



PO Box 51592
Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Newsletter

Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

November 2022

SAVE THE DATE

December 11, Sunday

The Foundry

4:30 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.

747 World's Fair Park Dr.



We are having our Holiday Installation Dinner this year!

After a 2-year hiatus due to COVID, the SMHC is pleased to be able to hold our wonderful holiday banquet this year.
Please note the date and location change from previous years.

There will be music, a cash bar, a delicious dinner, and 2023 SMHC officer installation. Awards are also presented. Our speakers will be Nancy Mercure East and Chris Ford, who re-established the Fastest Known Time to hike all of the trails in the Smokies as a way to support Preventative Search and Rescue in the Smokies. Their talk, however, is not just about establishing speed records, but about their motivations, inspirations and experiences on the trails and with SAR issues. Nancy has written a book about their adventure called "Chasing the Smokies Moon."

Watch for more details and the way to register for this event in the next few weeks!

Upcoming Hikes

Pre-registration at 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.

Handbook Update

Please review your membership info (name, phone, email) which is included in the back of your SMHC Handbook. If anything needs to be edited, please apprise Membership Secretary Scott Walker, swalker.dev@gmail.com, as soon as possible as the 2023 handbook will be printed soon!

November 5, Saturday ATMC Tool Maintenance Day at SMHC Tool Shed

As part of our continuing effort to keep the A.T. open, the SMHC maintains a tool shed, courtesy of the National Park Service. On November 5th I will be at the Tool Shed inventorying and cleaning up our tools. If you are interested in helping, please sign up on the SMHC website. I will provide information on location and other details. I plan on working from around 10:00 till 1:00. Work will include cleaning, painting, and sharpening hand tools. The tool shed is located adjacent to the Sugarland's NPS Headquarters. We will not carpool but rather meet at the shed.

For more details and directions, contact the leader.

Pre-register at smhclub.org.

Leader: Steve Dunkin, jsdunkin1302@gmail.com

**November 5, Saturday
Oak Ridge Northridge Trail**

We will meet at Books-A-Million parking lot, 310 South Illinois Avenue, Oak Ridge, at 10 am and carpool to hike 2 sections of the Oak Ridge Northridge Trail. Approximately 5 miles. Bring entire family! Rated easy-moderate with rolling hills. Drive distance 8 miles @ 10 cents = \$.80.

Pre-register with leader and at smhclub.org.

Leader: Jeanette Gilbert, corsica111@att.net, 865-483-8774

**November 9, Wednesday
Mingus Creek Trail to Deeplow Gap Trail and Beyond**

For this hike, we will walk past the historic Mingus Mill, 2 cemeteries, and climb about 1500 ft. in 2.9 miles to the junction with Deeplow Gap. We will follow Deeplow Gap 2.4 miles along Cooper Creek to reach the junction with the Cooper Creek Trail. Some hikers may want to have lunch here and then return the same way for a RT hike of 10.6 miles (and total elevation gain of 2300 ft, rated Moderate). Others may want to continue up Deeplow Gap, climbing 500 ft. in 0.8 miles, to reach Little Creek Falls which cascades 95' over hundreds of Thunderhead Sandstone shelves and spreads from 25' to 40' at the base. Returning the same way after lunch will result in a RT hike of 12.2 miles (and total elevation gain of 2800 ft, rated Moderately Difficult). If you are interested in carpooling, meet at Alcoa Food City at 7:30am (drive 130 miles RT @10 cents = \$13.00); or meet at the Mingus Mill off Newfound Gap Road at 9:15am.

The leader will meet the group at Mingus Mill, not the carpool site.

Pre-register at smhclub.org.

Leader: Pat Watts, watts_at_home@yahoo.com or text 901-487-7941.

**November 12, Saturday
Meigs Mountain Off-trail**

To begin this totally off-trail hike, we clamber around the hiker/horse bridge at the end of the Tremont road to the east side of Lynn Camp Prong, to and through the site of the old Tremont Hotel, and then climb steeply through the woods. After gaining 400 ft of elevation, we reach the long abandoned CCC trail that will take us ~3 miles around the ridges and hollows of Meigs Mountain to Upper Buckhorn Gap. This abandoned trail segment used to connect with the Meigs Mountain Trail at Upper Buckhorn Gap, but we are avoiding all official trails today. The fun really starts as we climb 800 vertical feet straight up the side of Meigs mountain. With most of the leaves off in early November, there should be nice views at the top of the ridge. After pausing at the top, we plunge down the south slope through greenbriar and then rhododendron. Just when it seems the rhodo is going to be unbearable, we realize we have reached the 100-year-old Marks Cove RR grade of the Little River Lumber Company. This RR grade provides a good path back down Marks Creek to Lynn Camp Prong. However, depending on timing, we'll explore in Marks Cove a little before heading back. For those who are not interested in the steep up and down across the top of Meigs mountain but would like to do the old CCC trail, you can arrange with the leaders to meet you at the West Prong trailhead parking near the Tremont Institute so that you can use the official Meigs Mountain and Lumber Ridge trails to get back to your car.

Difficulty: difficult—off-trail

Mileage: ~8 miles with ~2200 ft ascent and descent.

Pre-register with a leader.

Leaders: Mike Harrington (mike_harr@bellsouth.net) and Steve Dickinson (winston.fob@comcast.net)

**November 12, Saturday
Norris Watershed and Norris Dam State Park**

The Norris Municipal Watershed is a 2300-acre area that is the watershed of Clear Creek, the source of the city's water supply. Our hike will begin at the Lenoir Museum (Norris Dam State Park) parking area, which is located about 1 mile downstream from Norris Dam on U.S. Hwy. 441. We will hike up Clear Creek Trail and then Dyer Hollow Trail. Next, we will climb up to Reservoir Hill through older upland hardwood forest and reverted old fields of yellow poplar. The hike then travels to Observation Point where there is an open view of Norris Dam, the Clinch River, and Walden's Ridge. We will then descend to Cliff Trail, which was constructed by the CCCs in the 30s, to the starting point. The hike will take us through several different forest ecotypes, and we will see some of the work done by the CCC and TVA in the 1930s as part of the Norris Dam Project. This hike is 3.7 miles in length with a total elevation gain of about 600 feet. Rated easy. Meet at Lenoir Museum 2121 Norris Freeway, at 9 AM.

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

Leader: Deb Barton, dgbarton@comcast.net, 865-494-0276

**November 19, Saturday
Mt. Sterling Loop**

We will loop Big Creek Trail (5.1 miles) to Swallow Fork Trail (4.0 miles) to Mount Sterling Ridge Trail (1.4 miles) to Baxter Creek Trail (6.1 miles) and return to the Big Creek trailhead for a total of 16.6 miles with 2,700'+ of elevation gain. Rated difficult. Meet at the Big Creek Trailhead at 8:30.

Please contact the hike leader if you would like to carpool.

Pre-register at smhclub.org

Leader: Jeff Cooper, jeffcooper100@yahoo.com or 865-804-5065

**November 26, Saturday
Lead Cove, Bote Mountain, Finley Cane Loop**

On the weekend after Thanksgiving, we will take a moderate loop of Lead Cove, Bote Mountain and Finley Cane trails. This hike will begin with a 1200 ft climb over the first 1.8 miles to warm up. At Bote Mountain we will follow the ridge downhill, hopefully with some fall views of Thunderhead. When we reach the Finley Cane trail we will turn left to return to our starting point. Hike is 7.1 miles, rated moderate. Depending on water levels, we may continue on Finley Cane through the hiker tunnel under Laurel Creek Road to Turkeypen Ridge trail for a slight detour. Meet at the Food City in Alcoa at 8 a.m. or on Laurel Creek Road near the Lead Cove/Turkeypen Trailhead at 8:45 a.m. Carpool is approximately 50 miles or $\$.10 \times 50 = \5.00

Pre-register at smhclub.org.

Leader: Randy Mitchell, Mitchell1982@tds.net, 865-406-6469

**November 30, Wednesday
Cooper Road to Little Bottoms Lollipop**

We'll start this lollipop hike from the Abrams Creek campground, taking Cooper Road to Hatcher Mountain then Little Bottoms, back to Cooper Road and back to the Abrams Creek campground. Hike: 11.5 miles with elevation gain of 1,700 ft., rated moderate. If you are interested in carpooling, meet at Alcoa Food City at 8:00am {drive: 32 miles RT @ 10¢/mile=\$3.20}; or meet at the Abrams Creek Ranger Station at 8:30am.

The leader will meet at the Abrams Creek Ranger Station, not the carpool site.

Pre-register at smhclub.org.

Leader: Pat Watts, watts_at_home@yahoo.com or text 901-487-7941.

For the Record

August 20 Little Cataloochee and Long Bunk Trails

Eight hikers participated in a nice map-marker hike. The car shuttle from Mt Sterling Gap on old NC284 worked fine and the caravan stopped for a pit stop at Big Cataloochee and also stopped in the museum and saw pictures of the Little Cataloochee Valley destination from 100 years ago. We started out hiking and saw one elk resting in the woods off the trail. After climbing to Davison Gap, the trail descended into Little Cataloochee Valley and past several restored cabins and the recently painted Little Cataloochee Church with its large cemetery. The group enjoyed lunch on the tables on the pleasant knoll out behind the church. The rest of the trail is a gravel road with some steep downhill sections on the way to NC284. We saw some extremely orange fungi along the way. We had to retrace our steps back up the steep hill to the Long Bunk trail which starts uphill past another large cemetery and keeps on climbing most of the way to the Mt Sterling Ridge trail with occasional views of the gap. Some other large mushroom patches were seen. At the Mt Sterling Ridge trail gap there were cars waiting to drive back to Cataloochee. No elk were seen but we had time to take a group picture in a barn.

-Tim Bigelow



August 28 Noland Creek and Noland Divide

Five hikers participated in a long map-marker hike starting with the drive to Deep Creek and car shuttle over to Noland Creek. The trail makes a gentle climb up the creek valley. We stopped for a break at Campsite 64 and took a side trail to visit a cemetery and look at a few old home sites. Above there, the trail became a bit overgrown and then made a steeper climb up to the welcome lunch spot at Sassafras Gap and the Noland Divide Trail. The divide trail follows the ridge a long ways. We reached the Lonesome Pine overlook just in time for a lightning storm to move in. After a quick look at the view and donning rain gear, we headed down the steeper part of the trail to cars at Deep Creek and the long drive back.

-Tim Bigelow



September 7
Jakes Creek-Meigs Mountain Trails to Campsite 19

It was a beautiful day for a hike (at least for a while) as 19 hikers started up Jakes Creek trail. One more hiker caught up with the group soon after we started. The Jakes Creek portion of the hike was the hardest as Meigs Mountain trail has no long steep climbs. After we got to Campsite 19 and were enjoying lunch, a small shower started but did not last long. Later the rain came again. Nothing like the Grapeyard Ridge deluge but enough to need rain gear. Soon the rain stopped and we had to deal with wet rain gear. Everyone finished in good time and headed home. We're very glad to welcome Diane back from her epic adventure on the John Muir trail.

10.6 miles with 1600 ft. elevation gain.

-Ron Brandenburg



September 14
Jakes Creek-Cucumber Gap-Little River-Goshen Prong

I don't know how you would define a more pleasant day for a hike. The morning was cool, the afternoon was warm but not too hot, and the sun shone all day. Nineteen hikers started this hike up Jakes Creek trail over Cucumber Gap to Little River trail and then on to Goshen Prong trail. There the group split into two groups. One group did the hike up Goshen Prong as advertised. (14.2 miles, 1910 ft. elevation gain). The smaller group of 6 continued on up Little River trail to campsite 24 where they enjoyed a leisurely lunch before returning to the cars. (9.6 miles, 1100 ft elevation gain). The most significant wildlife seen on the hike was a copperhead snake laying in the middle of Little River trail. It seemed to not care that we were present taking pictures before being persuaded to move off the trail by one of the hikers.

-Ron Brandenburg



**September 17 and 18
Backpack Loop Hike to Spence Field
Shelter**

Eight SMHC members backpacked from the Cades Cove parking area to the Spence Field Shelter. We climbed up Anthony Creek and Bote Mountain trails to the shelter and had a wonderful time at the shelter with two of our clubs Ridge Runners (Amelia and Ricky). They are awesome. The new privy was spotless (thanks to our Ridge Runners). We were concerned with the predicted temperature drop for the night, but once again the weatherman must have overreacted. It was a great night. We all woke at the crack of dawn and hiked over to Russell Field and down to our cars. Overall, a great weekend trip.

-Steve Dunkin

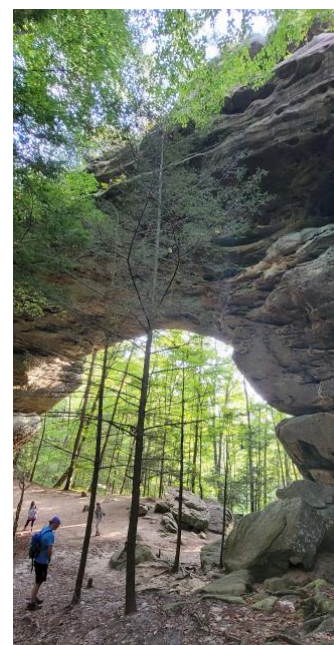


Spence Field
Herder's Cabin
1907

**September 17
Twin Arches-Big South Fork**

Six members and one visitor made the 2+ hour trip to Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area to hike a double loop at the Twin Arches. There were two other club activities that day, but the participants were all glad that they made this trip. We were blessed with a great late summer day with low humidity and a light breeze. Although it was a relatively short hike, we took our time to explore the geologic features of the Cumberland mountains not seen in the Smokies. We began at the Twin Arches trailhead and descended a couple of steep staircases to the massive sandstone arches. After crossing on top of the north arch, we circled under to view the south arch. Either arch alone is nearly as large as any found in the East. From there we went on to visit Charit Creek Lodge and the friendly staff there. The hike continued to Jakes Place, then to the cliff line that continued for over a mile. Several of the group had previously seen the arches but not the cliffs. As impressive as the arches are, the group agreed that the cliffs are even more awe inspiring. One of the hikers was already planning a return trip to bring friends to view the area before we had completed the loop back to our cars. On the drive out, another hiker reported seeing a bear run across the road.

-Randy Mitchell



October 5 Nemo Bridge to Breakaway Bluff

Twenty-nine hikers came out on this gorgeous fall day to explore a seldom-hiked section of the Cumberland Trail near Wartburg, TN. Filled with random information about the Cumberland Trail and the Obed National Wild and Scenic River, we crossed Nemo bridge over the Emory River and picked up the Cumberland Trail heading south towards the Devils Breakfast Table. However, our destination was only another 4.2 miles away, Breakaway Bluff. The relatively short mileage is deceiving, because the last mile or so before reaching the bluff involves steep rock steps, both descending and ascending. To this leader's great delight, all but two people made it all the way up to the bluff, and the two that chose not to do it, made wise decisions. Hikers had to answer questions about factoids correctly in order to get a treat, although even the ones who answered incorrectly got a treat too! The view from Breakaway across the Obed river gorge was stunning. On the return, five hikers decided to go a little bit off trail, not on purpose, but soon were able to right themselves and join the rest of us. All in all, a beautiful walk on a beautiful day.

-Diane Petrilla and Pat Watts



It is with a heavy heart that we share that Carol Towers Coffey died on August 26 at age 82. Carol served as President of the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club (1975-1976) and of the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, continuing the belief that such places of natural beauty should be preserved and protected from development. He was also an avid environmentalist and hiker. Click this link for his obituary:

<https://www.knoxnews.com/obituaries/kns051566>

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. 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.



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.

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Officers and Directors

President: Ken Wise kwise@utk.edu

Vice President: jsdunkin1302@gmail.com

Recording Secretary: Kristi Knight kcsknight@charter.net

Treasurer: Diane Petrilla petrillad@gmail.com

Trust Liaison: Jean Gauger jeanguager@yahoo.com

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Director: Randy Mitchell mitchell1982@tds.net

Director: Will Skelton whshome@bellsouth.net

Director: Taylor Weatherbee 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 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, your name and description of hike.