



Smoky Mountains Hiking Club

P O Box 51592 Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

February 2020

CUMBERLAND TRAIL LOOP AT FROZEN HEAD

February 1- Saturday

We will begin this challenging hike by setting up a short car shuttle, leaving cars at the Big Cove Camping area, then driving the very short distance back to the Rocky Fork Trailhead just outside the entrance of FHSP. It is a 2.4 mile hike up to Ross Gap, on a lovely access trail that connects with the Ross Gap Tr. The climb to Ross Gap is steep! (about 1400 ft). Then we pick up the Cumberland Trail, heading NE, and gaining about 600 more ft. of elevation, to hike past fabulous sandstone rock formations. These include Mushroom Rock, Castle Rocks West and Castle Rock itself. When we intersect the Lookout Tower Tr, we head down and back to the cars at Big Cove. Total hike mileage 9.9 miles. Rated at Difficult side of Moderate. Meet at Golds Gym/ BAM, Oak Ridge at 8am. RT 50 miles= \$2.50. Leader: Diane Petrilla, petrillad@gmail.com or 931-224-5149.

DADDY'S CREEK- CUMBERLAND TRAIL

February 8 - Saturday

We will hike a newly constructed portion of the Cumberland Trail from Peavine Road near Crossville. The first part of the hike is through Keyes-Harrison Wildlife Management Area (WMA). About two miles in, we cross the bridge across McGinnis Branch which flows into Daddys Creek. This is also the entrance to Catoosa WMA. After the bridge we proceed up a steep hill and between two large rocks which puts us near the top of the plateau. The hike passes by many interesting rock structures and views of the river below. This is a moderate hike due to a couple of short, steep trail sections. The hike will be about 8 miles; 4 miles in-and-out as Catoosa WMA is closed to traffic until the end of March.

We will meet at 8 AM at Oak Ridge Books-a-Million/Gold's Gym near Illinois Avenue. 310 South Illinois, and carpool to Peavine Road as parking is limited. Drive is 100 miles round trip from Oak Ridge @ 0.05 = \$5.00 suggested driver reimbursement. Anticipated return to Oak Ridge is 5:00pm. Leader: Pete Berntsen, peteberntsen@gmail.com or 865-256-7896.

SMHC PHOTO PROGRAM

February 9 - Sunday

Although the club stopped having photo competitions a few years ago, many members enjoy getting together to look at photos taken by fellow club members. So, load your best shots (no more than 20) on a thumb drive and join us for an afternoon of photography, stories, and memories. Light refreshments will be served. Meet at the Humana Community Center, 4438 Western Avenue (One half mile West of I-640 in I-640 Plaza), at 2:00pm

Coordinator: Cindy Spangler, spangler@utk.edu, 865-776-1301 or Sarah Wimmer, ches1995@yahoo.com, 865-382-9636

EASY HIKE: UT ARBORETUM TRAILS

February 9th - Sunday

The Arboretum is located on Hwy. 62 on the way to Oak Ridge. This will be a pleasant walk/hike about 3 miles on a variety of trails through this delightful and educational mixed habitat setting. This is also a good place for first time hikers. Bring water and a snack if you'd like. You might want that camera also! We will meet at 1:30pm at the Visitor Center parking lot just inside the entrance to the Arboretum. Leader: Priscilla Clayton, sigmtngirl@earthlink.net, 865-966-4142

MT. CAMMERER VIA DAVENPORT GAP & A.T.

February 12- Wednesday

Let's climb to Mt. Cammerer a different way, via the A.T. at Davenport Gap. The 3000 ft. ascent is fairly gradual, passing junctions with Chestnut Branch Trail and Lower Mt. Cammerer Trail. There is a long sturdy rock wall built by the CCC as we get higher, and some magnificent views towards the Pigeon River Valley and the Black Mountains. As long as trail conditions permit, we will take the .6-mile spur trail to Mt. Cammerer. Total hike mileage 12.6, rated Difficult. Meet at Comcast, 5720 Asheville Hwy at 8am. RT 60 miles= \$3.00. Leader: Diane Petrilla, petrillad@gmail.com, 931-224-5149.

ALBRIGHT GROVE

February 15 - Saturday

This is a wonderful remnant area of virgin timber in a less-visited area of the park. From the Maddron Bald trailhead a couple miles from Cosby, we follow the Maddron Bald Trail on a moderate uphill course, passing an old log cabin along the way. Shortly after crossing the foot log over Indian Camp Creek we reach the side trail into Albright Grove, where we can see some truly big yellow poplars (tulip trees), along with some other large specimens of various tree species. We will eat lunch in the grove, then return via the same trail we came in on. The hike is about 7 miles, rated moderate. Snow or icy roads will cancel the hike! Meet at Comcast on Asheville Hwy @ 8:30am. Drive 120 miles RT = \$6.00

Leader: Claudia Dean, claudiadean0@gmail.com, 865-206-0145

LITTLE CATALOOCHEE- OFF-TRAIL

February 15 - Saturday

This hike entails moderate off-trail exploration of the early 20th-century mountain farms of the Bennett, Woody, and Conard families in a remote section of Little Cataloochee of the National Park. After taking an access trail for about a mile, the hike will follow ridges and streams as hikers examine the considerable detritus remaining from the farmsteads. Leaders will bring photos of the former cabins and barns for comparison with the current sites. Hiking distance is about 8 miles. Pre-registration for this off-trail hike is required.

Leaders: Mike Knies knies06@att.net and Cindy McJunkin mcjfive@aol.com (828) 712-9646



LEADER'S CHOICE: RICH MOUNTAIN TRAIL & INDIAN GRAVE TRAIL LOOP

February 22 - Saturday

Cades Cove is closed but we will visit the area with a climb up Rich Mountain Trail to Indian Grave Gap Trail. We will hike Indian Grave Gap Trail while viewing the beauty of Cades Cove with no cars passing through as we hike to Rich Mountain Road. We will follow Rich Mountain Road back to our cars at the Ace Gap trailhead. The hike is rated moderate to difficult due to the climb over the first 2.3 miles. Hike approximately 8.5 miles. Meet at 8:00am at Alcoa Food City. Round trip drive: 50 miles = \$2.50

Leader: Dale Potter, dalepotter55gmail.com, 865.773.8114

ANGEL FALLS/ GRAND GAP LOOP, BIG SOUTH FORK February 26 - Wednesday

Beginning at the Leatherwood Ford TH area, we will hike north on the John Muir Trail to the Angel Falls Overlook, with its stunning views of the Big South Fork Gorge and River. We will pick up the Grand Gap Loop, hiking counter-clockwise, to circle the top of the Cumberland Plateau, with more fabulous views, including the Grand Gap Overlook. Although this can be a long hike, there are shorter options, and we can car-pool accordingly. RT hike distance to Angel Falls Overlook is 6 miles. Grand Gap Loop adds 6.8 miles, for a total of 12.8 miles. Rated Moderate. Meet at Hardees, 107 Buffalo Rd., Clinton at 7:30am (please note earlier meet-up time). Distance 110 miles RT= \$5.50.

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

SUGARLAND VALLEY HISTORY HIKE February 29 - Saturday

We will start off on the Old Sugarland Trail making observations along the way. At about .7 mile we will leave the trail to follow the old farm lanes as we visit home sites. Throughout the hike we will observe various degrees of forest recovery from the 2016 fire. We will also witness the old "leave no trace" practice vs. the new "Leave No Trace" efforts. The hike will seek out more home places before we head to the CCC camp. Time will be spent learning about the 3 decades use of this area. Leaving the CCC camp, we will walk through the farmland the forest is reclaiming to 3 more home sites and view various artifacts. We will emerge at the Sugarland Cemetery for a time of reflection of those buried there. Depending on time/weather we will add two more stops before hiking back to the parking lot. Total hike miles 7.5, rated moderate-strenuous, due to potential dangerous winter weather, please provide a cell number to get back to you. Remember it could be 55 and sunny or just the opposite, and since the fire, the Park is quick to close the roads. Meet at Sugarland Visitor Center Rest Room area at 8:45 AM. Please park in the lot above and to the right of the visitor's center

Leaders: Mark and Janet Snyder, 865-448-1183, markandjanets@gmail.com.

COMING EVENTS – March 2020

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| 7 Saturday | A.T. Work Trip |
| 14 Saturday | Little Greenbrier/Walker's Sister's Cabin |
| 14 Saturday | The Sugarfingers, Off-trail |
| 21 Saturday | Bradley Fork to Cabin Flats |
| 28 Saturday | Norris Dam River Bluff Trail |
| 28-29 Sat/Sun | A.T. Maintenance Backpack |

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](#). **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](#). **Hardees** off I-75 at Hwy 61 [Map Link.htm](#). **Humana** 4438 Western Avenue Knoxville. ½ mile West of I-640 @ exit 1 [Map Link](#). **UT Arboretum** 901 S. Illinois Oak Ridge. Hwy 62 approaching Oak Ridge from Solway. [MapLink](#)

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

FOR THE RECORD

Rich Mountain Loop

12-18-2019

Carolyn chose another cool but sunny and beautiful day for a hike. This time 21 hikers started up Rich Mountain Loop trail after being told by a Park Volunteer that we could not walk on the Cades Cave Loop road. Of course, we did not want to do that anyway. At the first junction, one hiker continued on Rich Mountain Loop trail and the other 20 went up Crooked Arm trail. The Crooked Arm cascade was quite full and looking good. As we got up to higher elevations, we found some snow, but it would be stretching it a bit to say we hiked in the snow. The highlight of the day was the hoarfrost on the trees at the higher elevation. In some places, the trees were covered but the trail was not. Most of the group ate lunch at the tower site, a few chose to not climb



up there but they missed the candy that Nancy made and brought. There is no view from the top anymore because the rhodos have grown tall enough to block the view but there are some good views from the trail. When we got to the John Oliver cabin we spent some time relaxing in the sun before finishing the hike. Back at the cars, Carolyn treated us to cookies. This loop is 8.5 miles with 1958 of elevation gain. Add another 100 feet for the tower site.
Ron Brandenburg

Lumber Ridge & Spruce Flats Falls Manway 12-21-2019

The hike included a stop at Honey Cove Falls and Spruce Flats Falls. It was attended by Leo Lawson and Suzan Murphy. The weather was great for hiking. Dale Potter



Ft. Dickerson 12-28-2019

For this last "official" Club hike of 2019, we had a fantastic turnout of 22 members and 16 visitors for a total of 38 participants! The mild weather and a chance to learn about the history of Ft. Dickerson was also helpful. Leader Eric Keller began by providing an excellent overview of the strategic importance of Knoxville in the Civil War, (river and railroad) and the fortifications on the south side of the Tennessee River built to protect it. They included Ft. Dickerson, Ft. Higley and Ft.



Stanley. Perched on high hills, they were unassailable by General Longstreet's troops. We then walked on the meandering trail system in the Park, down to the Augusta Quarry (also known as

Lambert's Quarry). Although rose marble was not quarried there, we talked about Knoxville's history as the "Marble City" and the many buildings in the USA that used this beautiful form of crystallized limestone. The Augusta Quarry is under development as an improved green-space in Knoxville, part of the Legacy Park System, and with help from the Aslan Foundation. The climb back up to the parking lot was a great post- Christmas workout, and we appreciated everyone who joined us.

Eric Keller and Diane Petrilla

7 Islands State Birding Park 01-01-2020

The first day of 2020 started with sunny skies and cool windy conditions-perfect for 7 members and 2 visitors hiking Seven Islands State Birding Park. Beginning at the Blue Bird Barn we took the Inner Loop Trail. At the summit of the trail Mt Le Conte came into view. A sign pointed out the 4 famous peaks of that famous mountain. A red-breasted woodpecker, perched high in a tree performed for us.

We continued on, stopping at Schumpert Pond, reading the sign and looking deep into the still water from the observation deck. On the same trail we hiked down down down to the intersection with the 7 Islands Loop Trail where we veered right heading toward Wayne's Pond and our destination, the new 800' pedestrian bridge to "Newman" (?) Island. There will be a dedication ceremony for this bridge in May. After crossing this bridge we hiked this loop trail which gave us, at times, close views of the 213 mile French Broad River. At the far end of the island there is a bench and an open area close to the fast running river. This was a perfect spot to stop for snacks or

lunch. Another group of hikers and their dogs had the same idea. After lunch and some bonding with the other group we headed back to the mainland where we took the Seclusion Bend Trail until we found the unnamed trail across the prairie. At this point one hiker left us to continue on the Seclusion Bend Trail as he wanted a longer hike. We connected to the Kelly Greenway returning to the Blue Bird Barn. There five of us took the .6 m steep Walnut Ridge Trail , a roller coaster.



At the summit we enjoyed a wonderful view of the French Broad and the park. On this hike we had views of some wildlife.

Beside the Red-breasted Woodpecker we saw a downy woodpecker, an eagle,

and deer. One of the more interesting sights were the 200, per the ranger, people milling around waiting for the ranger led hike. There are many popular ranger-led hikes in January and February. If interested go to the 7 Island Facebook page. Thank you, Peg Mc Donough, for being the sweep and Ron Brandenburg for the photo.

Adele Soucy

Chestnut Top Trail

01-04-2020

On a foggy and rainy day five hikers came on this hike after New Year's Day. It rained for the first two and a half hours during the first part of the hike. The sun did come out for a while after it stopped raining. The elevation gain of around 1,200 occurred mostly during the first couple of miles of the hike. After the ascent it was up and down until we came to the intersection at School House Gap where we had quick lunch and started back on the Chestnut Top Trail. We did not have any rain on our return back to the cars. Everyone enjoyed the hike.



Tom Welch and Jeff Copper

Welcome New Members

- Becky Courtney becky@utk.edu
1640 Littleton Drive Loudon, TN 37774
- Wayne Davis wtdavis@utk.edu 865/250-0265
1626 Banebury Ln Alcoa, TN 37701
- Ronald Moore 1ronmoore1@gmail.com 630/406-8481
520 Spring Branch Ln Knoxville, TN 37934



In Memoriam: SMHC expresses our belated condolences to family and friends of Dr. Ed Clebsch, who passed away in mid-December at the age of 90. Ed was a distinguished retired UT professor and avid hiker.

Whiteoak Sink Volunteer Recruitment to protect trails and flowers

Volunteers are needed to rove Whiteoak Sink during peak days, mainly on weekends, to provide resource damage interpretation to visitors.

Who: Eager volunteers able to hike 3+ miles

What: Rove manway: remind visitors to stay on path, provide resource interpretation

When: April 1st – May 10th, half day shifts

Where: Whiteoak Sink in GSMNP

Volunteer qualifications:

- Eagerness to learn several spring wildflowers
- Able to safely hike 3 miles (to Whiteoak Sink floor and back) partly on an unmaintained manway
- Work at least 4 shifts from April 1st - May 10th
- Have a willingness to engage the public about Whiteoak Sink, its wildflowers, and hiking etiquette (i.e. stay on the main footpaths and obey fencing and restricted area signs)
- Attend a scheduled training session
- Are 18 years or older, unless accompanied by a parent/guardian

The Park will provide:

- Brief training sessions
- Laminated photos of the common wildflowers found in Whiteoak Sink
- Bulletheaded talking points
- Radios
- T-shirts



If you are interested, please contact the Whiteoak Sink Volunteer Coordinators at grsm_whiteoak@nps.gov or (865) 436-1737.

SMHC Appalachian Trail Maintainer Accomplishments in 2019

For the year ending 9/30/19, 279 maintainers worked a total of 9014 hours (work and travel combined), to care for the 101.9 miles of A.T. between Davenport Gap, TN and Wesser, NC. This represented an increase over last year's hours of 7656. We had 4 college group visits, as well as other types of groups, contributing a total of 689 hours included in the total above. One of our proudest accomplishments this year, was the completion of the last "major" privy/ shelter rebuild/ remodeling project, with the re-build of the Spence Privy. Over the last 23 years, our Club has rebuilt or remodeled 15 shelters and 7 privies along the A.T., and this represented the last of those "big" projects. Led by Ed Fleming, Philip Royer, George Minnigh, Keith Stayton, Don Dunning, Jack Bray, Phyllis Henry, Terry Martin, Taylor Weatherbee, Mike Harrington, Pete Berntsen, and many others, from design to pre-assembly to old privy take-down to helicopter lift and building, the project was completed from March 15- April 7, 2019. The ATMC greatly appreciates the assistance of the ATC and Christine Hoyer of the NPS in this project. Locust logs dropped in caches during the helicopter lift on the A.T. north and south of Spence will be used for Trail rehab in 2020.

We had a very successful and fun National Trails Day on June 1 (our 24th), and by going to a sponsorship model rather than fee-based registration, increased our volunteer participation significantly. Immense appreciation goes to all who helped plan this event, all of our great crew leaders and participants!

We had successful equestrian delivery of mulch to Cosby and Tricorner this year and continue to work through an MOU between the Park, Horsemen/women and our Club. Maintainers attend Appalachian Trail Conservancy meetings to further our partnerships, and Franklin LaFond has assumed an important leadership role within the ATC as the Southern Regional Partnership Chair and Stewardship Council Representative.

Our future challenge remains in recruiting young and diverse volunteers, to mentor and engage with the beautiful Appalachian Trail miles that we care for. And as always, if you are interested in maintaining, we welcome you! Contact Diane Petrilla, petrillad@gmail.com, or go to the SMHC website and sign up under the "ATMC" tab.

