



Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Newsletter

Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

PO Box 51592
Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

April 2024

SMHC Centennial Fish Fry and Square Dance

Saturday
May 11, 2024
Appalachian Club, Elkmont
3:30-7:30 p.m.



Announcing the SMHC Centennial “Tom and Meta Dewine Fish Fry and Vaughn Browder Square Dance” celebration.

SMHC held regular fish fry events and square dances over many of the early years of the club as social events, banquets and election picnics. Join in the celebration and relive this history which will include a fish dinner and then a square dance. We’ve lined up old time square dance caller Leo Collins and friends and live music from Boogertown Gap and friends. A genuine “Appalachian Trail” sign will be given away as a door prize to a lucky winner.

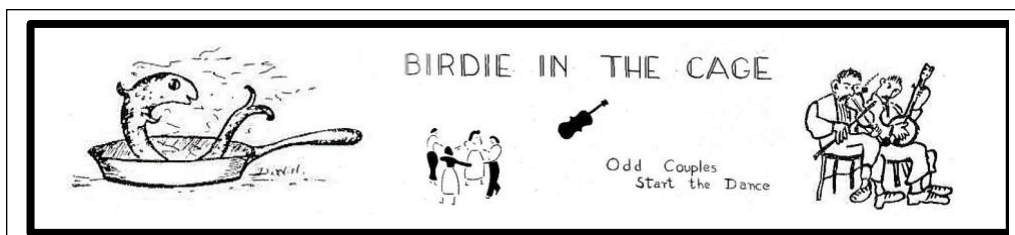
Bring a dessert to share
Current parking pass is required
Please consider carpooling

The event cost is \$22 per person and can be paid for through the web site or by check in advance by mailing in a check with information below. Attendance will be limited to 90.

- To register and pay via the website click [HERE](https://smhclub.org/fishfry). (<https://smhclub.org/fishfry>)
- To register and pay by check by May 1, 2024, mail \$22/person with name(s) and contact information to:

SMHC Centennial Fish Fry/Square dance
Smoky Mountains Hiking Club
PO Box 51592
Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

A group camp site has been reserved at the Elkmont Campground for those wishing to camp. Please make a note on your registration that you are interested.



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.

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

April 6, Saturday

Fontana Dam to Shuckstack Firetower ATMC Worktrip

This ATMC work trip is designated toward treadway rehab between Fontana Dam and Shuckstack Firetower. Specific work locations will be identified based on highest priority needs and number of volunteers that sign up. Planned work includes filling in root ball holes, some sidehill digging where tread is starting to slip downhill, pruning back encroaching vegetation, and installation of a few log steps. Tools will be provided. Carpool from the Maryville Walmart on Hwy 411 at 7:30 am. Alternate meeting point is at the Fontana Dam Visitor Center at 9:00am. RT travel from Maryville is approximately 110 miles. Participants will need to wear sturdy footwear and weather appropriate attire. Bring gloves, lunch, snacks, and plenty of water. If you have a favorite tool you prefer to use, please bring those as well.

Leader: Franklin LaFond 678-464-3380 ox97GaMe@aol.com



April 7-Sunday

Abrams Falls via Abrams Ranger Station Qualifying Centennial Challenge Hike

This Centennial Challenge Hike is a less travelled way to see Abrams Falls. Many old issues of the club handbooks describe club hikes to Abrams Falls from Happy Valley and they often went via what is now known as the Rabbit Creek Trail. We will start at Abrams Creek Ranger Station, walk through the Abrams Creek Campground and along the Cooper Road Trail to the Little Bottoms Trail which follows Abrams Creek through woodlands and rocky overlooks. There is one stream crossing on the Little Bottoms Trail which is usually a rock hop but, depends upon the flow. A short walk on the Hatcher Mountain Trail takes us to the Abrams Falls Trail. This follows the Abrams Creek Gorge and takes us to the Falls. We will return via the same route. Total distance is approximately 10.8 miles with a total climb of 1857 feet. Rated difficult. Carpool from Kroger 244 S. Hall Road, Alcoa. Meet on the side of the building near the old KARM store at 8:00 A.M. Round trip 30 miles @ \$0.07 = \$2.10, cash, to the driver or meet at the Abrams Creek Ranger Station, (Ranger Creek Campground Access Road, Tallassee, TN.) at 8:30 A.M. The hike leader will be at the Abrams Creek Ranger Station.

Hikers must register at smhclub.org.

Leader: Neil Snapp, nsnepp@comcast.net 281-797-3808



April 10-Wednesday

Rich Mountain-Crooked Arm Loop Qualifying Centennial Challenge Hike

Third time's a charm? We will try for a third time to schedule this hike with the Wednesday Group! This Centennial Challenge hike is a classic and one of the Club's favorite loop hikes. Beginning at the entrance to Cades Cove, we will approach the loop in a clockwise direction. We will start on the Rich Mountain Loop Trail with a stop at the John Oliver Cabin. Then we will continue UP Rich Mountain Loop, tackling the strenuous climb to reach the Indian Grave Gap Trail (1300ft over 2 miles). We will continue along the ridgeline on this trail with views of Dry Valley and Townsend. A very short walk down the Scott Mountain Trail will take us to Campsite 6, a great place for lunch. Then we start our descent down from the ridge on the Crooked Arm Ridge Trail where we will see Crooked Arm Falls and enjoy outstanding views of Cades Cove before returning to our cars. The hike is 8.6 miles with a total elevation gain of 2000 ft. Rated moderate. To carpool, meet at Kroger, 244 S Hall Road, Alcoa (park at the side of the building, near the SE corner), *ready to leave at 8:00am* {Drive: 56 miles RT @ 7¢/mile=\$4.00 CASH rounded} or near the entry gate at Cades Cove Loop Road, *ready to hike at 8:45am*. The leader will meet you at Cades Cove.

Register at smhclub.org by 5:00pm Tuesday April 9.

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

April 13-Saturday
Victor Ashe Park, 4901 Bradshaw Road in North Knoxville

For a lovely and easy Spring walk, let's explore a Knoxville greenway with one of its original planners. Beginning at Victor Ashe Park on Bradshaw Rd., we'll walk on the paved greenway through the park and around its southern border, passing a lake and disk golf course, Then we will connect with the Northwest Greenway and follow it along Third Creek, passing several springs. We'll then turn around at the Northwest Middle School and return. Our leader is one of the founders and planners of the Greenway movement in Knoxville and both leaders are published hiking guide authors. See this link for the general route: <https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/tennessee/victor-ashe-park-loop>
Hike around 3 plus miles and rated Easy. Meet at 10 am EDT at Victor Ashe Park; from the entrance drive to a "T" intersection, turn right, and go to the road's end just before a gazebo.
Register at smhclub.org.

Leader: Will Skelton, wshome@bellsouth.net and 865-523-2272 Co-Leader: Doris Gove

April 14, Sunday
Bent Arm Manway, Off-Trail
Leroy Fox Legacy Hike

Leroy Fox was a member of the club from 1963-2003 and was Club President from 1969-1970, He was a committed conservationist and served on the Tennessee Great Smoky Mountain Park Commission from 1979 to 1986, was President of the Clean Environment Council, and was Chairman of the Knox County Air Pollution Control Board. Leroy led several of the early club hikes on the Bent Arm manway. This loop hike begins at Elkmont, where we will leave the Cucumber Gap Trail to follow a long abandoned CCC-era trail to meet the Miry Ridge Trail on Dripping Springs Mountain. Be prepared with long pants/long sleeves for briery sections of the manway. We will return to Elkmont via the Miry Ridge and Jakes Creek trails. Hike: 11.8 miles with 2500' of climbing, rated moderately difficult, off-trail.
Pre-registration with leaders is required.

Leader: Hiram Rogers, 865-584-7310(H) or hiramrogers@yahoo.com. Co-Leader: Jean Gauger



April 17, Wednesday
Alum Cave Trail to Mt. LeConte/Cliff Top
Qualifying Centennial Hike

Let's do the hike that started it all for SMHC! For this fabulous and iconic hike in the Great Smoky Mountains, we will start at the Alum Cave trailhead and climb 2500 feet over 5 miles, passing Alum Cave Bluffs and on to the junction of Rainbow Falls Trail. Continuing, we will arrive at LeConte Lodge and then take the spur trail to Cliff Top where the idea of the Club began one hundred years ago. The hike is 11 miles round trip with a 2800-foot climb, rated Difficult. I'm really sorry for the really early start time, but due to parking at the trailhead, it is a must. Meet at the Sugarlands Visitor Center (in the lot furthest away from the visitor's center) ready to leave at 6:00am {Drive: 18 miles RT @ 7¢/mile=\$1.25 CASH}. We'll meet at the Alum Cave trailhead ready to start at 6:30 am. I encourage everyone to carpool.
EVERYONE register at smhclub.org by 5:00 pm Tuesday April 16.
Leader: Pat Watts, patty.watts@aol.com, (901)487-7941.

April 20, Saturday
Panther Branch/North Old Mac Flower Hike

We'll park at Old Mac trailhead parking and walk about a mile to the Panther Branch Trail on which we'll hike past (and admire) DeBord Falls and continue onward to Emory Falls. From Emory Falls we'll return to Panther Branch Trail and follow it up to the intersection with North Old Mac, enjoying flowers and some aerobic climbs, then down North Old Mac to the trailhead. There will be an optional 2 mile bonus up Judge Branch and down South Old Mac. The hike is moderate with .75 miles of steep grade ascending Panther Branch to North Old Mac. Hike 6.6 - 9 miles.
For carpooling, meet at Books A Million in Oak Ridge ready to leave at 8:00 a.m. or at the Macs trailhead in Frozen Head at 8:45. Drive 50 miles RT @ \$0.07 per mile = \$3.50 (cash only).
Register at smhclub.org.
Leader: Claudia Dean, claudiadean0@gmail.com, 865-206-0145.

**April 27, Saturday
Bradley Fork to Cabin Flats—Wildflower Hike**

April is prime wildflower viewing time! We will explore a bit of the North Carolina side of the Smoky Mountains as we walk the road/trail alongside Bradley Fork to the Cabin Flats Trail. We will gain about 1200 ft over 4 miles, then a couple of hundred feet to Campsite #49. There we can enjoy lunch by a rushing stream before our return. The hike is 9.8 miles, rated moderate. Meet at the Bradley Fork Trailhead in the Smokemont Campground (far end) at 9:30 a.m. or carpool from Sugarlands Visitor Center, leaving promptly at 8:30 a.m. Park away from the restrooms, leaving the spaces for the tourists. Carpool 54 miles roundtrip @ \$0.07 = \$3.78 to the driver (round to \$4).

Register at smhclub.org.

Leader: Randy Mitchell, mitchell1982@tds.net

For the Record

February 7

Baskins Creek to Grapeyard Ridge and Injun Creek Manway

Today was the Wednesday offering of the Baskins Creek to Grapeyard Ridge Centennial Challenge hike! A beautiful day was promised by weather reports, and we did indeed have one. Although chilly in the morning at 28° at Greenbrier, by the end of the day, it was sunny with blue skies and temperatures in the low 60s. We had 24 hikers, including 23 members and 1 visitor, take the Gatlinburg Recreation Dept. shuttle bus from the Greenbrier Ranger station to Cherokee Orchard. Three hikers did their own shorter version up the Injun Creek manway without using the shuttle. For the long hikers, the trails were full of multiple blow-downs that had to be navigated over, under, through, and around. Everyone did this with great patience and good will. We heard about the Baskins Creek cemetery, Thomas's Legion, Homer Bales and his interesting cemetery, as well as a number of other factoids along the hike. Most people went up to look at the old Nichols-Shepard steam engine (the colloquialization of this word leading to the name "injun"), before heading down the 2-mile manway back to their cars. A challenging hike on a beautiful day! Note the hikers wearing their Centennial apparel in the photos; available at smhclub.org.

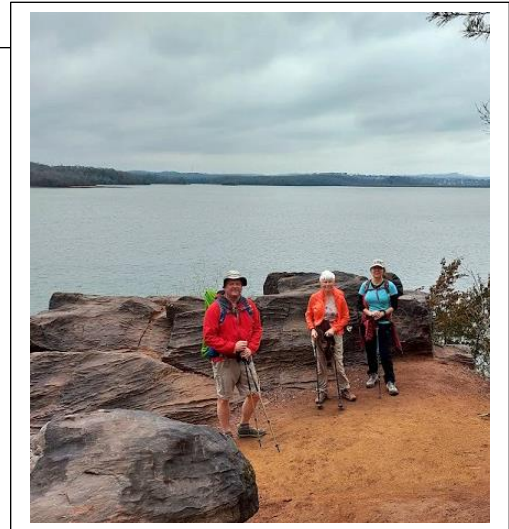
-Diane Petrilla and Michael Zielinski



February 10
Canal and Baker Hollow Branches of the East Lakeshore Trail-Tellico Lake

It rained most of the day before this hike, and the forecast for the hike day called for more of the same. That's probably why there were only 4 of us (versus the original 13) who gathered at the trailhead of the East Lakeshore Trail on Tellico Lake. The gray sky caused us to don all of our rain gear and put on our pack covers before heading down the trail. But the weather was very kind to us throughout most of the hike. Though the sky remained overcast, we still enjoyed views of the lake and the soft bed of pine needles under our feet. At the end of our out-and-back route, we enjoyed an early lunch before heading back to our cars. It wasn't until the last mile that we started feeling some sprinkles. And it wasn't until we were driving home that it rained in earnest. We were all thankful that the rain treated us so favorably!

-Pat Watts



February 14
Loyston Point

Twenty-two hikers gathered at the Loyston Point Mountain Bike parking Lot on Norris Lake to hike the pleasant well-graded trails of this recreational area. We only encountered a couple of cyclists, and they remarked on our big group! We did a loop starting at Loyston Loop, then Mill Creek, then Loyston to Hemlock Bluff SWA (with a nice healthy grove of hemlocks!) then the Point 19 trail and back to our cars. Some folks returned to the parking lot after the first 8 miles and our lunch spot. Fifteen hikers completed the entire 12.7-mile hike. There were many Happy Valentine's Day wishes all around on this beautiful sunny day! ♥

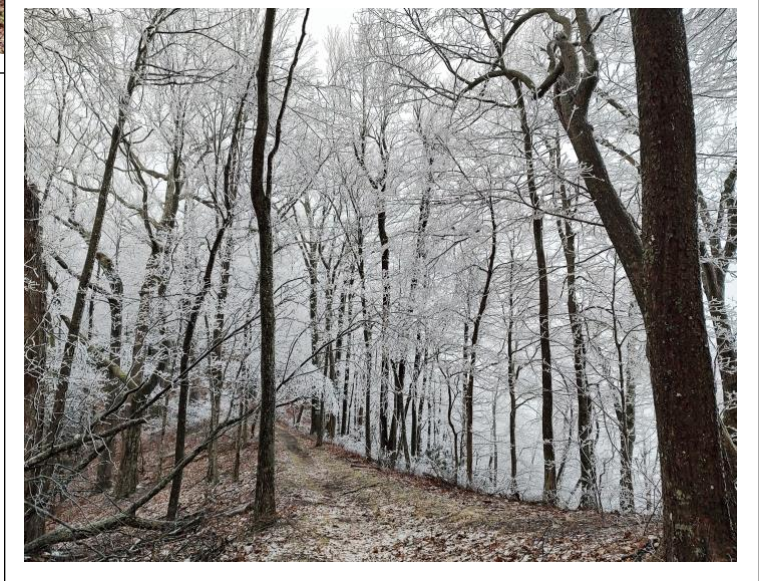
-Diane Petrilla and Michael Zielinski



February 17
Rich Mountain Loop/Crooked Arm Ridge/Indian Gap
Centennial Challenge Hike

Twenty eager hikers showed up on this chilly morning. Once we started the steep and steady ascent of Crooked Arm Ridge we warmed up quickly. Near the top we were greeted with a dusting of snow on the ground and snow covered trees. After a much needed lunch break at the former tower site of the Rich Mountain Firetower we started our descent to Cades Cove passing by the John Oliver Cabin. Back to our cars at 1:45.

-David Smith



February 24
Big Ridge State Park

The string of above normal February temperatures came to an end on Saturday 2/24/2024. A cold front provided wind and threatening skies but twelve members and three visitors came to Big Ridge State Park to hike. The lesser traveled trails to Indian Rock and Sharps Station plaques were blazed and had been recently cleared. A lunch stop had been planned for the Norris Lake shoreline but cold winds saw the group retreat to the woods for shelter. To complete the figure eight the route went by the Ghost House Loop and cemetery where the reported ghost was buried. The ghost had the last laugh as the leader made a wrong turn and instead of a planned exit on the lake trail did the Ghost House Loop again! After much deserved ribbing the leader made an on the fly decision to shorten the exit and go by the Grist Mill. The forecast rain was only a few drops as the group passed by the cabins and some trees that had been chewed by a beaver.

-Randy Mitchell



February 24
Greencamp Manway

The group of 14 members and 3 guests traveled the Greencamp Manway from its beginning at the old Cadillac on the Middle Prong trail to its end on the Thunderhead Prong railroad grade. The scenic manway provided numerous expansive views of the valleys of upper Tremont as well as the first wildflowers of the season. One hiker spied a 12 ft long segment of railroad track near the end of the Thunderhead railroad grade and others saw lengths of rusty steel cable at multiple locations. With the Little River above Townsend running 350 cfs (per USGS website), the crossings of Sams Creek, Shut-in Creek, and Thunderhead Prong involved wet feet but no significant bodily hazard, although one member lost a pair of eyeglasses that rhododendron near the bank flicked into the fast-running water. The weather was unsettled, with some rain at the beginning of the hike and snow and cold wind near the end. A good time was had by all, topped off with a birthday celebration at the end for one of the hikers.
-Steve Dickinson and Mike Harrington



SAVE THE DATE!!

**National Trails Day, Saturday June 1,
2024!**

***Come and help out on the Appalachian
Trail for a day; T-shirts, picnic and door
prizes!***

***More information and registration form
to follow soon!***

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 and Betsy Bohannon, 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.

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Officers and Directors

President: Steve Dunkin jsdunkin1302@gmail.com
Vice President (interim): Diane Petrilla petrillad@gmail.com
Recording Secretary: Tim Bigelow bigelowt2@mindspring.com
Treasurer: Pat Watts watts_at_home@yahoo.com
Trust Liaison: Jean Gauger jeanguager@yahoo.com
Membership Secretary: Scott Walker swalker.dev@gmail.com
Communications Director: Randy Mitchell mitchell1982@tds.net
Historian: Brian Worley baw2222@aol.com
Director: Ken Wise: kwise@utk.edu
Director: Will Skelton whshome@bellsouth.net
Director: Larry Johnson larryj11320@gmail.com
Compliance Director: Taylor Weatherbee tweatherbe@aol.com



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Community Awards Program**

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- Select **My Account** and use the menu to choose **Community Rewards**.
- Enter **MV194** and hit **Save**.

**CONSIDER
GOING GREEN!!!**

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