



Newsletter of the  
Chattanooga Hiking Club

July 2023

### Be a Wednesday Hike Leader!

Our area is rich with trails ready to explore! Members, both new and old, are encouraged to volunteer and lead hikes they are comfortable with. If you've got a hike you like and know, contact Che ([mtnhikerche@bellsouth.net](mailto:mtnhikerche@bellsouth.net)) and she'll get the information out there.



### Trail Maintenance Opportunities

The Benton MacKaye Trail Association needs help with one of their toughest areas: The Heart of Darkness.

**When:** Saturday, July 22 at 9 a.m.

**Where:** Cherochala Skyway Visitors Center (tentative)

**What to bring/wear:** Water, food/snacks, gloves, long pants, boots. Snake gaiters are highly recommended! Bring safety glasses and hard hats if you have them. If not, they will be provided.

For more information, email [communications@bmtmail.org](mailto:communications@bmtmail.org).

# Making

# TRACKS



### Upcoming Outings at a Glance

**Saturday, July 8: GSMNP**

Trail: Mount Cammerer

Miles: 11

Elevation gain: 3,000'

Contact Susan Faidley at [susanf.chchiker@gmail.com](mailto:susanf.chchiker@gmail.com).

**Wednesday, July 12: Raccoon Mountain**

Miles: 7.5

Elevation gain: Fairly level

Contact John Prescott at [johnmprescott@yahoo.com](mailto:johnmprescott@yahoo.com).

**Sunday, July 16: Lookout Mountain**

Trail: Moonshine Trails

Miles: 10

Elevation gain: 900'

Contact Jenny Hopkins at [jenhop60@gmail.com](mailto:jenhop60@gmail.com).

**Saturday, July 22: GSMNP**

Trail: Spence Field Day Hike

Miles: 13.5

Elevation gain: 3,000'

Contact Susan Faidley at [susanf.chchiker@gmail.com](mailto:susanf.chchiker@gmail.com).

**Wednesday, July 26: Near Jasper**

Trail: Little Cedar Mountain Trail

Miles: 3.2

Elevation gain: 400'

Contact Steve Barnes at [sebarnestorm@gmail.com](mailto:sebarnestorm@gmail.com).

**Wednesday, August 23: Hiwassee Float Trip and Picnic**

Join us for this annual picnic and float trip down the Hiwassee River! For more information and to sign up, email Barbara McCollum at [bpmccollum@yahoo.com](mailto:bpmccollum@yahoo.com).



Website: [www.chatthiking.com](http://www.chatthiking.com)

Facebook: Chattanooga Hiking Club

**Reports from the Field**

**Friday, June 9**

**Nickajack Bat Cave by Paddleboard**

On June 9, members of the Chattanooga Hiking Club jumped on paddleboards and headed to the bat cave on Nickajack Lake. Low humidity, pleasant temperatures, and a beautiful sunset, made for a great time. Then, just after sunset, thousands of bats came out the mouth of Nickajack Cave. Special thanks to Renaud and Sunshine who guided this outing.



**Sunday, June 11**

**Cloudland Canyon Ascalon Trail**

The threat of rain showers couldn't keep these hardy souls from a Sunday morning hike beginning at the Ascalon Trailhead. The group meandered for about seven miles along the CCT, Kindergarten, ATLATL, and Can't Hardly trails. They had the whole trail to themselves! Thanks to Jenny for leading this hike!



**Reports from the Field**

**Wednesday, June 14**

**Durham Trails Cleanup**

A huge shout out to the many hard-working Chattanooga Hiking Club members who showed up at the Lula Lake's Durham Trails to tackle some old trash heaps.



**Wednesday, June 28, 2023**

**Lula Lake Land Trust**

A big group—23 members—turned up at the Lula Lake Land Trust for a six-mile hike in the core preserve. A special thanks to Lula Lake for granting us private access and to Jenny for serving as guide.



**Club Officers and Support**

- President** - Stormy McGauley
- Vice President** - Tony Morales
- Treasurer** - Jenny Hopkins
- Secretary** - Susan Basch
- Membership Database** - Susan Basch
- Outings** - Susan Faidley
- Midweek Outings** - Cheryl Carico
- Newsletter** - Betsy Archer and Steve Barnes
- Webmaster** - Renaud Courbiere, Christianne Montoya
- Maintenance** - Bill Kinnaman

<b>Upcoming Outings</b>
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**Saturday, July 8, 20****Mt. Cammerer****Location:** Great Smoky Mountains National Park**Driving Time:** 2.5 hours from downtown**Distance:** 11 miles**Rating:** Strenuous**Elevation Gain:** 3,000 feet**Pace:** Standard (about 2 mph)

**Trail Conditions:** Some rocks, but mostly good trail  
This is a beautiful hike starting on the Low Gap Trail from the Cosby Campground and then following the Appalachian Trail to the side trail for Mt. Cammerer. At almost 5,000 feet, the tower provides outstanding 360-degree views. On a clear day, this is one of the “crown jewel” hikes of the Smokies. It is a difficult climb, and while we will have rest stops and will not hike at a fast pace, participants need to have experience with similar mileage and elevation gain. The hike leader is Susan Faidley. For more information and to register, email [susanf.chchiker@gmail.com](mailto:susanf.chchiker@gmail.com).

**Wednesday, July 12, 2023****Raccoon Mountain****Driving Time:** 20 minutes from downtown**Distance:** 7.5 miles**Rating:** Easy-moderate**Elevation Change:** Fairly level**Pace:** Standard

This is a lollipop trail, easy to moderate, with little elevation change. As it is shaded, it is cooler than most trails on Raccoon Mountain. It does get significant bike activity, but that should be low during the week. Expect pleasant walking and beautiful views. To register, email John Prescott at [johnmprescott@yahoo.com](mailto:johnmprescott@yahoo.com).

**Sunday, July 16, 2023****Moonshine Trails****Location:** Lookout Mountain**Driving Time:** 20 minutes from downtown**Distance:** 10 miles**Rating:** Moderately strenuous**Elevation Change:** 900'**Pace:** Standard

Jenny Hopkins will lead this out-and-back hike along the Moonshine Trails on Lookout. The area is rich in local history, including an illicit distillery, where the trails get their names. Expect rocky terrain, wildflowers, and views. For more information, contact Jenny Hopkins at [jenhop60@gmail.com](mailto:jenhop60@gmail.com).

**Saturday, July 22, 2023****Spence Field Day Hike****Location:** Great Smoky Mountains National Park**Driving Time:** 2.5 hours from downtown**Distance:** 13.5 miles**Rating:** Strenuous**Elevation Gain:** 3,000 feet**Pace:** Standard

**Trail Conditions:** Creek fords, some rugged ascents, ladders, and short sections with narrow footing  
Some of the nicest views in the Smoky Mountains are from Spence Field, which is an Appalachian grassy bald. This has long been a club favorite! Beginning in Cades Cove, we will pick up the Anthony Creek Trail and begin a 5.2-mile climb. After a nice rest and lunch, we'll follow the Appalachian Trail 2.9 miles to Russell Field. Our descent to complete the loop will take us down Russell Field Trail. This is a strenuous hike, both for mileage and elevation gain. However, we will hike it at a standard hiking pace of approximately 2 mph, with extra time included for climbing. We will leave town early to ensure a nice long day is available for hiking. Driving time is 2.5 hours each way. To register contact Susan Faidley at [susanf.chchiker@gmail.com](mailto:susanf.chchiker@gmail.com).

**Wednesday, July 26, 2023****Little Cedar Mountain Trail****Location:** Near Jasper**Driving Time:** 20 minutes from downtown**Distance:** 3.2 miles**Rating:** Easy**Elevation Change:** 400'**Pace:** Standard

This loop trail follows the shoreline of the Tennessee River and Nickajack Lake for part of the hike. Expect nice views of the river and unusual rock formations. To sign up, contact Steve Barnes at [sebarnestorm@gmail.com](mailto:sebarnestorm@gmail.com).

**Wednesday, August 23, 2023****Hiwassee River Float Trip and Picnic****Location:** Reliance, TN**Driving Time:** About 1 hour from downtown**Rain date:** August 30

Join us for our annual float trip and picnic! We'll reserve duckies from Webb Brother's Rafting. After the float, enjoy a potluck picnic. Barbara McCollum ([bpmccollum@yahoo.com](mailto:bpmccollum@yahoo.com)) is organizing this event, so contact her for more information.

## Members on the Move

*Members on the Move isn't always about far-flung travels. These two stories are from Tennessee and North Carolina. Hope you enjoy!*

### Roan Mountain

My love affair with the Roan Highlands began 26 years ago when Eric Skrivseth, the CHC president at the time, invited a few of us to join him backpacking on this beautiful section of the Appalachian Trail. The waving-in-the-wind grassy balds, the rhododendron, the flame azalea, and the 360-degree views captured my heart. For several years after that, I led hikes here—this was a place that needed to be shared. One of my most memorable experiences in this amazing area was hiking with the late Betty Petty who was determined to find the rare and elusive Gray's Lily, which is endemic to the area. When Betty spotted the beautiful flower amid the high grasses, she was overjoyed. Congrats to Shelly for spotting it on this trip!

On one of our trips, John Rowland, a new hiker with the club, joined us. This special place did a number on his heart, too, as he then led quite a few trips himself! And then he passed along the Roan Highlands magic to Barbara McCollum, who also responded to the call. She went on to lead many hikes here. Recently, Barbara and I decided to join forces to lead a trip for several new and old hiking friends, so they too, could enjoy the riches of this place.



After driving up to Carvers Gap, we hiked on the AT south to the Roan High Knob Shelter—the highest AT shelter at 6285 feet—set in a beautiful spruce and fir forest. Next, we wandered through the rhododendron gardens. The very highest elevations were not blooming just yet, but we still enjoyed a wonderful feast-for-the-eyes. Then it was off to our hotel in Johnson City and some great BBQ and pizza at Cootie Browns—a place John Rowland put on the itinerary years ago.



The next morning we met our shuttle bus at the Mountain Harbor B & B and made our way back to Carvers Gap—this time to hike north on the AT for about 15 miles over Round Top and Jane Bald, where Shelly, Lance, and John H took off to summit the 6,000 foot Grassy Ridge, adding another mile to their hike. The rest of us continued on to the Red Barn, which is a renowned AT shelter, now closed to overnight stays. Once we were back together again, we started a 1.6-mile climb to the top of Little Hump Mountain. Then after a quick mile through the forest, there it was rising before us—Big Hump Mountain, in all its splendor with its epic climb to the top! We were so fortunate to have a great day to enjoy the natural beauty in this rare and special place with new and old friends.



New to this area: John Prescott, Terri and Noel Holcomb, Lance and Shelly Lewis, Chris Bresson, Dan Garner.  
Repeat hikers: John Hyler, Barbara McCollum, Susan Faidley

Submitted by Susan Faidley.

## Members on the Move

### Gregory Bald Day Hike

After a hearty breakfast at the Townsend Pancake House ten hikers, including some CHC members, drove the Cades Cove Loop to Parsons Branch Road. We saw several deer, a young bear, and a large gobbler along the loop. After 5 miles of slow winding along the narrow and rutted gravel road, we arrived at the trailhead parking area and hiked up toward Gregory Bald. The first section climbs gently through pine trees, rhododendrons, and mountain laurel. It was a warm summer morning, with a mix of clouds and sun, but there were welcome breezes on the upward route.



After the first mile the trail steepened moderately and the trees were more mature. We saw some large tulip poplars on the trailside and a small snake basking in the sun. After a climb of more than four miles, we passed through an area of small shrubs and blueberry bushes before the trail opened into a wide meadow ablaze with flame azaleas near their peak of color.



The trail continued through the bald and onto a ridgeline eastward toward the North Carolina crest and the Appalachian Trail at Doe Knob. Stopping for lunch atop the bald, we enjoyed the panoramic views of Cades Cove and the surrounding peaks. Afterwards, we began the return hike along the same route. On the descent, we encountered a few other day hikers. The return hike was fairly fast and we made it to the parking area where we shed our packs and began the slow drive out to US 129 near the Dragon's Tail. At Susan's urging we stopped briefly to look at a small rattlesnake on the roadside. Many thanks to Barbara McCollum and Susan Faidley for planning this trip.

Submitted by Steve Barnes.



## Tips for the Trails

Ready to hit the trails? Here are 10 essential items to have in your pack to keep you safe while hiking!

- Appropriate footwear for traction/protection
- Map and compass/GPS (cell phones don't always work)
- Water (and a way to purify it)
- Food (a little extra is a good idea)
- Rain gear and dry-fast layers
- Safety items (headlamp, fire starter, whistle)
- First-aid kit
- Knife or multi-use tool
- Sun protection
- Shelter (space blanket)

This list was compiled by the American Hiking Society. Visit them at <https://americanhiking.org>.