

Hiking Club News

January, 1992

Hiking

WHISTLING ROCK (Scheduled for January 18, 1992)

Leader: Hugh Thompson (Phone: 615-928-0472)

This is a short but steep climb from Spivey Gap on the AT south of Erwin. The name of this outcrop is derived from the action of wind in season that flows through the area. Big Bald is several miles west of there and the visible views to the east are of the Cane River basin. This will be an invigorating outing. We won't try to set a record in the climb. Bring a light lunch and water if you desire and dress for the weather. Meeting time is 9:15 am at Bldg. 215 parking lot. Those wishing to do so can meet us at the Burger King in south Johnson City at 9:45 am. Hiking time up will be about 2 hours. For additional information call Hugh Thompson at 928-0472.

KINGSPORT'S GREENBELT TRAIL (Scheduled for January 19, 1992)

Leader: Collins Chew (Phone: 239-6237)

We will stroll the easy trail along Reedy Creek upstream to the current trail end, east of John B. Dennis Bypass, and enjoy the new hiking area provided by the City. Those who wish may also hike the section completed behind Holston Valley Community Hospital. Those even more ambitious might also walk the older section in Riverfront Park. It will be an easy hike and people may walk only as far and take as much time as they wish. The total completed trail at this time is about 3.5 miles long and is in three sections. This should be a good mid-winter outing. Meet at 1:30 pm in the parking lot behind Heilig-Meyers, 1901 N. Eastman Road (Kingsport Mall). For information call Collins Chew at 239-6237.

CHARIT CREEK LODGE/BIG SOUTH FORK NATIONAL RIVER AND RECREATION AREA (Scheduled for January 25-26, 1992)

Leader: Ted Malone (Phone: 615-477-2222)

The Big South Fork is north of Knoxville and straddles the Tennessee & Kentucky border. Charit Creek lodge and LeConte lodge are managed by the same folks. I have reserved one of the log bunk houses that sleep 12 but the Lodge can take more. The bunks will have a mattress and pillow; bring your own sleeping bag. Heat will be by wood stove and lighting by kerosene lamps. They have bathrooms but the showers will be closed for the winter. We have to take our own food but we can use their kitchen. Sounds like a good opportunity for a gourmet dinner and breakfast. Access is by a one and/or seven mile trail. We may use a car shuttle and do both. I would like to go down

on Friday after work and motel it on I-75 near our exit but we could meet on Saturday morning at the BSF Ranger Station; call for details. I have to send in \$10.25 each by Jan the 15th to confirm spaces. Those unconfirmed may have to pack a tent. The Big South Fork is a unique area; the canyons and arches remind me of the west.

FROZEN VIRGIN FALLS/CROSSVILLE TENN (Scheduled for Jan-Feb, 1992)

Leader: Ted Malone (Phone: 615-477-2222)

I'm not giving up on this hike! Maybe this is the year. Virgin Falls is a unique water fall in that it comes out of a cave (sometimes roaring), goes a very short distance, edges over a cliff, and drops 140 feet to the bottom of a bowl whose drain is another cave. The water comes out of the cave at approximately 58 degrees and is not exposed to the air long enough to freeze, but imagine what forms of sculpture the mist and spray must take on as they hit the rocks below and splatter in all directions. On the six mile hike in we will pass three more waterfalls that could be solid. Interested? Let me know so I can start a list of who to notify if the weather cooperates. We'll probably go down Friday after work and stay in Crossville to get an early start to drive the 14 miles to the parking area, hike in, explore the area, and get out by dark. Ideal conditions I am looking for are freezing temperatures with little or no snow.

APPALACHIAN TRAIL WORK TRIPS

Leader: Ed Oliver (Phone: 349-6668)

It is difficult to schedule work trips a month or more in advance during the winter and early spring because the weather is so unpredictable. If we have reasonable weather on weekends during the winter or early spring, we will work on some of the relocations on the Appalachian Trail. It will take one to two days to complete the Buchanan Relocation near Unaka Mountain and several days on Pond Mountain. We have a section of trail around No Business Knob that needs rehab work. Not all of this work involves building sidehill trail. Some is relatively easy - cutting blowdowns and clipping limbs and small bushes. If you would like to be called when we work on these projects this winter, send your name and phone number to Ed Oliver 261 Kanan Drive, Kingsport, TN 37664 or call 349-6668. These trips will be decided on by Wednesday or Thursday of a particular week because it is difficult to anticipate the weather any further in advance.

Canoeing

POLAR BEAR CANOE TRIP (Scheduled for January 1, 1992)

Leader: Dave Ingram (Phone: 615-282-5856)

Start the New Year off right - join us for this hard-core paddling Polar Bear Expedition. We will paddle something in the Class II-III range and return early to catch the football games. Plans are to meet at 9:30 am at Burger King in South Johnson City and make a decision on where to paddle based on water levels and weather conditions at the time.

WATAUGA GORGE CLASS IV-V (Scheduled for January 25, 1992)

Leader: Dewey Fuller (Phone: 615-764-7340)

The Watauga Gorge run is one of the most challenging "steep creek" runs in the east. The six mile run from Guys Ford near Beach Creek Community, North Carolina down to Watauga Lake features lots of class IV rapids and a few in the V-VI category. If water level is not right for a Watauga run, we will choose an alternate stream.

Other Activities

MEETING (Scheduled for January 28, 1992)

Leader: Darrol Nickels (Phone: 615-239-5442)

There will be a meeting in ROOM 114 of the EASTMAN EMPLOYEE CENTER at 7:30 pm on Tuesday, January 28, to discuss a week-long backpacking trip in the western mountains, particularly the WIND RIVER RANGE of Wyoming. This is an exploratory meeting to determine interest - the exact time and area visited will be decided later.

TRAIL SPORTS LTD. (*G. S. Luttrell reporting*) - A new store carrying hiking and camping supplies has opened in Kingsport: TRAIL SPORTS LTD. is located at 3808 Fort Henry Drive with MIKE'S SHOE REPAIR, 239-7787, near the Evergreen Store. Some of the brands carried include Jansport, Slumberjack, Diamond Brand, and Danner. Mike Brown, who runs the store, also sells reconditioned boots and can do sewing repairs on boots, packs, etc. Mike's hours are 9 - 6, Tue - Sat, except 9 - 5 on Wed. Tennessee Eastman Hiking Club members will receive a 10% discount on purchases by showing their stamped ERC pass. Mike will have a list of retiree and guest members of the TEHC. Stop by and give Mike some business - it's good to have a hiking and camping store right here in Kingsport!

For the Record

TEHC CHAIRMAN FOR 1992 (*G. S. Luttrell reporting*) - I've enjoyed serving as Chairman in 1991 and want to thank all those who helped make it a good experience. The new Chairman for 1992 is Dan Sand. Good luck Dan!

APPALACHIAN TRAIL BLAZING ON HUMPH MOUNTAIN (*John Thompson reporting*) - Using three work trips, blazing has

been completed on the 1.6 mile bald portion of the Appalachian Trail over Hump Mountain, down to Bradley Gap. This was done in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service (Tocane District), which supplied and hauled 16 six foot locust posts to the Trail 0.6 mile from the peak. In addition, signs prepared by Ed Oliver were placed on Hump peak and at Bradley Gap. Work dates were September 24 and 27 and October 27, which fortunately were fine weatherwise. The following workers participated in one or more of these trips: Bruce Cunningham, R.W. Miller, Darrol Nickels, Ed Oliver, Frank Williams, Paul Worsham, and John Thompson.

GRASSY RIDGE RELOCATION - November 16, 1992

(*Joe DeLoach reporting*) - On November 16, Frank Williams and I headed out through the fog at Carver's Gap to look at a potential site for Konnarock Crew work in 1992. This was a relocation on the north side of Grassy Ridge which had been flagged three years ago. The relocation would replace a 0.3 mile section of the Trail which goes rather steeply down Grassy Ridge. Although the red flags had faded enough to blend in pretty well with the leaves on the beech trees, we were able to find both the upper and lower tie-ins with the existing Trail. We were able to follow the flags from the lower end but could only find the initial one at the upper end. We tied on a couple more flags to make the start and end more evident. Although the AT was pretty muddy after the recent snow had melted neither of us felt that the current Trail was dangerous. A more dangerous situation existed on the level section between the cutoff of the Grassy Ridge Trail from the AT and the beginning of the downhill section. Drainage is very poor in parts of this section which resulted in some icy patches. However, it should not be too difficult to improve the drainage.

We took the measuring wheel out to the proposed relocation and along the way measured the relocation finished last summer.

The distances measured from Carver's Gap are as follows.

Round Bald Summit - 0.43 miles

Start of 1991 Relocation - 0.56 miles

End of 1991 Relocation (Engine Gap) - 0.80 miles

Jane Bald Summit - 1.13 miles

Junction with Grassy Ridge Trail - 1.63 miles

Start of Proposed Relocation - 2.08 miles

End of Proposed Relocation - 2.38 miles

MT ROGERS BACKPACK - November 23-24, 1991 (*Ted*

Malone reporting) - A few of us must have really needed this trip because as we approached Friday and it was still raining, I was told more than once, "let's go even if it is raining". I was in total agreement, I needed it too. We met at the Cracker Barrel at 6:00 am, had a hearty breakfast, arranged car pools, and headed for Damascas and Mt Rogers. The fog was so thick and heavy on the way up it was almost like being submerged underwater. About a mile from our parking area at Elk Garden we surfaced to a bright, clear and crispy morning. After

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donning lots of orange and red because of the hunting season, we kept to the horse trail and open areas as much as possible and made the four miles to our campsite at "the rock". After lunch we pitched our tents and then set off to find the new Mt Rogers shelter. We located it about 1/4 mile trail north of the blue blaze to Mt. Rogers. Louann and Dee were waiting on us. It's a new log and chink shelter and was the first time anyone in the group had seen it finished. Louann had worked with Konnarock and the Mt Rogers Club on the stone foundation. The rest of the afternoon was spent on excursions and gathering firewood. After dinner we settled down to backpacker's hot chocolate (recipe below), some tall tales, experiences, and some little known bits of useless information. Useful items were: use earplugs to keep out the unnatural sounds of the night (snoring), cook in brown and serve bags (no pots to clean), and how to forecast the weather by looking at mare's tails (clouds). We went to bed pondering the true meaning of "three dog night" and why grazing animals always point in the same direction. The next morning we awoke to a crystal wonderland straight out of a Disney movie. Thick, heavy frost covered everything, our tents were stiff with it. After mugs of hot steaming oatmeal, coffee and granola bars, we packed up and pushed our way into the 30-50 mph winds and headed back to the cars. Two thermometers at breakfast had read a chilly 20 degrees.

BACKPACKER'S HOT CHOCOLATE: Dump hot chocolate into a large insulated mug. Add hot water to the half full mark. Splash in enough peppermint schnapps to be borderline on a breath analyzer test. Squirt whipped cream until it runs over the sides and dash on the nutmeg until you no longer can see the whipped cream. All this... more or less to taste. **HAPPY CAMPERS** and great conversationalists were Frank Williams, Jerry McKenzie, Steve Wilson, Garry Luttrell, Louann MackDrinkard, Dee Drinkard, Bob Sherrill and myself.

TOE RIVER CANOE TRIP - November 23, 1991 (*Dave Ingram reporting*) - For the past several weekends prior to November 23, we had been paddling the Nolichucky Gorge at 350 to 400 cfs (very low) because nothing else was runnable. We were wondering if the fall rains would ever arrive. Finally, the rains came. Friday afternoon, November 22, the Nolichucky rose to over 4000 cfs. We decided now was the time to take advantage of the high water and paddle the Elk, which is so unpredictable and difficult to catch at high water. It turned out to be a good choice.

Thirteen paddlers of assorted description, equipped with assorted canoes and kayaks, showed up on Saturday morning. When we arrived at the put-in, the water level had dropped some but there was still plenty of water for a good trip. The Elk River is a small, technical class II, low III river, with a lot of ledges and drops. It is a great place to develop technical paddling skills. Enjoying the river, the great weather, and fine tuning their paddling skills were: Bill Reynolds, Brad Dayvault, Jamie Gaither, Dale Mathis, Mary Mathis, Charlie LeBlanc, Carl Petering, Keith (Snake) Swift, Burchel Pierce, Norman Neal, Carmen Howell, Billy Wilcox, and Dave Ingram.

ABRAM'S CREEK, GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK, December 7, 1991 (*Ben Becker reporting*) - Six paddlers enjoyed the clear cool weather and the

moderate water level. Our trip took us through an isolated section of the park where few visitors travel. The water quality was excellent as usual, and the scenery was enjoyable. Our first stop was at the site of a former cabin, now just a memory. On one of the weathered and lichen covered foundation stones we were able to distinguish "John Farr Browner 1879" which had been chisled into the stone. As nature continues to reclaim the area, that will someday be gone too. The second stop was at the site of a bridge across the creek. On a previous trip, the top to an iron cookstove was found there. Extensive hand laid stones for the bridge abutments remain, but the history of it is unknown. Later, after lunch, the creek became a little more challenging. One spot was scouted where an island divided the stream. A nasty undercut was on river right, so we all opted to run a technical drop on river left. Sooner than we would have liked, Lake Chilhowee appeared. The final 2 miles was flat, but not bad since there was no wind to speak of. Those who elected to paddle that day were Paul Fontaine, Rick Culbertson, Dave Ingram, Burchel Pierce, Ben Becker, and Kurt Kauffman who was kind enough to paddle sweep to make sure no one went the wrong way.

WORK TRIP, NO BUSINESS KNOB - November 29, 1991 (*Kevin Edgar reporting*) - The day after Thanksgiving, Frank Williams, Joe Deloach, and myself, along with our respective bellies, drove up to the short access trail to Temple Hill Gap, about midway through our southernmost maintenance section. After banging out the dents which Joe's head had made in my car roof on the washboard FS road on the way there, we proceeded to dig out the worn out sidehill trail. We began almost immediately trail south of the gap, and had rehabilitated about 750 ft of trail by the time we couldn't lift the pulaskis anymore in mid-afternoon. Hunters and gunshots abounded in the area, one well-armed pair hearing the noise we were making and coming to investigate and talk for a spell. The sunny, mild day was perfect for being out in the woods. We probably have on the order of 100 person-days of trail rehab work left in this section.

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