



Mountain High Hikers Newsflash January 3, 2010

Happy New Year to ALL!!! We hope that 2010 will bring many great trails and friends your way.

Just a reminder to all that your 2010 dues are due NOW!!! Please download the membership form from the website, fill it out, and send it back to John Orr with your check. Thanks!

MHH goes to Wildlife Wilderness Week!

MHH will offer two activities for WWW: eating and hiking. If you are interested in being part of a group, come join us! As of now, Richard and I have reservations for Sat.- Wed., longer if the weather is nice.

Dining:

Saturday: Smokey Mountain Brewery

Sunday: Old Mill Restaurant

Monday: Smokey Mountain Brewery

Tuesday: Applewood Farmhouse Restaurant

Meet in the Music Road Inn lobby after the hike sign-up, between 6:45-7pm. In case of large groups, we may need to split into smaller groups at the restaurant to facilitate better service.

These restaurants all have great reviews and are very popular, especially the Brewery.

Hiking:

Missed the hike sign-up or did your hike fill up? We will post some hikes on the MHH website.

Meet in the Music Road Inn lobby at 9 am.

Nancy Shofner will lead a hike on Monday: The Old Settlers Trail. This trail begins in the Greenbriar area, not far from Gatlinburg and follows old roads and trails through remnants of communities that existed over a hundred years ago, with dozens of rock walls, chimneys, and several cemeteries. We will hike in 4 miles on an easy to moderate trail and retrace our steps back.

We have other moderate length hikes at a moderate pace planned on the agenda but will discuss them over the MHH dinners the evening before to firm up details. If we are allowed to, we will post them in the lobby of the Inn the evening before.

These are all subject to change:

Tuesday: Little Greenbrier/Laurel Falls. Spectacular waterfall. This would be moderate - some uphill, but not steep. We can add a side trail or two if anyone wants to. Without side trails, it would be about 7.5 miles. Car shuttle required.

Wednesday: Old Sugarlands/Two-mile Branch Trail. A beautiful area where settlers lived many years ago, leaving only a large cemetery to remember them by. Moderate trail, 5 or so mile loop, with the possibility of adding to the length.

Anyone familiar with these trails would be MOST welcome to help out!

Questions or to contact Pam Sullivan, call (c) 478-374-5281, (h) 706-374-5281

Travel Information:

For up-to-date park information, visitors can call (865) 436-1200 for a road conditions report. Remember that the main park road US 441 will close from time to time due to weather.

Also Remember:

I-40 between Tennessee and Asheville, NC (near mile marker 3, very close to the Tennessee state line) is blocked because of a huge rockslide. Find alternate routes if you were planning to travel this stretch of I-40.

US 64 to the west of the Ocoee Whitewater center is still closed due to a rockslide.

The Gatlinburg Bypass and the Spur will have periodic single lane closures to clear vegetation from November 2-January 15. The work will be suspended during times of heaviest traffic.

Clingmans Dome road is closed until summer as is Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail and the parking area for the Sinks.

The National Park Service lists road closures on their website also.

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Trip Report of the December 15th Hike on the Bartram Trail at Appletree Campground

This hike was a new one for our club so a group of us did a post-Thanksgiving pre-hike. The 8.2 mile hike was very strenuous, involving steep ascents, deep creek crossings and confusing trail markings. Since the hike was on the short hike schedule we wanted to find an easier version.

Three of us went back out to do an alternative trip, avoiding the stream crossings on Piercey Creek. Across the Cascades Section of the Upper Nantahala, we found the first blue blaze. Since this would have required whitewater boats and life jackets to access the beginning of this trail, we had to come up with another plan.

We did a 6+ mile hike along Junaluska Rd. The trail was severely eroded in many places and I learned what the term "PUD" meant - pointless up and downs. So we scratched this version, too.

We decided to do a simple 5.2 mile in and out hike along the Upper Nantahala River as the club hike. Expecting an easy hike along the Bartram Trail on a misty morning, 8 of us, including a new hiker, found the Nantahala River raging. The river came over the trail in 3 areas, forcing us to bushwack around the flooded areas. Luckily Jacob brought his folding saw.

We had read the power company was drawing down the lake to do dam repairs and the water was flowing rapidly down the Nantahala River. With this high volume of water on top of the rain, we expected to see some incredible waterfalls. Roadtrip!

We went took an alternative route out past the Cascades and took in a rare sight. Waterfalls were everywhere and very impressive. Virginia snapped away with her camera. These pictures, along with our disappearing trail, are posted on the web site. It was quite the adventure trip!

Pam Sullivan

Howdy !!

A group of the MHH met this morning (Jan. 29) at Neels Gap planning to hike to Wolf Laurel Top and back. The temperature was 15 degrees with winds of 30 mph, (that's a wind chill of a balmy -5 degrees) !!

Half of the group decided in the parking lot that this might not be fun, the rest of the smart hikers bowed out after ten minutes of the hike. Only one old fart decided to take his name off of the club sign up sheet and do the hike by himself.

By the time I got to the top of Leveland Mountain, I had taken off my wool hat, parka and mittens. It had warmed up to about ten. If you happen to think I might be a little "abnormal", I ran into some Boy Scouts and the two leaders had on shorts !!

I won't be seeing you for a couple of weeks, one of my best friends wife died and I'm going down to be with him awhile.

Happy Trails !!
Loud Jon

TRAIL MAINTANENCE PLAN FOR JANUARY

Since I have been fortunate enough to inherit the MHH Maintenance program in such excellent shape from John, I hope to continue doing the same great work, and am counting on everyone's help to pull off some new projects we have in mind.

The Trail Maintenance Plan for Jan. '10 will consist of the following:

1. Jan 7th: Fires Creek; we will work from Far Bald trail up to the rim, and then over to Cold Springs gap, then down the "escape" trail, in preparation for the Jan. 19th long hike. Meet at Ingles in Haysville
2. Jan. 21st: Possibly Wagon Train Trail in preparation for the Feb. 3rd short hike- vs- new trail relocation project at Lake Chatuge - vs -Yellow Mountain Trail cleanup. Meet at Mary Ann's / The Bread of Life Restaurant in Young Harris
3. Jan. 28th: Extra day to finish above Georgia projects or possibly bridge work at Coleman River Trail.. Meet at Mary Ann's / The Bread of Life Restaurant in Young Harris

All meeting/orientation times are at 0845 with departure at 0900

Richard Sullivan

Tuesday Hikes Canceled !!!

Due to the Prolonged cold weather, and with the wind-chill Tuesday Morning predicted to be < 0 and the highs at elevation will be in the low 20's, Both the Long and Short hikes have been canceled for this week (Jan 5th).

Wes Clonts

Richard Sullivan