



• 2024 DUES ARE DUE! \$15 PER FAMILY •

• NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello Cherokee Hiking Club Members!

The holidays are upon us. Lots of folks will be traveling and very busy with all the things that go with parties, large meals, and celebrations. Please be safe in all you do.

We are looking forward to our own Christmas Party, which will be held at the Etowah Senior Center in Etowah, TN, on Saturday, December 9, 2023. If you have not responded to the request to let us know if you plan to attend, please drop a note to cherokeehikingclub@gmail.com to help us plan for the meal. (Tell us how many are in your party including yourself.) Jennifer Schroll will be preparing the meal. She has been working diligently on menus and a wide variety of desserts, so you do not want to miss it. Gail and Edmond Gray will again facilitate the Dirty Santa gift exchange. If you plan to participate, please bring a gift (\$10 maximum--You are not obligated to participate). We plan to eat at 12:00 noon.

If you have not paid your dues, now is the time to complete that task. Dues are still \$15 per family in a household. The cost per person of the Christmas meal is \$10. Please pay by check as it makes the bookkeeping so much easier.

Hopefully you have begun to write up your planned hikes and events for next year. Remember to put each event on a separate sheet of paper, with all the necessary information, such as where to meet, how long the hike is, how difficult, and the Event Leader. There are already some great events being planned and we hope to make 2024 even more interesting than the year before. We will hold the annual planning meeting on Sunday, January 14, 2024, at the [Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church, 934 Ohio Avenue, Etowah, TN, 37331](#) at 2:00 pm. The club will provide drinks and, if you want to, you could bring a simple snack or cookies for the break.

If you have any questions, please give me a call.

Jack Callahan, Club President

▪ ENTERPRISE SOUTH NATURE PARK

Very important information from ESNP: Patrons will now have access to the visitor center restrooms during all park hours. The exterior doors will be used to gain access whenever the visitor center is closed.

▪ LAKEVIEW DRIVE

From [Great Smoky Mountains NPS](#) on Facebook: Attention all visitors! Construction continues on Lakeview Drive for much-needed rehabilitation. This project will improve the infrastructure and enhance the scenic beauty of the area for everyone to enjoy. As we work towards creating a better experience for all who travel this road, we appreciate your patience and understanding during this construction phase. After a full closure since August, Lakeview Drive reopened to vehicles today, November 16, at 12 pm. Still, visitors should plan for temporary single-lane closures and periodic closures of some parking areas. Construction crews will continue rehabilitating guardrails, headwalls, parking areas, and more over the next few weeks. Crews will complete the road rehabilitation in the spring when they place the final layer of asphalt that will provide for a smoother ride. Noland Creek Trail, Lakeshore Trail, Goldmine Loop Trail, Benton MacKaye Trail, and Lakeview Drive Tunnel will be accessible to hikers and visitors but the closest parking lot to the trailhead may not be available. For more information about temporary road and trail closures at Great Smoky Mountains National Park, please visit the park's Current Road, Facility, Trail & Backcountry Updates webpage at www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/temproadclose.htm.

▪ LAUREL-SNOW SNA

Laurel-Snow will close on December 4, 2023, for road paving and will remain closed until completion.

▪ NORTH CHICKAMAUGA CREEK GORGE STATE PARK

From Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation: One of Tennessee's newest state parks is North Chickamauga Creek Gorge State Park. From whitewater paddling, to bouldering and rock climbing, to rugged and beautiful trails and overlooks, this park will be an outdoor recreation gem. Thanks to Gov. Bill Lee's agenda and partnership from the legislature, this new park will serve as the southern gateway to the beloved Cumberland Trail. It also serves as an example of thoughtful and intentional development that balances preservation and conservation in our state.

See the tour [here](#).

▪ OVERMOUNTAIN SHELTER

Overmountain Shelter near Roan Mountain, Tennessee, has been pulled down. See this background [article](#) from Smoky Mountain News and photos by [@themissjanet](#) on Instagram.

• PAST EVENTS

CHEROHALA SKYWAY FESTIVAL OCTOBER 28, 2023



The Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA) had a booth at the Cherokee Skyway Festival in Tellico Plains on this beautiful Saturday. As usual, we also had a crosscut saw interactive area next to the booth. I would guess more than 50 kids enjoyed cutting their segments of a log with a real crosscut saw. And several adults tested their skills as well. Some of the kids really learned quickly under the tutelage of Ed and Clare Sullivan. Besides Ed and Clare, Rick Harris, Brenda Harris and their neighbors Gary and Barb Lewinski answered a continuous barrage of questions about our trail and other trails in the Tellico Area. Rick had his new trail guide for trails in the Tellico and Ocoee area for sale at the booth, and the response was overwhelming. He ended up selling over 50 guides during the festival. One would say they sold like hotcakes. There were also several questions about our other guides and we directed them to the Cherokee Skyway Visitor Center and the Charles Hall Museum to pick up their copies. We also got many queries about the Cherokee Hiking Club and the Tellico/Ocoee Trail Crews. Our booth was right next to the United States Forest Service (USFS) booth, and this worked well because they sent several folks over to us to answer questions about the trails. We had fun interacting with the USFS folks as well. The festival was very well-attended and my guess is that there were several thousand in attendance. It seems like this festival has doubled in size every year it has occurred. There were maybe twice as many booths as last year and several food booths as well. We partook of pizza at one of the booths, which was really excellent coming from a festival booth. We were amazed. • Rick Harris



TALLULAH GORGE STATE PARK CAMPOUT OCTOBER 29 – NOVEMBER 2, 2023



Nineteen club members made it to the campout, and we had really nice weather the entire time. On Monday, the group met up at Camp Toccoa at Currahee. This is the camp where the 506th Paratrooper Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne began their training before marching to Fort Benning, then on to England. Company E trained here, the subject of the miniseries, *Band of Brothers*. We had an excellent guide for our tour of the site, which included a museum, several barracks, and a C-47, one of the many planes the paratroopers jumped from in Normandy on D-day. The tour took about two hours and our guide went into detail on many of the items and the facilities and answered all our questions. Afterwards, we had lunch in Toccoa and several of the group went to the military museum in town, while others went back to camp to hike down into the gorge, a 1000-foot-deep, very steep climb in and out.





On Tuesday, the group traveled to the Foxfire Museum site and met our guide for the tour of this very interesting location. The site includes many log structures which were relocated from around the area to give an example of life in the 1800s. There were homes, barns, a blacksmith shop, a church, and a gristmill to name a few. Again, we were fortunate to have an excellent guide, a local gentleman who was very knowledgeable of the site and the locals. The tour typically lasts about two hours but due to our interest, we went for three-and-a-half hours. Afterwards, most of the group had a late lunch in Clayton.



On Wednesday, several of the group enjoyed coffee at the Tallulah 1882 coffee shop, then drove to the Chattooga River and hiked down to several of the class IV and class V rapids. With the water so low, there was not much activity on the river. Afterwards, the group returned to camp and several walked the South Rim Trail, and a few walked down into the gorge and back up the far side. In camp, we had a nice campfire, and, using pie irons, dessert was prepared and Janet served us strawberry shortcake. It was a great evening to finish out our trip.



- Jack Callahan

BMTA ANNUAL MEETING AND HIKE FEST NOVEMBER 2 - 5, 2023



Well, it is finally in the books. A year of contacting numerous potential hike and special event leaders, then organizing the hikes/events with a leader and co-leader, advertising the hikes/events, getting sign-ups in advance, then carrying out the hikes/events at the BMTA Annual Meeting in Tellico Plains. There were not any hitches. Every hike and event went off as planned. We ordered beautiful weather, and we got it. One could not ask for better weather. It was a little chilly in the mornings, but the mountains warmed up quickly under the influence of sunny skies. We had hikes and various side options for non-hikers each day. Over the four days we had 18 various offerings with a total attendance of 225 folks. The hikes included the following:

- Conasauga Falls
- Coker Creek Falls
- Rocky Flats Hollinghead Homesite
- John Muir/BMT Trail along the Hiwassee River
- Bob Bald on the BMT
- Indian Boundary Loop Trail
- Lost Creek section of the BMT
- Whigg Meadow on the BMT
- Falls Branch Falls
- Mason Evans Cave
- Three Bald Hike (Whigg Meadow, Huckleberry Knob, and Hooper Bald)
- Turtletown Falls
- Unicoi Turnpike Trail

Special Non-Hiking Opportunities included

- Fly Fishing Class by Trout Unlimited
- Sequoyah Museum/Fort Loudoun State Historic Park
- Charles Hall Museum
- Hiker Dinner at the Iron Works Grille (30 attended this)

There were several members of the Cherokee Hiking Club participating as well and some local Tellico Plains area folks who just heard about our event one way or another. - Rick Harris





The Benton MacKaye Trail Association's Annual Meeting was held in the Alumni Center of the Tellico Plains High School in the charming country town of Tellico Plains, Tennessee. The annual event is where the Maintainers meet the Hikers and the Hikers meet the Maintainers. They come together to honor BMTAers who have generously contributed their time, talent, and expertise to make the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT) one of the premier mid-distance hiking trails in the southeastern United States. Mayor Marilyn Parker, Department of Tourism Director Blaina Best, and Monroe County Mayor Mitch Ingram welcomed our group to the area on Friday evening. Members enjoyed a Taco/Nacho Bar at the Alumni Center and later socialized at the Tellico River Retreat Cabin. While munching delicious snacks, they perused the outstanding array of raffle items and dropped tickets in jars next to the raffle items of their choice. Sixty-nine attendees were at the Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet. BMTA President Ken Cissna recognized past presidents, Barry Allen, George Owen, Steve Cartwright, Clayton Pannell, and Darcy Douglas. Garret Brick was recognized for his Eagle Scout project, refurbishing the Sisson Shelter. Ocoee District Trail Specialist Mason Boring; Tellico District Trail Forestry Technician Robert Alwood; and Brandon Burke, Recreation/Trails/Wilderness Specialist in the Supervisor's Office of the Cherokee National Forest also were recognized. Barry Allen received a plaque for nine and a half years of continuous service on the Board of Directors. Judy Price, Steve Barnes, and Darcy Douglas received certificates in recognition of their tenures on the Board. Cissna updated the group on the quest for designation of the BMT as a National Scenic Trail (NST). HR 3683, the Benton MacKaye Scenic Trail Act, was introduced in the House in May of this year. There have been frequent meetings with Congressional staff and we are hopeful a Senate bill soon will be introduced. As the Chair of the Nominating Committee, Darcy Douglas introduced the slate of nominees for 2024 BMTA officers. Those elected were:

- President: Bob Cowdrick
- Vice President: Clare Sullivan
- Secretary: Jessie Hayden
- Treasurer: Lydia Burns
- GA Maintenance Director: Joe Cantwell
- TN/NC Maintenance Director: Nelson Ashbrook
- Smokies Coordinator: David Watkins
- Conservation Director: Patrick Ward
- Communications Director: Joy Forehand
- Membership Director: Frank Forehand
- Hiking Director: Kelly Motter



Featured speaker Pam Mathews gave a passionate presentation on the history of Tellico Plains. The Cherokee Native Americans, Tellico Iron Works, and lumbering were major players in that history. Mathews's father served as Tellico Plains mayor for 31 years! The next item on the agenda was the presentation of awards. Clare Sullivan was named Volunteer of the Year. She is the current Vice President of the BMTA. She previously served as Secretary and is a member of the National Scenic Trail Committee. Sullivan is a member of the event staff and assists with Inter-Active Crosscut at festivals. She enjoys giving presentations on the BMT for special events and civic organizations. She is the liaison for BMTA with Fannin County Middle School and their learning objectives regarding forest and water quality. In addition to being a hike leader, Sullivan participates in maintenance activities, including blazing the trail, in Georgia and Tennessee. She and her husband Ed maintain section 11e (FR221 to Thunder Rock Campground). This was the third year for the Trail Maintainer's Idiosyncrasy Award which recognizes a person for their "especially adamant" personal preferences. Rick Harris received a new roll of duct tape—so he can keep wearing his favorite puff jacket during trail maintenance. He also received a gift certificate for Subway for a sandwich, his favorite snack/meal for trail maintenance. Holding the Annual Meeting and Hike Fest in Tellico Plains had long been a dream of Rick and Brenda Harris. They wanted to share the BMT in Tennessee as well as other amazing trails in their big backyard. It goes without saying—they more than succeeded in showing BMTAers the wonderful treasures the town with the Big Back Yard has in store for visitors. - Clare Sullivan



Photo @mayormitchingram

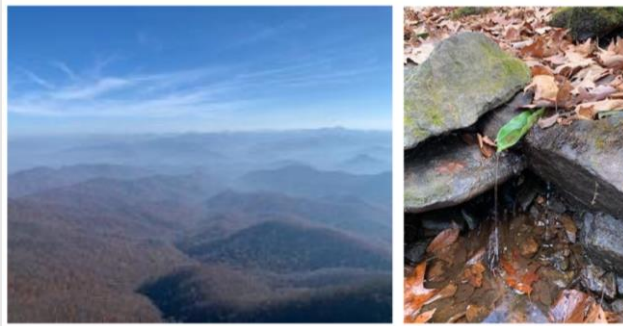
BACKPACKING AND HIKING TRIP IN NORTH CAROLINA NOVEMBER 7 - 10, 2023

This was a multi-day loop hike of about 25 miles that started at Standing Indian Campground near Franklin, NC. Participants were Buddy Arnold and James Anderson. We stayed at several shelters on the Appalachian Trail (AT). The hike was rated strenuous due to elevation gains on part of the hike, but much of the hike was moderate. There are a number of scenic views on the hike. We were blessed with great weather with clear skies and moderate temperatures except for a few sprinkles the last day.

- November 7 Day 1: Hiked about three miles to Long Branch Shelter via Blackwell Gap Trail and then AT. The shelter was a newly constructed two-level structure. We had this and all the shelters to ourselves on the hike.



- November 8 Day 2: Hiked 8.9 miles to Carter Gap Shelter on AT. Crossed over Albert Mountain with great views. The water source at Carter Gap was reduced to a trickle due to the recent drought, but we were able to get about a liter in 3-4 minutes. Another hiker had used a leaf to direct the flow!

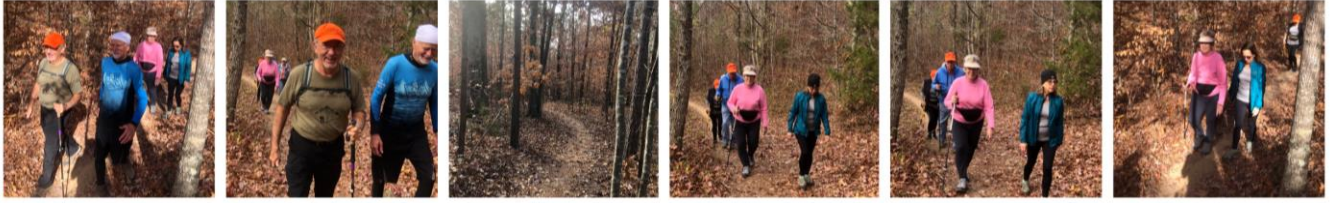


- November 9 Day 3: Hiked 7.6 miles to Standing Indian Shelter and crossed over Standing Indian Mountain with great views.



- November 10 Day 4: Hiked 4.5 miles back to Backcountry Info Center via AT and Kimsey Creek trail.

We took a tour of the Standing Indian Campground while we were there. It is a beautiful, well-maintained campground. James and I both agreed that it would be a good site for a group campout for the hiking club. There are nice groups sites available and many possibilities for all sorts of hikes from easy to strenuous in the area. The campground can take RVs but there is no electricity hookup. There is, however, an RV park within three miles or so of the campground. I will come up with a possible hike club event there next year, possibly in the May timeframe. • Buddy Arnold



TN/NC BMTA MAINTENANCE WORK TRIP NOVEMBER 18, 2023

Section 16c - Brookshire Creek Section
 Richard Harris - Crew Leader



Eighteen maintainers came from some fairly distant homes to join us for the work trip on the Brookshire Creek Trail. Marty Dominy gets the prize for driving up from the Macon area, a four-hour drive one way, but there were several coming from the Atlanta and north Georgia areas. Some of us met at the Cherokee Skyway Visitor Center and carpoled to Campsite 11 on Bald River Road, almost an hour drive on mostly-gravel USFS roads. The Georgia folks met at the Big Cove Campground, coming in from the Murphy side. The SAWS crew of two (Scotty Bowman and Rebekah Morrison) worked the upper third of the trail from Sledrunner Gap, while the GA Crew (Joe Cantwell, Bob Cowdrick, Carol Nufer, Marty Dominy, Steve Hayden, and David Blount) brushed and logged out the middle third of the trail. The TN Crew came in from Campsite 11 on Bald River Road. Rick and Brenda Harris, Steve Bayliss, and Robert Alwood logged out the lower third of the trail with crosscut saws. A large crew of loppers/snippers brushed out the lower section as well (Clare and Ed Sullivan, Sandra Fenton, Madison and Daphne Martin, and Ralph Van Pelt).



There were three significant creek/river crossings we had to negotiate. Some folks did not do too well. Joe Cantwell took a dunking into the creek closest to Campsite 11 and Marty Dominy almost did the same. Also, on the Bald River crossing, a few folks walked across the river on an old rotten log. All made it safely, but things looked tenuous a time or two, especially for Carol Nufer and Bob Cowdrick. Thankfully, we all made it back safely, though wet in places, and enjoyed snacks and drinks before returning home. All maintainers on this trip now have a new BMTA Maintainer sticker to affix to the back windows on their vehicles. - Rick Harris

HIWASSEE LOOP NOVEMBER 19, 2023



Fifteen club members joined up for the train ride to and around the famous Hiwassee Loop and back on the dome car, the Algonquin. This is a 50-mile, five-hour ride from Delano to the far side of the loop, near Apalachia Dam, and back. The loop is only one of six in North America, and the only one east of the Mississippi.



The car we rode on, the Algonquin, is only one of 14 of its kind. They were made in 1954, and most are in service in Canada. It is very unique, with a glassed-in front, and a glassed dome. In its heyday, it had several sleeping rooms which are open for viewing now. Along the way, we saw a bald eagle and a flock of mergansers in the Hiwassee River corridor. There was also a large flock of Canadian geese, searching for a golf course.



The guide on the train gave a very good description of the history of the line and the numerous deserted towns which sprang up during the rail's active service and the construction of the Apalachia Powerhouse. On the return trip, the steward gave a great history of our car and pointed out all the special paintings and carvings which decorated the inside of the compartments. Afterwards, eight of the group met at the Steel Wheel Restaurant for supper. It was a fun afternoon and everyone seemed to have a great time. - Jack Callahan



LINDA DAVIS MEMORIAL GREENWAY WALK NOVEMBER 25, 2023



Four club members enjoyed a nice walk along the Cleveland/Bradley County Greenway on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. This annual hike, named for the late club member Linda Davis, has been an annual tradition for several years. The walkers enjoyed a crisp, clear November morning in which we viewed the numerous resident ducks as well as a beautiful red-tailed hawk observing his/her surroundings. In a change from recent years, we traveled south this year from the Greenway Pavilion at Raider Drive to the southern terminus of the greenway past Willow Street and back again. Enjoying the morning were Judy Price, Jennifer Schroll, Carin Taber, and Hike Leader Randy Morris. • Randy Morris



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 pm. A note on the walk is sent out the beginning of each week on Messenger. Contact Jack Callahan at 423-284-7885 if you want to be included in the messages. • Jack Callahan

THIRD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH BREAKFAST



Nice breakfast this morning at our regular monthly club breakfast. We had some great conversations about interesting trips by members. We missed our regulars, Gail and Edmond Gray. • Jack Callahan

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOTE: Event schedule subject to change according to guidance from governmental agencies and offices regarding health and safety, weather, or other conditions.

CLEAR CREEK

DECEMBER 4, 2023 MONDAY

Approximately six miles, rated moderately strenuous. We will shuttle from Hwy 30 trailhead to Chilhowee Recreation Area and hike to the beginning of the Clear Creek Trail. This is a very picturesque and scenic trail with views of Big Frog Mountain and Parksville Lake. There are two creek crossings near the end of the trail. Bring water, food, and water shoes. If the weather is not optimal, we will reschedule the hike. Contact Hike Leaders Clare Sullivan and Judy Price at cherokeehikingclub@gmail.com for meetup details.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

DECEMBER 9, 2023 SATURDAY NOON ETOWAH TN SENIOR CENTER

The Cherokee Hiking Club will celebrate its annual Christmas Party on December 9 at the Etowah Senior Center. We will eat at 12:00 noon. If you plan to attend, ASAP please email cherokeehikingclub@gmail.com with subject line "Christmas Party" and indicate how many will be in your party so that we will have an accurate headcount. Our own Jennifer Schroll will be catering the meal again this year. If anyone would like to assist with decorating or transporting items to the Senior Center, please contact Jennifer at jennifergeologist@gmail.com. The cost of the meal is \$10 per person, payable at the door. Also, dues are due, so you may consider combining both. (If you became a member October through December 2023, your dues are paid up through 2024.) Please pay by check made out to the club, as it makes bookkeeping so much easier. Gail and Edmund Gray will again do the honors with the Dirty Santa gift exchange. Everyone who wants to participate should bring a gift, not to exceed \$10. (You are not obligated to participate.) We will also have the induction of new officers. There is no deadline to RSVP. You are welcome to come even if you decide to at the last minute! Please consider joining us to celebrate the special time of year and close out another great event-filled year with great friends.

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK

JANUARY 14 – 23, 2024 SUNDAY – TUESDAY TEXAS

Proposed Big Bend Day Hikes

- Day 1, Jan 14 Arrive, Setup Camp, meet as a group that evening to plan hikes
- Day 2, Jan 15

	Mileage	Elev. Gain Feet	Notes
○ Morning: #11, Lost Mine Trail	4.8	1500	
○ Afternoon #2, Grapevine Hills	2.0	330	
- Day 3, Jan 16

○ Morning #12, The Window	5.6	1290	
○ Afternoon #6 Burro Spring	2.4	300	
- Day 4, Jan 17

○ #10 Emory Peak	10.0	3290	
<i>Options:</i>			
○ #16 Mariscal Canyon Rim	7.0	1830	
○ #18 Hot Springs Canyon	6.0	720	
- Day 5, Jan 18

○ Morning #7 The Chimneys	4.8	380	
○ Afternoon #8 Mules Ear	3.8	590	
- Day 6, Jan 19

○ #17 Murofo Vega	12.6	3270	
<i>Options:</i>			
○ #18 Hot Springs Canyon	6.0	720	
○ # 13 Pine Canyon	4.0	1070	

- Day 7, Jan 20
 - Morning #4 U. Basin Mesa Pouroff 3.6 520
 - Afternoon #5 Blue Creek Canyon 3.1 560

- Day 8, Jan 21
 - #9 South Rim Loop 12.5 3380
 - Options:*
 - # 3 Ward Spring 3.0 520
 - #1 Dog Canyon 4.0 50

- Day 9, Jan 22
 - Morning #18 Hot Springs Canyon 6.0 720
 - Noon: Break Camp, Drive to Midland if Flying Out

- Day 10, Jan 23 Depart for Home

Contact Hike Leader Buddy Arnold at we_arnold@outlook.com or 601-415-3551.

WEDNESDAY WALKS ON THE CLEVELAND GREENWAY

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THIRD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH BREAKFAST

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

- NON-CLUB OPPORTUNITIES

TELLICO/OCOEE VOLUNTEER TRAIL CREW

Check the Facebook page for future work days.

BENTON MACKAYE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

See the calendar for upcoming events and trail maintenance dates.

TENNESSEE STATE PARKS

Tennessee State Parks offers First Day Hikes on or around New Year's Day across the state. See the calendar for upcoming events.

CUMBERLAND TRAILS CONFERENCE VOLUNTEER TRAIL MAINTENANCE EVENT

DECEMBER 8, 2023 FRIDAY 8:30 AM PINEY RIVER TRAILHEAD SHUT-IN GAP ROAD

"We will be doing some much-needed maintenance at the Piney River Segment."

SPRING WILDFLOWER PILGRIMAGE

MAY 1 - 4, 2024 GSMNP

You may book lodging early for SWFP.

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

- MINUTES

Monthly Club Meeting
November 9, 2023 6:00 pm
Etowah Senior Center

The meeting began at 6:00 pm with the blessing and a potluck supper. As always, there was a great variety of main courses and desserts. Afterwards, Jack Callahan conducted a brief business meeting with the approval of the minutes of the past meeting and the Treasurer's Report given by Jennifer Schroll. The current balance is \$2334.69. This was approved by the group. Jack also discussed past and future events and hikes. Rick Harris won a Cherokee Hiking Club hat in the drawing. Jack then turned the program over to Dr. Janet Coombs, who gave an excellent presentation on trail first aid. She discussed the important items to have in your individual first aid kits for day hikes, and discussed how to handle different types of emergencies on the trail. Some of the things emphasized were foot care and hydration, two of the common things that hikers get into trouble over. In addition, there was a great discussion on how to deal with broken bones and snake bites. And one of the most important: How to administer CPR. It was an informative presentation and brought up important points about how to handle situations on the trail. Thank you, Janet, for some great information. One thing that everyone should do, as Janet stressed, is to watch the YouTube video, "[CPR in Action/A 3D Look Inside the Body.](#)" The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Callahan, President and Secretary