



Newsletter of the
Chattanooga Hiking Club

May 2017

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 June 5, 2017

Dues were due on April 1, 2017

If it has just slipped your mind, please go to the renewal form available on the website, under the “About Us” tab. You can print it and mail it in along with your check. And *please* tell us about any changes to your address, phone number, email, etc.

Club T-shirts

If you're interested in buying a Chattanooga Hiking Club t-shirt, Bo has worked to put together an opportunity to do so. Check out this link:

https://stores.inksoft.com/chattanooga_hiking_club



Walls of Jericho - Bob Butters

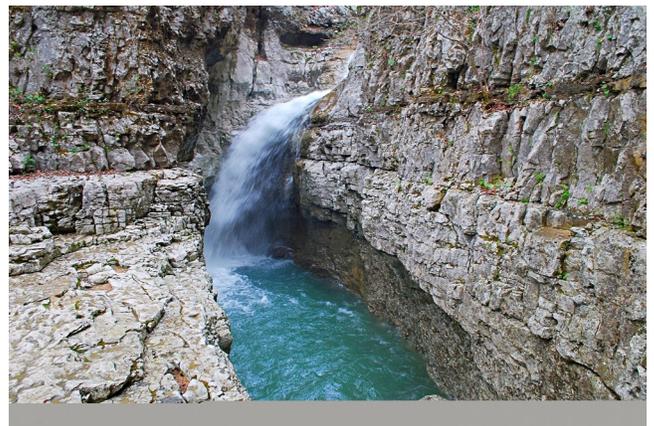


Reports from the Field

Walls of Jericho

Wednesday March 29, 2017

Although many long time club hikers may say upon completion of this hike, "that was my last time to hike this trail!", they do line up and go again! It is so hard to resist the lure of this 3.5 mile downhill trek, then 3.5 mile uphill trek and the beautiful woodland filled with bluebells near midpoint. Always fearful of missing their peak, not so this year and several new to the trail hikers were awed. After enjoying the blue hue of the prettily blooming flowers, the trail leads one across a log bridge over Hurricane Creek and on to the Turkey Creek rock hopping/wading crossing. The trail dead ends in a canyon with cascading water and waterfalls. Getting to the most hidden waterfall requires some careful climbing up to a level above the lunch site. Hikers today did just that and found the water in the pool below the most remote waterfall to be at a record fill point. Lunch was leisurely in the sunshine with water roaring loudly enough to make conversation difficult. Then began the trek back passing again Blood Root, Anemone, Trillium, Spring Beauty, Trout Lily, Bluebells, Twin Leaf not yet blooming, Stone Crop, Hepatica and Wild Geranium. A long drive but safely home were: Patti Giles, Sonja Parker, Bob Rahn, Wanda McCarter, Barbara McCollum, Angela Davis, Suzanne Dorough, Kathy Seymour, Renee Grace, Susan Basch, Bob Butters, Boe Rudder, Mac Dean, Teresa Dean, Linda Keown, Bill Needham, Susan Garrett, Barbara Miller, Terri Holcomb, Janice Carter, Gayle Monk, Diehl Boggs, Merry Boggs, Che Carico reporting, and John Rowland leading.



Upper Falls, Walls of Jericho - Bob Butters

Upcoming Outings

Saturday May 6, 2017

Rock Creek

Location: Cherokee National Forest near Ocoee, TN

Distance:

Elevation Gain:

Rating:

Pace:

Driving time: 1 hour one way

We will drop the hikers at the trailhead on Hwy. 64 and park most of the cars at Thunder Rock CG. We will hike East to West. The trail drops off for the first 1/2 mile along Laurel Creek and then begins a steady ascend for the next several miles in the Little Frog Wilderness Area. Because it is a wilderness area there are no trail markings. However, the trail is very easy to follow and there are some blazes from prior to the Wilderness Area designation. After the gap, the trail descends rapidly to Rock Creek. It follows Rock Creek for about a 1/2 mile. We will then climb to the ridge top and go along it until we intersect Dry Pond Lead (BMT) and hike back down to Thunder Rock CG. There should be some late blooming wildflowers along both creeks. We will stop for a snack along Rock Creek. Leader is Boe Rudder, 432.400.1103

Friday-Saturday May 12-13, 2017

Smokies, Cherokee area, NC

Location: Cherokee, NC

Distance: Friday 3.2 miles and Saturday 8.1 miles

Elevation Gain: 2,000 feet

Rating: Strenuous

Pace: Standard

Driving time: 2 ½ hours one way

Friday, May 12, we'll drive to Cherokee, NC to work on map marking Friday afternoon in Smokemont. The two trails will be Tow String at 2.2 miles and the 1-mile Benton MacKaye connector trail. This will require an overnight stay in or near Cherokee, NC.

Saturday, May 13, will be a shuttle hike which will begin on Big Cove and Straight Fork Roads. A car will be left at the Hyatt Ridge trailhead. We'll continue to Round Bottom and begin hiking on Beech Gap II which is 2.8 miles and 1,800 feet in elevation gain. For the map markers, we'll hike 1.8 in and out to Campsite 44 which is a slight descent. After the campsite diversion, we'll hike downhill on the Hyatt Ridge trail (3.5 miles) back to our cars on Straight Fork Road. The Hyatt Ridge car will take drivers back to Round Bottom. For those who aren't able to travel on Friday, a car pool will be organized from Ooltewah to Cherokee on Saturday morning.

Reports from the Field

Piney River

Wednesday March 22, 2017

This is a favorite trail for Chattanooga hikers as it is fairly gentle underfoot, features either Duskin Creek or the Piney River all along the way, and usually has an amazing variety of wildflowers blooming. The flowers had not emerged so much but we saw one or two of many: white trillium, spring beauty, trout lily, star chickweed, blood root, anemone, yellow buckeye, hepatica, and wild geranium. The Shut In Gap Road to the Duskin Creek trail head is often so rutted that it is hazardous - likely for cars to bottom out. So we first checked out the route to Newby Camp with the idea of beginning there. From here Shut In Gap road appeared to be in good shape and we decided to give it a try and had an easy time getting to Duskin Creek after all. Lunch was at Log Camp with ample seating by the river. The biggest obstacle was the McDonald Branch crossing. There was not a lot of water, but it was running fast and enough to make the rocks very slippery. This made crossing tense and many looked up and down the branch hoping to find a safer way to cross. I wonder how many finally just stepped into the water? I know I did! Enjoying this glorious day were: Boe Rudder, Susan Basch, Suzanne Dorough, Wanda McCarter, Bill Needham, Bill Kinnaman, Bill LaRoque, Charlie Breeding, Bob Rahn, Mac Dean, Teresa Dean, Patti Giles, Renee Grace, Stormy McGauley, Susan Garrett, Wayne Chambers, Karen Ramsey, Kathy Seymour, and Che Carico, reporting.

Smokies Forney Ridge, Springhouse Branch, Noland Creek

Saturday April 1, 2017

Sixteen hikers enjoyed a picture perfect day in the Smokies. From the Ooltewah departure, to the prehike shuttle preparations and meetup at Clingmans Dome, everything went as planned. It was a foggy start on the newly-reopened Clingmans Dome Road, but the nearer we drove to the top, the more brilliant the sky became which served as a warm welcome to the highest point in the Smokies. Tom, Diehl, Merry, Bonnie, and Ken were instrumental in setting up a successful shuttle by meeting earlier in the day at the Noland Creek trailhead. Temperatures were in the low 40's when 15 hikers began the descent on the Forney Ridge trail while reliable Sherpa Tom returned to Noland Creek to hike in and meet the group. A quick stop at Andrews Bald, one of two maintained balds in the park, provided a beautiful spot for a group photo. After leaving Andrews Bald, the trail became a bit eroded and rocky for about a half mile. A sunny section of the Forney Ridge Trail was selected for lunch before continuing on to the Springhouse Branch trail. The further we descended the more wildflowers we saw. From Trout Lily to Robin's Plantain, the hike leader kept a list of all sixteen wildflowers identified by the group. At the Springhouse Branch and Noland Creek junction, everyone (including Sherpa Tom) enjoyed a nice break at the campground picnic tables before tackling the final 4.1 miles. Both Springhouse Branch and Noland Creek were abundantly flowing with all the recent rain. The hike concluded an hour ahead of schedule and everyone loaded up in the four vehicles to begin the long drive back to Clingmans Dome. It was a little cool and windy at Clingmans Dome, but everyone was happy to (next page...)

Reports from the Field

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have accomplished 12.5 miles with over 4,000 feet in elevation descent and be headed for home before dark. We said our goodbyes and went our separate ways. Special thanks to Tom Long, Diehl and Merry Boggs, Ken Smith, and Bonnie Smith for their help in setting up the shuttle. Newcomers Jenny Hopkins and Shelly Claiborne learned about shuttle hikes while Betsy Parson, Bill Needham, Boe Rudder, Che Carico, John Rowland, Joyce Campbell, Monty Simmons, and Terri Holcomb were happy to be back in the Smokies. My heartfelt thanks to everyone for your patience and cooperation in helping to make a very enjoyable day on the trail. Barbara McCollum, reporting.



The hikers and Sherpa Tom (inset) - Diehl Boggs



Pictures from Barbara

(continued...)

removal and they joined in on the rest of the downhill trek. We drove back downwards and along the gorge where water was diverted from generation and released from the dam to provide for whitewater for rafters and kayakers downstream of the dam and through the 1996 Olympic whitewater course. Those enjoying the refreshing weather and sublime views were Jean Dickinson, Bill Kinnaman, Kathy Seymour, Boe Rudder and Steve Barnes, reporting.

Frozen Head State Park Wednesday April 12, 2017

The hikers who came out today had never been to Frozen Head or it had been a very long time. The park is beautiful with immaculate campsites, the parking for which would accommodate long RVs as well as tents. After checking in at the ranger station and enjoying their "comfort" facilities we started out following Don Deakins from the Flat Fork trail head with Ross Gap as the first destination. The reputation for the uphill trek was proven true as we did indeed go uphill about 3.5 miles before finding a restful lunch spot beside an old mining retention pond. There were cattails growing in the water near the banks and fish of all sizes swimming lazily! Yes there was a bit more climbing ahead, along with downhill pitches along the ridge top - not so steep and not so long - until we came to the trail split and the relentless downhill stretch of the Bird Mountain trail back to the parking area. Features along the ridge top were high elevation (3100 feet) views of the surrounding mountains, Mushroom Rock, interesting but typical Cumberland Plateau rock formations as well as many wildflowers: Blood Root, Anemone, Hepatica, Star Chickweed, White and Yellow Trillium and Spring Beauty. Feeling quite accomplished for having hiked this infamous Frozen Head portion of the CT were: Bob Rahn, Edie Behringer, Susan Garrett, Charlie Breeding, Boe Rudder, Betsy Parson, Renee Grace, Barbara McCollum, Terri Holcomb, Wendy Gunn, Delores Ladd, Che Carico reporting, and Don Deakins leading.



Picture from Don

Wolf Creek Saturday April 1, 2017

A few hikers met on a spring-like morning and proceeded to Cherokee National Forest. Once there we wound our way up the Ocoee Gorge, turned at the bridge to the No. 3 powerhouse, and then on uphill via FS45. The upper roads make for a winding ride to the Wolf Creek trailhead. There were a few campers alongside the road at Big Creek. After slipping on our boots and looking at the now expired wildfire information in the signboard we climbed the first uphill section where we often do trail maintenance. This section looked good except for several blowdowns that Bill and JD elected to saw and remove. We proceeded up the ridge and occasionally stopped to enjoy the distant views from this scenic trail. The day was sunny with very few clouds in the sky and the temperature was mild with an occasional breeze. We stopped at the Junction with the Chestnut Mtn. trail and enjoyed a brief snack before proceeding back downhill. Bill and JD had made good progress on the branch

Lula Lake work day and hike Wednesday April 19, 2017

We met Ronnie Hilburn at the Lula Lake work shed, then piled into the fewest vehicles possible and crossed the road to the site of a new trail system that will connect the Lula Lake property to Covenant College. Armed with loppers and clippers we vigorously attacked the many exposed large roots in the trail. We made considerable progress over a couple of hours, then as planned, we switched over to hiking the rest of the loop, being treated to the sight of many beautiful pink wild azaleas along the way. Most of us then adjourned to Café on the Corner on Lookout Mountain for lunch, and enjoyed a most pleasant reunion with Richard Park. Thanks for all their hard work to Barbara Miller, Betsy Parson, Bill Kinnaman, Bob Rahn, Jenny Hopkins, Linda Keown, Mac Dean, Teresa Dean, Renee Grace, Patti Giles, Wanda McCarter, and Che Carico. John Rowland reporting.

Reports from the Field

Smokies Cataloochee area

Friday-Sunday April 21-23, 2017

Another trip to the Great Smoky Mountains was successful for 15 members of the club and one guest from the Over the Hill Hiking Group (OHHG) of Decatur, Georgia. The trip included day hiking, backpacking, wildflowers, historical structures, cemeteries, stream crossings, socializing, dining, and fun for all! Friday's 11-mile hike involved a complicated shuttle between Mt. Sterling Gap and Pretty Hollow Gap in Cataloochee, but an overnight stay on Thursday in Newport, Tennessee helped with the early morning shuttle and the 9:00 a.m. start time was accomplished. Friday's hike started with a 400-foot climb out of Mt. Sterling Gap to the Long Bunk trail. Along the descent, the Long Bunk trail was a spectacular display of wildflowers. From Trillium to Nodding Mandarin, it was a botanical delight. At the intersection of Long Bunk and Little Cataloochee, the map markers were intent on completing that 1 mile section to Mt. Sterling Road while others headed on to the Little Cataloochee Baptist Church for lunch. Afterwards, it was up hill on the Little Cataloochee trail before descending into Pretty Hollow Gap. The fast hikers were able to help with the after-hike shuttle. Nonshuttle hikers enjoyed hanging out in the Beech Grove School (circa 1901) built along the banks of Palmer Creek during a rain shower while waiting for the shuttle cars to arrive. Enjoying the trails and historical sites in Little Cataloochee Valley were Angela Evans, Betsy Parson, Bill Needham, Boe Rudder, Bonnie Smith, Che Carico, John Hyler, Monty Simmons, Rick Glisson, Sonja Parker, Tim Chomyn, Tom Long, Tom Sewell (OHHG), Wayne Chambers, and Barbara McCollum. Historical sites along the trails included Hannah Cemetery, Hannah Cabin, Dan Cook Cabin, and the Little Cataloochee Baptist Church and cemetery.



Pictures from Barbara and Tim

Seven hikers spent Friday night in Maggie Valley and started Saturday morning with a delicious breakfast at Joey's Pancake House voted "Best Pancake House in North Carolina." Saturday's hike started at Beech Gap I at Round Bottom. It was a 2,000 foot climb to the Balsam Mountain trail and on to the Laurel Gap Shelter for lunch. Three club backpackers (Bonnie Smith, Ken Smith, and Barbara McCollum) claimed their spot in the shelter before continuing on in pursuit of the 11.6 miles in and out on the Balsam Mountain Trail. Four day hikers (Che Carico, Tim Chomyn, Betsy Parson, and Monty Simmons) continued on to the Mt. Sterling Ridge Trail and descended into Cataloochee on the Pretty Hollow Gap Trail which also provided a spectacular showing of wildflowers including a most abundant display of

Reports from the Field

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Stone Crop. (From Che: Star chickweed, spring beauty and trout lilies blooming as far into the forest as the eye could see. Also spotted about 100 feet up the Beech Gap trail were at least 5 painted trillium. There were "patches" of dutchman's britches and squirrel corn larger than any of us had ever seen! Breathtaking beauty!!!) Day hikers ended the day with 14+ miles, a nice dinner in Maggie Valley, and retrieval of the other shuttle car at Round Bottom. All day hikers were pleased to mark off 3 more trails despite a late-night return home.



Pictures from Tim

A deluge of rain on Saturday night made for a cozy night in the Laurel Gap Shelter along with 8 others including a well-behaved Boy Scout troop from Asheville, NC. Saturday's mileage for the backpackers was 16+ miles. Rain continued on Sunday morning for a soggy return to Pretty Hollow Gap via Mount Sterling Ridge trail. Four stream crossings didn't deter the backpackers and a few more marked trails equals happy hikers. The two hikers who hiked all three days (Bonnie Smith and Barbara McCollum) racked up 36 miles while the Friday and Saturday day hikers racked up 25+ miles and Ken Smith, the backpacker, hiked 26 miles. Special thanks to Tom Long for formulating Friday's shuttle plan and to all drivers (Angela Evans, Che Carico, Tim Chomyn, Tom Long, Tom Sewell, and Bonnie Smith) who helped to make another successful trip to the Smokies. Barbara McCollum, reporting.

Shake Rag Hollow and Natural Bridge Wednesday April 26, 2017

The Shake Rag Hollow is famous for spring flowers and the site for guided wildflower walks. You would have to go once a week during the month of April to catch all the flowers there as their blooming times are staggered. As we went down into the gorge from the stone gate entrance to Sewanee and on the perimeter trail, we began to see evidence of a massive white trillium bloom. They were spent today, however. We found other beauties to take their place: larkspur, jacks, lots of lavender phacelia, vassay trillium, lots of May apples with their white blossoms hanging under their umbrella leaves, star chickweed, and 3 pink lady slippers!!! Water was falling swiftly from the bluff above in the creeks which had bridges or enough rocks to hop. The climb out onto the Beckwith trail at the Greens View end is steep and has big boulder steps. Going out this way, however, allowed us to loop back to the cars along the Beckwith trail. Lunch was leisurely enjoyed at the Natural Bridge (from 41A go left on 56 and watch for signs). Enjoying Jenny Hopkins oatmeal apricot cookies and the beauty of the area were: Susan Garrett, Mac Dean, Teresa Dean, Allen Dance, Linda Keown, Bill Kinnaman, Jean Dickinson, Bob Rahn, Tom Carter, Susan Basch, Barry Ligon, Beverly Ligon, Edith Behringer, Nancy Hoover, Hank Konigsmark, Wayne Chambers, and Che Carico, reporting.

Outings Schedule

05/06/17 Rock Creek day hike
 05/12-13/17 Smokies day hikes (S)
 06/02-04/17 Smokies backpack (S)

B Rudder
 B McCollum
 B McCollum

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.

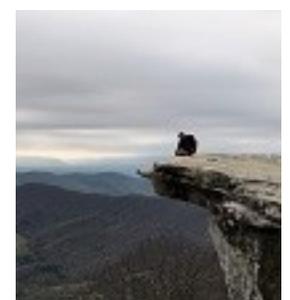
Attention: When calling to go on an outing, please specify exact number of people who will be attending. Do NOT just show up with a friend or family member unannounced! This puts your hike leader in an awkward position as most hikes involve some planning of transportation. Also we frequently hike in 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 Stuff

Our Sarah...

has recently spent three weeks on the AT in southwestern Virginia, covering 328 miles. She apparently had a great time, made some wonderful friends, and certainly took some marvelous pictures. Here's just a few of the pictures.



Rock/Creek Discount Info

Show your Chattanooga Hiking Club Membership Card, along with your ID at any Rock/Creek Store.

Chattanooga Hiking Club - 10% off one Item

*Applies to one non-sale, in-stock item. Can not be combined with other discounts or promotions. Offer does not apply to gift cards, boats, boards, coolers, & electronics. **In-store only.**

Club Officers and Support:

President - Gary Petty (423) 488-5954

Vice President - Stormy McGauley (423) 505-4525

Treasurer - Donald Box (423) 892-6754

Secretary -

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)