



# The Cherokee Hiker

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**Cherokee Hiking Club, Inc. • 198 Crews Drive Benton TN 37307**

[www.cherokeehikingclub.org](http://www.cherokeehikingclub.org)

## EVENTS SINCE LAST NEWSLETTER

### **JANUARY 29-FEBRUARY 7, 2020 TELlico TRAIL OF TEARS REMEDIATION PROJECT**

This massive project was completed in half the time expected, 6 days instead of the planned 10 days, including volunteers from the Benton MacKaye Trail Association and the Cherokee Hiking Club. Numerous folks volunteered their time to right a wrong done about 5 years ago. A little history is in order.

It has been known from long ago that the Trail of Tears for many of the Cherokee and Creek Indians in the mountains of TN and NC followed the Unicoi Turnpike route across the mountains through Unicoi Gap, then through Tellico, Charleston, and Blythe Ferry down to Ross's Landing (Chattanooga). Probably 3-4000 Cherokee and Creek started their journey to Oklahoma on this TOT route in 1838 and 1839. The Cherokee National Forest purchased 400+ acres adjacent to the Doc Rogers Fields area through which the Unicoi Turnpike ran about 5 years ago. It was first purchased by the Conservation Fund, then turned over to the USFS. While it was under ownership of the Conservation Fund, the CNF put in numerous tank traps (50 or so) to stop motorcycle and ATV use on the old trail, not requiring NEPA since the property was not owned by the CNF at the time. They did this without notifying the Cherokee, the TN Heritage folks, TOT Assn, or any other groups. It was only discovered by the Cherokee and the CNF archeologist Quinton Bass by accident when they went on a walk on the old route and out to Fort Armistead (also owned by the CNF). Through numerous meetings in Tellico Plains with all the involved parties, a plan was created to remove the tank traps and to develop a hiking trail on the old route as well as to develop plans for interpretative signs, and possible a visitor center.

So now over the past 4 years the CNF has been trying to right the wrong done. This several-day project was to fill in all the tank traps, put in netting, straw bales, and wattles and plant grass in the repaired areas. Also, numerous wildflowers were planted along Peels Branch and a cedar split rail fence in the area where the TVA high tension lines cross the trail. On this project were representatives from the Cherokee, USFS, Benton MacKaye Trail Assn, Southern Appalachian Back Country Horsemen, SAWS, Tellico/Ocoee Volunteer Trail Crew, the Coker Creek Ruritan Club, and just others who heard about the project and volunteered from as far away as Atlanta and Johnson City. It was supposed to take 10 days, but we got the project done in 5 days with all the volunteers we had and the hard work they put in on the project. The area will sit fallow for 2-3 years until it has recovered, then the Unicoi Turnpike Trail will be extended from its current terminus along Joe Brown Hwy through Doc Rogers Fields, this newly rehabbed area, and on to the Fort Armistead site. There may even be a museum/visitor center built along with interpretive signs. That is down the road a few years.

The route of the Unicoi Turnpike through Unicoi Gap, to Tellico and to Charleston is being added to the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail and will receive signage similar to what is currently in the Charleston area. And this route will be added to the TOT brochures, website, etc. It will be administered by the National Park Service as part of the National Historic Trails program.

by Richard Harris

## FEBRUARY 3, 2020 TUNNEL HILL HERITAGE MUSEUM

Seven hikers made the trip to Tunnel Hill, and after arriving around 10 am, began the tour in the center museum. Exhibits in the museum are centered on the Civil War and railroad implements of the era. From there we rode the park shuttle to the historic dry goods store which was furnished with typical items you would find in an 1860's store. Then we walked a short distance to the Clisby Austin home, which was constructed in the 1840's. The home contained several pieces of original furniture, and was furnished to represent the Civil War period, including the portion that was used as a field hospital. The home is in very good condition and is well-maintained.



We then rode the shuttle through the 1477-foot long tunnel, which was constructed in the 1850's. This was the final section of railroad which provided through traffic from Atlanta to Chattanooga. Our guide was extremely knowledgeable of the history of the area and of the Civil War in general.



After the complete tour, which took about 2.5 hours, we drove to Dalton for lunch at the Oakwood Café. Before leaving town, we spent a few minutes at the historic Dalton Freight Depot and viewed the quilt exhibits. Members making the trip were Debbie and David Flower, Ruth and Clayton Pannell, Judy Price, Yvonne Rittenhouse, and Event Leader, Jack Callahan.



### FEBRUARY 8-9, 2020 BIG FROG BACKPACKING

Postponed due to weather and rescheduled to Saturday and Sunday, March 14 and 15, 2020.

### FEBRUARY 13, 2020 MONTHLY CLUB MEETING

We had a great turnout of 23 members and one guest for our potluck meeting--delicious dishes provided by the club members, with wonderful desserts--more than we could eat! This is a nice facility and we really appreciate the Etowah Senior Center allowing us to use it. After supper we had a business meeting and discussed last month's hikes and upcoming events. Thanks again to all who made the drive in the rain and for the great food.



**FEBRUARY 17, 2020 EAST LAKESHORE TRAIL CANAL AND BAKER HOLLOW SECTIONS**

Hike Leaders Rick and Brenda Harris along with Jake (their golden retriever) led this 4.7-mile joint BMTA and Cherokee Hiking Club hike on the East Lakeshore Trail along the edge of Tellico Lake. This was the first of several section hikes on this trail planned for the next few months. All will occur on Mondays and these hikes are dog friendly on leash.

Twenty-three hikers and seven dogs showed up at Sloans in Vonore. We left some cars at Pizzeria Venti across the highway, then carpooled to the trailhead near Fort Loudon Dam and the canal which joins Tellico and Fort Loudon Lakes. We left some cars at the finishing point.

We hiked this easy and very well-constructed and maintained trail along the edge of the lake, eating lunch along the way. The weather could not have been better, sunny and warm. The dogs got to play in the lake while we ate lunch sitting on driftwood. What a great hike.

Afterwards several of us ate pizza or calzones at Pizzeria Venti. The next two hikes on the East Lakeshore Trail are scheduled for Monday March 30 and April 13.



**FEBRUARY 21, 2020 BENTON MACKAYE TRAIL SECTION BIG BEND TO TOWEE CREEK**  
Canceled due to weather.

### WEDNESDAY WALKS ON THE CLEVELAND GREENWAY

Every Wednesday Jack Callahan leads a 3.75 mile walk on the Cleveland Greenway.



### THIRD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH BREAKFAST

This was our first club breakfast at Old Fort Restaurant and we had a great turnout of eleven members. Attending were James and Phyllis Anderson, Margaret and Jack Callahan, Ann and Bill Gray, Carol and Carroll Guhne, Judy Price, and a big thanks to Gail and Edmond Gray for arriving early to save us a table and getting us a really nice waitress, Ms. Love. We had a delicious breakfast and interesting conversation and we look forward to doing it again next month.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## **WEDNESDAY WALKS ON THE CLEVELAND GREENWAY**

Every Wednesday Jack Callahan leads a 3.75 mile walk on the Cleveland Greenway, meeting at the lower end of the parking lot across from Perkits and the Gondolier restaurant adjacent to Keith Street. Meet time is currently 4:30 pm. A note is sent out the beginning of each week on the walk on Messenger. Contact Jack Callahan at 423-284-7885 if you want to be included in the messages.

## **THIRD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH BREAKFAST**

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

## **MARCH 5, 2020 THURSDAY BRUSH CREEK AND BRUSH CREEK SPUR**

Hike portions of these trails to make a loop hike of approximately 2.5 miles. This is a well-graded and moderately easy trail. The hike begins at Boyd Gap Overlook on US 64, approximately 3.5 miles east of the Ocoee Whitewater Center. To carpool meet at the Ocoee Hardee's on Hwy 411, just north of the Hwy 64/Hwy 411 intersection at 9 am. Park behind Hardee's in the large parking lot. Hike Leaders, Ruth and Clayton Pannell, crpannell@comcast.net, 423-506-9623.

## **MARCH 6, 2020 SATURDAY (and possibly Saturday and Sunday if you would like to camp)**

Hiking at Falls Creek Falls State Park. Fall Creek Falls, at 256 feet is one of the highest falls in the Eastern US. Other waterfalls within the park include Piney Falls, Cane Creek Falls, and Cane Creek Cascade. The park is 57 miles (about 1.5 hours) from Cleveland via Dayton and Pikeville. Meet at the Nature Center at 10 am and carpool to Fall Creek Falls overlook and hike down to the base of falls, approximately one-mile round trip rated moderate. Return to overlook and go by Cane Creek Cascade and view via the cable suspension bridge. Returning to the Nature Center, take a short hike to the base of the cascade. Propose eating a late lunch in Pikeville on the return trip. For more information contact Hike Leader Larry Van Dyke, Larry.VanDykeTN@gmail.com if you plan to attend.

## **MARCH 12, 2020 THURSDAY 6 PM MONTHLY CLUB MEETING**

Potluck planned at the Etowah Senior Center, 435 Cooper Street, Etowah, TN.

## **MARCH 14 AND 15, 2020 SATURDAY AND SUNDAY BIG FROG BACKPACKING**

12 miles round trip, strenuous with approximately 2300-foot elevation gain to top. Expect cold weather and be prepared for temps in the upper teens overnight. Each person is responsible for all their gear and food. Meet at the Thunder Rock Campground trailhead parking just below TVA Powerhouse #3 on US Highway 64 at 9 am Saturday morning to carpool to the trailhead. Return Sunday afternoon. Persons interested must call James Anderson, Hike Leader, at 423-715-8824 or text to same.

## **MARCH 20, 2020 FRIDAY BUSHWHACKING FOR WATERFALLS ABOVE RAINBOW FALLS**

Off-trail bushwhacking to find unmarked falls; hike will be strenuous, and require fording streams and climbing steep side hill sections. Bring lunch, water shoes, and first aid supplies. Wear sturdy boots and work gloves. Meet at 9:30 am at Clemmer Trailhead parking on the left just after you turn off Hwy 64 onto Hwy 30. From Cleveland, you will pass Mac Point Rec Area on your right, and Hwy 30 is the next paved road to your left, approximately 0.30 miles past Mac Point. Hike Leaders Jack Callahan 423-284-7885, and Clare Sullivan, 404-849-0872.

## **MARCH 21, 2020 SATURDAY ROCK CREEK GORGE SECTION OF THE CUMBERLAND TRAIL**

5.4-mile hike, strenuous, bring water shoes and lunch, and wear sturdy hiking boots. To carpool from Cleveland, meet at the Park and Ride at I-75 exit 25, on Hwy 60 next to the Mapco gas station at 8 am. We will need two vehicles minimum as we will have to shuttle at the trailhead. The hike will begin at Upper Leggett Trailhead (N35 24.606, W85 07.856) and end at Retro Hughes Trailhead (N35 24.173, W85 11.021). We will drop cars at end (Retro Hughes) and shuttle back to beginning (Upper Leggett). For those hikers who wish to meet at either trailhead, you must contact Hike Leader Judy Price at jprice.bird@yahoo.com.

## **MARCH 23, 2020 MONDAY IJAMS NATURE CENTER**

Ijams (the j is silent) Nature Center, located at 2915 Island Home Ave, Knoxville, TN, approximately 1.5-hour drive from Cleveland. The center has numerous wildflower trails with a great variety of plants. There is no admission, and it is dog friendly. We will make a leisurely walk of about two miles on the well graded trails. Bring a lunch and we will eat in their picnic area. To carpool from Cleveland, meet at the Home Depot parking lot near the garden center on Paul Huff Parkway at 8:30 am. If you plan to meet us at the nature center, we will meet in their parking lot at the visitor center at 10 am. Look for the orange baseball caps. Event Leader, Jack Callahan, 423-284-7885, Jackn1945@bellsouth.net.

**MARCH 24, 2020 TUESDAY  
HIWASSEE RIVER HERITAGE  
CENTER GUIDED TOURS**

We will meet at the Heritage Center, 8746 Hiwassee Street, Charleston, TN, at 11 am to begin the event which consists of three guided tours. First will be the Heritage Center and Civil War walk, next the Calhoun Historic Walk, then the Charleston Trail of Tears Walk. Each tour will be about one hour, with a tour guide. The cost of the tour is \$5 per person. Bring a lunch and we will eat at the city park pavilion. Event Leaders Yvonne Rittenhouse and Jack Callahan. Call Jack at 423-284-7885 for more information.

**MARCH 28, 2020 SATURDAY  
SHAKERAG HOLLOW TRAIL**

Shakerag Hollow is adjacent to the University of the South, in Sewanee, TN. The trail was constructed in the 1930's by the CCC, and passes through cove hardwoods with limestone bedrock. It has an amazing natural garden of wildflowers. The trailhead is 1.5 hours from Cleveland. Bring a lunch and water, and wear sturdy hiking shoes. We will walk approximately 5 miles total, with lunch at about the halfway point. To carpool from Cleveland, meet at the Home Depot parking lot near the garden center, on Paul Huff Parkway at 8 am.

Coordinates for Shakerag trailhead are N35deg12min36 sec, W85deg53min53sec. If you plan to meet at the trailhead you must contact the hike leader, and look for the hikers wearing orange baseball caps at the trailhead. Hike Leader, Jack Callahan, 423-284-7885, jackn1945@bellsouth.net.

**MARCH 30, 2020 MONDAY  
EAST LAKESHORE TRAIL**

Glendale Branch and Coytee Section, 5.2 miles, easy, dog friendly. Wear good hiking shoes and bring a lunch. Meet at Sloans in Vonore, TN, at the intersection of Hwy 411 and Hwy 360 at 9 am to drive to trailhead. Hike Leaders, Rick and Brenda Harris. Contact Rick at 513-260-1184

## NON-CLUB OPPORTUNITIES

**MARCH 1, 2020 SUNDAY 830 AM TO 3 PM [CANEY CREEK SETTLEMENT WORK TRIP](#)**

Rick Harris is planning a work trip on FS trail #74, the access to Caney Creek Settlement. If interested, contact Rick Harris at [harrisri@aol.com](mailto:harrisri@aol.com) or text 513-260-1184.

**APRIL 14, 2020 TUESDAY [MUSHROOM FORAGE AND OPTIONAL MEAL AFTERWARD TAPOCO LODGE ROBBINSVILLE, NC](#)**

The Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA) is organizing the following event and our club is invited to attend: Meet with BMTA members Jim Kronstadt (botanist) and Kim Hainge (entomologist and naturalist) at the Tapoco Lodge to learn about foraging for wild mushrooms along the BMTA. Route will head up Yellowhammer Gap, then along Ike Branch, and return on the Slickrock Trail back to the lodge. After the hike you may choose to join in a gourmet meal prepared by Chief Shea Blalock from the Willow Tree Restaurant in Robbinsville, a five-course meal with each course containing one species of choice edible mushrooms. Seating for the meal will begin at 6:30 pm. There are 40 seats available for the meal at a cost of \$40 per person not including gratuity. The dinner will be moderated by Kim Hainge. Call 828-260-8158 for reservations. The restaurant is the Willow Tree Catering, Baking and Restaurant, 302 Ford Street, Robbinsville, NC 28771.

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

Cherokee Hiking Club  
Minutes of Monthly Meeting  
February 13, 2020

The February meeting of the Cherokee Hiking Club meeting was called to order by President Jack Callahan. The club treasury report was given by the president due to the absence of the club treasurer. Jack reported that the club balance was \$1930.57 on January 19, 2020 and \$2095.27 on February 5, 2020. The treasury report and the minutes of the January meeting were approved by the club members.

Old Business--Jack displayed the paint sticks that were purchased to be used by hike leaders to remark faded trail markers as club hikes are conducted.

New Business-- Club dues are due. Ocoee Days will be held this year at the Ocoee Hiwassee State Park. Jack will meet with the State Park rangers in the next week to get more information on what is expected of organizations that want to exhibit during the Ocoee Days.

Jack reviewed upcoming activities and scheduled activities for club members. Plenty of room is available on the yearly hike schedule for impromptu events.

The next club meeting will be held on March 12, 2020 at the Etowah Senior Center and will include a potluck dinner.

An announcement was made that club members are invited to gather at the Old Fort Restaurant in Cleveland on Thursday, February 20th, at 8:30 for an informal breakfast.

The meeting was adjourned by the president at 7:10 pm after the club enjoyed many delicious dishes at the potluck dinner.

Jim Passmore  
Club Secretary