

THE CHEROKEE HIKER

MARCH 2026

VOLUME 43, ISSUE 3



NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

"And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time." - T.S. Eliot

Jennifer Scroll never disappoints. Her presentation on the Utah National Parks adventure was yet another example of this. Thank you, Jennifer, for a beautiful and fun presentation of this amazing experience shared by many of our club members. Thank you, too, for conceptualizing, organizing, and implementing this outing.

Not long after our son, Drew, had begun first grade, I remember carelessly grabbing his Ninja Turtle lunch box off the counter one morning to prepare his lunch for school. I nearly dropped the box because it was unexpectedly much heavier than I had anticipated. I remember thinking to myself, "What could possibly be inside?" Opening the box, I found seven or eight rocks and plenty of dirt. Summoning Drew to the kitchen, I asked, "What in the world are these rocks doing in your lunch box?" "Rocks," he cried in disbelief! "Those aren't rocks! They are gems." Realizing I had completely misunderstood the importance of his lunch box contents, I cautiously continued, "Oh, and where did these gems come from?" "I found them on the playground. Isn't that amazing?" Decades have passed and I still remember this teachable moment. He was right. The most precious gems in our lives can be found in the great outdoors. Looking

for the real gems in life? Join some hikes with our hike club on our playground, and you, too, will find gems everywhere. You might even be tempted to put a few in your backpack and carry them home.

I have discovered that many of our club members enjoy reading books about exploring the great outdoors. I thought it might be fun to highlight books of interest for our hike club members. The first book recommendation is included in this newsletter. If you have read a book that you would like to recommend to our hike club, please send me the book reference.

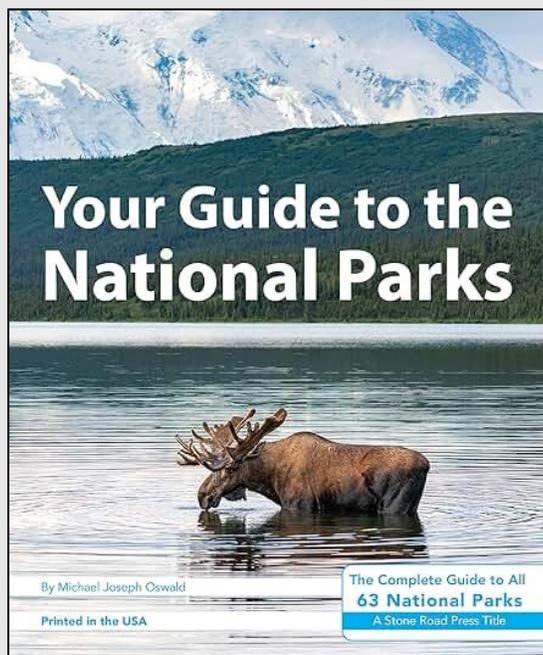
Next month, the rolls will be purged of nonpaying members. If you haven't paid dues for this year, please send a \$15 check (per family in a household) to Cherokee Hiking Club, 1295 Crown Street NW, Cleveland, TN 37312. Please make out the check to Cherokee Hiking Club.

See you at our next scheduled club meeting at the Etowah Senior Center on Thursday, March 12, 2026. Our presentation will be the "History of Whitewater on the Ocoee River: The First Female Guide's Reflections" presented by Judy Norton

Rob Coombs, Club President



HIKE CLUB BOOK RECOMMENDATION . . .



This full-color travel guidebook is the ultimate tool to simplify your travel planning. Detailed maps highlighting popular attractions and trailheads help visualize your itinerary. Lodging, camping, and hiking tables make choosing where to stay and what trails to hike easy. Hiking is explored in depth, but you'll find details, including outfitter essentials, on all the most popular activities such as bicycling, kayaking, canoeing, and camping.

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.

MARCH EVENTS

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, 2026 - 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: randytaylormorris@gmail.com Cell Phone: 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 the 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: cellphone: 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.

APRIL AT-A-GLANCE

Friday, April 3, 2026 - BMT along Hiwassee River from Childers Creek to the Powerhouse

Hike Leaders - Brenda & Rick Harris (and Nahme, our dog). Location: Childers Creek Trailhead, John Muir/BMT Trail near Reliance. Departure Time: 10 a.m. Return Time: 3 p.m. Hike Difficulty is rated Easy. What to Bring: Lunch, water, your dog on leash. Description: THIS HIKE IS OPEN TO DOGS AND TO MEMBERS OF BOTH THE BMTA AND CHC. For this ~ 5-mile hike, we will meet at the Childers Creek Trailhead, then position some vehicles up at the Appalachia Powerhouse. Then we will return to the Childers Creek Trailhead and hike upstream along this incredibly beautiful river along the John Muir Trail to the Towee Creek parking area. From there, we will follow the old JMT route or the road to the powerhouse. When we return to the parking lot at Childers Creek, we can fire up a stove and have hot chocolate and snacks, provided by Rick & Brenda. Contact: Email: HarrisRi1947@gmail.com Cell phone: 513-260-1184.

Tuesday, April 7, 2026 - Shakerag Hollow

Hike Leader - Lucia Case. Location: The University of the South, Sewanee, TN. Meet at the University Gates parking lot. Departure time: 10:00 a.m. Return Time: Late Afternoon. Rating: Easy. What to Bring: Money for lunch at the university dining hall, boots that can handle mud, roots, and rocks. Brief Description: Expect to see a profusion of spring wildflowers. After lunch we will go on a very short hike to the Natural Bridge. Contact Email: luciacklarkcase@gmail.com; Cell phone: 404-210-9634.

Thursday, April 9, 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 Tom Darden on *A New Perspective for Forestry and Wildlife Conservation* in India: Saving Tigers Through Partnerships.

Tuesday, April 14, 2026 - Ijams Nature Center

Hike Leaders - Margaret & Jack Callahan. Location: 2915 Island Home Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37290. Meet at the Nature Center. Departure time: 10:00 a.m. Return Time 2:00 p.m. Rating: Easy. What to Bring: Lunch and rain gear. Brief Description: There is a \$5.00 charge to park. The gardens are free. Contact Email: Jackn1945@bellsouth.net. Cell phone: 423-284-7885.

Tuesday, April 14, 2026 - Thursday, April 16, 2026 - Silver Comet + Chief Ladiga Trail Bicycle Ride

Leaders: Janet & Rob Coombs

Important updates for those who would like to participate:

***Tuesday, April 14, 2026** - Meet at 9:30 a.m. **Central Standard Time** in the lobby of the Hampton Inn Jacksonville-Anniston Area 1041 JD-L Dr. SW, Jacksonville, Alabama, 36265. I have asked for permission to leave our cars in the hotel parking lot until we return on Thursday. We will bike 1 mile from the hotel to enter the Chief Ladiga Trail at mile marker (MM) 5. There are two reasons to enter the trail at this location rather than MM-0: one, the reviews for the hotel near the Anniston trailhead were poor, and two, this will shorten the miles we bike on our first day to 38 miles. Janet and I plan to spend the night before the ride (Monday night April 13) at the Hampton Inn, but this is optional for the rest of the group. Those not staying overnight at this hotel the day before the ride should still plan to meet us there to park their cars

as that is the location where the shuttle will return us on Thursday. Tuesday's ride will be 38 miles to Cedartown, GA where we should arrive in time to enjoy dinner. The best option for a hotel in Cedartown is the Quality Inn at 925 N Main Street, 770-747-9951, which is 1.6 miles off the trail.

***Wednesday, April 15, 2026** - We will bike from Cedartown to Hiram, GA. Country Inn & Suites by Radisson, 70 Enterprise Path, Hiram, GA, 30141, The hotel is reasonably priced, decent, and less than a mile (.7) from the trail.

***Thursday, April 16, 2026** - We will bike 17 miles to the Smyrna Trailhead (MM 94) Our shuttle will pick us up at 1:00 p.m. (EST) and return us to the Hampton Inn Jacksonville-Anniston Area parking lot. The cost of the shuttle is a flat fee which will be shared equally between the passengers. Depending on the number participating in the bike ride, the shuttle should be \$40-60 per person.

***Shuttle Reservations** - The shuttle can transport eight passengers and eight bicycles. If need be, the shuttle driver will return to Smyrna to pick up a second load of passengers. For this reason, those participating on this outing will be limited to 16. You can reserve your spot by sending a text message or calling me (Rob) - 423-400-8008.

For a great resource for this trip, check out bikesilvercomet.com/planner.aspx.

Thursday, April 16, 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, April 24, 2026 - BMT – Whigg Meadow to Beech Gap

Hike Leaders - Rick & Brenda Harris (and Nahme, our dog). Location: Meet at Cherohala Skyway Visitor Center. Departure Time: 9 a.m. Return Time: 3 p.m. Rating: Moderately Strenuous. What to Bring (food, water, etc.): Lunch, water, your dog on leash. Description: THIS HIKE IS OPEN TO DOGS AND TO MEMBERS OF BOTH THE BMTA AND CHC. This 4.8-mile section of the BMT will start at Whigg Meadow (~5000' elevation) with its expansive views and will follow the BMT north to Mud Gap then along the state line ridge all the way to Beech Gap. With minimal tree foliage, the views should be fantastic, and the majority of the winter should be behind us. There is quite a bit of ups and downs, so expect to get a good workout. After the hike, we will have to retrieve vehicles up on the Whigg, then we can go to Tellico Plains for dinner possibly at the Ironworks Grille right on the edge of the Tellico River. They have outside seating where well-behaved dogs are allowed. Contact: Email: 513-260-1184.

Saturday, April 25, 2026 - Walls of Jericho

Hike Leader: Jennifer Schroll. Location: Meet at the state line south of Winchester, TN. Departure Time: 8 a.m. Return Time: 5 p.m. Hike Difficulty is rated Easy. What to Bring: Water and lunch. Brief Description: After a short car shuttle, we will descend from the TN trailhead, some sections are steep. Hopefully we will see lots of wildflowers. At the bottom, we will cross two streams via foot bridges and travel ½ along a rugged section of trail, then ford a shallow, wide creek to reach the "walls" area. A fantastic geological area, like a cave above ground and maybe a waterfall. Then we will backtrack on the rugged trail and ascend 1300+ feet to the AL trailhead. 6 miles round trip. Contact: jennifergeologist@gmail.com; Cell phone: 423-284-1256.

Tuesday, April 28, 2026 - Big Creek Trail

Hike Leader - Jack Callahan. Location: Big Frog Wilderness; Big Creek Trail. Departure time: 9:00 a.m. Return Time 5:00 p.m. Rating: Moderate. What to Bring: Lunch, water, shoes, and rain gear. Brief Description: A leisurely one-way walk about 2 miles. Contact Email: Jackn1945@bellsouth.net. Cell phone: 423-284-7885.

Wednesdays, April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 - 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

Below is updated information about the camp-out at Linville Gorge May 4-8, 2026. Note the this is a camp-out with day hikes. It was erroneously labeled as a backpack in the list of events.

Hike Name: Linville Gorge, NC, Campout

Hike Leader: Buddy Arnold, we_arnold@outlook.com, cell number 601-415-3551

Location: Linville Gorge, NC. Stay at Linville Falls, RV Park, and Cabins. This is about 4.5 hours' drive from Cleveland. The plan is to stay at this private campground that has a choice of tent camping, RV sites with full hookup, and cabins. A quick review shows the rates to be reasonable and with good facilities including showers and a camp store. There is more information at linvillefalls.com. I am planning to rent a tent site a month or so before the event. Each camp site is rated for 6 people, so depending on number of participants, we can rent adjacent sites for convenience.

Date(s): May 4-8, 2026

Departure Time: 8:00 a.m. May 4. I may be going up a day early to check out the area. **Return Time:** Afternoon of May 8.

Hike Difficulty: There are many hikes in the area of varying difficulty. Information on day hikes can be found at <https://hikinginthesmokys.com/linville-gorge-wilderness-area/>.

What to Bring: Normal hiking gear. This time of year, temperatures can vary a lot, so plan for layers and possible need for cold weather clothes. It is always smart to have rain gear. All hikers are responsible for their own meals. If folks are interested, we can plan to have evening meals together.

Brief Description of the Hike: The plan is to select several hikes of varying degrees of difficulty that hikers can choose from. More information on day hikes can be found at <https://share.google/drGTy9CHN4xfQ6ZoQ>.

No specific limit on number of hikers. If you are interested, let me know by April 1, 2026. We can possibly reserve adjacent campsites and share tents sites.

*Addendum: I went ahead with a reservation for a tent campsite at Linville Falls Park, May 3-8, that will hold 6 campers. Cost about \$50 per camper.

May 30-June 4, 2026, Cumberland Gap National Historical Park Outing

Hike Leader, Jerry Schneider

Type "Wilderness Road Campground" in the search box at Recreation.gov. for reservations. Suggested campsites are F-12 through F-17. There is good availability. Please let me know if you are interested in participating by calling or texting me, 513-324-4564, or by email at jschneider@fioptics.com . See the outing description in the 2026 Calendar of Events.

HIGHLIGHTS OF PAST EVENTS

January 23, 2026, Hooper Bald / Huckleberry Knob Hike

Hike Leaders: Rick & Brenda Harris

Distance: 4.5 miles

Author: Richard Harris

Brenda and I led this hike to the high balds in about 5 inches of snow. Ten brave souls were on the hike (Me, Brenda, Penny Strickland, Shelley Cadousteau, Molly May, Judy Norton, Clare Sullivan, Melissa and Darrell Sheffield, and our dog Nahme). This was Nahme's first real experience with snow, and, boy, did she love it! She kept doing zoomies in the snow and burying her head in the snow, rolling over and over. She just couldn't get enough of it. She highly recommends this activity and feels sorry for the folks who cancelled out on the hike for a variety of reasons. They really missed out on a great experience. A total of 25 folks were at one time or another signed up, but we still ended up with a good group of 9 explorers + Nahme. We couldn't ask for a better day to hike in the snow at high elevation. The hike was originally scheduled for the previous Friday but had to be rescheduled due to very cold temps and icy roads. On my trip up the night before the original date, the temp was 5 degrees, and the roads were quite slick. But on our hike the weather was in the upper 30s, the views were incredible, the snow was tolerable, and the wind was nearly zero.

We met at the Cherohala Skyway Visitor Center, then carpooled up to the wide pull off along the Skyway between Hooper Bald and Huckleberry Knob. We did not try to access the official parking lots due to black ice covering the access roads. From our cars, we first headed up to the top of Hooper Bald at 5429'. It was not slippery even though it was quite steep, since the snow was about 5" deep and soft without any ice to speak of. Once at the top I told of the history of the famous rock and of the Hoopers and later the hunting lodge.

In brief, the rock has a Spanish inscription "PREDARMS CASADA, SEP. 1615" which translates to "forearms married September 1615". It was once thought to be written by DeSoto's band, but DeSoto was not on Hooper Bald in the year 1615. Then it was thought to maybe be deserters of DeSoto. But the most likely scenario is that a Spanish couple got married there in September of 1615. Perhaps, their surname was Predarms.

As to Hooper Bald itself, Dr. Enos Hooper owned the property along with 13,000 acres down toward Robbinsville, and he moved to the bald with his wife and 5 sons and 3 daughters in 1840. They raised

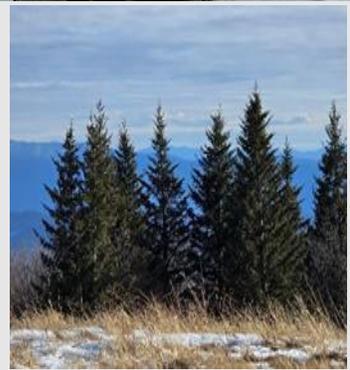
cattle and a special breed of horses known as the Hooper Pony, which he sold as farm horses in the region. His sons fought in the Civil War, and they all returned safely but to a family in heavy debt. Enos borrowed \$1200 from a TN man but could never pay him back. He lost much of his property in the settlement. Dr. Hooper died in 1872 at the age of 76. The remaining property was split among his kids. Much of the land eventually became part of the Nantahala National Forest.

However, the land around the bald was bought by the Great Smoky Mountain Land and Timber Company, which then in 1908 sold much of the land to the Whiting Manufacturing Company. Whiting hired George Gordon Moore to establish a European style hunting preserve. He fenced in a large part of the property and built a 10-room lodge and several outbuildings. The buildings had running water, electricity and telephones. He hired Cotton McGuire to run the lodge and brought in buffalo, elk, bear, turkeys and nine huge Ural Mountain Russian Blue Boars (one male and 8 females). Many famous folks traveled to Hooper Bald including such folks as the Vanderbilts. However, the road from the valley below was 25 miles of steep rutted wagon trace and the enterprise began to lose money. The animals all escaped and were either killed or died of exposure, except for the boars. The boars began to take up residence in the mountains and to mate with regular farm pigs, leading to the hybrid boars that now populate much of the Appalachian Mountains. Cotton McGuire continued to lead hunting and fishing parties over the ensuing years for the rich folks who could make it up the mountain. Cotton met and married Mabel Hooper, a great granddaughter of Enos. Their family lived in the caretaker house which burned down, forcing them to move into the lodge. Cotton and his family eventually left the mountain. The lodge collapsed and was later bulldozed off the side of the mountain. Eventually, the property came into the hands of various private individuals as well as the USFS.

Our hiking group returned to the cars and ate lunch, then hiked up to the top of Huckleberry Knob, the fourth most prominent peak in NC. There we met a family with 3 small children enjoying the day, just as we were. I then told the story of the gravesite on top of the bald. Back on December 11, 1899, two lumber workers from the lumber camp along Sycamore Creek, Andy Sherman and Paul O'Neil, headed out of their camp up over Hogjaw Gap and into NC, trying to make it to Robbinsville. They intended to go down Santeetlah Creek, but got lost and ended up on the top of Huckleberry Knob in the freezing temps. Their bodies were discovered 9 months later with several empty jugs of whiskey lying about. Andy Sherman was buried where he died. Paul O'Neil's skeleton was taken to Robbinsville and reassembled and put on display in Dr. Robert Orr's medical office.

The views from Hooper Bald and Huckleberry Knob were incredible. We could see Clingman's Dome (Kuwohi), Mt LeConte, Gregory Bald, Cheoah Bald, the high mountains which the AT traverses in NC, Nantahala Gorge, Big Frog, Brasstown Bald, and the Cumberland Plateau. We could even see the steam coming out of the Watts Bar Nuclear Power Plant.

We returned to our cars and drove down the mountain and ate supper at the Tellicafe in Tellico Plains. The food was a delicious end to an amazing day.





February 3, 2026, Dutch Settlement, Clare Sullivan and Rick Harris (3)

Hikers Enjoy Exploring By Clare Sullivan

Our BMTA and Cherokee Hiking Club hikers (Barb Childress, Roger and Stephanie Gordon, Rick Harris, Debbie Heilner, Chris Hurd, Daphne Martin, Judy Norton, Darrell and Melissa Sheffield, Kathy Williams, and me) enjoyed exploring the "Old Dutch Settlement" area in the Ocoee District of the Cherokee National Forest. Our hike was led by Rick Harris. Hikers looked for signs on the ground where a cabin once stood. We felt as if we located two old home sites. One area showed signs of a collapsed chimney, another area had lots of flat rocks around that we felt were four pillars of an old cabin. Once we entered the area of the settlement hikers spread out and went exploring. Judy Norton located an old wagon wheel that she had found on a hike there years ago. Daphne Martin and Roger Gordon started digging near the wheel and discovered pieces of very old Mason jars. As we explored, Daphne spotted a piece of pottery in the dirt where hogs had been digging. That motivated more hikers to start looking for treasures. We spotted an old metal pipe buried in the dirt, a hinge, another piece of metal that had "medic" on it and a long thick bent nail. The glass pieces with letters on them included one that spelled "shoop medici", and one with "Mas". There was also the sighting of an old spring covered with a cap rock.

This was the first "bushwhacking" hike for Stephanie Gordon and Debbie Heilner, a new and unusual experience! Luckily, most of us wore long pants and long sleeve shirts as the briars were everywhere. Such a fascinating day!



**Historical Hike to the Old Dutch Settlement
February 10, 2026**

Hike Leaders: Clare Sullivan and Rick Harris

Distance: 4.2 miles

Hikers: 12

Twelve members of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association and/or the Cherokee Hiking Club were on this joint BMTA/CHC hike on this warm and sunny Winter Day. We met at the Sugarloaf Picnic Area below the Ocoee #1 dam, then carpooled to the trailhead along FS 221. We hiked down FS 221H into the settlement area, trying to search out some of the old homestead sites.

Rick Harris gave an overview of the history of the Settlement and using the map in the chapter in Thurman Parish's book along with the USGS map on his cell phone, we were able to locate two of the homesites and several artifacts including a wagon wheel, shards of glass and pottery, and objects such as nails and hinges. These artifacts were left at the site, per USFS regulations. We ate lunch at the 2nd homesite.

Two cell phones and one hiking pole were lost, then found, thankfully. We got scratched up somewhat from the high briars in the Dutch Fields. No one fell at the creek crossing, also thankfully.

Richard Harris, Benton MacKaye Trail Association
423-253-6358 home, 513-260-1184 cell/text, rharris@bmta.org

The Old Dutch Settlement

by Richard Harris

For use with the writeup for our CHC/BMTA hike. Most of this info is from Thurman Parish's book entitled *The Old Home Place – Pioneer Mountain Life in Polk County, Tennessee*.

The history of the Old Dutch Settlement goes back nearly 200 years ago. Until 1838 and the Cherokee Removal Act, the lands on which the settlement were located were Cherokee Indian property. Soon thereafter, the lands became available for purchase. In 1842, a New Yorker named Christian Dietzsh visited the Big Creek area and built a house. He moved back to New York, deciding life in the Southern mountains was not to his liking, but he told a friend, Edward Bayer, a wealthy banker, about the lands close to his Big Creek homestead. Bayer purchased over 200,000 acres in what is now USFS lands in Polk County. In order to protect his holdings from squatters (the "Americans", as he called them, mostly Scotch-Irish living in the Sylco Creek area), he decided to sponsor a utopian colony in the Dutch Creek area. He hired Napoleon Guerin as the colony manager. Guerin gathered together seven families who had immigrated from Germany, Italy and France to move to the Dutch Creek area and start the colony. The name of the creek and the Dutch Settlement was due to some of the families being from Germany (Deutschland).

Bayer's wife (Adele) and her sister (Rosine Parmentier) helped recruit the immigrant families to move to SE Tennessee to start a new life. The colonization began in 1847. The immigrants took a long tortuous route to the new lands, traveling by train through Pittsburg, Cincinnati, and Cleveland TN, then a 3-day wagon route, much of which Guerin had built, from Cleveland to the new lands. The new families lived in two guest houses until they could build their own homes, which were spread around the Dutch Creek Valley. In the ensuing years, more families moved to the Dutch Settlement. Guerin also constructed a guard house on his road into the colony to keep out the "Americans." The new residents built their homes and started farming. They especially grew various types of grapes, selling them in Cleveland and for their own consumption. However, it was so far to markets in Cleveland that most of the wine was consumed within the colony itself. The area also became known as "Vineland" because of all the vineyards and wine making.

In 1851, Bayer sent another person to the colony to aid Guerin in his duties, Alphonso Chable, a Frenchman. Chable later took over as the Colony Manager after Guerin's death, even though he lived about 2 miles away at the junction of Dutch Creek with Sylco Creek. Chable later joined the Confederate Army and rose to the rank of Captain.

Bayer and his wife and sister-in-law did not even visit the colony until 1852. They travelled by steamship from New York to Savannah GA, then by rail to Cleveland TN, then over the same road Guerin had built to the colony. Rosine kept a diary of their visit. They only spent a few days at the settlement.

The colony began to decline as a distinct separate settlement in the late 1850s. The cause of the decline was the search for suitors among the "Americans" and the inevitable "melting pot" phenomenon that followed the integration of these "Americans" into the colony.

In 1870, Rosine, who inherited most of the lands previously owned by Bayer, began to sell off the lands, and they were all gone by 1900. Eventually, much of the land was bought by the Ocoee Timber Company

and was logged off. Later, the lands were purchased by the forest service to become part of the new Cherokee National Forest. The last of the families, the Becklers, sold their property to the USFS in 1939.

February 7, 2026, Lowry Top, Hike Leader, Jennifer Schroll

Seventeen hikers set out on a crisp but sunny day. It was a tough grind up the first 2000 feet in less than two miles. Just after reaching the crest where the trail starts to level-out, we cut off trail for a short bushwack over to an old service road. We followed the road for about a mile. There are great places along the road to find animal tracks. At the end of the road, we bushwacked some more out to Lowry Top which has a nice view of the Hiwassee River and the bridges at Reliance. After a quick bite to eat, everyone headed back down the mountain. Attending the hike were Sue, Doug, Anne, Claire, Charlie (and his friend Tyler), Henry, James Anderson, Jerry Barrow, Nina, and Johnathan Barrow, Leslie, Lucia, Otis, Jack, Chris Heard, and hike leader Jennifer Schroll.



February 10, 2026, Candies Creek Greenway and Wetlands Walk, James Anderson

We had a wonderful afternoon walking the Candies Creek Greenway and listening to the frogs in the wetlands. We were especially pleased to see some old friends and a couple of visitors.



February Wednesday Walks on the Cleveland Greenway led by Jack Callahan



February 12, Monthly Meeting, Etowah Senior Center



February 19, 2026, Hike Club Breakfast at Old Fort Restaurant in Cleveland, TN, hosted by Jack Callahan



February 20, 2026, Cow Camp/Bald River Falls Trails Hike, Leader: Rick Harris

Co-Hike Leader: Otis Pannell

Distance: 5 miles

Number of Attendees: 20

Twenty members of the BMTA and/or the Cherokee Hiking Club joined us on a 5-mile hike on the Cow Camp and Bald River Trails. We met at the Cherohala Skyway Visitor Center at 10 a.m. accompanied by sunshine and warm temperatures. After sign-ins, we carpooled to the Baby Falls Picnic Area to start our hike. Prior to hiking, Rick Harris discussed the origin of the name Cow Camp, the logging operations along the Bald River, and the designation of the Bald River Gorge Wilderness and Wilderness in general, as well as the origin of the SAWS (Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards) in the Tellico Plains / Coker Creek area.

We broke into two groups to meet the group size requirements for Wilderness. Rick Harris led the first group, and Otis Pannell led the second group. We hiked up the road along the Tellico River to the Cow Camp Trailhead, then up the Cow Camp Trail to the top of the ridge at the intersection with the Henderson Mountain Trail, then down the back side to the Bald River Trail. From there, we turned upstream to the Papaw Branch crossing where we ate lunch. We then returned down the trail to the Bald River Falls parking area, then upstream on the road back to the Baby Falls Picnic Area. Once we all got back to the parking area, we drove to Tellico Plains and 15 of us ate an early supper at Senor Lopez Mexican Restaurant.

The weather could not have been better. And the water level in the rivers and Papaw Branch were high, adding to the beauty of the hike. Now, for some history which was discussed by Rick Harris at the Baby Falls Picnic Area and along the way.

Origin of the Cow Camp Trail Name: Back in the mid-1800s, farmers would take their cattle to higher elevations during the summer to avoid the heat down in the lowlands. The ridgeline along Henderson Mtn, accessed via the Cow Camp Trail, was one such spot.

Logging in the Bald River Gorge: The Babcock Lumber Company owned these lands and built a narrow gauge railroad up the gorge to aid in the logging of the area in the early 1900s. Eight Shay engines built by the Lima Locomotive Company in Lima, OH, were owned by the lumber company and were designed to climb 10% grades and to use a cogwheel if needed for steeper climbs. The rail line actually crossed over the river just above the falls and crossed the river a total of 18 times up through the gorge. The logs were transported to Tellico Plains for processing at the large lumber yard. Then the finished boards were transported mostly to Chattanooga for further distribution. The Bald River Trail follows the railroad grade when on the east side of the river, but new trail was constructed by the CCC to connect segments where the rail line was on the west side of the river. The trail is 5 miles long, ending at Bald River Road near the Holly Flats campground.

Discussion of Wilderness and the Wilderness Act of 1964: President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Wilderness Act on September 3, 1964, finalizing a multi-year effort by conservationists around the country and members of the Wilderness Society and the Sierra Club to protect public lands threatened by logging and mining interests as well as others who wanted to purchase and develop public lands for personal gain. Two of the better-known members of The Wilderness Society were Benton MacKaye (founder of the AT) as well as Harvey Broome from Knoxville. The principal author of the Wilderness Act was Howard

Zahniser, president of The Wilderness Society, and the most famous quote from the act was his definition of Wilderness as below:

A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. – Howard Zahniser

Per the Wilderness Act, land eligible for Wilderness designation was defined as land chosen from existing federal lands owned by the USFS, NPS, and FWS (Fish and Wildlife Service) meeting the following criteria:

Minimal human imprint

Opportunities for unconfined recreation

At least five thousand acres Educational, scientific, scenic or historical value

Have no commercial enterprises within them or any motorized travel or other form of mechanical transport (e.g., vehicles, motorcycles, bicycles).

Section 4 of the act lists what usage is not allowed on land protected by the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS), as follows:

Use of a motor vehicle, equipment, motorboat. or any other mechanical transport (including bicycles) [This also means that we cannot use chainsaws or gas- powered brush cutters in Wilderness. Thus, we must use the same crosscut saws to clear logs off the trail that were used in the late 1800s and early 1900s to remove all the huge trees out of the Appalachian Mountains.]

Creation of a permanent or temporary road

Inclusion of a commercial enterprise [such as liveries]

Landing of aircraft

Mining or logging

During and prior to this era, several important conservation-minded acts were passed by Congress

□ 1872 General Mining Act – authorizing mining on public lands and development of a “claims” system

□ 1906 Antiquities Act – allowed designation of National Monuments

□ 1916 National Park Service Organic Act – allowed establishment of National Parks

□ 1911 The Weeks Act – allowed purchase of denuded or other “useless” lands from timber and other companies for development of national forests and national parks

□ 1948 Clean Water Act

□ 1963 Clean Air Act

□ 1964 Wilderness Act – revisions in 1964, 1970, 1975. 1982

□ 1968 Wild & Scenic Rivers Act

□ 1970 NEPA, a system for evaluating the impact of any change to the land on the flora, fauna and archeological aspects of the area under consideration, creating an “Environmental Impact Statement” for the proposed project

□ 1973 Endangered Species Act

□ 1975 Eastern Wilderness Act – opened up areas east of the Mississippi for designation with less stringent criteria

□ 1976 – BLM (Bureau of Land Management) added to the Wilderness Act

□ 1980 Alaska Wilderness Act – added many lands in Alaska

The original Wilderness Act designated 54 sites with 9.1 million acres in toto. In the years that followed, many additional sites were designated and today the National Wilderness Preservation System encompasses 806 areas with a total acreage of 111,889,002. This includes the 68,166 acres in SE TN, NW GA and SW NC

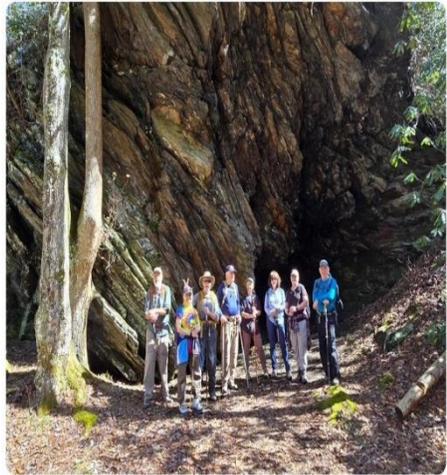
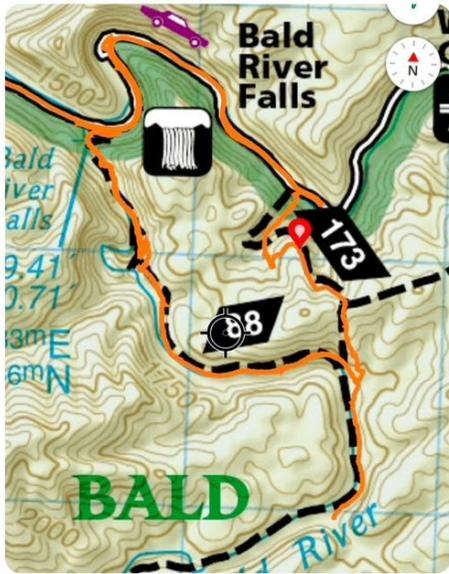
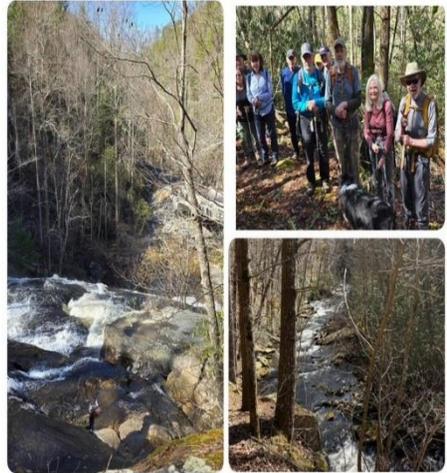
1975 Gee Creek – 2,493 acres
1975 Cohutta – 36,977 acres
1975 Joyce Kilmer – Slickrock – 19,246 acres
1984 Bald River Gorge – 3,721 acres
1984 Citico Creek – 16,226 acres
1984 Big Frog – 8,480 acres
1986 Little Frog Mountain – 4,666 acres
2018 Upper Bald River – 9,038 acres

Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS) and Bill Hodge – you will have to wait until next month to read about the origin of SAWS and its founder, Bill Hodge.

SAWS started right here in the Tellico Plains / Coker Creek Area of the Cherokee National Forest and is now recognized nationwide for its work in supporting Wilderness with feet on the ground and educational programs, such as crosscut saw certification, saw sharpening, Wilderness First Aid, trail maintenance and construction, rockwork, bridge construction, and management of Wilderness areas. SAWS yearly co-sponsors with the USFS, NPS and ATC the Wilderness Skills Institute at the Cradle of Forestry in the Pisgah National Forest near Brevard, NC.







Minutes

Cherokee Hiking Club
Monthly Club Meeting
6:00 p.m., February 12, 2026
Etowah Senior Center

President Rob Coombs opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. The meeting Sign-in Sheet was distributed and 17 members signed. Carol Guhne won the *Tonight's Lucky Hiker* door prize. Rob Coombs shared thoughts about his month's hike club quote: "You're off to great places, today is your day. Your mountain is waiting, so get on your way." Dr. Seuss

- I. The Treasure's Report was given by Rob Coombs. The current balance in the club treasury is \$3,310.36
- II. Corrections from the November minutes published in our newsletter.
 - A. No Corrections were made
 - B. A motion was made to accept the report as reported by xx, seconded by xx, and accepted.
- III. Unfinished Business - No unfinished business to report
- IV. New Business
 - A. New members added to our club roster.
 1. None
 - B. I have begun work on writing a brief history of our club.
 - C. Hikes / Meetings / Events since our last meeting.
 1. January 15, 2026 - Monthly Hike Club Breakfast
 2. January 16, 2026 - Hooper Bald / Huckleberry Knob Hike - Hike Leaders: Rick & Brenda Harris
 3. January 24, 2026 - Dry Pond Lead - Hike Leader: Randy Morris.
 4. January 28, 2026 - Coker Creek Falls - Hike Leader: Clare Sullivan.
 5. February 7, 2026 - Lowary Top - Hike Leader: Jennifer Schroll.
 6. February 10, 2026 - Candies Creek Greenway and Wetlands - Hike Leader: James Anderson
 7. February 10, 2026 - Dutch Settlement - Hike Leader: Clair Sullivan.
 8. Wednesday Walks on the Cleveland Greenway, Jack Callahan
 - D. Hikes / Activities / Events scheduled for the month ahead.
 1. February 19, 2026 - Monthly Hike Club Breakfast
 2. Friday, February 20, 2026 - Bald River Falls in the Winter - Hike Leaders - Brenda & Rick Harris

3. March 7, 2026 - Loop Hike Section 13D BMT - Hike Leader: Anne Anderson & Mary Alton.
 4. Wednesday Walks on the Cleveland Greenway, Jack Callahan
- V. Our presentation for the evening is entitled the *Utah Five National Park Adventure* presented by Jennifer Schroll.
- VI. Our next meeting will be held March 12, 2026. Our presentation for the evening will be the *History of Whitewater on the Ocoee River: The First Female Guide's Reflections* presented Judy Norton at the Etowah Senior Center.

Respectfully submitted by Otis Pannel, Vice President on February 12, 2026

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.

