



# Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Newsletter

*Exploring the Smokies Since 1924*

PO Box 51592  
Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

September 2023

## Upcoming Hikes

Pre-registration at [SMHClub.org](http://SMHClub.org) is required for all hikes unless stated otherwise in the description. Please contact the leader if you are not sure of when and where to meet.

Please review [How We Rate Outings](#) and [Hiker Responsibilities](#) found on [SMHClub.org](http://SMHClub.org) as you consider a hike

### September 2-Saturday Old Sugarlands-Twin Creeks, Gatlinburg loop

This loop hike from the Sugarlands Visitor Center combines forest and city walks. We will walk from the visitor center to the Old Sugarlands trail head and hike it to Cherokee Orchard Road. A short walk, downhill, on Cherokee Orchard Road takes us to the Ogle Place and the Twin Creeks trail. After a short stop for those who wish to explore the Ogle Place, we will proceed along the Twin Creeks trail to the park entrance on Cherokee Orchard Road. There are a couple of small stream crossings on this section. Then we take a stroll through Gatlinburg on Cherokee Orchard Road and 441 to the Gatlinburg trailhead for the return to the Sugarlands visitor center. The total distance is 10 miles with a total ascent of 1675 feet. Rated moderate. For carpooling, meet at the Cracker Barrel off I-40 at exit 398 (1510 Cracker Barrel Lane, parking lot, southeast corner) at 6:45 AM (72 miles RT @\$0.10/mile \$7.20) or the Sugarlands Visitor Center (second parking lot, the end further away from the bathrooms) at 8:00 AM. Please inform the hike leader where you will meet. Reminder: a parking permit is required in the park.

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

Leader: Neil Snapp, [nsnapp@comcast.net](mailto:nsnapp@comcast.net), 281-797-3808

### September 6-Wednesday Cooper Road-Hatcher Mountain

This loop hike will start at Abrams Creek Ranger Station parking. After walking through the campsite we begin the day by following the Copper Road trail for a short distance to the Little Bottoms trail. We continue by hiking across Hatcher Mountain trail to return to the trailhead on Cooper Road trail. Total distance is 10.6 miles and rated moderate for at least one steep, short climb.

Meet at Kroger in Alcoa, 244 S. Hall Rd., at the SE end of the building, near the old KARM store, and park around the side of the building at 8:00 am. Alternatively, meet at the trailhead at 8:30 am. Drive 30 miles. \$3.00

Register with leader or use the club website. Leader will meet at the trailhead.

Leader: Michael Zielinski, [kf4yws@charter.net](mailto:kf4yws@charter.net) or 865-363-6527

### September 9-Saturday Work trip, AT from Cosby Knob Shelter to Camel Gap

Participants will clear vegetation and water bars along the Appalachian Trail from Cosby Knob Shelter to Camel Gap. Please contact the leader about meeting time and preparations. Hike to work area is strenuous. Hike distance is up to 10 miles in total.

Leader: Mark Shipley at [shipleymark57@gmail.com](mailto:shipleymark57@gmail.com)

**September 16-Saturday  
Lamar Alexander Rocky Fork State Park**

Let's explore one of Tennessee's newest state parks, Rocky Fork. The park is located in NE Tennessee in the rugged Cherokee NF and southeast of Greeneville, TN. We'll hike to Whitehouse Cliffs for a fabulous view, then do a long loop that takes in the highlights of the park. We'll hike along creeks, up and down in forests with some beautiful views, and see the Flint Creek battle site, where John Sevier fought the Cherokee in 1789. Most of our trails are old but well-maintained logging roads, so the walking is not difficult. Hike 12 miles total, rated moderately-difficult. Please meet to carpool at Cracker Barrel, Strawberry Plains exit at 7am. We have an early start because the drive is 180 miles RT = \$18.00.

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

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

**September 20-Wednesday  
Old Settlers Trail**

We will hike the Old Settlers trail to campsite 33 then return. There will be chimneys/old home sites along the trail. Distance is 13.2 miles and rated moderately difficult for a couple of climbs and distance. Meet at Cracker Barrel off I-40 at Exit 398 (1510 Cracker Barrel Lane, parking lot, southeast corner) at 7:30 or at the Greenbriar trailhead at 8:30. Drive is 38 miles. \$3.80.

Register with leader or use the club website. Leader will meet at the trailhead.

Leader: Michael Zielinski, [kf4yws@charter.net](mailto:kf4yws@charter.net) or 865-363-6527.

**September 23-Saturday  
No-Name Ridge, Off-trail**

Starting from familiar grounds at the Alum Cave trailhead, we'll take a short stroll to just before Arch Rock where we'll exit the trail and commence a delightful rockhop/wade/splash along Alum Cave Creek for a distance just shy of a mile. From there we'll ascend fabled No-Name Ridge, clambering one of its open landslide scars to reach the airy crest and soak in the immensity of unobstructed views that offer a seldom seen perspective of the southerly slopes of Le Conte and the distant Chimney Tops. After exploring the many outcrops and overlooks of the ridge crest we'll return via one of the scars to the creek below and retrace our earlier route back to the trailhead. Rated difficult. Total distance 4.2 miles total with approximately 2.4 miles off-trail.

Register with trip leaders for meeting place and time.

Leaders: Todd Long, [toddmlong@gmail.com](mailto:toddmlong@gmail.com) and Kindel Page

**September 23-Saturday  
Rich Mountain Loop to John Oliver Cabin and Back  
This is a change from the 2023 Handbook  
Family Friendly Easy Hike**

The hike begins at the far end of the Cades Cove Visitor Orientation Pavilion. The trailhead is located just past the Cove entrance gate on the right. Rich Mountain trails meanders a mile and a half up and down along the base of Rich Mountain before reaching the John Oliver cabin site. There is no elevation gain but you will walk up and down a few small hills on the way to the cabin. The earliest settlers lived along this lower edge of the mountain. A large mount/hill can be seen in one of the open fields. It has been excavated twice by the Park Service and there are no signs of it being an Indian Mound or indeed any sign of human construction. The trail crosses three streams a total of six times. These are all shallow rock hops. The streams are Crooked Arm Branch, Harrison Branch and Martha's Branch. You are welcome to stop off at the Cades Cove store for ice cream after the hike or bring a picnic lunch for after the hike.

Total distance 3 miles. Rated easy. Meet me at the Cades Cove Pavilion near the entrance gate to Cades Cove at 10:00 am. Parking passes are available at the Pavilion. Email the hike leader for more specific directions.

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

**September 24-Sunday**  
**The Crag at Ijams**  
**Easy Hike**

The Crag offers more than 10 climbing routes, but we won't carry ropes or use any of the handholds . We might get to watch climbers. We'll go up Imery Trail, bypass Keyhole and the other quarries and circle the huge limestone borrow pit, looking for lime slag and fall flowers. A few ups and downs, but good trail. On the way back we may explore some interesting loops of the mountain bike trails. Meet at Meads Quarry (just past the entrance to Ijams Nature Center), near the bathrooms, at 9:00am. Hike about 5.5 miles with optional minor rock scrambling. Option to swim after the hike. Leader: Doris Gove, 865 456 8198, dorisgove@aol.com

**September 30-Saturday**  
**Hemphill Bald Loop**

This is a beautiful loop hike using Hemphill Bald, Caldwell Fork, and Rough Fork trails out of the Balsam Mountain section of the Smokies. You will be able to check out Hemphill Bald and parts of the Cataloochee that are along the park boundary. The trail enjoys fantastic views of the Caldwell Fork Valley. As we proceed down the trail into the park we will stop at the Big Poplar and then continue climbing Caldwell Fork Trail to Rough Fork. The climbing will level out once we reach the old railroad bed of Rough Fork. Hike is 13.7 miles. Total descent and ascent 3300 feet. Rated difficult. Trailhead is at Polls Gap off Heintooga Ridge Road starting at 8:30 a.m. Carpool from Cracker Barrel off the Strawberry Plains exit 398 of I-40, leaving at 6:30 a.m. Roundtrip mileage of 200 miles at 10 cents/mile = \$20. Register on the smhclub website. Leader: Randy Mitchell, mitchell1982@tds.net

## For the Record

**July 1**  
**Charlies Bunion**

The weather forecast for this first of July was one of doom and gloom, with threats of thunderstorms during the day. Since the hike to Charlies Bunion is predominantly along a ridge line, that's not where I wanted to be if there's lightning. That didn't stop 9 members and 2 guests from meeting at Newfound Gap under cloudy skies. Unsurprisingly, the weather did a complete turnaround, with the clouds giving way to sunshine and bright blue. We made our way down the AT, enjoying the shade provided by the forest of fir and spruce. One couple planned a shorter hike, and we said goodbye at the first trail junction. The rest of us arrived at Charlies Bunion where the views seemed to go on forever. We enjoyed lunch on the rock, then made our way back down the trail, now heavy with tourists. With the exception of one who struggled on the return, I believe everyone enjoyed the day.

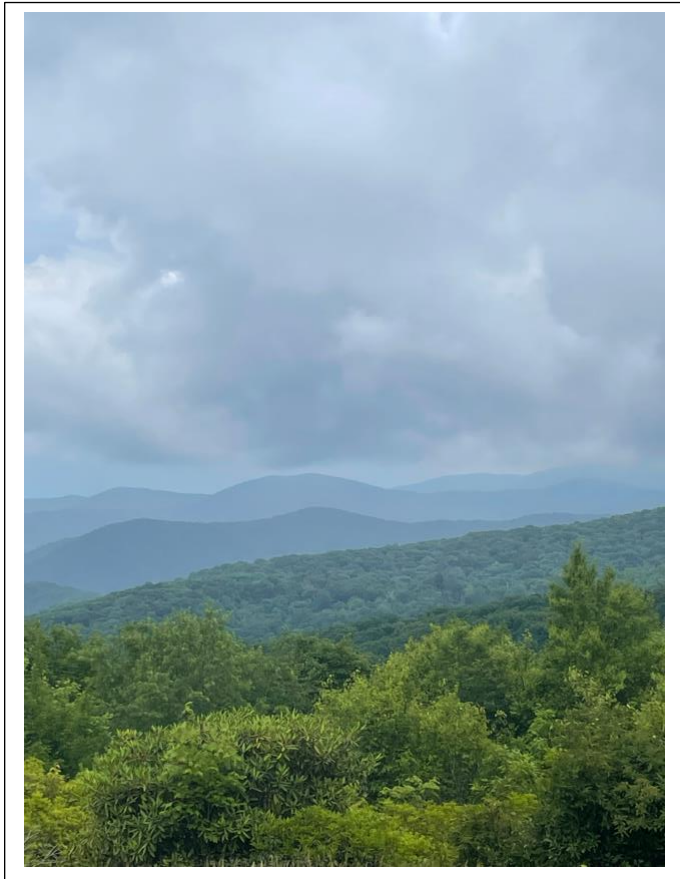
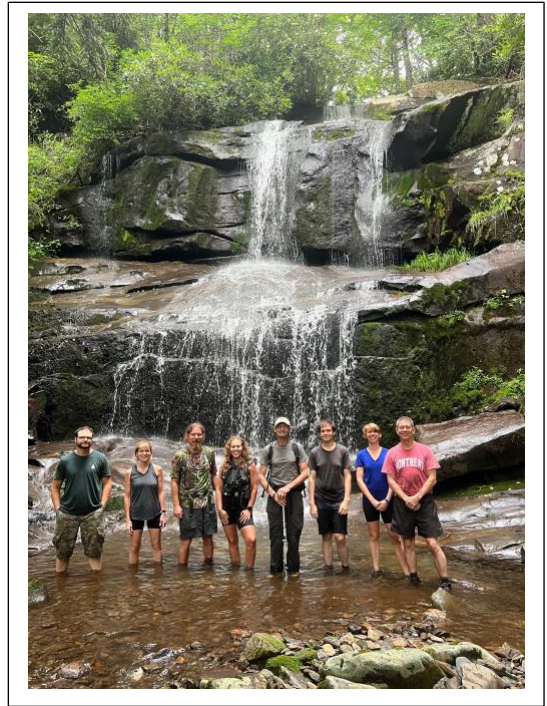
-Pat Watts (with thanks to Handsome Dan for helping me sweep!)



**July 15**  
**Sweat Heifer Creek-off trail**

Nine hikers, including one brand new adventurer, showed up to rock-hop up a spectacular stretch of Sweat Heifer Creek. They doused themselves with cold water from the numerous pools and cascades. They admired the beautiful scenery. They scampered up and over various obstacles. They delighted in the hilarity of a SMHC President and famous author getting himself stuck on the side of a waterfall. They enjoyed a wonderful day as they always do, deep in the Smokies wilderness.

-David Sands



**July 15**  
**Lead Cove-Bote Mountain-AT to Rocky Top**

For this Saturday hike the weather forecast called for cloudy skies all day, and 40% to 70% chance of thundershowers mid-morning through the afternoon. Even so, 3 SMHC members (including 2 who joined this year) gathered at the trailhead. We started up Lead Cove Trail in cool temperatures perfect for hiking. In about a half-mile one of us spotted a medium-sized bear in the rhododendrons, about 10 feet away, obviously surprised to see us. We didn't stop to take photos, just went (briskly) on to the junction, and turned up Bote Mountain trail. We passed a beautiful patch of Scarlet Bee Balm on the way up to the Appalachian Trail. After the brief climb up Thunderhead Mountain we arrived at Rocky Top, where high clouds allowed intermittent views of the surrounding mountains and Fontana Lake. Wind prompted us to don jackets as we ate lunch. After descending the A.T. to the Bote Mountain junction we felt a few rain-drops. One of us put on a pack-cover. But no more rain fell. We enjoyed cool weather all the way down to the trailhead. The hike, 12 miles with ~3,900 feet climb, was rated difficult. But for these 3 (experienced) hikers, it wasn't.

- Eric Sundstrom

**July 16  
Anthony Creek Trail**

The hike was changed from The John Oliver Cabin to Anthony Creek due to ground bees on Rich Mountain Loop Trail. Two club members and two visitors enjoyed the lovely, rocky, moderately inclined creekside trail to just below Russell Field. Total hike was 3.8 miles. The hemlocks and rhododendron tunnels sheltered us from the sun but not the humidity. We were fortunate to see that some rhodies were still blooming, more so the higher the elevation. Our sights included a horse camp, foot bridges, bluets, swallowtails, tick trefoils, millipedes and of course the gurgling, flowing creek itself along with the quiet of the forest. All in all, it was time well spent.

-Adele Soucy



**July 29  
Big Creek Trail to Walnut Bottoms  
New Member Hike**

It was a great hike up the Big Creek Trail on a muggy Saturday morning. We were the first ones on the trail and enjoyed walking past Midnight swimming hole and Mouse Creek Falls. We did not pass any other hikers on our way to Walnut Bottoms. Lunch by the creek was very peaceful. We all sat under the bridge and enjoyed our time together. On the way down, we stopped for a break and some of our group took a dip in the creek! As we passed Midnight Hole the place was now crowded with families and we passed numerous folks headed toward a dip in the creek. The parking lot was packed, and it was nice to get on the road and head home.

-Steve Dunkin

**Fall 2023 SAWS/USFS Crosscut Certification Courses**

Two crosscut sawyer certification opportunities planned for the fall of 2023. These courses can each accommodate 15+ A/B participants, so please share with your club leaders and land managing partners. There is no cost to attend the courses. More information and application form for each course can be found with the links below:

**October 18-20**

Virginia Crosscut: A/B only; camping options at training site (MRNRA/Volunteer Trail Camp)  
<https://wildernessskillsinstitute.org/sawsi/2023-crosscut-a-b-course-in-sugar-grove-virginia/>

**November 13-17**

Georgia Crosscut: A/B/C certifications; camping options available at Lake Winfield Scott  
<https://wildernessskillsinstitute.org/sawsi/2023-georgia-crosscut-saw-certification-course/>

More sawyer resources can be found at ATC's Saw Safety Program page.

Josh Kloehn, Senior Trail Operations Manager  
Appalachian Trail Conservancy  
Email: [jkloehn@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:jkloehn@appalachiantrail.org)  
Cell: 406.860.8371



## Great Smoky Mountains National Park announces upcoming North Carolina road construction

Great Smoky Mountains National Park is using nearly \$19 million in funding from the Great American Outdoors Act to reconstruct Lakeview Drive and repair Heintooga Ridge Road this summer. Lakeview Drive will be closed from August 14 to November 14. Heintooga Ridge construction dates will be announced in the coming weeks. Hikers and visitors will not be able to access the Noland Creek Trail, Lakeshore Trail, Goldmine Loop Trail, Benton MacKaye Trail, Lakeview Drive Tunnel or the Tunnel Bypass Trail from the road during the closure. Backcountry campsites 65 and 67 will also be closed. Access to the cemeteries along Lakeview Drive will be available for anyone planning the Sunday, October 8 Decoration Day.

Full announcement can be found at [Great Smoky Mountains New Releases](#)

For updated information on closures please use the following link:

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

### 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 [bigelownt2@mindspring.com](mailto:bigelownt2@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 Reports

Post-hike reports 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.