

The Cherokee Hiker

May 2009 Volume 25, Issue 5

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

~CHC Calendar~

MAY HIKES & OTHER EVENTS

>May 2, 2009 – *Hike on Chattanooga Bike Trail is cancelled due to schedule conflicts with the leaders, Debbie Flowers and Esther Nunley.*

>May 7-10, 2009 – (Thur thru Sun) SEFTC Mt (Cumberland Gap). Chain saw certification along with many other activities.

Please see the Cherokee Hiking Club website at www.cherokeehikingclub.org

>May 16, 2009 – Sat Falls Branch Trail (2.6 mi), moderate. Leader: Randy Morris.

The Falls Branch Trail is a short but beautiful trail to an 80 foot waterfall. This trail is rated moderate because it is steep and slippery in the vicinity of the falls. Located just off the Cherohala Skyway, this trail features some of the best old-growth forest in the Citico area near the 1-mile point including one of the largest maples I have ever witnessed. We may “hit it lucky” and catch some wildflowers in this old-growth forest area. We will eat a snack at the base of the falls and enjoy the view for a while and then hike back up for an afternoon meal and club meeting at the home of Rick and Brenda Harris. We will “take our time on this hike” and enjoy nature. If you plan to go on the hike, please call hike leader Randy Morris by Friday evening May 15. We will have meeting places in Etowah and Tellico Plains—leaving from Tellico at 10:15 a.m.

>CHC monthly meeting (for May) will follow this hike. See instructions below.

>May 17, 2009 – Sun BMT Unicoi Gap to TN 68 (4.5 mi). Easy. Leader: Al Rymer. The information for this hike is unavailable.

>May 23, 2009 - Sat BMTA TN/NC Worktrip S from Sledrunner Gap. *Please see Cherokee Hiking Club website at www.cherokeehikingclub.org*

>May 24, 2009 – Sun Rhododendrum Trail (2.5 mi) easy. Leader: Jane Bohannon

This is a lovely, newly built trail which extends from the Thunder Rock/Ocoee Powerhouse#3 and follows the Ocoee coming out at the picnic area just below the Ocoee Whitewater Center. It is a very easy, (handicap accessible) walk with a beautiful section of board walk that juts out over the river where you can halt and gander at rafters and kayakers floating by. I will meet Athens and Etowah area hikers in Bi-Lo parking lot at Etowah @ 1:30 PM. Hikers in the Cleveland area meet at Ocoee Hardee's @ 1:45 PM and car pool from there. I will not be meeting this group until I see you at the trail head. Everyone meet at the trailhead @ 2:30 PM. **Directions:** Your turn off of Hwy 64 will be at the Thunder

Rock Campground sign which directs you across a bridge. After crossing the bridge you will see the trail head sign on the left. A large trail head parking lot is across the gravel road near the Thunder Rock Campground entrance.

>**May 24, 2009** – Sun. BMTA TN/NC Worktrip S from Sledrunner Gap. Please see Cherokee Hiking Club website at www.cherokeehikingclub.org

>**May 31, 2009** – Sun Hiwassee River Canoe Trip. Leaders: Esther Nunley and Clayton Pannell with Hiwassee Club. Will float the Hiwassee. Bring your own canoe or come with someone who has a canoe. Meet at highway 411 and highway 30 at 1:30 pm for shuttle. If water is low, the trip will take place from the G2 campground to patty (canoe ramp). Clayton Panell. Esther Nunley

***NOTE:** As a courtesy, **ALWAYS** contact the hike leader **in advance** of the hike to facilitate planning.*

Club News

May Meeting (Saturday, May 16 @ 2 p.m.)

The May meeting will be held at the home of Rick and Brenda Harris (outside of Tellico Plains just off the Skyway) on Saturday, May 16 at approximately 2 p.m. It will be held after a morning hike to Falls Branch Falls. Brenda has kindly agreed to grill burgers and hotdogs for us. She will have all the “fixins”, but members are asked to bring other “potluck” items such as appetizers/snacks, side dishes and desserts.

You have a choice of coming after the hike or just for the meeting. Brenda is going to meet us at the Skyway before the hike to take food items for the meeting from hikers on to her house. Directions to the Harris’ home are below.

(Note from Brenda Harris)

Regarding the May meeting at our house:

The menu will be hot dogs and burgers. I will supply the "fixins" and the drinks, so bring something that will go good with a grill out.

I will meet the hikers at the scenic overlook just past mm 6 on the Cherohala to take any food that needs to be kept cold or warmed.

If you are not hiking and plan to come to the house, the anticipated arrival time for the hikers is 2 pm *(double check this with Randy's plans as he is hike leader).*

Upcoming hikes: See Above.

Hikes completed: See Below

Recent Hike & Event Reports

April 4, 2009: 6 mile John Muir Clean Up Hike. Hike Leader: Debbie Flower

The fog lifted and we were amazed to see beautiful flowers blooming, several adventurous fishermen in the river and three large horses coming straight for us. And, oh yes, as this was a clean-up hike, we collected about ¼ of a bag of trash. The trail was very clean, as we snipped, clipped and sawed our way to Big Bend. Abby had a lot of fun swimming in the river and racing up and down the trail. Taylor Morris discovered the use of a hand saw. Clayton Pannell met us on the trail and offered to be the shuttle and Randy Morris and Debbie Flower enjoyed the conversation. Hikers: Debbie Flower, Randy Morris, Taylor Morris, Clayton Pannell and Abby Flower.

April 11, 2009: John Muir Trail. Hike Leader: Leon Bates

Four hikers, Jane Bohannon, Ann Gray, Yvette Strickland and Sherry (from the Hiwassee Hiking Club) made the trek along the John Muir Trail on April 11. Spring wildflowers were at their prime including several uncommon species such as Catesby's trillium, one-flowered cancer root, and native orchids. A partial list of 85 species was compiled and is available for interested hikers.

Hikers also visited the short trail behind the Hiwassee/Ocoee Scenic River Office near Gee Creek and viewed large colonies of yellow trillium, Virginia bluebells and Solomon's seal. This very accessible trail along the Hiwassee River is recommended for wildflower viewing by senior citizens and young hikers.

An American Woodcock was flushed from an old, open field near the Childer's Creek trail head, providing some hikers their first sighting of this shy camouflaged bird. Woodcocks commonly feed and nest in these open riparian zones along the river. Alert hikers can observe the elaborate courtship of these birds on moonlit nights wherein the male flies in an upward spiral emitting nasal calls and drops like a fluttering leaf to the ground then repeats the "show off" flight again and again.

So much for musing about birds and wildflowers but isn't that part of what hiking is all about!

April 22-23, 2009: Hike Leader: Karen Young. *Trip was cancelled due to lack of participation.*

April 25, 2009: Three Forks to Little Skeenah Creek (BMT Section 2) Leader: Randy Morris
After putting in place our car shuttle, we set out on Section 2 of the Benton MacKaye Trail—the section from Three Forks to Little Skeenah Creek. The first mile or so of trail is shared with the famed AT and is a nice section with old growth of old growth trees (featuring white pine, hemlock and tulip poplar) and beautiful Long Creek. Just before the splitting off from the AT, we took the short side trail to Long Creek Falls which had a good spring flow and was quite refreshing on a day that was unusually warm for late April. After bridging Long Creek we began to go uphill toward the high point of our trek at 3,250 feet. We then “roller coastered” for the next 4 miles or so before beginning our descent to the Toccoa River. Along the way we enjoyed great views of the surrounding mountains—especially to the east. We first heard, then viewed, the shoaling Toccoa River and crossed the 260 ft. long suspension bridge. After a refreshing break on the shores of the Toccoa, we then began to climb back out to Tooni Mountain—our final mountain destination of the day. We enjoyed fantastic views of the valley and surrounding mountains during our final 2 miles on the trail. The day was quite warm, but beautiful, with very clear skies. The area had a late spring so were ahead of most of the wildflowers. But the late season did give us winter-like views—with no leaves to obscure the surrounding countryside. We ended a good day with a tasty dinner in Blue Ridge at Serenity Garden Café. Making the 12.2 mile trip were James Anderson, Bob Bennett, Lettie Burress, Donna & Mark Cameron and hike leader Randy Morris.

Minutes April 9, 2009
Annual Joint Cherokee Hiking Club and Hiwassee Hiking Club Meeting
Wesley United Memorial Methodist Church at Etowah

The club extends thanks again to Clayton Pannell and Kay Smallwood and their church for allowing us to meet there. A welcome and invocation was given by Clayton followed by fellowship and a delicious potluck meal. The club gave a money donation to the church food pantry. Thirty-three members and four guests attended. We enjoyed viewing Rick Harris’s loop power point which he prepared for the club exhibit at CSCC.

The business meeting was called to order by Randy Morris at 7:30 p.m. Minutes of the March meeting and the Treasurer's report were omitted. We signed a "Get Well" card to Martha Firestone who recently fractured a wrist and required surgical repair.

Old business: Rick reminded us of the SEFTC meeting which is scheduled for May 7-10. Randy discussed our exhibit which will be at the CSCC "It's All About The Green" festival on April 18. Rick's power point and the trifold prepared by Taylor Morris will be featured. In addition, small items used for hiking, camping, canoeing, and trail maintenance will be on display.

Randy reminded us that annual membership fees are due and if not paid, your name will be removed from the club roster. The last date to pay is May 30, 2009.

New business: Rick brought sign up sheets for us to select 4-9 mile sections of the Benton MacKaye Trail to hike and describe the condition of the section. He suggested that two people hike each section together and write up a description of the condition of that section. This is going to be done to help celebrate National Trails Day which is June 6. Your walk through does not have to be done necessarily on June 6 as long as you get your written report to Rick in a timely manner.

Rick Foster, a member of the Sequoyah Club visited and presented a map which shows how to get from Farr Gap to Chilhowee Lake. He said the trails are challenging there and need maintenance.

Upcoming hikes: Randy mentioned the April 11 Wild Flower Hike to be led by Leon Bates and also the Three Forks to Skeenah Creek which Randy will lead. Steve Cartwright, President of the Hiwassee Club, invited the group on the Sycamore Creek hike with his Boy Scout group on April 18. Steve also encouraged participation with the BMT walk throughs for National Trails Day.

Hikes completed: Hikes reports were omitted. Steve Cartwright introduced Dr. Joyce Baker who gave a very interesting account of her visit to the Galapagos Islands. She presented pictures and stories from a scientific view point and also entertained us with her humor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be May 16 at Rick and Brenda Harris's home following the Fall Branch Falls hike.

Respectfully submitted, Jane Bohannon, Secretary

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