



Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Newsletter

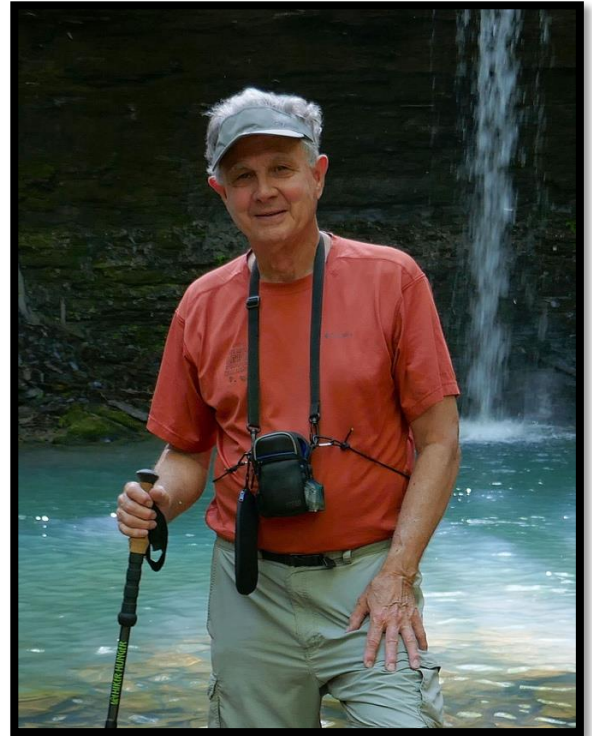
Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

November 2021

Meet Your 2021 Board Members

This month's SMHC Board member is Will Skelton. Hiking and backpacking have been lifelong activities for me. I grew up on a farm in Hawkins County, TN, and loved the rural life (but not farm work) and did a bit of hiking in the Boy Scouts. But I really developed my love for hiking, backpacking and environmental activism after college and law school at the University of Tennessee, while serving in the US Marine Corps in southern California. A fellow officer took me backpacking in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and got me to join the Sierra Club and I loved both. Once back in Knoxville in the early 1970's and practicing law, I spent much of my spare time in the outdoors (running, hiking, canoeing, backpacking, and some rock climbing) and working on various conservation efforts. Some failed, like the Tellico Dam battle. Others were great successes. I led the campaign by a Coalition to get a good part of the Cherokee National Forest designated as Wilderness by the US Congress, and as Chairman of the Knoxville Greenways Commission, appointed by Mayor Ashe, led the effort to get a comprehensive greenways system built in Knoxville. I also began traveling throughout North America and abroad, via car/plane/bus/boat and often hiking/backpacking/canoeing/mountaineering. I have visited around 70 countries, all but four of our National Parks, and many of our country's premier backpacking and canoeing areas (in early September I returned from backpacking in the Wind River Mtns in Wyoming, and my favorite place to backpack is Gates of the Arctic National Park in northern Alaska's Brooks Range). After retiring in 2007, I have been able to travel and do outdoor adventures even more. I have been on the Board of SMHC for well over a decade. I also currently serve on several other boards, for the Legacy Parks Foundation, Cumberland Trail Conference, and the local Sierra Club.

~Will Skelton



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 still required for all hikes. Pre-registration may also now occur through smhclub.org.
2. **Group size may now be up to twenty.** Higher numbers of registrants should be split into two groups.
3. **Meet-up locations with carpooling to the trailhead, shuttles and key swaps are acceptable.** Hikers may still choose to drive to the trailhead independently, depending on their comfort level.
4. **Masks are now required for all those participating in carpools, shuttles, or key swaps, regardless of vaccination status. Window venting is encouraged. You may also choose to drive your own vehicle to the trailhead.**
5. Hikers must sign a release form, with accurate contact information.
6. Inform hikers if anyone becomes ill within 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>.
7. All participants should have hand sanitizer or wipes.
8. If leader(s) or any participant feels sick, please stay at home.
9. If leader(s) need to alter planned activity, please contact an SMHC Board member ASAP to discuss proposed changes.
10. Guidelines for A.T. maintainers will have to be reconciled with the National Park, National Forest, and ATC, particularly in regard to group size.

Update to SMHC COVID guidelines

In light of the fact that we are in an area of "high or substantial transmission" of COVID as per the CDC, as well as the increased incidence of breakthrough COVID infections in vaccinated people throughout the United States, the SMHC COVID Committee has updated our COVID Guidelines to the following:

"Masks are now required for all those participating in carpools, shuttles or key swaps, regardless of vaccination status. Window venting is also encouraged. You may also choose to drive your own vehicle to the trailhead."

For additional information, please see:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>

Federal Mask Mandate Back in Effect in the GRSM-Please Be Aware

1. Masks are worn, regardless of vaccination status, in federal buildings such as Backcountry Office - including if they were to be in a government vehicle (example: Ridge runner RR Shuttle)
2. Masks are worn, regardless of vaccination status, in the outdoor areas when it is not possible to maintain six feet of physical distance

Facebook Administrators Needed

SMHC has a Facebook page with some 7,000 followers. Consideration is being given to changing this page to an interactive page where you could post about a hike, inquire about a trail or campsite, seek out others to join you on a hike, but to do that Facebook group administrators are needed to screen out the posts that are not related to hiking and issues that would involve the SMHC. If you have are interested in doing this for the SMHC Facebook page, you need to contact Scott Walker at swalker.dev@gmail.com. If the page is made interactive, then hike leaders would be able to share any last-minute changes to a hike due to road conditions or the weather, giving everyone on that hike a chance to see the latest information. This change to an interactive group could benefit everyone in SMHC but volunteers are needed to make it work.

WEBSITE CHANGES

Have you been to <https://smhclub.org/> in the last month? You need to check out the latest changes on the website. On the Home Page there is a Member Log In where you can log in and see your membership profile along with accessing the membership directory. **You can pay your dues by the website** which is much quicker and easier than mailing in a check. Under **HIKE WITH US**, you can find a list of all the Upcoming Events for SMHC. You will want to check that area often to see the latest events that have been added. Take a few minutes and check out the website. Encourage your hiking friends to check it out and join SMHC.

Road Closures

For current Smokies Closures, please contact the Park at **865-436-1200 UPDATES** or follow current road status updates on Twitter at [SmokiesRoadsNPS](https://twitter.com/smokiesroadsnps) or access from the internet using this link: <https://twitter.com/smokiesroadsnps>.

CONSIDER GOING GREEN!!!

If you receive this newsletter by US Mail, please consider changing to the digital PDF version distributed by email. Email swalker.dev@gmail.com to change from print to digital. You will find the digital version much easier to read. Changing to digital will help save considerable time from printing to preparing the newsletter for mail, in addition to the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter.

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.

Brushy Mountain

Wednesday — November 3rd

We will start in Greenbrier by walking up Porters Creek for a mile (passing the Ownby cemetery) before veering off onto the Brushy Mountain Trail (where we will see the SMHC Cabin). Brushy Mountain, bordered by beautiful old stone walls as we begin, ascends gradually through moist forest, and switchbacks with views as we get higher. At the junction with Trillium Gap, we will walk out to the summit of Brushy Mountain, full of sand myrtle, blueberry, and huckleberry (and mud), as well as outstanding views. Return same way. Hike: 11.8 miles, rated difficult, elevation gain about 3,000 ft. Meet at Comcast on Asheville Hwy at 8:00am or at the Porters Creek trailhead in Greenbrier at 9:00am. Drive: 80 miles RT { @5¢=\$4 }.

Pre-registration with the leader. Ron Brandenburg, ronb86@comcast.net or text 865-898-7602

Register at smhclub.org or contact leader

Leaders: Pat Watts, watts_at_home@yahoo.com, 901-487-7941, Ron Brandenburg, ronb86@comcast.net or text 865-898-7602

A.T. Maintenance Work Trip

Sunday — November 7th

Anyone interested in helping clean and sharpen the trail tools stored in our new ATMC shed can come up to Sugarland's Maintenance Area and help out. We will provide all the items needed to clean and sharpen our club's tools as we prepare for the 2022 trail maintenance year. Drinks and snacks will be provided. This is a great chance to meet fellow maintainers and also an opportunity to see if you might be interested in joining the club's A.T. maintainers. Bring a pair of work gloves if you have them. Masks are required for this activity. Time- 9:00 am – 12:00 am. Location-ATMC Tool Shed at Sugarland's Maintenance Area (At Gatlinburg Trail trailhead).

Pre-registration is required.

Register at smhclub.org or contact leader

Leader: Steve Dunkin Contact, jsdunkin1302@gmail.com, 865-202-3286

Lakeshore Trail to CS 90

Wednesday — November 10

Starting at Fontana Dam, we will hike 5.6 miles to Campsite 90. There will be LOTS of rolling hills along the way, several small stream crossings (one that could be wet if there has been recent rains), views of Fontana Lake, and interesting artifacts (including at least 3 car bodies). After lunch at the campsite, we will return the same way. Hike: 11.2 miles, rated moderately difficult, with elevation gain of 2,100 ft. Meet at Walmart-Supercenter far right side of the parking lot, on US 411 south in Maryville at 7:30am, or at the Lakeshore Trail trailhead at Fontana Dam (GPS coordinates 35.460976, -83.811035) at 9:00am. Drive: 96 miles RT { @5¢=\$4.80 }.

Pre-registration with the leader. Ron Brandenburg, ronb86@comcast.net or text 865-898-7602

Register at smhclub.org or contact leader

Leaders: Pat Watts, watts_at_home@yahoo.com, 901-487-7941, Ron Brandenburg, ronb86@comcast.net or text 865-898-7602

Panther Stairs

Off -Trail

Saturday — November 13

This hike begins at the familiar Groundhog Ridge parking area with a climb up one of the branches of Groundhog Creek to the Lower Mount Cammerer Trail. This trail is used to zip around the mountain to Robinson Creek where the narrow valley leads up into the Highlands. The climb then turns toward the Panther Stairs as the trek passes by four nice waterfalls set in a broad almost gentle valley. These gentle slopes give way to the cliffs beneath the Panther Stairs. At this point, the hike becomes a scramble up the open sandstone faces and along narrow spine of Panther Stairs affording excellent views into the Smoky Mountain valleys below. The hike will proceed to the Mount Cammerer Lookout Tower and then return by the old Groundhog Ridge manway. Total trip is 5.2 miles, 3.8 being off trail. Rated difficult. Previous off-trail experience encouraged. Please contact trip leader to get details, including meeting time and place.

Pre-registration with the leader is required.

Leaders: Greg Harrell, GSHarrell@milligan.edu, 865-719-0173, Greg Hoover, ghoover@cn.edu, 865-475-7832

White Rock/Sand Cave

Saturday — November 13

CANCELLED

Lily Bluff Overlook of the Obed River and Boulder Field Trail

Saturday — November 13

EASY HIKE

We will learn about this area in Morgan County on this 2-hour leisurely hike.

Meet at Books-A-Million parking lot, 310 South Illinois Avenue, Oak Ridge, at 10 AM for carpooling.

Pre-registration with the leader is required.

Register at smhclub.org or contact leader

Leaders: Jeannette Gilbert, Corsica111@att.net, 865-438-8774, Ray Garrett, garrett.ray1@att.net

History Hike

Saturday — November 20

This hike visits numerous home sites within the Park, some with tall standing chimneys. The initial portion of the hike follows the Noisy Creek access path (from US 321) for approximately 0.8 miles to the Old Settlers Trail. We will first visit the Anse Ramsey chimney, one of the tallest in the Park. Then we will follow Old Settlers Trail to the west, following Ramsey Creek and visiting six more home sites. The trail crosses over into the Redwine Creek watershed, where we will visit additional home sites. The final section of the hike follows a well-maintained manway along Redwine Creek back to US 321, with two homesites along the route. Hike about 7.2 miles of which about five miles is trail; nearly all the rest is good manway. Rated moderate.

Meet at Comcast on Asheville Highway at 7:45 am for carpool or meet at the first parking area in Greenbrier at 9:00 am. Note that hike leaders will not be at the Comcast meeting point but will meet everyone at Greenbrier. The driving distance is eighty-eight miles round-trip from Asheville Highway to Greenbrier. Expect to reimburse drivers \$6.00 for fuel.

Pre-registration with the leader is required.

Register at smhclub.org

Leaders: Frank March, frankamarch@gmail.com, 865-908-0463, Ed Fleming, edwrdfm@aol.com, 865-548-2489

Norris Watershed and Norris Dam State Park

Saturday — November 27

This post-Thanksgiving hike will let us work off a little bit of the turkey and pumpkin pie and enjoy some beautiful fall colors in the Norris Watershed. The Norris Municipal Watershed is a 2300-acre area that is the watershed of Clear Creek, the source of the city's water supply. Our hike will begin at the Lenoir Museum (Norris Dam State Park) parking area, which is located about one mile downstream from Norris Dam on U.S. Hwy. 441. We will hike up Clear Creek Trail and then Dyer Hollow Trail. Next, we will climb up to Reservoir Hill through older upland hardwood forest and reverted old fields of yellow poplar. The hike then travels to Observation Point where there is an open view of Norris Dam, the Clinch River, and Walden's Ridge. We will then descend down Eagle Trail and Cliff Trail, which was constructed by the CCCs in the 30s, to the starting point. The hike will take us through several different forest eco-types, and we will see some of the work done by the CCCs and TVA in the 1930s as part of the Norris Dam Project. This hike is 3.7 miles in length and rated easy, with a total elevation gain of about six hundred feet. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Lenoir Museum, 2121 Norris Freeway, Norris, TN.

Pre-registration with the leader is required.

Register at smhclub.org

Leader: Debra Barton, dgbarton@comcast.net, (865) 494-0276

For The Record

Baker Creek

September 5

Five members met at the end of the James White Parkway and toured mountain biking training structures at Baker Creek. We climbed practice boulders, walked narrow serpentine bridges, and watched bikers fly off jumps and zoom horizontally on banked walls. And, of course, we played on the playground. Then we hiked Sycamore Loop along Baker Creek.

~Doris Gove



Alum Cave/LeConte/Boulevard

September 15

26 hikers split into 2 groups for this hike: those going up to LeConte and back down Alum (ultimately 10), and the others doing the entire loop (16). We of course started at different times, both for COVID precautions and because the second group had to set up a shuttle (challenging with the roadwork on NFG Rd.!) Alum Cave never disappoints, and even though it was cloudy and drizzly, we could see the Eye of the Needle, the fabulous alum bluffs, Grass of Parnassus, narrow-leaf gentian (oh how blue!!), and more. At LeConte, several visited the store, and we all ate lunch in the chilly damp air. Clothing layers were added! The long hike group headed out to Boulevard; Myrtle Point was not visited because of clouds. Boulevard was its beautiful self (except for that last climb!). A few gluttons for punishment went out to the Jumpoff where there was no view, but some of us had never been there. Then on out to NFG via the A.T.- always a pleasure to walk. It rained for the last hour or so. Both groups made it safely out and were completely tuckered out! Leaders Ron Brandenburg and Pat Watts.

~ Diane Petrilla



Little River to Goshen Prong

September 22

This was a well-planned hike both for the trails to be taken, and for a birthday to be celebrated! A slower paced group hiked directly up Little River to the Goshen Prong junction. A slightly faster group did the same thing, only left later. The really fast group hiked Jakes Creek to Cucumber Gap to the GP junction. By the time everyone arrived at that junction, there was a birthday banner, a crown and sash for our fearless leader, Ron. Also, by the time everyone arrived, the rain started to dump. Still, we had special buttons to wear, a little cake, LED candles, cookies, and snacks and many well wishes for this decade- birthday! Rain and wind did not dissuade us from the celebration! But it did dissuade us from the rest of the great hike that had been planned; instead of a 14.5 miler, everyone turned back after the birthday and some of us pretty much ran down the trail to get warm again!

~Ron Brandenburg and Michael Zelinski



"For hiking is one of those things that you can only do when you have the determination in you."

~ Unknown

"Returning home is the most difficult part of long-distance hiking. You have grown outside the puzzle and your piece no longer fits."

~ Cindy Rice

Boulevard to LeConte out Alum Cave

September 25

It was a gorgeous Saturday morning to hike to LeConte via the Boulevard trail. It was one of the clearest mornings that one could experience on the trail. We met numerous hikers descending from LeConte via the Boulevard trail. At the top, we were surprised to see so many people at the top of Mt. LeConte including a lady with a dog. After spending some time to enjoy the views from LeConte we headed down Alum Cave trail to the parking lot. Along the way we encountered three more dogs, with one almost to Mt. LeConte. Neil Snepp was able to convince one lady to turn around, but the rest did not care about the rules regarding dogs. It was a wonderful day for hiking to LeConte. Lots of other people had the same idea. The parking area was extremely packed with cars parked on both sides of the road.

~Dale Potter



"Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop away from you like the leaves of Autumn."

~ John Muir

"Our minds, as well as our bodies, have need of the out-of-doors. Our spirits, too, need simple things, elemental things, the sun and the wind and the rain, moonlight, and starlight, sunrise and mist and mossy forest trails, the perfumes of dawn and the smell of fresh-turned earth and the ancient music of wind among the trees."

~ Edwin Way Teale

Post Hike Write Ups

Post-hike write-ups and photos should be submitted to SMHC Newsletter Editor Dale Potter at smhcnewsletter@gmail.com and Scott Walker, swalker.dev@gmail.com, Facebook Manager. For your write-up, please include the following: Hike name and date, total number of members and visitors, and description of hike.

"I might look like I am listening to you, but in my mind, I am hiking."

~ Unknown

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Officers and Directors

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