

Newsletter of the
Chattanooga Hiking Club

May 2015

Club Meeting

The Chattanooga Hiking Club meets at 6:30 PM on the first Monday of even numbered months at the Outdoor Chattanooga offices on River Street. Directions to the meeting site are on the club website: chatthiking.com

Next meeting – Monday Jun 1, 2015

Newsletter Changes

Well, this is the first of the “electronic” newsletters. Hopefully it still looks familiar, but there have been some subtle changes. I have started using MS Publisher instead of MS Word; that should make it easier to keep things lined up and straight. Other than that, it’s a series of 8 1/2 x 11 sheets so everybody’s printer should be able to handle it. If you need help making it print on both front and back of the sheet of paper, call your grandchildren or contact me; maybe I can talk you through it. And you’ll notice that it has color! If we need to tweak things a little, we can; I’m especially anxious about the print size being large enough for us to read.
John

Newsletter on the Website

If you have acquired an abbreviated printed copy of this newsletter, the full version is available through a link on our website, Chatthiking.com.

Dues Are Past Due

And we need to get your up-to-date email address if you haven’t already sent us that information. We’re going to try to send out a mass email to tell you when each newsletter has been posted to the website.

Making

TRACKS

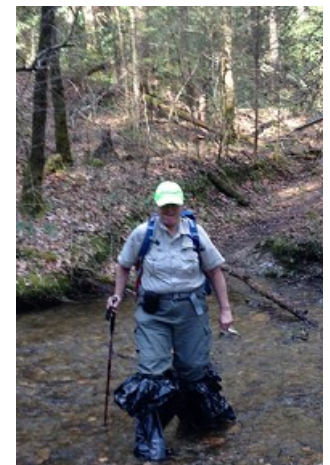


Reports from the Field

Lost Creek

Saturday March 28, 2015

After 8 CHC members cancelled out, Steve Barnes called me for Bill's phone number to find out if Bill wanted to continue with their plan to hike Lost Creek on the Benton MacKaye Trail. I didn't bother asking Steve if I could join the hike because I felt Steve was going to cancel it. Bill calls me a few minutes later to ask if I wanted to go. The hike was on!! We arrived at the trail head and started our hike at 9:30AM in the brisk 30 degree morning air; with blue skies and a slight breeze we were in for a treat. We marveled at the beauty of Lost Creek and the many spring flowers encountered on our trek. We took the time to explore interesting fauna, unique forest areas off trail and unusual rock formations. Lunch break was on a sandbar along a tranquil section of Lost Creek...very 'zen' moment. We had such fun putting our high tech Tennessee waders on (*held up with rubber bands*) and tromping across a small tributary creek flowing into Lost Creek. We were back at the car by 2:30PM refreshed and excited about our hike. Jean Dickinson reporting.



Pictures of high-tech TN waders from JD

Upcoming Outings

Upcoming Outings

Friday-Saturday April 24-25, 2015**Old Settlers trail backpack**

Location: Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Distance: 17 miles

Rating: Strenuous

Elevation Gain: 3100 feet

This will be an overnight BACKPACK. We will start at the Greenbrier section of the park near the Ramsey Cascades trail. We will hike 6.5 miles and camp at site #33. The following day, we will end near the Maddron Bald/Gabes Mountain trailhead. There are about 22 creek crossings. This area is full of historic chimneys, cabins, and walls. The back country permits are \$4.00/person. Hike leader, Wayne Chambers, 423-855-9926. (currently no spaces available, but contact Wayne if you wish to be put on a waiting list)

Saturday May 2, 2015**Towee Creek/Coker Creek day hike**

Location: Hiwassee, TN

Distance: 11.2 miles

Rating: Strenuous

Pace: Standard

Driving Time: 1 hour

We will drive to Reliance, cross the bridge and continue on Childer's Creek Road to Towee Creek rest area. There we'll begin our hike on the new Benton MacKaye reroute to where it intersects with John Muir trail. Then we will continue on to Coker Creek. We'll eat lunch at the Coker Creek campground and then return by the same route we took in. There should still be plenty of wildflowers along the route. Hike leader is Boe Rudder, boerudder@yahoo.com or 423.400.1103

Saturday May 2, 2015**Little Cedar Mountain day hike**

Location: TVA's Little Cedar Mtn, near Jasper, TN

Distance: 4 miles

Rating: Easy-moderate

Elevation Gain: 350 feet

Pace: Standard-leisurely

Driving Time: about 30 minutes

This popular 4 mile hike on TVA's Little Cedar Mountain has two modest climbs and two descents, and a couple of scenic views of Nickajack Lake and the surrounding mountains. We'll get to see Little Cedar Mountain's wide variety of plant life and unique geology, and perhaps spot some of the mountain's abundant wildlife. We'll meet at the easy-to-get-to trailhead. Hike leader is Bob Butters, bobbutters@hotmail.com or 423-991-1548.

Saturday May 9, 2015**Trail maintenance**

Location: Tennessee River Gorge

Rating: Strenuous

We will work on the Bird Banders new trail in the Tennessee River Gorge. We plan to work on May 9 from noon until 4. Come be a part of creating a new trail! Contact Steve Barnes, sebarnestorm@gmail.com or 423-339-3019

Saturday May 16, 2015**TBA**

(check the website)

Saturday May 23, 2015**Savage Gulf day hike**

Location: Savage Gulf State Natural Area

Distance: 8 miles

Rating: Moderate

Elevation Change: Little

Driving Time: 1 1/2 hours each way

We will begin and finish at the Savage Gulf Ranger Station, covering the Savage Day Loop Trail and parts of the South and North Rim Trails. Along the way, we will pass through scenic areas, waterfalls, a campground, and spectacular overlooks. Hike leader is Donald Box, Donaldbox@epbfi.com.

Saturday May 30, 2015**TBA**

(check the website)

Saturday June 6, 2015**TBA**

(check the website)

As you can see, we need hike leaders! Contact Boe Rudder if you can help!

boerudder@yahoo.com or 423.400.1103

Reports from the Field

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Skyuka Springs**Saturday March 21, 2015**

The morning was cool and pleasant as we gathered in the parking lot just across from the Kidde trail. After exchanging our morning pleasantries, and my usual pre-hike speech, we set off for Skyuka Springs. We walked along the gravel road through the Nature Center, stopping along the way to enjoy some early Spring flowers. As we walked along the Lower Truck Trail, everyone enjoyed getting to know our new hikers, and sharing stories of past hikes and life experiences. After enjoying a nice lunch break at Skyuka Springs, we walked back to the Nature Center, going around the pond to see the turtles and fish. Those along for this pleasant hike, on a beautiful day were Jerry Wright, Wayne and Vicki Chambers, Robin Raya, Donald and Madelaine Box, Jane Seale, Kellie Yarbrough and Lindy Johnson. Hike leader Kendra Cross, reporting.



Skyuka Springs hikers from Madelaine

Scott's Gulf**Wednesday March 25, 2015**

Virgin Falls near Sparta is one of our favorite (in spite of long drive) hikes. Now we have discovered more trails in the Bridgestone/Firestone Centennial Wilderness. Today, led by Jim Hardy (TC Varner, Judy Varner, Carol Deakins and Don Deakins had done some scouting previously) we hiked the 8.1 mile loop of the Yellow Bluff, the trailhead for which you will find on down the road from the Virgin Falls trailhead. At first the trail gently descends into Scott's Gulf. The canyon was formed by the Caney Fork River. From Boar Hog Gap Overlook you will look down into the canyon and at the river below. Upon reaching the canyon floor, after passing several waterfalls, the loop turns downstream to the gorge bottom with boulder fields, rock bluffs, and a

(continued...)

wilderness decorated by Blood Root, Trillium and Trout Lilies. We enjoyed our lunch perched on rocks beside the fast moving and cascading Caney Fork River. Following the old Scott's Gulf Road .4 miles steeply uphill (an elevation gain of 550 feet), we stopped off at the Joe Holloway Rockhouse near the end of the loop. Stepping back onto Scott's Gulf Road the loop is completed by turning right and hiking another .5 miles to where the loop began. Big game hunts affect this area, so always check the dates.

Hikers today: Suzanne Dorough, Bill Needham, Tim Chomyn, Bob Rahn, Larry Parks, Susan Garrett, Linda Busby, Sue Christensen, Boe Rudder, Wendy Gunn, Gwen Brimer, Charlie Breeding, Jane Ellett, Tom Long, Jean Dickinson, Carol Deakins, TC Varner, Judy Varner, Wanda McCarter, Patti Giles, Wayne Chambers, John Rowland, Renee Grace, Bill Kinnaman, Bill LaRoque, Suz Riggle, John Dever, Don Deakins, Che Carico reporting, and Jim Hardy leading.

Goldmine, Cooper Road, Beard Cane**Friday March 27, 2015**

It was raining as we approached the exit to the Smokies headed to Top of the World and begin this hike. All suited up we took off down the Gold Mine trail. By the time we came to the intersection with Cooper Road it had stopped and remained dry with mostly clouds and some sunshine for the remainder of the hike. The Beard Cane trail has been closed for several years due to trees felled by the tornado. Evidence of the damage was all around us as we bottomed out and extensive cleanup is still needed. The trail passed through a now field where briars are growing up due to the sunlight coming onto this part of the trail. Lots of water flowed in the creek and we had to cross 36 times each way, often with no choice but to step into the water. After a pause at the bottom of the last .6 miles uphill to the junction with Ace Gap, all forged on and rested there on logs in the gap. The return was uneventful with the sun coming out for a while. There is no way to avoid the steady uphill .8 of a mile back to the trail's beginning and some of the veteran hikers warned this would seem tough after hiking 17 miles according to Art's gps. The rain had returned to dampen efforts to put on dry socks and clothes. Weary yet jubilant and well fed at Venti's were: Art Dees, Beth Jones, Barbara McCollum, Gwen Brimer, Wanda McCarter, Susan Garrett, Boe Rudder, Sarah Frost, Stormy McGauley, Charlie Breeding, Joyce Campbell, Che Carico reporting, and Wayne Chambers leading.

Reports from the Field



The Bearded Cooper Goldminers from Barbara

Reports from the Field



Bluebells

Walls of Jericho

Wednesday April 1, 2015

Although forecast for high temp of 75, 34 hikers set off to hike the "Alabama Side" trail to the Walls of Jericho. This area is one of our favorites for the wonderful wildflowers, especially the Virginia Bluebells. On the downhill trek to Mill Creek, we were rewarded with masses of Spring Beauty and Hepatica. Upon arriving at the bottom we walked up the "Tennessee Side" trail just a bit and did find fully in bloom the wonderful forest floor covered in bluebells, Dutchmen's Britches, and Phlox. John was so happy !!! Across Mill Creek is a bench and a smaller patch of the bluebells. The trail continues on to another bridge crossing of Turkey Creek, passes the very old Clark Cemetery with campsite nearby, and onto a more narrow, rocky, creek- side portion (1/2 mile) of the trail. Blood Root, Twin Leaf, Anemone, Trout Lily, and Stone Crop were spotted along this section. A rock hopping across Turkey Creek is almost always required to cross again and gain access to the Walls of Jericho amphitheater. Put your gear down and go on up to what looks like the end of the amphitheater. Climb up to the level above and view the rear falls at the very end and the deep hole into which they disappear. First time to the area and veterans alike basking in the sun for lunch were: Wanda McCarter, Bill LaRoque, Nancy Hoover, Debbie Lambert, Wayne Chambers, Larry Parks, Bill Kinnaman, Renee Grace, Jennie Chandler, Linda O'Neil, Suzanne Dorough, Susan Garrett, Bob Butterfield, Teresa Dean, Bob Rahn, Sarah Frost, Sonja Parker, Sue Christensen, Diehl Boggs, Merrie Boggs, Shirley Wright, Margaret Newton, Tom Carter, Wendy Gunn, Trish Appleton, Charlie Breeding, Barry Ligon, Beverly Ligon, Patsy Smith, Linda Busby, Karen, Bill Whiteside, Che Carico reporting, and John Rowland leading. We have been carrying small portions of Arlene's cremains to sprinkle in special places. Did so today among the bluebells along a trail she dearly loved.



Approaching the Walls



Lunch by the falls — pictures from John

Reports from the Field

Little Cedar Mountain Saturday April 4, 2015

This hike today was sponsored by Chattanooga Outdoor and led by Bob Butters (an original CHC member!) and James Eubank. The occasion was to celebrate the rerouting and reopening of the trail on the mountain above NickaJack Lake. Debbie Lambert and I went to check it out along with Weston, Ellie, and Emery Carico. We found it to be beautiful and splendid with spring wildflowers! Perhaps the most splendid was the Phacelia in full bloom and covering the tops of the huge rocks. You can check this trail out at www.tva.gov, choose "River Recreation", "Recreation Trails", and "Nickajack" for Google directions and a map. We hiked 4 miles but you can cover 6 miles with a little backtracking. We will be taking you there, Che Carico reporting.

Piney River Wednesday April 8, 2015

The Piney River trail is in another of the Pocket Wilderness areas created by Bowaters. It is one of our favorites for its diversity of flowers and the river or Duskin Creek running beside it any time of the year. The lower trailhead is on the left as you arrive at the river and recreation area "at the bottom" or at either Newby Camp (which adds an extra mile) or Duskin Creek bridge "at the top" (end to end 10 miles). Walden Mtn. Rd. to Duskin Creek has become deeply rutted as it is a logging road. It is the same to access Newby Camp but not as much of it to drive. Today we chose not to place a car shuttle or organize a key swap and all began at the lower trail head. This meant at least a 4 mile walk into our chosen lunch spot and then return. Since it had rained the night before, the many rocks on the trail were very slippery and McDonald Branch was tricky to cross for the same reason. So not a good plan as the roughest part of this trail had to be walked two times! Several hikers fell but with no serious injuries. White Trillium, Stinking Benjamin, Spring Beauty, Anemone, Jacks, Little Brown Jug, Spotted Mandarin, and Wild Oats were dominant. John trekked on to Rock House Branch, Debbie led several on the spur to the "bathtub", and Bill hiked the trail to Twin Rocks. Remaining in good spirits despite the hard work carefully crossing the many rocks were: Wanda McCarter, Wayne Chambers, Suz Riggle, Patti Giles, Bob Rahn, Larry Parks, Renee Grace, Sarah Frost, John Rowland, Suzanne Dorough, Susan Garrett, Sue Christensen, Gwen Brimer, Reggie Jay, Trish Appleton, Linda Busby, Bill Kinnaman, John Dever, Che Carico reporting, John Rowland and Debbie Lambert leading.

Reports from the Field



Off to Piney River



The Wednesday lunch bunch



Trout Lilies, a Wakerobin & White Trillium, and a Yellow Trillium — pictures from John

Reports from the Field

Reports from the Field

**Big South Fork car camp
Friday-Sunday April 10-12, 2015**

While I had my cereal Friday morning, I checked the radar and was pleased to see the swath of yellow and orange and red had almost cleared Big South Fork up there and Soddy-Daisy down here. We met in a light sprinkle and had some of that on up past our pit stop in Crossville, but the weather had cleared quite a bit before we stopped for lunch. By the time we got to the campground, it was quite pleasant. We set up the basics of camp and had time to do the scheduled 4.6 mile hike to O&W Railroad Bridge. There was a lot of wet footing, a precursor of what we found all weekend. And the river had gone wild! The low footbridge that we were going to use Sunday to start that hike was completely under water! But that day's hike was quite pleasant, with a pretty afternoon, wildflowers, and the interesting old bridge. The evening was nice, with a hotdog cookout. And it was a cool sleeping night. Saturday we did the Twin Arches Loop down to Jake's Place, with a side trip to Slave Falls, then on to Charit Creek Lodge, and back up to Twin Arches - 8.9 miles for the day. We saw lots more wildflowers and a pretty falls, took a nice break at the lodge, and marveled at the awesome arches. We had hamburgers and a couple leftover hotdogs for dinner. It was a little chillier sleeping night, but lots of stars overhead before we retired.

Sunday we checked on that footbridge, and while we could now see it, there was considerable damage and it was impassable, and probably had been for a while, being blocked off at the far end. But just as we were about to go in search of a "Plan B", we found that across the nearby highway bridge there was a set of steps going down to a dirt and gravel path headed right toward the point where our trail would pick up on the far side; we were back in business! So we did the planned 5.6 miles out to Angel Falls Overlook and back. It was another warm day with many more wildflowers, including quite a few bluebells! Banter was great during the days and around the campfire at night. The food was good, and the weather was great, especially considering I expected Friday to be a washout. We did 19.1 miles of hiking, most or all of it new to most of the hikers; that was especially nice, hearing the "wow's", etc. And the campground and the park itself were new to most; but now they may have gotten spoiled! The gang consisted of Barbara McCollum, Sonja Parker, Sarah and Tim Frost, head chef Bob Butterfield, Wayne Chambers, Monty Simmons, Patricia Smith who joined us Saturday evening, and John Rowland reporting.



What's the old saying, "Too many cooks stir up a lot of smoke"?



Not sure I'd want to try it, but the old O&W bridge apparently still can support a vehicle!



Danged elevator was out of order again!



Under the North Arch



North Arch

Reports from the Field



Charit Creek Lodge and cabins



Atop the South Arch



Another elevator out of order



On the way to Angel Falls Overlook



Angel Falls overlook

All pictures from Barbara

Reports from the Field

Reports from the Field

**Mt Sterling
Saturday April 18, 2015**

We went in search of three things today, and we found all three of them - some tough but rewarding hiking, some great views, and an abundance of wildflowers. Some chose the "easier" route, up Mt Sterling trail and down Baxter Creek trail, while others chose the opposite route beginning with the challenge of climbing Baxter Creek trail. A key swap solved the transportation problem of dealing with the two different starting and ending points. Those hardy souls who climbed Baxter Creek were in agreement about it's toughness; those who went up Mt Sterling trail thought it was quite a chore in itself, and we felt that even going downhill on Baxter Creek was not an east trek. But all agreed on the beauty of Baxter Creek trail, especially the lush greens of the upper portion. And we were all smitten by the wildflowers that often seemed to cover entire hillsides on both trails. There were trout lilies, squirrel corn, white trillium, spring beauties, painted trillium, purple phacelia, yellow trillium, dwarf crested iris, and wild geraniums a-plenty. We even spotted a couple clumps of showy orchis at hike's end! It wasn't the nicest of days, being mostly cloudy, and thus the views from Mt Sterling towers weren't very picture-worthy, but nonetheless impressive. And we were in our cars on the way to dinner before any rain fell. For five of the eight hikers, it was their first trip to Mt Sterling and their first time on either trail. Thanks to co-leader Bob Butterfield who led the group that went up Baxter Creek, including Sarah and Tim Frost, Barbara McCollum, and Beth Jones. Those going the other way were Che Carico, Kathy Seymour, and John Rowland reporting.



A flat-out sprint at the finish; or was he just flat out? And look at that big smile!



And then you have to climb this to get full credit!



Eager for their first crack at climbing Baxter Creek



But a nice view from the penthouse
All pictures from Barbara

Outings Schedule

04/24/15	Old Settlers Smokies backpack (S)	W Chambers
05/02/15	Towee Creek/Coker Creek day hike (S)	B Rudder
05/02/15	Little Cedar Mountain day hike (E/M)	B Butters
05/09/15	Trail maintenance (S)	S Barnes

Wednesday Day Hikes - Che Carico - The Wednesday group hikes many of the same trails as the weekend hikers. Since a schedule is not published in advance, please call Che at **(423) 886-5135** on Monday or Tuesday and listen to the week's hiking plan or before Sunday email her at MidWeek@chatthiking.com to be added to the email distribution list to receive the week's plan every week.

Hike Difficulty Ratings

The information below is provided as a guide only. Each hiker assumes the risks associated with hiking in the great outdoors, including the responsibility of paying any bills associated with rescue efforts or medical care. The wise hiker always carries water, food, and first aid items.

Easy (E): 6 miles or less; mostly level or only slight incline.

Moderate (M): 6-10 miles with an elevation gain that will generally not exceed 350 feet per mile, with a total elevation gain of no more than 1000 ft.

Moderately Strenuous (MS): 6-10 miles in length, but include rocky trail conditions, tricky stream crossings, or elevation gain of more than 1000 ft but less than 2000 ft.

Strenuous (S): a distance of 10-14 miles or with more than 2000 ft total elevation gain, but no more than 3000 ft.

Extremely Strenuous (S+): Usually involves distances of more than 14 miles or more than 3000 ft in elevation gain. There might be very steep/rugged climbs, deep stream crossings, or unmentioned trails.

Pace: Standard pace is 2 miles an hour; less on steep or rugged terrain. Fast pace is 2.5 to 3 miles an hour or more and may not vary much regardless of terrain.

Attention: When calling to go on an outing, please specify exact number of people who will be attending. Do NOT just show up with a friend or family member unannounced! This puts your hike leader in an awkward position as most hikes involve some planning of transportation. Also we frequently hike in wilderness areas and other places where the number of hikers in a group is limited. If that is the case, and the hike is already full, you may be turned away!

Cancellations: Hike leaders are entirely at the own discretion regarding the weather. It is possible that a leader may decide that, due to weather conditions, they do not feel safe hiking on that day. Lightning kills many people every year and can strike hikers on a trail. Also many of the areas where we hike are prone to flash floods that can kill or injure. The leader will call if deciding to cancel before the day of the hike. In the event that the decision to cancel is made on the day of the hike, the leader will give you the courtesy of showing up at the designated meeting place to announce that the hike is cancelled.

Other Items

Meeting of April 6, 2015

Our last club meeting was held on Monday, April 6. Our guest speaker was Shane Petty, Chief Ranger, Emergency Services Coordinator Tennessee State Parks. Mr Petty has considerable experience in the area of search and rescue and has incorporated the use of blood hounds in searches for many years. He told us the different types of searches, such as lost individuals, drowning victims, abductions, and criminals. He gave us some good tips for assistance in a search, like knowing what clothing the individual was last seen wearing, or looking for an identical shoe print. One of the main things he stresses, especially to children, is that if you become lost, or separated from your group, to stay put. Lastly, Mr Petty regaled us with stories of past searches and the great lengths he has gone to find the person he is looking for; such as following a small herd of cows to the location of one person, and the time he literally pulled a mans prosthetic leg off. That was an accident, of course!

Please plan to attend our next club meeting, which will be held on Monday, June 1. Kendra Cross reporting

Summer Len Foote overnight trip

I have 10 rooms reserved, 20 people for Wednesday, August 19. They have had a rate increase since our February trip. The new rate is \$99.00 per room, or \$49.50 per person. I have 10 people with interest from the first notice. Please let me know for sure if interested since we now have the date. Wayne

Club Officers and Support:

President - Gary Petty (423) 488-5954

Vice President - Stormy McGauley (423) 505-4525

Treasurer - Donald Box (423) 892-6754

Secretary - Kendra Cross (423) 785-7425

Outings - Boe Rudder (423) 400-1103

Newsletter/Webmaster - John Rowland (423) 802-7704

Membership Database - John Rowland (423) 802-7704

Membership Information - Chris O'Conner (423) 991-3220

Trail Maintenance - Steve Barnes (423) 339-3019

Midweek Outings - Cheryl Carico (423) 886-5135

Website: chatthiking.com (includes link to newsletter)