



# Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Newsletter

*Exploring the Smokies Since 1924*

PO Box 51592  
Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

November 2023

## Attention Club Photographers!

SMHC's 100th birthday is about to begin in 2024. We would love to document, through photos and/or short videos, some of our major events next year. A list of all of our events will be appearing soon in the SMHC Newsletter and at [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org). Photographs would be wonderful for our April 2024 Fish Fry and Square dance, our May SMHC Cabin Service project and our October 5, 2024 capstone event, a dinner with speakers at Bearden Banquet Hall. There are other things happening throughout the year that deserve being memorialized for future generations of SMHC members! Reasonable costs would be reimbursed for you. If you are interested, please contact Rebekah Young at [rebekahy27@aol.com](mailto:rebekahy27@aol.com). Thank you!

## Carpooling for Hikes – Reimbursing Drivers

If you are planning to attend a hike, we highly encourage you to carpool to the trailhead. Our goals include having less environmental impact by driving fewer cars, consumption of less fuel overall, and requiring less parking space at trailheads. We ask carpool riders to reimburse their driver for taking on this role. In mid-2022, we set the reimbursement rate at 10¢ per mile. The SMHC BOD recently re-evaluated current gas prices and driving costs, and voted to change the reimbursement rate to 7¢ per mile. You will see that amount reflected in the Hike Writeups found in this newsletter and on our web site. Thank you for participating in carpooling!

## The SMHC Needs Your Help!

The club offers hikes for everyone at all levels, and the Easy Hike Program is a mainstay of the organization. But we can't offer these hikes without someone to lead them! If you are willing to lead an Easy Hike for the club, please contact Priscilla Clayton at [sigmtngirl@earthlink.net](mailto:sigmtngirl@earthlink.net) or Pat Watts at [patty.watts@aol.com](mailto:patty.watts@aol.com). We greatly appreciate your involvement!

## Upcoming Hikes

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.

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

### November 4-Saturday A.T. Work Day

This A.T. work trip will be a little different. We will meet at the SMHC Trail Maintainers tool shed to clean, sharpen and inventory the club's hand tools used on the A.T. The SMHC has a large inventory of hand tools, and it is vital we keep them in good working condition.

We will meet at 10:00 a.m. in the Park Maintenance Area, behind the Sugarland's Park HQ. (As you drive out of Gatlinburg into the Park take the first road to the right and go straight back to the end of the road. It is where the Gatlinburg Trail comes out of the trees in the park.) There are two white work sheds in the center of the parking lot. The SMHC shed is the smaller building. Please bring gloves and a scrub brush if you have them. We will work till about 1:00 p.m.

Rated Easy.

Leader: John Lee, [johnjlee.67@gmail.com](mailto:johnjlee.67@gmail.com)

### November 8-Wednesday Lower Mt. Cammerer

Starting from the Cosby Picnic area, the Lower Mt. Cammerer trail provides a slow climb on a smooth pine-needle trail in and out of creek valleys to reach the Appalachian Trail after about 7.5 miles. We'll pass CS 35 along the way (at mile 3.3), a nice turn-around point for those wanting a shorter hike. Return the same way. Hike: 15 miles with elevation gain of 1,800 ft., rated difficult due to distance. Because of the longer hike distance, we will start our hike a little early. To carpool, meet at the Cracker Barrel off the Strawberry Plains exit 398 of I-40 (1510 Cracker Barrel Lane), **ready to leave at 7:00am** or at Cosby Picnic Area Parking at 8:00am. Drive 110 miles RT {@ 7¢/mile = \$7.70}. *The leader will meet the group at the trailhead, not the carpool site.*

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

Leader: Pat Watts, [patty.watts@aol.com](mailto:patty.watts@aol.com), 901-487-7941.

### November 11-Saturday Sampson Mountain Wilderness, Cherokee National Forest

This loop hike will explore an area rarely visited by the club. The hike starts at the Horse Creek Recreational Area in the Greene County portion of the Cherokee National Forest. We will quickly cross Horse Creek on a bridge and enter the Sampson Mountain Wilderness. Traveling past an A-Frame house we will soon come to a trail intersection and take a right, then another intersection and take a left to ascend the steep Middle Springs Ridge Trail. We'll take a right at the intersection with Turkeypen Cove Trail and follow the ridge of Middle Spring Ridge Trail eventually to the Appalachian Trail. We'll go right on the AT and explore Views on Coldspring Mountain and descend either FS-94 or the more scenic Sarvis Cove Trail, depending on recent rainfall. The descent will involve crossing Horse Creek unbridged. This is a Difficult hike of 11 miles, and you will get wet. Meet at the Cracker Barrel Strawberry Plains (I-40 exit # 398, 1510 Cracker Barrel Lane) *ready to leave at 7:00am*. Drive: 140 miles round trip {@7¢=\$10.00}.

Registration with the leader is required or register at [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org).

Leader: Mark Shipley, [shipleymark57@gmail.com](mailto:shipleymark57@gmail.com), (865)388-5261

**November 18-Saturday  
Ijams and Environs: New Member Hike**

New and old members will enjoy this exploration of Ijams. We'll walk along Mead's Quarry and clamber around Ross Marble Quarry on our way to Ijams Crag. From the Crag we'll head back toward the nature center, take the River Trail and finish at the Visitor Center. This will be a very moderate ramble of 5-7 miles. Meet at Mead's Quarry parking (just past the entrance to Ijams Nature Center) near the bathrooms at 9:00AM.

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

Leader: Claudia Dean, [claudiadean0@gmail.com](mailto:claudiadean0@gmail.com), 865-206-0145

**November 18-Saturday  
Panther Stairs, Off-Trail**

This hike begins at the familiar Groundhog Ridge parking area with a climb up one of the branches of Groundhog Creek to the Lower Mount Cammerer Trail. This trail is used to zip around the mountain to Robinson Creek where the narrow valley leads up into the Highlands. The climb then turns toward the Panther Stairs as the trek passes by four nice waterfalls set in a broad almost gentle valley. These gentle slopes give way to the cliffs beneath the Panther Stairs. At this point, the hike becomes a scramble up the open sandstone faces and along the narrow spine of Panther Stairs affording excellent views into the Smoky Mountain valleys below. The hike will proceed to the Mount Cammerer Lookout Tower and then return by the old Groundhog Ridge manway. Total trip is 5.2 miles, 3.8 being off trail. Rated difficult. Previous off-trail experience encouraged. Preregistration for this off-trail hike is required – please contact trip leaders to get details, including meeting time and place.

Leaders: Greg Harrell, [GSHarrell@milligan.edu](mailto:GSHarrell@milligan.edu) and Greg Hoover, [GHOOVER@CN.EDU](mailto:GHOOVER@CN.EDU)

**November 25-Saturday  
Cumberland Trail from Sarvis Trailhead to Chimney Rock**

We will hike a newly re-opened section of the Cumberland Trail and enjoy some late fall views and interesting rock formations. The trail from Sarvis climbs up to the top of the Cumberland Escarpment. We hike along the escarpment to the southwest past a few viewpoints. In a few miles we arrive at the McCloud Mountain area and walk a short way on a road to the Chimney Rock overlook. We'll enjoy the formations and views for a lunch break and then follow the Cumberland trail a little further west along the road to the turn-around point. On the return we may stop to look at the view at the McCloud porch and then continue retracing our steps along the escarpment and downhill to Sarvis. Hike about 8 miles with 1500 foot elevation gain. Rated Moderate. Meet at 8:00 AM at the Hardee's in Clinton (107 Buffalo Rd). Drive: 60 miles RT {@ 7¢/mile = \$4.20}.

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

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

**November 29-Wednesday  
Lakeshore Trail to Campsite 90**

Brave the drive across The Dragon and join us for this pleasant hike along Fontana Lake! Starting at Fontana Dam, we'll hike 5.6 miles to Campsite 90. There will be LOTS of rolling hills along the way, several small stream crossings, views of Fontana Lake, and interesting artifacts (including at least 3 car bodies). After lunch at the campsite, we'll return the same way. Hike: 11.2 miles, rated moderately difficult, with elevation gain of 2,100 ft. To carpool, meet at Walmart-Supercenter far right side of the parking lot, on US 411 south in Maryville at **7:30am**, or at the Lakeshore Trail trailhead at Fontana Dam (GPS coordinates 35.460976, -83.811035) at 9:00am. Drive: 96 miles RT {@7¢=\$6.75}. *The leader will meet the group at the trailhead, not the carpool site.*

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

Leader: Pat Watts, [patty.watts@aol.com](mailto:patty.watts@aol.com), 901-487-7941.

# For the Record

## August 26 Fork Ridge-Deep Creek

Seven hikers, 6 members who should have known better and a visitor who didn't, began hiking south from Newfound Gap on a bright warm morning. The first segment of the hike followed the A.T. up and down through lovely, shady, mossy forest. The second section on Fork Ridge trail plummeted 3000' down to the junction with Deep Creek. The wide, wet crossing was the low point, altitude wise, of the hike but the high point for cold, foot reviving pleasure. The third section, up Deep Creek trail, was hot and, by the last miles, simply had to be endured. We were late in the season for flowers but saw a few turtleheads, coneflowers and yellow fringed orchids.

-Claudia Dean



## September 9 AT Worktrip

Two members and two visitors participated with the leader on this AT worktrip which involved clearing vegetation and waterbars from Low Gap to Camel Gap. The weather cooperated for the early portion of the outing, but soon steady rainfall set in. Luckily there was no wind or thunderstorms and the work targeted for the day was completed. The trail was in mostly good condition with only one blowdown noted about half a mile north of Camel Gap.

-Mark Shipley



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

Thirteen club members and two visitors made the long drive to Lamar Alexander Rocky Fork State Park in NE Tennessee to explore this relatively new gem in the Tennessee State Park system. Right off the bat, we made the vigorous climb to the Whitehouse Cliffs overlook (900 ft. in 1 mile) and back. Then we did a 10-mile loop in the main part of the park, which allowed us to cover almost all of the highlights! There are beautiful big boulders in the creeks, waterfalls, a battle site from the Chickamauga wars in 1789, peaceful forest paths, and stunning views. The weather stayed cool and dry for us, and although the day was long due to the drive, it felt well-worth it.

-Diane Petrilla



**September 20**  
**Old Settlers Trail**

Twenty-two members showed up to hike Old Settlers trail out of Greenbriar. It's been quite a while since we've been able to hike this trail with everything that's happened here over the past few years. The day started a little on the cool side. There were even a few jackets worn, at least until we were into our first climb, but it was still a beautiful morning. Before we started, there was someone who has a birthday coming up, so we all did our best to wish him a Happy Birthday. If you've never hiked Old Settlers before from this end, it could be a little misleading, starting out somewhat flat for about a third of a mile. After the second creek crossing, you will start to climb out of the river valley. The climbs are not very strenuous. The trail up to campsite 33 is in fairly good shape considering the length of time this section of the park was closed. There were a few blow downs, but very manageable, and all the creek crossings were very easy rock hops. The trail changes from creek valleys to the tops of ridges a few times, which makes it that much more interesting. Along with all the remaining rock walls and old home sites and chimneys, this makes for a very pleasurable hike. The group made it to campsite 33 in good time for a leisurely lunch with the sound of a nearby creek just below us. It had warmed a bit on the return trip which may have slowed a few of us slightly, but everyone made it back in good time—maybe pretty tired but thankful for a great day in the park.

-Michael Zielinski

September 23  
John Oliver Cabin

It was a great day to take a nice stroll through the woods. The three of us had a great time walking on Rich Mountain Trail the back way to the John Oliver Cabin. The weather was perfect. Along the way we stopped to chat with a couple doing the "loop". On the way back we walked up to the Crooked Arm Cascades, which was about dry. At the trailhead we had a chance to pet some horses who had the day off from carrying park visitors. A great day in the Smokies.  
-Steve Dunkin



**Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Officers and Directors**

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**CONSIDER  
GOING GREEN!!!**

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**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.