



# 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".

### **9:00 AM - Rocky Flats Hollinghead Homesite**

Chris Hollinghead and Rick Harris

Chris Hollinghead, an English Literature teacher at Tellico Plains High School, grew up in the Tellico area. His ancestors owned property along Rocky Flats Creek the area that is now the Citico Wilderness. They lived in a simple log cabin and had to make very long, difficult trips down the mountains to Tellico or Ballplay for supplies. For the most part, they hunted and fished the area and grew their own food. Chris wrote a book, "Papaw's Tales". Written from the perspective of his grandfather, the book described his relatives' experiences growing up in the mountains. Chris Hollinghead and Rick Harris will take you on a short <3-mile round-trip hike to the old cabin site and tell you all about it. This

hike also is on the docket for Sunday but is already full (Wilderness regulations limit hike participants to 12). Because of this great, new offering, if you already signed up for either the Conasauga Falls or Coker Creek Falls hikes for Thursday, you can change your hike choice to the Rocky Flats Hollinghead Homesite Hike. Go to [Thursday](#) to sign up.

## **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

Pam & Kent Mathews

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

*Friday Hikes continued on page 2*



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*Friday Hikes continued from page 1*

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 (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—Hwy 30 at Reliance 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.

### **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.

*Saturday Hikes continued on page 3*



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*Saturday Hikes continued from page 2*

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.

## **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 “Tahlequah” 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.

## **9:00 AM—Huckleberry, Hooper, The Whigg & Walk through the Giant Tulip Poplars in Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest**

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. Finally, enjoy walking through a forest of giant tulip poplars. Total distance is about 5 miles and though there is some climbing, it is not excruciating.

## **SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5**

### **9:00 AM - Rocky Flats Hollinghead Homesite**

Rick & Brenda Harris

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. Rick and Brenda Harris will take you on a short 3-mile round trip hike to the old cabin site and tell you all about it.

*Sunday Hikes continued on page 4*



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*Sunday Hikes continued from page 3*

## **10:00 AM - Unicoi Turnpike and Maybe**

### **Buck Bald**

George Owen

George Owen will take hikers on this approximately 3-mile hike on the freshly maintained Unicoi Turnpike. If time permits, he will drive the group to Buck Bald. This hike is designed for annual meeting attendees who live in GA and want to get in a very historic hike on their return trip at the end of the meeting. Impressive highlights include: the Unicoi Turnpike and the old fire tower site on top of Buck Bald. The Unicoi Turnpike has a history which goes back even before 1756, which was when soldiers moved cannons through Unicoi Gap to the newly constructed Fort Loudoun at the junction of the Tellico and Little Tennessee Rivers. Before 1756, the trail was a major route for the Cherokee Indians to cross the Appalachian Chain into the Overhill Settlements from NC. After 1756, the route became a heavily used road for settlers and gold seekers crossing the mountains to the Tennessee River Valley and also used to carry their goods back to markets east of the Appalachians. Sadly, this also was the main route used to take the Cherokee from their homelands across the mountains and out to Oklahoma on the Trail of Tears. This route now is a part of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. Today, the old route has been replaced by Joe Brown Highway, a gravel forest service road.

## **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').