

Huckleberry Knob & Hooper Bald

Saturday, August 29, 2009

The date of this hike has been changed from Sunday, August 23 to Saturday, August 29.

This hike will provide an opportunity to visit two high elevation mountain balds. First, we will hike to Hooper Bald, return to the trailhead, and then hike to Huckleberry Knob from a second trailhead about one mile away. Hooper Bald's elevation is 5,429 feet and Huckleberry Knob is 5,560 feet. Traveling west, Huckleberry Knob is the western most peak exceeding 5,500 feet east of the Mississippi.

Both balds have historical significance. There is writing engraved on a rock on top of Hooper Bald thought to be of Spanish origin with a date of 1615. Also Hooper Bald was the site of a hunting lodge built about 1911. In April 1912, a shipment of European wild hogs was delivered to the lodge. A number of the hogs escaped from their pen and proliferated throughout the National Forests and the Smokies. Huckleberry Knob is the site of a marked grave of Andy Sherman, one of two lumbermen who were walking from the mouth of Sycamore Creek across the mountain to Robbinsville on Dec. 11, 1899. Both perished near the peak due to the bitter cold, snow and fog. Their bodies were found nine months later by a hunter.

Total mileage walked is about 3 ½ miles with approximately 500 feet elevation gain rated easy. Both balds are overgrown and we will be walking in paths that other hikers have taken. Long pants and boots are recommended.

Bring rain gear, water, and a snack. Meet at Comcast in Athens at 9 a.m. or Hardee's in Tellico Plains at 9:45. The Hooper Bald trailhead is about 8 miles inside North Carolina on the Cherohala Skyway. This is a joint hike of the Cherokee and Hiwassee Hiking Clubs.

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