



Smoky Mountains Hiking Club

P O Box 51592 Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

July 2018

FORK RIDGE & DEEP CREEK TRAILS

July 8 - Sunday

We'll enjoy the lower temperatures at higher elevations on this hike. After setting up a short car shuttle, we begin on Clingmans Dome Road at the Fork Ridge Trailhead. We'll descend 5.1 miles and 2800 feet through a forest that changes with the elevation differences. We'll see hemlocks, American beech, yellow birch and many summer flowers. Reaching Deep Creek, we cross near the Poke Patch Campsite. Pokeweed was used by early settlers as salad greens, but the mature leaves and berries are poisonous. We now begin climbing the Deep Creek Trail, which was one of the first trails built in the Park by the Civilian Conservation Corps. After hiking 3.9 miles, but only a 1600-foot climb, we reach our destination on the Newfound Gap Road. If some of our group prefer the more difficult, reverse route we may do this as a key swap. Hike: 9 miles, rated moderate. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** at 8:00 am or Sugarlands Visitor Center parking lot at 9:00 am. Drive: 115 miles RT {@4¢ = \$5}.

Leader: J.D. Schlandt, trailhard@gmail.com, 865-661-4474.

WEDNESDAY HIKE: ROUNDTOP TRAIL FROM METCALF BOTTOMS TO TOWNSEND WYE

July 11 - Wednesday

We will hike the Roundtop Trail from Metcalf Bottoms to the Townsend Wye. Hike: 7.5 miles, rated moderate. This hike will require a car shuttle. Wading the Little River is required, so bring water shoes. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** at 8:00 am or at the Townsend Wye at 8:30 am. Drive: 60 miles RT {@4¢ = \$2.40}. Leader: David Grab, digrab@aol.com, 865-405-5779.

RAINBOW FALLS TO MT. LECONTE

July 14 - Saturday

Starting from the Rainbow Falls trailhead we will begin our hike with an almost 4000 ft. ascent. The uphill walk to Rainbow Falls is 2.8 miles and the view of the falls makes it well worth the effort. We will stop there for a break and take in the waterfall. After, we will leave most of the crowd behind and continue our trek to the summit. At the 5.5 mile mark of the trail is a short side trail, approximately .2 miles long that provides great views and will be worth the little extra time to explore. It loops us right back on the trail we were previously on. We'll then continue on to Mt Le Conte. We will pause at the top for lunch. We can take a little bit of time to explore the lodge and take in the views. We will then retrace our steps back the way we came, omitting the side trail. This difficult hike will most likely be hot so carry plenty of water to stay hydrated. Also carry an extra layer as the temperature at Le Conte is often much cooler than you would expect. Hike: 13.4 miles, rated Strenuous. Meet at **Comcast on Ashville Hwy <see list>** ready to leave by 7:30 am. Drive: 85 miles RT {@4¢ = \$3.50} or meet at the trailhead at 8:30 am.

Leaders: Ron Blessinger, rblessinger@msn.com, 865-465-7117; and Jon Richey, jon.richey.spsu@gmail.com, 404-213-6955.

SAVE THE DATE – SMHC ELECTION PICNIC Saturday August 11

Please be sure to mark your calendars for the SMHC annual election picnic at the Metcalf Bottoms picnic pavilion.

APPALACHIAN TRAIL WORK DAY

July 14 - Saturday (Please Note Date Change)

This work trip will coincide with the AT's Konnarock Crew work in the Nantahala National Forest. This crew is typically made up of volunteers from across the country and often includes members of other trail associations. This annual crew builds treadway structures such as rock steps, log stairs, cribbing, and retaining walls. We will be helping to finish the relocation of a trail section near the Brown Fork shelter. The hike to the worksite is only 0.5 mile but steep and strenuous. Meet at **Maryville Walmart <see list>** at 8:00 am or Stecoah Gap parking lot at 9:00 am. Drive: 125 miles RT {@4¢ = \$5}. **Please pre-register with trip leaders so that appropriate tools will be available.**

Leaders: Franklin LaFond, ox97game@aol.com, 678-464-3380; and Maury Hudson, mhowe13@gmail.com, 540-629-1021.

STYX BRANCH OFF-TRAIL

July 21 - Saturday

Mt. LeConte's Styx Branch, far from being a route to the underworld, will be a highway to the heavenly lookout of Myrtle Point. We depart from the Alum Cave trail just above Arch Rock and follow the creek and its ever steeper and smaller tributaries to a point roughly 1000 ft (vertical) below Myrtle Point at which time we must improvise as best we can to find a way safely to the top. Lunch and views at Myrtle Point are major objectives with a return via trail and - possibly, depending on conditions on hike day - an off-trail route such as Big Duckhawk Ridge. Hike is mostly off-trail, rated difficult. RT distance between 6 and 9 miles depending on return route selected. **Please contact one of the leaders if you are considering going on this hike; pre-registration is required.** This hike will be rescheduled or cancelled in case of really bad weather. Leaders: Mike Harrington, mike_harr@bellsouth.net, 865-765-4604; and Brian Worley, baw2222@aol.com, 865-691-5294.

CHARLIES BUNION

July 22 - Sunday

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 with the option of taking a short side trip to the Jump Off. The hike is 8 miles, 9 miles if we visit the Jump Off and is rated moderate. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** ready to leave by 7:30 am or at Sugarlands Visitors Center at 8:30 am. Drive: 100 miles RT {@4¢ = \$4}.

Leaders: Billy Heaton, bheaton8@yahoo.com, 865-924-0095; and Ron Blessinger, rblessinger@msn.com, 865-465-7117.

SMHC Newsletter Editor: Don Dunning 865-705-2154

Send hike write-ups & photos to: dedz1@aol.com.

Please include preferred contact method (email, phone).

Visit our website: www.smhclub.org

**WEDNESDAY HIKE:
LAUREL FALLS TRAILHEAD TO ELKMONT
July 25 – Wednesday**

This hike will go from the Laurel Falls Trailhead to Elkmont by the old road to Little River Trail to Huskey Gap Trail to Sugarland Mountain Trail to Laurel Falls Trailhead. Hike: 9 miles, rated moderate. Meet at **Alcoa Food City <see list>** at 8:00 am or at the Laurel Falls Trailhead by 8:45 am. Drive: 65 miles RT {@4¢=\$2.60}. Leader: David Grab, digrab@aol.com, 865-405-5779.

**BOB'S BALD AND HANGOVER
July 28 - Saturday**

This spectacular out-and-back hike begins at the Beech Gap parking area on Cherohala Skyway. We hike up a short way to Bob's Bald and enjoy the view, then follow the Stratton Bald Trail for some more excellent views and summertime high elevation wildflowers. We'll then hike on the Haeo Lead to Haeo and the Hangover where we'll stop for lunch and more views of the Citico Creek Wilderness. Hike: 12 miles RT, rated moderately difficult. Meet at **Lenoir City Cracker Barrel <see list>** at 8:00 am. Drive: 140 miles RT {@4¢ = \$6}. Leader: Tim Bigelow, bigelowt2@mindspring.com, 865-607-6781.

MEETING PLACES: **Alcoa Food City** = On right between 3rd & 4th stoplight (on Hall Rd., TN 35), a block before Big Lots. [Map Link](#). **Comcast on Asheville Hwy** = From Exit 394 ramp off I-40 go left (east) on Asheville Hwy, US-11E/25W/70, to signal light at top of hill; turn right, down into Comcast lot, 5720 Asheville Hwy; park to left of entry, about 2 lanes over toward the exit end of lot. [Map Link](#). **Lenoir City Cracker Barrel** = Off I-75 at Exit 81, 0.6 mile or 3 stoplights, 325 Fort Loudon Medical Center Drive. [Map Link](#). **Maryville Walmart** = On Hwy 411 S between Market Place and Legends Way, 2410 Hwy 411. Meet near fuel center. [Map Link](#).

COMING EVENTS – August 2018

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|-------------|--------------------------------|
| 4 Saturday | AT Work Trip |
| 5 Sunday | Virginia Creeper Bike Ride |
| 11 Saturday | Election Picnic |
| 12 Sunday | Clingmans Dome to Newfound Gap |
| 18 Saturday | Raven Fork Gorge Off-Trail |
| 25 Saturday | McCloud Mountain |

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Barbara Bolen, bbolen48@gmail.com,
928 Teakwood Road, Knoxville, TN 37919
David Gall, dgall@pdknox.org, 865-804-0095,
PO Box 11462, Knoxville, TN 37932-1462
Leah Graves, Lgraves1@utk.edu, 865-386-1100,
6359 Love Song Lane, Knoxville, TN 37914
Bruce Howard, howardbh11@gmail.com, 865-789-9967,
11601 S. Monticello Drive, Knoxville, TN 37934
David Krebs, david.j.krebs@gmail.com,
2661 Sherrod Road, Knoxville, TN 37920
Mark Peach, peach@southern.edu,
3404 Montview Drive, Chattanooga, TN 37411
Michael Tenbus, mtenbus@tds.net, 865-966-4699,
332 Wardley Road, Knoxville, TN 37934

THANK YOU TO NATIONAL TRAILS DAY SPONSORS!

The SMHC, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, and Great Smoky Mountains National Park would like to thank the sponsors who helped to make our 22nd Annual Smokies A.T. Work Day on June 2 a great success. We extend our sincere thanks to:

REI Co-Op, Knoxville
Uncle Lem's Outfitters, Knoxville
Cash Hardware, Sevierville
Little River Trading Company, Maryville
Mainstay Suites and Convention Center, Pigeon Forge
River Sports Outfitters, Knoxville
Tennessee State Bank, Pigeon Forge
Todd White & Frochauer Fine Catering, Knoxville

Please join us in expressing your appreciation to these fine organizations for their vital support for this event.

**NTSA 50TH ANNIVERSARY SERVICE EVENT
Invasive Species Removal – July 7 at Fontana Dam**

ATC, in cooperation with TVA, REI, GSMNP, and USFS, is planning a work day to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the National Trails System Act on July 7. Volunteers will help to remove invasive species from the AT on both sides of Fontana Dam, where the National Forests meet the National Park. Work will occur between 9 am and 1 pm and will be followed by a naturalist walk and other activities. Participation is limited and preregistration is required. For more information see:

<https://www.appalachiantrail.org/home/community/events/2018/07/07/default/50th-anniversary-service-at-dam>

NEWCOMER TO HIKING WITH SMHC?

Some hints: Our 'difficulty ratings' are gauged to SMHC members with some experience with our hikes, not to the general public, nor to sometime or flatland hikers who are all likely to find our 'easy, moderate, or difficult' seem to under-rate the difficulty. Always be prepared for worse weather (wetter, colder) than expected. Wear adequate boots. Bring rainwear, water, spare food. Each carpool rider should reimburse driver about 4¢ per mile. Doubts? Call a leader.

And please note: No dogs or firearms are permitted on any Club hikes, whether inside or outside of GSMNP

FOR THE RECORD

BSF: Grand Gap Loop & Angel Falls Overlook 5/6/2018

Sunny skies and warm temperatures made ideal conditions for viewing wildflowers and the Big South Fork along the John Muir and Grand Gap Loop trails. Our group comprised of five members and one visitor were the only hikers on this route for much of the day. The warm solitude also made ideal conditions for a rattlesnake stretched across the width of the loop trail. Fortunately, it was most concerned about being warm so it slowly slithered away after a few minutes. The Angel Falls overlook was an ideal location for lunch before finishing the loop and returning back to Leatherwood Ford.

Steven Miller



Ten-Mile Creek Greenway 5/10/2018

Three members and 6 visitors enjoyed a gorgeous early evening urban hike on the 10-Mile Creek greenway. This 5+ mile hike was also shared with the Dogwood Arts hike program. We saw a ringneck snake and heard wood thrush, woodpeckers, and a variety of songbirds. We all expressed thanks for such a beautiful woodland habitat in the middle of west Knoxville!

Cindy Spangler



Kuwahi Scar Off-Trail 5/19/2018

Three members and the two leaders enjoyed the cool weather and incredible views offered by this high elevation off trail route. The group descended at the gap between Clingmans Dome and Mount Buckley. The descent was steep but carpeted in a lovely array of mosses that looked like something out of the Lord of the Rings. Once at the confluence of the drainage we descended and the drainage which created the scar at about 5,200 feet, the group took a short break and began the ascent to Clingmans Dome. The views from the scar did not disappoint and were well worth the effort. The group found a long flat rock section to take lunch and gazed into the horizon where no signs of "civilization" were apparent. As we approached the tower at Clingmans Dome the open rock scar returned to a spruce fir forest. The sky began to darken and some rumbles of thunder were heard in the distance. We made it to the parking lot and avoided the rain and reflected on a perfect day in the mountains.

Mark Shipley & Hiram Rogers

Spence Field – Russel Field Loop 5/12/2018

Nine members and two visitors embarked on this 13.5-mile classic loop hike. We thoroughly enjoyed the various ecosystems and lovely footbridges and streams that we experienced as we trekked our way up to the AT. Spence Field was beautiful on this day and the group enjoyed the distant views of Fontana Lake and it was clear enough that you could see the Shuckstack Mtn. fire tower with the naked eye. After our leisurely lunch (and endless photo opps and selfies) we continued south along the AT to the Russell Field Shelter. Here we ran into notorious Ridge Runner, Mr. Carl Goodman. We exchanged info and got caught up on various stories for a long while. Carl was very complimentary of the SMHC and took a picture with our group that he later included in his Ridge Runner Report. And then it was off again back down the mountain to our cars and the trailhead to conclude a full day of nature, adventure and many smiles.

Billy Heaton and Ron & Jamie Blessinger



Kanati Fork/Thomas Divide/Newton Bald 5/19/2018

Eight hikers decided to gamble with the weather forecast and set out over Newfound Gap to the Kanati Fork trailhead. At Newfound Gap the fog was almost thick enough to obscure the rain and at least one hiker was thinking "what have I done?" By the time we reached Kanati Fork it was not raining and we split into two groups of four. One group started up Kanati Fork and the other continued to the Newton Bald trailhead to start the crossover. We got a little rain while toiling (at least I was toiling) up the Newton Bald trail, but not enough to make us put on rain gear. Thomas Divide treated us to lovely colonies of lady slippers, wood betony and Canada mayflower, as well as another 500-foot climb. We found Kanati Fork trail rather nasty; overgrown, muddy, slippery, and collapsing on the downslope side but it got us back to our car. We were winners in the weather lottery.

Brad Reese & Claudia Dean

Ace Gap Trail 5/16/2018

This was a Mountain Laurel day. They were blooming all along the trail on big bushes and little bushes. Most were white but a few were pink. That made up for the lack of pink lady slippers. The usual big batch had only a few that were well past the sell-by date and there were a few singles along the trail that were in pretty good shape. Some flame azaleas in various shades of yellow and orange were scattered along the trail. Also, some were mixed in with the white mountain laurel to be true to the Tennessee orange and white. The weather started out threatening for the 14 hikers who made this hike but the most rain we got was an occasional drop or two. Not even enough to be called a sprinkle. By the time our early lunch (11:00 am) was over and we were heading back, the sun was shining. For a hike of 11 miles this hike always goes fast and most hikers were back to the cars by 2:00 or shortly after. The footing is good and there is only a 1570 ft. elevation gain. It also helps that the trail head is one of the closest to Alcoa where we meet to carpool so we got an early start.

Malcolm McInnis & Ron Brandenburg



Welch Ridge Backpack**5/19-20/2018**

Four members and a visitor started out from Clingmans Dome parking area in the rain. Since there was no view and we had a long hike, we took the bypass trail to the AT and headed downhill. Several wildflowers were still blooming. The rain let up by Double Springs Gap and the day turned gradually nicer. Along Welch Ridge trail, two turkeys were spotted and later 5 boars ran by in a line. The view from High Rocks was great but the hike down Cold Spring Gap trail was rocky and wet. After one wide creek crossing and a mile we arrived at campsite 83 by 7. There was a Meetup group camping but no horses. It was dark by the time dinner was over. In the morning everyone opted out of the side trip to Bone Valley and most of the group headed for Procter. One amazing hiker opted to return back up the trail to Clingmans Dome. The main group enjoyed the Calhoun House a while and then hiked on the Lakeshore Trail to Eagle Creek on a warm afternoon. We arrived a bit early for the boat so one swam and others relaxed in a hammock. It was a wonderful boat trip back.

Tim Bigelow

**Rich Mountain Loop****5/23/2018**

As expected, when we got to the entrance to Cades Cove there were bicycles and cars all over. Parking places were hard to find. We finally all got together in the parking area so we could start the hike. The day was cool and dry as we started but the cool part did not last long. Fortunately, the dry part did continue all day. When we got to the loop we turned right and went up Crooked Arm Ridge trail. The Brown book says most people go the other way. There were not many showy wild flowers on that trail. There are many small flowers for the dedicated wildflower hunter. Crooked Arm ascends 1495 feet in 2.2 miles (690 ft./mi.) so it is a workout. Indian Grave Gap continues to go up for about 1.5 miles more but at a much less steep rate. Then there is the short trail to the site of the former fire tower at almost the midway point in the hike. We managed to find the alternate path to the site. It seems a little longer but less steep than the usual path to the top. After lunch at the tower site we descended by the usual path. A couple of pink lady slippers were along the path but the well did not seem to have any little salamanders this year. After this point the trail is almost all downhill with just some small climbs after the cabin. The showy wildflowers (flame azaleas and mountain laurel, etc.) were more in abundance on this part of the trail. Rich Mountain Loop trail is rockier with several small stream crossing than Crooked Arm which is why we prefer to do it going down. Again this week's road paving slowed us down both getting to the trailhead and going home. The waits were not too long and we all got home reasonably early. No one stopped to get ice cream.

Malcolm McInnis & Ron Brandenburg

MEMBER INPUT TO 2019 HANDBOOK

Please Email rittergeo@gmail.com with any changes needed in your entry in the Handbook listing of Members. Spouse Email addresses can be added in the 2019 Handbook, so send that if you want it listed.

**Ace Gap****5/26/2018**

It was a moist morning with plenty of flying insects when 2 members and 2 visitors arrived at Rich Gap. We started out with a side trip to the sinkhole and the deep cave entrance- very impressive. Then onto the main trail which is meticulously maintained. Many late wildflowers were enjoyed and mountain laurel in full bloom lines sections of the trail. We stopped for lunch at the actual Ace Gap which was peaceful but several were attacked by multiple ticks. After lunch we went on to the end of the trail and started back. Two black snakes were seen but no other wildlife. Great day for a hike.

Tim Bigelow & Steve Hill

**Cataloochee Divide Hike with CMC****5/28/2018**

Six members and four visitors braved very inclement weather to gather at the Cataloochee Divide TH for this joint Memorial Day hike with the Carolina Mountain Club. Cindy McJunkin represented the CMC (and is also a member of the SMHC!) and we were delighted to have her with us. Although the rain was steady, it was never (quite) a deluge. The forest foliage shone in all of the moisture, and we saw flame azalea, spiderwort, lady slipper, wood betony and more. The mist prevented any expansive views from the trail or at the Appalachian Highlands Science Learning Center, but we enjoyed the shelter on the porch at the Science Center while having lunch. All hikers remained in good spirits in spite of the rain! We look forward to another hike next year with the CMC!

Diane Petrilla and Cindy McJunkin

**HIKE CO-LEADERS NEEDED**

If you enjoy participating in SMHC hikes, please consider volunteering to be a co-leader for an upcoming hike. You will be teamed with an experienced leader. Your club needs YOU. Please contact bradktn@gmail.com to volunteer.