

# THE CHEROKEE HIKER

FEBRUARY 2026

VOLUME 43, ISSUE 2



**HEART ROCK**

## NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

"You're off to great places, today is your day. Your mountain is waiting, so get on your way." Dr. Seuss

Oh, the weather outside is frightening . . . let it snow, let it snow, let it snow. Several years ago, I commented to a friend that I was looking forward to spring so I could get back to hiking. His response was immediate. "Why are you waiting? Even the most familiar trails take on a unique beauty not found in any other season." Shortly thereafter I made my first winter hike and enjoyed every minute. Since that hike, I have not let a winter pass without a few winter hikes. Of course, it's important to have the correct clothing. I was told by a longtime resident of Alaska if you are cold, it just means you have the wrong clothing. Certainly, with the advancements in clothing technology, this is true. Unlike summer when you can't undress because of the heat, in the winter you can add layers as needed for the cold. It's well worth the effort. It's truly inspirational to hike in the winter. Even familiar trails are transformed into magical winter wonderlands where you can enjoy solitude, the quiet beauty of fallen snow, unique frozen sights, an escape from bugs, a great workout, along with the empowerment of successfully taking on a worthy challenge.

Dues for 2026 are now due. If you haven't done so, please mail a \$15 check 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

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**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.***

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## FEBRUARY EVENTS

### Tuesday, February 3, 2026 - Dutch Settlement

Hike Leader: Clair Sullivan. Location: Dutch Settlement. Departure Time: 9:00 a.m., Return Time: Afternoon. Hike Difficulty: Easy. Bring: Lunch, water, rain gear. Brief Description: Meet at TVA Sugar Loaf picnic area at 9:00 a.m. to carpool to Pace Gap to begin hike. Hike is 3 miles total. Contact: Cell phone: 404-849-0872.

### Saturday, February 7, 2026 - Lowry Top

Hike Leader: Jennifer Schroll. Location: Start at Quinn Springs, Cherokee National Forest, Hwy 30. Departure Time: 9 a.m. Return Time: 1 p.m. Hike Difficulty: Moderately Strenuous. Bring: Water & snacks. Brief Description: Hike up from Quinn Springs toward Oswald Dome. Near the top, cut off-trail and bushwhack 200 feet to an unimproved roadway. Follow the roadway to the end then bushwhack to a great view overlooking the Hiwassee River. There is significant (>1000 ft) elevation gain. Contact: jennifergeologist@gmail.com; Cell phone: 423-284-1256.

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

Hike Leader: James Anderson. Location: Parking lot on left side of Candies Lane just before it crosses Candies Creek if heading west. Departure Time: 1:00 p.m. Return Time: 2:30-3 p.m. Hike Difficulty: Easy. Bring: Water. Brief Description: We have seen various birds and even a fox on this walk. It is beautiful and not nearly as crowded as the Mouse Creek Greenway. Contact: 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. Departure Time: 10 a.m. Return Time: 3 p.m. Hike Difficulty is rated Moderate. What to Bring (food, water, etc.): Cold Weather Gear, lunch, water, your dog on leash. Description: THIS HIKE IS OPEN TO MEMBERS OF BOTH THE BMTA AND CHC. We are hoping for a frozen waterfall or lots of water crashing over the several falls. This 4.5-mile loop hike will start at the Baby Falls Picnic Area. We will go up the road to the Cow Camp Trailhead, then up the ridge on this trail then downhill to the Bald River Trail. We will then turn left (upstream) and go to the Pawpaw Branch Crossing. From there, we will return downstream along the Bald River Trail to River Road past several incredible waterfalls, ending, of course, at the iconic Bald River Falls by the road. We will then walk along the road upstream to Baby Falls and our vehicles. Afterwards, we can dine at a local Tellico Plains restaurant, maybe Mexican food at one of the two Mexican restaurants, enjoying marguerites and authentic Mexican food. 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.

## **MARCH AT-A-GLANCE**

### **Saturday, March 7, 2026 - Loop Hike Section 13D BMT**

Hike Leader: Anne Anderson & Mary Alton. Location: Towee Creek Boat Launch. Departure Time: 9:30 a.m. Return Time: unknown. Hike Difficulty: Moderate. Bring: Water, lunch, hiking shoes or boots, poles optional. \$3 daily parking fee. Pit toilet. Hike is a 5 mile "almost loop" with short shuttle. Moderate rating only because old John Muir is not maintained and requires at least one scramble over rocks and can be very muddy. There is a swinging bridge, small waterfall at Wildcat Creek, walk along Rock Island Creek, views of Hiwassee River and down into Towee Creek drainage. This is a joint hike with BMT association. Contact: Email: ahander@aol.com; Cell Phone: 423-284-7032.

**Thursday, March 12, 2026 - Thursday 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 Judy Norton on the History of Whitewater on the Ocoee River: The First Female Guide's Reflections.

### **Thursday, March 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, March 20, 2025 - Exploratory Hike to Upper Lost Creek Falls**

Hike Leaders - Rick & Brenda Harris (and Nahme, our dog). Location: Webb Brothers Store in Reliance. Departure Time: 9 a.m. Return Time: 3 p.m. Hike Difficulty is Moderately Strenuous. Bring lunch, water, your dog on leash. Description: THIS HIKE IS OPEN TO DOGS AND TO MEMBERS OF BOTH THE BMTA AND CHC. This series of waterfalls have been lost to the outside world for decades, ever since the USFS quit maintaining the trail from the Lost Creek Campground upstream to the falls. We know people who have bushwhacked on the old trail. The falls are spectacular, but it is currently very difficult to get to them. We will meet at the Webb Bros store in Reliance, then carpool to the Lost Creek Campground. Then, with hand saws and loppers, we will work our way for two miles up the old trail to the waterfalls. As we go, we will leave flagging tape on the trees to mark the route. We are hoping the USFS will allow us to open this trail back up. Once we reach the falls, we will eat lunch, then return to our vehicles. This trail, we understand, crosses the creek several times, so you must be prepared for these water crossings. This is likely to be a difficult trip, so do not decide to go until you are sure you are up to the challenge. Contact: Email: HarrisRi1947@gmail.com cell phone: 513-260-1184.

### **Saturday, March 21, 2026 - Chickamauga Battlefield**

Hike Leader: Jennifer Schroll. Location: Meet at Battlefield Visitors lower parking lot. Departure Time: 9 a.m. Return Time: 1 p.m. Hike Difficulty is rated Easy. What to Bring: Water and snacks. Brief Description: Hike a 5 to 6-mile route in the Battlefield. See cannons and monuments; possibly climb the Wilder Brigade tower for great views. Meet at the Park N Ride in Cleveland at 9 a.m. to carpool or met us at the Visitors Center at 10 a.m. Contact: jennifergeologist@gmail.com; Cell phone: 423-284-1256.

### **Tuesday, March 24, 2026 - Johnston Woods**

Hike Leader: James Anderson. Location: Meet in the trailhead parking area at Johnston Woods off Hwy 11 just south of Cleveland. Meet time: 10:00 a.m. Bring: Please wear comfortable shoes and bring water to drink. Hikers have the option of walking the 1.2-mile loop and then the 2.9-mile loop for a total of 4.2 miles or just one of the loops. Hike difficulty is rated Easy. Contact: 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.

### **Friday, March 27, 2026 - Rock Gorge Segment of the Cumberland Trail**

Hike Leader: Randy Morris. Location: Near Sale Creek, Tennessee. Departure Time: 8:30 a.m. Return Time: 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Hike Difficulty: Moderate. Bring: Food, water, sturdy hiking shoes. Brief Description: We will hike part of the Rock Creek George Segment of the Cumberland Trail with a total hike distance estimated at 5 – 7 miles. The Leggett Point Overlook Trail, with a beautiful view of the gorge, will be included. The trail lives up to its name as it is very rocky so hiking boots with ankle support are recommended. Please text or email if interested in attending no later than 8:00 a.m., Thursday, March 26. Contact Email: randytaylorlormorris@gmail.com CellPhone: 423-650-0485.

## Tuesday, March 31, 2026 - Black Mountain, Cumberland Trail

Hike Leader: Sue Robinson. Location: Crab Orchard. Meet at Spring City McDonalds at 9:30 a.m. eastern time to carpool. Departure Time: 10:00 a.m. Return Time: 3:00 p.m. Hike Difficulty: Moderately Strenuous. Bring: Lunch, water, good hiking shoes. Brief Description: In/out hike about 8-9 miles total with 1,643 elevation gain. Trail is a fairly gentle climb up to the top. A short side trip to Windless Cave an option on way up. At top there are amazing rock formations, old foundations and a spring house. We will eat our lunch at scenic view at top. Possible stop in Spring City for food/drink. Contact: cell phone: 423-519-9751 (please text and not call).

## Wednesdays, March 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.

**Please Note:** The hike listed in the Calendar of Events as "Monday-Friday, May 4-8, 2026 – Linville Gorge, NC, Backpack" is described as a **backpack**. This is an error. It is a **camp-out** at a camping area for tents and RVs with day hikes. -Buddy Arnold

# HIGHLIGHTS OF PAST EVENTS

January 15 Hike Club Breakfast at Old Fort Restaurant in Cleveland, TN, hosted by Jack Callahan



Greenway Walks, Wednesdays in January 2026-Jack Callahan.



## January 28, 2026, Coker Creek Falls Hike

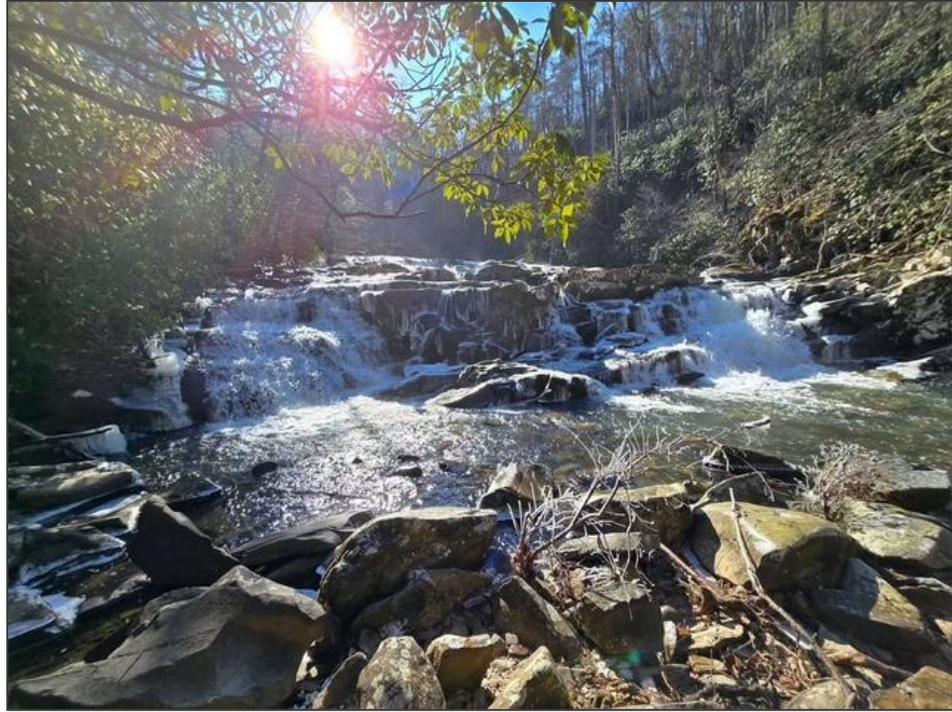
Top Notch Day at Coker Creek Falls

By Clare Sullivan, Photos from Rick Harris and Clare

It was a top-notch day along the Coker Creek Falls Trail in the Cherokee National Forest. Coker Creek tumbles over seven cascading waterfalls. The 375-acre area is designated a National Forest Scenic Area. Hikers enjoyed the exhilarating views. The falls glistened with ice. We hiked three miles down the trail to the bridge of the BMT and the John Muir Trail over Coker Creek.

Coker Creek was the center of the Tennessee Gold District in the 1800's. Hundreds of miners were digging and panning feverishly from 1831-1854. There are gold seekers today who pan along the creek on private property. Permits are obtained through the state of Tennessee and the Gold Prospectors of America.







Sue Robinson examining old metal.



**MINUTES** – There was no monthly meeting in January.

## **NON-CLUB OPPORTUNITIES**

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

### **TELLICO/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.





