



Newsletter of the
Chattanooga Hiking Club

July 2018

Club Meeting

The Chattanooga Hiking Club meets at 6:30 PM on the first Monday of even numbered months at the Outdoor Chattanooga offices on River Street. Directions to the meeting site are on the club website: chatthiking.com

Next meeting – Monday August 6, 2018

Last month we had a very interesting and educational program from Doug Carson. Some of us may have known about the caves in the area, but I doubt that any of us knew about the **SIZE** of those caves. I also doubt that any of us knew about the extensive mining of iron ore there “way back in the day.” Enjoying Mother Nature is great, but knowing some human history of where you’re hiking is nice also.



Castle Rock pictures from Teresa



Making

TRACKS



Reports from the Field

**Benton MacKaye Project
Saturday June 2, 2018**

Five brave souls completed the Benton MacKaye Trail’s “Heart of Darkness” on Saturday, June 2, 2018: Bonnie Smith, Cathy Love, Barbara McCollum, Charlie Breeding, and Boe Rudder. This section in the Club’s Benton MacKaye series began at Sandy Gap and ended at the Pheasant Fields Fish Hatchery on Tellico River Road (14.5 miles). It is called “Heart of Darkness” due to its remoteness and relative lack of maintenance. The group encountered close to 5,700 feet of elevation change, waist-deep briars and undergrowth, blowdowns, rainstorms, numerous water crossings, and a 2 hour shuttle set-up. The last 2 miles of the trail is the section maintained by club member, Ralph Van Pelt, who used to work it with Betty Petty. The group found this section to be in great shape with freshly-painted trail blazes, and it was the most enjoyable part of the day. Terri Holcomb and Helen Owens arrived Saturday night to share the car camp at McNabb Creek Group campground and enjoyed hiking the Bald River Falls trail on Sunday. Reported by Cathy Love.

**Castle Rock
Wednesday June 20, 2018**

When you hike with Bob Butters you are likely hiking a new trail! Bob builds, writes about, and leads hikes on new trails as they are opened especially in the South Cumberland Park system. Castle Rock is a familiar destination for climbers. These hikers today had never been to the trail on the top of the mountain above Jasper that leads to a beautiful bluff view of the valley. 30,000 acres on the mountain top are owned and protected by the TRGT. This was a perfect hike for a hot and humid day. It was nice to be looking down from the intriguing promontory that is visible as you look up to the mountain from Jasper. Bob has a theory about a space ship buried up there and will welcome any help finding the right place to dig to access the space ship's door! It was a short trail but there were blackberries to be picked along the way. Joyful for another experience on a new trail were: Larry Parks, Linda Keown, Renee Grace, Bill Kinnaman, Ellie Carico, Emery Carico, Susan Garrett, Sue Christensen, Gail Stokes, Shirley Wright, Barbara Miller, Wayne Chambers, Teresa Dean, Mac Dean, Trish Appleton, Betsy Parson, Debbie Lambert, Patti Giles, Che Carico reporting and Bob Butters leading.

Upcoming Outings

Saturday June 30, 2018

Amadahy Trail "Family" Hike

Location: near Chatsworth, GA

Distance: 3.6 miles

Rating: Easy

Elevation Gain: minimal

Pace: Leisurely

Driving Time: 45 minutes

The Amadahy Trail is a pleasant loop trail around Carters Lake which is the deepest of Georgia's reservoir lakes located in the Blue Ridge Mountains near Chatsworth. It is owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and is a man-made lake without private docks or houses along its shore. The lake is fed by the Coosawattee River that runs between Ellijay and Chatsworth. Join Barbara for a "family" hike along this pleasant trail with just a few ups and downs and a very scenic shoreline. This trail is good for any skill level. Bring the spouse, kids, grandkids, and well-behaved dogs on leashes for a fun day on the trail.

Bathroom facilities at the trailhead. To register, contact Barbara McCollum at 770.289.7143 or bpmccollum@yahoo.com.

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lovecat@charter.net or 334.329.4807. To register, Barbara McCollum, bpmccollum@yahoo.com or 770.289.7143.

Saturday July 14 and Saturday July 28, 2018 Trail Maintenance in the Tellico Plains area

If you really want to earn a star in your crown, join the BMTA in clearing a nasty stretch that some of our members recently fought their way through. Contact Boe Rudder, boerrudder@gmail.com, 423.400.1103

Wednesday July 18, 2018

Picnic/Float Hiwassee River

You can do a short hike, or float the river in a ducky/funyak rented from Webb's in Reliance, or simply just join us for lunch. Either way you can enjoy a great picnic with hot dogs and a variety of covered dishes. Floating costs around \$23-\$25 each (keeps creeping up). A fun time for all! Call in sick if you have to! All orchestrated by Che, mtnhikerche@bellsouth.net

Saturday July 7, 2018

Gee Creek

Location: Gee Creek Wilderness area

Distance: 4 miles

Elevation Gain: 600 ft

Rating: Strenuous

Pace: Standard

Driving Time: 1 hour

Gee Creek Wilderness area was established in 1975 and was the first in Tennessee. Because there are eight water crossings each way, I recommend wearing sturdy water shoes for the entire hike and bring an extra set of clothes. We will hike .4 mile to the pedestrian bridge that starts us through the gorge between Starr Mountain and Chestnut Mountain. The trail is rocky, and the crossings can be slick. Trekking poles are a must. This is a short, but strenuous trail and we will pass an old concrete flume used by the Tennessee Copper Company for iron ore extraction used in copper smelting. At .9 miles, we will come to Twin Falls. This is a popular picnic and swimming area. Most people do not go beyond this. At 1.9 miles, we will take a snack break before turning around. Should the water level be too high to safely cross the stream, we will hike the lower section of Starr Mountain trail (which has been recently logged out) and possibly the old logging loop. Bring water, snacks, trekking poles, extra clothes, and a towel. Leaders are Boe Rudder, boerrudder@gmail.com, 423.400.1103, and Steve Barnes, sebarnestorm@gmail.com.

Saturday July 21, 2018

Fork Ridge and lower Deep Creek

Location: Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Distance: 14.7 miles

Rating: Strenuous

Elevation LOSS: 4100 feet

Pace: Standard

This will be a shuttle hike from Clingman's Dome Road to Deep Creek. We will drop cars at Deep Creek and shuttle to the trailhead of Fork Ridge Trail on Clingman's Dome Road. We will follow Fork Ridge Trail it's full length of 5.1 miles, descending 2,800 feet to Deep Creek Trail at Campsite #53. From there we will follow Deep Creek Trail roughly 9.6 miles to Deep Creek Road. This portion of Deep Creek trail is mostly a very modest descent, with only a couple of short uphill stretches. Contact hike leader Ken Smith at kensmith323@gmail.com or 864.809.1800 to register.

Gibbs Gardens

Saturday August 4, 2018

Location: Ball Ground, GA

Distance: less than 5 miles

Rating: Beautiful and fun

Pace: Casual saunter

Something different for the first weekend in August—a visit to beautiful Gibbs Gardens located on 292 acres in Ball Ground, Georgia, an hour north of Atlanta. The gardens include 220 acres making it one of the nation's largest residential gardens. Gibbs Gardens has 16 different gardens including three feature gardens: Manor House Gardens, Japanese Gardens, and the Waterlily Gardens. Admission is \$20 per person or \$16 for age 65 and over. Group rates are \$16 for 10 or more. The Arbor Café is located on the grounds and makes for an exquisite place for lunch. Advance reservations needed. For more information, visit their website: www.gibbsgardens.com or contact the hike leader. According to Jim Gibbs, owner of the property, August is his favorite month in the gardens. Perfect for photographers, walkers, and those looking for something less strenuous. To register contact Barbara McCollum, bpmccollum@yahoo.com or 770.289.7143.

Benton MacKaye Trail Project

Saturday-Sunday July 14-15

Don't miss the third series of the Benton McKaye project, a two-year club project to section hike the entire 287.3 miles from Springer Mtn, Georgia, to the Great Smoky Mtns. The July series is a 2-night stay at a Robbinsville, NC motel. Advance reservations recommended. Saturday's hike will be 15.2 miles from the Cherohala Skyway @ Beech Gap to U.S. 129 and Meadow Branch Road. Sunday's hike will be 14.1 miles from U.S. 129 to Fontana Dam Visitor Center. Sign up for one hike if that works better for you. Key swaps an option. You're not required to sign up for the entire project to enjoy this fun weekend of hiking, food, and fellowship. Contact Cathy Love with technical questions,

Reports from the Field

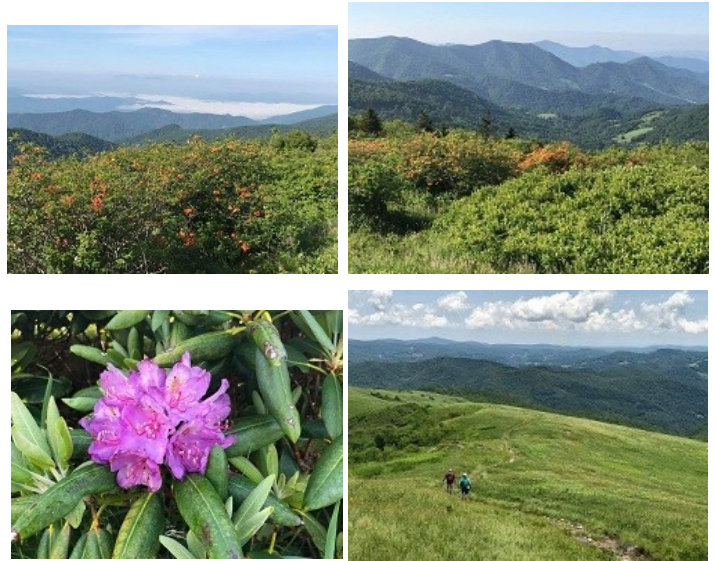
Reports from the Field

Little Hump/Big Hump, Roan Highlands
Friday June 15, 2018

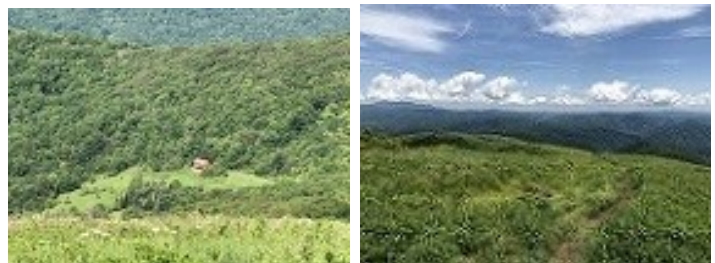
It was mid-June, so dreams of Little Hump/Big Hump were dancing in the heads of those who had been there before and have become addicted to the area. And as usual, we enticed a few first-timers to join us. We assembled in Johnson City Thursday evening, and most of us enjoyed dinner at what has become a favorite of ours, Cootie Brown's; there Vicki Chambers provided the highlight of the evening by momentarily rendering Wayne speechless – a moment to remember! On Friday an out-and-back hike from the Red Barn shelter was the original plan, but in order to accommodate everyone we added an option for a longer through hike from Carver Gap to 19E, then at the last minute put in a third option to go from the Red Barn to 19E. This necessitated a fairly lengthy and complex car shuttle, but we pulled it off without a hitch. The weather was great and stayed that way all day, unusual for this trip. The rhododendrons at Carver's Gap (and at Rhododendron Gardens the day before) were not yet up to peak, but lovely none the less. And they were complimented by some nice flame azaleas around Carver's Gap, plus we saw several of the rare Gray's Lilies around Big Hump. The long hikers enjoyed watching a deer up close and personal on their lunch break. We all enjoyed the majestic sight of Big Hump as we prepared to climb it, and we all were rewarded with magnificent views once we reached the top. Bonnie Smith, Cathy Love, Ken Smith, Rick Glisson, and Tim Chomyn, all first-timers, did the long hike. First-timer Betsy Parson and veteran Wayne Chambers went from Red Barn to 19E. The torch is being passed to Barbara McCollum as the leader of these expeditions; she and I did the out-and-back from the Red Barn. And I'm still grateful to Susan Faidley, who introduced me to this wonderland back in 2000-aught... - never mind!; John Rowland reporting.

On our way back, Barbara and I encountered two ladies with a miniature Dachshund on a leash. I commented afterward on how many steps those tiny little legs must have made. Barbara put it all into perspective by adding, "And you think you've got it bad!"

Way too many pictures for the newsletter; there will be more on the website!



Pictures from Rick above



Pictures from Barbara above, from John below



Pictures from Tim



Reports from the Field

Hyatt Ridge, Enloe Creek, Hughes Ridge, Chasteen Creek

Saturday June 23, 2018

The weather had been of concern all week leading up to the 23rd. How blessed and amazed were these hikers as the clouds parted leaving patches of blue, a cool temperature prevailed for this time of year, and sometimes gentle breezes. When you go to the Smokies your senses are challenged: sound (rushing water and today a startled grouse), sight (views from mountain tops and this day fresh ferns spreading throughout the forest), smell (the fragrance of damp earth and evergreen trees) and touch as the stinging nettles reached out to sting bare legs! Then there is "good sense" as we wondered if we had any when striking off steeply uphill for the first 1.9 miles, then soon steeply again for a 2.3 mile section. Turns out the climbing ultimately ended in an incredibly beautiful gap on Hughes Ridge. Each hiker "pulled up" a log or rock for an extended lunch break. The reward for the uphill trek was the downturn on Chasteen Creek and descent most of the way back to Smokemont. Flowers in bloom were fire pink, umbrella leaf, spider wort, squaw root, sweet cicely, a few unidentified in the moment flowers, rhododendron, and soooo many ferns as yet untouched by the summer heat. There were beautiful waterfalls and cascades on Raven Fork Creek, Enloe Creek and Chasteen Creek - one of these always present alongside. Feeling good and on to supper at NOC were: Monty Simmons, Betsy Parson, Che Carico reporting and Wayne Chambers leading.

Sycamore Creek BMTA trail maintenance

Saturday June 23, 2018

The Benton MacKaye Trail Association usually does trail maintenance twice a month; one time a TN team will work in TN, and the other time a GA team will work in GA. This time the two combined forces to work on a section in the Tellico Plains area that had been closed for months by circumstances beyond their control. So, some 26 people gathered, were divided into teams, assigned certain areas, given the necessary tools, and off we went on a 6-mile downhill trail clearing mission. There were 2 chainsaw teams; the other 4 teams had string trimmers, brush trimmers with blades, loppers, and hand saws. Perhaps the high point of the day came early on when we cleared a nice cozy little campsite and the spur trail leading to it; had it not been marked by a scout team, you wouldn't even had known the spur trail was there! We made a tremendous amount of progress considering we were attempting to clear 6 miles, but time eventually ran out on us. And at about that same time we were drenched in a torrential downpour with some rather frightful high winds for a few minutes. We finished our day by trekking out to the lower end of the trail in a drizzling rain. There we could at least refuel ourselves thanks to two wonderful ladies who prepared burgers and hot dogs and all the fixings. Under the heading of culinary discoveries, adding raindrops to the other condiments on your burger really isn't all that bad! On a day when a couple and their two young girls came all the way from south of Atlanta (inspiring on multiple levels!!!), the CHC was well represented by Ralph Van Pelt, JD Dickinson, Bill Kinnaman, Boe Rudder, and John Rowland reporting.

Reports from the Field

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(Two more opportunities for this kind of fun and excitement are coming up in July; see the Upcoming Outings section above. A lot of sweat, a couple of minor scratches, some soreness the next day - eh, so what; the sense of satisfaction looking back at what you've accomplished - priceless! Somebody will come through here tomorrow or the next day or next week and have a great carefree experience, thanks in a large part to what you did today!)



The whole gang, a "before" and "after" set, and generational memories being made. Pictures from Larry Van Dyke of BMTA; thanks Larry!

Outings Schedule

06/30/18	Amadahy "Family Hike" (E)	B McCollum
07/07/18	Gee Creek (S)	B Rudder
07/14-15/18	BMT Project, Cherohala-Fontana (S)	B McCollum
07/21/18	Fork Ridge-Deep Creek, Smokies (S)	K Smith
07/28/18	BMT trail maint, Tellico area	B Rudder
08/04/18	Gibbs Gardens, GA	B McCollum
08/11/18	Conasauga River	S Barnes
08/18/18	Cumberland Trail	T Chomyn
08/25/18	Betty Petty hike, Chatt Nature Center (E)	J Rowland

Wednesday Day Hikes - Che Carico - The Wednesday group hikes many of the same trails as the weekend hikers. Since a schedule is not published in advance, notification of each week's plan is sent out by email on Sunday or Monday. Please call Che at (423) 718-9271, leave your email address, and ask to be added to the group list; or email her at MidWeek@chatthiking.com and likewise ask to be added to the group list.

Hike Difficulty Ratings

The information below is provided as a guide only. Each hiker assumes the risks associated with hiking in the great outdoors, including the responsibility of paying any bills associated with rescue efforts or medical care. The wise hiker always carries water, food, and first aid items.

Easy (E): 6 miles or less; mostly level or only slight incline.

Moderate (M): 6-10 miles with an elevation gain that will generally not exceed 350 feet per mile, with a total elevation gain of no more than 1000 ft.

Moderately Strenuous (MS): 6-10 miles in length, but include rocky trail conditions, tricky stream crossings, or elevation gain of more than 1000 ft but less than 2000 ft.

Strenuous (S): a distance of 10-14 miles or with more than 2000 ft total elevation gain, but no more than 3000 ft.

Extremely Strenuous (S+): Usually involves distances of more than 14 miles or more than 3000 ft in elevation gain. There might be very steep/rugged climbs, deep stream crossings, or unmentioned trails.

Pace: Standard pace is 2 miles an hour; less on steep or rugged terrain. Fast pace is 2.5 to 3 miles an hour or more and may not vary much regardless of terrain.

Attention: When calling to go on an outing, please specify exact number of people who will be attending. Do NOT just show up with a friend or family member unannounced! This puts your hike leader in an awkward position as most hikes involve some planning of transportation. Also we frequently hike in wilderness areas and other places where the number of hikers in a group is limited. If that is the case, and the hike is already full, you may be turned away!

Cancellations: Hike leaders are entirely at the own discretion regarding the weather. It is possible that a leader may decide that, due to weather conditions, they do not feel safe hiking on that day. Lightning kills many people every year and can strike hikers on a trail. Also many of the areas where we hike are prone to flash floods that can kill or injure. The leader will call if deciding to cancel before the day of the hike. In the event that the decision to cancel is made on the day of the hike, the leader will give you the courtesy of showing up at the designated meeting place to announce that the hike is cancelled.

Other Stuff



The "Heart of Darkness" hikers. Obviously "before" since their legs are not scratched and bleeding and their clothing is not tattered and torn! Picture from Barbara.

Rock/Creek Discount Info

Show your Chattanooga Hiking Club Membership Card, along with your ID at any Rock/Creek Store.
Chattanooga Hiking Club - 10% off one Item
*Applies to one non-sale, in-stock item. Can not be combined with other discounts or promotions. Offer does not apply to gift cards, boats, boards, coolers, & electronics. **In-store only.**

Club Officers and Support:

President - Gary Petty (423) 488-5954
Vice President - Stormy McGauley (423) 505-4525
Treasurer - Donald Box (423) 892-6754
Secretary - Susan Basch (706) 375-7750
Membership Database - Susan Basch (706) 375-7750
Outings - Barbara McCollum (770) 289-7143
 Boe Rudder (423) 400-1103
Newsletter/Webmaster - John Rowland (423) 802-7704
Membership Information - Chris O'Conner (423) 991-3220
Trail Maintenance - Steve Barnes (423) 339-3019
 Boe Rudder (423) 400-1103
Midweek Outings - Cheryl Carico (423) 781-9271
Website: chatthiking.com (includes link to newsletter)