



Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Newsletter

Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

January 2022

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: <https://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 <https://smhclub.org/Preparing-for-a-Hike>
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. Guidelines for A.T. maintainers will have to be reconciled with the National Park, National Forest, and ATC, particularly in regard to group size.

Road Closures

For current Smokies Closures, please contact the Park at (865) 436-1200 UPDATES or follow current road status updates on Twitter App @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.

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.

January 1–Saturday
Seven Islands State Birding Park

Come join us on the first day of the New Year for easy walking in Seven Islands State Birding Park. For this hike, we'll walk about 5- 6 miles to include part of the Seclusion Bend Trail, the bridge to the Island Loop Trail, and the Upland Trail. Rated Easy. We will meet at the Seven Islands park entrance trailhead, 2809 Kelly Lane, Kodak, TN, at 8:45 am.

Pre-registration with the leader is required.

Register with group leader or <https://www.smhclub.org>

Leader: Kristi Knight at kcsknight@gmail.com, text 865-898-7227

January 8--Saturday
Alcoa Greenway

We will walk the newest section of the Alcoa Greenway. After shuttling from Springbrook Recreation Center to the North Greenway Parking Area we'll walk under Pellissippi Pkwy then over Little River and Pistol Creek. Next we'll walk around the Alcoa Duck Pond before ending up at Springbrook Park. Trail is paved so wear comfortable shoes. Hike is 6 miles, rated easy. Meet at Springbrook Rec. Center 1537 Dalton St. Alcoa at 9:00.

Register with group leader or <https://www.smhclub.org>

Leader: David Smith, dcsmith041@gmail.com or text 865-202-2074

January 12, 2022--Wednesday

Bird Mountain / Lookout Tower / South Old Mac Loop at Frozen Head State Park

After a short walk north (~0.2 mile) past the campground to the trailhead, we ascend Bird Mountain Trail through more than a dozen switch-backs (~1,300 ft. climb) to Castle Rock, then head east along the ridge, past Bird Mtn. Campground toward Bald Knob and the junction with Lookout Tower Trail. We go east, then south (3.9 miles) to the Tub Spring campsite for lunch – near the 0.4 mile spur trail to the tower. After stopping at the tower we head west on South Old Mac Trail, following Judge Branch back to Old Mac Trailhead parking. Total, 11.9 miles. Rated Moderate to Difficult. [For the short option, at the junction of Bird Mountain Trail with Lookout Tower Trail, go southwest to the trailhead. Total 7 miles.] Meet at Books A Million in Oak Ridge at 7:30 am, or at the Old Mac Trailhead (just past the Visitor Center) at 8:15 am. Drive 48 miles RT {@5¢ = \$2.40}.

Leader: Eric Sundstrom Sundstrom.eric@gmail.com, or text 865-406-8794

Preregistration required with Ron Brandenburg, ronb86@comcast.net or text 865-898-7602

January 15--Saturday
Little River – Cucumber Loop

This will be an easy paced hike with time spent on history along the way. Places of interest will be pointed out including a side trip at the top of Cucumber Trail to walk the beginning of the abandoned Bent Arm Trail. Time will be spent to note Little River R.R. and Lumber Co. rail beds vs. the CCC trail work. There will be one water crossing so waterproof boots suggested. It's January so prepare for the worst weather and HOPE for the best! Meet at Jakes Creek Trailhead prior to 9am.

Total Mileage about 6 miles. Register at <https://www.smhclub.org> or with leader.

Leader: Mark Snyder, 865-448-1183

January 16--Sunday
Ijams Nature Center

We'll gather at the Ijams Nature Center Visitor's Center (2915 Island Home Blvd) at 1:30 PM and explore all or parts of several trails--the Tower Trail, the River Trail which affords a gorgeous view of the Holston River from a lovely boardwalk, the Imry Trail through the magic keyhole, and the Tharp Trace trail which rises above Mead's Quarry. Hike is rated easy, approximately 4.5 miles total.

Register at <https://www.smhclub.org> or with the leader.

Leader: Cindy Spangler, spangler@utk.edu, 865-776-1301

January 22--Saturday
North Boundary Greenway

Join us for a little fresh air and exercise on a cold January day in Oak Ridge. We'll begin hiking on the gravel East Quarry Road and turn onto the Big Oak trail for an invigorating climb up the ridge to the North Boundary greenway. Following the boundary, we'll pass several private homes with curious dogs before turning left down the Gallaher Trail to return to East Quarry Road. We'll pass the Gallaher cemetery and stop to check out the quarry toward the end of the hike. Meet at 10am at the large gravel parking area just west of the guard shack and Wisconsin Ave. Total distance 6.5 miles, rated moderate.

Register at <https://www.smhclub.org> or contact leaders to register.

Leaders: Amanda and Adam Beal, amandaw455@gmail.com, 865-207-1469

January 26, 2022—Wednesday

West Prong / Bote Mountain / Finley Cane / Lead Cove

A 'Lollipop' hike from the Tremont area: We'll take West Prong Trail to Bote Mountain Trail, and in 0.3 miles descend the Finley Cane Trail to its trailhead on Laurel Creek Road. Then in 0.2 miles we take the Lead Cove Trail back to Bote Mountain Trail. After lunch at the junction we return to the West Prong trailhead. Total, 13.1 miles and ~2,600 feet climb, rated Moderately Difficult. [For a shorter option, head straight up Bote Mountain to the Lead Cove junction and return, 11 miles total.] Meet at Alcoa Food City at 8:00 am, or the West Prong trailhead at 8:45 am. Drive: 46 miles RT {@5¢= \$2.30}.

Leader: Eric Sundstrom, sundstrom.eric@gmail.com or text 865.406.8794.

Preregistration required with Ron Brandenburg, ronb86@comcast.net or text 865.898.7602.

January 29--Saturday

Tellico Lakeshore Trail

Beginning at Coyotee trailhead and ending at Baker Hollow trailhead we will stroll along the banks of Tellico Lake for 11.7 miles. The hike is considered moderate because of the distance. There's minimum elevation gain or loss. A car shuttle will be involved. Depending on Covid restrictions at the time of the hike, it may be an out and back. Meeting time is 8 AM at the Lenoir City Walmart, 911 Highway 321N, on the Murphy gas station side. Drive RT 20 miles: {@.05 cents = \$1.00} suggested for driver.

Register at <https://www.smhclub.org> or with the leader.

Leaders: John Smiley, jslenoir34@gmail.com, 865-816-0822 & David Smith, dcsmith041@gmail.com



Lilly Bluff Overlook



History Hike—Noisy Creek/Old Settlers

November 20

Seven members and six visitors got a chance to see some of the finest chimneys still remaining in the Park. We had a fine fall day with perfect temperatures for hiking. We entered the Park through the Noisy Creek manway and visited a couple of sites along Noisy Creek. Our group had the rare privilege of seeing a cantilevered barn site discovered during the hike! We continued west on Old Settlers Trail, mostly paralleling Ramsey Creek, visiting seven home sites along the route. Near Campsite 33 we turned down the Redwine Creek manway and visited two sites. We walked back along US 321 with a side trip to see two additional tall chimneys. Everyone agreed it was a wonderful day in the woods.

Frank March and Ed Fleming

Shuckstack

October 16

We had 1 member and 1 guest depart Fontana Dam on a rainy, foggy Saturday morning along with father and son hike leaders. Our hike was along the AT to Shuckstack fire tower 2,244 ft above Fontana Lake in the Smokies. We saw lots of backpackers and hikers out enjoying the fog on the way up. We met some backpackers from Romania at the tower and had good conversations there. Three members of our group climbed the fire tower in spite of the fog and no views. Naturally the fog lifted on our way back down and the sun came out making for a beautiful hike back to our cars. Even with the fog our group had a great time and made some good memories.

-Amanda and Adam Beal

Panther Stairs

November 11

When I was in the first grade, my teacher divided our class into two reading groups, the Turtles and the Rabbits. The Rabbits were the fast readers who sped through the reading assignments and then, with too much time on their hands, managed to get into mischief, while the Turtles were the slower readers who proceeded through the assignments at a reasonable pace. Whenever Greg Hoover and Greg Harrell lead a Club hike, it appears that the hikers in attendance tend to self-select into similar groups. The Turtles being the slower more cautious hikers who tarry a bit to enjoy the wilderness while the Rabbits are those who charge heedlessly up the mountain and back down again. However, all is well as both leaders are fastidiously attentive to the smallest detail and intimately familiar with the off-trail route.

It was no different on a foggy overcast second Saturday in November, when thirteen members of the Club and one visitor gathered at the lower terminus of the Groundhog Ridge manway for an assault of Panther Stairs. After explaining the various nuances of the Club's motto, "If you fall behind you're left behind," the leaders proceed to herd the group up Robinson Creek to the base of the Panther Stairs. Not only was the climb up Panther Stairs exhilarating, but also the fog and clouds parted, affording fabulous views of brilliant white ice-covered trees on the higher slopes and a palate of bright red and yellow fall colors on the slopes below. After a brief respite for lunch, the group continued up the mountain for a visit to the Mount Cammerer Lookout Tower.

At the lookout tower the group unofficially divided itself into the Rabbits and the Turtles with Harrell leading the Rabbits in reckless abandon down Groundhog Ridge while Hoover followed by leading the Turtles on a long detour off the wrong ridge. Among the Rabbits, David Sands provided the greatest moment of entertainment when he ran headlong into the sharp end of a broken rhododendron branch, gauging a hole in his forehead and leaving a face full of blood. Among the Turtles, Amanda Beal managed to cut open her knee, an injury that later required three stitches and a tetanus shot.

After leaving Mount Cammerer, the Rabbits reached their cars an hour later where their detail-oriented leader, Greg Harrell, discovered he had gone off up Panther Stairs and left the door of his Jeep standing wide open. No one among the Rabbits knows when the Turtles finally got down. The Turtles had gotten lost and thus the Rabbits had gotten tired of waiting and had all gone home. However, they do know that the Turtle's detail-oriented leader, Greg Hoover, discovered that he had gone off up Panther Stairs and left the gate of his pickup truck down.

-Ken Wise

Lilly Bluff Overlook

November 13

Seven members and three guests met author David Brill (red jacket) and wife Belinda at Lilly Bluff Overlook in Lancing, TN with views of Clear Creek. We heard about The Obed Wild and Scenic River which winds thru huge boulders and large stands of hemlock. We then headed down to the Boulder Trail below and saw many adventuresome young boulderers practicing their climbs. Co-leader Ray Garrett led the group through many rock caves and dramatic boulders made more beautiful with surrounding fall foliage. Many hemlocks had blue and yellow markings where the National Park Service is treating to save them from the woolly adelgid insect. It was a short distance hike that lasted 2 hours because the group couldn't stop photographing surrounding beauty of so many boulders in a colorful deep forest. After officially ending our SMHC hike we headed to nearby Lilly Pad Brewery for a chili bowl lunch and 🍷

What fun on such a gorgeous fall day in Morgan County.

-Jeannette Gilbert

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 editors, Connie and John Tatgenhorst at newsletter@smhc.org 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.



Kroger has a program known as Community Rewards that they use in order to donate money to qualifying organizations, and through this, you can help support the SMHC. Log into your Kroger account online and select My Account. Under that menu select Community Rewards and enter **MV194** for your reward sponsor. That will select the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club. Save it, logout, and then log back in to verify that 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.



Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Officers and Directors

President: Ken Wise kwise@utk.edu

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