
Cherokee Hiker

JUNE 2021 Volume 38, Issue VI

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

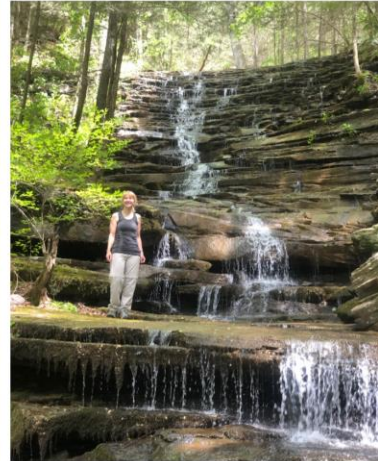
www.cherokeehikingclub.org

EVENTS SINCE LAST NEWSLETTER

APRIL 5, 2021 MOUNT LECONTE



APRIL 30, 2021 ROCK CREEK GORGE SECTION OF THE CUMBERLAND TRAIL



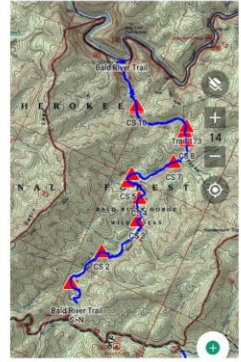
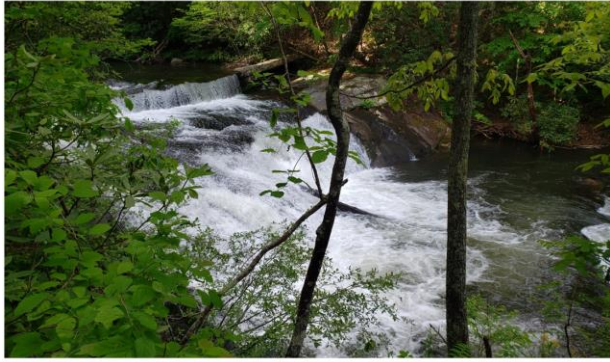
It was a warm, beautiful day as three hikers--Karen Kocher, Doug Lynch and Hike Leader Judy Price--set off from Upper Leggett Road trailhead in Sale Creek after shuttling from Retro Hughes trailhead near Bakewell. After rock-hopping Boiling Springs Branch, it wasn't long before we were at Rock Creek Overlook, a rock outcropping where you can see the creek in the winter. The mountain laurel had just begun to show its unique pink blooms. We were surprised to see that the bridges at Flat Branch and Rocky Branch were out, but we were able to rock-hop both creeks. Soon we were crossing Leggett Branch Cascades, a magnificent little waterfall. After hiking along rock bluffs to our right and through what we called "Fire Pink Alley," we began to head downhill past a patch of Jack-in-the-pulpit to Rock Creek Bridge. We stopped for lunch at the picturesque bridge, watching the butterflies and dragonflies playing and talking to a fellow dayhiker, before we continued up the other side of the gorge. Here along the trail was an abundance of wildflowers: dwarf crested iris, red and yellow buckeye, trillium, and the one Karen had been hoping for, pink lady's slipper. We continued to climb up and up on the pine-needle-covered trail until we were back at the trailhead. The trail is 5.4 miles one-way but we ended up hiking 7.7 miles. Quite a wonderful day.



MAY 7, 2021 BALD RIVER TRAIL



Leaders: Richard and Brenda Harris. Length: 9.6 miles, moderate. Attendees: Hike Leaders Richard and Brenda Harris, Tom and Carolyn Sewell, Karen Kocher, Mary Alton, Reggie Jay. This hike was originally scheduled for May 3, but was rescheduled for May 7 due to the heavy day-long rains on May 3. Seven hikers met at the Cherokee Skyway Visitor Center at 9 AM and drove to the Bald River Falls Parking Lot. We first viewed the main falls by the road, then hiked up the perfectly maintained trail. The first mile is rocky with lots of ups and downs with some rock scrambling, but with lots of eye candy with numerous waterfalls. The next four miles were easier hiking, much of it on the old railbed. Crossing Pawpaw Creek was tricky, though. Rick spent time discussing the logging days, the route of the narrow-gauge railway used by Shay engines to bring out the logs, the old CCC rec area above the falls, the CCC itself and the location of CCC camps in the area, and the Wilderness designation and what it means for explorers and trail maintainers. Rick also conducted a quiz on the 8 Wilderness areas in the region; no one knew them all. Also, Carolyn Sewell pointed out all the numerous flowering plants along the way. We saw some of the largest blooming Solomon's seals ever, both true and false. We ate lunch at the last falls closest to Bald River Road, then returned to the parking lot. It was a gorgeous cool sunny breezy day, much different from the Monday it was scheduled for. In addition to Carolyn slowing up us hikers to look at flowers, Rick slowed up the hikers with his history talks and with documenting the location of the 11 campsites along the trail and GPS'ing the route for the upcoming revision of the Will Skelton's *Cherokee National Forest Hiking Guide*. But slow is good, to the enjoyment of all.

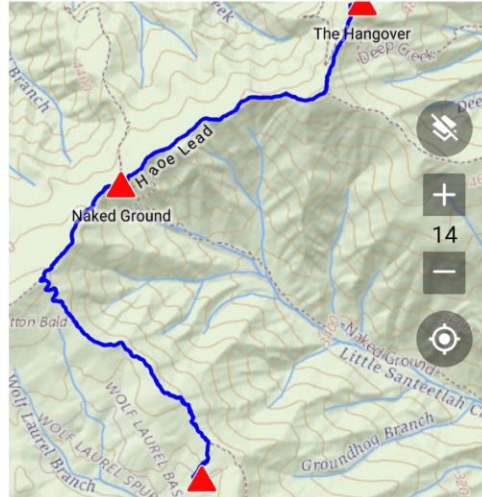


MAY 8, 2021 SATURDAY JOHN MUIR NATIONAL RECREATION TRAIL MAINTENANCE



MAY 13, 2021 MONTHLY CLUB MEETING

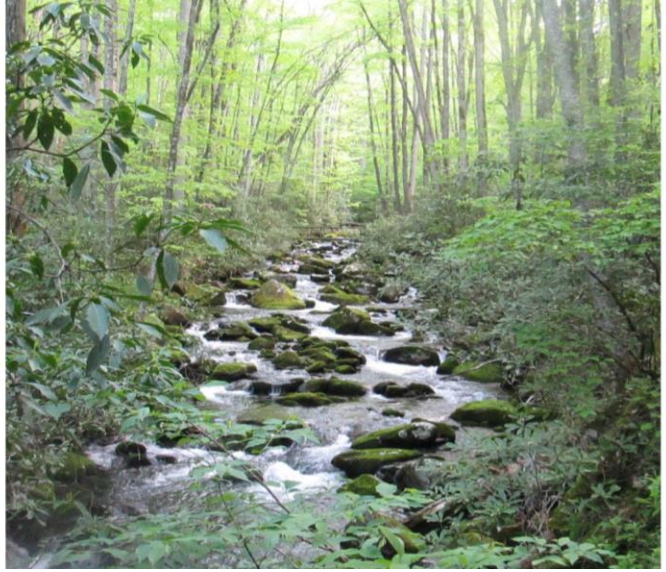
MAY 14, 2021 THE HANGOVER



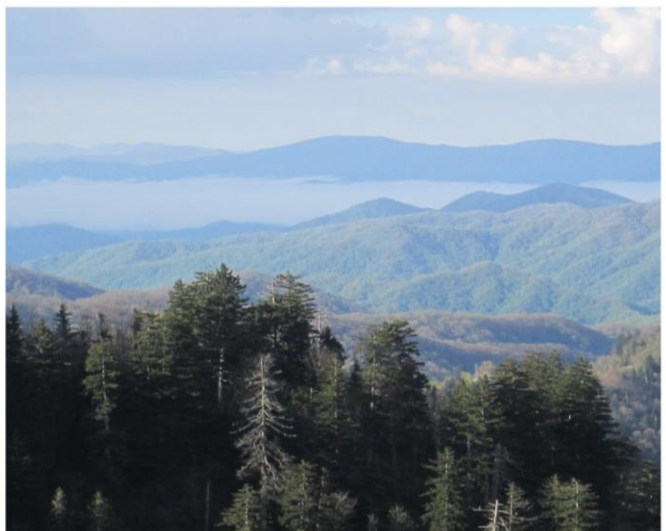
Hike Leaders: Richard and Brenda Harris. Attendees: Richard and Brenda Harris, Tom and Carolyn Sewell, Mary Alton, Anne Anderson, Phil Strickler, Fred Woodward. Distance: 7.0 miles. Elevation Gain: 2041'. Difficulty Level: Difficult. Thirteen folks were signed up but due to gas shortages, only eight showed up. Five met at the Cherokee Skyway Visitor Center at 9 AM and three met us at the Wolf Laurel Trailhead on the east flank of Stratton Ridge. The day started and stayed cool in the 50s and partly sunny with clear air. We started up the Stratton Ridge Trail and reached the BMT on Stratton Ridge at 1.3 miles. After resting at "Sit your butt down for a few minutes" Rock at the intersection with the Hae Lead Trail/BMT at 5281' elevation, we headed down to Naked Ground, then up to Hae (the site once of a fire tower) and on out to the Hangover at mile 3.5. We ate lunch and admired the incredible views into the Smokies and the Cherokee and Nantahala National Forests and across the Tennessee River Valley to the Cumberland Plateau. The trail was in good condition except for three or so minor blowdowns, but provides always a quite challenging hike. We then returned the way we came, all very tired after this difficult but rewarding hike.



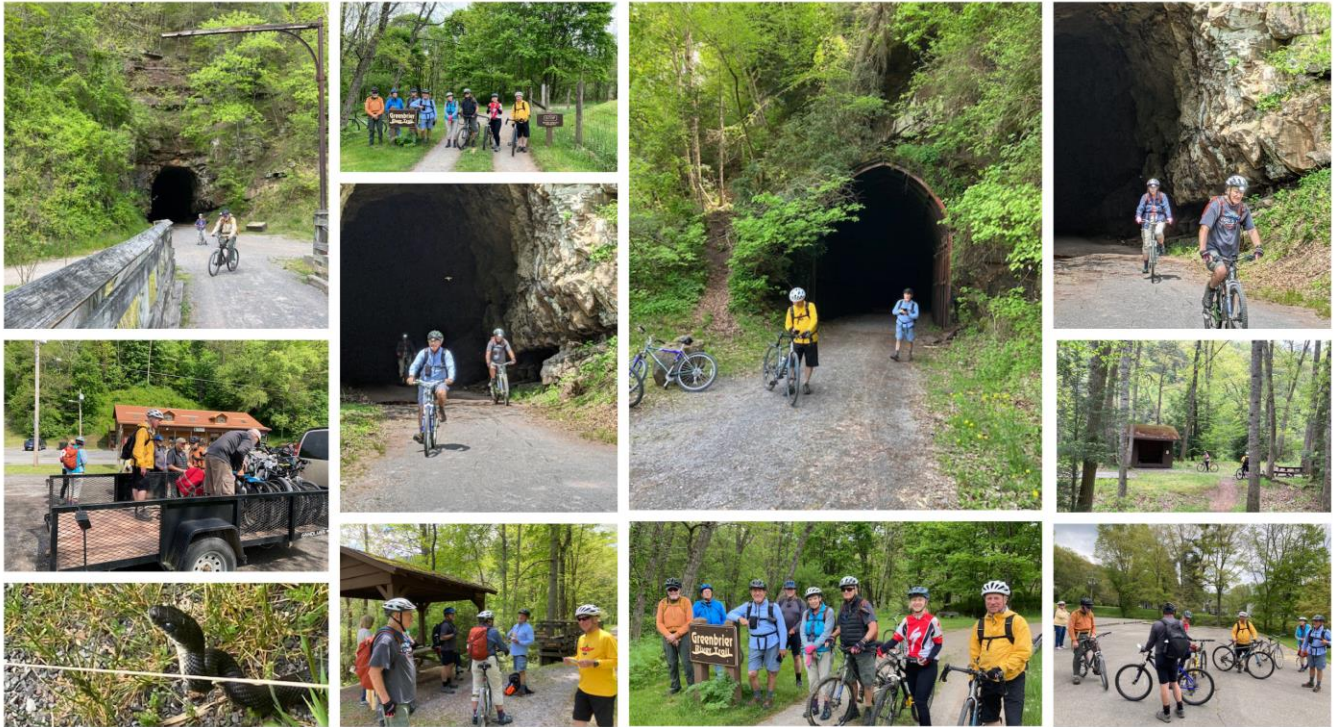
MAY 11 – 15, 2021 BACKPACK IN THE SMOKIES



Buddy Arnold, Bruce Lee, and Darrell Morgan completed this backpacking trip on May 15, 2021. We started the hike on May 11, 2021, leaving a vehicle at the Kephart Prong Trailhead, and taking a commercial shuttle to the Beech Gap Trailhead north of Cherokee. The shuttle service used was "A Walk in the Woods." They provided good service and were cheaper than others contacted. The first part of the trip was very strenuous with a gain in elevation of about 2500 feet in about 5 miles. We spent the night at the Laura Gap Shelter, having the shelter all to ourselves. The shelter was nice, with the only downside being a long steep trip to the water source. We got a lot of rain during the night and waited until mid-morning to continue up the Balsam Mountain Trail to the AT. We continued on to the Tri-Corner Shelter, a total hike of about 7 miles. When we got to the shelter, there were only a couple of people there, but we were soon to be joined by close to 30 AT thru hikers. This is a nice shelter with a close water source. We continued about 6 miles the next day on the AT to the Peaks Corner Shelter, again sharing the area with a large number of thru hikers. This is a nice shelter, but the water source and latrine are considerable distance. There were great views of the mountains along the way. The next day we took the AT toward the Kephart Shelter, and then took side trails to the shelter. The distance hiked was about 10.5 miles, with a lot of downhill. This is a nice shelter located close to a stream, but no latrine. We had the shelter to ourselves. The last day we hiked out to the trailhead, only about 2 miles, with great views of the stream and several log bridges. A lesson learned from the hike is that it is probably a good thing to avoid using the AT shelters when there are so many thru hikers headed north from Georgia. This would be from April until almost 1 June based on my experience. We might want to consider sending a letter to the Park Service about this issue. There really has to be some limit placed on the number of thru hikers so that all can enjoy the experience of hiking the AT and protecting the resource. It does not seem fair that recreational hikers are limited to very small numbers with no limits on thru hikers. The crowding at and around the shelters detracted from the enjoyment of the experience. Despite this issue, it was a very good hike that we all enjoyed.



MAY 17 – 23, 2021 MONDAY - SUNDAY CAR CAMP AT WATOGA STATE PARK IN WEST VIRGINIA



The majority of the group assembled on the evening of Monday, May 17. On the morning of Tuesday, May 18, the bikers took a shuttle from Marlinton to Cass, and rode the 24.6 miles back to Marlinton. The trail is a rails-to-trails of the former line down the Greenbrier River, a total of 78 miles of well-graded gravel path, with a minus grade of 1 percent. The portion we rode included several campsites with water, vault toilets, and shelters. We also rode through a long tunnel, and numerous bridges. Back in camp, Jennifer treated us to campfire cooking of pie filled pastries cooked in a cast iron pie iron.





On Wednesday, May 19, we drove to nearby Beartown State Park, walked the boardwalk through some very interesting rock formations, and observed interesting mosses, lichens, and a large, winged creature's nest. From there we toured Droop Mountain Battlefield, hiked to a very limited cranberry bog, observed Bog Boy collecting samples, and rode to the observation tower which provides views of the Greenbrier Valley. From there we visited the Lost Creek covered bridge, a 114-foot-long structure built just after the Civil War. Several people finished the day with a meal in Marlinton.



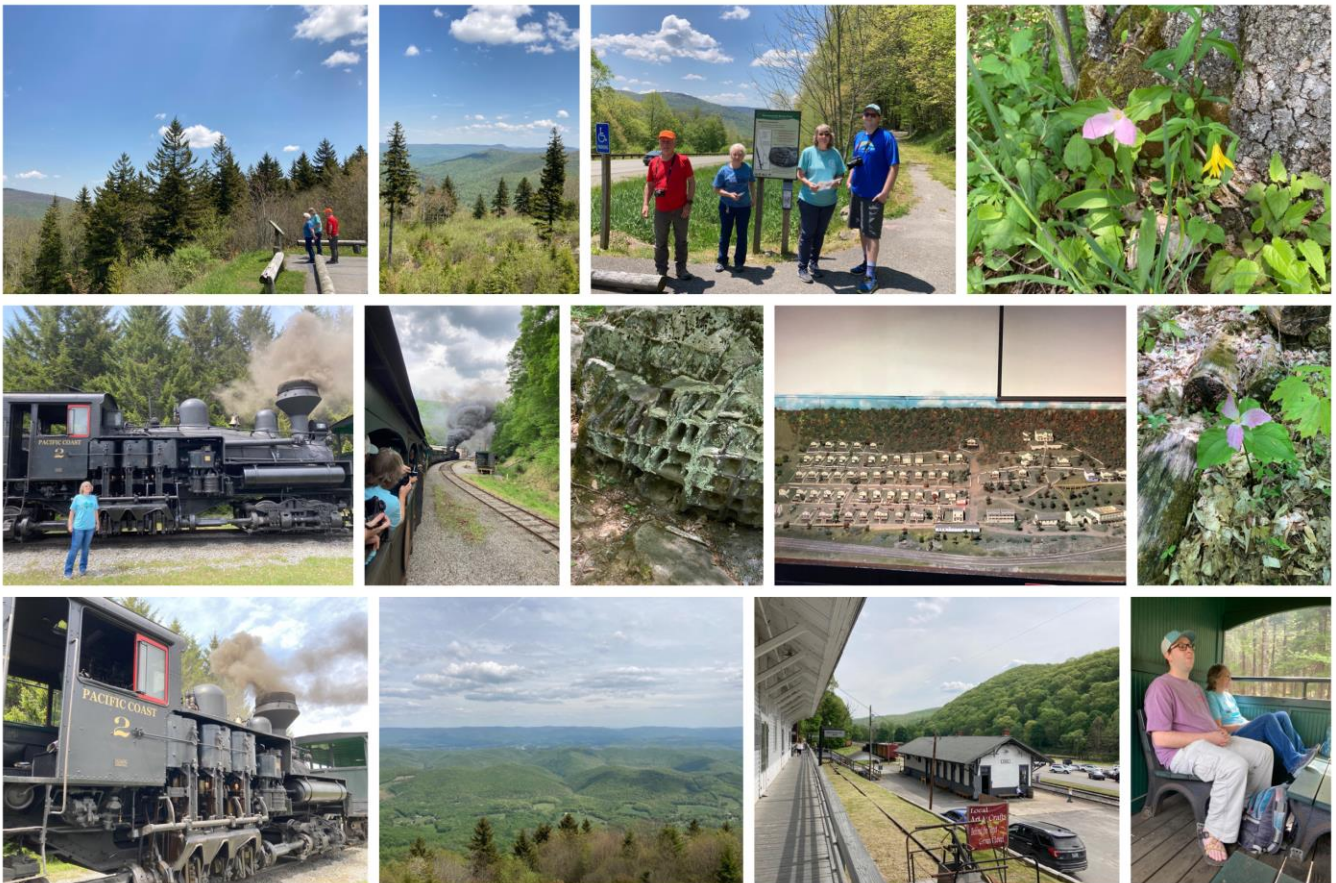


On Thursday, May 20, the group drove to Seneca Rocks, and climbed the 900-foot elevation, 1.5-mile trail to the overlook. Several more of the fleet of fools climbed beyond the skull and cross bones sign to take more exciting photos. From there we drove to near the top of Spruce Knob and hiked the last 0.2 miles to the top, the highest point in West Virginia. Then some went to Elkins for their side of beef. Others stopped briefly at Green Bank Observatory to see the huge radio telescope, the largest articulating telescope in the USA. Back in camp after supper, we were treated to more campfire cooking and James presented Jack with a souvenir of West Virginia--local maple syrup.





On Friday, May 21, we drove to the Cranberry Glades Botanical Area and toured the glades with a guide provided by the Forest Service. Mr. Moose was very knowledgeable of the area and answered our questions and identified numerous plants we did not know. From there we toured the Falls of Hill Creek, a very well-maintained trail with numerous sets of steps, and viewed the second-highest waterfall in West Virginia, some 64 feet tall. Several of the group continued on and drove the Highland Scenic Byway, while others took a tour of a nearby whiskey brewery.



Saturday, May 22, many took off for home while the remainder of the group drove to Cass and rode the Shay train to the top of Pine Mountain and back. We viewed the movie which gave the history of the area and saw a scale model of the town when it was in its heyday. From there the remaining folk headed home with the exception of one couple who chose to spend one more night. The early riser Sunday morning was treated to two barred owls talking to one another, then a tom turkey gobbling as it left its roost, followed by the sounds of a kingfisher darting down the river and a pileated woodpecker calling nearby. Not bad for a 20-minute span of time. There were fifteen club members who made the trip: James and Phyllis Anderson, Karen and Fritz Kocher, Doug Lynch, Joanne Jackson, Jennifer and Mitchell Schroll, Jerry Schneider, Al Johnson, Amanda Colantonia, Rick and Brenda Harris, and Margaret and Jack Callahan, Event Leader.

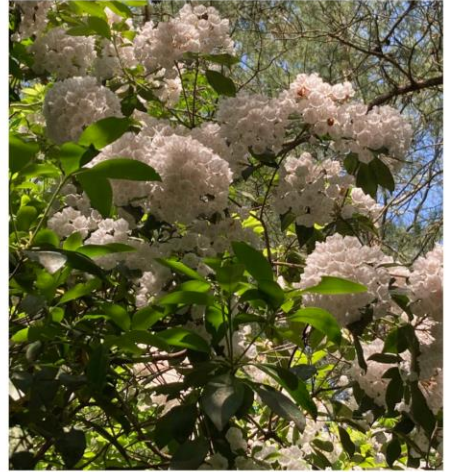
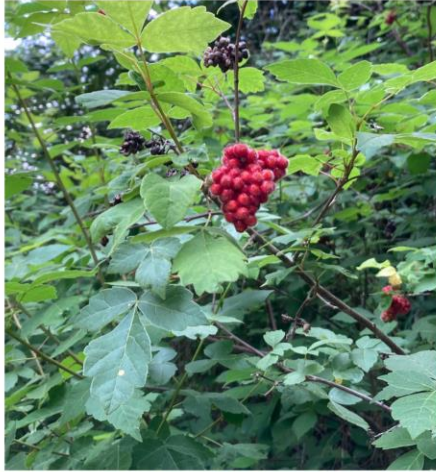
MAY 22, 2021 TN BMTA WORK TRIP SECTION 17A-B SYCAMORE CREEK



Fifteen maintainers participated in our May TN BMTA work trip to log and brush out the section 17a-b, the section of the BMT along Sycamore Creek between the Tellico River and Whigg Meadow. This 6.2-mile section was completely logged out, removing 20 trees, including one huge 36-inch tree suspended above the trail; The saw team consisted of Bob Cowdrick and Ed & Clare Sullivan. There were 3 other teams covering 2-mile segments of the trail which brushed out the trail and the 4 campsites. It was a long but very productive day. Afterwards several folks visited local restaurants. We had hoped to go to the Iron Works Grille, but it was packed to the gills with no parking spot left and a long waiting line. We also replaced the sign at the lower switchback and Pam & Kent Mathews plan to go back later to replace the upper switchback sign. Participants included Pam and Kent Mathews (section maintainers), Rick and Brenda Harris, Ken and Phyllis Jones, Ed and Clare Sullivan, Bob Cowdrick, Keith Mertz, Judy Wade, Ralph Van Pelt, Bill Lawdeer, Andy Meeks, and Anne Anderson. Submitted by Rick Harris.



MAY 27 OLD COPPER ROAD FROM BOYD GAP TO OCOEE WHITEWATER CENTER



WEDNESDAY WALKS ON THE CLEVELAND GREENWAY



THIRD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH BREAKFAST

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOTE: Event schedule subject to change according to guidance from governmental agencies and offices regarding [COVID-19](#), weather, or other conditions. An email will be sent to members if an event is canceled.

JUNE 5, 2021 SATURDAY COKE OVENS MUSEUM AND TOUR

Tour this complex near Dunlap, TN, which includes a reproduction of the original country store and short walks to the 100-year-old coke ovens in the Coke Ovens Park. Drive time from Cleveland is approximate 1.25 hours. Meet at the Park N Ride at the intersection of I-75/Hwy 60 in Cleveland at 8:45 am to carpool to the park. Bring a lunch or we will possibly eat in a local restaurant depending upon the virus situation. Contact Event Leader Jack Callahan at 423-284-7885.

JUNE 8- 10, 2021 TUESDAY - THURSDAY BACKPACKING IN THE SMOKIES

Canceled.

JUNE 10, 2021 THURSDAY 6 PM MONTHLY CLUB MEETING

JUNE 22, 2021 TUESDAY MUD GAP TO WHIGG MEADOW HIKE

This is an easy-to-moderate hike off the Cherohala Skyway covering about 4 miles. Those attending will meet at the Tellico Welcome Center at 9:00 am to carpool and/or caravan to the trailhead as parking is limited. It is limited to 12 hikers. Anyone interested should contact Hike Leader Sue Robinson at 423-519-9751 to sign up. She asks that you text and leave your name and contact info.

JUNE 27 – 29, 2021 SUNDAY - TUESDAY CAR CAMPOUT AT ELKMONT CAMPGROUND IN THE SMOKIES

This will include hiking the Sugarland Mountain Trail, to Rough Creek Trail, to Little River Trail which is 12 miles. The hike begins on Clingmans Dome road near Mt. Collins shelter and terminates at Elkmont Campground. Those participating would drive to the campground on the June 27 and camp two nights with the hike being on June 28. Individuals are responsible for their own campground reservations. The hike is long and will require an early start on the June 28 to get to the trailhead. If there is interest, possibly another night of camping and hiking other trails or doing a bike ride in Cades Cove could be added. If you are interested in attending contact Hike Leader Jack Callahan at jackn1945@bellsouth.net.

WEDNESDAY WALKS ON THE CLEVELAND GREENWAY

Every Wednesday Jack Callahan leads a 3.75-mile walk on the Cleveland Greenway while social distancing, 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 on the walk is sent out the beginning of each week 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.

NON-CLUB OPPORTUNITIES

[TELLICO/OCOEE VOLUNTEER TRAIL CREW](#)

Check the Facebook page for future work days.

[BENTON MACKAYE TRAIL ASSOCIATION](#)

See the calendar for upcoming events.

JUNE 4 – SEPTEMBER 10, 2021 [LOOKOUT WILD FILM FESTIVAL](#)

“Out of concern for our attendees and as an opportunity to share wild places and the people they inspire with a new audience in Chattanooga, we have arranged for LWFF 2021 to take place along with the [Nightfall Music Series](#)! Instead of 15 hours of films in one weekend, we're breaking the films up into 15 1-hour blocks right after Nightfall on the screen in Miller Park. The films will run from approximately 9:45 p.m. until 10:45 p.m. every Friday night from June 4 to September 10. We are working to release the full lineup of films but we couldn't wait any longer to share the news. It's free! Bring a chair and a friend!”

JUNE 5, 2021 SATURDAY [AMERICAN HIKING SOCIETY'S NATIONAL TRAILS DAY](#)

A day of service and advocacy for hometown trails.

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