



Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Newsletter

Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

December 2021

Dear Members of SMHC,

As 2021 draws to a close, so does my last year as president of SMHC. As it was last year, due to COVID and current CDC guidelines for mask wearing at large indoor events, we will not be able to have a Holiday Installation banquet this year. I am so glad I got to see many of you at our August picnic at GATOP, and we have Fox Den reserved for 2022, so keep your fingers crossed!

In spite of the pandemic dominating our lives for the last two years, the Club has accomplished much in 2021. The COVID Committee implemented COVID guidelines that allowed us to resume hiking a few months after the start of the pandemic and has modified those over the last two years as per CDC recommendations and will continue to do so. We transitioned to an engaging new website this year that allows us to perform membership management functions including joining the club, automatic renewal notices, registering hikers, A.T. work trip reporting, volunteer sign-up and more. Our membership has grown significantly as a result. Amanda Beal and Scott Walker, who spearheaded those efforts, were the recipients of the Marshall Wilson Presidential Citations at the August 2021 election picnic. We have made strong opinions known in the GRSM Park planning processes regarding the commercial Air Tour Management Plan and the proposed Foothills Parkway Section 8D/ Metcalf Bottoms Access Improvement Plan. Our A.T. volunteers logged 5520 work hours in the park and NNF (7474 hours counting travel), the 8th highest number of all 31 volunteer maintaining clubs for the A.T. We made significant donations from our Trust funds and conservation monies to organizations performing crucial work in and near the Smokies. We will publish more detailed reports regarding much of the above, in the next newsletter, as you usually see in the banquet bulletin each year.

I want to thank Amanda Beal and Dale Potter, who will step down from the Board at the end of the year, and welcome Scott Walker and Randy Mitchell to the Board! I am excited that our next president, Ken Wise, a renowned Smokies historian, author and avid off-trail hiker will be leading SMHC for the next two years. It has been my pleasure, and truly my honor to serve in this position. I wish you good health and a beautiful holiday season. See you on the trail!

All my best,
Diane Petrilla M.D.

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.
- ten. Guidelines for A.T. maintainers will have to be reconciled with the National Park, National Forest, and ATC, particularly in regard to group size.

900 Miler Club Changes

Thanks to **Ramsay Roth and Lori Garufi** for an outstanding nine years as the co-directors of the 900 miler club. The 900 miler club has doubled to 715 members during their tenure and still growing averaging around 40 per year. They have done an excellent job answering questions about the 900 Miler Club and sorting through all the applications over the years. Your time and service are appreciated by all the members of the 900 Miler Club and the SMHC.

Welcome **Eric and Michelle Anderson** who have been selected to oversee the 900-Miler Club. They will essentially serve as the “gate keepers”, reviewing and approving each applicant’s request to become an official member of the 900 Miler Club. The 900 Miler Club webpage page (<https://www.smhclub.org/900-Miler-Club>) is maintained by our Club and there is a Facebook presence for recognizing each 900 Miler which the co-directors manage.

MANY THANKS to Ramsay Roth and Lori Garufi



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 will donate to our club. 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.

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>.

Interstate 40 near Harmon Den Exit will be shut down to one lane in both directions until May 2022 as they replace the bridge and also install a wildlife crossing under the interstate. This will have an impact on those wanting to hike in the Cataloochee area of the Smokies as to travel time.

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.

Post Hike Write Ups

Post-hike write-ups and photos should be submitted to SMHC Newsletter Editor Connie and John Tatgenhorst at smhcnewsletter@gmail.com and Betsy Bohannon, betsybo1964@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.

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.

Rich Mountain Loop

Wednesday — December 1

We will hike up Crooked Arm Ridge and down Indian Grave Gap. The trail starts at the entrance to Cades Cove. Moderate hike 8.5 miles RT, 1958 feet elevation gain. There 'should' be several good views if the day is free of clouds (and rain). There is a nice cascade along the Crooked Arm trail. Lunch will be at the tower site. Meet at Food City at 8:45 a.m. Drive 60 miles RT (\$3.00).

Register at smhclub.org or with Ron Brandenburg, ronb86@comcast.net or text 865-898-7602

Leader: Carolyn Reeves

Spence /Russel Loop

Saturday — December 4

This is a loop hike beginning and ending at the Cades Cove Picnic Area. We will take Anthony Creek to the Russell Field trail and up to the A.T. then across the A.T. to Spence Field. We will return to the Picnic area via the Bote Mountain and Anthony Creek trails. The hike is approximately 13 miles, with a total climb of about 3200 feet. Rated difficult. Meet at 8:30 AM at the Anthony Creek trail head in the back of the Cades Cove Picnic Area.

Pre-registration with the leader is required.

Register at smhclub.org or contact leader

Leader: Neil Snapp, nsnapp@comcast.net, 281-797-3808.

Frozen Head State Park: Spicewood Trail to Mart Field or Chimney Top

Wednesday — December 8

This hike starts at the Spicewood Trail. After we hike this trail, we will hike another mile on the Chimney Top trail to Mart Field (a campsite). After a break, we will hike back down to the junction for Frozen Head Tower and hike up to the tower for lunch. After lunch, we will head down the North Old Mac trail to the parking lot. Total mileage: 10.5 miles, 2000 feet elevation gain. Moderately difficult. For those wanting a bit more challenging uphill hike after the break at Mart Field, they can continue on the Chimney Top trail for six more miles and 500 additional feet of elevation gain. By choosing this option, they will end up at the Park Office which is only a very short distance from where all of us parked at Shelter C to begin this hike to the Spicewood trail. Total mileage: 10 miles total, 2500 feet elevation gain, rated difficult. Meet at Books- A-Million, 310 S. Illinois Avenue in Oak Ridge at 8:00 a.m. or Spicewood Trailhead at Frozen Head State Park at 8:45 AM.

Register at smhclub.org or with Ron Brandenburg, ronb86@comcast.net or text 865-898-7602

Leader: Carolyn Reeves

Wheat Community and Black Burial Grounds

Saturday — December 11

EASY HIKE

We will explore the Wheat Community and Black Burial Grounds in Roane County Oak Ridge with option of additional short trails nearby along with this area's history before/after The Manhattan Project on a 2-hour leisurely hike. Meet at Books-A-Million parking lot, 310 South Illinois Avenue, Oak Ridge, at 1 PM, for needed 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

House Mountain

Sunday — December 12

For this well-known local hike, we will ascend the West Overlook Trail, hike out the Crest Trail, and then hike back down the Mountain Trail. The 2,100-ft crest of House Mountain is the highest in Knox County. The trails are fairly steep through wooded terrain with rock outcrops. On the summit, the Crest Trail stretches the length of the mountain from the West End Overlook to the East Overlook offering wonderful views. Hike about 5 miles, rated Easy-Moderate. If you'd like to carpool from the west side of Knoxville, please meet at the Panera parking lot at 205 N Peters Rd. (off of Cedar Bluff) at 9am or meet at the trailhead on Hogskin Rd. at 9:45 am. \$2.50 from Panera carpool fee. *Pre-registration with the leader is required.*

Register at smhclub.org or contact leader

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

Leader's Choice
Saturday — December 18
CANCELLED

From The Archives

In addition to the regularly scheduled weekend hikes that are summarized in the annual handbook, club members expressed interests in mid-week hikes for those you could get away during the week. Beginning in May 1990, a schedule of Wednesday mid-week hikes was added to the newsletter for those interested. Starting in the 1991 handbook and in the subsequent annual handbooks, monthly mid-week leaders were assigned for each month. The hikes were nominally scheduled for alternate Wednesdays for the first several years. The hikes were not included in the yearly handbook and thus provided a flexibility in scheduling and destinations on a monthly basis. For many years, Chris Hamilton and Jean Bangham coordinated the Wednesday hikes. Beginning in 2010, Ron Brandenburg has been the sole coordinator for the Wednesday hikes and received the Marshall Wilson Presidential Citation in 2021 for his dedication and leadership.

Starting in 1995, an easy weekend hike program was added. Similar to the mid-week hike program, the hikes are not included in the annual handbook but are announced in the monthly newsletter. The annual handbook includes the names of the monthly coordinators.

~ Brian Worley, Historian

This newsletter marks the end of Dale Potter's role as Editor. Dale has done an outstanding job for the past 15 months and the Board sends him our deepest appreciation.

We welcome **new editors Connie and John Tatgenhorst!** Connie and John are longtime club members and experienced hikers who will continue the club's legacy of stellar newsletters!

~ Cindy Spangler, Communications Director



An icon, Jean Bangham, of the SMHC at the historic SMHC cabin on November 3, 2021

~Diane Petrilla

When asked about the best advice. "Commit and then figure it out."

"It is clear to me in my life that the biggest risk I ever took was deciding to commit to the dream I had."

~ *Jimmy Chin*

For the past fifteen months I have appreciated your feedback as I put together the newsletter. It is time to allow Connie and John Tatgenhorst begin their experience with the newsletter. I appreciate them for volunteering as the editor for the newsletter.

After watching mountain climber Jimmy Chin in an interview talk about his biggest risk recently on CBS Sunday Morning. He was right. Our biggest risk in life is the hesitancy to commit to our dreams.

My time serving on the SMHC Board and as newsletter editor has been an interesting experience. It is time for me to focus on which of my dreams are important for me to commit and make happen. Maybe it is Montana in two years or something else in 2022. Who knows what I will get in to next, but I will be in Yellowstone in late January and early February.

~ *Dale Potter*

K-25 Manhattan Project History Hike

September 4

A large group of 14 turned out on a warm day in the western end of Oak Ridge (and former Wheat Community) to see the sites and hear about the history of the K-25 Manhattan Project and surrounding area and get a little exercise too. From the K-25 visitor overlook parking lot, the group walked along Rt58 a short distance to the African Burial Ground and memorial. A bit of history about the recently discovered 1850 slave cemetery was presented and the group walked around the perimeter and looked at the monument honoring the memory of those buried there. Amazing that the site went undisturbed when just across the road where such a momentous undertaking of building the K-25 gaseous diffusion plant took place. After visiting the memorial, the group crossed the street and walked by what's left of the K-25 excursion train cars and on to the Powerhouse Greenway trail maintained by Oak Ridge Greenways. This trail passes restored ponds and features great bird watching and interesting large-leafed pond plants in season. After enjoying the greenway, the group retraced the route back to the visitor overlook and relocated cars across the street to a closer parking area and started walking on another greenway. Most of the flowers planted along this route were past their peak and the loop past the pond needed mowing so the group walked along the paved path over to the K-25 History Museum which has just reopened after a yearlong pandemic closing. The museum introduction movie was enjoyed and then everyone toured this well-done museum about the establishment of the mile-long gaseous diffusion plant in about two years during WWII.

People hiked back to their cars at their leisure.

~Tim Bigelow



Fiery Gizzard

October 9

On this lovely fall day on the Cumberland Plateau, 12 SMHC members undertook hiking a challenging portion of the Fiery Gizzard trail in South Cumberland State Park. Using part of the Grundy County Day loop that passed a couple of giant old growth hemlocks, as well as Blue Hole Falls, we quickly crossed a bridge onto the main trail. From there we hiked past Black Canyon, the Chimneys, Sycamore Falls, and onto the "rock pile" trail. Rocks, for 2.4 miles to balance on, jump between, step up and down on, and follow white blazes on. Part of the "charm" of this trail! This agile group handled it with no problem! Then the steep climb out of the gorge to Ravens Point, with breathtaking views of the Fiery Gizzard gulf. This was our lunch spot. From there, we traveled a bit further south on the main trail, to admire the incredible work done rerouting the trail that had occurred about 5 years ago, creating steps and a new trail down to a view of Anderson Falls, before continuing on to Foster Falls. (We did not go further however). Retracing our steps, we hiked out the Dog Hole Mine trail. It was a long drive to and from this hike, but all who did it were good-natured and appreciative of the beauty we were privileged to enjoy.

~Diane Petrilla and Amanda Beal



Lost Creek State Natural Area

October 20

The popularity of hiking with the Wednesday Group caused us to split into 2 groups for this hike to Virgin Falls to stay within the COVID guidelines. Although the original leader of this hike couldn't be there due to family illness, the groups were ably led by Pat Watts and Lloyd Chapman. The first group of 9 met at the western end of Lost Creek State Natural Area and was followed by the second group of 16 a while later. The first stop was a climb down into a sink to find the Lost Creek Falls and Cave, a beautiful area of towering rock cliffs (so beautiful that it was used in Disney's "Jungle Book" movie in 1994). The hike out the Virgin Falls trail included stops at Rylander Cascades and, for some, Dry Creek Falls before reaching Virgin Falls itself. This unique fall is formed by an underground stream that emerges from a cave, then drops over a 110-foot-high cliff before disappearing into another cave at the bottom of the sink. Both groups enjoyed lunch in the clearing while some went exploring, climbing down to the base of the falls as well as climbing up the spur trail to the top. As the second group gathered together to head back to their cars, the first group opted to take the Loop Trail for a visit to Sheep Cave before returning to their cars. The hike totaled 12 miles for the first group and about 8.3 miles for the second.

~ Pat Watts and Lloyd Chapman



Brushy Mountain Hike

October 24

Wonderful weather was in store for this fall hike with nearly peak fall colors. Seven hikers participated. The group started with a little side excursion to the Messer Barn and Hiking Club cabin and a short discussion on a bit of history about the early days of the Club. We then followed the old connector trail over to the main trail and shared a few memories of Charlie Klabunde, a past long-time newsletter editor and President of the Club. On the main trail the group enjoyed seeing a few of the old stone walls and home sites but were not able to locate the fiftified spring. As the trail slope started increasing, the hikers got spread out a bit while enjoying the fall colors visible over on the side of Brushy. Everyone made it to the top and enjoyed the views at staggered times. The sun was hot on exposed Brushy and Trillium Gap made a nice lunch spot for the final group. The hike back down was equally pleasant with perfect fall temperatures.

~Tim Bigelow



Please Read About the Hike Below

Brushy Mountain Wednesday Hike

November 4

It was 3 days after Halloween, but I'm convinced that goblin spirits had taken possession of the 20 hikers who gathered for the Brushy Mountain hike. The Wednesday Group is very comfortable hiking together, so some of our hikes have become somewhat "casual." That being said, I felt like I was herding a group of second graders. When we stopped at the John Messer Barn and the Smoky Mounting Hiking Club Cabin for group pictures, there was talk of a manway that would take hikers directly to the Brushy Mountain trail. When I looked up from retrieving my hiking poles, part of the group was headed one direction and the other part.... had disappeared. After hearing voices over the hillside behind the outhouse, I called out to direct folks back to me. Two hikers sheepishly appeared and confessed they had been unsuccessfully trying to find the manway. We proceeded up the "real" trail and caught up with the rest of the group stopped about a third of a mile up Brushy Mountain. We did a quick headcount, then a second headcount and a third. The resulting 15 was short by 5 hikers! It seems that they were also looking for the manway. This is a scenario any hike leader does not want to find themselves in. This leader and another hiker took on the roles of drill sergeants to keep the remaining group corralled and to devise a plan. Two hikers were sent up the trail to determine if the Missing Five had made their way to it and were (hopefully) waiting for us. The plan was for them to report back so that we could either exhale in relief or get park rangers involved to start a search. After hearing nothing after an hour and a half, my co-sergeant stayed behind with 2 others while I headed up the trail with the rest of the group. After hiking a little over an hour, what did we see up ahead? Two of the Missing Five sitting eating lunch! My group and the Missing Two headed back down the trail with strict instructions to stay as a group and report directly back to the co-sergeant. I took off up the trail to corral the remaining hikers. As I approached the top, some of my hikers started trickling down, and at the top, I found the last of them. With much relief, we headed down the trail with all hikers safe and accounted for. The learnings from this? We want everyone to have fun and enjoy the hiking experience, but that must be done within certain hiking guidelines. Key ones from this experience: [1] the leader is the Leader, and all direction comes from her; [2] never take off on your own and always communicate with the Leader of any modifications you would like to make to the hike - turn-backs, spurs, manways, longer lunch etc.; [3] always stop at trail intersections, no exceptions, even if part of that intersection is a manway; [4] if there are long sections of trail with no junction (in this situation, 5 miles), periodic meetup points will be predetermined to let everyone catch up and be accounted for; [5] if you are separated from the main group, then pause and think about the most safe and secure way to reconnect; don't make assumptions. Much stress and heart ache could have been avoided on this hike. As it was, I really needed a beer by the time I got home!

~Pat Watts



"The greatest threat to the planet is the belief someone else will take care of it."

~ Robert Swan

"Wilderness is not a luxury but a necessity of the human spirit."

~Edward Abbey

Lakeshore Trail to CS 90

November 3

It was an absolutely gorgeous day as 18 hikers gathered for the trek down the Lakeshore Trail to Campsite 90. There are guidelines that, as a club and in consideration of our fellow hikers, we should all follow on group hikes, and we briefly reviewed these. The leader decided to break into 2 subgroups, each with its own leader, so that managing the crowd was a little easier. This section of the Lakeshore Trail is a series of rolling hills, and some of those hills, though short, can be rather strenuous. The huffing and puffing did not overshadow the beautiful fall scenery and interesting artifacts (remnants of 4 car bodies!) that were enjoyed along the way. The 2 subgroups came back together at Campsite 90 where we lounged next to Eagle Creek for lunch. A few hikers sat on rock recliners in the glorious sun on the flood plain next to the creek. After our relaxing lunch, we started the trek back. This leader was relieved that all 18 made it back to the cars with no drama!

~Pat Watts



Backcountry Apps for Navigating

The following list of apps may be useful when you are hiking. Most will work in airplane mode on your phone. Some will require you to download the map for a particular area first. Several of the apps have a free version, and others require a small fee. If you like planning your routes you may want to look at CalTopo. It is a great mapping app used by many for hiking, but may be more complicated than some prefer. Gaia GPS does a great job recording a hike and allowing you to save photographs with GPS locations. AllTrails is useful for information about a hike. Hiking Project is a popular app that is provided by REI. PeakFinder is a fun app to identify and label the mountain peaks you are viewing. You can label with a live camera shot. If you are traveling you will want to download the PeakFinder map for the area you will be hiking. There are more apps available. If you have a popular one, share it with your hiking friends when you are out on the trail the next time. AllTrails, Gaia GPS, CalTopo, Spyglass, Hiking Project, PeakFinder, and Cairn are a few of the popular ones.

~Dale Potter

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Officers and Directors

President: Diane Petrilla petrillad@gmail.com
Vice President: Ken Wise kwise@utk.edu
Recording Secretary: Steve Dunkin jsdunkin1302@gmail.com
Treasurer: Tim Bigelow bigelowt2@mindspring.com
Trust Liaison: Jean Gauger jeanguager@yahoo.com
Membership Secretary: Amanda Beal amandaw455@gmail.com
Communications Director: Cindy Spangler spangler@utk.edu
Historian: Brian Worley baw2222@aol.com
Director: Kristi Knight kcsknight@charter.net
Director: Dale Potter dalepotter55@gmail.com
Director: Will Skelton whshome@bellsouth.net
Director: Taylor Weatherbee tweatherbe@aol.com

