



# Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Newsletter

*Exploring the Smokies Since 1924*

PO Box 51592  
Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

April 2023

## Upcoming Hikes

Pre-registration at [SMHClub.org](http://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.

### **April 1, Saturday A.T. Maintenance Work Trip**

This work trip will focus on treadway rehab in the section between Fontana Dam and Shuckstack Fire Tower. Specific locations of work will be based on prioritization of work needed and number of volunteers available. All work locations will be less than 5 miles round trip from the trailhead. Participants will need to wear sturdy footwear, bring work gloves, lunch, snacks and plenty of water.

Meeting times and locations: Maryville Walmart at 2410 US-411 S at 7:30 am or at the Fontana Dam Visitor Center near 40 Fontana Dam Rd, Fontana Dam, NC 28733 at 9:00am. Roundtrip travel is approximately 110 miles.

Please contact the work trip leaders to sign up for this event.

Leader: Franklin LaFond: [ox97game@aol.com](mailto:ox97game@aol.com) 678-464-3380

### **April 4, Tuesday Norris Watershed**

Norris Watershed has many hiking and biking trails. For this hike we will start at the Grist Mill and explore up Clear Creek Trail and Dyer Hollow Trail looking for wildflowers. Dyer Hollow has a tremendous display of Trout Lilies which will probably be past peak, but you will know where to look next Spring. From there we may continue past Norris Dam to see what is blooming on the River Bluff Trail. Hike 2-4 miles depending on our choice. Meet ready to leave at 10 am at Ingle's parking off I-75 North and Emory Rd. Driving miles is 33miles RT @10cents/mile=\$3.30

Preregister [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org)

Leader: Barbara Allen, 865-621-9047, [allen745139@bellsouth.net](mailto:allen745139@bellsouth.net)

### **April 5, Wednesday Ace Gap Trail to Campsite 3 on Beard Cane Trail**

Let's look for early wildflowers! We'll hike the rolling hills of the Ace Gap Trail to Blair Gap on Hurricane Mountain and the intersection with the Beard Cane Trail (5.6 miles). Then we'll turn down Beard Cane to Campsite 3 (0.6 miles), a nice place to enjoy lunch (though the waters of Beard Cane Creek are usually too high to cross to get to the Campsite). Return the same way. Hike: 12.4 miles with elevation gain of 2,300 ft., rated Moderate. For those stopping at the Ace Gap/Beard Cane intersection: Hike 11.2 miles with elevation gain of 1,900 ft., rated Moderate.

To carpool, meet at the old Alcoa Food City, 121 N Hall Rd., Alcoa *ready to leave at 8:00am* {Drive: 40 miles RT @ 10¢/mile=\$4.00} or at the Ace Gap trailhead at 8:30am. *Note that the hike leader will meet you at the trailhead, not the carpool site.*

Preregister [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org).

Leader: Pat Watts, [watts\\_at\\_home@yahoo.com](mailto:watts_at_home@yahoo.com), 901-487-7941.

**April 8, Saturday**  
**Little Cataloochee Trail to Pretty Hollow Campsite 39**  
**Map Marker Hike**

This mostly one-way hike will mark the map to complete the Little Cataloochee Tr. We start at the trailhead on Mount Sterling road at about 3050 ft. elevation. We will organize a shuttle to park most cars at the hike end at the Pretty Hollow Gap trailhead on Cataloochee road. This will be a leisurely hike through the rarely visited Little Cataloochee Valley, one of the several scattered farm villages in this area of the park. Highlights include the Hannah Cemetery, Hannah Cabin, Dan Cook Cabin, and Little Cataloochee Baptist Church. Perfect for photography buffs. The trail varies from old gravel road to single track. There are some boggy areas and side stream rock-hopping and a moderate climb over Davidson Gap. This hike includes Pretty Hollow Gap tr. to camp site, (CS) 39 Pretty Hollow, 1.6 mi. out and back, (3.2 mi total). At the end of Little Cataloochee Tr, those wanting a 3.2 mi shorter hike, (total of 6.0 mi.), may easily skip the out and back to CS 39 Pretty Hollow. The leader will guide those hikers to turn left on Pretty Hollow Gap Tr. 0.8 mi to the end on Cataloochee Rd where most cars will be parked. Difficulty is moderate. With CS 39, the total is 9.2 miles. The shorter hike without CS 39 total is 6.0 miles. Ascent about 1,100 ft.

To carpool, meet at the Cracker Barrel Strawberry Plains (1510 Cracker Barrel Lane, I40 Exit 398. Park on the right side of the lot). Be ready to leave Cracker Barrel by 7:30 am. Or meet at Little Cataloochee TH on Mount Sterling Rd ready to start the 1 hour, (30 min each way), gravel road shuttle by 9:45 am. Carpool distance 143 mi, (128 mi plus shuttle 15 mi). Each rider please plan to pay your driver \$14.30 each rider.

Preregister [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org).

Leader Larry Johnson, (questions contact: email: [larryj11320@gmail.com](mailto:larryj11320@gmail.com), Mobile 865-776-6434)

**April 15, Saturday**  
**Wilson Falls, Off-Trail**

Purportedly the longest continuous cascade in the Smokies, Wilson Falls tumbles several hundred yards from the upper bounds of Meigs Post Prong. The falls are comprised of a majestic 400-foot upper cascade that rolls into a rugged sequence of middle tier siblings before dropping into a fifty-foot lower falls. Beginning from the spruce-fir stands near Mount Collins, the hike descends into the lush valley of a tributary of Sweet Creek to its confluence with Meigs Post Prong before turning upstream for a brisk rock-hop to the base of Wilson Falls. A stiff climb up the cascades terminates near the starting point on Mount Collins. The hike is rated difficult due to steep rocky terrain and four miles of slick creek scrambling.

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

Leaders: Ken Wise, [kwise@utk.edu](mailto:kwise@utk.edu) 865-310-7764 and Todd Long, [toddmlong@gmail.com](mailto:toddmlong@gmail.com) 865-406-2421

**April 15, Saturday**  
**Bird Mountain Trail, Cumberland Trail, West Lookout Tower Loop**  
**Wildflower Hike at Frozen Head State Park and Natural Area**

Frozen Head State Park is renowned for its display of wildflowers in April and May. Join us for a 7.3 mile, loop hike on the south-facing slope of Bird Mountain, where we will see a great display of vernal flora and some interesting geologic formations. We will meet at the parking lot for Shelter B at the entrance to Big Cove Campground. We will walk the 0.1 miles through the campground to the Big Cove Trailhead (at 1,600 feet) on the north end of the campground. From there, we will take the West Lookout Tower Trail 0.1 mile, then take a left and climb up the Bird Mountain Trail to its intersection with the Cumberland Trail. We will then go east on the CT, passing by the Castle Rocks and on to the top of Bird Mountain (3,010 feet). We will stay on the CT until it meets the West Lookout Tower Trail again, then descend back to where we began on that trail. This is a moderately difficult hike with a vertical rise and fall of about 1,800 feet, including some ups and downs on the CT. Much of the route is rocky or rooty and there are some steep drop-offs in places. We will ramble along slowly and enjoy the flowers and rock formations and not try to see how fast we can hike this route!

Carpoolers can meet at the Books-A-Million in Oak Ridge at 310 S. Illinois Avenue at 7:00 AM and depart by 7:15 AM. The carpool fee is \$4.60 (23 miles x 2 x \$0.10/mile). Otherwise, meet at the Shelter B parking lot at 8:00 AM. We need an early start to avoid the parking crunch expected in the park that day. The entrance to Frozen Head State Park is on Flat Fork Road, off TN Highway 62, three miles east of Wartburg, TN.

Preregister [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org).

Leaders: Jerry Thornton at 865-719-9742 ([gatwildcat@aol.com](mailto:gatwildcat@aol.com)), Alice Thornton ([scithorn@aol.com](mailto:scithorn@aol.com))

**April 19, Wednesday**  
**AT, Dry Sluice, Grassy Branch, Sweat Heifer Loop**

We'll start this challenging loop hike from Newfound Gap, heading out the A.T. to first make our way to Charlies Bunion. Then we will continue the loop, turning south onto Dry Sluice Gap and on to Grassy Branch. Then get ready for the demanding (for even the best of hikers) climb up Sweat Heifer Creek (2,300 ft. over 3.7 miles). After reaching the A.T., we'll return back to Newfound Gap. The hike is 13.7 miles rated Difficult/Strenuous due to mileage and the steep climb out. Total elevation gain 3,740 ft.

To carpool, meet at the old Alcoa Food City, 121 N Hall Rd., Alcoa *ready to leave at 7:30am* {Drive: 100 miles RT @10¢/mile=\$10.00} or at Newfound Gap at 8:45am. *Note that the hike leader will meet you at the trailhead, not the carpool site.*

Preregister [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org).

Hike leader: Pat Watts, [watts\\_at\\_home@yahoo.com](mailto:watts_at_home@yahoo.com), 901-487-7941.

**April 22, Saturday**  
**Norris River Bluff Trail**  
**New Members Hike**

The River Bluff Trail is a scenic way to see the Clinch River and enjoy a beautiful, forested area. This is a great trail for observing a large variety of wildflowers in a small area including several rare species. Rich pockets of wildflowers are scattered over the hillside, especially yellow trout lilies, celandine poppies, bloodroot, spring beauties and toothwort. It is a 3.2 mile loop with an elevation gain of 538 ft., rated easy.

The trail is located on the Norris Dam Reservation on the west side of the dam—across the tailwaters from the Songbird Trail. Norris Dam is about 30 miles north of Knoxville, Tenn., off I-75, exit 122.

We will meet at 9 am at Norris Dam Visitor Center, 1810 Norris Freeway, since there is a bathroom and ample parking. Depending on number of people, we may carpool since parking is limited at the trailhead.

Preregister [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org).

Leader: Debra Barton, [dgbarton@comcast.net](mailto:dgbarton@comcast.net), 865-494-0276

**April 29, Saturday**  
**Little River Trail and Cucumber Gap Loop Hike**

The Brown Book (Hiking Trails of the Smokies) calls this “one of the finest short loops in the park (total loop 5.5 miles)” . Late April should be a good time for spring wildflowers. This hike will proceed at a slightly slower than usual pace to allow for viewing scenery and photography. We will start at the Little River trailhead past Elkmont Campground. The trail gains about 400 ft. in elevation over 2.4 miles. Shortly after passing Huskey Branch Cascades on a wide bridge, we will take a sharp right turn to join Cucumber Gap Trail. After about 0.2 mile we will again cross Huskey Branch, this time with no bridge. In normal conditions the stream can be rock hopped but if the water is high, we may have to wade. Cucumber Gap Trail gains about 500 ft in 1.4 miles the descends to join Jakes Creek Trail. Here we can turn right to proceed to the Jakes Creek Trailhead which is about .6 mile from the Little River Trailhead. If there is interest, we can instead turn left on Jakes Creek and go 0.5 mile to visit the Advent Cabin. This would add another 1 mile to our hike for a total of 6.5 miles.

Be advised that “Park It Forward” is now in effect and a parking permit will be required for the cars parking at the trailhead. Meet at the former Food City location at 121 N Hall Rd in Alcoa to carpool. We will leave sharply at 8:00 a.m. please arrive a little earlier to organize riders. Round trip is 68 miles; at 10 cents per mile reimbursement to the driver is \$6.80. Drive towards Elkmont Campground and just before the campground entrance turn left. Little River trailhead is 0.6 mile up the side road. If you choose to meet at the trailhead, be there at 9:00 a.m. to start. Parking is somewhat limited there so carpooling is encouraged.

This hike is rated moderate.

Preregister [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org).

Leader: Randy Mitchell. [mitchell1982@tds.net](mailto:mitchell1982@tds.net). 865-406-6469

# For the Record

## February 8 Pickett State Park Loop

Twenty-six members and one guest made the long trek up to Pickett CCC Memorial State Park. There was a fair amount of rain on the way up, making us all worry that the day would be wet, but by the time we started hiking, it had stopped. The only other rain we had was during lunch where we had some shelter under one of the lovely CCC built pavilions that are situated around Arch Lake at Pickett. The hike consisted of about 9 miles of interlocking trails. Highlights included Hazard Cave and the Lake Trail along the aquamarine waters of Arch Lake, where we saw the beautiful arch in the water that gives the lake its name. We hiked the Bluff Trail and the Ladder Trail (yes, there were ladders!). We also hiked to Natural Bridge (a graceful sandstone arch) and back. We learned about the rare Fulton's gnat fly glow worms which can be seen in the rock houses in the summertime. We learned about several of the rare plants that grow in the unique sandstone/limestone damp rock house environment. We saw liesegang bands on the rock faces, and the original dam built by the CCC in the 1930s. 2 people made shorter hikes; everyone else patiently navigated many intersections! A good day, which these leaders thoroughly enjoyed.

-Diane Petrilla and Pat Watts



## February 11 East Lakeshore Trail along Tellico Lake-Sinking Creek and Lotterdale Branch

Thirteen members and two visitors enjoyed a pleasant 8.5 mile key swap hike along Tellico Lake. Weather was a little warmer than expected. Some of us took a side trip to the Lotterdale Pier. Special thanks to Dan Feller and Claudia Dean for leading the other group.

-David Smith & John Smiley



**February 15**  
**Davenport Gap to Mt. Cammerer**

Twenty-six hikers (25 members and 1 visitor) turned out on this unseasonably warm February day to exercise their heart, lungs and legs by climbing to Mt Cammerer from Davenport Gap on the Appalachian Trail. Although overcast, it never rained, and we had occasional peeks of sunshine. The group self-divided into subgroups of 1, 4, 2 and 19. The 19 went all the way to the tower, 2 went to the Cammerer spur trail junction, and the other 2 groups did shorter versions overall. Views through the bare winter trees were beautiful, especially as we got higher. We admired the fairly new roof on the Davenport Gap shelter (looking down from above on the A.T.). We saw rock fern, galax, and bright green moss blankets on the sandstone rock faces. There were 8 blowdowns, with 2 being fairly large (will be reported to the equestrian teams to help with chainsaw work in the Spring). We passed several NOBO hikers (yes, already!) and gave one of them some food, since he had run out and was hiking to Standing Bear hostel. Another great day with a great group!

-Diane Petrilla and Ron Brandenburg



**February 18**  
**Elkmont to Tremont**

It was a COLD 28 degrees when 7 club members and 1 guest gathered to setup the shuttle for our hike. After leaving cars at Tremont, we drove to Elkmont and the Jakes Creek trailhead. We made our way up the trail admiring stone chimneys that remained from the vacation homes of a time gone past. There was a good layer of frost covering the foliage along the trail with a few daffodils peeking through. When we turned onto the Meigs Mountain trail, we quickly started encountering creek crossings that were normally almost non-existent. But with the volume of water flowing down from the mountains, some were quite interesting. We ended up with only a few pairs of wet feet. At the Curry Mountain trail intersection, there's a wonderful long log that's perfect for sitting to enjoy lunch. It was a very quick lunch, though, as everyone started to cool down too quickly to sit still very long. We finished up the hike on Meigs Mountain and Lumber Ridge meeting quite a few other folks enjoying the beautiful sun-shiny blue-sky day. The hike was about 10.8 miles full of sneaky rolling hills that added up to about 1,500 feet of elevation gain.

-Pat Watts



**February 25  
Pogue Creek Canyon**

With a good chance of rain in the forecast for this hike, a number of hikers cancelled (perhaps they were the smart ones?) but 5 stalwart members joined this leader to hike the stunning Pogue Creek Canyon SNA. We did indeed have rain for the first 2 hours or so, but had intermittent dry spots under massive sandstone bluffs rising above us. We climbed down (then up) a ladder, down (then up!) some steep gorge trails, and then up to the mesa view area. We saw arches, columns, and deep rockhouses formed by sandstone erosion. We learned about the rare plants and animals that inhabit the Cumberland plateau sandstone rockhouse areas. It had stopped raining by the second half of our hike, but we kept moving to stay warm. Needless to say, I hope when we offer this hike next year, the weather will be nicer! It was still a great walk, with great company.

-Diane Petrilla



**Don't Forget: It's time to PARK IT FORWARD**

<https://www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/fees.htm>



**Deep Creek Trail Advisory**

Deep Creek approximately 0.5 miles north of Campsite #55

Tree debris is diverting water from the main channel to a secondary channel across the Deep Creek Trail creating an area of high-water volume and turbulent current. This is quite hazardous and caution is advised.



# In Memoriam

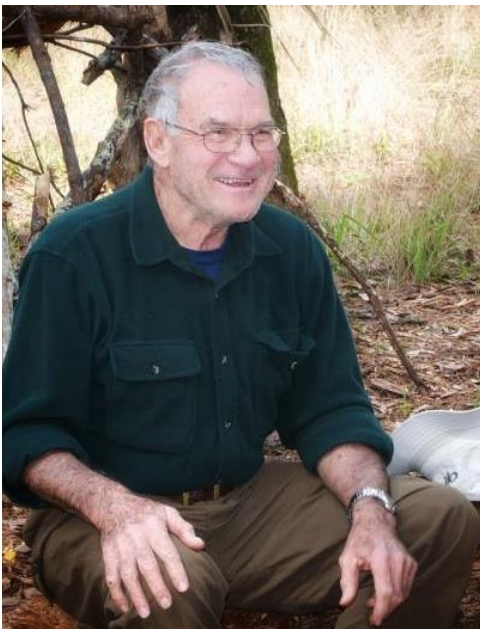
One of the Club's most active long-time members died on February 24, 2023, at the age of 92. Ray Payne had a lifetime of incredible outdoor adventures and equally incredible accomplishments toward protecting our wild land, especially the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Cherokee National Forest.

Ray originally joined the Club in 1964, subsequently serving on the Board for over 50 years, serving as president in 1971 and 1972, and chairing the Conservation Committee for decades. He received almost every award the Club bestows, including the Marshall Wilson Presidential Citation for extraordinary contribution to the Club in 2008, and the Harvey Broome Distinguished Service Award for outstanding long-term contributions to the spirit and objectives of the SMHC in 1989 and again in 2019.

A leader in many activities concerning environmental issues, one of Ray's most important contributions was his work with Citizens for the Economic Future of Swain County to oppose the North Shore Road which, thanks to him and others, was never constructed. In addition, Swain County was recently compensated for the cost of the county road that was flooded to create Fontana Lake. He was also instrumental in organizing the Save-Our-Smokies Wilderness Hike on October 23, 1966, to protest a proposed trans-mountain road from Clingmans Dome to Elkmont Campground. The road was never constructed. Our park may have looked quite different today were it not for Ray's efforts.

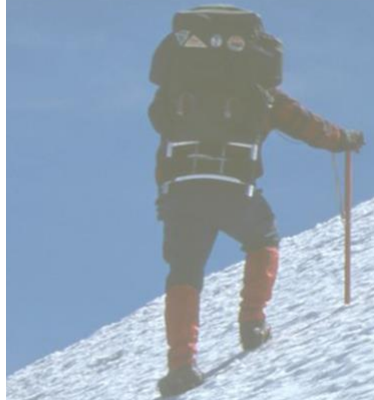
Also close to his heart was volunteering in the GMSNP Backcountry Office. Christine Hoyer, Back Country Management Specialist, stated, "Ray contributed 9,037 volunteer hours to the park through his service in various roles in the backcountry program. An amazing contribution and an extraordinary legacy - as a park volunteer, steward, and tireless advocate."

Ray's wife Genny predeceased him, and he is survived by daughters Elizabeth and Joan and son Alan plus 7 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren and 3 great- great-grandchildren. He will be greatly missed.



<https://www.knoxnews.com/obituaries/kns056263>

In lieu of donation of flowers, a donation may be made to the Smoky Mountain Hiking Club, Sierra Club, or Friends of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.



## Meeting Locations

**Alcoa Food City-** although the grocery store is no longer there, we use the parking lot at 121 N Hall Rd, on the right coming from Knoxville, between the 3rd and 4th stoplight, just after Walgreens.

**Oak Ridge Books-a-Million-** 310 S Illinois Ave. (same parking lot as Golds Gym), on the left as you come from Knoxville.

**Cracker Barrel Strawberry Plains-** 1510 Cracker Barrel Lane, Exit 398 off of I-40. From Knoxville, turn right off of I-40, go to the first traffic light and turn right. Park on the right side of the lot.

**Lowe's Harriman-** 1800 Roane St Hwy, Harriman, TN. Exit 350 off of I-40.

**Hardee's-** 107 Buffalo Road, Clinton, TN. Exit 122 off I-75. Turn left off the exit ramp then left at the first red light

**Walmart Supercenter** -2410 US 411 South in Maryville; park on the far right side of the parking lot.

**Please be aware that when a time is listed to meet, that is the time that the group will leave.  
It is best to be at the meeting location 15 minutes early to sort out who is driving and who is riding.**

### 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.



## 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](mailto:kwise@utk.edu)

Vice President: Steve Dunkin [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: Randy Mitchell [mitchell1982@tds.net](mailto:mitchell1982@tds.net)

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

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

Director: Pat Watts [watts\\_at\\_home@yahoo.com](mailto:watts_at_home@yahoo.com)

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

Code of Conduct Coordinator: Taylor Weatherbee  
[tweatherbe@aol.com](mailto:tweatherbe@aol.com)

## CONSIDER GOING GREEN!!!

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