



Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Newsletter

Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

December 2020



President's Message

I very much wish I could be giving this greeting at our wonderful annual Installation Banquet normally held in December. But who knew that 2020 would bring us a rare and historic global pandemic, SARS-CoV-2 or COVID-19! We have all been on this journey now for nine months or more. It is likely COVID will continue to affect our activities into 2021 for a time. However, here is the good news from the standpoint of the club....

In the face of a public health crisis, our Board of Directors and COVID Committee were able to make decisions in the best interests of Club members' safety and health. After an initial pause on all hikes and A.T. maintenance work, we were able to resume these activities under careful protective guidelines. The BOD is grateful to every single Club member and maintainer who has complied with the Club and ATC COVID guidelines with patience and generosity of spirit that reflects caring for others around you. We are grateful to hike leaders and A.T. work trip leaders who demonstrated what "right" looks like. We are grateful to the many, many unsung heroes of our Club who have kept the wheels turning on so many things- planning hikes, newsletters, membership, communications, more. Some of this occurred, in addition, after the death of George Ritter, BOD member, Membership Secretary, and my father. I cannot express the depth of my gratitude for people who extended their sympathy and support and stepped up to help after this happened.

Hikers and maintainers are just good folks. I feel that very strongly. I enjoy all of you during "normal" times so much! During this "abnormal" time, I have seen a side of you that makes me feel grateful. And for the holidays, I hope you feel that gratitude, and I hope you have a joyous December. All of us on the BOD look forward to finishing this COVID "adventure" safely, with your help.

Thank you and best wishes,
Diane

SMHC Hiking Guidelines During COVID

1. One hike leader will serve as pre-registration contact, with e-mail and phone # available in the write-up. Pre-registration is required for all hikes.
2. **No more than 10** total participants may be on a hike (including leader, co-leader). Registration will have to be halted when there are 10 participants.
3. All meetups will be at the trail head, so adjust meetup drive time accordingly.
4. No carpooling except for people in their trusted "bubble."
5. Hikes will be chosen to avoid crowded trailheads and crowded trails.
6. Events should be no more than a 2-hour drive from the Knoxville area.
7. Avoid hikes that will involve a key swap or shuttle.
8. Hikers must sign a release form, with accurate contact information.
9. Inform hikers if anyone becomes ill with in a few days of the event, with symptoms concerning for COVID-19, to contact the hike leader immediately. (In addition to the usual pre-hike info). For regular pre-hike prep, see <http://www.smhclub.org/outingpreparation.htm>.
10. All participants must have a face mask, to use at trailhead meetup, and then if needed, when distancing on the trail from other hikers is not feasible.
11. Maintain 6 ft. of distance between hikers, and if possible 10-12 ft.
12. Stop at junctions to be sure group is all present, given the spacing out.
13. All participants should have hand sanitizer or wipes.
14. No sharing of food.
15. If leader(s) or any participant feels sick, please stay at home.
16. If leader(s) need to alter planned activity, please contact an SMHC Board member ASAP to discuss proposed changes.

UPCOMING HIKES

Meeting Places

Pre-registration with the leader is required for the hike and to ensure you know when and where to meet. We request that you cancel your registration ASAP if unable to hike to allow someone on the waiting list to take your spot. Please familiarize yourself with the Club guidelines in this newsletter.

Old Sugarlands Trail to Cherokee Orchard

Wednesday — December 2

Since this hike is in the winter, we will pass a lot of rock walls and remains of an old CCC camp on the way up the trail. A side trip to the Sugarlands Rock House will add another two miles. Hike: 8 miles RT to Cherokee Orchard. 10 miles RT including trip to Rock House. Elevation gain 1160 feet. Rated easy to moderate. Meet at Old Sugarlands trailhead on Hwy. 441 across from Park Headquarters. Group #1, 8:30 am Carolyn; Group #2, 9:00 am Ron *Pre-registration with the leader is required.*

Leaders: Carolyn Reeves and Ron Brandenburg. Register with Ron Brandenburg ronb86@comcast.net text 865-898-7602

Brookshire Creek Trail to Beaverdam Bald

Upper Bald River Wilderness

Saturday — December 5

It's always interesting to me to hike somewhere new! The Brookshire Creek Trail is deep in the Cherokee National Forest and Unicoi Mountains, and in the newly designated Upper Bald River Wilderness Area. It follows Bald River for much of the hike, with numerous waterfalls and rhododendron tunnels. As we climb, the trail becomes part of the Benton MacKaye trail. At the top of our climb, we walk an additional .6 miles to Beaverdam Bald, a remote grassy bald at an elevation of about 4000ft. If you want to feel "far away" from everything, this is the trail for you! Hike length 13.6 miles, elevation gain 2000 ft. There are 1-3 potential wet crossings (depending on water levels, whether you want to walk across a log, etc.), so we will hope for a somewhat balmy December day and not too much rain. If those conditions are not met, we will likely hike the Bald River Falls trail, and I will let you know beforehand. Meet at Bald River Falls parking area at 8 am, and we will caravan to the trailhead. Hike is rated DIFFICULT *Pre-registration with the leader is required.*

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

Digital Newsletter Suggestion

Thanks to those who changed from the print version to the digital newsletter. If you have not switched, try out the digital version of the newsletter by subscribing. Adobe PDF reader and other PDF readers are available for download online. Adobe PDF reader is FREE. If you are receiving the newsletter by mail, consider going digital. Check out and review the club digital club newsletter at <http://www.smhclub.org/index.htm> under Outings on the menu bar. If you have a printer you can print out a personal copy from the online pdf. Email smhcnewsletter@gmail.com to make the change.

Bird Mountain Loop Frozen Head State Park

Wednesday — December 9

We will hike up Bird Mountain trail from Big Cove Campground and come down Lookout Tower trail to return. Hopefully, there will be snow like last year! Hike 8 miles RT with elevation 2100 ft. including ups and downs at the top. Rated Moderate. Meet at Bird Mountain trailhead. Group #1, 8:30 am Carolyn; Group #2, 9:00 am Ron. *Pre-registration with the leader is required.*

Leaders: Carolyn Reeves and Ron Brandenburg. Register with Ron Brandenburg ronb86@comcast.net text 865-898-7602

House Mountain

Sunday — December 13

We will summit the highest peak of Knox County, hiking first to the East Overlook, then across the ridge to the West Overlook, and then down for a loop in the shape of a half-eaten lollipop. The trail is rocky, eroded, and has steep parts, but the stroll on the ridge is easy with some great rock outcrops. The distance is less than 5 miles. Possibly great views. We will meet at the trailhead at 1:00pm. If you pre-register and then are unable to come, please contact leader in case of waiting list. *Pre-registration with the leader is required.*

Leader: Doris Gove (dorisgove@aol.com; 865-456-8198

Meigs Mountain to Curry Mountain

Saturday — December 11

The hike starts at the Jakes Creek trail in Elkmont. We will hike Jakes Creek to the Meigs Mountain trail and travel to the intersection with the Curry Mountain trail where we will retrace our steps back to cars at Elkmont. This was one of the first parts of the Smokies to be logged commercially. Remnants of old home sites can be seen on Jakes Creek and Meigs Mountain. This is a moderately easy hike that winds through the woods along the lower slopes of Meigs Mountain. The elevation change is 600 ft. along the route with a total distance of 9.6 miles. *Pre-registration with the leader is required.*

Leader: Neil Snepp, nsnepp@comcast.net, 281-797-3808

Shady Brook Farm Horse Ranch Ramble

Saturday — December 26

Our planned hike will be a moderate one along the many well-groomed horse trails (promise-no horse poop and trails are not muddy) by special permission at the beautiful Shady Brook Farm Horse Ranch. Perfect for a winter day. Over 400 acres of woodlands crisscrossed with over 11 miles of rolling trails await our enjoyment. Hike distance and difficulty will be adjusted to meet the wishes of the hikers. Due to the confusion from many interconnecting trails, this hike will be limited to one group with a maximum of 10 hikers. Meet at Trailhead at 9:00. Trailhead is located at 148 Shady Brook Lane, Kingston, TN. Exit I-40 at Kingston, drive south on Hwy 58 through town and over the lake. At top of hill, turn right onto Hwy 304 (River Road) and drive 4 miles. Turn left onto Shady Brook and follow gravel then asphalt drive and park near silos. *Pre-registration with the leader is required.*

Leader: Lloyd Chapman. 865-719-3769

lrcchapman6667@yahoo.com

Reminder for Members: Dues for 2020 are due. If you have not paid your dues for this year, please do ASAP. Dues are important in the operation of the club. COVID has resulted in a delay in collecting dues for 2020. For information about membership and paying your dues visit <http://www.smhclub.org/membership.htm>

Welcome SMHC New Members

Evalyn Andriola, Lawrence Young Andriola, Ray Garrett, Rob Morris, & Bennie Watts

For The Record

Lumber Ridge, Meigs Mt. to Curry Mt.

October 14

Group 1: We could not have asked for better weather today! 9 hikers began at Tremont in chilly fall morning temperatures, but quickly warmed up while climbing Lumber Ridge. We could hear the rushing Middle Prong below. There were large groups of gentian- purple, blue and white along the trail. As the sun got higher, it illuminated red sourwood leaves against bright blue skies. This hike has a nice combination of climbing and flatter ridge walking, allowing easy conversation. After reaching the Curry Mtn Tr junction, we backtracked to the Huskey Cemetery where Polly Huskey is buried with some of her children. (she had 10 children before dying at age 42). It was a tranquil sunny setting for lunch. By that time, Group #2 caught up, and we vacated the "restaurant" to allow them space to eat. We were back to the cars by 2:30pm, hiking 12 miles in 6 hours.

Group 2: There were only 4 hikers in group 2. For a 12.1 mile hike with a 2,258 foot elevation gain, it is a fairly easy hike. Both trails are in excellent condition which make hiking easier. While most of the trees have not yet changed color there were plenty of reds and yellows to see. We found group 1 at the cemetery. I told them to be gone because the second seating was scheduled as soon as we got back from the Curry Mountain intersection. As I was returning, I heard much laughter from the cemetery. I told them they were having way too much fun for a cemetery. They left just as the rest of group 2 arrived. After lunch, we continued down Meigs Mountain trail and Lumber Ridge trail enjoying the colors as we went. We were back to the cars by 3:00.

~~ Diane Petrilla, Ron Brandenburg



With the holidays approaching you will be spending more at the grocery store, you can help support the SMHC from your shopping by taking few minutes of your time. Kroger has a program known as Community Rewards that they use to donate to qualifying organizations.

Log into your Kroger account online and select My Account. Under that menu select Community Rewards. Enter **MV194** for your reward sponsor. That will select the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club. Save it. Logout and then log back in to verify it saved your information.

This does not cost you anything, nor does it affect your fuel points.

Each quarter Kroger donates to the SMHC a check from the Community Rewards that is used to help support trail maintenance and other club projects.

If every member signed up and encouraged their family and friends to do the same, this would result in a substantial increase in the amount of money Kroger donates to our club.

Do not put it off until later. Take a few minutes and enter your information in your Kroger account online. You can check each quarter to see how much money your spending at Kroger resulted in a donation to the club. You will be glad you were able to help the SMHC and the Smokies.



SMHC Newsletter Editor: Dale Potter

Send hike write-ups to smhcnewsletter@gmail.com. Please include both email and phone contact information. Please submit photos from your hike if available. Submit photos from your hike to the above email and to Website Manager Michael Vaughn mvaughn@knology.net.



Woodland Dolphin Trail & Stanley-Lippencott Park

October 18

An inquisitive and curious group of 8 hikers explored some virtually unknown trails in south Knoxville - the Woodland Dolphin Trail and the Stanley-Lippencott Park Loop, both part of the Dogwood Community Trail. The unusual name for the Woodland Dolphin Trail is that it lies on the Dogwood Elementary School property and the school's mascot is the dolphin. This quarter mile loop features an arboretum containing 51 labeled tree species and a historic cemetery from the 1800's - the Davenport Cemetery. From there we walked the 2 mile loop through Stanley-Lippencott Park recently constructed by the Appalachian Mountain Bike Club. This park contains many massive trees giving the forest here many characteristics of old growth forest. We lingered long admiring the over 40 inch diameter oaks, tulip trees, hickories, maples with colorful leaves while enjoying the warm October weather. These trails are best accessed from the Dogwood Community Trail entrance on Gerson Dr. near the elementary school.

~ Mac Post

Panther Branch to South Old Mac, FHSP

October 17

On this absolutely beautiful Fall day, three of us hiked an 8.5 mile loop starting at Panther Branch in Frozen Head. The starting temperatures were quite cool, so the climb up Panther was a good warm-up! We stopped to admire DeBord Falls on the way. Then, turning east on North Old Mac, we then picked up the Lookout Tower Trail, and hiked up to the tower. The view from the top was excellent, with the distinct silhouette of the Smokies to the south. Leaf color is beginning to change; there will certainly be more opportunities to see Fall colors at FHSP over the next few weeks. We then hiked down South Old Mac, and back up the road to our cars. Although we were a small group, the company was delightful!

~Diane Petrilla



"You never climb the same mountain twice, not even in memory. Memory rebuilds the mountain, changes the weather, retells the jokes, remakes all the moves."

~Lito Tejada-Flores

Mt Cammerer Via Rowdy Creek & The Miner's Stairs Off-Trail

October 24

Ten optimistic club members drove through varying degrees of rainfall to the meeting place. By the time sign in was complete the rain had ended. After starting up the right fork of Groundhog Creek we used a short section of the Lower Mount Cammerer Trail to access Rowdy Creek. The climb steadily steepened past the waterfall, boulder field, and fern garden before we reached the base of the Miners Stairs. The final struggle to the top through dense heath and over rocky cliffs was sparsely rewarded with only fog shrouded views. After lunch by the Cammerer tower we descended the Groundhog Ridge manway under clearer skies and enjoyed some of view of the spectacular fall colors that Cammerer is famous for.

~~ Hiram Rogers, Ed Fleming



"The mountains were so wild and so stark and so very beautiful that I wanted to cry. I breathed in another wonderful moment to keep safe in my heart."

~ Jane Wilson-Howarth

Boogerman & Big Fork Ridge Loop

October 31

How could we pass on doing the Boogerman Trail on Halloween? It will be six years before we get this opportunity again. When Robert Palmer was a child, he was asked by his teacher what he wanted to be when he grew up. He bowed his head and said "The Boogerman". He never let the lumber companies cut on his land and sold to the new Park in 1929. He and his wife and child left to never be heard from again. It was a family mystery until 2017 when two brothers from Oregon showed up at Homecoming in Cataloochee. They were the great-grandsons of the Boogerman. Turns out he went West.

Seven hikers showed up for a chilly start but had sunshine all day. There was some fall color and a herd of elk in the valley.

~~ Leaders Claudia Dean, David Smith



Visit our Website: www.smhclub.org



From the Archives

The club's first handbook, a paper pamphlet describing the hikes for 1926, consisted of eight pages, the last page showing two photos of members on Mt LeConte and the Chimneys. The descriptions of the hikes were short, and all but two of the hikes were numbered to reflect numbered signage at the trailhead with the club's official emblem. The hikes listed for 1926 were: Look Rock near Montvale Springs, Mt Harrison Trail No. 4, Gregory Bald Trail No. 23, Mt LeConte Trail No. 1, Thunderhead Trail No. 33, Abram's Falls Trail No. 22, Alum Cave Trails No. 1 and 2 and 3, Pinnacle Trail No. 10, Round Top Trail No. 5, Indian Gap Trail No. 3, House Mountain Trail No. 20, and Indian Cave near Newmarket. In the following handbooks, the trail numbers were no longer mentioned, and the hike descriptions become much longer, with carefully thought out prose and descriptive details of the hike. The 1928 handbook was 64 pages long with a fold-out map in the back with the proposed boundary of the national park. The fold-out maps were included in all subsequent handbooks up through 1941, after which they were no included any longer. So what were the other numbered trails? What happened to the signs? Who made them? Your historian is searching, so if any of you have the answer, please let us know.

~Brian Worley

December Banquet Canceled For 2020

The Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Annual December Banquet for 2020 has been canceled due to COVID-19. The Board of Directors are considering possible options for early 2021 once the restrictions of COVID-19 are lifted that will allow having a larger group size either indoors or outdoors safely. One option being considered is having a spring picnic.

The Board looks forward to being able to have the Annual Banquet in December in 2021.

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Officers and Directors

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