



# Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Newsletter

*Exploring the Smokies Since 1924*

PO Box 51592  
Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

May 2023

## AMERICAN HIKING SOCIETY'S NATIONAL TRAILS DAY®

### It's Time to Register for National Trails Day, Saturday June 3, 2023!

National Trails Day is on Saturday June 3 this year. This is the 26th year that the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club has hosted an NTD event. We are looking for a few more crew leaders and volunteers to fill the crews that will work on the Appalachian Trail from Silers Bald Shelter to Icewater Springs Shelter. Volunteers will meet at Sugarlands Visitor Center at 7am for an orientation and dispersal of tools for the day, and then carpool to their designated trailheads by 8:30am. We will provide a bagged lunch, a free commemorative T-shirt, and prizes! Please see the Registration Form attached to this Newsletter.

You can register by:

- Going to [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org) and clicking on the link displayed on the home page or
- Printing the registration form and mailing to the address listed at the bottom or
- E-mailing Franklin LaFond directly with answers to each question on the registration form, at [ox97game@aol.com](mailto:ox97game@aol.com)

All Volunteers, including crew leaders, must complete a registration form.  
Deadline to receive registrations is FRIDAY MAY 19.

Come out and help us with a day of work and fun on the A.T!

## 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.

**May 6, Saturday**

**ATMC Work Trip**

**Davenport Gap to Mt. Cammerer Fire Tower side trail**

This AT work trip will concentrate on the east end of the Smokies. We will work on cleaning out water drainages, pruning back encroaching vegetation, and install/repair of a few log steps as time allows. Some tread repair and removal of downed trees may also be required. Several work groups that are willing to hike different distances up to 5 miles into the far end of the section would be good. We will meet at the Cracker Barrel (1510 Cracker Barrel Ln, Knoxville TN 37914) at 8:00 am or at the Davenport Gap trailhead at (TN 32 / NC284, I-40 Exit 457 Waterville NC) at 9:00 am.

Parking at this location is limited, so carpooling is strongly encouraged. Roundtrip (Drive 114 miles=\$11.40).

Bring sturdy footwear, gloves, lunch, snacks, plenty of water, and weather appropriate attire.

Registration with the leaders is required.

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

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

**May 6, Saturday**  
**Easy Hike- UT Arboretum**

This will be a 2-to-3-mile stroll to enjoy the Arboretum's woodland trails and check for what's new in bloom. We will meet at 10:00 in the parking lot by the Visitor Center just inside the entrance. The Arboretum is located at 901 S. Illinois Ave. on the way to Oak Ridge. Rated easy.

Register at [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org).

Leader- Priscilla Clayton, [sigmtngirl@earthlink.net](mailto:sigmtngirl@earthlink.net) or 865-966-4142.

**May 6, Saturday**  
**The Rocky Crag, Off-Trail**

The Rocky Crag traversing The Righteous Way is a classic off-trail adventure that entails extreme wilderness, old manways, bear trails, and lots of knife-edge ridge climbing. As originally planned, the hike was to follow up the Porters Creek Trail, the lower half of Dry Sluice manway, Lester Prong, and an exceedingly steep scramble up the side of Rocky Crag. However, a violent rainstorm that washed out the roads in the Greenbrier area last year has blocked access to the Porters Creek Trail. Consequently, the hike will begin from Newfound Gap following the AT 4.5 miles out to the upper terminus of the Dry Sluice manway and then down the manway to Lester Prong. At this juncture, the climb will begin, terminating at the summit of The Rocky Crag (known by some as the Real Charlies Bunion). Along Dry Sluice manway and Lester Prong hikers will have an up-close and personal encounter with the unbelievable destruction from last year's storm. Total hiking distance is about 13 miles (3.5 miles off-trail) and rated strenuous.

Pre-register with leaders for meeting time and place. Leaders: Greg Harrell, [gsharrell@milligan.edu](mailto:gsharrell@milligan.edu) (865) 719-0173 and Ken Wise, [kwise@utk.edu](mailto:kwise@utk.edu) (865) 310-776

**May 10, Wednesday**  
**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. (Total of 9 miles). Bring a trail lunch & water. Rated moderately easy. Meet at the Lenoir City Cracker Barrel 325 Fort Loudoun Medical Center Dr, Lenoir City, TN by 9 am.

Drive 10 miles RT { @ \$.10 = \$1.00 }.

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

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

**May 13, Saturday**  
**Lumber Ridge**

Let's hike the lovely Lumber Ridge Trail from Tremont to Meigs Mountain. This 8.2-mile round trip hike begins with a 1300 ft. climb over about 2.5 miles. There are intermittent views and there should be plenty of Spring wildflowers to see! The climb is a good work-out, with the steepest part at the very beginning. Our turn-around point (and lunch spot) will be Buckhorn Gap, at the junction of Meigs Mountain and Meigs Creek Trails. Rated Moderate. Meet at the (old) Alcoa Food City at 131 N Hall Rd., Alcoa at 8am, or at Tremont at 8:45am. 50 miles RT= \$5.00.

Register at [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org).

Leader: Diane Petrilla, 931-224-5149, [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com)

**May 13, Saturday**  
**Foothills Parkway Right-of-Way from the Glades to Emerts Cove**

As there is substantial interest in using the unbuilt portion of the Foothills Parkway right-of-way property as a trail instead of a road, on this hike we will explore a route from the Glades community in Gatlinburg to the Emerts Cove community in Pittman Center. The hike will be totally off-trail with some steep uphill and downhill climbs, some areas of thick vegetation, and numerous blowdowns to negotiate. Off-trail hiking experience is required for this hike of around 6 miles, rated difficult. Group size will be limited.

Contact leaders for meeting time and place.

Leaders: Ed Fleming, [edwrdfm@aol.com](mailto:edwrdfm@aol.com), (865) 548-2489, and Hiram Rogers, [hiramrogers@yahoo.com](mailto:hiramrogers@yahoo.com).

**May 20, Saturday**  
**Goldmine Trail to Cane Creek Trail**

This is an out and back hike. Note: this is the Tennessee Goldmine Trail. The hike will start at the Goldmine Trail in the Top of the World community in Blount County. We will hike down Goldmine (0.8), turn left for 0.4 miles on Cooper Road Trail then head down Cane Creek Trail (2.1). The hike consists of a gradual descent from Top of the World down to Cane Creek. On Cane Creek we will pass BCS #2 and wade three streams as we head toward the park boundary and the end of the trail. None of the crossings are too difficult but bring water shoes just in case. Cane Creek was a small farming community prior to it being incorporated into the park. Along Cane Creek we will also visit the Buchanan family cemetery. This is a good opportunity to knock out some short but remote trails if you are working on your 900 Miler map. Distance 6.6 round trip. Rated Moderate due to elevation gain as we head back to the cars. We will meet at the Goldmine Trailhead. If you need directions to the trailhead, email the hike leader. For those interested in ride sharing, meet at the Maryville Walmart in Maryville at 7:30 am (this is the Walmart across from Chick-Fil-A and Blaze Pizza in Maryville). Roundtrip 24 miles = \$2.40. Park just across from Chick-fil-A next to the road. The leader will not be at this site but will meet hikers at the Goldmine Trailhead at 9:00 am to start hiking.

Register at [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org).

Leader: Steve Dunkin, [jsdunkin1302@gmail.com](mailto:jsdunkin1302@gmail.com)

**May 24, Wednesday**  
**Sinking Creek Branch of the East Lakeshore Trail**

This hike is 4.5 miles along Tellico Lake (total out and back of 9 miles) with 1325 feet cumulative ascent. Moderately easy. Bring a trail lunch & water. 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, 325 Fort Loudoun Medical Center Dr, Lenoir City, TN by 9 am.

Drive 20 miles RT = \$2

Register at [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org).

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

**May 28, Sunday**  
**Joint SMHC-CMC Memorial Day Hike- Gabes Mountain Trail**

Each year on Memorial Day weekend, we plan a joint hike with the very active Carolina Mountain Club, just 1 year older than us, but also instrumental in helping promote the creation of our Great Smoky Mountains National Park! This year, we will hike from Cosby on Gabes Mountain Trail, heading west. We'll stop at Hen Wallow Falls, for the short and steep descent to view the falls, then head onward CS 34. After a pleasant lunch at the campsite, we'll go back the way we came. Hike 9.6 miles, ascent 2000 ft. Rated Moderate. Let's make an effort to share some time with this other wonderful Club! Meet at Cracker Barrel, 1510 Cracker Barrel Lane off of the Strawberry Plains exit 398 at 8am, or at the Cosby Hiker Parking Lot at 9:15am. RT carpool mileage 120miles = \$12.00.

Register at [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org).

Leaders: Diane Petrilla, 931-224-5149, [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com) and Cindy McJunkin, 828-712-9646, [mcjfive@aol.com](mailto:mcjfive@aol.com).

**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.



**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.

# For the Record

## March 11 Cat Stairs

After rain delayed our hike to the Cat Stairs until the Saturday after its originally scheduled weekend, twenty-two ambitious hikers were treated to gloriously cooperative weather. We began with an easy walk through the woods and took a relaxing break near a well-preserved stone chimney. From there, we followed Cat Stairs Branch more steeply through a beautiful little valley to the base of one of the finest boulder fields in the Smokies. Giant boulders, topped with ferns and moss, concealed deep and intriguing labyrinths that drew the prolonged attention of some of the hikers. While the unclaustraphobic squeezed through tight passages, led by our fearless ten-year-old scout, the more sane of the group enjoyed lunch at the base of a towering line of cliffs. Upon consolidation of the group, we made our way to the Kitty Crack, where, one-by-one, the train of hikers slid through a giant crack in the cliff and performed an acrobatic maneuver to insert themselves into an orthogonal tunnel leading to the top. After that thrill, a steep rhodo-thrash took us up to a faint manway that led us on our descent past incredible overlooks of the Greenbrier valley. We took in these views, basking in the brilliant warm sunshine. In what might be a first in the history of the SMHC, a group of hikers with a range of ages spanning seven decades enjoyed an obscure route up one of the most iconic landmarks of the Smokies.

-David Sands



## March 11 Elkmont Loop

We had a beautiful sunny day for this 10 mile loop out of Elkmont with 16 members and 5 visitors. Little River Trail was a warmup for the climb up Huskey Gap. After taking Sugarland Mt to Fighting Creek Gap we took the old road into Elkmont where we took a side trip to where Wonderland Hotel once stood.

-David Smith and Claudia Dean





### March 15 Cosby Connectors Hike

March 15 is still officially winter. As we gathered at Cosby Campground the thermometer registered in the low 20's. It was as if old man winter raised a hand to say "I'm still here". Eighteen members wearing winter gear introduced themselves to a new member on her first club hike. The group quickly moved to the Gabes Mountain Trailhead for a few photos. After 0.3 miles we began piecing together the various connector trails surrounding the Cosby Campground. Moving in a counterclockwise direction we connected some horse trails and a campground access trail to mark trails needed for a 900-mile map. Along the way were a side trip to an old car and an intact double chimney. It was cold enough for the ground to be frozen, yet some Hepatica was blooming. To add a little mileage to our hike, we took a side trip along the Lower Mt. Cammerer trail to Sutton Overlook for lunch. There we had some views of lower elevation trees budding pastel colors while the ridge tops were covered with white hoar frost. After lunch we turned back towards the campground and our last connector. The last connector trail did involve an unbridged crossing of Cosby Creek which the group crossed mostly with dry feet. Unfortunately, one hiker took a tumble on the Horse Trail prior to the creek and needed some on-the-spot first aid. We were fortunate to have some experienced medical along. A memorable hike was had by all.

-Randy Mitchell



### March 18 Abrams Falls from Cades Cove--New Member Hike

It was a COLD morning that greeted 6 members and 4 visitors that gathered at the back of Cades Cove for the hike to Abrams Falls. Pat reviewed with the group a few guidelines to follow during the hike, and Taylor enlightened us on how the Creek and Falls were named (one would think that Abrams came from one of the white settlers in the cove, but the Falls and Creek were actually named after a Cherokee chief.) Thus informed, we headed up the trail! The Trails Forever crew did an outstanding job of rehabilitating this trail in 2021 – as Taylor commented, you could almost hike it in slippers. Everyone enjoyed the hike as blue skies slowly began to emerge. Taylor pointed out markings that had been painted on some hemlocks indicating that they had been treated for the wooly adelgid. We climbed to the top of Arbutus Ridge, where everyone enjoyed the views of The Horseshoe and many pictures were taken. As we continued on the trail, we noticed small clusters of white flowers in foliage close to the ground, which the “Seek” app identified as Trailing Arbutus. I wondered which was named first, the wildflower or the ridge? We also saw an abundance of Pussytoes along the trail as well as asters and violets. There were ooh’s and ah’s as we rounded the bend and got our first glimpse of Abrams Falls. It was quite spectacular, aided I’m sure by recent rains. We perched on the rocks enjoying a snack, and some ventured further on the rocks for a closer view of the falls. On the return trip to our cars, it was apparent that this trail gets a lot of traffic from tourists. Yes, it has already started!

It was a great day and a great hike, and we thoroughly enjoyed the company of my fellow hikers!

-Pat Watts and Taylor Weatherbee





**March 25**  
**Laurel-Snow Cumberland Trail**

Seven club members and one visitor met at the Richmond Creek trailhead in 50-degree temperatures, where thundering green-brown rapids raced down. We were excited to have a once-in-a-lifetime experience of so much water flowing over Laurel Falls after a night of torrential thunderstorms. Crossing the bridge over Laurel Creek, we turned right onto Laurel Falls Trail, ascending the gorge around large boulders. We stopped at the base of the falls outside of the fog-like spray to take photos and videos of the water pounding against the boulder-strewn plunge pool. After eating snacks, the group retraced the trail down the gorge, reaching the "Y" junction. Along the way, we reviewed the swollen Laurel Creek torrent cascading down under the hiker bridge we had crossed and reaching the confluence with Richland Creek in 0.3 miles. Hikers continued on Snow Falls trail 1.6 miles over the bridge, enjoying views along the creek, seeing yellow trillium, patches of yellow trout lily, and groups of flowering painted buckeye shrubs. At the Buzzard Point rock formation, we greeted a club Wednesday hiker finishing up lunch with a friend. We basked in the mild, warm breeze and temperatures in the 70's under bright sunny skies for our lunch break while taking in the view of the flat-topped rock formations jutting to the edge of Richland Creek and Morgan Creek gorges. We also delighted in unobstructed views over the Tennessee River Valley to distant mountains and observed a few turkey vultures soaring below us on the updrafts. All enjoyed this moderate/strenuous 10-mile hike with 1700 feet of elevation gain.

-Larry Johnson and Pat Watts



**March 29**  
**Bradley Fork**

Twenty-two hikers gathered on a chilly morning at Smokemont from both sides of the mountain. Two members from South Carolina and one from North Carolina on their first club hike as well as two visitors joined us. Low humidity and clear skies made for a cool start but a very pleasant day. The early spring wildflowers were just beginning to open. Among the flowers that we observed were Large-flowered Trillium, Phlox, Hepatica, White-fringed Phacelia, violets, Fraser's Sedge and Bloodroot. Bradley Fork was flowing full and clear. After about 5 miles we arrived at Cabin Flats campsite and enjoyed lunch by the stream before retracing our steps back to Smokemont. The flowers had opened more as the temperatures warmed. Thanks to Michael and Pat for taking the point and to Diane for sweeping. Pat said she has four days just like this Wednesday ordered for April.

-Randy Mitchell



## How We Rate Our Outings

We have expanded the definition of our on-trail hike ratings to include additional criteria that will help everyone have a better understanding of what might be in store on a particular hike. Naturally, not all hikes can fit neatly into a pre-defined ratings box. A hike's write-up should point out any particulars of the trails (be it mileage, footing, steepness, etc.) that contribute to the rating assigned.

As you contemplate undertaking one of our outings, you should consider these ratings and assess your own capabilities compared to the requirements of the hike. Only you can evaluate your own physical capabilities and decide if the hike is right for you. While we want everyone to stretch to obtain new goals, you should also be realistic about your abilities. This is for your own safety and well-being, as well as to ensure a better outing experience for the group.

If you have questions concerning the rating assigned to a hike, be sure to contact the hike leader to obtain more clarification.

If you are contemplating one of our off-trail hikes, be sure to contact the hike leader. You can find additional rating information for off-trail hikes on the website at [smhclub.org/How-We-Rate-Outings](http://smhclub.org/How-We-Rate-Outings).

For on-trail hikes:

**EASY:** 5 miles or less and up to 1000' elevation change (on trail). Hikers should be comfortable hiking at a 1.5-2.0 mph pace with 300+ feet of continuous elevation gain over a mile.

**MODERATE:** 5-10 miles and/or elevation change of 1000-1800', on trail hiking. Hikers should be regularly hiking 5+ miles with 400-500 feet of continuous elevation gain over a mile, at a 2.0-2.5 mph pace.

**DIFFICULT:** 10-14+ miles and/or elevation change of 1800-2500' or more, mostly on trail, some off-trail possible. Hikers should be regularly hiking 8+ miles with continuous elevation gains of 500+ feet per mile for a sustained 2 to 5 miles (or more), at a 2.0-3.0 mph pace.

### 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)

### 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.



**Saturday June 3, 2023, Smoky Mountains Hiking Club**  
**26<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 3, 2022 - 7:00 AM in the overflow parking lot at the Sugarlands Visitor Center, rain or shine.
- ☐ **WORK AREAS:** A.T. between Icewater Spring Shelter and Silers Bald.
- ☐ **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:** Registration is Free, but the form below **MUST** be completed. Please note, your registration serves as your commitment to attend, since T-shirts, parking passes, and lunches are being ordered, and crews will be built based on our registrations.
- ☐ **QUESTIONS:** Email [ox97game@aol.com](mailto:ox97game@aol.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 be given crew details prior to event).

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

Do you have a Park it Forward Annual Pass? (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 Franklin LaFond, 4219 E. Lamar Alexander Pkwy, Walland TN 37886 OR email all information required above to: [ox97game@aol.com](mailto:ox97game@aol.com). You can also register on-line at [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org).