



# Smoky Mountains Hiking Club

P O Box 51592 Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

September 2018

## CUMBERLAND TRAIL IN CATOOSA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA September 1 - Saturday

Our hike will begin at the Devil's Breakfast Table trailhead on the Cumberland Trail in Catoosa WMA. We leave the trailhead and head south-west across a wooden bridge and head up the road for less than two-tenths of a mile where we enter into the woods. During the hike we will cross two streams, one with a bridge and one rock-hop crossing. The first overlook provides a view of the river near the parking area. We then continue up and down to start the big ascend, between bluffs, over approximately 380 rock steps/pavers to reach the top. Once on top, the hike is an easy, leisure hike. We will make two side hikes to overlooks of the Daddy's Creek. The hike is 4.8 miles RT, rated moderate due to the steep bluffs. If time and spirits allow, the distance can be increased. Meet at **Gold's Gym & Books-A-Million in Oak Ridge <see list>** at 7:30 am or at the trailhead at 9:00 am. Drive: 115 miles RT {@5¢ = \$5.75}.

Leader: Pete Berntsen, [peteberntsen@gmail.com](mailto:peteberntsen@gmail.com), 865-256-7896.

## A.T. MAINTENANCE WORK TRIP September 8 - Saturday

On this AT work-trip, participants will cut weeds and prune larger vegetation between the Lower Mount Cammerer Trail and the Mount Cammerer side trail. Participants are encouraged to bring appropriate clothing and gloves and to plan for a long day that, for those interested, will include a side trip to the Mount Cammerer fire tower. **Pre-registration with the leader is required so that needed tools will be available. As part of pre-registration, the leader will provide for a meeting time and place and any other pertinent information.**

Leader: Mark Shipley, [shipleymark57@gmail.com](mailto:shipleymark57@gmail.com), 865-388-5261.

## WHITE ROCKS & SAND CAVE September 9 - Sunday

The White Rocks, on the Eastern end of the Cumberland Gap National Historic Park, used to signal early settlers that that they were about 20 miles, or a day's journey, from the Cumberland Gap. Today it provides a destination for determined hikers and provides a wonderful view of the Powell River valley and beyond. The hike gains about 2000 feet in four and a half miles, but most of this is along an old road with lots of switchbacks to smooth the ascent, at least somewhat. After leaving White Rocks we'll visit Sand Cave, a huge rock shelter whose floor is carpeted with fine sand, before heading back down the mountain. Total hike distance about 9 miles. Meet at **Outback on Merchants Drive <see list>** at 8:00 am. Drive: 120 miles RT {@5¢ = \$6}.

Leader: Brad Reese, [bradktn@gmail.com](mailto:bradktn@gmail.com).

**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).

## WEDNESDAY HIKE: WEST PRONG / BOTE MTN / SCHOOLHOUSE GAP & CHESTNUT TOP TRAILS September 12 - Wednesday

We will hike the West Prong, Bote Mountain, Schoolhouse Gap, and Chestnut Top trails. A short car shuttle required. Hike: 10.3 miles, rated moderate. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** at 8:00 am or at the Townsend Wye at 8:30 am. Drive 40 miles RT {@5¢ = \$2}.

Leader: Michael Zielinski, [kf4yws@comcast.org](mailto:kf4yws@comcast.org), 865-363-6527.

## STYX BRANCH OFF-TRAIL (Note Change from Bullhead via Big Branch Off-Trail) September 15 - Saturday

This hike was cancelled on July 21 because of rainstorms and is hereby rescheduled for a hopefully drier day. Mt. Le Conte's Styx Branch, far from being a route to the underworld, will be a highway to a heavenly lookout. We depart from the Alum Cave trail just above Arch Rock and follow the creek and its ever steeper and smaller tributaries to a point roughly 1000 ft (vertical) below the peak of Mt. Le Conte at which time we must improvise as best we can to find a way safely to the top. Lunch and views at Myrtle Point are major objectives with a return on trail. The uphill part of the hike is mostly off-trail, rated difficult. RT distance roughly 10 miles depending on return route selected. This hike will be rescheduled or cancelled in case of really bad weather. **Pre-registration for this off-trail hike is required; please contact trip leaders for meeting place and additional information.** (Please note that the originally scheduled hike, Bullhead via Big Branch, was cancelled due to poor conditions, mostly related to the summertime growth of perennials, insects, etc., encountered during the scout hike; as well as the current closure of the Bullhead trail. It, or a similar trek to Bullhead, may be re-scheduled for a more suitable time of year, e.g. early spring. Also, we hope that the Bullhead trail will be open at that time so we can use it for part of the hike.)

Leaders: Mike Harrington, [mike\\_harr@bellsouth.net](mailto:mike_harr@bellsouth.net), 765-4604; and Cindy McJunkin, [mcjfive@aol.com](mailto:mcjfive@aol.com), 828-712-9646.

## BAXTER CREEK TO MT STERLING September 15 - Saturday

The hike to Mt. Sterling via Baxter Creek is a challenging hike, with an ascent of 4,100 feet over 6.1 miles. We'll have a gentle half mile before starting a steady steep climb to the top of Mt. Sterling at 5820 feet. There we will lie in the grass, eat lunch, climb the tower for views, and look for early spots of fall color. Return trip is back down the same way. Carry plenty of water to remain hydrated, given the weather we've had lately it could be hot! Hike is 12.4 miles, rated difficult due to elevation change and length. Meet at **Comcast on Asheville Hwy <see list>** ready to leave by 7:30 am or meet at the trailhead at 8:45 am. (If you want to meet at Exit 407, contact the leader and she'll put you in touch with an alternative.) Drive: 140 RT {@5¢ = \$7}. Leader: Rebekah Young, [rebekahy27@aol.com](mailto:rebekahy27@aol.com), 865-548-6648.

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

**CADES COVE MOONLIGHT HIKE  
September 22 – Saturday**

On this first day of fall, we will start our hike at the Cades Cove loop road parking area and will look for shooting stars and wildlife on this popular hike. Shoes compatible with walking on pavement and a headlamp or flashlight are recommended. We will wait to start until the nightly closure of the road at 8:00 PM. S-Mores are planned at the end of the hike. Hike: 8 miles, rated moderate. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** at 5:00 pm. Drive: 90 miles RT {@5¢ = \$4.50}.

Leader: Pete Berntsen, [peteberntsen@gmail.com](mailto:peteberntsen@gmail.com), 865-256-7896.

**WEDNESDAY HIKE: ALUM CAVE TRAIL  
TO MOUNT LE CONTE  
September 26 - Wednesday**

This hike will take the Alum Cave Bluff trail to Mt. Le Conte. Hike: 11 miles with the option to add a side trip to Myrtle Point, rated Strenuous. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** at 7:30 am or at the Sugarlands Visitors Center at 8:30 am. Drive: 90 miles RT {@5¢ = \$4.50}.

Leader: Michael Zielinski, [kf4yws@comcast.org](mailto:kf4yws@comcast.org), 865-363-6527.

**EASY HIKE: IJAMS NATURE CENTER  
September 29 - Saturday**

Beauty in our back yard! We'll hike the River Boardwalk Trail, which hugs a rocky cliff face and features scenic views of the Tennessee River. Next, we'll jump over to Mead's Quarry and hike Imerys Trail, then cool off in the Hayworth Hollow. As an option, end the hike with refreshments at Ijams Beer Garden. Meet at 2:00 pm at the **Ijams Visitor Center <see list>**, 2915 Island Home Avenue.

Leader: Beth Eades, [eadesb@comcast.net](mailto:eadesb@comcast.net), 865-609-8311.

**FAMILY HIKE: BIG CREEK TO MOUSE CREEK FALLS  
September 29 - Saturday**

We will park at the Big Creek/Baxter Trail parking area and hike up Big Creek Trail. Big Creek is a gently sloping trail that climbs toward the Walnut Bottoms back country campsite 5 miles away. Big Creek Trail follows the old Crestmont Lumber Company railroad line from logging days. At the 1.5 mile mark we will pass the Midnight Hole area. Approximately 2.1 miles up the trail is Mouse Creek Falls. This is an excellent hike for young or new hikers. This is an easy hike totaling 4.2 miles, and appropriate for all ages. Once we reach the falls we will stop for a snack and photos then head back down the trail. Note: We will not be swimming, rather hiking. So leave the trunks at home. Meet at **Comcast on Asheville Highway <see list>** at 8:00 am. Drive time to Big Creek is around an hour and a half up I-40 to the Waterville exit. Drive: 120 miles RT {@5¢ = \$6}.

Leader: Steve Dunkin, [jsdunkin1302@gmail.com](mailto:jsdunkin1302@gmail.com), 829-202-3286.

**SAFETY: OUR #1 PRIORITY**

Anyone traveling in the backcountry, on a hike or a volunteer work trip, should file an itinerary with a trusted friend or family member. If there is a need for assistance due to an injury, please contact 911 or Park Dispatch at 865-436-1230.

**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](#). **Gold's Gym & Books-a-Million in Oak Ridge** = 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](#). **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](#). **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](#).

**COMING EVENTS – October 2018**

- |             |                                     |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| 6 Saturday  | AT Work Trip                        |
| 7 Sunday    | Blue Heron Loop                     |
| 13 Saturday | Chimney Tops/Spicewood Loop at FHSP |
| 20 Saturday | Mt Cammerer via White Rock Falls OT |
| 20 Saturday | Mt Cammerer On-Trail                |
| 27 Saturday | Forney Ridge Trail to Andrews Bald  |

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

- Debbie & Barry Branes, [dbarnes@blomand.net](mailto:dbarnes@blomand.net), 931-252-5688, 131 Barren Bluff Lane, McMinnville, TN 37110
- Lisa Crutchfield, [noblebluebird@gmail.com](mailto:noblebluebird@gmail.com), 865-719-6548, 7241 Sorrenta Road, Knoxville, TN 37918
- Deanna Davis, [Deanna-davis@hotmail.com](mailto:Deanna-davis@hotmail.com), 865-982-1106, 423 Tennessee Avenue, Greenback, TN 37742-4303
- Liz Ehr, [liz04118@gmail.com](mailto:liz04118@gmail.com), 661-808-7195, 817 Bent Tree Road, Knoxville, TN 37934
- Erin Wentley, [ewentley@hotmail.com](mailto:ewentley@hotmail.com), 865-336-6844, 520 Prestwick Ridge Way, Apt #59, Knoxville, TN 37919

**CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU:  
SMHC EXECUTIVE BOARD FOR 2019**

- |                                  |                                |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| President.....Brian Worley       | Historian...Ken Wise           |
| Vice President....Diane Petrilla | Director....Pete Berntsen      |
| Treasurer..... Tim Bigelow       | Director....Steve Dunkin       |
| Secretary..... TBD               | Director....Jean Gauger        |
| Mmbrship Sec... George Ritter    | Director....Dale Potter*       |
| Comm Director...Cindy Spangler   | Director....Will Skelton       |
|                                  | Director....Taylor Weatherbee* |

\*New to the Board.

Thanks to these members for volunteering to serve our club in 2019. And sincere thanks to outgoing Board members and officers Billy Heaton and Brad Reese for their outstanding service to SMHC.

## FOR THE RECORD

### Fork Ridge and Deep Creek Trails

7/8/2018

There were 24 hikers including 9 visitors on this wonderful 9-mile trek. This hike had a little bit of everything that makes hiking in the Smokies so grand, Creek Crossing, old forests, water features, views, and tough ascents. The Fork Ridge section of the hike descended through old growth forest and thick understory, and provided a cool and pleasant walk. The trail had been recently cut back and free of brambles, however there were a number of large trees down across the trail. We ate lunch and enjoyed the cool waters of Deep Creek at the trail junction of Fork Ridge and Deep Creek, before we started our uphill ascent. After going over and under a huge Hemlock that barred the Deep Creek trail, we started our tough ascent.

JD Schlandt



### Roundtop Trail

7/11/2018

On a warm morning in July, hikers gathered at the Townsend Wye. Arrangements were made to ferry everyone to Metcalf Bottoms picnic area to start the hike while leaving a few cars at the Wye to complete the car shuttle when we were finished with the hike. There were some hikers already at Metcalf bottoms to make the total number of hikers 23. Not the most we have had on a hike but still a large number for Wednesday. We walked a mile up the road to the trailhead where we paused for the 'mandatory' group picture. Then we went up hill for about 2.5 more miles until we reached the high point for the day of 2,600 feet. Not high enough to make it much cooler. At four miles there is the very steep section of the trail. Fortunately, it was dry so it was not slippery and everyone made it down safely. That would be a tough climb going the other way. Lunch was eaten along the trail then we continued on to what everyone was waiting for, the river crossing. On this hot day the cool water felt very good. Some just stood in the river to soak up as much of the cool as possible. With a total length including the walk on the road of 8.5 miles and elevation gain of only 1255 feet this hike was over early even with the time taken for the car shuttle.

David Grab and Ron Brandenburg



### Rainbow Falls Trail to Mt Le Conte

7/14/2018

Twelve hikers, 9 members and 3 visitors, began our hike from the Rainbow Falls trailhead. It was overcast and sticky as we made our ascent to Rainbow Falls. We took a break to cool down a bit at the Falls before moving on to the Spur Overlook. We took the side trip and was greeted with a great view of the inside of a cloud which shortly thereafter produced a nice summer shower for us as we reached the top. After a well deserved lunch break we made our way back the way we came. Although the views we're not great this trip, this group of hikers and the hike itself was.

Ron Blessinger and Jon Richey



### Charles Bunion

7/22/2018

With only five members showing up for this classic club hike it appeared that a lot of folks were convinced that it would rain and storm. So was I, but we were wrong. We started up out of Newfound Gap parking lot in a fog that got thicker the higher we went. We were all familiar with this hike and stopped at all of the little "vista viewing windows" only to be teased by intermittent openings of the fog that gave us short glimpses of the valleys below. However, the forest takes on a different, special kind of feel in that kind of cloud cover. Hikers mentioned that it felt like we were in New Zealand in a Hobbit movie. The temps were very comfortable and we knew that it could certainly be different in July. We were flanked on the way up by a doe and two little fawn that were less than a month old. At the bunion we took a brief lunch break and were joined by a couple of little hungry squirrels that weren't too proud to beg. All in all, it was another wonderful day in the woods...

Billy Heaton and Ron Blessinger



### Little River-Huskey Gap-Sugarland Mountain

7/25/2018

It was a great day for a hike as 20 hikers gathered at Fighting Creek Gap (as well as several "thousand" others going the opposite direction) to start our hike. Five of the hikers were new to the Wednesday group although most were club members. We went along a manway for about a mile while climbing over many blowdowns both small and large. That is a good way to get scratches and bruises but every one made it. After a short stop at the Old Elkmont cemetery, we continued on the manway to Elkmont road and on to Little River trailhead. Sandy took us a short way off of Little River trail to see the Troll bridge. We did not see any troll because they come out very early in the morning. Ten o'clock is much to late to see a troll. We continued up Little River and Huskey Gap trail aiming to eat lunch at the intersection with Sugarland Mountain trail. Before we got there

we ran into a nest of unhappy yellow jackets and several hikers got stung. At the intersection we were doctoring our stings with various medications while eating lunch. Several other yellow jacket nests were seen on Huskey Gap and Sugarland Mountain trails but I do not think anyone got stung at these other nests. When we got back to Fighting Creek Gap, the parking lots were still overflowing but we did not care anymore. We had a good hike and were ready to call it a day.

David Grab and Ron Brandenburg



**Bob's Bald and Hangover 7/28/2018**

We started on a beautiful morning at the trailhead off Cherohala. We had 8 members and 2 visitors hiking. With all the rain in June, the trail had places where the weeds were thick and above head height but other places are in great shape. It was a

good day for wildflowers including big patches of Turks cap Lillies and bee balm and others. Bobs Bald is kept open by the Forest Service and has an amazing spread of wildflowers this time of year. We enjoyed the view and flowers during a lunch stop then headed on toward Hangover. Some of the group hiked a ways further then turned back and the others went on to the Hangover through many more sections overgrown with high weeds. There was a bit of discussion as to which view spot is actually the Hangover but they all look good on such a nice day.

Tim Bigelow and Steve Hill



**URGENT LEGISLATIVE UPDATE  
LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND**

Your help is urgently needed to encourage Congress to reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which is otherwise set to expire on September 30, 2018. The LWCF is one of the most important conservation and recreation programs, which has helped to protect, preserve, and expand our public lands throughout the United States for over 50 years. Since its creation in 1963, this visionary and bipartisan program has helped to conserve trails, national parks and forests, fish and wildlife refuge areas, and state and local parks in every state. All of this was done without reliance on taxpayer dollars, as LWCF is funding by a small portion of federal offshore drilling fees to protect important land, water, and recreation areas for all Americans.

Without action by Congress, the LWCF will expire on September 30. Congress previously allowed the LWCF to expire in 2015 after 50 years of success; fortunately, it was reinstated within months and is now authorized through September 30, 2018. It is now critical that the LWCF be permanently reauthorized with full, dedicated funding. If the program expires, access to the places we love would be at risk.

Please take time to contact your elected representatives to let them know that reauthorization of the LWCF is important to you to preserve our public lands for future generations, and urge their support for H.R. 502 or similar legislation.

**2019 SMHC HIKE LEADERS – HANDBOOK INPUT**

All hike leaders for SMHC hikes during 2019 should submit a brief description of their hike to the SMHC Handbook Editors as soon as possible if you have not already done so. 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](mailto:rittergeo@gmail.com)) and Ken Wise, ([kwise@utk.edu](mailto:kwise@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. Always bring rain gear, water, and food. Each carpool rider should reimburse the driver 5¢ per mile. If you have any doubts or questions, please contact the hike leader.

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

**PLEASE SUPPORT SMHC THROUGH KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS**

There is an **easy** way to show your support for the Conservation Program of Smoky Mountains Hiking Club. 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. In the most recent quarter, **proceeds from only 23 SMHC member households amounted to \$110**. 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](http://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 Non-Profit Organization (NPO) number **MV194**.

That's all. It takes 7 - 10 days for your enrollment to become active. The good news is that Kroger has ended 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 club will utilize every dollar to support conservation of the areas where we love to hike.

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.