

# The Cherokee Hiker

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Cherokee Hiking Club, Inc. • 198 Crews Drive • Benton TN 37307  
[www.cherokeehikingclub.org](http://www.cherokeehikingclub.org)

## ~CHC Hike and Events Calendar~

### MARCH HIKES

- March 1, 2014 – Saturday. Laurel Falls/Buzzard Point Hike. Strenuous with climbing in places. 8 miles round trip.
- March 13, 2014 – Thursday. Club meeting at the Golden Corral Restaurant in Cleveland.
- March 16, 2014 – Sunday. Athens Regional Park Hike. Easy to moderate. 3.1 miles around loop. Joint hike with Hiwassee Hiking Club.

### MARCH HIKES

#### Laurel-Snow Hike: March 1, 2014, Saturday

Hike leader: Randy Morris. **Rating: strenuous.** Length: 8 miles.

We will hike approximately 8 miles in the Laurel-Snow Section of the Cumberland Trail near Dayton, TN. The plan is to hike to Laurel Falls and combine it with the fantastic vista of Buzzard Point in a hike throughout the Richland Creek Gorge. The trail contains nice cascades along Richland Creek, the entrance to Richland Mine, impressive rock formations and the great overlook at Buzzard Point which looks back over the Tennessee Valley.

The hike does involve moderately tough climbs to the top of the gorge going to both the falls and Buzzard Point and rocky terrain. Combined with the length of the hike I rate the hike as strenuous. For more information and directions you can go to <http://www.cumberlandtrail.org/laurel-snow.html> .

Please call Randy Morris at **423-650-0485 no later than 8 p.m. Friday, February 28** if interested in attending and for more details.

#### Athens Regional Park Hike - March 16, 2014, Sunday

Hike leader: Jane Bohannon. **Rating: easy to moderate.** Length: 3.1 miles around loop.

The Athens Regional Park Trail has its ups and downs and scenic views in woodland, an open field, and the paved area around the lake. It is a hike around the perimeter of the 165 acre park and along North Mouse Creek where beavers are sometimes seen. I am leading this hike for both the Cherokee and Hiwassee Hiking Clubs.

We will start at the area around the lake, hike along North Mouse Creek, then through the wooded areas, and back to the trailhead. This is a nice gentle hike to get us out after the holidays and snow.

***Directions to the trailhead from Cleveland:*** The park is located on State Highway 30 West (Decatur Pike). Take I-75 north to the first Athens Exit, then turn right onto Highway 30 toward Athens. The park is approximately 1 mile on the right.

***Directions to the trailhead from Etowah:*** take State Highway 30 through Athens all the way to the park. The park is approximately 1 mile on the left from the State Highway 11 (Congress Parkway) and Highway 30 (Decatur Pike) intersection.

Please plan to meet at the trailhead at **2:30 p.m.** on Sunday afternoon for signing in. The mountain bike/hiking parking lot is the first turn to the left after entering the park. Children accompanied by an adult and dogs on a leash are welcome.

If interested in attending, please contact Jane Bohannon by Saturday evening March 15 at 745-9534 or 381-8388 (cell).

### **Hikes and events in March**

For last minute updates to our current hike schedule, there are 3 places to check:

1. Our club website at <http://www.cherokeehikingclub.org>
2. The Cherokee Hiking Club Facebook page. Click on the Facebook link:



3. The Cherokee Hiking Club Meetup page. Click on the Meetup link below:



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

## **OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST**

### **March Club Meeting**

The Club will meet at the Golden Corral Restaurant in Cleveland on **Thursday March 13 at 6:00**. This restaurant is one of our old standby's which always serves up a hearty meal in buffet style. The Golden Corral is located centrally at **350 Stuart Road**. If traveling from Chattanooga or points north, take I-75 to Exit 27 and turn east on Paul Huff Parkway. Continue on Paul Huff, passing over the intersection with Keith Street (Highway 11/Lee Highway). After that intersection, Paul Huff becomes Stuart Road. Go a very short way, and you will see Golden Corral on the right, right across Stuart Road from the Hobby Lobby.

### **Trails and Trilliums – April 11-13, Friday-Sunday**

This is the 11<sup>th</sup> year of this event, a festival of wildflowers and unique hikes held in the South Cumberland State Park near Sewanee TN. This event features a performance by Joe Wiegand, the famed Teddy Roosevelt repressor, 15 guided hikes, a native plant sale, workshops on garden design and native plants, Art for the Park and children's events. See <http://www.trailsandtrilliums.org/> for more information and to register.

### **2014 (64<sup>th</sup>) Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage – April 15-19, Tuesday-Saturday**

The Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage, held in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in and around Gatlinburg, is a unique event. This 5-day event features hikes, natural history walks, motorcades,

photographic tours, art classes and indoor seminars that all highlight the wonderful natural treasures that are just emerging from their winter slumber in glorious displays, as well as the traditional arts and culture of the Appalachian region. Additional highlights include the wonderful antique and art and crafts shops in the area, and the famed Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts in Gatlinburg (<http://www.arrowmont.org/>). Cherokee Hiking Club Vice President Leon Bates will be one of the many that will be leading the nature hikes.

Online registration is currently going on. The cost is \$50 for one day and \$75 for more than one day per person age 13 and up, \$15 for one or more days for high school and college students (student ID will be checked), and children under 12 are free. The cost does not include lodging or meals. See <http://www.springwildflowerpilgrimage.org/> for more info and to register online.

## **Recent Hike & Event Reports**

### **Thunder Rock Hike – February 1, Saturday**

One dozen beautiful ladies along with two old men (*sic*) came out to hike on the Thunder Rock Express Trail. The weather started out in the high 20's Fahrenheit, but it warmed up to make hiking a great joy. After the snow storm and cold weather of the preceding week, there was only a very little snow and crunchy ice on some of the shady sections of the trail. On the trail we checked out the rock in the tree; it is still there! We did not encounter any bike riders on the trail; we only saw them in the parking area after we got off the trail.

Al and I, two Groundhogs on the same trail, thank the ladies who sang Happy Birthday to us both. I offer a great big "Thank You" as well to the ones who helped with the car shuttle.

Hikers included club members Aggie Scott, Becky Levings, Debbie Koenig, Sheila Bailey, Ruth Gafford, Rose Hambright, Al Rymer, and hike leader Clayton Pannell.

Meetup and personal guests included JoAnn Ratcliff, Holly Ratcliff, Carina Davis, Olga Cinnamon, Shirley Wright and Deborah Webb.



Pictured here are the “dozen beautiful ladies and two old men”, minus Becky Levings who was taking the picture.

### **Wendy Von Fronk’s Personal Alum Cave Trail/Mount LeConte Hike – February 11, Tuesday**

This is a hike report submitted by former club member Wendy Von Fronk, who went on her own challenging winter wonderland adventure. **Note: the Club does NOT endorse hiking alone in remote areas such as this!**

Despite the icy conditions brought about by the winter storms, I was thankful for the beautiful scenery they left behind. Mount LeConte near Gatlinburg, Tennessee reportedly received over 16" of snowfall.

So looking for a challenge, on February 11<sup>th</sup> I decided to hike to the summit via Alum Cave Trail off Newfound Gap Road. It was a beautiful but strenuous hike that gained an elevation of 2,763 feet in just five miles. Its highest point is at 6,593 feet. Due to the difficulty of the climb as well as the heavy snow and ice, the round-trip entailed a non-stop 8 hours. My GPS clocked the route at 6.5 miles one-way. However, National Geographic (as well as the trail sign), notes the route to be only 5 miles. Along the way, I passed five other adventurous hikers, several of which had thought better about the terrain and turned around. Those that made it to the top (wearing crampons and gaiters) were awarded with amazing views of nature's many gifts.



The first few miles of the trail travels alongside a creek bed. There are several footbridges and even a few intriguing geological features, such as an arched rock formed by many years of erosion. An overlook, known as Inspiration Point, allows hikers to view the Eye of the Needle. The "eye" is a

circular area of erosion formed at the top of a rocky peak. Although not as awe-inspiring, it reminded me of the rock formations in Arches National Park, Utah. The half-way point of the trail brings hikers to a massive bluff spanning approximately 500 feet in length and 80 feet in height. The bluff was a popular saltpeter mine of the Confederate Army during the Civil War. Hikers courageous enough to travel beyond the bluff will finish the last 2,000 feet climbing steep rocky ledges decorated with a few small waterfalls. Support cables have been mounted alongside the most hazardous ledges. At the summit, several trails come together; where there are also a few historic cabins and shelters for those wishing to spend the night and head out the next morning via a separate route. The shelter is available for reservations year-round and the cabins can be reserved from late March through November.

Due to the length and strenuous nature of the trail, I would recommend getting an early start and perhaps hiking in on an alternate route to the summit and coming back down via Alum Cave Trail. I consumed 4 liters of fluid in 40 degree temperatures and would suggest careful planning and appropriate gear for the

weather. I hope to make it again when the weather is cool in the early spring or even in the fall, before the leaves cover the rocky trail. This is a popular hiking trail just outside of Gatlinburg, and tourist season may bring noisy crowds and leave few parking areas. I have found that visiting popular places "out of season" and during the middle of the week affords the best of both worlds. I was able to stay in a quiet creek side cabin in Townsend for only \$50 a night. There were plenty of parking spaces and less than a dozen vehicles on the roads.

Pictured above is a section of the Alum Cave Trail that features cables alongside a steep cliffside, taken and walked by Wendy. Other pictures from this same adventure can be viewed on Wendy's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/von.fronk>.

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**Cherokee Hiking Club Monthly Meeting Non-Minutes  
February 12, 2014  
Monterrey Restaurant, Cleveland, TN**

Due to the deep snow, bad ice and power outages that many club members experienced on Thursday, only three people showed up at the Monterrey Restaurant, which was closed due to the weather emergency. These troopers did not give up however; they ended up at the Cleveland Cracker Barrel where they chowed down on some warm food instead of having a meeting. These stalwarts included club President Clayton Pannell, Secretary Richard Foster and member Al Rymer.