



# Hikes/Tours for the Annual BMTA Meeting

**November 2 – 5, 2023**

*All hikes and non-hiking day trips will start from behind the Cherohala Skyway Visitor Center (CSVC) in Tellico Plains at 225 Cherohala Skyway, unless otherwise noted.*

## **THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2**

### **Coker Creek Falls**

Clare Sullivan & Darcy Douglas

*Meet at 1:00 PM at CSVC, 1:30 PM at Coker Creek Welcome Center.*

This is a short one-mile hike with only a short climb back to the parking lot. Coker Creek Falls is near the trailhead on a well-maintained trail. The falls are more of a series of cascades than a single waterfall. Each of the cascades drops 20-30 feet over ledges.

### **Conasauga Falls**

Ed Sullivan & Ken Cissna

*Meet at 1:00 PM at CSVC, 1:30 PM at Coker Creek Welcome Center.*

This easy, approximately 1.5 mile round-trip hike will take you to a series of cascades on Conasauga Creek where you can enjoy an early lunch or snack by the roar and spray of the falls. This is one of the most picturesque waterfalls in East TN and is only about four miles from Tellico Plains. Ed says "swimsuits optional".

## **FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3**

### **9:00 AM - Bob Bald**

Rick Harris & Bob Cowdrick

7 miles round-trip, 900' elevation climb. With a peak elevation of 5280', Bob Bald is one of the iconic Southern Appalachian balds — a mile-high in the sky with expansive views into NC and the Cherohala Skyway. The trek is a 900' climb on the BMT, but it is well worth the views. Numerous campsites on "The Bob" beckon backpackers and thru hikers alike. The Strattons lived on the bald and their history is "colorful". You will learn about the Stratton son killed by Bushwackers during the "War of Northern Aggression" for a dime.

### **9:00 AM - Tour of Sequoyah Birthplace Museum / Lunch at Pizza Venti / Tour of Fort Loudoun State Historic Park**

Vonore, GA

Leader TBD or do on your own.

It is about a 45-minute drive to Vonore along Tellico Lake to first visit the Sequoyah Birthplace Museum (small entry fee) and tour the museum and the grounds. Sequoyah was born in the area and is famous as the Cherokee Indian who developed the Cherokee Syllabary, allowing the Cherokee to put down in writing their stories and run their own newspaper. From there you will go into Vonore for lunch on your own penny at Pizza Venti. After lunch, you will go to the Fort Loudoun State Historic Park, the site of the fort at the confluence of the Little Tennessee and Tellico Rivers during the mid 1700s. All the soldiers and cannons reached this fort via the Unicoi Turnpike and Unicoi Gap (see other hikes on or near the Unicoi Turnpike).

### **9:00 AM - Fish Hatchery/Sycamore Creek 2-Mile Section of BMT**

Kent Mathews & Ken Cissna

Kent Mathews will lead this hike, since he and his wife Pam have a close association with this area which he will tell you about. Also, he and his wife Pam Mathews (daughter of Charles Hall, former mayor of Tellico Plains and curator of the Charles Hall Museum) are the maintainers for this section of the BMT. We will carpool up to the Fish Hatchery along Tellico River Rd and tour the hatchery if it is open, especially checking out the albino rainbows they raise there. Then we will hike up the BMT along the edge of Sycamore Creek for two miles and eat lunch along the way. Then we will return to our vehicles. Kent may also tell you about the Brook Trout Reintroduction Program

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*Fish Hatchery/Sycamore Creek Hike  
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on Sycamore Creek by TWRA. If he doesn't, ask him about it, or ask the TWRA folks at the fish hatchery. Total distance is about four miles on a gently climbing trail along the edge of the creek.

**9:00 AM (9:45 AM at Childers Creek)  
John Muir Trail along Hiwassee River**

Anne Anderson & Ed Sullivan

This hike uses a short, easy shuttle. It is a 4.5-mile hike along the BMT/John Muir Trail paralleling the Hiwassee River through a beautiful stretch of the river commonly used by kayakers and fly fishermen. The Hiwassee is a big wide cold river coming out of the mountains from North Carolina into Tennessee. At the end of the hike, hikers will visit the powerhouse and suspension bridge over the river. The powerhouse releases water for boaters most every day at 11 AM, about 5000 cfs. That is a lot of water, by the way. The trail is named for John Muir who traversed this segment on his first travels from Indiana to Florida. The treks led to his love of all things natural — and all the rest is history.

**2:00 PM - Indian Boundary Loop Trail**

George Owen & Darcy Douglas

George Owen will lead this hike on the 3.1 mile loop trail around the edge of the Indian Boundary Lake by the USFS campground. This is an easy but beautiful hike with great views of the lake with Flats Mountain looming in the backdrop.

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4**

**9:00 AM – Introductory Fly Fishing Class**

*Mary Alton and other members of  
Trout Unlimited – parking lot of the  
Cherohala Skyway Visitor Center*

Mary Alton (one of our section maintainers along the BMT/JMT on the Hiwassee River) and

her colleagues will give an introductory class in fly fishing with a discussion of flies mimicking the hatch out there, info on equipment (rods, reels, waders, etc), and practice casting with fly rods provided by Trout Unlimited.

**9:00 AM - Lost Creek**

Sue Robinson & Bob Cowdrick  
*Meet at 9:45 AM at Webb Store or  
9:00 AM at CSVC*

This is a 5 mile hike along a beautiful tumbling creek in a rocky ravine without much elevation gain or loss. Lost Creek is a tributary of the Hiwassee River which runs through a narrow, steep canyon with numerous stunning cascades. We will hike from the Lost Creek Campground on the BMT for about 2.5 miles. We will return the way we came on this fairly flat trail with one significant but safe crossing of Little Lost Creek (bring creek shoes and a small towel). There are several popular swimming holes along the way that are worth checking out on warm sunny days.

**9:00 AM - Whigg Meadow**

Ken Jones & Ken Cissna

A 3.2-mile round-trip hike includes a 500' elevation climb, 5000' peak elevation. At 5000' with expansive views in all directions, Whigg Meadow is a large, open bald near the state line between TN and NC. From the meadow, one can see the TN River Valley and the Cumberland Plateau beyond on a clear day. A great place for a picnic. The hike to the bald follows a 1.6 mile 500' climb up an old roadbed which now is the BMT, returning the same route.

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## **9:00 AM - Mason Evans Cave on top of Starr Mountain (Starr Mountain Hermit)**

Tazz Reid & Darcy Douglas

Tazz, one of our regular trail maintainers in the South Zone of the Cherokee NF and a preacher to boot (check out his “Weekly Word” on Facebook which highlights the scenic flora and fauna and historical sites in the area) will take you up to the top of Starr Mtn for a short 2 mile round trip hike to a cave area where the hermit Mason Evans lived for quite a while running from the law. There is a book written about Mason and Tazz may also take you by his gravesite. Tazz will entertain you thoroughly with all the backstory. He is a great storyteller.

## **9:00 AM - Tour Charles Hall Museum / Lunch at Tellico Grains**

Pam Mathews

Pam Mathews, curator of the Charles Hall Museum in Tellico (daughter of Charles Hall, former mayor of Tellico Plains, the driving force for the development of the Cherohala Skyway, and a collector of vast amounts of historical memorabilia relating to Tellico) will take you on a tour of the museum which highlights the early days of Tellico from the time “Telliqual” was a regional capital of the Cherokee, then became a booming lumber and mining town after the Trail of Tears, then the site of several CCC camps after the USFS acquired most of the land east of Tellico, and is now a “Small Town with a Big Backyard”, a busy outdoor recreation hub for hikers, backpackers, kayakers, tubers, mountain and road bikers, motorcyclists, Skyway tourists, and trout fishermen. Check out her book for sale on the history of Tellico, which is stuffed full of pictures.

## **9:30 AM -Three Bald Hike (Huckleberry, Hooper, The Whigg)**

George Owen

This is a special hike led by George Owen which takes the hikers on fairly short trails up to high balds along the Cherohala Skyway. All the balds are about a mile in elevation with open views into the surrounding mountains. Included will be Hooper Bald, Huckleberry Knob, and The Whigg. Total distance is about 5 miles and though there is some climbing, it is not excruciating.

## **9:00 AM - Falls Branch Falls**

Rick Harris

2.6 miles round-trip This hike to a 90' waterfall off the Cherohala Skyway involves going down/up a 500' steep trail to the base of the falls. Compared to the Bald River Falls, it is smaller but about the same height. And you are alone in the pristine Citico Wilderness — a very different experience from the hordes who visit the better known Bald River Falls near Tellico.

## **SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5**

## **10:00 AM - Unicoi Turnpike/ BMT Unicoi Gap to TN68**

George Owen

George Owen will take hikers on this ~8 mile hike up a stretch of the Unicoi Turnpike, then from Unicoi Gap along the BMT to the USFS road up to Buck Bald, then back down to the BMT, ending at TN68. This hike is designed for annual meeting attendees who live in GA and want to get in a good hike on their return trip at the end of the meeting. This hike includes two major highlights: the Unicoi Turnpike and the old fire tower site on top of Buck Bald.

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## **10:00 AM - Bald River Falls Loop**

Rick Harris

This is a 4-mile loop hike which includes the best the Tellico and Bald Rivers have to offer. We will park at the Cow Camp Trailhead and head up the ridge with about 500' of elevation climb to a ridgetop, then down to the Bald River Trail. At this point we will go upstream about a half mile to the Papaw Creek crossing, then turn around and go downstream to the Bald River Falls parking lot. From there, we will head up Tellico River Rd a mile back to our cars. This hike will take us by numerous waterfalls and cascades on both the Bald River and Tellico River, including Bald River Falls and Baby Falls. Cameras and hiking poles are essentials. We will enjoy lunch by one of the water falls.

## **9:00 AM - (Tentative) Rocky Flats Hollinghead Homesite**

Chris Hollinghead

Chris Hollinghead is a teacher at Tellico Plains High School who grew up here in the Tellico area. His ancestors owned property along Rocky Flats Creek up high in what is now the Citico Wilderness where they grew up in a simple log cabin and had to make very long difficult trips down the mountains to Tellico for supplies. They hunted and fished the area and grew their own food for the most part. Chris has written a book about his relatives and their life growing up in the mountains. He will take you on a short 3 mile round trip hike to the old cabin site and tell you all about it.

## **1:00 PM (1:30 PM at Coker Creek Welcome Center) – Buck Bald from Unicoi Gap**

Judy Price & Jack Callahan

The hike begins at Unicoi Gap, heading south along the BMT and ends at Buck Bald for snacks

and views. Buck Bald is a big open bald with great views of the surrounding mountains and the site of a former fire tower. Unicoi Gap, where the hike begins, is the crossing of the old Unicoi Turnpike, through the lowest gap in the region. It was first an Indian path, then a settlers route for folks moving into the TN River Valley and a route to get their goods to market in NC and SC, then a military road during the French and Indian War, then the principle route for the Cherokee coming out of NC on the Trail of Tears. Hike Leader Jack Callahan, a former USFS employee, will fill you all in on the history of the area.

## **10:00 AM – Turtletown Creek Falls**

Judy Price & Keith Mertz

This hike takes you on a trail down the Turtletown Creek ravine toward the Hiwassee River to two sets of waterfalls, then returns along a ridgetop trail to the vehicles. Bring water shoes and a small towel in case we must ford a small creek near the parking lot. The total distance is about 6 miles with not much elevation gain (trek from the waterfalls up to the ridgetop, ~400').