

The Cherokee Hiker

March 2015 Volume 31, Issue 3

Cherokee Hiking Club, Inc. • 198 Crews Drive • Benton TN 37307
www.cherokeehikingclub.org

~CHC Hike and Events Calendar~

- March 7, 2015 – Saturday. Cloudland Canyon Hike (Georgia). Moderate-strenuous, 5.5-7 miles. Water falls. Leader: Buddy Arnold.
- March 12, 2015 – Thursday. Monthly Meeting at 6:00 p.m., Hiwassee/Ocoee State Park at Gee Creek. Bring covered dish and folding chair.
- March 15, 2015 – Sunday. **(RESCHEDULED)** East Lakeshore Trail Hike. Moderate, 3.5 miles. Leader: Clayton Pannell.
- March 21-22, 2015 - Saturday-Sunday. Benton MacKaye Trail Backpack, strenuous, first day 6 miles, second day 7 miles. Shuttle vehicles needed. Hike leader: Rick Harris.
- March 21, 2015 – Saturday. Day Hike to Bob Bald from Beech Gap. Moderate, 6-7 miles with 900 foot elevation gain. Hike leader: Brenda Harris.
- April 4, 2015 – Saturday. Shakerag Wildflower Hike. **(RESCHEDULED)**. This hike is included in the March hikes because it is so close to the beginning of the month of April. Moderate-strenuous, 4.2 miles. Hike leader: Leon Bates.

MARCH HIKES

Cloudland Canyon Hike, West Rim Trail - March 7, Saturday

Hike leader: Buddy Arnold. **Rating: moderate, with two more strenuous options.** Length: 5.5 miles, loop, with options for an extra mile or 1 ½ mile. Leashed, well-behaved dogs are allowed.

To start with, we will turn left at the “Falls Trail” trail sign, which connects to the West Rim Trail. The West Rim Trail has an elevation gain of about 300 feet overall, with a low point-high point elevation variance of about 400 feet. I am rating it moderate due to distance and elevation changes. The trail has great vistas of the Canyon and views of Trenton, GA, and Lookout Valley 1200 feet below. There are nice overlooks along the way for a lunch or snack stop, or some may want to have their lunch at the falls if they decide to take that option, as described below. When you get back to the parking area, I would recommend that you spend some time on the overlook trail. It is mostly flat and has great views of the canyon; you can see one of the falls described below.

There are two options for those wanting some more strenuous hiking; one being very strenuous, and one a little more moderate. Both options consist of taking a Canyon trail down to either Cherokee or Hemlock Falls or both. These falls are really spectacular, being over 60 feet in height over a sheer cliff and some of the best in the region. About ½ mile into the West Rim Trail there is a series of steps and paths that go down the Canyon wall to view these falls. We will pass this junction on the hike out. On the return at about the 4.5 mile distance, there is an option to take the trail down to the falls. Go down the trail for about ¼ mile, dropping in elevation about 150 feet. Then go left and go about 0.1 mile to get

to Cherokee Falls. To get to Hemlock Falls, return on the 0.1 mile trail to the main trail down the Canyon. Continue on down this trail about another ¼ mile, dropping another 250 feet in elevation, and you will arrive at Hemlock Falls.

1. Strenuous option #1 gives you the fun task of returning back up the Canyon trail, gaining about 350 feet in elevation over just ½ mile, returning to the West Rim Trail. Going to both falls would add about another mile to the hike total, making the total miles covered 6.5 miles. This extra option would take about an hour if you view both falls and return back up the Canyon trail; or just 30 minutes if you view just one fall and return up the Canyon Trail.
2. Strenuous option #2 would allow you to see one or both falls, but take a more moderate return trip, adding another ½ mile to the 6.5 miles, making for a total of 7 miles. To do this you must hike down to Hemlock Falls. From there, you can take Sitton's Gulch trail, and avoid going back the steeply ascending Canyon trail. Sitton's Gulch trail is about 2 miles long, and goes mostly downhill, walking along a creek. This will return you to the end of Sitton's Gulch, where you will pick up your shuttle vehicle. **If you are interested in hiking this Strenuous option #2, please let Buddy Arnold know ahead of time, so that we can arrange to leave a vehicle at the end of the Sitton's Gulch Trail on the way into the park.**

Please bring plenty of water and a lunch. You can view a map of the trails we will be hiking for this event at <http://www.meetup.com/Cherokee-Hiking-Club-of-Southeast-Tennessee/events/220808795/>.

The hike will begin around **10:15 a.m.** If you go on your own, it should take about 1 hour and 15 minutes to arrive there from Cleveland. There is a **\$5 entry fee per vehicle** at the park. If you carpool, you can work out your portion of the entry fee with the driver of the vehicle. We plan to carpool from the **Cleveland Home Depot parking lot at 9:00.**

Directions to the trailhead from Cleveland: take I-75 south to Chattanooga, and at the split, continue straight on I-24. Continue through Chattanooga, and then take I-59 south toward Birmingham AL. From I-59, take Exit 11 at Trenton, GA. Go left on SH 136 and continue 0.2 miles. Turn right on Main Street and continue 0.1 miles, then turn left on Lafayette Street (this is 136 East). Continue 6.6 miles to the park entrance on the left, and continue about 0.2 mile to the kiosk to pay the fee. Go past the park store and gift shop and turn right at the intersection (go toward Cabins 1-5). Then go about 1.5 miles to the parking area, restrooms, and trail head. The trailhead will have a sign that reads "Falls Trail".

Directions to the carpool location: take I-75 to Exit 27 and turn east, going toward the new Cleveland Publix on Paul Huff Parkway (on the right). Continue past the next intersection after the Publix (corner of Mouse Creek Road). You will see the Home Depot back from the road on the left. Turn there and come to the parking lot in front of the Home Depot.

If you are interested in going on any of these Cloudland Canyon hikes, please contact Buddy Arnold at 601-415-3551 (home), 423-339-2621 (cell) or by email at we_arnold@BellSouth.net.

More info: there are some shorter, less strenuous hikes starting at the same parking area; in fact there are many nice trails of varying difficulty in the park; some may want to come and spend more time there with an overnight stay. There are cabins and yurts, all reasonably priced. Please let me (Buddy Arnold) know if you want to explore any of the other trails; it would be good if one of you would like to volunteer to be an "alternate" hike leader for one of these.

If interested in staying overnight, please contact the Cloudland Canyon Park at 1-800-864-7275. For other information, call 706-657-4050 or visit <http://gastateparks.org/CloudlandCanyon>.

East Lakeshore hike (Tellico Lake) - March 15, Sunday

Hike leader: Clayton Pannell. **Rating: moderate.** Length: 3 ½ miles.

Note: this hike has been changed from Saturday March 14, to Sunday afternoon March 15. This is after the time change to daylight saving time. Located around Vonore, the East Lakeshore trail is part of a system that connects 30 miles of trails.

Please meet at the carpool location in Etowah, TN, at the Bi-Lo parking lot at **2:00 p.m.** We will car pool to the FIRST Sinking Creek Trailhead, on the right of the Parkway. We will do an in-and-out hike because there is a spot that may be very muddy near the other end of the trail.

Directions to the carpool location from Cleveland: go to east down U.S. Highway 64 until it crosses U.S. Highway 411, then head north on U.S. 411, continuing north through Benton and across the Hiwassee River. Continue into Etowah. Staying on U.S. 411, go through a few traffic lights until you pass the turn to State Road 30 on the left, and then you will see the Bi-Lo grocery store on the right. Park in the parking lot in front of the store.

Benton MacKaye Trail Day Hike – March 21, Saturday

Hike leader: Brenda Harris. **Rating: moderate.** Length: 6-7 miles with 900 foot elevation gain.

This hike is coordinated as a companion to the BMT Backpack on the same weekend, for those only wanting to do a day hike. We will go from Beech Gap to Bob Bald. For questions or to sign up, please contact Brenda at 423-253-6358 or BrendaTHarris@aol.com.

Benton MacKaye Trail Backpack Trip – March 21, Saturday to March 22, Sunday

Hike leader: Rick Harris. **Rating: strenuous.** Length: approximately 12 miles, round trip.

This hike will take place on the BMT, from Beech Gap to the TAPOCO Lodge at U.S. Highway 129 near Cheoah Dam. On Saturday night, we will camp near the Hangover (6.3 miles). Those who wish to stay at Rick's house the night before (Friday night) are welcome to do so.

The latest from Rick: "We now have 17 people planning on going, with two more who are so far undecided. Since this is wilderness and we must keep group size down to 12, we will be splitting into two groups. One group will come in from the TAPOCO Lodge near Cheoah Dam, and one from Beech Gap at the NC/TN state line on the Cherohala Skyway. We will all camp somewhat close by to each other and do a key swap. Then we will meet somewhere for dinner afterwards on Sunday to swap stories and cars. So we still have room for a few more backpackers. More details will follow to those who sign up. Please notify Rick Harris at 513-260-1184 cell, 423-253-6358 home, HarrisRi@aol.com if you would like to go and have not yet signed up or have questions."

To sign up or for more information, please contact Rick Harris at 423-253-6358 or HarrisRi@aol.com.

Shakerag Hollow/Beckwith's Point Trail Hike – April 4, 2015, Saturday

Hike leader: Leon Bates. **Rating: moderate-strenuous.** Length: 4.2 miles

Note: this hike has been rescheduled from March 28, Saturday to a week later due to a schedule conflict for the hike leader. It is being included in the March hikes because it is so close to the beginning of the month of April. It will take place on the beautiful campus of the University of the South in Sewanee

TN.

We will hike a portion of the Perimeter Trail through beautiful Shakerag Hollow (one of the best wildflower hikes in the Southeast) and return via the Beckwith's Point Trail after a short detour to Green's View. Most of this hike is fairly easy, but we will have a short steep climb out of a gorge and some other up and down segments; after all, we will be just off the edge of the western side of Monteagle Mountain on the University of the South campus. Also, portions are very rocky, so good hiking boots and poles are recommended. Hopefully, we will catch the wildflowers in spectacular form, but it all depends on the weather conditions between now and then.

Please call Leon Bates at 256-710-5508 no later than 8 p.m. Thursday, April 2 if interested in attending to find out the meeting location and time.

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 Monthly Meeting – March 12, 2015, Thursday

The Cherokee Hiking Club will meet at the Hiwassee/ Ocoee State Park (Gee Creek) at **6:00 p.m.** The meeting will be indoors in the Headquarters/Visitor Center across the road from the Park's Work Center. Please bring a covered dish to share, as well as a folding chair for each person in your party. Picnic tables are on location.

Leon Bates will present a program on wild flowers. Since Leon is so knowledgeable about this subject, many people far and wide love to hear his presentations. Therefore we are allowing the park employees to attend if they so desire, since they have inquired about it.

Directions to the Hiwassee/ Ocoee State Park: from Cleveland take U.S. Highway 64 east to the intersection with U.S. 411. At that point, turn north on U.S. 411, going through Benton. Continue north on 411, crossing the Hiwassee River; after crossing the river, take the second right, onto Spring Creek Road. This road leads to the Park. After crossing Gee Creek, the Headquarters/Visitor Center building and parking lot will be visible on the right.

Tellico River Clean-up – March 14, 2015, Saturday

From our president, Clayton Pannell:

Free food (if you work, that is)! Registration for this event begins at **8:00 a.m. in the Tellico Ranger**

Station. This event is sponsored by several groups, including TN Wild, the Gold Prospectors Association of America (GPAA), Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA), the Chattanooga Trout Association and more. The latter group is serving grilled hot dogs for all volunteers from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the North River Checking Station on the Tellico River below Green Cove. TWRA will be serving homemade chili and offering tours of the Pheasant Field Fish Hatchery for volunteers.

Wear long pants, sturdy shoes and gloves and a coat. This event will be happening rain or shine. See <http://www.tnwild.org/events/tellico-river-cleanup/> for more information.

TN/NC BMTA Work Trip – March 28, Saturday to March 29, 2015, Sunday

Note from Rick Harris: The TN/NC BMTA Work Trip scheduled for this Saturday and Sunday, February 28 to March 1 on the Towee Creek Reroute, is cancelled due to deep snow on the road and trail. It has been rescheduled for March 28-29.

We will continue work on the Towee Creek Reroute. Please meet at the Towee Creek Trailhead on the Hiwassee River Powerhouse Road at 9:00 a.m. both days, ready to do treadwork on a steep sideslope. Two of the switchbacks and some crib walls are already in and we are working on tread up to the proposed third and fourth switchbacks. Those who plan to work both days can opt to camp out on the floor of Rick Harris's home near Tellico Plains if desired. Contact Rick Harris for questions at 423-253-6358 (home), 513-260-1184 (cell), or HarrisRi@aol.com.

Grand Canyon Adventure – March 19, 2016, Saturday through March 27, 2016, Sunday

Anyone interested in going to the Grand Canyon? If so, club member James Anderson would like to hear from you. *Note:* the header for this event is NOT a typo, he really means 2016.

James and member Buddy Arnold recently had the opportunity to spend 4 days in the Grand Canyon. It was a truly awesome experience, so James and his wife Phyllis are trying to get together a trip for 2016. The date range would be very close to the dates mentioned above, since these are the dates for Bradley County schools' spring break and for Phyllis, a school teacher.

In order to stay at the Phantom Ranch at the bottom of the canyon, reservations must be made a year in advance; therefore James will start reserving this by around the first of March, 2015. The plan would be to stay in one or more of the cabins at Phantom Ranch; these are in high demand and go quickly. The dorms would be a less-desirable alternative, but can be booked if no cabins are available. Plans include purchasing meals from the Phantom Ranch while at the bottom of the canyon. This is the website for Phantom Ranch: <http://www.grandcanyonlodges.com/lodging/phantom-ranch/>. Also Trip Advisor rates it highly, based on 247 guest reviews, including a 2014 Certificate of Excellence; see http://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotel_Review-g143028-d145716-Reviews-Phantom_Ranch-Grand_Canyon_National_Park_Arizona.html.

Approximate Costs include:

Flight out to Flagstaff AZ or Las Vegas NV	\$500-600 per person
Rental vehicle to travel to canyon and back (likely individual share of cost)	\$150
Cost of cabin per person for 3 night stay	\$138
Meals purchased at Phantom Ranch (\$62/day x 3; transporting food by mule is costly)	\$186
Cost of 1 hotel night upon arrival	\$90 per person or couple
Cost of 1 hotel night prior to departure	\$90 per person or couple

Cost for mule to carry out your gear down (not needed for hike out)	\$35
Groome transportation from Chattanooga to Atlanta and back	\$75
Total ballpark cost per person	\$1264

Important things to note:

- If you can share a room with someone upon arrival and departure, that might decrease your cost a bit.
- James will look into the possibility of getting a later flight out of Flagstaff on the day we hike out of the canyon. If a late flight can be found, a hotel room for the last night prior to departure might not be needed.
- This cost does not include any meals other than those served at Phantom Ranch. Some hotels do include full or continental breakfasts, however.
- The plan is to fly into Flagstaff AZ as it is closer to the Canyon. The alternative would be to fly into Las Vegas NV if the flight into Flagstaff is too expensive.
- We will need to rent a car and spend a night near the canyon so we could get an early start down into the canyon the next day. We will then hike into the canyon and spend 3 nights at the Phantom Ranch. During the following 2 days, we can do day hikes to some interesting locations. On the third day, we will get an early start and hike out.
- As an option, you can bundle up any extra gear that you don't need for the hike out, and send it out by mule, in order to reduce extra weight that you would need to carry out. The other option would be to carry it out yourself.
- Mealtimes at Phantom Ranch include a hearty breakfast, a sack lunch, and a bountiful supper. Later after supper they open up the dining room for games, fellowship and beverages.

This hike is rated **strenuous**, as it about **8 miles downhill** going down, losing almost a mile in elevation. The hike out is a little longer at about **10 miles, but the elevation gain is a little less** and the trail isn't as steep. The views and scenery all around are awesome, and the atmosphere at Phantom Ranch is great. They have hot showers, and the cabins have a motel-type heat and air unit. Cabin guests sleep on bunk beds.

One other club couple (Debbie and David Flower) has indicated their interest. So come join the fun!

Please let James know by Wednesday February 25, 2015 if you plan to come, and be prepared to pay your cost of the cabin reservation up front (by March of this year), since James will probably be paying for the cabin reservations for the whole group at that time. For the remaining costs, be prepared to pay toward the first of 2016.

Please contact James Anderson at 423-715-8824 or by email at jeandersonishere@gmail.com if you are interested or have any questions.

Happy Trails To You!

The 2015 Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage – April 21, Tuesday through April 25, 2015, Saturday

Online Registration for the 2015 Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage began on Saturday, February 14th. Mark your calendars and make sure you get signed up for the programs that you want to attend before they are full, and make sure you reserve your lodging ASAP, the hotels, condos and cabins are going fast.

The Club's own native plant expert Leon Bates will be leading several hikes and talks for this event.

You can download the beautiful brochure, featuring the event schedule and other information. Visit www.springwildflowerpilgrimage.org and click on "Download Brochure" to start your planning today.

2015 Club Dues

The following is a note from our club Treasurer, Randy Morris.

The 2015 Cherokee Hiking Club dues of **\$15 per household** are currently due. You may bring the dues to the February club meeting or mail them to the club treasurer at the address listed below. **Note:** If you are a new member and joined in the 4th Quarter of 2014 your dues for 2015 are waived.

**Cherokee Hiking Club
198 Crews Drive
Benton, TN 37307**

New Members

We have two new member families. The club welcomes:

- Marty Dobbs and his family
- Darrin Hunt and his family

Recent Hike & Event Reports

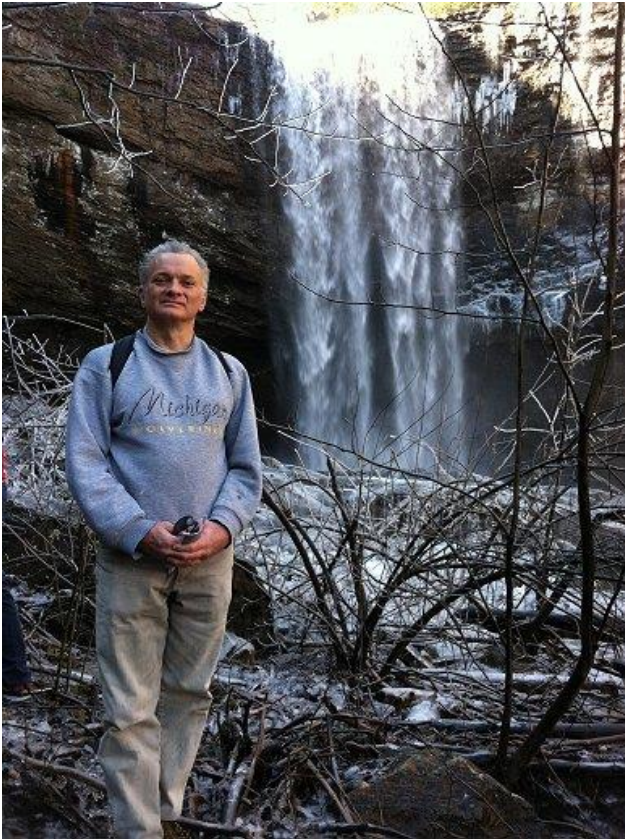
Lula Lake Land Trust Hike – February 7, 2015

This was an impromptu hike (some of our best hikes are spur of the moment!) on a day that this normally restricted area on Lookout Mountain in Georgia was open to the public, as a promotional effort. The hike was organized by Richard Foster, to hike the new trail to the falls. The trail was moderate and about 2-3 miles in length. Attendees included Richard Foster (leader) and Chris Swain. Rick and Brenda Harris also attended, but went on another trail.

The Lula Lake Land Trust Open Days occur the first and last Saturday of the month, except when the open day event is closed due to bad weather. The gates open at 9:00 a.m. and close for entrance at 4:00 p.m. They close for exit at 5:00 p.m. Leashed dogs are allowed. Admittance is free, but donations are encouraged. The address for this land trust area is 5000 Lula Lake Road. This website gives more information: <http://lulalake.org/>.

Richard Foster stated: "The falls and view from the Bluff Trail were both worth seeing. The weather was great, though a bit warm for maximum iciness. Lula Lake Land Trust has built a new trail down to the bottom of the falls that is an improvement over the old stairs, especially in icy weather." See <http://www.meetup.com/Cherokee-Hiking-Club-of-Southeast-Tennessee/events/220341998/> for pictures and more commentary on this event.

The pictures below show our two intrepid explorers to the falls. On the left is a stately-looking Richard Foster, and on the right is the brave Chris Swain.



Ruby Falls to Sunset Rock Hike – February 8, 2015

This spur of the moment hike was organized for the day after the Lula Lake Hike by Richard Foster as well. It was attended by Richard, and Jack and Margaret Callahan. The trail (or series of trails), like those of the Lula Lake Land Trust, also go along Lookout Mountain, but on the Tennessee side.

The hike was rated moderate with a length of around 5-6 miles. It also featured about 4 flights of steps. The hikers started from a point near Ruby Falls, and went around the north end of Lookout Mountain using the Upper Truck Trail. They arrived at the Rifle Pits Trail (featuring the rifle pits constructed during the Civil War), and took that to the Cravens House, then made the switch back up the end of the mountain to Point Park. Then they took the Bluff Trail from there to Sunset Rock, the beautiful climax of the hike. The return trip took the hikers back to the Upper Truck Trail, via Gum Spring Trail.

The following link shows a map of Lookout Mountain, its trails, and the historic Point Park and battlefield: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/national_parks/chickamauga_lookoutmt99.pdf. Also, you can view pictures and commentary about this event on our club's Meetup site at http://www.meetup.com/Cherokee-Hiking-Club-of-Southeast-Tennessee/photos/all_photos/?photoAlbumId=25908742.

Carter's Lake Hike: the Amadahy Trail – February 28, 2015

Today we were able to make this hike happen. Neither snow nor rain nor cold of day or night could keep us from our appointed walk around the lake. Thankfully hunting season is now closed, which made this hike on the Amadahy Trail undoable back in the fall.

We had a very pleasant walk in the snowy woods with great views of the lake from much of the trail. The trail was constructed fairly recently by the Army Corps of Engineers near Elijay, Georgia, in the Woodring Branch Recreational Area around Carter's Lake, and doesn't show up in some of the web

searches of Carter's Lake trails because of this. Here is a newer map which shows the trail: <http://www.sam.usace.army.mil/Portals/46/docs/recreation/carters/docs/AmadahyTr.pdf>. It consisted of a loop of around 4 miles in length, and was an easy walk, in spite of the snow and a few slippery patches. Toward the end of the hike the sun came out and we were able to enjoy our lunch in the sun as we returned to our vehicles.

Despite the hike leader drinking beer throughout the hike--root beer that is--the hike went off today without a hitch.

Those making the hike included members Margaret and Jack Callahan, Olga Cinnamon, Darrin Hunt, Becky Levings, Evette Strickland, Ruth and Clayton Pannell, Ann Gray and hike leader James Anderson. Shown below is this hardy group, with James Anderson taking the picture. As you can see from the picture there was still a good bit of snow on the ground. For more pictures and comments, see http://www.meetup.com/Cherokee-Hiking-Club-of-Southeast-Tennessee/photos/all_photos/?photoAlbumId=25947863.



**Cherokee Hiking Club Meeting
Minutes
February 12, 2015
Golden Corral, Cleveland, TN**

We met for dinner at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was called to order at 6:40. 17 members attended. Club treasurer Randy Morris reported our balance of **\$1764.25**.

News:

- A Towee Creek section of the John Muir Trail will be rerouted, adding switchbacks.
- The Ocowassee Festival at Gee Creek Campground on the Hiwassee will have multiple events April 18 & 19.
- The Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association still wants waterfall locations & proofreading for publication.

Activities Conducted:

- Randy's Dry Pond Lead hike was well attended and with good weather and views and bear sign.
- A Lula Lake hike had four participants (all of whom missed at least one turn), good if icy weather, and good views.
- Three people hiked from Ruby Falls to Sunset Rock via Point Park; weather was unseasonably good and there was an unusual abundance of rock climbers on the ledge of Lookout Mt.

Activities Planned:

- 21 & 22 February, Pickett State Park hikes.
- 28 February & 1 March, BMTA Towee Creek workdays; tell Rick Harris you are going.
- The Andrews NC site for June is checked out & will be reserved.

Next meeting:

- The next meeting will be a potluck at 6 PM, Thursday 12 March indoors at Gee Creek Campground.

The meeting adjourned at 7:13.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Foster, Secretary