



Smoky Mountains Hiking Club

P O Box 51592 Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

April 2019

APPALACHIAN TRAIL WORK TRIP

April 6 - Saturday

In this month's "first Saturday" AT maintenance activity we will do light trail maintenance of the trail in areas trail north and south of Newfound Gap. Due to a delay in our chainsaw use window we will be doing inventory of trail conditions, remove fallen branches and smaller blowdowns with hand tools, and if the ground is not frozen, we will be able to clear water bars and drains. Weather and trail conditions permitting, we will try to cover the trail between Dry Sluice Gap trail junction southward to Clingmans Dome.

This trip will be an opportunity for people who want to know more about trail maintenance to get out and learn a little.

We will meet at 8:00 a.m. at Sugarlands Visitor Center parking area near the restrooms and will form teams that may carpool to Newfound Gap. Watch weather conditions during the week prior and judge the clothing (and possibly traction devices for icy trail) you may want to have in addition to work gloves and appropriate footwear, lunch, and water. Drive = \$1.25 from Sugarlands.

Leaders: Dick Kettle (rhkettle@comcast.net) and Diane Petrilla (petrillad@gmail.com)

FROZEN HEAD STATE PARK WILDFLOWER HIKE

April 7 - Sunday

Frozen Head State Park encompasses over 24,000 acres of wilderness and wildflower diversity. We begin the hike with a short shuttle about 1 mile to the trailhead. Typically, we will be able to enjoy dozens of species of wildflowers this time of year. Besides the wildflowers, on this year's hike (Panther Branch and North Old Mac Trails) we will enjoy waterfalls, footbridge crossings, cascades and cascade crossings, and an overlook with distant valley views. Hike 6 miles. The hike is rated Moderate. Meet at Oak Ridge Books A Million on S. Illinois Avenue ready to leave @ 9:00 AM. Drive 50 miles RT = \$2.50. A reminder: **This is a wildflower hike and as such will be at a much slower pace. If you aren't interested in wildflowers, this hike is not for you.**

Leaders: Lynda Bryan, ellymay2015@aol.com, 865-661-3117 and Jim Quick, jqhiker37@aol.com, 865-660-3351

BRADLEY FORK TO CABIN FLATS

April 10 - Wednesday

We will go to the Smokemont area of the Park to explore the trail along the Bradley Fork of the Oconaluftee River, hoping to find wildflowers along the way. We will take the Bradley Fork Trail to the Cabin Flats Trail, and then follow that to Campsite 49 to enjoy our lunch by the water. We will return to the Smokemont campgrounds the same way. Hike: 9.7 miles rated moderate. Elevation gain about 1,100 ft. Meet at Alcoa Food City at 7:30am, or at the Bradley Fork trailhead (at the back of Smokemont Campgrounds) at 9:15am. Drive: 126 miles RT @ 5¢ = \$6.30. Leader: Ron Brandenburg 865-482-5078, ronb86@comcast.net (substituting for Pat Watts)

PORTER'S CREEK WILDFLOWER HIKE

April 13 - Saturday

Let's go see the flowers! Join us for a spring hike up the Porters Creek trail to BCS 31 and back.. In addition to the plethora of wildflowers normally seen here, there are several historical sites including the Messer farmstead and the former SMHC cabin. Fern Falls is 2.7 miles from the trail-head. This hike is 7.2 miles round trip with an elevation gain of 1500 ft., rated moderate. Meet at Comcast, 5720 Asheville Highway at 08:00 AM or, Porters Creek Trail-head at 09:00. Drive 90 miles RT. = \$4.50. Leader: Eric Sundstrom sundstrom.eric@gmail.com

EASY HIKE: BEECH FLATS & OLD NEWFOUND GAP RD

April 14 - Sunday

Just a few miles downhill from the Thomas Divide Trail is the Beech Flats quiet walkway that follows the original route of the Newfound Gap road before that road was relocated in 1960 due to recurring landslides. We'll enjoy spring wildflowers while we gradually climb the old road grade back up to just below the current road. There are occasional branches to step over or under, but the trail is otherwise in good shape. Hike about 4.5 miles. Meet at Alcoa Food city at 11 am and we'll drive the new portion of foothills parkway over to Metcalf bottoms entrance to the park. Carpool fee determined later.

Leader: Tim Bigelow, Bigelowt2@mindspring.com, 865-607-6781

WHITE OAK SINK

April 20 - Saturday

White Oak Sink, basically a basin surrounded by steep hills, is without a doubt one of the most popular wildflower hikes in the Smokies. Every April this natural botanical garden comes alive with more than 40 varieties of native wildflowers. The name "Sink" comes from the caves that are found in the area, more like rocky sinkholes. Wildflowers, history, and geology will comprise our day. Hike: Roughly 8 miles RT with a steep climb out of the Sink, rated moderate. Meet at Alcoa Food City, 121 North Hall Road, at 8:30 AM. Drive: 40 miles RT @ 5¢ = \$2.00. Leader: Alan Sweetser, 865-938-7627 and Cindy Spangler, spangler@utk.edu, 865-776-1301

SAVE THE DATE!!

National Trails Day, Saturday June 1, 2019!

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

More info to follow soon!

NORRIS RIVER WILDFLOWER HIKE**April 21 - Sunday**

Two loop hikes for the price of one short drive. We'll start with River Bluff Trail and hike 3.25 miles to see late spring flowers--a large variety, but each weekend has its specials (poppies? trilliums?). Then we'll return to the cars, drive back across Norris Dam, and drive past the grist mill to the Norris Watershed water tower. After a snack, we'll hike up Reservoir Hill (looking for Jacob's ladder in bloom) for our real lunch. We'll descend past hundreds of wild oats (*Uvularia* spp.) and then turn down Dyer Hollow and descend along a pretty spring-fed creek. This trail will have a different special for the weekend (Phlox? Purple Phacelia?). Then we'll turn right, look for efts or tadpoles, and return to the cars. Most of the hike is easy; each loop has about a half mile of steady climb. Drive: 40 miles RT x .05 = \$2.00. Hike: About 6.5 miles. Meet at Outback Steakhouse, 314 Merchant Drive, at 8 AM.

Leader: Doris Gove, dorisgove@aol.com

SUGARLAND MOUNTAIN, HUSKEY GAP**April 24 - Wednesday**

Now that the Sugarland Mountain Trail has been reopened, let's see how it looks in the aftermath of the fire. Car shuttle or key swap (if enough people want to climb 4,000 feet). For this mostly downhill hike, we'll start at Clingmans Dome Road and head down Sugarland Mountain, then we'll turn onto Husky Gap to make our way to Newfound Gap Road. Hike: 11.2 miles rated moderate (if going downhill, otherwise rated difficult). Meet at Alcoa Food City <see list> at 7:30am, or at the Husky Gap trailhead at 9:00am. Drive: 107 miles RT {@5¢=\$5.35}.

Leader: Ron Brandenburg, ronb86@comcast.net, 865-482-5078 substituting for Pat Watts

SMOKEMONT LOOP- BRADLEY FORK TO CABIN FLATS**April 27 - Saturday**

From Smokemont, we will follow Smokemont Loop trail which passes Bradley cemetery and climbs to the top of a ridge above the Oconaluftee river valley. We then head down the other side of the ridge and join up with the Bradley Fork trail. This follows Bradley Fork and climbs gradually to the intersection with Cabin Flats trail which leads across an old bridge and on to Campsite 49 and a lunch spot. After looking around the Cabin Flats area we will head back down Bradley Fork all the way to Smokemont. Expect some late spring wildflowers. Hike 12 miles with 1500 ft elevation gain. Rated moderate to difficult. Meet at Alcoa Food City at 8:00 am and we will drive via the Foothills Parkway to Metcalf Bottoms entrance to the park. Drive 60 x.05=\$3.00.

Leader: Tim Bigelow, Bigelowt2@mindspring.com, 865-607-6781

BENT ARM MANWAY OFF TRAIL**April 27 - Saturday**

This loop hike begins at Elkmont, where we will leave the Cucumber Gap Trail and 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 two briery sections of the manway. We will return to Elkmont via

the Miry Springs and Jakes Creek trails. Meet at Alcoa Food City at 7:30 AM. Hike: 11.8 miles, rated moderately difficult. Drive 70 miles x.05. = \$3.50

Leaders: Hiram Rogers, hiramrogers@yahoo.com 865-584-7310 and Jean Gauger

NEW BACKPACKER ORIENTATION**April 27&28- Saturday & Sunday**

The SMHC will offer a weekend backpacking event for anyone interested in beginning backpacking or those interested in honing their backpacking skills. Two experienced backpackers (Ernie Wiles and Steve Dunkin) will host this event. The plan is to park vehicles at the Big Creek hiker parking area in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and hike 5 miles up to Back Country Campsite 37 (Walnut Bottoms) in the park. Big Creek trail is a pretty easy hike with a gradual elevation gain and level smooth trail with one small creek crossing. Once we reach camp, Ernie and Steve will demonstrate how to select a camp site, set up your tent/hammock, hang your bear bag and everything else necessary to set-up and enjoy a night in the woods. Bring food for a lunch, supper and breakfast. The backpacking leaders can also provide limited amounts of gear if you are missing one or two items. We will have reservations for 4 backpackers initially. You may have to make your own reservation, but the leaders can explain how if the initial 4 spots are taken. You will need a sleeping bag, tent/hammock, pack and food. Sunday morning, we will break camp and hike back to the vehicles. Steve will make the site reservations and you can repay him the \$4 that weekend. Information regarding meet-up location and times will be provided when you contact Steve or Ernie. Round trip mileage is 128 miles x \$.05 = \$6.

Leaders: Steve Dunkin, jsdunkin1302@gmail.com and Ernie Wiles, ernestwiles09@comcast.net

COMING EVENTS - May 2018

4 Saturday	AT Work Trip
11 Saturday	Ramsey Cascades
11 Saturday	Sams Creek Off-Trail
18 Saturday	Bald River Falls
18-19 Sat/Sun	Ladies only backpack Cabin Flats
25 Saturday	New Section of CT
27 Monday	Joint Hike with Carolina Mtn Club

MEETING PLACES: **Alcoa Food City** = On right between 3rd & 4th stoplight (on Hall Rd., TN 35), a block before Big Lots. [Map Link](#). **Charter E. Doyle Park** = 5100 W Martin Mill Pike, Knoxville, TN 37920. [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](#). **Oak Ridge Books-a-Million** = 310 South Illinois Avenue (same lot as Golds Gym) 3-1/2 traffic lights in, on left coming from Knoxville, opposite Walmart. Meet next to Illinois Ave. in front of Books-a-Million [Map Link](#). **Outback Steakhouse on Merchants Drive** = From Exit 108 off I-75, Merchants Drive, go west towards Clinton Hwy. Park in front part of large lot at Outback Steakhouse (314 Merchants Drive), near McDonalds [Map Link](#).

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Linda Allen, lallen629@gmail.com, 865/934-7371
 301-Woodland Trace Dr Knoxville, TN
 Michelle Brandenburg, our_stuff86@comcast.net
 Robert Claytor, borxie@comcast.net 865/207-1920
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 Edward Hess, edhess@comcast.net 941/493-781
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 2129 Raulston View Dr Maryville, TN 37803
 Karen Reeves, kwreeves@tds.net 865/771-821
 228 McFee Rd Knoxville, TN 37934
 James Yeager, jyeager@pipeline.com
 622 S Haywood St Waynesville, NC 28786

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 flatterd 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

Twin Arches/ Charit Creek/ Slave Falls 2-13-2019

Sometimes when the weather forecast says "100%" chance of rain!" "Flash flood warning!" "Scattered thunderstorms!" it's all wrong and we have a fortunate-not-too-bad bit of rain and congratulate ourselves on ignoring those dire predictions. Sometimes however, the forecasts are quite

correct. Which do you think we encountered this Wednesday?! If you stayed at home preferring to be warm and dry, you were wise. If you had come along with the 6 "hike or die" people who went to Big South Fork, you missed the wettest coldest hike



I think I have ever been on. (but one that was still pretty epic!)

Five of us met in Oak Ridge and piled into one hiker's truck to drive the long and winding roads to BSF. Big heavy rain on the way up. The hike leader/navigator had us take an unintended side trip to the Bandy Creek Visitor Center because she forgot where the turnoff was to Twin Arches. So that put us 45 minutes behind our ETA, by which time another hiker had almost given up on us and was driving out of Twin Arches TH dirt road. Lucky for him, because I know

he didn't want to miss the misery, we found him and all went to the TH to begin! Light rain at that point. The giant Twin Arches never fail to be awesome, and we explored them a bit, including squeezing through the "tunnel" in the South Arch. Then we started down the Charit Creek Loop, towards the Slave Falls Trail. Raining harder now. But still- gorgeous huge bluffs, rock, and sandstone erosion creating tiny arches, honeycombs, and ridges. Numerous slim waterfalls pouring off the bluffs. As we descended, the trail was becoming wetter with standing water and running water. At the bottom, and after we crossed Mill Creek (which was quite high) to pick up the Slave Falls Tr, the trail became totally



water. Small lakes. And mud and piles of slippery leaves. It felt like we were ice skating. Occasionally there were boardwalks, which presented their own slippery challenges. The trail gradually ascended out of that, and that's when the distant thunder and occasional lightening started. It was raining harder. I was counting those seconds in between lightening and thunder. None of it got too close, but it was enough to be nervous. For me. Slave Falls (named for the run-away slaves who were hidden there

in the 1880s by Unionist sympathizers in the area), was thunderous, dropping 60 ft. off a rock ledge. We climbed up and sat behind the falls in the rock amphitheater to eat lunch. Too chilly to linger, because most of us were pretty wet by then. In spite of raingear. We slogged back. Mill Creek was now at the level of the bridge as we crossed. We headed towards Charit Creek Lodge to complete the loop. There were rushing muddy streams everywhere, pouring into the main Station Camp Creek, which was raging. One small stream was a knee-high crossing. One part of the trail was a rushing river. We plowed on. After a while it just didn't matter where we walked; we had accepted the zen of being soaked. At times there was hysterical laughter. At Charit Creek Lodge, we stopped briefly on a porch to see the pretty cats that hang out there. I wished we could stay there a couple of days until the rain went away. Then we started the big mile ascent back to the Arches. Streams, streams, gushing, rushing everywhere. Back at North Arch, there were steep steps to head back to the TH (actually several sets of steps!). If you can believe it, the rain was lighter by then. Back at the cars, we peeled off raingear to find (mostly) soaking wet clothes, and we wrung out gloves and hats that were dripping with water. It was brisk and chilly up on the plateau, so this was not pleasant! Our driver stoically drove back to Oak Ridge through pelting rain which had begun again. Kudos and thanks to him. Actually, kudos and thanks to all who came on this hike, all of whom displayed their innate extraordinary good cheer and kindness. Our hike was about 9.5 miles total. Hoping for better weather next Wednesday! Is that silly?

Diane Petrilla and Ron Brandenburg

Rich Mountain Loop**2/16/2019**

Seven brave people put the threat of rain aside and went on a history hike in Cades Cove. The streams were running strong, with Crooked Arm Falls putting on quite a show. Along the way the hikers stopped at a few home sites, including John Oliver's grandson and then to the site of John's great-grandson's house.

Crumbling chimneys were viewed as well as an old car rusting away with a good-sized downed tree laying on top of it making sure it can't be driven away. Lunch was had at the Rich Mtn. fire tower location. Walking in the mist and clouds prevented any good views which was disappointing, yet it did not rain. The sun did come out just enough to see our shadows, for about two minutes. None of the hikers who joined the leaders fell from the slippery trail conditions, the hike leader with the beard can't make that claim!

Mark and Janet Snyder

Rich Mountain Loop**3/6/2019**

It was a cold but bright and sunny day as 17 hikers started up Rich Mountain Loop trail. Clockwise this time instead of counter-clockwise like usual. The nearby mountain peaks were beautifully covered with light snow or ice. At the start of the trail, despite the cold temperature, the surface of the trail was not frozen and was a thin layer of mud. As we gained altitude the surface was frozen and there were many patches of needle ice along the trails. When we got to the Indian Grave Gap trail,



three hikers chose to go down that trail to Rich Mountain road and back to add some mileage and help Neil with his 900

miles. Some chose to go up to the location of the former fire tower while the rest kept on the trail. I do not know how the view from the fire tower site was (probably not good because of trees) but the view from the trail on past the tower site was spectacular. The hard rime on the trees made them gorgeous and the view out over the valley was great. At the upper elevations we hiked over a few patches of snow, but they were not long and less than one half inch deep. This loop has multiple creek crossings, but none were deep enough to cause any problems. It was important to keep dry feet on a day as cold as this one. On the way down Crooked Arm trail it had warmed enough that the trails had become muddy in places-which means slippery. One of the hikers found that out the hard way. Being a relatively short hike, we were all back to the cars and ready to head home by around 2:00 pm. The length of the hike was 8.5 miles with 1,958 foot elevation gain.

Ron Brandenburg

Schoolhouse Hike**3-9-2019**

Five members and one visitor arrived at Metcalf Bottoms, in spite of a forecast that had shown a reasonable chance of thunderstorms. We shuttled to Elkmont Campground, where we walked around the campground, visiting the sites of three former schools and the Elkmont Missionary Baptist Church. There was

a modest drizzle during this walk, but it had ended by the time we finished the short loop in the campground.

We then shuttled to the Jakes Creek Trail parking area and began our hike. We hiked past the Hommel apple barn, the Lem Ownby place and then turned onto the Meigs Mountain Trail. We saw numerous home sites during this part of the walk, before turning onto the old Meigs Mountain Road.



There were a couple of standing chimneys and we ate lunch at the West Huskey chimney, a particularly nice tall chimney that is unfortunately in the process of falling down. We next visited the Meigs Mountain School and the John Huskey home site, one of the few mountain homes to have had a flush toilet. We made our way back to the Meigs Mountain Trail and visited the site of the Meigs Mountain Church, which was also used as a school house. Finally, we walked down Curry Mountain Trail to our cars. The rain held off for the entire latter part of the hike. Everyone seemed to enjoy the hike and the history.

Frank March

Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics First Principal – Plan Ahead and Prepare

The first outdoor ethics principal for Leave No Trace is to Plan Ahead. As experienced hikers we all have interesting stories of unexpected events on the trail. This principal reminded me of a recent hike up the Big Creek Trail. As I was walking up to BCS 36/37 to pick up trash I met two backpackers coming down the trail. I could not help but notice that one gentleman had on one shoe and a flip-flop with tape wrapped around it. As he related to me, he and his friend were new to the park and backpacking. They decided to hike up Gunther trail that morning and he did not have water shoes. Reportedly, he tried to throw his brand new \$200 hiking boots across Big Creek at the trail junction. As he related, he threw the first shoe, which hit a branch and was immediately floating downstream toward the Waterville Power Plant. A kind and experienced backpacker gave him the flip-flop and tape to get him down the trail.

So, the Leave No Trace principal of Plan Ahead and Prepare can come in handy in any number of situations. The full set of principals include:

- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you'll visit.
- Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.
- Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.
- Visit in small groups. Split larger parties into smaller groups.
- Repackage food to minimize waste.
- Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of rock cairns, flagging or marking paint.

2nd annual BUSAR Fundraiser

Saturday, April 13, 2019

4-8pm

Maple Grove Missionary Church

3201 Carpenters Grade Rd Maryville TN 37803

\$10/person collected at the door

BBQ Dinner, Silent Auction, Survival Skills Demonstrations

BUSAR Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit Search and Rescue team
operating in the GSMNP and NPS system

www.teambusar.org