



PO Box 51592  
Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

## Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Newsletter

*Exploring the Smokies Since 1924*

July 2022

### SAVE THE DATE

**Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Election Picnic**  
**Saturday, August 13**  
**GATOP Gardens and Arboretum**

More to follow in August newsletter

### Slate of SMHC Officers for 2023

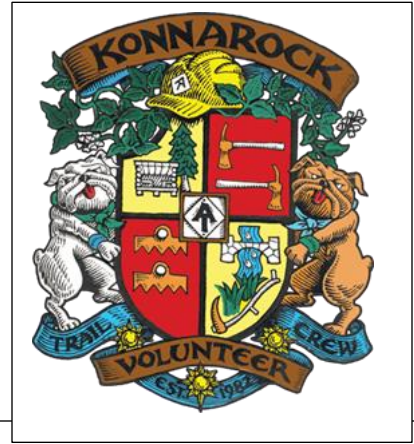
Each year the SMHC membership is provided notice of the slate of officers to be elected. This year it will occur at the August 13 picnic to again be hosted by Alan Solomon at his fabulous gardens--GATOP. The slate of officers was selected by the nominating committee; however the nominations of the committee do not preclude club members from making nominations for the respective offices at the meeting wherein the election is held.

President, Ken Wise  
Vice President, Steve Dunkin  
Recording Secretary, Kristi Knight  
Historian, Brian Worley  
Membership Secretary, Scott Walker  
Treasurer, Diane Petrilla

Trust Liaison, Jean Gauger  
Communication Director, Randy Mitchell  
Compliance Director, Taylor Weatherbee  
Director, Will Skelton  
Director, Tim Bigelow  
\*NEW Director, Pat Watts

\*Pat didn't even know there was this thing called "hiking" before she moved to the Knoxville area in 2015 from the flatlands of West Tennessee. Her first hike was in blue jeans, tennis shoes and the cold pouring rain. But she knew it was something she would love. That day, another hiker told her about the SMHC Wednesday Group, and she has been part of that family ever since. She also participates in weekend hikes with the Club and leads a number of hikes throughout the year. She is excited to become involved with the board and "give back" to the group that has given her so much enjoyment.

## Konnarock Work Trip July 7



The July 7th work trip is designated to support ATC's annual Konnarock Trail Crew in the National Forest. This crew consists of volunteers from across the country that donate their vacation time to working on the AT. This year, the crew will be working on trail restoration north of the Brown Fork Shelter. The project consists of repair to rock steps, replacing rotting locust logs that are utilized to stabilize the trail, and to improve drainage in the area. This is an excellent opportunity for maintainers to gain additional skills not typically utilized for general section maintenance. The work site is approximately ½ mile hike from the trail head. The Konnarock Crew will be on location for multiple days. If any volunteers would want to join for additional days, there will be camping available near the crew's base camp. Any volunteers that work with the crew for 3 or more days receive a Konnarock T-Shirt

Carpool from the Maryville Walmart on Hwy 411 at 7:30 am. Alternate meeting point is at Randy Bullock's home on Green Gap Road, near Stecoah Gap at 9:00am. RT travel is approximately 120 miles. 120 miles @ .10/mile = \$12.00 Volunteers will be shuttled to the trailhead behind FS gates. Participants will need to wear sturdy footwear and weather-appropriate attire. Bring gloves, lunch, snacks, and plenty of water. If you have a hardhat or safety glasses, please bring those as well.

Pre-register at [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org) AND with Franklin LaFond

Contact: Franklin LaFond 678-464-3380 [ox97GaMe@aol.com](mailto:ox97GaMe@aol.com)

Randy Bullock [realrandybullock@yahoo.com](mailto:realrandybullock@yahoo.com)

### CLUB MERCHANDISE DIRECTOR NEEDED

The Club is searching for a person to handle our merchandise.

Currently we have an inventory of dry-fit t-shirts, nylon t-shirts, caps, patches, and books authored by former member Jenny Bennett.

The merchandise director receives notification of an order via email, and then puts the item(s) in a padded envelope (also provided), and then mails (via US Post Office) to the recipient. All expenses are reimbursed by our treasurer. This is not a difficult job.... maybe 2 orders per month.

For questions or more info, contact Cindy ([spangler@utk.edu](mailto:spangler@utk.edu)). THANK YOU!

### CONSIDER GOING GREEN!!!

If you receive this newsletter by US Mail, please consider changing to the digital version distributed by email. To change from print to digital, just send an email to [swalker.dev@gmail.com](mailto:swalker.dev@gmail.com). Not only is the online version much easier to read, changing will help us save considerable time and will also cut the cost of printing and mailing.

Please note that the SMHC Board of Directors voted to raise the carpool fee to 10 cents/mile due to rising fuel costs. If gas prices decline, we will recommend adjustments going forward. Thank you all for sharing these carpool costs!

# 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.

## July 2-Saturday Forks of the River

Our annual July urban hike! We will meet at the Meads Quarry parking lot just past Ijams Nature Center. After walking the Greenway to Perimeter Trail, we'll enter shady woods and take Groundhog (skipping Chigger and Big Rut) to Dozer and Whaley and finally to Will Skelton Greenway, which will take us back to cars. Many summer flowers, possibly wildlife other than ticks. After the hike is officially over, you can swim, hike more, or have a beer.

Caution: poison ivy and ticks. Bring water and snacks. Meet at 7:30am; Hike is 4-5 miles, easy with a few rocky stretches.

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

Leader: Doris Gove 865-456-8198 [dorisgove@aol.com](mailto:dorisgove@aol.com)

## July 13-Wednesday Rich Mountain

We will hike the Rich Mountain Trail from the Ace Gap Trailhead parking lot at Rich Mountain Road to the Indian Grave Gap Trail then on to Campsite 6 on the Scott Mountain Trail and return via same trails. 8.3 miles. Rated moderate due to a 1,600-foot climb in the first 2.3 miles; 2,100-foot total elevation gain. Meet at Food City in Alcoa to leave at 8:00 am or at Ace Gap to begin hiking at 8:30 am. Drive 40 miles RT at .10 / mile = \$4.00.

Pre-register at [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org) **AND** with Ron Brandenburg, [ron86@comcast.net](mailto:ron86@comcast.net)

Leader-David Grab 865-405-5779, [digrab@aol.com](mailto:digrab@aol.com)

## July 16-Saturday Thomas Divide Trail to Campsite 52

A pleasant, high-altitude summer hike. From the trailhead at ~4650 ft. elevation, we walk up to Beetree Ridge (~5,000 ft.), follow it past the Kanati Fork Trail to Nettle Creek Bald, and descend to Tuskee Gap (~4,200 ft.). We climb another ridge, pass the junction with Sunkota Ridge (Mountains-to-Sea) Trail, turn left onto the Newton Bald Trail and stop at Campsite #52 for lunch. Return the same way.

Hike: 10.2 miles total, elevation gain ~2,050 ft., rated Difficult.

Meet at Cracker Barrel off I-40 at Exit 398 (1510 Cracker Barrel Lane, parking lot, southeast corner), 7:00am, or at Thomas Divide Trail pullout parking on US 441, 8:30am. [Drive 104 miles RT @ 10¢/mile=\$10.40].

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

Leader: Eric Sundstrom [sundstrom.eric@gmail.com](mailto:sundstrom.eric@gmail.com) 865.406.8794.

**July 16 – Saturday**  
**Drinkwater Pool, Off-Trail**

There are very few summertime excursions in the Smokies that are more delightful than a hike to Drinkwater Pool. After a pleasant four-mile preamble along the Ramsey Cascades Trail, the off-trail exercise begins with a stiff climb up and over Ramsey Cascades. The hike then remains largely in the stream except to circumnavigate overhanging rhododendron and the more difficult falls and cascades. A mile above Ramsey Cascades the climb terminates at uncommonly attractive pool which Harvey Broome once famously named Drinkwater. From Drinkwater Pool the intent will be to cross over the adjacent ridge to Buck Fork and follow that stream down to the Ramsey Cascade Trail. This hike is rated difficult.

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

Leaders: Cindy McJunkin 828-712-9646 [mcjfive@aol.com](mailto:mcjfive@aol.com); Ken Wise 865-310-7764 [kwise@utk.edu](mailto:kwise@utk.edu)

**July 20-Wednesday**  
**Fighting Creek Gap-Elkmont Loop**

From the trailhead just west of the Laurel Falls Trail parking at Fighting Creek Gap we will take the old road manway to Elkmont then take the Little River Trail to Huskey Gap Trail and return to Laurel Falls Trail parking via the Sugarlands Mountain Trail. Hike is 9 miles and rated moderate. Meet at Food City, Alcoa to leave at 7:30 am or at Laurel Falls Trailhead by 8:15 am. Drive 66 miles RT at .10 / mile = 6.60.

Pre-register at [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org) **AND** with Ron Brandenburg, [ron86@comcast.net](mailto:ron86@comcast.net)

Leader-David Grab, 865-405-5779, [digrab@aol.com](mailto:digrab@aol.com)

**July 23-Saturday**  
**Welch Ridge-High Rocks-Bear Creek**  
**Map Marker Hike**

For this very long day hike, we'll meet bright and early to leave some cars at the Road to Nowhere tunnel and shuttle ourselves to Clingmans Dome. From there, we'll take the AT to Welch Ridge trail and descend along this rocky spine to High Rocks. High Rocks is the location of an old fire tower and cabin. While the tower was removed, the remains of the cabin are still there among the rocky bluffs and worth exploring, along with the interesting geological features of the area. We'll have great views of Fontana Lake from High Rocks, so bring your camera. After High Rocks, we'll head back to the trail and drop down along Bear Creek, passing backcountry campsite #75 about halfway along the Bear Creek trail. The remainder of the day will take us along parts of Forney Creek and Lakeshore trails and back to our cars. This will be a long, challenging day without much water access between the AT and BCS75, so please come prepared with plenty of food and water. Total distance about 20 miles, rated difficult. Meet at 7:30 am at the tunnel.

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

Leaders-Adam and Amanda Beal, [amandaw455@gmail.com](mailto:amandaw455@gmail.com)

**July 30-Saturday**  
**Bald River Falls**

This out and back hike in the Cherokee National Forest begins at the impressive Bald River Falls. The trail starts out with a steep climb to the top of the falls then follows the Bald River through deciduous forest and over numerous embankments and cascades to Forest Service Road #126. After enjoying the river view and lunch we will return the same way.

Hike is 11.2 miles, rated moderate.

Those wanting to carpool can meet at the Lenoir City Cracker Barrel at 8:00 am. Drive 49 miles, 1 hr 5 minutes from the Cracker Barrel to Bald River Falls. Round trip distance is 98 miles, @ \$0.10/mi=\$9.80. Meet the leader at the Bald River Falls 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



# For the Record

## May 14 Ace Gap Trail

In perfect hiking weather, four of us, including a first-time visitor, set out from the Ace Gap trailhead. We soon saw Mountain Laurel flowering beautifully near the trail. At old Campsite 4 we looked in vain for Pink Lady Slippers usually found there, but later we saw a few solitary blooms near the trail. We also saw Flame Azalea, yellow Trillium, and other wildflowers in bloom. We easily climbed over or under recent blow-downs, and enjoyed a pine needle trail bed for much of the 5.5 miles to, and from, the junction with Beard Cane Trail. Birdsong from Vireos intermittently accompanied us both ways. A delightful Spring hike.  
-Eric Sundstrom



## May 11 Sinking Creek-East Lakeshore Trail

It was an absolutely beautiful day as seventeen hikers began to hike the Sinking Creek branch of the East Lakeshore Trail. There were several good sized hills that caused the hikers to get spread out. The trail was in excellent condition. The leader stopped a couple times over the 4-½ mile long trail to allow most everyone to regroup. After our lunch break, we hiked back to our vehicles at the trailhead. The hills seemed to be taller. I think that everyone enjoyed the hike and felt like they had a decent workout.  
-Ron Brandenburg



## May 14 Deep Creek

Nine members set out from Bryson City on a 16-mile trek along Deep Creek. After shuttling up Newfound Gap Road, we began our descent under overcast skies and kept a steady pace, pausing to photograph abundant wildflowers and admire the boulder-strewn stream. At campsite 57, we stopped for lunch and located the Horace Kephart millstone marker, placed at his last camp by Boy Scouts in 1931. The weather held out for us all day and we didn't get any rain during the hike.  
-Amanda and Adam Beal



**May 29  
Fork Ridge to Noland Divide  
Annual SMHC/CMC Memorial Day Weekend Hike**

Nine SMHC members and 2 Carolina Mountain Club members (who are also SMHC members!) took on an ambitious 15.7 mile hike with elevation loss and gain of about 3500 ft. for our joint hike this year. To say there were a few water crossings on this hike would be a gross understatement. Although the day was sunny and clear, the rain in the previous few days had filled Deep Creek and Pole Road Creek. The crossing at the junction of Fork Ridge and Deep Creek required water shoes, but Deep Creek then presented other wide, long and deep crossings as we progressed, some as high as our thighs. Oh my. Fortunately, this was a strong, capable and good-natured group who slogged through them all! There were 3 snake sightings (all non-venomous), large beautiful patches of blue-bead lily, a few remaining ladies slippers, and some flame azalea. We learned what myrmecochory is, and how important it is to trilliums (look it up!). We passed what is recorded to be the largest birch tree in the Park as well as the state of NC, as we ascended Noland Divide (although some of our off-trailers have seen a possibly larger one in their explorations!). It was an adventurous hike with a wonderful group of people!

-Diane Petrilla and Cindy McJunkin

P.S. That's our Club President Ken Wise enjoying getting wet!



### KROGER'S COMMUNITY AWARDS PROGRAM

**YOU** have the power to raise money for the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club! Follow these steps and help us:

- Create and login into your Kroger account.
- Select **My Account** and use the menu to choose **Community Rewards**.
- **Enter MV194** and hit **Save**.

By doing so, you will help support trail maintenance and other club projects. You can check each quarter to see how much money your spending at Kroger resulted in a donation to the club.

#### 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 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 [jeanguager@yahoo.com](mailto:jeanguager@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)