

THE CHEROKEE HIKER

JANUARY 2026

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NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

"Of all the paths you take in life, make sure a few of them are dirt." John Muir

Thank you, Jennifer Schroll, for a very merry Christmas Party. The food was both abundant and delicious. The Dirty Santa was dirty, but fun. The time spent together could not have been better. Even the induction ceremony for our Executive Committee, where I learned I was the Ace of Hearts, was creative and meaningful. I look forward to another year of working with Otis Pannell - Vice President, Jennifer Schroll - Treasurer, Phyllis Anderson - Publicist, Rick Harris - Webmaster, and Margaret Callahan - Hostess. Collectively, we will work together seeking to ensure the club will continue to provide opportunities to enjoy as many walks, hikes, backpacking, canoeing, and bicycling experiences as possible in the year to come.

As we begin a new year, I am reminded of an allegory that goes something like this: Imagine that you receive a call on Thursday, January 1, 2026, that you have won a one dollar lottery ticket that will pay you one penny every second for the years to come. The only stipulation with your winnings is that you are required to spend every penny given to you by the close of each 24-hour day. Keep spending the pennies, and more pennies will be given. You hang up the phone and run to your calculator. Just how many seconds are in a day, anyway? Sixty seconds for one minute times sixty minutes in one hour equals 3,600 seconds. Let's see, 3,600 times 24 hours in a day . . . wow, that's 86,400 seconds every day. That means 86,400 pennies every 24 hours. That's \$864 a day or \$6,048 a week or \$314,496 a year. What a win! So much for pretend. Far better than the lottery is the reality of what will take place on the morning of

January 1, 2026. On that morning you will be given the gift of time which equals 86,400 seconds per day, which, of course, equals twenty-four hours each day. The reality is that the same restrictions apply as if you were given pennies per second because the amount of time given each day can only be used on that day. From today's dawn until tomorrow's dawn, you have a precisely determined amount of time. As someone has put it, "Life is like a coin. You can spend it any way you want to, but you can spend it only once."

How you will spend this gift of time in the year to come is your choice. Hopefully you will spend part of the gift of time with our Cherokee Hiking Club. During the month of December, we finalized a 20-page calendar chock full of adventures for 2026. As you decide how to spend your seconds in the year to come, consider spending several with us. It's well worth your investment.

Dues for 2026 are now due. If you haven't done so, please mail a \$15 check (or 1,500 pennies) to Jennifer Schroll, 1295 Crown Street NW, Cleveland, TN 37312. This will cover one family household. Please make out the check to Cherokee Hiking Club.

See you at our next scheduled club meeting at the Etowah Senior Center on Thursday, February 12, 2026. Our presentation will be The Five Utah National Parks Adventure presented by Jennifer Schroll.

Rob Coombs, Club President

REMINDER:

TO ATTEND ANY EVENT, YOU MUST CONTACT THE EVENT LEADER AS THERE ARE TIMES DUE TO WEATHER OR OTHER CONDITIONS WHERE A HIKE IS CANCELED OR RESCHEDULED. THE EVENT LEADER WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CONTACT YOU IF YOU DO NOT GET ON THE ATTENDEE LIST.

JANUARY EVENTS

Thursday, January 15, 2026 - Monthly Hike Club Breakfast

Join us for conversation over breakfast at 8:30 a.m. at Old Fort Restaurant on 25th Street in Cleveland. For more information, contact Jack Callahan at 423-284-7885.

Friday, January 16, 2026 - Hooper Bald / Huckleberry Knob Hike

Hike Leaders: Rick & Brenda Harris (and Nahme, our dog). Location: Cherohala Skyway Visitor Center. Departure Time: 10 a.m. Return Time: 3 p.m. Hike Difficulty is Moderate. What to Bring: Cold weather gear; lunch; water. Description: THIS HIKE IS OPEN TO DOGS AND TO MEMBERS OF BOTH THE BMTA AND CHC. We are hoping for snow to make this a memorable hike. The round trip to Hooper Bald (5440' high) is 2 miles, and the round trip to Huckleberry Knob (5540' high) is 1.8 miles. Afterwards, when we return to Tellico Plains, we can gather for supper and beverages at one of the local restaurants, perhaps the Peach Street Grill and the Tellico Brewing Company for some great cuisine and a local brew. If the

weather is the wrong type of nasty (cold rain instead of snow), our rain date will be Friday, Jan 23. Contact: Email: HarrisRi1947@gmail.com Cell phone: 513-260-1184.

Saturday, January 24, 2026 - Dry Pond Lead

Hike Leader: Randy Morris. Location: Meet at Thunder Rock Campground. Departure Time: 9:00 a.m. Return Time: 2 p.m. Hike Difficulty is Strenuous. What to Bring: Food, water, appropriate clothing. Brief Description: Be prepared for a 1700-foot gain as the first half of this hike In and Out hike is uphill. Bring appropriate clothing, food, and water. We should conclude this hike around 2:00 p.m. For additional information contact Randy Morris at 423-650-0485 or randytaylormorris@gmail.com.

Wednesdays, January 7, 14, 21, 28 - Wednesday Walks on the Cleveland Greenway

Every Wednesday Jack Callahan leads a 3.75-mile walk on the Cleveland Greenway, meeting at the lower end of the parking lot across from Perkits and the Gondolier restaurant adjacent to Keith Street. Meet time is currently 4:30 p.m. A note on the walk is sent out the beginning of each week on Messenger. Hike difficulty is rated Easy. Contact Jack Callahan at 423-284-7885 if you want to be included in the messages.

FEBRUARY AT-A-GLANCE

Tuesday, February 3, 2026 - Dutch Settlement

Hike Leader: Clair Sullivan. Location: Dutch Settlement. Contact: Cell phone: 404-849-0872.

Saturday, February 7, 2026 - Lowry Top

Hike Leader: Jennifer Schroll. Location: Hike Difficulty: Moderately Strenuous. Brief Description: Hike up from Quinn Springs toward Oswald Dome. Contact: jennifergeologist@gmail.com; Cell phone: 423-284-1256.

Tuesday, February 10, 2026 - Candies Creek Greenway and Wetlands

Hike Leader: James Anderson. Anyone planning to attend is encouraged to text or call James Anderson, the event leader, at 423-715-8824 so you will be aware of any event changes or cancellations.

Thursday, February 12, 2026 - Monthly Club Meeting

We will meet at the Etowah Senior Center in Etowah at 6:00 p.m. for a potluck supper and a presentation by Jennifer Schroll on the Cherokee Club Utah Hiking Trip.

Thursday, February 19, 2026 - Monthly Hike Club Breakfast

Join us for conversation over breakfast at 8:30 a.m. at Old Fort Restaurant on 25th Street in Cleveland. For more information, contact Jack Callahan at 423-284-7885.

Friday, February 20, 2026 - Bald River Falls in the Winter Hike Leaders - Brenda & Rick Harris (and Nahme, our dog) will be 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Location: Cherohala Skyway Visitor Center. If the weather is terrible on Feb 20, we will reschedule the hike to Feb 27. Contact: Email: HarrisRi1947@gmail.com Cell phone: 513-260-1184.

Wednesdays, February 4, 11, 18, 25 - Wednesday Walks on the Cleveland Greenway

Every Wednesday Jack Callahan leads a 3.75-mile walk on the Cleveland Greenway, meeting at the lower end of the parking lot across from Perkits and the Gondolier restaurant adjacent to Keith Street. Meet time is currently 4:30 p.m. A note on the walk is sent out the beginning of each week on Messenger. Hike difficulty is rated Easy. Contact Jack Callahan at 423-284-7885 if you want to be included in the messages.

PLAN AHEAD

Group Campout Stone Mountain State Park, North Carolina, May 10-14, 2026

Campground includes primitive group sites, individual sites without power and full-service sites with electric and water. There are restrooms with showers. There are numerous hiking trails with huge, exposed granite dome and waterfalls, and a historic homestead. A short drive to MP 213 on the Blue Ridge Parkway is the Blue Ridge Music Center with live Appalachian music every day.

To accommodate the combination of campers wanting individual sites without power and sites with full service, and to be camping together, consider sites 2-6 and 46-50. This is just a suggestion, and folks may choose any site. This is a link that shows a photo of each site to help in deciding a campsite:
<https://www.campsitephotos.com/campground/nc/stone-mountain-state-park/>

For questions about the event, contact Jack Callahan, event leader. 423-284-7885.

HIGHLIGHTS OF PAST EVENTS

Linda Davis Memorial Greenway Hike (Saturday, November 29)

Two club members did a round trip on the southern half of the Cleveland/Bradley County Greenway on Saturday, November 29. This yearly Saturday after Thanksgiving stroll is done in memory of former member Linda Davis who began the annual events on the Chattanooga greenway before the Cleveland one was built. It is nice to be able to remember Linda while planning/leading this hike since she was a special soul. The two strollers enjoyed a sunny, brisk autumn day while attempting to solve many of the world's problems through conversation. Since the club populace at large was skeptical of the events these two shared in a hike write-up concerning Big Frog Mountain years ago (Dallas Cowboy cheerleader appearance for example), I will not share what we saw or any answers to world issues that we came up with. However, we had a nice time walking off a few Thanksgiving Day calories.

Strollers were James Anderson and Randy Morris, reporting.

Sunday, December 7, 2025, Annual Planning Meeting – Turnout was excellent at the annual planning meeting at Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church. Be sure to check out the attached annual calendar so that you can plan to join us on some of our many adventures.

Saturday, December 13, 2025 - Annual Christmas Party - The Christmas party was held at the Etowah Senior Center. After the meal, the 2026 officers were inducted, and then many participated in the "Unwashed Santa" (Dirty Santa) gift exchange.



Induction of Officers, 2026



This is a rare photo of Jack Smiling 😊...



Janet resting a second....



Margaret has it under control...



Thursday, December 18, 2025 - Monthly Hike Club Breakfast Join us for conversation over breakfast at 8:30 a.m. at Old Fort Restaurant on 25th Street in Cleveland. For more information, contact Jack Callahan at 423-284-7885.



Wednesdays, December 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 - Wednesday Walks on the Cleveland Greenway

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MINUTES

There are no minutes to report as there was no business meeting in December.

NON-CLUB OPPORTUNITIES

As always, go to the specific sponsor web page for more information on these events if you plan on attending.

IT'S FREE!!! Sandhill Crane Festival, Saturday, January 17th-Sunday, January 18th
8:00-4:00 p.m.

This event is lots of fun. Visit the food and craft vendors at the Birchwood Community Center where there will also be an American Eagle Association raptor presentation. Free shuttle buses take you to the site to observe the cranes. See flyer below. Visit www.SandhillFestival.com to see complete agenda.

January 17-18, 2026

 **Birchwood, Tennessee**

What You'll Experience:



Birdwatching:

Witness thousands of Sandhill Cranes, eagles, and waterfowl at the Hiwassee Refuge



Entertainment:

Enjoy live music, folk singers, and arts & crafts vendors.



Cultural Immersion:

Explore Native American folklore, music, and crafts at the Cherokee Removal Memorial.



Conservation:

Learn about crane conservation efforts.



How It Works:

- ✓ Park at the Birchwood Community Center
- ✓ Ride FREE shuttle buses to viewing sites at the Hiwassee Refuge
- ✓ Use provided telescopes and get guidance from volunteers to spot cranes and other wildlife



FREE Family-Friendly Event!

 Park at Birchwood Community Center. Shuttle buses provided.

www.SandhillCraneFestival.com

(Flyer credit: Camp Wilderness Wildlife Center, Inc.)

TELICO/OCOEE VOLUNTEER TRAIL CREW

Check the Facebook page for future workdays.

BENTON MACKAYE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

See the calendar for upcoming events and trail maintenance sites.