



Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Newsletter

Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

February 2022

SMHC Handbooks Have Been Mailed!

The 2022 SMHC Handbooks have now been mailed. Developing, formatting, printing, and mailing of the Handbooks is an all-volunteer team effort! Led by Program Chair and Editor Ken Wise, there was huge assistance with formatting from Scott Walker, and editing by various BOD members. Cindy Spangler led a team of envelope-stuffers and mailed over 600 Handbooks. If you have not received yours, and feel you should have, please contact Scott Walker at swalker.dev@gmail.com.

2021 Year End Reports

2022 Membership Renewals

For many members, receiving your Handbook in the mail means it's also time to renew your membership. You can check the status of when your renewal is due by going to smhclub.org, logging into your account, and clicking the renew button if it is there. (It will not display unless you need to pay dues.) You can renew on-line with a credit card, or mail your check to:

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club
Box 51592
Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

For any questions about logging in, please email Scott Walker at swalker.dev@gmail.com. If you have questions about your membership dues, want to change your membership level, or anything else, please email Treasurer

Diane Petrilla
petrillad@gmail.com
OR call 931-224-5149

Appalachian Trail Maintainer Report

In 2021 our SMHC A.T. maintainers continued their hard work to support and care for the 100 miles Trail we have maintained for almost 100 years! We continued with COVID guidelines agreed upon by the ATC, NPS and USFS. In the spring, blowdown removal trips were planned and led by Franklin LaFond in the Nantahala NF, and Dick Ketelle in the GRSM. In June, we were able to host a "modified" National Trails Day event (the 2020 event was cancelled due to COVID) with smaller teams. Despite that, we had great sponsorship and turnout with 61 participants, 14 teams, and over 400 hours of work accomplished in one day! Throughout the year, we continued our regular first Saturday work trips on different sections of the A.T. We have a new tool shed placed at the Park maintenance area (thanks to the Friends of the Smokies and Christine Hoyer), and all of our tools have been consolidated and organized thanks to Steve Dunkin. Our constant challenge to engage more volunteers and section leaders has received a great boost by the engagement of Ann Farrar, who is working to make a promotional video about our work and helping with general volunteer recruitment efforts. We had 3 wonderful ATC Ridgerunners this year (Amelia Cary, Yael Girard and Ricky Vandegrift), who were crucial for their work on the Trail from March through October. We also saw some big changes in leadership for the southern region of the ATC. Morgan Sommerville has transitioned to a Trail-wide position in Visitor Use Management, Drew Ball is our new Regional Manager, and we have 2 local "directors"- Stephen Eren for the GRSM, and Sarah Adams for the NNF. Franklin LaFond was elected the new Chair of the ATMC in August. Finally, for the 2021 fiscal year, our volunteers logged 5520 work hours, ranking 8th among the 31 maintaining Clubs for the A.T. We look forward to an even busier 2022, as hopefully the pandemic becomes more controlled and our very dedicated maintainers continue their work. Many thanks to all of them, and we always welcome new volunteers!

Diane Petrilla

These recognition awards seem small considering all that these volunteers have accomplished and that all our A.T. volunteers accomplish. The Smoky Mountains Hiking Club is proud of our tradition of being a maintaining club for the A.T. since our founding in 1923 and we are very proud that you carry on this mission.

2021 Maintainer Awards

SMHC Maintainer Awards

SMHC awards given for trail work hours earned in 1 year.

(Repeat Platinum and Gold cap award winners receive an ATC pin for their caps)

Platinum (200 hours): Dick Ketelle, Bill Pyle

Repeat award: Pete Bernsten, Franklin LaFond, Janet Snyder, Mark Snyder, Taylor Weatherbee

Gold (100 hours): Randy Bullock, Rick Hughes

Repeat award: Terry Martin, Randy Mitchell, Diane Petrilla

Silver (50 hours): David Gall, Jack Grant, Melanie Harmon, Ann Farrar, Steve Hill, Rick Waggener, Elizabeth Weikert

There are 11 additional maintainers who repeated at least 50 hours of work this year.

Bronze (25 hours): Stephanie Gose, Scott Medlyn, Lisa Sumter, Davis Wax

There are 15 additional maintainers who repeated at least 25 hours of work this year.

Appalachian Trail Conservancy Awards

ATC awards given for cumulative hours since the start of the database on 10/1/2000

ATC Vest (1000 hours): Taylor Weatherbee

ATC Cap (500 hours): Bill Pyle

ATC Patch (100 hours): Lillian Bray, Randy Bullock, Rick Hughes, Eric Keller, Charlie McDonald, Brad Sites, Elizabeth Weikert



Appalachian Trail Park Office Award

ATPO awards the "America the Beautiful" Interagency Volunteer Pass in recognition of 250 volunteer hours since last eligibility date. The pass provides fee-free access to federal lands for 12 months after issuance.

Maintainers who are eligible will be contacted individually to choose whether they want the Pass.

Conservation Report

The Club submitted letters on various local and national issues during 2021. These included comments in connection with the revision of an Air Tour Management Plan in the Smokies. The Park's draft plan was flawed and basically copied from other National Parks. We urged the Park to adopt a Plan that provides for the ultimate phasing out of all air flights over the Park (both helicopter and fixed wing) at elevations which are appropriate and allowed under applicable law.

In connection with North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality review of a proposed wastewater permit renewal and variance removal for the Pigeon River, we opposed any relaxation or reduction of the existing permit requirements and urged the continued protection of the water quality of the Pigeon River.

Finally, regarding the Park's Foothills Parkway Section 8D/Metcalf Bottoms Access Improvements proposals, we urged them not to proceed based on a simple Environment Assessment instead of a full Environmental Impact Assessment. We suggested that the uncompleted portions of the Foothills Parkway between Wears Valley Road and Cosby be converted to a paved recreational trail/greenway for hikers and bicyclists that would cost far less than the Parkway. And regarding the Metcalf Bottoms road improvements, we opposed any new road construction from the Foothills Parkway to Metcalf Bottoms.

Treasurer's Report

This report summarizes the status of the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club finances on December 31, 2021. The club's funds are maintained in two accounts, one for overall SMHC activities and the other for Appalachian Trail Maintenance. A significant portion of the reserves are invested with the Trust Company of Knoxville including a memorial fund consisting of donations from members bequests plus Life Member Dues fund. Details of the Trust Company fund donations are in a separate report by Jean Gauger. The Conservation Fund comes from donations by members above the annual dues and is used for projects supporting conservation efforts both inside and outside the club that improve hiking areas in the region. In the past year, donations totaling \$1800 were made to Cumberland Trails Conference, Cherokee Forest Voices, Legacy Parks Foundation, Foothills Land Conservancy, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy and Tennessee Parks and Greenways.

SMHC Primary Account Balances

Operating Funds **\$33,450.54**

Used for newsletter and handbook printing, postage, Website, liability insurance and other administrative expenses. Source is annual membership dues and some donations.

Conservation **\$2615.87**

This fund is used for AT improvements and for other trail-related conservation projects at SMHC and donations to local land conservation organizations as those mentioned above. These funds come from dues paid in excess of the annual minimum and from other donations from members.

Life Membership **\$25,700.00**

Interest from this fund is used for newsletter, handbook, and other life membership expenses. Source is Life Membership dues. (The Life Membership funds are included in the Trust Company investments and have grown in value significantly above this amount)

SMHC Funds invested at the Trust Company **\$254,056.54**

(in addition to the Life Membership Fund)

Total Current Equity **\$313,279.08**

Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee Balances

Operating Funds **\$46,841.09**

Used for trail maintenance expenses including privy construction, shelter and projects, sanitation supplies, tools, brochures, and administrative and incidental expenses. These funds come from donations and grants targeted specifically at Appalachian Trail and shelter maintenance and improvements. Sizeable donations were received from Friends of the Smokies, Monte Swanson and National Trails Day registrations.

ATMC Funds invested at the Trust Company **\$247,095.44**

Total Current Equity **\$293,936.53**

Submitted by Tim Bigelow, Treasurer

SMHC Trusts

Two trusts, a Conservation Trust and an AT Trust, are the result of generous donations from past members. (Lionel Edney and Charlie Klabunde were major contributors, via their estates.) Other members have given memorial, or 'donations in appreciation' to the SMHC Trusts. A process was established in 2018 to determine amounts to be donated from the Trusts, consistent with the Club's objectives and Trust terms. The Board and ATMC designate distributions to be made from the respective trusts.

2021 SMHC Trust Distributions

Conservation Trust (The SMHC Board designated these distributions):

\$2000 to the Friends of the Smokies (FOS) to support the AT Ridgerunner program
\$1500 to FOS for the Trails Forever program
\$2000 to Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont, to their scholarship program
\$1500 to the Sierra Club's Inspiring Connections Outdoors (ICO) program in the Knoxville area
\$1000 to Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS)

AT Trust

\$3000 designated by ATMC to support the AT Ridgerunner program

For 2022, the ATMC Finance Committee will assess upcoming AT projects and the financial needs. This can structure future AT Trust distributions.

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.

February 2—Wednesday Stinging Fork Falls Section of Cumberland Trail

For this section of the CT, we will hike from south to north, along Soak Creek. We ascend and descend several bluff areas, and will see several waterfalls, including Stinging Fork Falls itself. The falls are part of the Stinging Fork Falls State Natural area and plunge 30 ft. in a fan shape, to the rocky creek below. Hike 11.6 miles RT. Rated Moderate. Meet at Lowes, Harriman, 1800 Roane State Hwy at 8am or at the Piney Creek TH on Shut-In Gap Rd. near Spring City, TN at 8:45 am. 55 miles RT= \$2.75.

Pre-register with Ron Brandenburg at ronb86@comcast.net or text 865-898-7602
Leader: Diane Petrilla

February 5—Saturday
Old Sugarlands/Twin Creeks/Gatlinburg Trails

This pleasant saunter through civilization past and present (if that's what Gatlinburg is) makes a triangle of three trails, with a bit of easy road walking to connect them. We will start by climbing 1000 feet on the Old Sugarlands Trail from Sugarlands Visitor Center to the jump-off point for the Bull Head and Rainbow Falls trails. From there we'll wend downhill on Twin Creeks Trail into Gatlinburg, where those who wish can tarry for lunch, and then stroll (or waddle) back up the easy Gatlinburg Trail along the river and past the Park HQ complex to the VC. Through the whole hike we'll see much sign of habitation, including old walls and chimneys from the Sugarlands community, remnants of the former CCC camp, the Bud Ogle cabin, and the new Twin Creeks Science Center. About 9 miles, rated moderate. Meet at Alcoa Food City at 8:00 AM or at Sugarlands Visitor Center (in the first parking area on the right as you enter, before the VC) at 9:00. Drive 74 miles RT (@ 5¢ = \$3.70).

Pre-register at smhclub.org or with leader.

Leader: Dan Feller at dfeller@utk.edu or 865-673-5822 (no texting!).

February 9—Wednesday
Lead Cove/Bote Mountain/Thunderhead

Let's take a chance on hiking to a high elevation (and perhaps some snow!) We'll climb Lead Cove, then Bote, then turn north on the Appalachian Trail for another 1.5 miles to Rocky Top and Thunderhead. Hike 12.4 miles RT. Rated Difficult due to elevation gain of 3700 ft. Some may want to go to A.T. and back only, for RT mileage of 9.4 and elevation gain of 3100 ft. (or some lower climb permutation of that). Meet at Alcoa FC at 8 am or at Lead Cove TH at 8:45 am. 50 miles RT= \$2.50.

Pre-register with Ron Brandenburg at ronb86@comcast.net or text 865-898-7602

Leader: Diane Petrilla

February 12—Saturday
Mill Creek and Loyston Point at Norris Lake

This loop hike at Norris Lake begins at the trailhead of the Loyston Loop. We will follow this 5.4 mile loop counterclockwise until it intersects with the Mill Creek 7.3 mile loop. We hike this loop counterclockwise as well and intersect the Loyston Loop and return to the point where we started. Total hike mileage is 12.5 miles, rated moderate. Meet at the Loyston Point trailhead parking area at 146-1 60 Lakeshore Dr., Andersonville, TN. It is a large parking lot with restrooms.

Pre-register at smhclub.org or with leader

Leader: Brian Worley at baw2222@aol.com, text or phone 865-207-2625.

February 12—Saturday
Heintooga Bike-Hike, Off-Trail

Try this adventure combination of a bicycle ride and an off-trail hike in the Balsam Mountain section of the Smokies! Add another feature of winter weather which might be your best outdoor experience of the season. We will meet at the closed gate on Straight Fork and shuttle to the Masonic Marker on the Blue Ridge Parkway (if it's open) or an alternative location if it's closed. We will ride bicycles 20 miles, on a combination of paved and gravel roads. Along the way, we will stop at Beech Gap to explore an old railroad grade with lots of artifacts and a logging camp, which is about three miles of foot travel round trip.

Some additional considerations for the hike include the obvious need for a bicycle that is functional and participation in a long shuttle ride. We will use masks and ventilation for the shuttle, following current club guidelines. Registration is required and participation will be limited according to availability of space for transporting bicycles.

Pre-register with Cindy McJunkin at mcjfive@aol.com, Co-leader: Mike Knies

**February 19—Saturday
Rainbow Falls, New Member Hike**

This hike has changed from the one listed in the 2022 Handbook. We had many new members join the SMHC last year and would like to encourage you to join us on a hike to Rainbow Falls! From the Rainbow Falls parking lot on Cherokee Orchard Rd., we will hike 2.8 miles to the Falls, then back, for a round trip of 5.8 miles. Along the way, we'll learn about the Smokies, and about the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club. In spite of the relatively short distance, there is still a climb of about 1600 ft. to the falls, along a beautifully rehabilitated trail. This is a family -friendly hike, and a good way to get outdoors in the winter! Meet at the Cracker Barrel off of the Strawberry Plains exit #398, 1510 Cracker Barrel Lane, Knoxville at 9am or at the Rainbow Falls parking lot (first one) at 10:30am. 70 miles round trip carpool fee from Cracker Barrel is \$3.50. Rated Easy- Moderate.

Pre-register at smhclub.org or with leader.

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

**February 26—Saturday
Old Settlers Trail via Big Copeland Creek, Off-trail**

This hike will begin at the Greenbrier entrance to the park. We will start up the east side of the river, then go by the Price Cemetery and a Price home place on our way across the Copeland Divide to Big Copeland Creek. We will follow this creek up to the OST passing numerous historic sites. We will then hike west on OST crossing back over the Copeland Divide to an area formerly called "Parton Town" where we will pickup another old road/trail going down the east side of the river back to beginning, passing more historic sites along the way. Hike around 9 miles, rated difficult.

Preregister at smhclub.org or with the leader.

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

**February 26—Saturday
Abrams Falls from Abrams Creek Ranger Station**

For this classic and beautiful GSMNP hike, we will meet at the Abrams Creek Ranger Station, hike a short distance on Cooper Road Trail, and then pick up Little Bottoms Trail. After a very short stretch on Hatcher Mountain Trail, we continue on the Abrams Falls Trail. Approaching this way allows us to follow the interesting and rugged old manway of the Little Bottoms Trail along Abrams Creek. When we reach Abrams Falls Trail, we will walk beside the Abrams Creek Gorge before reaching the Falls, which are about 20 ft. high and plunge into a large, lovely pool. We will return via the same route. This is the less-traveled way to see the Falls and a beautiful hike.

Rated moderate due to distance of 11 miles. Meet at Alcoa Food City at 8am or at Abrams Creek Ranger Station at 8:30am. Drive 30 miles RT= \$1.50 carpool fee.

Pre-register at smhclub.org or with the leaders.

Randy Mitchell, mitchell1982@tds.net, 865-406-6469 Lloyd Chapman, lrchapman6667@yahoo.com, 865-719-3769

**February 27—Sunday
Easy Hike
Gallaher Bend Greenway**

Gallaher Bend Greenway is an out-and-back gravel road located at the west end of the Clark Center Park Recreation Area. The trail gently rolls through the woods and is mostly level with a few slopes along the way and should be easily passable at this time of the year. At the beginning of the trail and closer to its end there will be some spectacular views of the lake. Weather permitting it could be very quiet and relaxing. Meet at Clark Center Park, 76200 Bull Bluff Rd, Knoxville (it is actually part of the Oak Ridge reservation) at 10 AM. When you have view of the lake pull into the first parking lot you see to the right.

Pre-register at smhclub.org or with the leader

Leader: Nina Petrov, petrovn@comcast.net, 865-621-1669

For The Record



December 4 Russell Field—Anthony Creek Loop

On an amazingly warm, perfect for hiking, December day; 6 people met at Cades Cove to hike this 13-mile loop. We were immediately greeted with the unexpected as the gate to the picnic area was closed. The group managed this situation wonderfully and we all gathered at the trail head for a group picture as planned. The leaves had fallen off the trees opening the view of the surrounding area and covering the trails. We arrived at the Russell Field shelter shortly after 11 and decided to continue on to Spence Field for lunch where the group decided to continue on the AT, past Bote Mountain, to a clear area with a view for lunch. After lunch, we returned to the picnic grounds via the Bote Mountain and Anthony Creek trails where, much to our surprise, we saw parked vehicles and people at the picnic tables. Everyone enjoyed the day (including the unplanned strolls through the picnic grounds)!?

Neil Snepp

December 4 Spicewood to Mart Field and Chimney Top

Beginning at the Old Mac trailhead area at Frozen Head SP, 15 hikers split into groups. All of us ascended Spicewood Branch Trail, a steep and at times, very narrow trail! At the top, one group hiked on to Mart Field, then continued for the entire remaining length of the Chimney Top Tr. Along the way, we had expansive views of broad open ridgeline with mountains on both sides, as well as beautiful sandstone rock formations. Another group hiked to Mart Field, then returned via North Old Mac. Our 3rd group hiked from the top of Spicewood, back down on North Old Mac. All of us, no matter what group, had to keep moving, since even though it was sunny, it stayed chilly! All of us enjoyed the unique look that winter brings to Frozen Head, since the bare trees allow full views of the rugged and steep terrain. A treasure in our own backyard!

Carolyn Reeves
Diane Petrilla



December 12 House Mountain

For this "traditional" SMHC December hike, 7 members gathered at the House Mountain on a bright, sunny and cold day. We started with the hard part, hiking up the West Overlook Trail, which has seen much use and erosion over the years, and has some challenging rocky areas. The views at the top however, of the Smokies to the southeast and Cumberland Plateau to the northwest, were spectacular! We continued on out the Crest Trail, with one hiker choosing a slower pace to take photographs of interesting flora on the ridge. We lunched at the open overlook just prior to the east end of the trail and its view of Clinch Mt. Then we backtracked and hiked down the Mountain Trail. This 4.5-mile hike is not long, but is a good workout, and the views are so worth it!

Diane Petrilla



View of the majestic Smokies rising out of the clouds to the south



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

Post Hike Write-Ups

Post-hike write-ups and photos should be submitted to SMHC Newsletter editors, Connie and John Tatgenhorst at newsletter@smhclub.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.

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.



50 Years Ago
LeConte from Cove Mountain
Charlie Klabunde

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Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Officers and Directors

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Recording Secretary: Kristi Knight kcsknight@charter.net

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Trust Liaison: Jean Gauger jeangauger@yahoo.com

Membership Secretary: Scott Walker swalker.dev@gmail.com

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Director: Randy Mitchell mitchell1982@tds.net

Director: Will Skelton whshome@bellsouth.net

Director: Taylor Weatherbee tweatherbe@aol.com

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