



Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Newsletter

Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

PO Box 51592
Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

January 2023

Upcoming Hikes

Pre-registration at SMHClub.org is required for all hikes unless stated in description. Please contact the leader if you are not sure of when and where to meet.

January 7, Saturday Asbury Trail, Off-Trail

This moderately easy off-trail adventure is offered as a newcomers' hike for those interested in an introduction to off-trail hiking. The unmaintained Asbury Trail follows the NE boundary of Cataloochee 6.9 miles from Cove Creek Gap to Mount Sterling Gap. Historical use and continued interest leave traces that can generally be followed as the trail climbs Scottish Mountain and crosses Indian Grave Branch, allegedly the burial site of a Cherokee chief. A nearby cemetery contains unmarked graves of black slaves and an unfortunate traveler of the mid-1800's. It also marks the site where the notorious Confederate bushwhacker, Captain Albert Teague, shot three Cataloochee men, George and Henry Grooms and Mitchell Caldwell. Short car shuttle required for this hike.

Pre-register with trip leaders for meeting place and time.

Leaders: Cindy McJunkin, mcjfive@aol.com and Ken Wise, kwise@utk.edu

January 7, Saturday Chestnut Top

Weather permitting, we will take an alternative route for the winter standby hike of Chestnut Top trail. After carpooling from Food City in Alcoa we will leave a few cars at the Townsend Wye. For those that prefer to meet at the Wye we will shuttle another 3.9 miles on Laurel Creek Road to Schoolhouse Gap. From Schoolhouse Gap our hike will climb about 500 ft. in 2 miles to intersect with the Chestnut Top trail. If interested (or map marking), hikers can continue another 0.2 miles to the park boundary and return to begin Chestnut Top Trail. After climbing for 1.5 miles to the high point of Chestnut Top Trail there is a descent of 2.7 miles to the Wye. If icy roads force a road closure of Laurel Creek Road we will do the traditional out and back from the Wye. Total miles 6.7. Rated moderate. Meet at Food City in Alcoa at 8:00 a.m. or at the Townsend Wye at 8:30 a.m. Round trip drive 42 miles. $0.10 \times 42 = \$4.20$

Pre-register at smhclub.org.

Leader: Randy Mitchell at 865-406-6469 or mitchell1982@tds.net

January 11, Wednesday Big Creek Trail to Campsite #36

This beautiful out-and-back hike closely follows Big Creek, past two small waterfalls (Midnight Hole; Mouse Creek) and over a dozen smaller creeks on the way past Campsite #37 to #36 for lunch. Return the same way (11.6 miles total, or 10.6 miles if hiking just to #37, and ~1,350 ft. climb, rated Moderate). For carpooling, meet at Cracker Barrel at I-40 Exit 398 (southeast corner of parking lot) at 7:30 am (drive 116 miles @ 10 cents = \$11.60), or at Big Creek Picnic parking (east end), ready to hike at 8:45 am. The leader will meet the group at the trailhead, not the carpooling site.

Pre-register at smhclub.org.

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

January 14, Saturday
Abrams Falls from Cades Cove-New Member Hike

Come hike with us to beautiful Abrams Falls which is stunning even in the winter-time. From the parking lot about half way around Cades Cove, we hike in 2.5 miles to the falls. We climb a little over Arbutus Ridge, where we'll have views of Abrams Creek gorge. The falls themselves plunge 20 feet over a wide-stepped sandstone ledge. Then we'll retrace our steps back to the cars. 5 miles total. Rated easy-moderate. Plan to meet at the parking lot for Abram Falls at 8:30 am.

Pre-register at smhclub.org

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

January 18, Wednesday
Curry Mountain Trail & Meigs Mountain Trail to Campsite #20

This pleasant out-and-back hike starts on an old logging road up the side of Curry Mountain and continues on Curry Mountain (both about 3,000 ft. high) to Meigs Mountain Trail. We turn east, through open woods to Campsite 20 for lunch. Return the same way (11 miles, ~1,500 ft. climb). For carpooling, meet at Alcoa Food City at 7:30 am (drive 54 miles RT @10 cents = \$5.40), or at Metcalf Bottoms picnic area parking (south end) ready to hike at 8:15 am. The leader will meet the group at the trailhead, not the carpooling site.

Pre-register at smhclub.org.

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

January 21, Saturday
Rich Mountain Loop

This is a favorite loop hike in the Smokies. We will make the loop in a clockwise direction, starting at the Cades Cove Information Kiosk and making our way down Rich Mountain Loop Trail. We'll stop for a visit at the John Oliver Cabin before starting the climb to the intersection with the Indian Grave Gap Trail. We'll follow this trail, enjoying views of the valley and a possible side trip to the site of the Rich Mountain fire tower (though the tower is no longer there). After our lunch break at Campsite 6 (on Scott Mountain Trail), we'll then descend on the Crooked Arm Ridge trail to return to the Information Kiosk. Hike is 8.6 miles with a 2,000 ft. elevation gain, rated Moderate. Meet at Alcoa Food City at 8:00am. {drive: 60 miles RT @ 10¢/mile = \$6.00} or at the Cades Cove Information Kiosk at 8:45am. *The leader will meet the group at Cades Cove, not the carpool site.*

Pre-register at smhclub.org.

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

January 22, Sunday
Ijams Nature Center-Easy Hike

We'll gather in front of the Ijams Visitor's Center (2915 Island Home Blvd) at 1:30 PM and explore all or parts of several trails-- the River Trail which offers a gorgeous view of the Holston River, 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.

Pre-register at www.smhclub.org.

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

January 28, Saturday
Norris Dam State Park-Lakeview Trail Loop

For this beautiful winter hike, we will begin behind the old CCC tearoom at the East Campground area of Norris Dam State Park. We hike down a brief section of the Christmas Fern Trail, pick up the Tall Timbers Trail, then the Lakeview Trail. This trail is situated several hundred feet above Norris Lake, so views are expansive in the winter, and the ascents and descents are generally gradual. We will do this entire trail, then pick up Highpoint Trail, and hike down on the north leg of the Lakeside Loop Trail. Then we will retrace our steps back to our cars. 10.9 miles. Rated Moderate. Meet at Hardees, 107 Buffalo Rd., Clinton, TN (near I-75) at 8 am, or at Norris Dam SP Tearoom Parking Lot (East Campground side) at 8:45am.

Pre-register at smhclub.org or with Diane Petrilla at petrillad@gmail.com.

Leaders: Diane Petrilla and Dan Feller



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.

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.

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS INSTITUTE AT TREMONT

The SMHC supports the educational mission of the Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont each year. For anyone interested in the GSMIT programs for 2023, please see the following link:

<https://gsmit.org/program/calendar/>

For the Record

November 7 North Ridge Trail, Oak Ridge

SMHC organized hikes are not frequently held in Oak Ridge, though the city has 14 greenways (public recreational properties) harboring a total of 64 miles of hiking trails. Many of the trails are localized to greenways in several different neighborhoods in town. But the more adventuresome venues have resulted from volunteer projects long after the days of the Manhattan Project. The first of these to be built by volunteers is the North Ridge Trail, constructed by the Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning (TCWP) back in the 1970s. This example meanders close-in along the north side of Black Oak Ridge for 7.7 miles of somewhat challenging up and down stretches in several places (9.4 miles including connectors.)

With a goal of providing a sample of Oak Ridge trails to SMHC members, on Saturday, Nov. 5, Ray Garrett led a group of six (organized by Jeannette Gilbert) on a hike covering the mid-section of the North Ridge trail. This sounds easier than one might think. The trail was built by volunteers who knew nothing about building hiking trails. There are several steep spots needing steps, and 3 or 4 long segments stretching straight up the steep contour-not a single switchback was built in. In one very steep segment a long chain-hold was installed a couple of years ago by TCWP volunteers, (otherwise hands and knees in wet weather). Due to very heavy leaf coverage, this "moderate" trail was quite tiring – somewhat like hiking through ankle-deep snow. One fall, but no injury. This is not really a complaint, since we all enjoyed a beautiful day where almost all learned new facts about Oak Ridge trails. With their variety and proximity, these trails have much to be recommended for moderate hiking experiences.

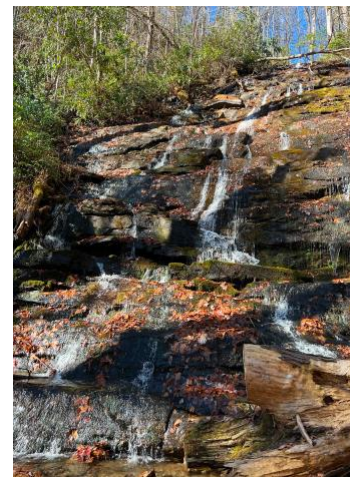
-Ray Garrett



November 9 Mingus Creek

What a beautiful day for a hike! It was a brisk 48 degrees with sun-shiny blue skies when 19 hikers (3 of which were visitors) met at the Mingus Mill for our hike. One hiker "did her thing" and planned a short hike before returning to the cars. The rest of us started the 3 mile trek up Mingus Creek, knowing it was going to be a tough 1,500 ft. climb. What we didn't realize (or had forgotten) was that the trail gradually gets steeper and steeper, so the almost flat trail during the first mile ends with a climb of 710 feet in the last mile. Everyone rested at the top before beginning the descent down Deeplow Gap. The lack of rain in the mountains didn't keep this trail from being a muddy, swampy, wet mess in spots. The trail crosses Cooper Creek periodically, small streams requiring simple rock hops. Then we came upon a foot log crossing, minus any kind of handrail, and with the addition of wet moss and rounded edges on the foot log. Most hikers opted to make their way through the stream. One channeled her inner gymnast and attempted to cross the log like a balance beam; but, her dismount into the water was less than graceful (the judges took off points for that). Thankfully, the only thing hurt was her pride. We reached the intersection with the now defunct Cooper Creek Trail, where 6 hikers opted to enjoy lunch before returning to their cars. The remaining 12 continued with another steep climb to reach their goal of Little Creek Falls. We all agreed that the lack of rain resulted in a less than spectacular show; but the falls still provided a soothing backdrop for enjoying lunch. After lunch, 2 hikers continued up Deeplow Gap to Thomas Divide and then around to Mingus Creek to complete a lollipop of more miles to mark off their maps. The remaining 10 reversed direction and headed back to the cars. I wish I could say that the return trip was uneventful. But the hike leader was her usual clumsy self and slipped on a wet rock on one of those "easy" stream crossings. She continued on, thinking nothing of it, until she happened to notice her pinky finger bent at a 45 degree angle! But with a quick stop at an orthopedic clinic in Sevierville, the dislocated finger was popped back into place. Thank you to everyone who provided help and advice. Here's hoping the next hike is uneventful!!

-Pat Watts



November 12 Norris Watershed and Norris Dam State Park

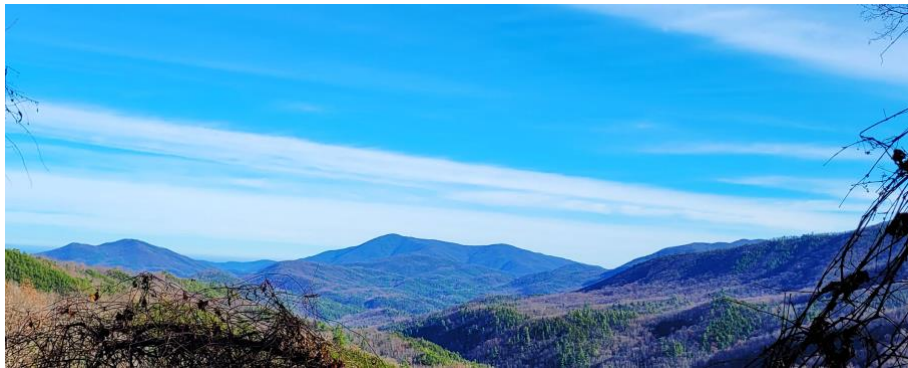
Five members and three visitors braved the threatening rains from Hurricane Nicole and enjoyed a lovely morning hiking in the Norris Watershed. We learned a bit about the history of Norris Dam, the City of Norris, and the still-exquisite work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the late 1930's. Blue skies opened up a bit for a view of the Dam from Observation Point and picturesque views of farmland along the Clinch River and the wier dam as we descended down Cliff Trail. Hikers enjoyed more history as they toured the Lenoir Museum at the end of the hike. We ended with new released maps of the Norris Watershed and Norris Dam State Park and promises to visit again on some of these beautiful hidden gem trails. It was proof once again that a rainy day spent in the woods is better than a lazy day on the couch or in the office.

-Deb Barton



November 26
Lead Cove/Bote Mountain/Finley Cane

On the Saturday after Thanksgiving eleven hikers (nine members and two visitors) made a loop of Lead Cove, Bote Mountain and Finley Cane trails. The morning began chilly but we warmed up on the climb up Lead Cove. Just before the intersection with Bote Mountain several in the group spotted a medium sized bear that was not aggressive but did not run off immediately. One hiker continued up Bote Mountain to mark an additional 1.2 miles. Descending Bote Mountain Trail there were views of Rocky Top and Thunderhead as well as welcome sunshine. The map marking hiker caught up with the group as we ate lunch at the intersection with Finley Cane. After lunch hikers returned to the cars on Laurel Creek Road. Weather was near perfect for a late November day.
-Randy Mitchell and Pat Watts



November 30
Cooper Road to Little Bottoms Lollipop

I drove to the trailhead through the pouring rain that Wednesday morning, wondering how many no-shows we might have for this hike. While I sat in my car after reaching the trailhead, the rain just disappeared. The Wednesday Hiking Group's luck held out once again! By the time the 20 club members gathered to start the hike (with zero no-shows), we were already seeing signs of blue skies. We went through introductions and welcomed 6 individuals who were somewhat new to Wednesday hiking. Then we started making our way up the Cooper Road trail. The group quickly separated into the usual sub-groups, with the quicker hikers bounding ahead, the more leisurely hikers staying behind, and another sub-group somewhere in the middle. Along Cooper Road we spied one of those pens used to capture wild boars – and it actually had one in it! He did not look very happy. The temps seemed to fluctuate all day, from being cool and breezy, requiring a jacket, to warm enough to strip off those layers, to cold enough to put them back on again. Because of the heavy rain the night before, I was worried about the rock-hops we usually encounter on this hike. Though the waters of Abrams Creek were very high, thank goodness the rock-hops were all passable with no problems. Our hike took us from Cooper Road to Hatcher Mountain to Little Bottoms then back to Cooper Road. (Little Bottoms is one of my least favorite trails with those rocky slopes and steep drop-offs, and then to top it all off, the seemingly never ending climb up that last hill!) Everyone finished the hike thankful for the beautiful day and with our 6 new folks enthusiastic about hiking on Wednesdays with us again. Thank you again, Michael, for taking the lead at the head of the hike!
- Pat Watts



December 3 Meigs Mountain Off-trail

Due to rain, we postponed the Meigs mountain off-trail to Dec 3 in hopes of better weather. When the hoped-for better weather failed to develop, we opted to lead a consolation hike and were joined by 6 members and one visitor for the car shuttle hike from the Tremont Institute ending at the Middle Prong trailhead at the end of the Tremont road. We started in light rain but it had stopped by the time we got to the manway above Spruce Flats falls. After a slight detour to view Honey Cove Branch waterfall and about an hour on the Spruce Flats manway, we took a bigger detour to unsuccessfully look for a structure near lower Buckhorn gap. A brief trail walk brought us to upper Buckhorn gap where we enjoyed viewing large poplars in the strip of old growth remaining at the base of Meigs Mountain. We then traversed the old, abandoned CCC trail between upper Buckhorn gap and the end of the Tremont road. Highlights included the large grapeyard about midway along, and the Honey Cove Branch cascade. After the steep 400 ft final descent from the CCC trail down to the Middle Prong, we inspected the remains of the old Tremont hotel and then clambered around rocks to the trailhead and the cars.

-Mike Harrington and Steve Dickinson



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.

Holiday Installation Banquet December 11

Nancy East, a member of the Haywood County, North Carolina Search and Rescue Team, was this year's election banquet speaker held at The Foundry in downtown Knoxville. She spoke of her emotional and physical journey as she and her hiker companion Chris Ford completed the fastest known time for all trails in the Smokies as a fundraiser for the Friends of the Smokies. The \$30,000 raised helped start a Preventative Search and Rescue educational program for Park visitors.



After installation of Club officers and directors, President Ken Wise presented current board member/treasurer Diane Petrilla with **the Harvey Broome Award**, given in recognition of long-term contributions to the spirit and objectives of the SMHC. Congratulations, Diane!

Our thanks go to the Club's Social Committee:

Barbara Allen, Janet Bigelow, Tim Bigelow, Priscilla Clayton, Debbie Goddard and Adele Soucy; and also to Dr. Kristopher Goddard for sponsoring the printing of the program.

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Officers and Directors

President: Ken Wise kwise@utk.edu
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Director: Will Skelton whshome@bellsouth.net
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