4/2018

On March 4 six club members had a wonderful day of hiking and Cades Cove views along the Rich Mountain Loop/Indian Grave Gap/Crooked Arm Ridge Trails. We also took the opportunity to walk down to Rich Mountain Road (where we met horseback mulch/chainsaw and trail maintainers) in order to pick up that short section for all our 900 miler maps. A great day! In the process Jeff and Eric "discussed" whether the Townsend "Y" is the "Y" or the "Wye" so if you have an opinion let us know. Finally, Tracy and Neil revealed that Diane P., bribes members of her Wed hike excursions with the best cookies in East Tennessee even when it is pouring rain. Hikers were Angela, Jeff, Neil, Eric, Steve and Tracy.

Steve Dunkin



Gabes Mountain Trail 3/7/2018

Nineteen hikers assembled in a snow-covered winter wonderland at the Cosby campground to hike up Gabes Mountain trail to campsite 34. At the start a few footprints were all it took to get through the snow to the mud but higher up the trail the snow was deep enough that the trail remained snow covered. When we got to the access trail to Hen Wallow falls the group waited for others to catch up. It was decided that the steep trail down to the falls might be slick with the snow covering so the hike to the falls was postponed until the return trip. We did not linger over lunch at campsite but a snow ball fight did erupt. A truce was called and we finished lunch and headed back down the trail. On the way back some went down the trail to Hen Wallow falls and some kept on going. By that time the trail was not snow covered but muddy. The mud was probably slicker than the snow. Everyone returned safely and thanked Lloyd for picking a good hike and a beautiful day to do it.

Ron Brandenburg



Gibson Gap 3/10/2018

8 very lucky club members managed to avoid the rain drops on a very pleasant 11-mile hike in the Cumberland Gap National Historic Park. We also managed to narrowly avoid getting a ticket on the drive up, as the pick-up truck that was in front of us got pulled over! After scouting the hike last weekend the leader decided to do the hike in the opposite direction than what was in the hike description, so we started with the steep climb up the Lewis Hollow Trail. We then followed the Ridge Trail, stopping for lunch at the Gibson Gap campsite before descending the Gibson Gap trail. Most of the group stayed tightly bunched together all day, making for some good conversation.

Brad Reese



Old Settlers Trail 3/17/2018

Five of us decided it was worth seeing if the weather for hiking would be much better than the forecasters had predicted. The weather turned out to be a wonderful spring day of hiking on Old Settler and Maddron Bald trail. Rain was never an issue for what was supposed to be a wet hike.

Dale Potter



Sugarlands Ramble 3/17/2018

Ten hikers showed up for what turned out to be a sunny day despite a brief shower at SVC. Started at the Huskey Gap parking area & headed down a small path to the first of several home sites. Ed Fleming enlightened us with the history of the area & a dowsing lesson. Followed a section of old Hwy 71, the first paved road over the mountain. Found the chimney to the Sky-U-Ka Hotel. Strolled along the river to the site where Jim Carr's tub mill once stood. Walked a section of the Will Thomas Turnpike which dates to the 1830's. On the way back to our cars we visited at the Newman Cemetery.

David Smith and Ed Fleming



CADES COVE ROAD PAVING

Paving of Laurel Creek Road, Townsend Entrance Road, and Tremont Road will continue until approximately June 15. Visitors traveling into Cades Cove should expect single-lane closures and traffic delays throughout this project. The lane closures will be managed with flagging operations and pilot cars through work zones. Some parking areas and pull-offs will be closed intermittently. There will be no lane closures on weekends or holidays.

22nd ANNUAL GSMNP APPALACHIAN TRAIL WORK DAY ON NATIONAL TRAILS DAY – JUNE 2, 2018

The 21st Annual GSMNP Appalachian Trail Work Day will occur on National Trails Day, Saturday, June 2. Get some exercise, enjoy a day of camaraderie (RAIN OR SHINE), receive a t-shirt designed by artist and club member Karen Brackett, and conclude your day with a fabulous picnic dinner at the Greenbrier Picnic Pavilion. Volunteers of all skill and experience levels are welcome – this is a great opportunity to learn trail maintenance techniques from experienced leaders. The staging area will be the Sugarlands Visitor Center (bus parking lot) at 7:30 AM.

Pre-registration is required. Registration fee is \$20 (\$25 after May 15). These funds help with the acquisition of materials for trail improvement. For example, it costs thousands of dollars to have locust logs and construction materials airlifted to specific trail sites. Registration forms will be available at area outdoor outfitters and on the SMHC website, www.smhclub.org.

WELCOME TO OUR 2018 RIDGERUNNERS

We are excited to welcome our new Ridgerunner crew for the 2018 season, which began March 1.

Christine Popp, originally from Orange, Connecticut, is new to our GSMNP Ridgerunner crew this year, and will be the long-season Ridgerunner in GSMNP from March through October. Christine previously served in the Peace Corps in Ethiopia as a community health educator. She thru-hiked the Pacific Crest Trail in 2017 and fell in love with the idea of living and working in the backcountry. This is her first time in the Southeast, and she is so excited to get to know the beauty of the Smoky Mountains.

Chloe de Camara is returning for her 3rd season. She will alternate on the north and south end with Christine through the end of May. Chloe and Morgan will switch sections midway through the season.

Carl Goodman is coming back for another season which will mark his 15th year as a Ridgerunner! He will be based at Fontana and cover the south end of the Park to the Spence Field shelter.

Thanks to each of our 2018 Ridgerunners for their important service in keeping this section of the AT and its hikers safe.

RAINBOW FALLS TRAIL REHABILITATION PROJECT CONTINUES

The second phase of a 2-year trail rehabilitation project began Monday, April 16 on the popular Rainbow Falls Trail. The trail will be closed April 16 through November 15, 2018 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.

"I encourage everyone to hike the trail this season on the open days to see the transformation taking place first hand," said Park Superintendent Cassius Cash. "It is truly inspiring to see the craftsmanship our Trails Forever crew brings into the design of trail improvements. The rehabilitated sections are not only more sustainable and safer for hikers, but they also blend naturally into the landscape."

The Trails Forever crew will continue to 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. LeConte, LeConte Lodge, and the LeConte Shelter by using one of the other four open trails to the summit including Alum Cave, Boulevard, Trillium Gap, and Brushy Mountain trails. The Mt. LeConte Lodge will remain open and can be accessed from any of these routes during the Rainbow Falls Trail closure. The Mt. LeConte backcountry shelter will be closed to the public for eight, 7-night periods beginning July 18 through October 24 to accommodate members of the American Conservation Experience trail crew working on the rehabilitation project. For more information on the shelter closure, please contact the Backcountry Office at 865-436-1297.

Trails Forever is a partnership program between Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Friends of the Smokies. The Friends have donated over \$1,500,000 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. For more information about you can volunteer to support the Trails Forever program, please visit <https://friendsofthesmokies.org/trailsforever/volunteer/>.