



# Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Newsletter

*Exploring the Smokies Since 1924*

May 2022

## Update to COVID Guidelines

As we have done throughout the pandemic, the SMHC COVID Committee is updating our Club COVID recommendations based on CDC recommendations. According to the CDC, in communities with "Low" levels of COVID transmission, the following is recommended:

- Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines
- Get tested if you have symptoms

Most east TN and western NC counties are at low levels of transmission. You can check a county's transmission rate, anywhere in the United States, by going to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>

***We are therefore pleased to end most prior COVID Club restrictions at this time.*** We are monitoring the Omicron BA.2 variant and will issue recommendations as needed going forward; there is still concern that BA.2 may become more of a problem in the future and guidelines would have to be modified again. It is always your personal decision as to preventative measures you use going forward, and we would ask Club members to continue to show the excellent mutual respect towards others that they have in the past. The guidelines going forward are therefore:

1. One hike leader will serve as pre-registration contact with email and phone # available in the write-up. Pre-registration at [smhclub.org](https://www.smhclub.org) is still required for all hikes.
2. Hikers must sign a release form with accurate contact information.
3. 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. For regular pre-hike prep, see: <https://www.smhclub.org/Preparing-for-a-Hike>
4. All participants should have hand sanitizer or wipes.
5. If leader(s) or any participant feels sick, please stay at home.
6. If leader(s) need to alter planned activity please contact an SMHC Board member ASAP to discuss proposed changes.

Stay safe and healthy!

## **SAVE THE DATE!** **NATIONAL TRAILS DAY SATURDAY** **JUNE 4, 2022!**

Please plan to come out and help us for a day of trail maintenance on the Appalachian Trail in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park! Our event this year will resemble last year's event with no large morning gathering or afternoon picnic.

However, experienced maintainers will lead crews spread out over the A.T. in the Park. We will provide bagged lunches and prizes again! We will also be giving each participant a special commemorative T-shirt, as in years past.

**Registration form is available at the bottom of this Newsletter and on [smhclub.org](https://www.smhclub.org). This is a wonderful way to give back to the trails and Park we love!**

## **CLUB VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

To lead a SMHC hike, a member must have completed at least 3 hikes with the club.

We are always in need of hike leaders so plan to get your 3 hikes completed before August 2022--the date we finish up the 2023 handbook.

Also, if you have a favorite hike you would like to lead, contact Steve Dunkin at [jsdunkin1302@gmail.com](mailto:jsdunkin1302@gmail.com).

**IT TAKES A VILLAGE!**

# Upcoming Hikes

Pre-registration at [SMHClub.org](http://SMHClub.org) is required for all hikes.

Please contact the leader if you are not sure of 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.

**May 7, Saturday**

**AT Maintenance Work Trip**

**Davenport Gap to Mt. Cammerer Side Trail**

This work trip will concentrate on the east end of the Smokies beginning at Davenport Gap and working as far as the Mt. Cammerer side trail. Although a lot of progress in these sections has been accomplished already this spring, we will work on cleaning any remaining waterbars and trail drains and repair a few log steps as time allows. Some tread repair, vegetation trimming and removal of downed trees may also be required. We hope to have several work groups willing to hike different distances up to 5 miles to the far end of the section.

We will meet at the Davenport Gap at 9:00 a.m. Bring gloves, lunch, snacks and plenty of water.

Pre-register at [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org)

Leaders: Tim Bigelow, 865-607-6781 [bigelowt2@mindspring.com](mailto:bigelowt2@mindspring.com)

**May 11-Wednesday**

**The Sinking Creek branch of the East Lakeshore Trail**

9 miles along Tellico Lake. Out and back. 1325 feet cumulative ascent. Bring a trail lunch & water.

Rated Moderately easy.

We will begin the hike at the Sinking Creek trailhead at the end of National Campground Road at 9:30 am.

Meet at the Lenoir City Cracker Barrel by 9 am. Drive 20 miles RT = \$1

Pre-register at [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org).

Leader: Terry Nyenhuis 865-206-9476 [terrynyenhuis@gmail.com](mailto:terrynyenhuis@gmail.com)

**May 14-Saturday**

**Ace Gap to Beard Cane**

With luck, we'll see pink lady slippers (endangered) that usually bloom in May near this pleasant hiking + horse trail. It goes northwest from Rich Mountain Gap along the Park boundary above Tuckaleechee Cove, past old Campsites #4 and #7, and up Hurricane Mountain to Beard Cane Trail. Return the same way. Total 11.2 miles and ~1,870 ft, elevation gain, rated Moderate. Meet at Alcoa Food City, 7:30am [drive 40 miles RT @ 5¢/mile=\$2.00] or at Ace Gap trailhead, 8:00am.

Pre-register at [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org).

Leader: Eric Sundstrom, [sundstrom.eric@gmail.com](mailto:sundstrom.eric@gmail.com) or text 865-406-8794.

**May 14-Saturday**

**Kuwahi Scar and Rattler Branch, Off-trail**

From the misty top of the Smokies we shall depart the AT at 6600 feet, just behind the Clingmans Dome Tower, into the breathtaking Kuwahi landslide scar for a challenging, rocky descent into the Kuwahi Branch watershed. After intercepting the Little River and continuing to just within eyeshot of Campsite 30, we will make a slight rhodo thrash to Grouse Creek and turn southbound again - finding the mouth of Rattler Branch in a half mile or so, thus commencing a stupendous creek-hop up the mountain along Rattler where there are several beautiful cascade sequences and impressive waterfalls to behold. After a mere 3000 feet of elevation gain, we once again find the AT at 6200 feet, just west of Mount Buckley. Hike is rated very difficult with ~6 miles off-trail.

Due to high difficulty level, treacherous nature and length of this hike, limited spots are available and previous off-trail experience is strictly required.

Pre-register at [smhc.org](http://smhc.org).

Leaders: Todd Long and Kindel Page, [kindeledhearts1985@gmail.com](mailto:kindeledhearts1985@gmail.com)

**May 14-Saturday  
Deep Creek  
Map Marker Hike**

We'll tackle the Deep Creek trail by the easiest route possible - top to bottom. This map marker hike is intended to help those working on their 900 miles, but all hikers are welcome; the 900 mile goal is not a requirement. This mostly downhill hike will involve a shuttle to the trailhead on Newfound Gap Road. From there we will descend into the creek valley, crossing several smaller streams as well as Deep Creek, passing by 8 backcountry campsites, and perhaps seeing some late spring wildflowers and artifacts from the pre-park days. Wet and muddy shoes are likely, and hiking poles are recommended.

For transportation, we will either hire a shuttle and split the cost or go the DIY route and shuttle ourselves by car. The cost per person for hiring a shuttle will depend on how many hikers register. The quoted price is \$250, so if we have 10 attendees, the per-person price would be \$25 plus tip for the driver. More attendees means less cost per person, so bring a friend! If we have fewer than 10 attendees, we'll determine carpooling at the trailhead and go by the standard \$0.05 per mile reimbursement for drivers. Please register ASAP so we can confirm the shuttle if needed.

This hike is 14.3 miles and rated difficult. Meet at 7:30am in the large parking area at the end of Deep Creek Road (across the creek from Deep Creek Campground) in Bryson City, NC.

Pre-register at [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org)

Leader: Amanda Beal, [amandaw455@gmail.com](mailto:amandaw455@gmail.com), 865-207-1469.

**May 21-Saturday  
Beech Gap to Bob's Bald**

The hike starts from the Beech Gap parking lot at the TN and NC border on the Cherohala Skyway, (TN165/NC143) (Beech Gap is 22 miles from the turn-off at Tellico Plains onto the Cherohala Skyway). From the parking area, we hike about 0.1 mi hike on the highway to Beech Gap, (4500' elevation). Enjoy panoramic views along the ascent north on No. 95 Fodderstack trail about 1.8 miles to the junction with No. 54A Bob Bald Connector trail. We then hike 1.2 miles to the junction with No. 54 Bob Stratton Bald Trail. It's another 1.0 miles to Bob's Bald, (5,280' elevation). After enjoying the view and lunch we will return the same way. Total distance about 7-8 miles, depending on how much exploring we do on the bald. Rated moderate. Those wanting to carpool can meet at the Lenoir City Cracker Barrel at 7:30am. Drive 140 miles RT, @ \$0.05/mi=\$7.00. Meet the leader at the Beech Gap Parking lot, (not at the Cracker Barrel), at 9:15am.

Pre-register at [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org).

Leader: Larry Johnson, ([larryj11320@gmail.com](mailto:larryj11320@gmail.com); mobile 865-776-6434)

**May 25-Wednesday  
The Canal & Baker Hollow branches of the East Lakeshore Trail**

The hike will begin at the Canal Branch Trailhead. We will hike 4.5 miles south along Tellico Lake on the Canal & Baker Hollow Branches of the East Lakeshore Trail, have a rest & lunch, then return north on the same trails back to our vehicles at the trailhead. Bring a trail lunch & water. Rated moderately easy. Meet at the Lenoir City Cracker Barrel by 9 am. Drive 10 miles RT {@ \$.05 = \$.50}.

Pre-register at [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org)

Leader: Terry Nyenhuis, 865-206-9476, [terrynyenhuis@gmail.com](mailto:terrynyenhuis@gmail.com)

**May 29-Sunday  
Fork Ridge - Noland Divide  
Joint Memorial Day Weekend hike with CMC**

We will have more than 14 hours of daylight to complete this challenging but diverse hike of 15.7 miles with 3400 feet ascent with the CMC. After leaving cars at the Noland Divide TH on Clingmans Dome Rd. (on the left, 5.5 miles up Clingmans Dome Rd.), we will shuttle some cars back just 2 miles, to the Fork Ridge TH. We will begin in this unique spruce-fir forest, passing through stands of unlogged red spruce, dense rhododendron and laurel cover and into the lush streams of Deep Creek. After descending to and crossing Deep Creek (be prepared for a wet crossing), we will pick up Deep Creek Tr for another 3.6 miles to Pole Road Creek Trail. After 3.3 miles on the latter, we will take Noland Divide back up to the CD Rd. trailhead. Although the circuit descends and then climbs nearly 3500 feet, we will be distracted and delighted by the variety of blooms at the different elevations, birdsong and tree canopy. Rated Difficult. Meet at the Noland Divide TH at 9 am or at Sugarlands Visitor Center 8:15 am to carpool. \$2.00 carpool fee from Sugarlands.

Pre-register at [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org)

Leaders: Diane Petrilla, [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com) and Cindy McJunkin, [mcjfive@aol.com](mailto:mcjfive@aol.com)

## For the Record

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

This hike originally scheduled in February of last year was cancelled due to heavy rain on the planned day and carried over to this year when it was finally completed by 10 members and 3 visitors. The leaders limited the group size to 15 hikers which had signed up by February 1. A couple of late cancellations reduced the group size to 13. More than 4 inches of rain fell shortly before the hike and lots of tree falls from winter storms made the hike somewhat more challenging, but the group took it all in good stride and seemed to enjoy the day. We did not get to two of the five cemeteries that we planned to visit due to constraints of time and high water. Thanks to his research on the homesites of the Smokies, Frank was able to put names of former residents with most of the homesites that we visited. He was also able to add four "new" homesites to his database. There were also some good displays of Easter flowers at several of the sites.

-Ed Fleming and Frank March

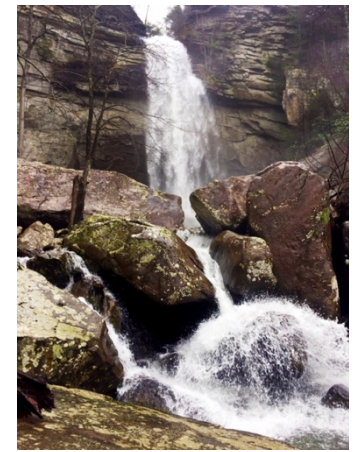




**March 16**  
**Laurel Falls in the Laurel-Snow State Natural Area**

An optimistic group of 12 hikers met to hike to Laurel Falls and Buzzard Point in the Laurel-Snow SNA outside of Dayton. Optimistic in that as we were driving to the Trailhead, we were met with heavy rains but expected to find near perfect hiking weather when we reached the Trailhead and we were not disappointed! Everyone thoroughly enjoyed this beautiful hike and learning much about the early mining history of the area. Because of the heavy rains, Laurel Falls was spectacular and clear blue skies made the views from Buzzard Point worth the climb.

-Lloyd Chapman



**March 26**  
**Rich Mountain Loop**

There were 10 club members and 1 visitor who gathered at the entrance to Cades Cove for the Rich Mountain Loop hike. There was lots of enthusiasm in the group because the sky was a clear blue and there was just enough of a nip in the air to get the blood flowing.

After the obligatory picture was taken at the trail head, we headed down the Rich Mountain Loop trail with the John Oliver cabin being our goal. We wandered around the structure before continuing up the more challenging (steep) part of the trail. It was too early for an abundance of wildflowers, though we did note the bloodroot trying to bloom, plenty of violets and spring beauties, and a particularly nice showing of rue anemone. Three of us lagged behind the rest of the group, and we inadvertently found ourselves doing an off-trail excursion up the stream. Realizing our mistake, we corrected course to the civilized trail and continued up. We had been hearing the wind build as we approached the Indian Grave Gap trail. As we made our way down the mountain ridge, the nip in the air at the start of the hike turned into an arctic blast. Our next goal became Campsite 6 on the Scott Mountain trail for lunch, thinking we might dip below the ridge enough to avoid the gusting wind. It was not to be, we were on the wrong side of the ridge sitting right in the wind's path. So, lunch was a hurried affair before continuing our hike down Crooked Arm Ridge back to our cars. Though windy and cold, we still enjoyed the incredible views of Cades Cove, Dry Valley and Townsend through the still barren trees as well as the sparkling rushing waters of Crooked Arm Falls.

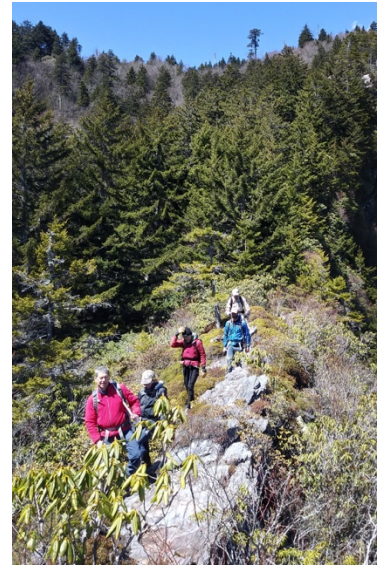
-Pat Watts



### March 26 Blindside Ridge

Nine intrepid hikers braved the cold temperatures and howling winds to visit the wild and remote heart of Smokies wilderness. A quick jaunt of approximately eight miles out the AT brought them to Laurel Top Mountain, where the real fun began. Two of the hikers, who had travelled the crest of Blindside Ridge before, split off from the main group to explore a wonderful-looking open valley at the base of the bluffs. The main group ventured down the ridge, creeping easily along the edge of towering vertical cliffs. There were rocky obstacles to scamper down and more rocky obstacles to scamper up. These were interspersed between wide-open meadows of myrtle, showcasing monumental views of never-ending mountain ranges to the south. After a long descent along the crest, Iron Mike found an easy route off the ridge leading to a beautiful sunny spot beside the creek. The group lazed around for several minutes waiting on the two wayward hikers to complete their detour. After a good rest, the challenging climb of the finest scar in the Smokies began. Climbers scattered all along the rock face, seeking out challenges to best suit their individual tastes. After numerous thrills all arrived safely at the top. Daylight disappeared as the group wearily trekked all those miles back to Newfound Gap.

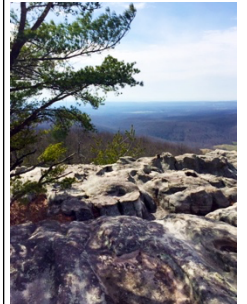
-David Sands



### March 30 Black Mountain

On a very blustery WINDnesday, 25 hikers followed the Cumberland Trail to Black Mountain to enjoy a spectacular view of Grassy Cove and beyond from the overlook. At least briefly. Wind gusts were so strong that maintaining a standing position was a bit challenging. Wildflowers were beginning to bloom and there was a proliferation of Blood Root in full bloom. Enjoyed a side trip to Windless Cave and a brief description of the geology of Grassy Cove being the largest sink hole in North America. Absolutely ideal hiking temperatures.

-Lloyd Chapman





## In Memoriam

The SMHC is sorry to report that John Sloan, age 94, passed away on January 19, 2022. John was an avid hiker of the Smokies and a 15-year member of the SMHC. When Bob Lochbaum was measuring the trails back a few years ago, either by wheel or by GPS, John often went with him on these outings. These accounts are mentioned in the short story "How Far Is It?" by Bob Lochbaum.



Please visit this link for John's obituary:

<https://www.smithfuneralandcremation.com/obituaries/John-Sloan-12/#!/Obituary>

### 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](mailto: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.



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](mailto:kwise@utk.edu)

Vice President: [jsdunkin1302@gmail.com](mailto:jsdunkin1302@gmail.com)

Recording Secretary: Kristi Knight [kcsknight@charter.net](mailto:kcsknight@charter.net)

Treasurer: Diane Petrilla [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com)

Trust Liaison: Jean Gauger [jeangauger@yahoo.com](mailto:jeangauger@yahoo.com)

Membership Secretary: Scott Walker [swalker.dev@gmail.com](mailto:swalker.dev@gmail.com)

Communications Director: Cindy Spangler [spangler@utk.edu](mailto:spangler@utk.edu)

Historian: Brian Worley [baw2222@aol.com](mailto:baw2222@aol.com)

Director: Tim Bigelow [bigelowt2@mindspring.com](mailto:bigelowt2@mindspring.com)

Director: Randy Mitchell [mitchell1982@tds.net](mailto:mitchell1982@tds.net)

Director: Will Skelton [whshome@bellsouth.net](mailto:whshome@bellsouth.net)

Director: Taylor Weatherbee [tweatherbe@aol.com](mailto:tweatherbe@aol.com)

### 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](mailto:newsletter@smhclub.org) and Betsy Bohannon, [betsybo1964@gmail.com](mailto: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.

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club  
PO Box 51592

Knoxville, TN 37950-1592



**Saturday June 4, 2022, Smoky Mountains Hiking Club**  
**25<sup>th</sup> Annual Smokies Appalachian Trail Work Day**  
**Volunteer Registration**

Show your support on American Hiking Society's National Trails Day ® - a fun day of work on the Appalachian Trail in the Smokies, when many improvements are made to the Trail that would not happen without your participation! Get some exercise, enjoy a day of camaraderie (RAIN OR SHINE) and receive a commemorative T-shirt. We will also supply bagged lunches and door prizes at the end of the day!

- **WORK DATE & TIME:** Saturday June 4, 2022 - 8:30 AM (at your trailhead) rain or shine. We will notify you of your meetup place after all registrations are complete.
- **WORK AREAS:** A.T. between Icewater Spring Shelter and Silers Bald, and Davenport Gap to Mt. Cammerer.
- **WHAT TO WEAR:** Layered clothing, boots or sturdy shoes (no open-toe footwear).
- **WHAT TO BRING:** Plenty of water, RAIN GEAR, snacks, work gloves, sunscreen, & bug repellent.
- **REGISTRATION FEE:** Registration is Free, but form below **MUST** be completed. Please note, your registration serves as your commitment to attend, since T-shirts and lunches are being ordered, and crews will be built based on our registrations.
- **QUESTIONS:** Email [smhc.elm@gmail.com](mailto:smhc.elm@gmail.com)

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**Please complete the following:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (Home/Cell/Work) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Information: (Required)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

**Please select from the following:**

Would you be a Crew leader? (Please circle) Yes No (Crew leaders will meet at Sugarlands at 7am).

Preference on round-trip hiking distance up to: 3 miles \_\_\_\_\_ 6 miles \_\_\_\_\_ 8 miles \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a team/person that you would like to be assigned with (list names)?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to backpack 20 lbs of mulch to a shelter (please bring pack)?(Please circle) Yes No

Would you be willing to work at the Davenport Gap area?

(Please circle) Yes No

Bagged lunch (Choose one)

Turkey sandwich plus sides

Vegetarian plus sides

T-shirt size (Please circle) S M L XL XXL XXXL

No, I am not able to work this year but would like to make a donation toward the maintenance of the A.T.

Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail form to: Smoky Mountains Hiking Club, c/o Diane Petrilla, 167 Liberty Court, Oak Ridge, TN. 37830 OR email all information required above to: [smhc.elm@gmail.com](mailto:smhc.elm@gmail.com). You can also register on-line at [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org).