

The Cherokee Hiker

July 2007

Volume 23, Issue 7

Cherokee Hiking Club, Inc. • 2349 Varnell Road • Cleveland, TN 37311

CHC Calendar

- July 1** **Monthly Meeting**
July 14 **Conasauga River Trail**
July 22 **Benton Falls Trail**

If you wish to receive *The Cherokee Hiker*, 2007 membership dues are \$10. Make checks payable to Cherokee Hiking Club (address above) or remit cash to Ann Gray.

JULY HIKES

July 14 – Conasauga River Trail (#61), 4.6 miles, Easy to Moderate.

Hike Leaders: Boyd & Martha Firestone, (H) 336-3133 or (C) 309-8024.

We will car shuttle for a one-way hike beginning at the upper end. The trail follows the ridge through a wooded section for 2 miles and then along the river on an abandoned roadbed for the remaining 2.6 miles. Meet at 8:30AM in the rear parking area of Hardee's in Ocoee. Bring a lunch & plenty of water.

July 22 – Benton Falls Trail, 3.3 miles, Easy.

Hike Leader: Edmond Gray, 336-1070.

An easy 3.3 mile roundtrip hike to a beautiful, stair-stepping waterfall. This is a perfect Sunday afternoon hike. Meet at the Medical Center Pharmacy at 2:00PM, Ocoee Hardee's at 2:25PM or at the trailhead at 3:00PM. Caution: Dogs not leashed would cause dangerous situations for hikers at the stairs above the falls.

NOTE: If you intend to participate in a hike, please contact the hike leader **in advance** of the hike.

Other JULY Events

None Scheduled.

Club News

June Meeting Minutes: 15 members & 1 guest met on Thursday, June 7 at Sugarloaf Park in Ocoee. Following a picnic style potluck supper, the meeting was called to order by Clayton Pannell. Secretary Jane Bohannon read the minutes of the previous meeting and they were approved as read. Treasurer Ann Gray reported a current balance of \$***left out on purpose***. No Old Business. New Business: Linda Davis was present & in fine form. However, she reported it would be necessary to cancel the Chestatee River Canoe Trip (originally scheduled for July 28) due to low water levels caused by the drought. Completed & Upcoming hikes discussed (see above & below). Places for the August & September meetings will be determined at the next meeting. (Any volunteers?) The meeting was adjourned, followed by a planning session for the Natural Bridge/Red River camping trip in Kentucky.

July Meeting: Sunday, July 1 at the home of **Bill & Ann Gray**, *****left out on purpose***** @ **7:30PM**. Bring a covered dish to share and a lawn chair. At dusk, enjoy a big fireworks display at the Tri-State Exhibition Center (courtesy of Mt. Olive COG) **from the Gray's front yard!**

Directions: *****left out on purpose*****.

Recent Hike & Event Reports

May 19 - 26 Buffalo River Canoe Trip – Six excited souls arrived at the Buffalo River on Sunday, May 20. After checking into our cabin, we headed to the hiking trail at the Tyler Ben visitors center. We hiked several trails covering about 3.5 miles. We returned to our cabin to enjoy a delicious supper of cornbread & beef stew prepared by Clayton's sister, Martha. Monday morning, after making arrangements for a car shuttle to take out at Rush Landing on Friday, we headed to the put in for our 5 day river trip. After all three canoes were equally loaded, we headed down river. The current was great for floating and the water level perfect. We paddled about 5.6 miles and found a large sandbar just past Gilbert, where we set up camp for the night. We spent the day fishing and visiting an old country store in Gilbert. A good night of rest and Tuesday brought another beautiful day of floating. We did 11.8 miles this day. Fished & floated in a wonderful current again. Martha had not floated with Clayton before and assured me that Clayton was expecting more paddling from her than I was doing with Carroll. Another beautiful night camped on a sand bar. The birds were in full chorus every night and the Whip-poor-wills sang us to sleep at night or kept us from sleeping. Wednesday morning we had a few showers, but they were appreciated to keep us cooled off. We floated 10.8 miles this day and spent another night on a sandbar with the wonderful sounds of nature to lull us to sleep. Thursday was a great day on the river where I caught the largest fish of the trip, but still not big enough to keep since the small mouth bass had to be 14 inches long. We arrived at Rush Landing around noon after 7.2 miles of paddling. Here we spent the night in a real campground with a toilet. Carroll & Clayton asked a nice gentleman to carry our gear in his SUV to the campground (1/2 mile). We climbed up the bank to our camping spot to unload the SUV when he arrived. For the first time in four days we had a perfectly level spot to set up our tents and a picnic table to cook and eat on. After putting up tents, Clayton, Martha, Nancy & I did a 4 mile hike in the Rush Landing area where we saw the remains of the old zinc mines that had kept the town alive from the 1890's – 1960's. Carroll & Jim attended camp while we were gone. We had a great supper and swim in the river to bath and cool off. Friday morning we hiked about 2 miles RT to the ghost town of Rush and visited many of the old buildings still standing. Our cars arrived a little after noon. While the girls packed up gear, the guys loaded canoes. We all headed toward Cleveland. Carroll, Clayton & I headed to Little Rock where we got a motel for the night and a bed and hot shower. Saturday morning we all headed for home. Nancy & Jim were going as far as they felt like driving so we parted ways. Martha had about 2 ½ hours drive on Friday before she would be home. We heard no complaining about the meals, so we took that as a sign of good eating on the river. Just in case any of you haven't tasted Clayton's blueberry pancakes, you need to go on the Kentucky trip in June just to eat his breakfast of pancakes. I have promised to bring blueberries from my freezer if he will make the pancakes. He has agreed. Sorry if you missed this trip. Clayton, Martha Albright, Jim & Nancy Carmen, Carroll and I were the canoeing group.

-Submitted by Carol Guhne

June 2 National Trails Day – 11 people participated in a work trip on the Flats Mountain Trail. We met at the Cherohala Visitor Center where we talked about the 15 year anniversary of National Trails Day. Free T-shirts and goodies and prizes were distributed to participants. We carpoled to the trailhead at Beehouse Gap and then hiked in about a mile to the wilderness boundary. From there we turned and worked back the rest of the day, re-grading the worst parts of the trail including 2 major

holes from blown down tree root balls. We completed over .1 mile (paced out at 630 feet). Temperatures were nice & cool due to overcast skies, but the humidity was high. Al Rymer graciously provided cold watermelon for everyone at the end of the day. Participants included Jane Bohannon, Elberta & Ross Broadway, Stephen Cartwright, Ken Jones, Esther & Ryan Nunley, Clayton Pannell, Al Rymer, Wade Smith and Evette Strickland.

June 8 - 15 Red River Gorge Camping Trip - 13 members of the Cherokee Hiking Club recently spent 8 days in Kentucky hiking, camping and discovering the Red River Gorge Geological Area. The gorge is a National Natural Landmark featuring over 100 natural sandstone arches which have resulted from wind and water sculpting over a 70 million year period. Many arches can be found in the 60 miles of hiking trails on the gorge.

FRI June 8: Arrival, we set up camp and then went on a short hike from our campground to Whittleton Arch. Total for the Day: 4.0 miles.

SAT June 9: Carroll & Carol Guhne and Debbie & Dave Flower biked 35 miles on a "Family Fun Ride" while Clayton Pannell, grandkids Cady & Matthew Pannell, Jane Bohannon and Aggie Scott hiked to Natural Bridge, one of the best known arches. The 900 ton arch bridge measures 65 feet high and 78 feet long. Very impressive! (2.4 miles)

SUN June 10: All 13 of us hiked Rock Bridge Trail (2.8 miles) and ate lunch at Angels Windows (.6 mile). 9 continued on to hike two moderate/strenuous trails: Swift Camp Creek and Wildcat Trails (2.6 miles). Total for the Day: 6 miles.

MON June 11: All took a car tour of the Red River Gorge by entering the gorge through the Nada Tunnel. This single lane tunnel was built to transport logs out of the Gorge by railroad. We stopped at several sites to hike, to view overlook vistas and visit the Gladie Cultural Environmental Learning Center and Historic Site. We watched several rock climbers scale the Military Wall at Martins Fork, (.6 mile) walked to Suspension Bridge on the Sheltopee Trace Trail, (1 mile) saw the impressive Sky Bridge Arch (1.8 miles) and finished the day by hiking the Whistling Arch Trail (.4 mile). Total for the Day: 3.8 miles.

TUE June 12: The Guhnes and Firestones rode the Sky Lift and the Flowers walked up to Natural Bridge (2.8 miles). The Flowers saw a 4 foot timber rattle snake resting on a log next to the trail. As a family with 4 very young children was herded past the snake, I heard the father say "This is why we have rules!" (You can imagine the rest of that conversation.) At the top of the arch we were amazed at the breathtaking scenery. By afternoon we caught up with the rest of the group and hiked Grays Arch Trail and a portion of Rough Trail. We saw an arch that looks like a "monkey face." (2.6 miles) Total for the Day: 5.4 miles.

WED June 13: The Firestones and Jane Bohannon returned home. Ten of us hiked to Double Arch Trail (2.4 miles). Then we split into 2 groups. The Carrolls & Aggie went to other trails and the Pannells & Flowers continued on to Courthouse Rock (.8 mile) and returned via the Auxler Ridge Trail (2.1 miles). Beautiful trails! Total for the Day: 5.8 miles.

THU June 14: The Guhnes returned home. The Pannells & the Flowers went to the Koomer Ridge Campground and hiked the road looking for the trailhead, which we found after asking the campground host (.5 mile). We hiked Cliff Trail, (1.4 miles) Silvermine Arch Trail, (3 miles, no silver & 75 steps) Hidden Arch Trail (2.4 miles) and Koomer Ridge Trail (2.6 miles). Total for the Day: 9.9 miles.

FRI June 15: We broke camp and everyone returned home safely.

The Red River Gorge is a unique and scenic area. It offers spectacular views of heavily forested slopes, ridges and cliffs that provide a stunning backdrop for more than 100 arches. We saw many of them by hiking a total of 37.3 miles. Participants: (Leader) Clayton Pannell & grandkids Cady & Matthew Pannell, brother & sister-in-law Johnny & Judy Pannell, Jane Bohannon, Boyd & Martha Firestone, Dave & Debbie Flower, Carroll & Carol Guhne and Aggie Scott.

-submitted by Debbie Flower

June 16 Siler's Bald - 2 brave hikers made the trip to Clingman's Dome. Temperatures were cool with low cloud cover and whipping winds. First we hiked a steep half mile to the tower into the clouds with zero visibility. We then made our way down the Appalachian Trail and started for Siler's Bald at 11:30. The first half hour we were wrapped in clouds. It was sort of dreamlike; the path was clear but looking toward the ridge caps you saw only cloud cover. Finally the sun broke through and the day improved. Birds were in abundance, flying back and forth in front of us. We saw several wildflowers including Bluets, Common Cinquefoil, Yellow Bead Lilly, Purple Rhododendron and Mountain Ashe just beginning to bloom. We saw fresh bear scat but never a bear. We ate lunch at the Double Springs Gap Shelter and signed the daybook there. At 2:00PM we decided to change this 9 mile hike into a 6 mile hike and started back toward Clingman's Dome. While taking a break, we were joined by a young man who is a ridge runner & member of the Smokey Mountain Hiking Club. He provides information to backpackers and checks on the shelters. We proceeded up the mountainside to Clingman's Dome, which was quite strenuous. We decided to return to the tower once more to see what we could not see earlier. We were able to see mountains north, south, east and west. We began the trip home after 5:00PM and stopped for supper at the Country Side Restaurant in Vonore. Hikers were Jane Bohannon and Esther Nunley.

-submitted by Esther Nunley

June 24 Hiwassee Canoe Trip – 4 members paddled from Hiwassee Outfitters to the Patty Bridge. The water was choppy enough to make maneuvering interesting. We saw a deer at the water's edge, a great blue heron, a turtle sunning and horses grazing in a pasture along the river. Esther & Ron collected "litter" from the water including a football, a paddle, bait and chain. The weather was great...until we got out of the water. Then the excitement started. Esther had remained with the canoes at Patty Bridge while we drove back to Hiwassee Outfitter's to retrieve vehicles. A severe storm developed with heavy rain. Esther and a stray cat took shelter under the Patty Bridge. She saw lightning strike a large barn and a hay/silage stack near the barn (across from the bridge). As we approached to pick up the canoes, we saw smoke billowing from the barn and fire trucks responding to the fire. We had a good time on the river but were very sorry for the farmer's great loss. Participants: Esther & Ron Nunley, Joanne Jackson and Jane Bohannon.

-submitted by Jane Bohannon

The Cherokee Hiker is published monthly by Cherokee Hiking Club, Inc. All are welcome to submit articles for publication. For additional information, please contact Evette Strickland, Newsletter Editor at EvetteDCS@aol.com or 338-1461.

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