



# Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Newsletter

*Exploring the Smokies Since 1924*

PO Box 51592  
Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

July 2023

## SAVE THE DATE

### Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Election Picnic

Saturday, August 12  
Cosby Picnic Area Pavilion

More to follow in August newsletter



### Slate of SMHC Officers for 2024

Each year the SMHC membership is provided notice of the slate of officers to be elected. This year the election will occur at the August 12 picnic at the Cosby Picnic Area in Cosby Campground. 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. For 2024-2026, we would like to welcome a new director, Larry Johnson, to the SMHC BOD. We would also like to sincerely thank Kristi Knight for her service on the BOD since 2021 in her role as Recording Secretary.

President, Steve Dunkin  
Vice President (Interim), Diane Petrilla  
Recording Secretary, Tim Bigelow  
Treasurer, Pat Watts  
Trust Liaison, Jean Gauger  
Historian, Brian Worley

Communications Director, Randy Mitchell  
Compliance Director, Taylor Weatherbee  
Membership Secretary, Scott Walker  
Director, Will Skelton  
Director, Ken Wise  
\*\* NEW Director, Larry Johnson \*\*

Larry joined the SMHC in March 2015 and was introduced to a new community of outdoor enthusiasts. He had been an avid weekend hiker, backpacker, paddler, and mountain biker for many years before joining the club. Initially, he participated only in a few of the club-led on and off trail hikes, National Trail Days and AT Trail Maintenance days. The pandemic of 2020 expedited his retirement after 40 years working as an Industrial Engineer. He joined the Wednesday Club Hiking Group in 2020, and after enjoying many Wednesday hikes and observing the hike leaders, he decided to become more involved with the club organization. Since 2022 he continues to lead Wednesday and Saturday hikes. This year he refocused hikes toward completing the remaining 350 trail miles of his first 900 Miler map. Larry looks forward to being elected to the board of directors and supporting our club organization into the second centennial!

# 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.

## July 1-Saturday Charlies Bunion

Originally known as "Fodderstack", it was Horace Kephart who got this extremely popular rock outcropping put on a government map as Charlies Bunion. From the Newfound Gap parking area, we will begin our hike travelling north on the AT. Approximately four miles in we will arrive at our destination. Here we will enjoy lunch and amazing panoramic views of Mount Le Conte, Greenbrier Pinnacle, Mount Kephart, the Jump Off, the Sawteeth and the beautiful Porters Creek Valley below. We'll return the way we came. The hike is 8 miles and is rated Moderate.

Meet at Alcoa Food City, 131 N Hall Rd., Alcoa (note this store is now closed) *ready to leave at 7:30am* {drive: 100 miles RT @ 10¢/mile = \$10.00} or at Newfound Gap at 9:00am. *The leader will meet the group at Newfound Gap, not the carpool site.* Register at smhclub.org.

Leader: Pat Watts, patty.watts@aol.com, 901-487-7941.

## July 8-Saturday A.T. Maintenance Work Trip

This work trip will support the annual A.T. Konnarock Trail Crew in the National Forest. Each year, volunteers from across the country sign up for this ATC Sponsored summer trail crew for a week at a time, over a 2-week period. The crew will be building a new trail relocation adjacent to the Fontana Marina. 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 Marina parking lot near 40 Fontana Dam Rd, Fontana Dam, NC 28733 at 9:00am. Roundtrip travel is approximately 110 miles.

Also note that the crew will be on location for several days, the weeks of June 24-30 and July 8-14, and will base camp in the area. Volunteers that participate for 3 or more days on the project will receive an ATC Trails Crew T-Shirt. Club members that want to overnight in the area can utilize the Fontana Hilton Shelter, near the TVA picnic area.

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

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

Randy Bullock, [jrbperfusion@gmail.com](mailto:jrbperfusion@gmail.com)

## July 12-Wednesday Rich Mountain Trail (from Rich Mountain Rd) to Campsite 6 on Scott Mountain Trail

This 8.3 mile in and out hike is rated moderate due to a 1,600-foot climb in the first 2.3 miles with 2,100 feet total elevation gain. Meet at the old Alcoa Food City (131 North Hall Rd) ready to leave at 7:30 am or at the Ace Gap Trail parking area to begin hiking at 8:00 am. Drive 40 miles round trip at .10 per mile = \$4.00. Carpooling is encouraged due to limited parking at the trailhead.

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

**July 15-Saturday  
Rocky Top**

This challenging, up-and-back hike from the Laurel Creek Road trailhead starts with a tree-shaded, 1.8 mile ascent of Lead Cove Trail to the junction at Sandy Gap with Bote Mountain Trail (~1,250 ft. climb), where we ascend this scenic (and rocky) trail south along the ridge, up to the junction with the Appalachian Trail near Spence Field shelter (2.9 miles and ~1,850 ft. climb). After a rest break we go east on the Appalachian Trail, up Thunderhead Mountain to Rocky Top (~1.3 miles with ~800 ft. climb) for lunch. We'll have spectacular views and plenty of sunshine if it's a clear day. Return the same way. Total of 12.0 miles and ~3,900 ft. total elevation gain, rated difficult. Pack extra water. For carpooling, meet at the former Alcoa Food City parking lot (131 North Hall Rd.) at 6:45 am (52 miles RT @10 cents = \$5.20), or at the Lead Cove Trailhead on Laurel Creek Road ready to hike at 7:30 am.

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

Leader: Eric Sundstrom, [sundstrom.eric@gmail.com](mailto:sundstrom.eric@gmail.com) or text 865-406-8794.

**July 15-Saturday  
Sweat Heifer Creek--Off-trail**

Join us for a wet and wild excursion up a beautiful Smoky Mountains creek. We'll cool off from the summer heat with a relatively short rock-hop/wade past deep pools, tumbling cascades, and a surprisingly large waterfall. There is no hike in the park with as many thrills per mile as this one. You could pay a lot of money to slosh around in the warm, chlorinated, nasty water at a local tourist water park, or you could join us for free and spend a day in the cold, clear, clean mountain water. Our pace will be slow, and our play will be long. Don your swimwear and don't miss this one! Contact the leader for meet-up time and place.

Leader: David Sands, [dsands314@yahoo.com](mailto:dsands314@yahoo.com)

**July 16-Sunday  
John Oliver Cabin via Rich Mountain Loop Trail  
Easy Hike**

This hike is approximately 3.6 miles. We will hike to the John Oliver Cabin, one of the oldest in the GSMNP. Bring hiking poles, hiking boots, water, snack, hand sanitizer. Meet at 1 pm at the old Food City in Maryville (2135 East Broadway, Maryville 37804). Car poolers pay driver \$.10 per mile which is approximately \$6.50. Or meet at the trailhead of Rich Mountain Loop Trail at 2 pm opposite the Kiosk at entrance of Cades Cove. We will park cars in that parking lot. If anyone comes down with Covid symptoms please phone Adele and cancel.

EVERYONE MUST register for this hike at [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org).

Leaders: Adele Soucy, [fthom4141@aol.com](mailto:fthom4141@aol.com) or 865-352-9156 and Priscilla Clayton

**July 22-Saturday  
Yellow Creek Mountain Trail-Fontana to Tapoco**

The Benton MacKaye trail route was relocated recently to follow the Yellow Creek Mountain in the Nantahala NF. We'll hike this scenic segment as a car shuttle with a few cars left across the river from Tapoco Lodge then drive over to Fontana Village to begin hiking near the General Store. We'll hike a short way on a Fontana trail to the Lookout Rock trail up to the ridge. The trail ascends steeply to reach the ridge line and the Yellow Creek Mountain trail which we follow with several climbs to Tapoco. Those interested can grab a bite at Tapoco before returning to get the cars at Fontana Village and the drive back on the Dragon. Hike 10 miles and climb about 2000 ft. Rated moderately difficult due to many ups and downs and possibly overgrown trails in July.

Meet at WalMart at 2410 US 411 (south) in Maryville at 8:00 AM. Drive 110 miles RT

Tim Bigelow, [Bigelowt2@mindspring.com](mailto:Bigelowt2@mindspring.com), 865-607-6781

**July 26-Wednesday**  
**Little River-Sugarland Mountain Loop via Huskey Gap and Old Road Manway**

This 9-mile, moderate hike is a loop starting in Elkmont on the Little River/Huskey Gap trails which lead to the Sugarland Mountain Trail. When we intersect Fighting Creek Gap Road, we will walk along the road for 0.2 miles until we reach the old road manway returning us to Elkmont. Meet at Food City, Alcoa (the old location on 131 N Hall Road) to leave at 7:30 am or at Little River Trailhead by 8:15 am. Drive 70 miles RT at .10 / mile = \$7.00. Carpooling is encouraged due to limited parking at the trail head.

Leader: David Grab, 865-405-5779, digrab@aol.com.

**July 29-Saturday**  
**Big Creek to Walnut Bottoms**  
**New Member Hike**

This hike is for anyone interested but will be at a slower pace for those just getting into hiking in the Smokies. Join us for this 10.2-mile round-trip hike up Big Creek to Backcountry Campsite #37 (Walnut Bottoms) and back. The popular Big Creek Trail passes Mouse Creek Falls and the Midnight Hole on its way to Walnut Bottoms. The trail follows a gradual incline up an old lumber company railroad bed to one of the most popular backpacking sites in the park (BCS 37). Backcountry Campsite 37 is one of the most used sites in the park. Rated moderate/difficult. We will meet at the Baxter Creek/Big Creek Trailhead parking lot at 9:00 am Saturday morning to begin the hike. To get to the trailhead, drive on Interstate 40 toward Asheville NC and turn off at the Waterville Exit. Turn right at the bottom of the ramp to cross the bridge then left to follow the road, past the powerplant. Continue straight, driving into the park on the gravel road. Continue past the Ranger Station and park at the end of the gravel road in the Baxter Creek parking lot. Email the hike leader for more specific directions.

Register at smhclub.org.

Leader: Steve Dunkin, jsdunkin1302@gmail.com

## For the Record

**May 10**  
**Canal and Baker Hollow Branches of the East Lakeshore Trail**

Seventeen hikers began the hike south on the Canal branch of the East Lakeshore Trail. It was an absolutely beautiful day. The trail was in excellent condition. After 1.7 miles we began the Baker Hollow branch and hiked 3 miles to its end where there were bathrooms and picnic tables. After lunch and a rest, we began the hike north back to our vehicles. The total hike was 9.4 miles long with a lot of ups and downs, but they were not long or steep. I think everyone enjoyed the leisurely hike.

-Terry Nyenhuis



**May 13  
Lumber Ridge**

Sixteen members and one visitor met at Tremont on this lovely sunny cool morning to hike on Lumber Ridge to Buckeye Gap. The mountain laurel put on a full show for us, much to our delight. We heard stories about Will Walker and his very big family, as well as his resistance to logging in the Tremont area. We also saw a few lady slippers. The day warmed up as it went on, but we were back to our cars in good time to cool off. A very enjoyable group on a very enjoyable day!

-Diane Petrilla



**May 13  
Foothills Parkway Right-of-way from the Glades to Emerts Cove**

After a rainy Saturday was in the forecast all week, 7 members and 1 visitor lucked up with a beautiful day for the first club hike on the 33.5-mile-long unbuilt corridor of the Foothills Parkway property. The visitor was initiated into off-trail hiking by a minor injury coming down a steep embankment at the first road crossing. She chose to leave the hike early and was escorted back to her vehicle by one of the club members. The rest of the group soldiered on crossing creeks, hollows, ridges, and roads until crossing the Middle Prong of the Little Pigeon River on the closed Grassy Branch Road bridge in Emerts Cove. We reflected on some of the writings of Harvey Broome as we visited some of the cabin sites of former club members that gave up their property for the Parkway project. In this cabin community, they hosted Spook Night parties for other club members and their children for many years on October nights near the full moon. At the end of the day, everyone seemed to favor the idea of a trail instead of a road on this unused National Park property.

- Ed Fleming and Hiram Rogers



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

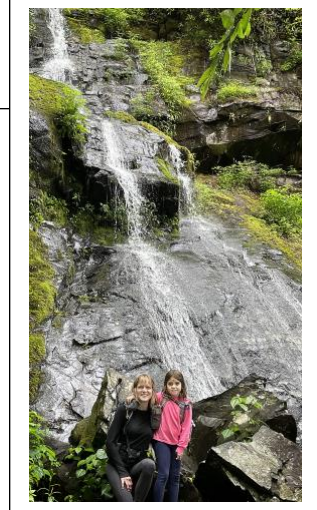
Nine SMHC members hiked down Goldmine to Cane Creek and then onward to the boundary line between the Smokies and Miller Cove on May 20th. It was a cloudy but perfect day for hiking. We spent a few minutes at the Buchanan Cemetery and crossed several small streams on our way to the boundary line. The climb back to our cars was a little more difficult than the walk down but we made it just before the rain began. Another day in the Smokies.

-Steve Dunkin

**May 28**  
**SMHC-CMC Joint Memorial Day Hike**

It's always a pleasure to get together with some of our friends from the Carolina Mountain Club! They are celebrating their 100th birthday this year, as we will celebrate ours next year. For this hike, we gathered at Cosby to hike Gabes Mountain Trail. The threat of rain in the forecast and the overcast sky kept our group from being very large. We had eight SMHC hikers and three CMC hikers, one of whom was 8 years old, and who was truly remarkable! We hiked out to, and down to Hen Wallow Falls, and talked about stories of the origin of the name for the falls. We saw some beautiful old-growth trees, including basswood, tulip poplar, and intact hemlocks. The crossing just before CS 34 was not a problem for anyone and we had a pleasant lunch at the campsite. There was essentially no rain on the hike, just an occasional drizzle, as well as dripping from the moist canopy. Our total hike was 10 miles at a good pace, and with our youthful hiker delighting all of us with her curiosity and stamina!


-Diane Petrilla  
 -Cindy McJunkin



**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 [jeaugauger@yahoo.com](mailto:jeaugauger@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!!!**

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.

**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.