



# Smoky Mountains Hiking Club

P O Box 51592 Knoxville, TN 37950-1592

Exploring the Smokies Since 1924

August 2020

Dear members of the SMHC,

July 6, 2020

Another month has passed under the “new normal” of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. As always, I hope you are finding ways to remain healthy and safe, even while getting some time in the outdoors. We resumed Club hikes in July with special guidelines, and I very much appreciate everyone’s patience and cooperation with those. The COVID Committee of the SMHC, as well as the BOD, continue to monitor conditions locally, very closely, for any potential need to change our scheduled events.

That is my subject today. As many of you know, cases of COVID-19 are rising nationally, and particularly in certain states, including Tennessee and Knox County. On June 29, Governor Lee extended Tennessee’s State of Emergency until August 29, which among many other things, states:

- Urge[s] Tennesseans to continue limiting activity and staying home where possible, as well as following health guidelines and maintaining social distancing;
- Urge[s] persons to wear a cloth face covering in places where in close proximity to others

The SMHC BOD has voted to cancel the Election Picnic scheduled for Saturday August 8 at Seven Islands State Park. Having a larger group get-together in a popular park, even if it was outdoors, increases risk of COVID transmission. The picnic was already going to be significantly altered i.e. bring your own food and chair, sit 6 ft. apart, wear masks except when eating, all in the August heat etc..... the risks outweighed the benefits in this situation. As it was with National Trails Day, we are sad to have to make this decision, but feel it is the safest option.

We still need your help! At the annual Election Picnic, we vote on the slate of officers for the upcoming year and sign up to lead hikes for 2021. Below is the slate of officers for next year. There are no changes from this year. We would love to hear from you if you have ideas or names for Board vacancies that may occur for 2022 however, or if you have any questions about the 2021 Board. You do not need to formally respond if you approve of the list below.

President: Diane Petrilla  
 Vice President: Ken Wise  
 Recording Secretary: Steve Dunkin  
 Treasurer: Tim Bigelow  
 Trust Liaison: Jean Gauger  
 Membership Secretary: George Ritter

Communications Director: Cindy Spangler  
 Historian: Brian Worley  
 Director: Amanda Beal  
 Director: Dale Potter  
 Director: Will Skelton  
 Director: Taylor Weatherbee

In the next few weeks, please watch for notifications with the Program (list of hikes) for 2021. The Program Committee worked hard this year to decide on hikes for next year, based on likely ongoing issues with COVID-19, at least for awhile. Many thanks to Dale Potter and Cindy Spangler for their work on the hike schedule. We will provide several ways and opportunities for you to look at the schedule, via email and Newsletter, and **SIGN UP TO BE A HIKE LEADER OR CO-LEADER!** We depend upon and deeply appreciate the folks who step up to lead a hike; if you have any questions about doing this, please feel free to contact any member of the Board.

As always, we appreciate your patience with this challenging time for the Club. The Smoky Mountains Hiking Club has a long and rich history; we’ll weather this pandemic too! And go on to have more adventures together!

All my best,

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

### A.T. WORK TRIP – note special circumstances AUGUST 1 - Saturday

By the date of this August work trip, we will have begun the process of return-to -maintenance work under the GSMNP guidelines with a new Volunteer Service Agreement and Job Hazard Analysis (JHA). Signing and returning of JHAs to Christine Hoyer will still be in progress. For this workday, we would encourage maintainers who have received confirmation that their signed JHA was received by Christine, and **who feel safe**, to return to their sections, and perform regular needed maintenance. This is all we are permitted to do at this time, in groups no larger than 4, and no shelter or privy work is permitted. If you did not receive an email containing all of the guidelines, with the JHA to sign, or if you have a question about the JHA, please contact Diane Petrilla at [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com) or 931-224-5149. **Please be safe.**

### Hikers: please see page 3 for safety guidelines for all Club hikes

### GABES MOUNTAIN TRAIL PAST HEN WALLOW FALLS TO CAMPSITE 3

August 5 - Wednesday

Out & back. RT is 9.6 miles. Moderate. Meet at the Cosby Campground (hiker’s parking area) at 9:00 am (9:30 am for the second group). Pre-registration required with hike leader.  
Leader: Steve Vittatoe, 865-724-9666, [svittatoe@charter.net](mailto:svittatoe@charter.net)

### Cancelled: ELECTION PICNIC Saturday August 8

Election Picnic- Seven islands SP  
Canceled due to COVID-19 pandemic. Please see letter from SMHC President, Diane Petrilla, above.

**EASY HIKE: EAST FORK POPLAR CREEK AND WILDFLOWER  
GREENWAYS IN OAK RIDGE  
AUGUST 10 – Monday**

We'll enjoy a pleasant evening stroll on the new East Fork Poplar Creek greenway in Oak Ridge. Meet at 6:00pm at the Boys And Girls Club parking lot off S. Jefferson Circle just off the Turnpike in west Oak Ridge. This nice trail along Poplar Creek was recently completed by Clinch Valley Trail Alliance and Greenways Oak Ridge. We'll hike out to the current end of the trail and back and might see a few wildflowers. The trail can be a little muddy. If there is time, we will also hike a little ways on the nearby Wildflower Greenway trail. Hike 3 miles total. Pre-registration required with hike leader.

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

---

**A.T. @ FORK RIDGE TO CLINGMANS DOME AND BACK  
August 15 - Saturday**

This high elevation hike should provide a respite from valley heat. We will head South on the AT through lovely conifer forests to the highest point on the Appalachian Trail. We will also be hiking through sections of the AT that our club maintains. After a climb to the top of the Clingmans Dome Tower, we will return via the same route.

Meet at the Fork Ridge parking area (3.8 miles from Newfound Gap on Clingmans Dome Road) at 9:30 AM. Allow a few extra minutes for summer traffic. Total hike mileage: 7.8 miles, rated moderate. Pre-registration is required with the hike leader.

Leader: Cindy Spangler, [spangler@utk.edu](mailto:spangler@utk.edu), 865-776-1301

---

**MIDDLE PRONG TRAIL IN THE TREMONT AREA TO INDIAN  
FLATS FALLS OUT AND BACK  
August 19 - Wednesday**

We'll see three multi-tiered falls including Lower Lynn Camp, Lynn Camp and Indian Flats. Historic artifacts to be seen along the trail includes the rusting Cadillac, a homestead chimney and remnants from logging operations of the past. RT is 7.8 miles. Moderate with elevation gain of 1175 ft. Meet at the trailhead at 9:00 am. (9:30 am for the second group). Pre-registration required with hike leader.

Leader: Steve Vittatoe 865-724-9666, [svittatoe@charter.net](mailto:svittatoe@charter.net)

---

**RAVEN FORK OFF-TRAIL  
August 22 -Saturday**

The date of the Raven Fork Off-Trail hike has been changed to Saturday August 22nd. We will leave Straight Fork Road at Round Bottom and climb the Hyatt Ridge Trail to Low Gap and then down the Enloe Creek Trail to the metal bridge spanning Raven Fork. We will work our way up Raven Fork to the Big Pool at Three Forks then exit either by way of Breakneck Ridge or Right Fork. This is a difficult hike and will be cancelled if the flow of Raven Fork is above 400 cfs. Advanced registration with leaders is required.

Leaders: Cindy McJunkin, [mcjfive@aol.com](mailto:mcjfive@aol.com) 828-712-9646 and Ken Wise, [kwise@utk.edu](mailto:kwise@utk.edu) 865-310-7764

---

Prefer to receive your newsletter via email?

Contact the newsletter editor, Sarah, at [ches1995@yahoo.com](mailto:ches1995@yahoo.com)

**BRUSHY MTN TRAIL  
August 22- Saturday**

This hike has been changed to avoid the crowded trailhead at Rainbow Falls/ Trillium Gap. We will start in Greenbriar by walking up Porters Creek for a mile before veering off onto the Brushy Mtn Trail. We will be able to see the SMHC Cabin at that point. Brushy Mtn trail is bordered by beautiful old stone walls as we begin. It ascends gradually through moist forest, and switchbacks with some views as we get higher. At the junction with Trillium Gap, we will walk out to the summit of Brushy Mtn, full of sand myrtle, blueberry and huckleberry, as well as some views. Total hike mileage 12.6, rated Difficult. Meet at Porters Creek Trailhead in Greenbriar at 8:30am. Pre-registration required with hike leader.

Leader: JD Schlant, [trailhard@gmail.com](mailto:trailhard@gmail.com) or 661-4474.

---

**CHEROHALA HIGHWAY, HOOPER AND  
HUCKLEBERRY KNOBS  
August 29- Saturday**

Hooper Bald and Huckleberry Knob are amazing anytime of year. Late summer wildflowers and views will be the features in August and maybe a ridge-top breeze. After meeting at the Cherohala Visitor Center at 9:00, we will caravan up to the Hooper Bald trail parking area a few miles over the state line into Nantahala NF. The hike up to Hooper Bald is about a mile with a small climb. We will enjoy the view and look for wildflowers along the bald. We will follow the bald and a road down to the Skyway and walk a short distance to the Huckleberry Knob parking area and begin that trail. It's a mile hike and about 500-foot climb to the top of the knob which has a view all around and more open meadow wildflowers.

We will return back to the start via Hooper Bald. These trails are very sunny!

Hike about 4.5 miles with 500 ft total elevation gain.

From Knoxville/Oak Ridge drive to Cherohala Visitor Center at the entrance to Tellico Plains which is about 60 miles. Meet at 9:00am. The drive to Hooper Bald is 30 miles one way.

Please register with the hike leader by email. Participation will be limited. Masks and distancing required at meeting places.

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

**MEETING PLACES: Reminder that all hikes will meet at the trailhead. Preregister with the leaders to ensure space for you with the group. Also, please cancel if needed, in case there are other people on the waiting list. See hike guidelines page 3.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**COMING EVENTS – September 2018**

To be determined. Watch for the newsletter!

**Welcome New Members**

Duane Gobin [donnchaidh@runbox.com](mailto:donnchaidh@runbox.com)

1927 Meadow Stone Ln Knoxville TN 37938

Raymond Lawson [ronlawson1881@gmail.com](mailto:ronlawson1881@gmail.com)

9601 Westland Cove Way #424 Knoxville TN 37922

Jerry Seal [jerryseale@comcast.net](mailto:jerryseale@comcast.net)

PO Box 33023 Knoxville TN 37930



## **We're looking for volunteers!**

### **Virtual opportunities**

- Do you know your way around a website? Enjoy figuring out how things work? We're looking for club members with technical aptitude for some digital remodeling of our website and email system. Interested? Contact Amanda Beal [amandaw455@gmail.com](mailto:amandaw455@gmail.com) or Cindy Spangler, [spangler@utk.edu](mailto:spangler@utk.edu).
- Do you enjoy putting pieces of a puzzle together to create something meaningful? We are looking for a club newsletter editor (mostly graphic design) to begin late 2020 or early 2021. Once content is submitted, the newsletter takes 4-5 hours to put together and then another couple of hours to make edits and send out via email and to print. Currently using Word to create the newsletter. All work takes place between the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month. Support will be provided to begin. Contact Cindy Spangler or Sarah Wimmer.

### **Hike leaders 2021**

- We depend upon and deeply appreciate the folks who step up to lead a hike: all Board members are happy to answer questions about responsibilities.

### **Financial Donations**

- Here's a simple way to contribute to the Club: The Kroger Community Rewards number for Smoky Mountain Hiking Club is MV194. Simply log into your shopper card account, enter the Club number, then each time you shop, the Club earns money to support trail maintenance and other behind-the-scenes needs.

## **Safe hiking with the SMHC**

We hope you have remained safe and well. The COVID-19 committee of the SMHC (which includes medical professionals and Club and/or BOD members) has now made the recommendation to the BOD to resume Club hikes in July, and the BOD has approved this recommendation. The COVID-19 committee will continue to meet monthly for the time being, and closely monitor the pandemic situation, especially in Tennessee and North Carolina, and adjust recommendations based on data. Guidelines have been created to promote safe hiking and Club events. We know this represents some inconvenience and change. One day this will be behind us! In the meantime, we appreciate your patience and adherence to the following guidelines for safe hiking:

1. One hike leader will serve as pre-registration contact, with e-mail and phone # available in the write-up. Pre-registration is required for all hikes.
2. No more than 10 total participants may be on a hike (including leader, co-leader). Registration will have to be halted when there are 10 participants.
3. All meetups will be at the trail head, so adjust meetup drive time accordingly.
4. No carpooling except for people in their trusted "bubble."
5. Hikes will be chosen to avoid crowded trailheads and crowded trails.
6. Events should be no more than a 2-hour drive from the Knoxville area.
7. Avoid hikes that will involve a key swap or shuttle.

8. Hikers must sign a release form, with accurate contact information.
9. Inform hikers if anyone becomes ill with in a few days of the event, with symptoms concerning for COVID-19, to contact the hike leader immediately. (In addition to the usual pre-hike info). For regular pre-hike prep, see <http://www.smhclub.org/outingpreparation.htm>.
10. All participants must have a face mask, to use at trailhead meetup, and then if needed, when distancing on the trail from other hikers is not feasible.
11. Maintain 6 ft. of distance between hikers, and if possible 10-12 ft.
12. Stop at junctions to be sure group is all present, given the spacing out.
13. All participants should have hand sanitizer or wipes.
14. No sharing of food.
15. If leader(s) or any participant feels sick, please stay at home.
16. If leader(s) need to alter planned activity, please contact an SMHC Board member ASAP to discuss proposed changes.

Diane Petrilla, M.D.  
President, Smoky Mountains Hiking Club  
Knoxville, Tennessee



Appropriate mask  
wearing as seen at the  
Knoxville Botanical  
Gardens

## For the Record

Club hikes have resumed in July with new guidelines, so we are thankful to once again offer hike reports and photos.

### Knoxville Botanical Gardens

7-5-2020

Photos courtesy of Doris Gove and Betty Glenn, hike leaders



### Rich Mountain-Indian Grave Gap to BC #06 7-15-2020

Dave's report from the first group:

The first group of 10 started out at 8:30 with 8 seasoned hikers and two new hikers. As everyone headed up the continuous incline, the heat began to bother one of the new hikers so the 2 new hikers turned around and went back to the cars. The remaining 8 hikers climbed the 1600 ft of elevation in the first 2.3 miles. All agreed it was a bit of a toil. Once at the junction with Indian Grave Gap Trail the hiking became much easier and all enjoyed the trek to Campsite 6 for lunch. On the way back, we passed the second group and even recognized everyone regardless of their masks. All in all, it was a good hike on a beautiful and HOT day. When we returned to the cars, we learned that the two new hikers had gone on up to Townsend and did some tubing down the Little River. Much cooler than the hike!

Ron's report from the second group:

The second group of 10 started out at about 9:15. We were a little slow in getting organized. The temperature was not too bad as we started up the mountain. It stayed not too bad, as long as the breeze continued. Which it did off and on. The trails are in very good shape with few rock and roots to trip over, but one hiker found one. Happily, there was no injury. The Rich Mountain-Indian Grave Gap intersection was a welcome sight because that meant most of the climbing was over. Lunch at Campsite 6 was very pleasant with good shade and a continuous breeze. The hike down the mountain was another story. It got hotter with every step down the mountain until at the bottom it was very hot. We all survived and were headed home at a reasonable hour.

~Dave Grab and Ron Brandenburg



Photos  
courtesy  
of Ron  
and  
Dave