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The magazine of exploration for walkers, hikers, and backpackers in the Southeast

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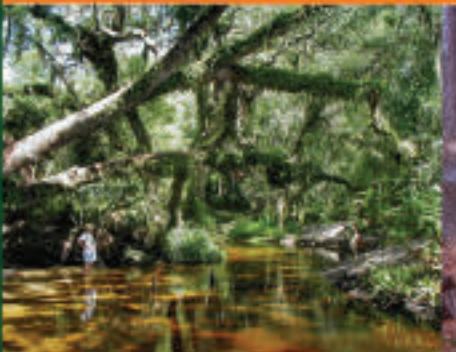
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Southern Hiker

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This Month's Contributors...

Leonard M. Adkins

Leonard is known as "The Habitual Hiker" and has hiked more than 17,000 miles of backcountry in the U.S., Canada, Europe, and the Caribbean. Some of his accomplishments include hiking the A.T. four times, the Continental Divide and the Canadian Great Divide, to name only a few. While not on the trail, Leonard is a highly successful and prolific writer having written over a dozen books on everything from outdoor adventures to travel. His book, "Wildflowers of the Appalachian Trail," garnered Leonard the National Outdoor Book Award. He is currently the hiking expert / columnist for Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine and Roanoker Magazine.

Jeffrey Hunter

A familiar name with all hikers and hiking clubs and organizations throughout the Southeast, Jeffrey wears many hats as the Southeast Trail Program Director for the American Hiking Society, Southern Appalachians Initiative,

Amy Werkheiser

Amy is currently on the Board of Directors for the Land Trust of Huntsville & North Alabama and is a biologist with Operations Management International (OMI, Inc.)

Kevin Coughlin

Kevin is the technology columnist for the Star Ledger newspaper in New Jersey, LONG time friend, and one heck-of-a-guitar player.

I.M. Russell

I.M. shares with us the story of becoming a hiking convert in this issue. M. is the proprietor of "Tubby's Country Club", a music club in Monteagle, TN.



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The Kiosk

The past two months have been eventful to say the least. It's been a real pleasure for me to meet many of our readers out on the trail and at some of the region's conferences over the past few weeks. I extend a very special thanks to the Florida Trails Association for the warm welcome they gave us during their conference in March. They made us feel very welcome and sure know how to throw a conference. Kudos to all of the planners and

volunteers that made it so enjoyable, informative, and successful!

And while we're at it we'd like to tell you how impressed we all were with the outpouring of support by hikers and outdoor enthusiasts in Alabama for the state's Forever Wild program. We will tell you about this state land purchase program later in this issue. It has been a huge success purchasing over 100,000 acres of pristine and threatened wilderness over the past few years. But two months ago the program faced a challenge. A handful of state Senators proposed cutting funding of the program between 30 to 50 percent. The hiking community joined the chorus of outdoor enthusiasts who were outraged that this vital conservation program, approved and blessed overwhelmingly by Alabama voters when first proposed, was being considered for funding cuts. In a monumental event their collective voices were heard and the bill never even reached the floor of the Senate.

In this month's issue we're all over the place with a little of this and a little of that but we think it's our best issue yet and hope you agree. Of note is the upcoming National Trails Day celebration which will be observed this year on June 4th. Many clubs and organizations throughout the region are planning activities to celebrate the day and this year's theme, "Take the Path to a Healthier You". We'll take a look at the event and list some of the many activities scheduled. I'm sure there will be one near you.

Thanks again for all of your support and enthusiasm for "Southern Hiker". We'd like to hear from you so feel free to drop us a line and let us know how we're doing or pass along any suggestions you may have for making "Southern Hiker" better. After all, we couldn't do it without you!

Happy trails!

Joe Cuhaj / Editor

It's Our World

EPA Backs NC

Last month Southern Hiker reported that North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper was prepared to file suit against the Tennessee Valley Authority for unduly polluting the state's air, particularly in the Great Smoky Mountains. Since then, Chattanooga Times/Free Press has reported that the Environmental Protection Agency has signed a consent agreement with North Carolina that may require the TVA to install more pollution control on their coal plants over the next year.

According to the agreement, the EPA will have until August to validate North Carolina's claims. If the claim is validated the EPA will require the TVA to provide a remedy to pollution from coal power plants in Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama.

With this action North Carolina becomes the first state in the South to pursue an action against a neighboring state under the Clean Air Act.



Funding for Conservation

The National Forest Service recently submitted its list of recommendations for projects to receive funding next year from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This fund provides money for a variety of outdoor activities and conservation projects from scenic trails to wildlife refuges. The money is derived from offshore drilling in the U.S.

Following submission of the list the President put a budget to the projects. At this writing, Congress will be reviewing the proposed projects and budgets. In the Southeast, proposed projects include:

- Alabama: Bankhead / Oakmulgee / Shoal Creek / Conecuh National Forest - \$2.3m
- Florida: Florida National Scenic Trail - \$3m
Suwannee River Pinhook - \$3m
- Georgia: Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest:
Ga. Mt. Riparian Project - \$4.5m
- North Carolina: Uwharrie Trail - \$500K
- South Carolina: Francis Marion Sumter National Forest - \$7.5m
Sumter National Forest: Chattooga River - \$400K
- Tennessee: Cherokee National Forest: Tennessee Mountains - \$3m



Refuge Study Cutback

After red flags were raised by the Southern Environmental Law Center, the South Carolina Department of Transportation has decided to cut back the size of the area being studied as a corridor for Interstate 73.

The SELC had warned state officials that the proposed corridor threatened the Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge, a significant habitat for rare and endangered species of animals including the Shortnosed Sturgeon, Red Cockaded Woodpecker, and the Swallow Tailed Kite.

The SELC was joined by the Coastal Conservation League and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, overseers of the refuge, in their battle. While the SELC is happy with the decision to narrow the study area, there is still concern that the interstate will end "at the refuge's doorstep" and open the door for construction of a connector directly through the refuge.

Gas Prices Hit Record Highs

An understatement if ever there was one, but how can we help conserve this precious commodity? The Alliance to Save Energy has these tips to help you minimize "pump pain":

- Keeping your car properly tuned improves mileage by 4 percent.
- Replacing faulty oxygen sensors in your car can improve mileage 40 percent.
- Properly inflated tires increases mileage by over 3 percent.
- Use motor oil certified as being "Energy Conserving" and that contains friction-reducing additives. In addition, use the manufacturer's recommended grade of oil to increase mileage another 2 percent.
- Replacing old and clogged air filters increases mileage by 10 percent.
- Avoid speeding and rapid acceleration that can rob 33 percent of your mileage at highway speeds.
- And the Department of Energy reminds you that every mile per hour you drive over 60 mph is like paying an extra 10 cents per gallon.

Learn more energy saving tips at the Alliance to Save Energy website, www.ase.org.

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Wanted

ASIATIC HONEY SUCKLE

for loss of native flora to hikers

by Amy Werkheiser

The southeastern United States is blessed with an abundance of natural beauty including gorgeous vistas, towering waterfalls, lofty bluffs and rich coves. Hikers are treated to trails featuring some of the richest and most diverse native flora in the United States.

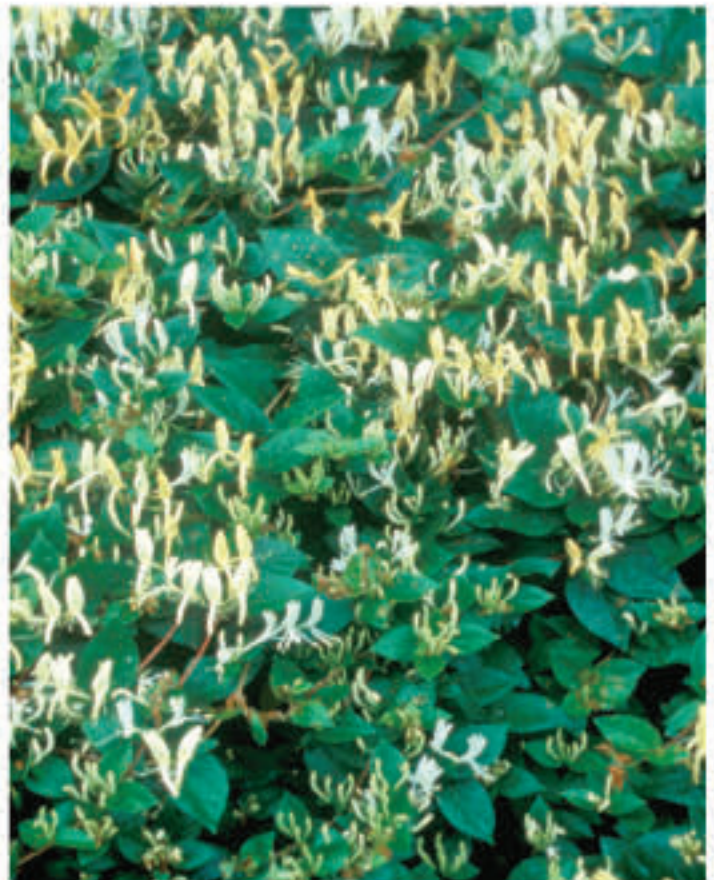
The forests which house these trails are seeing a dramatic change in the natural vegetation due in a large part to the proliferation of exotic species plants. One example is bush honeysuckle, a native of Asia (Asiatic honeysuckle). Introduced in the late 1800's as a fragrant landscape plant, it has now escaped cultivated areas and is spreading up mountainsides at a disturbing rate – especially in the last 25 years. This species (*Lonicera fragrantissima* and *L. x bella*) of honeysuckle has no natural enemies, can withstand a variety of habitats, proliferates rapidly and, as a result, is affecting rare and endangered plants.

The Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Council has classified this exotic species as "severe threat". A "severe threat" is defined as an exotic plant species possessing characteristics of an invasive species that spreads easily into native plant communities and displaces native vegetation.

In North Alabama, this exotic is observed on Huntsville's Monte Sano Mountain and surrounding mountainsides. The mountainsides of Huntsville are located within the western face of the southern Cumberland Plateau physiographic region of the Appalachian Plateaus. Numerous trails on the

mountain are used by hikers, backpackers, joggers, bikers, and nature lovers alike.

Bush honeysuckle is seen as dense thickets and scattered individuals. Dense bush honeysuckle thickets tend to completely exclude the native understory. On Monte Sano Mountain in Huntsville, AL, for example, the invasion appears to have begun along the forest fringes, and once established, moves toward the forest interior.



Bush honeysuckle is described as an upright multi-stemmed oppositely branched, deciduous shrub that varies in height from four to twelve feet. The plant flowers in January/February and April. The flowers are small white or yellow colored with the fruit a red semi-translucent berry. Reproduction is accomplished by root runners and limbs re-rooting, the fruit is dispersed by birds and mammals. This species also leafs out earlier in the season and retains its leaves longer, thereby reducing survivability of herbs and tree seedlings through light reduction

Several local and state organizations in throughout the Southeast have recognized this threat to our native flora and have begun the fight with education, research & management, and control programs. The Land Trust of Huntsville & North Alabama (The Land Trust) is one of the organizations doing battle with bush honeysuckle. In 2003, The Land Trust proposed and was awarded a grant under the US Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFW) Private Stewardship Grant Program (PSGP) to study the effects of bush honeysuckle on eleven rare, threatened and endangered plants species which are known to occur upon the mountainsides near Huntsville. Preliminary reports have shown this species is in fact affecting habitats of rare and endangered plants and trees.

Some of the "at risk" species observed with the threat of honeysuckle include Morefield's leather flower (*Clematis morefieldii*), federally endangered. This vine is only known to Madison County, Alabama in the United States. Other species include Price's potato bean (*Apios priceana*), Federally threatened, Cumberland rosin weed (*Silphium brachiatum*), listed as "imperiled", from extirpation as well as the American smoketree (*Cotinus obovatus*), listed as "imperiled".

Several other species are included such as the Alabama snow wreath (*Neviusia alabamensis*), Nevius' stonecrop (*Sedum nevii*), and Tennessee leafcup (*Polymnia laevigata*) are likely within the area and may also be affected by bush honeysuckle. These species, as well as many others within our forests, are at risk from Asiatic honeysuckle.

People who love the outdoors and experience the natural beauty seen in our native forests will soon find themselves with no diversity along the trails. One plant - bush honeysuckle -

could be the only plant left as it will have crowded out everything else.

There are ways to help as you travel the trails and forests: know what this plant looks like, contact your local park association or forestry service, or check out a land preservation organization in your community that is already involved in managing exotics species.

A crucial step toward control of this and other exotics is through education and public awareness. Nurseries and gardening magazines are still promoting the cultivation of this species. Our preserved forests and protected greenspace is all that is left standing between nature and urban sprawl. If those protected forests are left to the invasive plants there will be no diversity left for our future generations.

The continued support of State and Federal agencies is necessary to defend the plight of our native forests against exotic species. This will require continued funding of the investigation to determine which factors influence this species and other exotics from spreading as well as monitoring and implementation of management and control programs.

Through scientific research, grants and public education this specie's propensity for taking over our natural forests may be reduced or perhaps even eliminated. For further information about their eradication efforts contact The Land Trust of Huntsville & North Alabama, 507 Franklin Street, Huntsville, Alabama, 35801. (256) 534-LAND, or online at landtrust-hsv.org. For more invasive plant information, see Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Council at www.se-eppc.org.



Photo courtesy Auburn University

Keeping Alabama Forever Wild



State governments are beginning to see the light. They are realizing that large areas of greenways are rapidly disappearing because of development. In 1992, Alabama voters overwhelmingly voted to take funds acquired through offshore drilling and create a new program – Forever Wild.

Forever Wild purchases tracts of land with the intention of turning it back into public use. Since its inception, the program has purchased over 100,000 acres of land and wetlands and the acreage keeps growing.

Greg Lien, the Assistant Director Natural Heritage section of the Alabama Department of Environment Management which oversees the program, has been with the program since just after its inception and says that the process of acquiring property is pretty straight forward.

“The process begins with a tract being nominated for purchase,” Lien said. “Anyone can nominate a tract. You can nominate your neighbor’s house if you wanted.”

But kidding aside, Lien says that the property under consideration must meet certain criteria before the process can continue. The property must be a natural preserve and have environmental or historical significance or have potential as a recreation area, state park, or wildlife management area.

Once a nominated parcel has met any of these conditions, the process begins in earnest as the proposal is presented to the Forever Wild Board. While the Board may approve the purchase of the land there is still one

more hurdle – there must be a willing seller. If not, the process ends there.

Such was the case with the “Walls of Jericho” (see our feature article on page 19). The property was nominated almost immediately after Forever Wild was created but lacked a willing seller at the time. Not long ago the Nature Conservancy aligned with another group and approached the owners of the Walls who decided it was time to sell. The Conservancy purchased the land and in turn Forever Wild purchased it from the Conservancy.

Another notable tract purchased by Forever Wild is in the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta, the second largest river delta in the country and an area virtually undisturbed since botanist William Bartram explored the area in the 1700’s. Almost immediately after the purchase, local paddlers and outdoor enthusiasts joined Forever Wild in creating the Bartram Canoe Trail through the delta’s bayous complete with floating camping platforms.

But not everything is sacred these days as last month Forever Wild came under fire. A group of state senators proposed a bill that would divert 30% of Forever Wild funding to other agencies. Once the proposed bill became public knowledge, hikers and outdoor enthusiasts with a wide variety of interests joined forces, making



their voices heard in Montgomery. As of this writing, the bill is virtually dead.

"It's very gratifying," Lien said. "The response was overwhelming. It shows that support for the program is stronger now than when originally instituted and validates the job we're doing."

While Forever Wild receives funding from offshore drilling and matching federal funds, the money received is strictly for the purchase of land, not its management.

"Hunters purchase licenses each year with a portion of the proceeds going to land management," Lien said. "Hikers and paddlers do not have that mechanism. Forever Wild license plates have been established to fill this void."

Available at any Alabama state license bureau, a portion of the proceeds goes to aid in managing and maintaining hiking, birding, and canoe trails, and other wildlife and recreational management needs on Forever Wild tracts.

Lien encourages everyone to get out and use Forever Wild lands because after all, they are for all of us. Visit www.alabamaoutdoor.com on the web and click on the "Public Lands" link to learn more about Forever Wild and the areas they have purchased.



Paddling a bayou on Forever Wild's "Bartram Canoe Trail" in the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta. The 15-mile paddle includes floating camping platforms and a hike on Mound Island, a National Historic site.



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Hiking 101

Bugs Bumping



Backcountry Bivouacs?

by Leonard M. Adkins

Bumps. Welts. Red splotches. Itchy spots.

If this is your body after an outdoor outing, you need help. No matter what you do, you can't completely eliminate the creeping, crawling, flying pests. However, the following tips will at least decrease the number of offenses you suffer and the amount of liquid refreshment you donate to the nasty little suckers.

Get that woodsy smell as soon as possible. Bees and bugs are attracted to strong fragrances, so avoid using scented soaps, lotions, shampoos, and colognes. Forgo the deodorant before heading into the woods.

Be aware of the colors you wear. Mosquitoes are attracted to dark colors, especially blue. Pick beige or other neutral colors when shopping for hiking clothes.

Use clothing to cover as much of your skin as possible. Some authorities suggest wearing long sleeves and pants year-round.

It can get mighty hot and humid wearing those heavy clothes during a southern Appalachian summer, so if you hike in a T-shirt and shorts, bring along repellent. One with almost a 100% concentration of DEET is suggested for heavily infested areas, while a 10%-30% DEET repellent should work for places with just a few bugs.

If you're like me, you may have reservations about using such a heavy chemical on yourself and children. I have found that citronella-based repellents work as well as those with the lower concentrations of DEET repellents. It smells to high heaven and you have to reapply it every one to two hours, but at least you are chemical-free. Additionally, you might want to check out those that combine the repellent with SPF 30 sun protection.

Learn to recognize places that are popular with bugs. Take a look before you sit down to make sure you're not about to take a break on an anthill. Ticks gather on tall grasses and overhanging bushes and brush, yellow jackets nest in the ground, flies hover around animals, and mosquitoes like cool, moist places. (Ladies, you will be gratified to know that scientific studies have shown that mosquitoes prefer males to females. Bring along

your boyfriend, husband, or other member of the opposite sex and watch the bugs go for him instead of you.)

Be aware of the times of day the bugs you are likely to encounter will be most active. Black flies are busiest in the morning, mosquitoes just after sunrise and before sunset, and deer flies during midday. (Of course, if you happen to be in a place where all of these are present, there is never going to be a time you will be bug-free. Slather on the DEET!)

At the end of the day, check yourself and your hiking partners for ticks and/or bites. In the case of deer ticks, which are the source of Lyme disease, the thing you are looking for could be as small as the period at the end of this sentence. If you find a tick, remove it by grasping its head with tweezers and pulling straight up. Treat the bite with hydrogen peroxide and be alert for the development of a bulls-eye rash or flu-like symptoms. The presence of either should prompt a visit to your doctor.

The long days of summer are made for outings in the woods. Just be prepared and don't let the little buggers get to you.



We Need You!

We're taking votes for the 10 best beach hikes in the Southeast! Drop us a line and let us know your favorite. Send it to editor@southernhiker.com or by mail to Southern Hiker, 10286 Rebel Rd., Daphne, AL 36526



The Journal

Becoming a Hiking Convert by I.M. Russell

As a northerner (suburbs of Chicago) and a suburban housewife/career mom, I was unaccustomed to the joys of outdoor activities as they pertain to what I now know as "hiking". Yes, I did my perennial treks to the dunes of Wisconsin and Michigan and yes, I did my perennial "camping" trip associated with the trek. But I was far from the adventurer that I am today. Gone are the days of country clubs disguised as "roughing it" experiences. I have seen the light!!

I moved South approximately 2 years ago with the premise of developing land that I own in Monteagle. As I meandered my way through the intrinsic pitfalls associated with small town rural Southern living, I saw an article in the local paper talking about an upcoming Southeastern Foot Trails Conference that was being held at our local DuBose conference center.

I called Jeffrey Hunter (head of the Southeastern Foot Trail Initiative sponsored by the American Hiking Society and National Park Service) and he filled me in on the agenda that weekend. I was so impressed with his enthusiasm for the project that I felt compelled to attend.

Little did I know that was the beginning of the end for me and my naive outdoor ways. Not only did I attend most of the conference and its activities, I picked up invaluable information about my own park system that I never knew existed except for passing up the visitors center sign as I went along on my daily errands.

After the conference was over, I explored several of the trails that were listed on the brochures I picked up (yes sad to say, most of the local trails were located less than 10

miles from my house). To tell you how successful the excursion was, last Christmas I purchased 3 walking sticks for my girls and I and this Christmas I purchased one for my dad as well. Then to make matters worse, I enrolled in the Leadership Grundy program last Fall and really realized how important our outdoor splendor is to the economy. Dang, capitalism and environmentalism all in one concept...how brilliant is that?!

Anyway, to make a long story somewhat shorter, I wanted to somehow let all the people who don't take advantage of our great outdoors know that there is still time. Get out this Spring and smell the air and the flowers and the rain. Take a hike on a trail marked "Beginner" or "Easy to Moderate" and tell me that there is no greater joy than breathing in that fresh air and walking through the splendors that await those who wish to discover them. I am a Hiking convert and you can be too...just reach out and grab that gold ring.



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Gear Guide

The Gap ON GPS



It was John Masefield who said, "All I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by." Back then, getting from one place to another was rather difficult to say the least and you could get paid a pretty penny if you were a skilled navigator.

Today we still use stars but they are artificial ones – 24 to be exact. They make up the Navstar system of satellites that make Global Positioning Systems possible. The last of the 24 satellites was sent into earth orbit in 1993 by the U.S. Air Force and a whole new way of getting from point A to B was born, as well as a multi-billion dollar industry. Today, the sky is full of such satellites provided not only by the U.S. by European agencies as well.

By using a combination of these satellites and ground stations, what us old timers used to call "triangulation", your position can be pinpointed anywhere on the globe to the meter, centimeter with advanced GPS.

We couldn't possibly go into all of the features available on today's GPS units, but we can tell you a few things to look for when purchasing one.

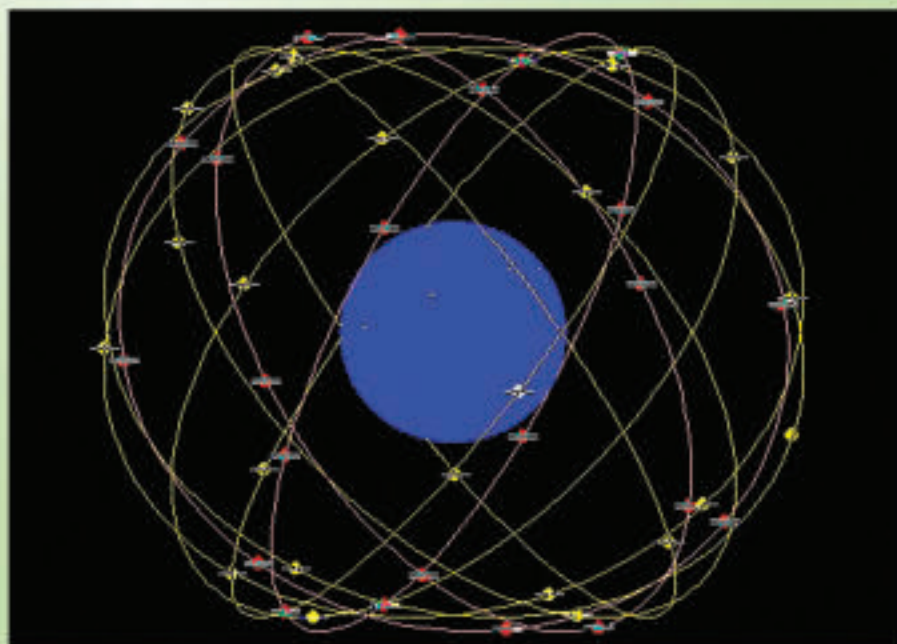
Size and weight is not usually a concern since most of them are very compact and weigh 6-ounces or less. You may want to consider the ergonomics of the case, however, since you will be carrying it in your hands.

The single most important consideration, next to memory and storage size, is the display screen. Make sure that it is large enough for you to comfortably view what's on it. The most common and comfortable screen size is a resolution of 160x104.

Screens come in either monochrome or color, but in either case make sure that it

is equipped with a high-contrast display with backlighting, otherwise viewing the screen in the bright of day is next to impossible.

Another key consideration is the amount of memory and storage the units have. The Random Access Memory (RAM) of a GPS, like most other computerized devices, is measured in megabytes (mb). Models can range from inexpensive versions with only



The satellites of the Earth-wide navigational system that makes GPS possible.

1 mb to 16mb RAM. What this boils down to is the higher the RAM, the more you can save on your unit.

So that begs the question, "what do you save on a GPS unit?" The answer is waypoints. Some people describe these as "breadcrumbs" that lead your way home. That's a pretty good analogy. As you hike hit a button and your exact location is saved in the unit – a waypoint. These can be used to retrace your steps back to the trailhead, use for future reference when you want to return a favorite mountain vista, or perhaps just save your life when you get lost and you need to find your way out. It is not uncommon for GPS units to hold over 500 waypoints these days.

In addition to the 24 Navstar satellites, a series of ground stations known as WAAS (Wide Area Augmentation System) has also been established. Units are now available that use WAAS in conjunction with the satellites and allow you to pinpoint your position to within 3-meters.

Finally, like the preverbal Radio Shack salesman, "Do you need batteries with that?" Yes you do. Most GPS units use standard AA batteries. Some use rechargeables. Whichever they use, think about your needs, the estimated life expectancy of the batteries in the unit, and what you're willing to pack along.

From here, the sky's the limit – literally, and the additional features are many. There are maps you can download from the internet to overlay on your screen, software to download your waypoints to mapping software on your computer, waypoints you can download of a hike you've always wanted to take way-out-west, the list is becoming endless.

We're sure you'll find one that meets your needs. Using a GPS is not only fun, but can be a lifesaver and is an indispensable piece of gear in the wilderness.



Forget copying pieces of a huge topo map and carrying it with you. The Magellan SportTrak Topo (above) has it built right in - 108 MB of interactive, nationwide topographic maps to be exact. The unit uses WAAS stations to help make it accurate to 3 meters. The memory is expandable to 16MB to allow for street-level maps. Retail for under \$300.

The Garmin eTrex Legend (left) is the company's first color pocket-size unit. The unit features a 256-color, sunlight-readable screen, 24MB of memory for storing plenty of maps (all of which are downloadable from the Garmin site via a mini USB port on the device), is WAAS enabled, and has a handy rocker switch that allows easy scrolling through menus or panning across maps. Retail for \$374.

Club Spotlight

The American Hiking Society

by Jeffrey Hunter

When you think about trails and hiking, what comes to mind? Most people think about hiking purely from a recreational perspective. But consider a recent Natural Heritage Inventory performed along the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. This study identified more than 2000 species of rare or endangered plants and animals, which makes the Appalachian Trail the single most biologically diverse unit in the entire National Park System! In other words, trails also serve a valuable role in the conservation of flora and fauna.

For the last 28 years, the American Hiking Society has been the national voice for America's hikers, and the hiking experience. Until recently, American Hiking has been located solely inside the Beltway in Silver Spring, Maryland. This location provides the American Hiking staff with easy access to the Halls of Congress, where they have been a steady presence on behalf of conservation issues such as Clean Air, Wilderness protection, Roadless Areas, and funding for trails.

In addition, American Hiking coordinates National Trails Day which is held each year on the first Saturday in June. This event is an opportunity to celebrate trails all across America. In 2004, more than 900 National Trails Day events were held across the United States. This represents a 12% increase in events over the previous year. Another great American Hiking Society program is Volunteer Vacations. For more than 20 years, American Hiking has sent volunteer crews to America's special places. These volunteers help build and maintain trails, remove invasive plants, build shelters, and do the work necessary to allow hikers to do their thing.

Now, in partnership with the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program, American Hiking opened its first regional office outside the beltway in Chattanooga, Tennessee to coordinate the Southern Appalachians Initiative (SAI). The effort will be regionally focused throughout Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and southern Virginia, and seeks to build, protect, and promote a 5,000-mile interconnected network of hiking trails.

Why did American Hiking and the National Park Service select the Southern Appalachians as the location for this regionally focused effort? The Southeast contains some of the most biologically diverse temperate forest in the entire world. Great Smoky Mountains National Park contains more species of salamanders than any other place on the planet. Several years ago a trail worker discovered a species of giant earthworm that was



A group effort: Trail maintenance along the Cumberland Trail

previously unknown to science on the Appalachian Trail in the Smokies! Additionally, hiking organizations located in the Southeast specifically requested assistance to help them organize.

American Hiking recently placed a full-time, “on the ground” staff person, headquartered in Chattanooga to provide much-needed organizational and technical support to SAI participants. The majority of the Southeast hiking organizations are volunteer-run and do not have an extensive history of fundraising or educational outreach. The SAI staff person will manage specific projects developed with our foot trail partners, all designed to reach the long-term goal of a viable regional trails system supported by strong, volunteer-based activists.

Want to get involved in this great project? Please join us April 28 – May 1st at the 3rd Southeastern Foot Trails Conference at Table Rock State park in Pickens, SC. You’ll meet new friends, have an opportunity to hike in a beautiful little-known park, learn new skills, and have some fun.

For more information, or to get involved, please visit us online at www.americanhiking.org or call 423/ 266-2507.



The spectacular view from atop Blood Mountain





The Walls of Jericho

by Joe Suhaj

photos by Jerry Green

*A*we-inspiring;
breathtaking;
magnificent.

*Just some of the words that
have been used to describe "The
Walls of Jericho". Not the
"Walls" in the biblical sense, but
in hiking lore.*



It is an area that straddles the Alabama / Tennessee state lines that many had heard of, but most have never had the chance to hike, that is until recently. Thanks to the efforts of the Nature Conservancy, Alabama's Forever Wild, and soon the state of Tennessee, the Walls are open for visitation.

Located in Franklin County, Tennessee, and Jackson, County, Alabama, the Walls consist of 21,453-acres of wilderness that had not been seen by the public in almost thirty years. The property, once the home of Davey Crockett's family, was purchased by Virginia lawyer turned Texas oil magnet Harry Lee Carter. Upon his death in 1977, the property was divided up between his heirs. The heir to the Walls tract sold it to a timber company who promptly cut off access to the public.

That's where the story could have ended but the Nature Conservancy knew of the property and its importance and ever since the organization's inception had eyes on purchasing the property and re-opening it to the public. Their dream was finally realized in 2002 when the timber company finally agreed to turn the land over for \$13.9 million.

Alabama's Forever Wild program in turn purchased the 12,500-acres on the Alabama side and the Walls were open once again. The remaining acreage on the Tennessee side is still being held by the Nature Conservancy and will be sold to the state as soon as funds are available. Tennessee has made it a top priority to acquire their portion of the tract in 2005.

What's so special about the Walls? The aptly named gorge is probably the most scenic and serene location in the state. The hike into the gorge takes you downhill from the trailhead slowly, meandering past several small creeks and streams. Then at about 2-miles

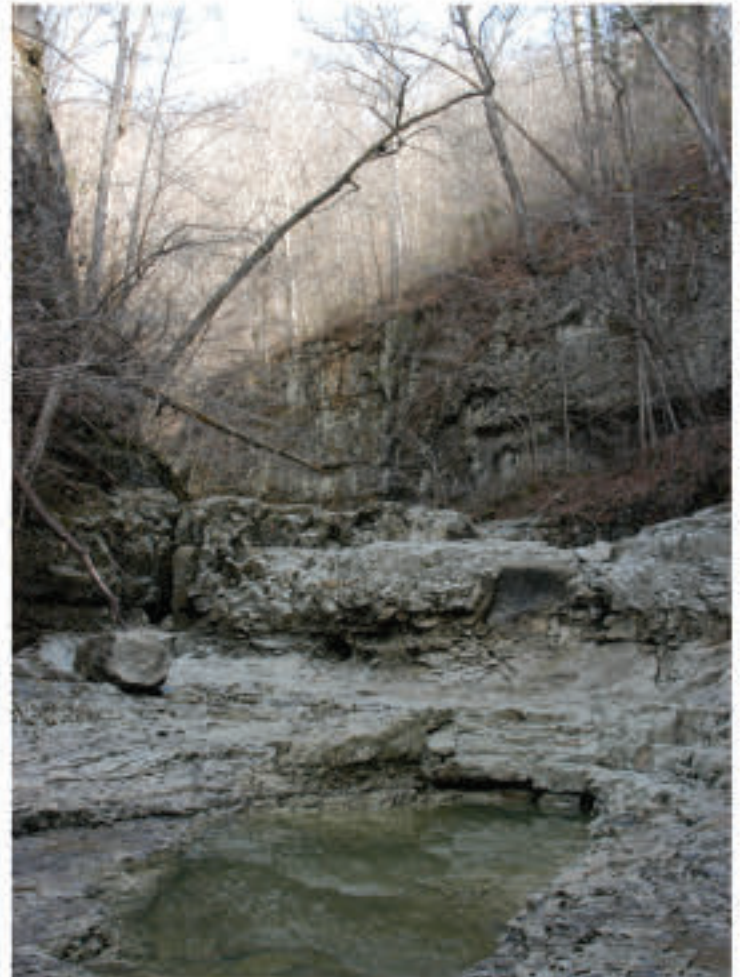
in you reach Hurricane Creek – a beautiful clear, icy cold mountain stream, its bottom lined with "pavers" of stones and pebbles.

Fording the stream you will soon come to Turkey Creek. From here the walls begin to narrow and rise progressively around you until you arrive at what is known as "The Bowl". The water from the small creek cascades into a pool where it is said that, appropriately enough, baptisms were once held. The water funnels through the rocks and shoots out in plumes down the limestone canyon walls in a spectacular cascade.

While the scenery along this strenuous 7-mile out-and-back hike is absolutely extraordinary, most people do not realize the natural significance of the Walls of Jericho. There was a sense of urgency to protect this land, not only for its beauty, but also to protect its fragile environment.

By purchasing this land, the headwaters for the Paint Rock River have finally been protected. The river is home to over 100 species of fish and 45 species of mussels, 17 of those are endangered and two can only be found in the Paint Rock River.

In addition, the purchase links together 50,000-acres of wilderness in the region, mostly in Tennessee,



including the Carter Cave State Natural Area, Franklin State Forest, Skyline Wildlife Management Area, and the Conservancy's David Carter tract.

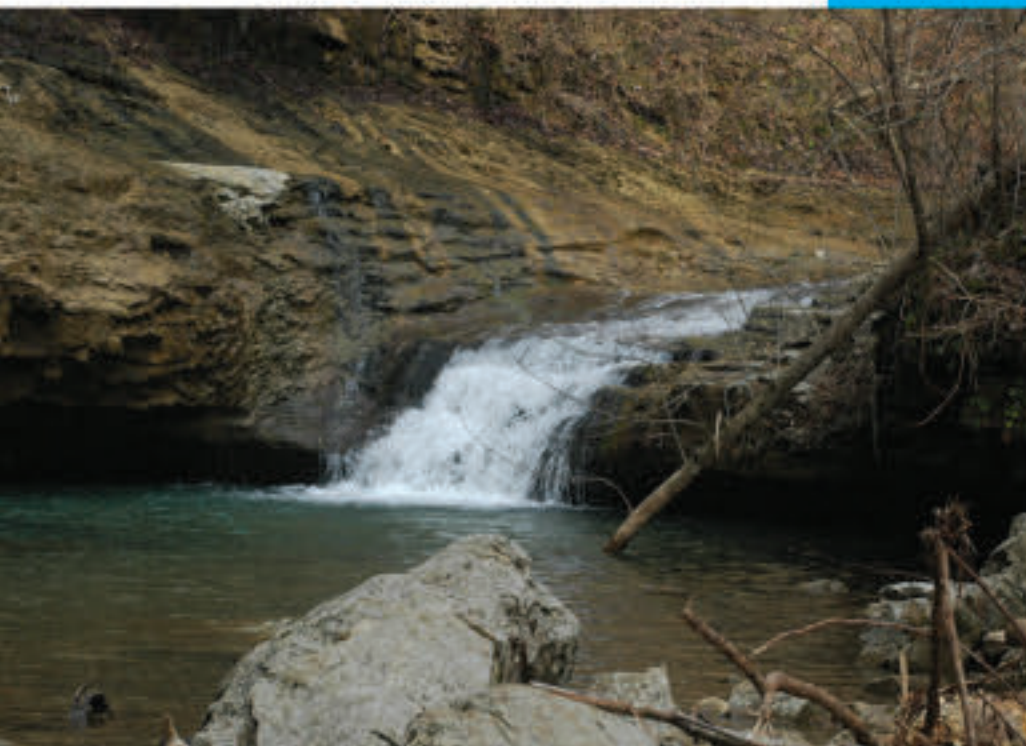
The Walls of Jericho is a prime example of nature and multi-use facilities living in peace and harmony. In addition to the hiking trail, there is an 8-mile equestrian trail and the creeks in the area are touted as some of the best kayaking (class IV-V) in the state of Alabama.

Which brings us to our word of caution: The Walls can be a very dangerous place especially after heavy rains where the creeks are prone to flash flooding! The best advice is not to go there during those times!

You will get wet on this hike, having to ford several streams and creeks. In addition, the trail is extremely muddy after rain, so be prepared for a change of clothes.

We can not sum up the experience of hiking the Walls any better than the officers of the Nature Conservancy who said, "God was smiling when he made this."

And now that we can all see his handy work, the smile is even bigger.



THINGS TO KNOW:

Length: 7-mile out and back

Difficulty: Strenuous – easy in, tough out.

What to bring: Plenty of water, lunch, snacks. It's a FULL day's hike.

Directions:

From Chattanooga: Take exit 127 (Highway 64) and head toward Winchester. Travel 15-miles and turn south onto Highway 16. Just after the Alabama state line, the parking area is to the right.

From Huntsville: Take Highway 27 North to Highway 79. This will take you through the Skyline / Hilltop Community. Follow Highway 79 north about 22-miles to just north of Hytop. You will pass the equestrian parking area then come to the hiking parking area. You've missed it if you enter Tennessee.

Fees: No fees

Camping: A tent camping area is available at the bottom of the trail.

Cautions: Do not hike the area after heavy rain! The streams and creeks are prone to flash-flooding.

Information:

Nature Conservancy: www.nature.org

Alabama Forever Wild:

www.alabamaoutdoors.com

Meet Hiking Legend

NIMBLEWILL NOMAD!



He's a legend in the world of hiking, having hiked many of the nation's long trails such as the Eastern Continental Trail not once but twice, being the first to hike the 5,500-mile long trail North to South and is credited with giving the ECT its name. He has written books about his adventures that have been highly acclaimed. His name is M.J. Eberhart, better known by his trail name, Nimblewill Nomad. We caught Nomad, or EB, off the trail and he was kind enough to answer a few questions for us. The interview has been edited down for this issue but you can read the entire text online at www.southernhiker.com.

SH: You said your family growing up was the quintessential "Ozzie and Harriet" experience, you married and had two wonderful children and had a successful career as a medical practitioner. How do you see hiking fitting into this picture? How has it added or taken away from your life?

EB: The "Ozzie and Harriet" comparison was simplistic. I used it to illustrate a way of life common to small, Midwestern towns during the 40s and 50s. My moral, social, and religious convictions were (and to this very day remain) framed in the beliefs and morals of that time and place. Thus have I raised my family and lived my life.

As a child, and during the seemingly endless barefoot days of summer, I hiked the Ozark Highlands, hunted the hardwood hollows and briar patches for squirrel and rabbit, fished the little meandering streams for perch and sunfish, and skinny-dipped the old swimming holes, all the while marveling Ma Nature's trove of outdoor treasures.

SH: Early on you deferred on having a pacemaker put in place and that seemed to be the right decision for you. How are you doing right now health wise?

EB: I've lived a very active life. One day, long ago, while preparing for a crosscountry motorcycle race, and during a particularly demanding time, I passed out while traveling

at a high rate of speed. Over the handlebars I went. It was a wicked wreck. My wife rushed me to the hospital. That's when doctors discovered that I suffered from heart block.

At Shands Teaching Hospital in Gainesville Florida, specialists told me I absolutely needed a pacemaker implanted in my chest, right then and there. That was over forty years ago. Pacemakers of that era were the size of a large donut. No way would I have that. I made the decision to trust my fate to the Lord.

At age 66, I may not be as active as I was back then, but I'm still able to do the miles, day after day. I have great vitality; I am very strong—thank you, Lord!

SH: You had some pretty nasty foot problems during the '98 Odyssey that you corrected with surgery prior to the 2000 trek. How are they holding up after the Lewis and Clark hike?

EB: After those *Ten Million Steps*, the title of my first book, I had literally walked my feet in the ground. At the beginning of that journey, and after nearly two months of slogging through the mud and water in Florida and Alabama, I lost all ten of my toenails. Toward the end of that hike, in the rocks of northern Maine, through New Brunswick, and onto the tundra that is the Chic Chocs of Quebec, the bones in my feet began giving way. The last 1,000 miles of that 4,000-mile odyssey were excruciating. My hiking days were over for good, so I thought.

That's when I met this great foot doctor from Cumming Georgia. After surgery to cut

and wire my bones back straight, I was good for to go again! Since then, in 2000-2001, I successfully hiked the entire Appalachian Mountain Range, at least as we know it to exist on the North American continent, a profound adventure, one which produced the fodder for my second book, *Where Less the Path is Worn*. The year 2002 brought a 3,000-mile transcontinental hike, from Cape Hatteras light on the outer banks of North Carolina, to Point Loma light on the Pacific in San Diego. In late 2003, and in preparation for my 2004 odyssey, I thru-hiked the Natchez Trace National Scenic/Historic Trail, then last year, on the 200th anniversary of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, I thru-hiked The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.

Oh yes, my feet are doing just fine. Thank you, Dr. Brian Holcomb—and again, thank you, Lord!

SH: Most long distance hikers, whether they complete their trip or not, all say that they come away with a new outlook and attitude, but your discussion of long-distance hiking as being "The Three Wise Men" was quite insightful into your soul after these trips. Tell us how you came to realize the "Three Wise Men" theory.

EB: We all struggle, day by day, the hardships of life, and often, unfortunately, even the joys. We have lived them; certainly we know them. In what is perhaps an

oversimplification, I have separated and distilled out life's entire journey onto three distinct planes. In ascending order, they are: the Physical Journey, the Mental Journey, and the Spiritual Journey. Though seemingly independent, each plane is intimately and intricately interwoven with the other two. Only when each Journey is taken to its limit, "to the wall," can one clearly see and understand them.

The demands of and the solitude provided by long distance hiking offer such an opportunity, the opportunity to study unto oneself and to understand, thence to confront and deal with the Journeys of life. The Biblical odyssey of the Three Wise Men, though a journey long, long ago, illustrates so vividly the progressive ascension through the ever-maturing Journeys I've described. The intrepid, on any long distance hike, after dealing with the first two, and be it a blessing, the third, that individual will be changed forever.

SH: *Of all of your journeys, on which did you feel fulfilled and satisfied the most?*

EB: That's easy! My first long distance hike, *Ten Million Steps*. Early on, as I trudged day after day through the torrential downpour, El Niño quickly tested both my physical and mental limits. Grudgingly, I plodded on. All the while not becoming a nice person. It wasn't fun. Slowly, I regained my physical strength, reached my stride and was able to endure the long, difficult miles of the Physical Journey. But I was a wreck mentally and emotionally. The anguish I was suffering and trying to deal with is impossible to describe. Somewhere in northern Alabama, perhaps western Georgia, I finally managed to wrestle down my ego-driven pride. That's when I became the master of my Mental Journey.

It was only then that I realized there existed a deeply rewarding and much more meaningful dimension to this whole long distance hiking thing—the Spiritual Journey.

SH: *You began hiking in the 80's. What motivated you into hitting the trail for the first time?*

EB: Everyone's been to the doctor's office, one time or another. We all remember that little cubicle with no windows. There were days during the winter months when I'd arrive at my office in the dark, ply the inter sanctum, then go home in the dark, never to see the light of day. I'm an outdoors person,

pure and simple. Put me in the great out-of-doors, especially the mountains and you've got a happy camper. If there's a group called "Hike for Sanity", sign me up!

SH: *You said that you hiked the AT in "jerks and stops" over fifteen years. How did you know that it was time to hit the big trail, the ECT?*

EB: For years I wanted to hike the Appalachian Trail. And I tried. Some of the "jerks and stops" occurred there while I was still practicing. Problem was, I couldn't get away for more than a few weeks. During that time I'd worked on piecing together an AT section hike. Over the years, I managed to make it as far as Duncannon, Pennsylvania. I've since completed two AT thru-hikes but have never gone back to finish that section hike.

In late 1997, I decided to try an AT thru-hike beginning the following spring. To get in shape, I started hiking the Florida National Scenic Trail in the Big Cypress National Preserve on New Years Day, 1998, with the thought of possibly hiking on. By the time I reached the Florida Panhandle, I'd heard about a fellow who'd hiked from Key West to Cap Gaspe in 1997. His name was John Brinda. I was in good shape by then, the timing was right, so I thought, why not keep on going, just like John! And that's what I did.

SH: *(The inevitable question) What was one of your most memorable moments in all of your long-treks?*

EB: That's an easy one! After nearly a year on the trail, turning at mile marker 00 in Key West, and walking those last few steps to the monument marking the southernmost point of the eastern North American continent, there to be cheered to the finish and greeted by so many dear friends. That was it. That was the time.

SH: *When it comes to equipment you learned your lesson about heavy packs quickly and began the first north-south hike of the ECT with only 9.5 pounds of pack weight. Wasn't that difficult especially when it came to handling the extreme temperatures in the north with that little gear and provisions?*

EB: Freedom has its price. So does comfort. Hiking with a fifty pound pack is not my idea of freedom or comfort. There has to be a tradeoff. Somewhere on the scale, at some packweight, there's a balance. Mine's at 9½ pounds. I got there by figuring out the difference between my "wants" and "needs," and by learning to deal with

the extremes of the trail. There is little difference now between my summer and winter packweight.

Time was, it'd taken three Mayflower vans to haul all my s—. That wasn't freedom; 9½ pounds is freedom!

SH: *Reading over some message boards online I came across an entry that said you didn't carry toilet paper. That line began a rather lengthy thread on "how did he do that" with guesses ranging from smooth stones to "the French water method". Care to share your secret with our readers?*

EB: Ha! It's true; I don't carry toilet paper. That's no secret. I've obviously figured out my own "wants" and "needs" on this one—go figure yours!

SH: *Everyone also marveled over your wood burning stove to cook meals on. It's very simple and efficient. Where did the idea come from? How did it come about?*

EB: At one time or another I've carried just about every kind of stove ever made, from the ones that flicker, to the ones that groan, hiss or roar. The last store-bought one was the insert-twigs-turn-on-fan kind. When the fan quit, the bugger still worked—sorta. That's when I got the idea for "Nomad's Little Dandy."

Over time, the Little Dandy has remained very popular; a couple of reasons, perhaps: First, the material to make it costs little or nothing and it's easy to build. Second, the stove is lightweight and there's no fuel to lug. Oh, and you don't have to be a pyro to start a fire with twigs.

SH: *So you've done the ECT not once but twice, the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, there's plenty of long-paths out there. What's in store for the Nomad?*

EB: For some of us, the wanderlust just gnaws so terribly. Oh yes, I'll be back out there again, good Lord willin'. We'll see what the summer brings, what the snowpack looks like in the northern Rockies.

Read the rest of our interview with Nomad online at www.southernhiker.com and be sure to visit EB's official website, www.nimblewillnomad.com for information on his books and latest outings.

Photo Gallery

Wild Flowers Of

As a Florida hiker, I study the beauty in the details along each trail, the rich complexity of flora for which this state bears its name, dubbed by Ponce de Leon as the “land of flowers.” While our state offers a bounty of blossoms year-round, spring is my favorite season for spying the best of the blooms, the cream of the crop. Take a journey around the Sunshine State and pay attention to the colors of spring.



Insects love the **purple thistle**, *Cirsium horridulum*, (left) encountered in open pine flatwoods and prairies. It is a host plant for little metalmark butterflies and attracts numerous members of the skipper family for nectar.



Cardinal wild pine, *Tillandsia fasciculata*, (upper right) is a bromeliad that grows profusely in cypress strands. Its bright red blooms liven up the earth tones of the swamp. Look for them overhead when hiking through Big Cypress and scattered amongst cypress stands such as this one, The Wall, in the Corbett Wildlife Management Area.

Whenever I see a **pine lily**, *Lilium catesbaei*, (right) I have to stop and photograph it. There isn't another flower in the pine flatwoods that stands out as sharply against the forest floor—and when you see one, if you don't have wet feet already, you will soon.



Florida by Sandra Friend

The *Coreopsis* family (right) is honored with a designation as Florida's state flower, and its scientific name sounds much nicer than the common name—**tickseed**. This variety, *C. leavenworthii*, is a common and colorful inhabitant of wet prairies and flatwoods.



Members of the *Sabatia* family, such as this **marsh pink** (left), are some of the most colorful flowers in Florida's flatwoods by virtue of their bright pink hues.

Atop tall stems, **Feay's palafox**, *Palafoxia feayi* (right), has blooms that look like a miniature fireworks display. It stands out sharply against its backdrop of scrub habitat.





Talk about a flower that'll stop you in your tracks—the **bearded grass-pink**, *Calopogon barbatus* (above), is a terrestrial orchid preferring moist conditions, found mainly in wet flatwoods and prairies.

The **ocean-blue morning glory**, *Ipomoea indica* var. *acuminata* Convolvulaceae (right), is almost impossible to capture its beauty on film. Viewed in person, its colors range into the ultraviolet spectrum. Found along coastal strands, it is one of the host plants for mangrove skippers in South Florida.

Sarracenia leucophylla (right) is one of the showiest pitcher plants, with its rubbery blooms and showy lace-patterned foliage. Look for these **white-topped pitcher plants** on trails in low-lying areas wetlands around Pensacola, including those at Tarkiln Bayou and Garcon Point.





Pisgah and the Promised Land

by Danny Bernstein

According to the Bible, Moses could not enter the Promised Land but could only see it from Mount Pisgah in present-day Jordan. Mt. Pisgah is one of the first mountains newcomers to Western North Carolina climb to get oriented in Pisgah National Forest (PNF) and identify other peaks in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Short, accessible climbs (1.5 miles one-way, 715-foot ascent) do not come with more rewards. Mt. Pisgah, almost in the center of the Pisgah District of the National Forest, is not a hike for those looking for quiet and solitude. The trail, lined with rhododendrons and mountain laurel, starts out almost flat but soon steepens and on the second half of the trail, you are climbing a set of rocky steps. The top at 5,721 feet has a platform with a 360-degree vista and a TV transmission tower, which makes the mountain an easy reference point in the Blue Ridge range.

As the legend goes, in 1776, James Hall, a chaplain who accompanied General Griffith Rutherford on his Cherokee killing spree, saw Mt. Pisgah from the French Broad River valley. Impressed with the rich green land, Hall named the mountain Pisgah, since it overlooked North Carolina's Promised Land.

After the railroad arrived to the Blue Ridge Mountains, wealthy Northerners and Midwesterners were attracted by the scenery, climate, and cheap land. When George Vanderbilt, grandson of the railroad magnate Cornelius "Commodore" Vanderbilt, came to Asheville in the 1880s to get away from New York winters, he started

buying land and planning his country estate. Eventually, Vanderbilt bought 125,000 acres from the Biltmore Estate, his chateau, to Mt. Pisgah. George hired Frederick Law Olmstead, who designed Central Park. Olmstead encouraged Vanderbilt to think about forest preservation because even in the land of milk and honey, trees were not an infinite resource. Vanderbilt constructed riding trails, including the 18-mile Shut-In Trail to his hunting lodge. The Mountains to Sea Trail (MST) follows the Shut-In Trail from the North Carolina Arboretum to the Pisgah Inn. Each fall, runners race the Shut-in Trail, considered one of the most grueling races in the country. Competing in the race means climbing over 5,000 feet of altitude while dealing with roots, rocks, and fellow runners all in single file. After George Vanderbilt died in 1914, his widow sold most of her land, which became the basis for Pisgah National Forest, the first forest east of the Mississippi.

The best introduction to PNF is on U.S. 276, which bisects the forest. PNF comprises over a half-million acres in several sections, but U.S. 276 is its spine. Most of the forest's accessible attractions lie off the road between the Forest entrance and the Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP). From the Pisgah Forest community on U.S. 280, stonewalls mark the main entrance to the Forest. On the brightest day, the feeling of dark, green, tall vegetation envelops you. The canopy is no longer that of the chestnut trees which crowded out almost all other foliage until they were killed by the chestnut blight of the early twentieth century. The trees



and bushes are more diversified now but the atmosphere is still enclosed.

Going up U.S. 276 is like driving in a corkscrew. Stop at the Pisgah Visitor Center and Ranger Station and walk the Andy Cove Nature Trail, a 0.7-mile trail, which starts with a new boardwalk, to get an introduction to the woods in this forest.

Continuing north, make a left on Davidson River Road, 5.4 miles north of the entrance to the forest. About a half-mile on the right is the trailhead for Looking Glass Rock, one of the most popular hikes in PNF, because the trail is accessible, easy to find and hike, even if some guides call it strenuous. The walk to the top is 3.1 miles one way, a 1,600 feet altitude gain with an outstanding view. Describing Looking Glass Rock as a big rock is like thinking of Grand Canyon as a hole in the ground. Looking Glass Rock is an icon in Western North Carolina, much like Ayers Rock in Australia. The name refers to the appearance of the mountain when water freezes on the exposed granite surface and reflects the sun like a mirror. From the BRP, Looking Glass Rock looks like a chiseled piece of sculpture - and nature did the carving. The rock is a pluton, a big ball of molten magma, like lava that did not make it to the surface. This magma solidified into rocks that were much harder than later rocks, which overlaid the magma. After much wearing down of the softer outer rock, Looking Glass Rock is the exposed rock that remains. This process gives the rock its domed appearance.

The yellow-blazed trail starts at 2,300 feet and parallels the river for a while in a rhododendron and fern forest. The trail is well graded and switch backed with an abundance of wildflowers in early spring and Rosebay rhododendrons in June. About halfway up the trail, you pass a rock clearing with a large H painted on the ground, a helipad used by the Transylvania County Rescue Squad to rescue rock climbers. People as far as Florida come to climb the other side of LGR; the hikers and the rock climbers never meet. The summit is not the end of the hike; the trail descends 80 feet through mountain laurels to a rock outcropping bordered by hemlocks and pine. You can see Cedar Rock, another pluton, on your left, Shining Rock almost straight-ahead and Mount Pisgah on the right in the 180-degree panoramic view.

Continue on the Davidson River Road to reach the Fish Hatchery, Wildlife Education Center and the Cat Gap Loop network of trails. Going back and northbound on U.S. 276, stop at Looking Glass Falls on the right side of the road, the most popular waterfalls in Western North Carolina. A steep staircase leads down to a more intimate view of the falls but the waterfall is so accessible that many people do not even bother to walk down. Continuing north, turn into the Sliding Rock Parking area on the left. The paved path leads to the 60-foot cascade with a natural pool at the bottom, perfect for sliding. Shrieking children and adults stand at the top of the slide trying to decide their take-off point. With changing rooms and lifeguards in the summer, Sliding Rock is so popular that there is a parking fee during the swimming season.

The next stop, the Cradle of Forestry, is a multimedia center with displays, a movie, and two short walks. Until the late nineteenth century, trees and forests were considered an infinite resource in the U.S. Cut trees down, burn them; the forest will come back but many areas never return to their former selves. The first school of forestry in the U.S. started here on the Vanderbilt estate in 1898 and lasted in various guises until 1913 when other, more academic schools of forestry opened up. The buildings still stand, arranged along a paved path in the Cradle of Forestry.

More twists and turns up the road until you reach the Blue Ridge Parkway and stop at the Cold Mountain Overlook, (yes, the real Cold Mountain). The view varies with the season and the tree leaves, which may obstruct it.

If you stood on the summit of Looking Glass Rock, you may want to see it from the other side, the classic postcard view. At the Cold Mountain Overlook, drive south on the Parkway to Milepost 417. The rock will go in and out of view as the Parkway twists but keep your eyes on the road; Parkway driving is challenging enough. At the Looking Glass Rock Overlook, you can look down on the Rock with its fringe of trees on top and one side against a background of higher mountains

The Blue Ridge Parkway goes through the PNF. I understand in the Deep South, the hiking season is at the end. But as I write this in mid-March, much of the Parkway at the higher altitudes is closed because of icy spots, especially in the tunnels. Our high-altitude hiking season does not start until April and sometimes we have been surprised even then at sudden closures on the Parkway. Hurricane Frances and Ivan damaged several sections of the parkway further north, which have not yet been repaired. However, with 400 miles of trails, you will have plenty to trails to explore.



THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT The Pisgah National Forest

DIRECTIONS: From Brevard, North Carolina, take U.S. 276 North to the entrance of Pisgah National Forest.

Trail guide: *The Best Hikes of Pisgah National Forest* by Goldsmith et al., published by John F. Blair, 2000.

Map: *Pisgah Ranger District, Pisgah National Forest, National Geographic Trails Illustrated # 780*

Website: <http://www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/>

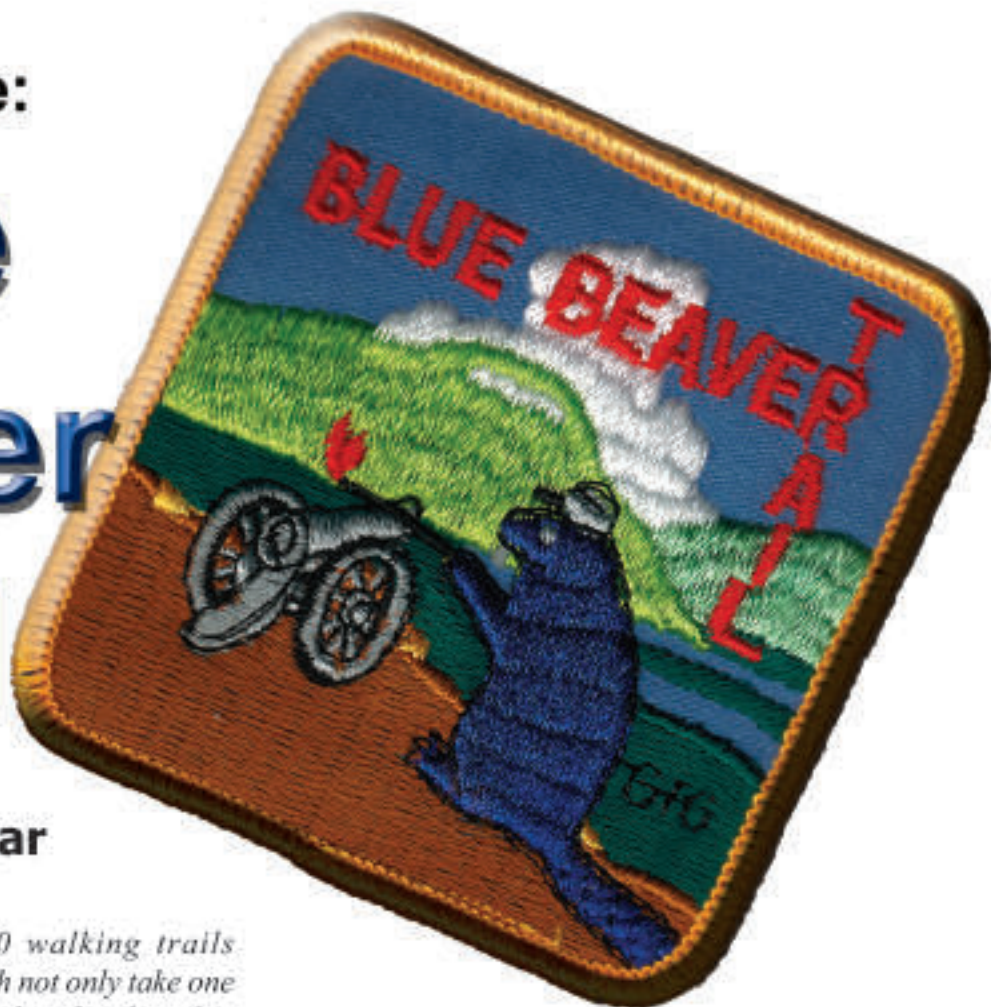
The Pisgah Inn, located on the Blue Ridge Parkway, has rooms and serves meals. During leaf season, there is a year's wait to stay there. See <http://www.pisgahinn.com>



Historic Hike:

Blue Beaver Trail

by Steve Rajtar



This is one of about 1000 walking trails established throughout the U.S., which not only take one through a historic area but also offer embroidered patches as souvenirs to those who complete the hike. This trail is located near Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, and can be reached from Chattanooga by driving south on Broad St. and west on Cummings Hwy. (SR 318) to the Reflection Riding Nature Center.

The trail begins at the entrance sign for the Chattanooga Nature Center and Reflection Riding, a 400-acre area preserved with indigenous flowers, trees and shrubs. The trail heads southward through a stone and wooden gate, along roads utilized by cars as they slowly cruise through the landscaped surroundings paralleling Lookout Creek. On display along this portion are an old barn and cabins of Indians and pioneers. At the southern end of Reflection Riding, just past a gazebo, is a Blue Beaver Trail sign, marking an abrupt turn where the trail heads eastward and upward.

In 1863, the Union army was bottled up in Chattanooga, and while they waited for real action they kept busy clearing trees for fuel, shelter and

fortifications. The Confederates likened their actions to those of a certain rodent, calling them "The Beavers in Blue." The name stuck, and the Blue Beaver name was applied to the trail.

Under orders from Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, about 1500 Union soldiers in October of 1863 floated south on pontoons on the Tennessee River from Chattanooga, meeting up with other troops which had traveled northeastward from Alabama. They congregated at Brown's Ferry, close to today's Reflection Riding.

The trail heads up Lookout Mountain, increasing elevation as it proceeds in a general northeasterly direction, heading back toward the river and Chattanooga down in the valley below. Also within sight, across the river, is Signal Mountain. It lived up to its name during the Civil War, as Confederate troops watched enemy movements and signaled them back to the units on top of Lookout Mountain. With that information, the soldiers on Lookout were able to thwart several

Union attempts at scaling the mountain's western face. On November 24, 1863, however, a heavy fog on Lookout obscured any such signals. The Union troops headed up the mountain, along the route which today is the Blue Beaver Trail.

At about the midpoint up the mountain, the trail passes by Craven's House, which during the Civil War was surrounded by a large farm. By noon on November 24, the Union troops captured the farm. The Confederates attempted to retake it, but by 2 p.m. the fog had descended to that level and eliminated all visibility for shooting. Later, the fighting became known as the "Battle Above the Clouds." Today, Craven's House is operated by the National Park Service and is a good place for hikers to stop and get water, and eat any food which they've carried with them.

From Craven's House, the trail swings back to the south along the western face of the mountain, then switches back to the north along the steepest wall of the escarpment. When it reaches the northern end of the mountain for the third time, well above Craven's House, an iron stairway leads to the plateau and Point Park. On November 25, 1863, the Union troops reached this same site and captured the area with only token sniper resistance. A walking tour of the park includes several impressive monuments erected to memorialize the men who fought from the various states. The New York monument dominates the point, and can be seen from the bottom of the mountain on a clear day.

Close by on the northern edge of the mountain, and a little below the field of monuments, is a very interesting museum which includes uniforms, armament and memorabilia of the Battle Above the Clouds and other Civil War engagements. To leave Point Park, one passes through a massive arched stone gate which itself qualifies as a monument worthy of note.

At this point, the trail is complete and, hopefully, it's not the first time that the hiker realizes that it's not a "loop" trail. After all, the Reflection Riding starting point is 1400 feet below, but 10.5 miles along the winding trail. Before setting out on the walk, hikers must make arrangements to leave their cars at or near Point Park and be shuttled to the base of the mountain, or vice-versa.

This trail can be challenging if you're not used to changes in altitude, but at the steepest points there are cables or railings or steps to prevent it from

becoming dangerous. The views of the mountain from several angles, and of the river, creek and wildlife make this a memorable walk. Further, for those enjoying more "touristy" attractions, Lookout Mountain features Rock City, Ruby Falls, the Incline Railway, and shops ranging from quaint to kitsch.

This is one of hundreds of trails included in "Historic Hiking Trails", a book written by Steve Rajtar and published by McFarland and Co, for use by anyone wishing to plan trips along the nation's historical trails. To obtain information about the book and other such hikes, write to Steve Rajtar at rajtar@aol.com or just go to www.geocities.com/krdvryhistoric.html.



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National Trails Day!

The first Saturday of June brings a special celebration for hikers. It is a day not only to celebrate their sport and the wonders found when hitting the trail, but also to promote its benefits and joys to the general public. This year is no exception with National Trails Day being set for June 4th.

Created by the American Hiking Society, the day is set aside to bring "a greater awareness of trails along with their many benefits and pleasures". The event brings together thousands of outdoor enthusiasts from hikers to land management agencies to environmentalists to business owners.

The day is celebrated in a variety of ways with some groups simply organizing a day hike to a unique destination, while others see it as a perfect opportunity to organize much needed trail work, and still others set up special exhibits, workshops, and trail dedications. Each event is based on the theme for that year. This year's theme is "Take the Path to a Healthier You".

A lot of us take hiking for granted but it is one of the best ways to get fit and stay in shape and if done consistently can actually help reduce the threat of cancer, heart disease, stroke and other killer diseases. The AHS has a complete list of health-related benefits of hiking on their website at www.americanhiking.org.

If you have a club or organization who would like to stage a National Trails Day event, simply visit the AHS website for details or email the AHS at NTD@AmericanHiking.org.

These are only a few of the events planned for the Southeast as we went to press. Many more are being added daily. Check the AHS website (AMERICANHIKING.ORG) for updates and additional events:

ALABAMA

Alabama Hiking Trail Society / Cherokee Ridge

Alpine Trail Assoc. - Hike Lake Martin - 9am
(334) 244-1579

Limestone County Parks & Recreation (Elkmont) Day
Hike - 9am

FLORIDA

Loxahatchee Chapter FTA - Hike on the Dike (Clewiston)
(877) HIKE-FLA

Rainbow Springs State Park
(Dunnellon) Walk with a Ranger

Suncoast Sandpipers Volkssport Club (Dade City)
Withlacoochee River Park 5 & 10K Walks

Loxahatchee Chapter FTA - Day Hike (Lantana)
(877) HIKE-FLA

Loxahatchee Chapter FTA - 9-mile Hike (Jupiter)
(877) HIKE-FLA

GEORGIA

A-CC Greenways & Riverside Park (Athens)
Dedication of new Sandy Creek Oxbow Trail
9am - noon. (706) 613-3615

Georgia Appalachian Trail Club 75th Anniversary
(Dawsonville) (770) 923-2405

Elachee Nature Science Center Trail Maintenance
(Gainesville) 9am - (770) -535-1976

Gainesville Parks & Recreation Day Hike
(770) 297-5451

Kemo Trail Corps Trail Maintenance

8:30am - (770) 356-4265

Lula Lake Land Trust Open Gate Day 8:30am-6:30pm
(423) 821-2424

USDA Forest Service Pinhoti Trail Maintenance
(Villanow) 9am (706) 695-3134

NORTH CAROLINA

Hemlock Bluffs Nature Preserve Volunteer Work Day
(Cary) 10am-noon (919) 387-5980

Partners for Parks Grand Opening Little Sugar Creek
Greenway (Charlotte) 11am-Noon (704) 347-1958

Eno River State Park Laurel Bluffs Trail Work (Durham)
9am (919) 383-1686

City of Greensboro (Greensboro) Hike Lake Brandt
7:30am-3pm (336) 373-3816

Fall Lake Task Force (North Raleigh) Work Day
9am-5pm (919) 868-6274

Pisgah National Forest Cradle of Forestry Bug Day
11am-4pm (828) 877-3130

SOUTH CAROLINA

Caesars Head State Park (Cleveland) Mt Bridge
Wilderness Area Day Hike 10am-2pm
(864) 836-6115

TENNESSEE

Hiwassee Hiking Club (Coker Creek) Dedication of Unicoi
Turnpike Trail 10am (423) 745-5254

What's New

And now for something completely different for those car camps or overnights -

ONE SWEET LITTLE AX

by Kevin Coughlin

Every winter, I sit on a Florida beach and pine for my guitar.

It's just too much of a hassle to fly with my precious Martin in the post-September 11 world. But what about one of those little "travel" guitars? Before heading south this year, I vowed to find one that would satisfy three requirements:

Big sound. Small size. Smaller price.

It had to be small enough to fit in an airplane's overhead luggage bin.

It had to be cheap enough so I wouldn't go berserk if the airline insisted on stashing it in the cargo hold.

Yet it had to play well enough so I actually would want to strum the thing.

The search led me to Montana, by way of Alabama and Romania.

Not Montana the Big Sky State, but Montana the MTG1. That's a travel guitar built in Romania. I found it online at Gear 1 Music in Alabama for about \$72, with shipping.

Few purchases have made me happier. You can pay a lot more for sturdier, better crafted instruments like the Washburn Rover or the Martin Backpacker. But you might fret over them. (Pun intended.) And some folks will argue that the Montana sounds nicer.

With a spruce top and beechwood sides, the tear drop-shaped MTG1 delivers astonishing volume. Tiny is not tinny. While the bass strings lack oomph, the treble tones are pure and pleasing. The sound suggests a cross between a banjo and mandolin.

Okay, so there is no truss rod for adjusting the 19-fret neck. The tuning gears are strictly bargain basement.

And the included backpacker bag is flimsy. I solved the bag problem with some bubblewrap and a plastic field arrow case (item 41-0757, about \$25 with shipping) from Cabelas.com, a sporting goods outfitter.

The fretboard action also was a tad high. (Slide-guitar players may like that.) For \$37, a luthier at my local Sam Ash music store filed down the saddle

to lower the strings. You should spend a few more bucks on a guitar strap, essential for holding this oddly shaped guitar.

Even with these extra expenses, the MTG1 cost less than just about any other travel ax.

Sadly, we didn't log much beach time together in Florida. But that's only because Mother Nature was in a foul mood. My trusty little Montana proved mighty handy passing the time indoors.

I'm not sure how the instrument would withstand the rigors of, say, the Appalachian Trail. Thanks to the improvised case, however, it survived Continental Airlines with nary a scratch. The MTG1 is sure to make happy campers of the R.V. crowd, and it's a perfect fit in cramped apartments. Mine is so cute I even take it to bed with me.

But that's another story.



Stoway Raingear Jacket by L.L. Bean

Great value, great jacket! That's what our crack team of testers told us about the Stowaway Raingear Jacket from L.L. Bean. Extremely lightweight the jacket can fold up right into its own pocket (hence the name -Stowaway).

The Stowaway has features you'd find on more expensive jackets but at a price that won't break the bank (MSRP \$145.00). The jacket is made of a tough double-layer of breathable Gore-Tex. Ventilation is excellent with a inner mesh liner in the back and a two-way zipper. As for durability, the double-needle stitching can really take a beating.

The hood has a rigid visor with drawstring for keeping the elements off your face. The sleeves give ample comfort when it comes to movement and the combination elastic / Velcro cuffs will keep the worst rain from seeping up your sleeve. And maintenance is a breeze - simply throw it in the wash and dry.

The Stowaway from LL Bean is a definite 5-star winner!



Coleman Xpert Powermax Stove

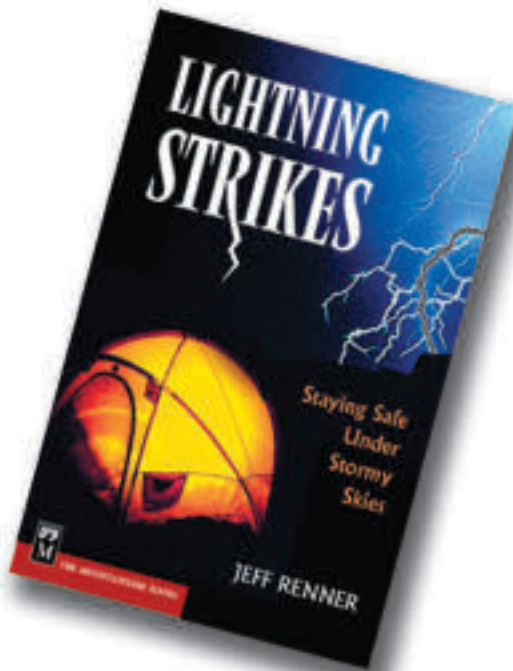
Fire up that meal with the latest stove from Coleman. The Xper Powermax is affordable, but efficient with a fully adjustable 12,000 BTU burner that boils water in 3.5 minutes. The stove includes aluminum and magnesium alloy components, four-leg for stability, folds down to 9" x 3.75", and weighs 13.5 ounces. The stove burns Coleman Powermax fuel. MSRP \$49.99.



LIGHTNING STRIKES: Staying Safe Under Stormy Skies

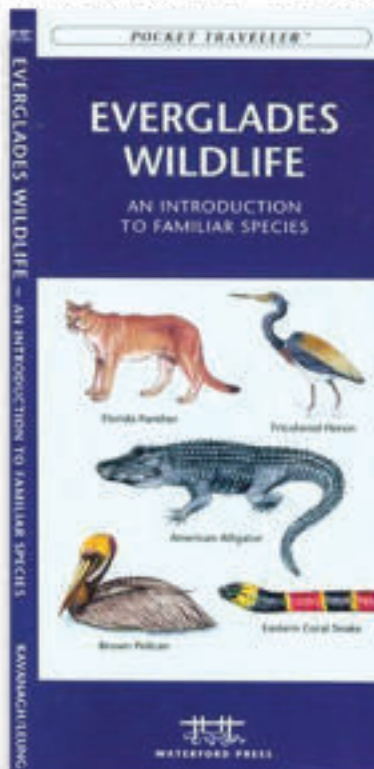
Award winning author and meteorologist Jeff Renner serves up this guide to nature's dangerous fireworks display. Discover the risks of thunder, thunderstorm winds, flash flooding, different types of storms, and much more, Renner tosses in a good dose of interesting anecdotes while debunking the myths and folklore of lightening.

This is an easy read that presents clear, concise, and practical information for all of us who love the outdoors. Publisher – Mountaineers Books. \$12.95.



Trail Lite Compact Hiking Poles

If you're under 6' tall and are looking for a quality hiking pole, then take a look at the Komperdell Trail Lite Compact Titanal Hiking Pole. Specifically designed for smaller hands and shorter people, the poles feature a secure twist lock to assure stability and comfortable full foam EVA grips. The poles come in pairs with one featuring an integrated compass. The poles are made of Titanal HF, a material that gives high tensile strength but is remarkably lightweight. The poles shrink down to 2-feet in length for packing. MSRP - \$125.00



Everglades Wildlife: An Introduction to Familiar Species

The latest edition in the Pocket Naturalist series from Waterford Press, this guide is an invaluable reference, highlighting over 150 species complete with maps that identify prominent sanctuaries and natural attractions. The guide is pocket size with folding spine and is laminated for durability. \$5.95.

Weekend Getaways

Alabama



Ruffner Mt.
Nature Center

Ruffner Mountain Nature Center

A secret hideaway, nestled within the border of a bustling city, Ruffner Mountain Nature Center is a treasure trove of hiking experiences. Located in Birmingham, AL., Ruffner Mountain has 11-miles of trail, each unique in its own right and each giving every hiker of every degree of experience excellent adventures. Some of the trails include Hawk's View Overlook with a view of the Birmingham skyline; Cambrian Overlook and views of the abandoned quarries, and Miner's Junction which takes hikers to the quarry to reveal an interesting fossil record. Wildflowers bloom and line the trails at various times of the year. Educational events into the center's history, geology, and flora are held almost every weekend with special emphasis on programs for K-12 graders. A fantastic little getaway for any weekend.



Getting There:

From Birmingham, take I-20 exit #132 and follow Oporto Madrid Blvd to Rugby Ave. Make a right on Rugby and follow it to 81st Street. Take 81st Street to the entrance of the center

Information: (205) 833-8264 / ruffnermountain.org
Maps can be downloaded from the website.

Fees: Donations accepted.
Events: Always something going on. Check website for schedules.

Florida

Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge



Things to Know:

Some trails are closed when the Space Shuttle is on the launch pad. Call ahead for closures.

Fees: No fees / Camping: Not permitted

Getting There:

Take I-95 exit 220 (SR 406 / Garden St) and travel through Titusville, crossing over Indian River Lagoon. The entrance and info kiosk are on the east side of the lagoon.

Info: Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge – merrittisland.fws.gov

Merritt Island
Wildlife Refuge

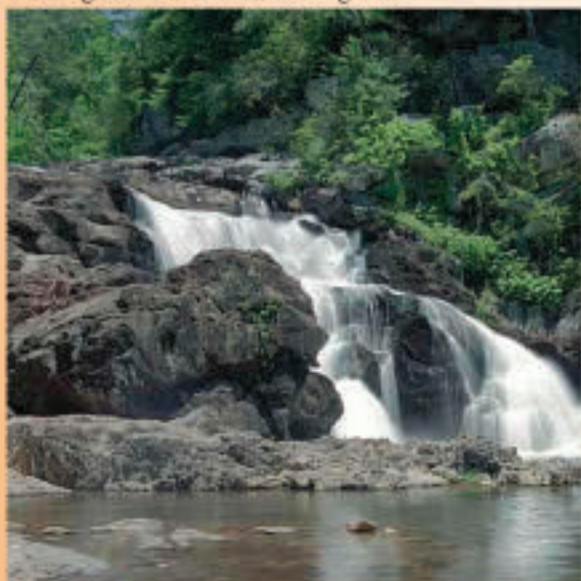


Mother nature and technology – living in harmony. That's what you will find at the Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge next to NASA's Cape Canaveral facilities on Florida's Space Coast. The 43-mile long refuge was established in 1963 as a buffer for America's space program and is unique in that it is situated smack dab in the onvergence between the temperate and sub-tropical climates. Combine this with the freshwater impoundments, saltwater and brackish estuaries, and you have 140,000-acres teeming with wildlife. 330 species of birds call the refuge home including one of the largest populations of the Florida scrub jay, a bird indigenous only to Florida. In addition, 31 species of mammals, 117 species of fish, and 68 species of amphibians can be found here including nesting areas of the loggerhead sea turtle. There are a number of trails that take you through the scrub, coastal dunes, scrub oaks, pines, and palm and oak hammocks. One of the best trails here to view all of this beauty up close is the one-mile long Scurb Ridge Trail.

Georgia

Jacks River Falls

The Cohutta Wilderness in Georgia is the hideaway for one beautiful waterfall - Jacks River Falls. The total round-trip hike to the falls is a strenuous 9.2-miles but well worth every step. In fact, people who visit the area and have never hiked before force themselves on to see this gem. Several small cascades and the main plume tumble over 200-feet down the rocks into basins carved over time into the bedrock and make fantastic swimming holes. The climb up the rocks is ringed with hemlock and pine and a few nice views. Be advised, however, that roads are closed in the area during winter. Check with the ranger office before heading out.



General Coffee State Park

Described as one of Georgia's best kept secrets, GCSP is a wonderful weekend destination especially if you are traveling with family. The facility is located on 1,511-acres of land named after planter, military leader, and U.S. Congressman General John Coffee. In this park visitors are treated to an internationally renowned interpretation of the region's agricultural history which includes log cabins, cane mill, and log cabins in its Heritage Farm. 4-miles of family-friendly trails lead hikers through the cypress swamp of Seventeen-Mile River along dirt footpaths and boardwalks, providing views of rare and endangered plants and you just might cross paths with the threatened indigo snake or gopher tortoise.

Things to Know:

Getting there: From Douglas take State Road 32 East 5.7-miles. The park is on the left.

Hours: 7am-10pm (Office 8am-5pm) Camping: Tent camping - \$16 per night. Cabins and cottages available.



Things to Know:

Getting There:

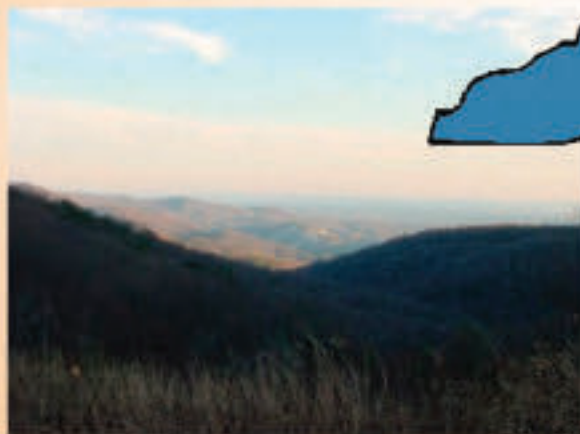
Southern trail head from Blue Ridge Georgia: From the intersection of US 76 and GA 5 just north of Blue Ridge, travel north 7 miles on GA 5 to Old Highway 2 and turn left. At 6.9 miles are Fightingtown Creek and McKinney Crossing. At 9 miles the pavement ends. At 10.5 miles, after a long climb up the mountain, look for the sign "Cohutta Wildlife Management Area, Watson Gap." At Watson Gap turn right on FS 22 and travel 3.6 miles to Dolly Gap and Jacks River trail head.

Fees: Forest Service fee parking

Information: Some roads are closed depending on weather conditions. Contact the Cohutta Ranger District of the U.S. Forest Service at (706) 695-6737 in advance of a trip.



North Carolina



Things to Know:

Information:

Blue Ridge Parkway Ranger Office (336) 372-8568

Camping: 110 tent campsites are available

A wonderful weekend getaway along the Blue Ridge Parkway, Doughton Park has plenty to see and do and many hiking options. Originally called the Bluffs, the park was renamed in honor long time supporter of the Parkway, Congressman Robert Doughton. The park is ablaze in late spring with flame azalea and rhododendron. Throughout the summer, park rangers provide interpretive guided tours of the area's rich pioneer history including the Brinegar Cabin and the Caudill Family Homestead dating back to the late 1800's. As for trails, take your pick. There is something for everyone such as the beautiful mountain vistas that can be found along the strenuous 4.2-mile Cedar Ridge Trail and 7.5-mile Bluff Mountain Trail or for wildflower and plant viewing try the Fodder Stack Trail.

South Carolina

Blue Ridge Railroad Historic Trail



This 15-mile (total) historic trail established by the Boy Scouts in 1976 begins on the outskirts of West Union, SC, passing town amenities and middle schools, but soon reaches the woods and follows the planned route for a railroad line that was supposed to connect the farms of the Midwest to the coast of South Carolina. Along this route, evidence of the hard work of laborers can be seen especially near the trail's end at Stumphouse Mountain where a massive 25-foot tall tunnel entrance, hand dug by the workers, can be seen. Due to safety concerns the tunnel is not accessible. The trail also encounters the beautiful 220-foot tall Issaqueena Falls and Short Falls at

Stumphouse Tunnel Park. Owned by Clemson University, the park is operated by the South Carolina State Parks System. There is a lot of history and beauty crammed into these miles. Plan a visit the next time you are near Walhalla, SC! (Be sure to read Steve Rajtar's article on this trail in next month's issue of Southern Hiker.)

Things to Know

Getting There: The trailhead is just east of the intersection of SRs 11 and 28 behind the grocery store in West Union, SC.

Fees: No fee

Information: Park office (864) 646-3782
Hours of operation: 8am to Sunset.

Closed Christmas



Tennessee

Dunbar Cave

Fees/Schedule: \$4 for cave tour

Dunbar Cave State Park

Things to know:

In an area dotted by sinkholes and caverns, Dunbar Cave is probably the most prominent.

This 8.1-mile cave located in central Tennessee has evidence of human existence dating back some 10,000-12,000 years probably due to its consistently flowing stream and natural air-conditioning. In more modern days, square dances – even radio shows – were held here. The cave is a wonder to behold.

Guided tours are available. But be sure to check rules and schedules before arriving.

Getting there:

From Clarksville take I-24 exit #8 (Rossvie Rd.), turning left onto Rossvie. Travel .25-miles to Dunbar Cave Rd. Make a left onto Dunbar. The park entrance is 2.5-miles ahead

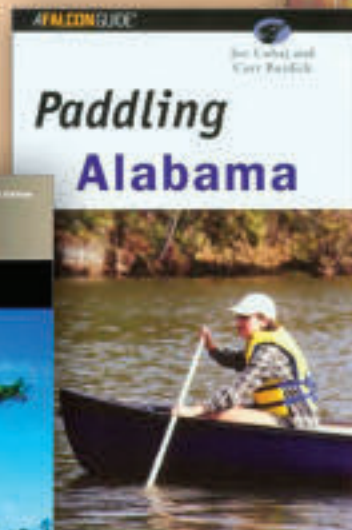
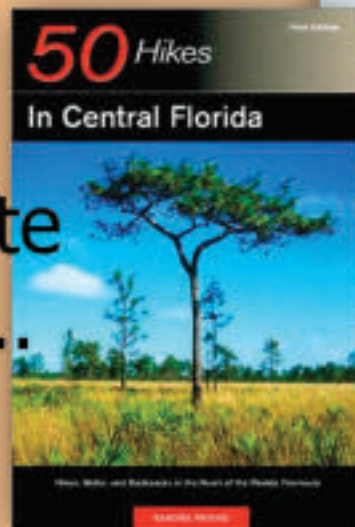
Hours: 8am-sunset



Cave Tour: Schedule varies so call ahead. Restrictions apply.

Discover the South with the Experts!

Find these guides at your favorite bookstore...



or online at Amazon.Com

PACK COOKERY

Chicken Diablo

- 1 5oz can chicken
- 1 cup instant rice
- 1 pack tomato soup mix
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp chili powder
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups water

At home, mix all dry ingredients in a Ziplock bag. At camp boil water and prepare rice. Stir in chicken and seasonings and heat through.

Northwoods Bread

- 1 cup sugar
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup coconut
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ cup light Karo syrup
 - 1 cup margarine
 - 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups rolled oats
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chocolate chips
- At home, preheat oven to 350 degrees. Blend margarine and sugar in a bowl then add remaining ingredients. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Spread "dough" on a greased baking sheet spreading to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. Bake 15 to 20 minutes or until light brown. Allow to cool and cut in half. Makes two "loafs".



Stuffed Banana

- 1 banana
- 1 tsp mint
- 1 tsp chocolate chips
- Aluminum foil (doubled)

Leaving the peel on the banana, cut a slit down the side. Stuff opening with mint and chocolate chips. Wrap in a double layer of foil, cover in coals of a campfire, and bake for 10-15 minutes. Grab a spoon and enjoy!

Trail Biscuits

- 1 tbsp sugar
- ¼ tsp salt
- 2 tbsp dry milk
- 1 tbsp baking powder
- ½ cup shortening
- ½ cup oil
- ¾ cup water per cup of dough mix

At home, combine dry ingredients, cutting shortening into small pea-size pieces, and place into Ziplock bags. At camp, mix ¾ cup of water per 1 cup of mix and blend thoroughly. This works best with floured hands. Coat frying pan with oil and dust with flour. Shape dough into 2" wide biscuit shapes, place in pan, cover and cook over a low flame. (Can also put the pan in coals of a campfire.) If it is a high flame, move the pan every now and then to prevent burning. Cook 5-7 minutes, turn and cook 5-minutes more.



Why not share your favorite trail recipes with us? Send them to Southern Hiker, c/o Editor, 10286 Rebel Rd., Daphne, AL 36526 or by email to editor@southernhiker.com



Activity Calendar

One of the goals of Southern Hiker is to be a conduit for the hiking community in the south and bring them closer together. The activities listed here are provided courtesy of the sponsoring clubs who do an outstanding job in protecting and maintaining our southern trails as well as giving the community excellent avenues for activities. Please consider joining these groups or volunteering to help during one of their many work projects.

Activity Leaders (AL) for the following activities are VOLUNTEERS who plan the activity for your enjoyment. The events listed in Southern Hiker are open to the public. To participate in hikes, camping trips, trail work, or backpacking trips, you MUST notify the AL in advance that you will attend. Should you fail to do this you may arrive to find the trip changed to a different location or cancelled. You must also notify the AL if you can not make it to an event after scheduling.

ALABAMA

MAY

07 Land Trust of Huntsville - Green Mountain Hike

9am - Spring flowers abound and the westerly view will win your heart. 2-mile moderate hike. AL - Land Trust (256) 534-5263.

14 Land Trust of Huntsville & North Alabama - Views to the North: Wade Mountain Preserve - 10am - 2.5-mile moderate hike introducing you to lovely cedar glades 'round Devil's Racetrack and flora only found on Wade Mountain. AL Lynne Weninegar (256) 534-5263.

15 Land Trust of Huntsville & North Alabama - Monte Sano Old Railroad Bed Trail - 2pm - 1.5-mile moderate / difficult hike. Perfect for the whole family! History comes alive on Monte Sano (Mountain of Health). The Old Railroad Bed Trail follows the same path as the steam locomotive that traveled from the Huntsville Depot to the Monte Sano Hotel from 1888 until 1896. AL Allen Berry (256) 534-5263.

15 Alabama Trails Association - Pinhoti Trail Maintenance 9:15am - AL Jim Austin jimboa@alabamatrailsasso.org or (205) 516-4683.

JUNE

June-August Land Trust of Huntsville & North Alabama - Tours of Historic Three Caves - June 4, 12, 19 at 2pm, 15 at 10am Don't miss this oh so "cool" tour - cool as in 55 degrees year 'round! See one of Huntsville's most unique wonders! This former mine is developing into a natural cave, offering a glimpse into a unique geological window in time with rocks that turn green in the light, baby stalagmites and smooth calcified rocks known as cave pearls. Free. Reservations required. (256) 534-5263.

02-03 Alabama Hiking Trail Society Pinhoti Trail Work - Bring lunch, hat, water, loppers, and boots. Camp at Cheaha State Park if planning to overnight. AL Rick Guhse' rguhse@hotmail.com or (334) 244-1579.

19 Alabama Trails Association Pinhoti Trail Maintenance - 9:15am - AL Jim Austin jimboa@alabamatrailsasso.org or (205) 516-4683.

FLORIDA

May

01 Florida Crackers / FTA Salt Springs Hike 9am Hike the spur trail from SR19 in Salt Springs to the Florida Trail and on to CR 314 (about 6 mi). We'll pass through several Florida habitats including hardwood hammocks, around small ponds and pine forests. AL Richard Schneider (352) 685-0263 or rickJoan318@cs.com.

07 Western Gate / FTA Eglin Hike - Leisurely hike on Ti Ti Trail on Eglin Reservation, swim in Silver Creek. AL Christine Hale (850) 939-0966.

14 Apalachee Chapter / FTA Wakulla Springs State Park Hike - 7.5-mile leisurely hike along the section of trail toward McBride Slough. Afterward enjoy a boat ride on the river (a fee is charged). AL Paul Kirkpatrick (850) 894-3224 or paultk@aol.com.

15 Sun Central Florida / FTA Daytona Beach Historical Trail- 5.7-mile leisurely hike visiting over 30 historical sites along the Halifax River. AL Steve Rajtar (407) 894-7412 or rajtar@aol.com.

21 Western Gate / FTA Work Hike - Blackwater Trail - 8am - AL Peggy Grantham (850) 994-4885 or pgrant9328@aol.com.

JUNE

05 Loxahatchee Chapter / FTA Jonathan Dickinson State Park Hike - 8am - AL Steve Meyers (561) 641-5462 or hikeit44@hotmail.com.

11 Apalachee Chapter / FTA Florida Caverns State Park Field Trip - Join us for a field trip to one of Florida's most spectacular natural wonders, the Florida Caverns near Marianna. Meet at the visitors center, then take the cave tour (Adults \$6 Children \$3). Park admission \$4 per vehicle. AL Terry Tenold (850) 877-1612 or ttenold@fs.fed.us.

GEORGIA

MAY

03 Mountain High Hikers Chunky Gal Trail Hike (Hayesville) - 9am - 4-mile moderate hike Hike from Bob Allison Campground along scenic Tuni Creek to the big buckeye tree and return. Multiple stream crossings, hiking sticks required. AL John Quinlan (706) 896-2430.

03 Mountain High Hikers Dicks Creek Gap Hike (Hiawassee) - 8am -11.2-mile (round trip) on the A.T. National Forest parking pass or \$2 fee. AL Johanne Kittle (706) 896-9751

05 Mountain High Hikers Trail Work Day (Hayesville) - 8am -AL Gordon Ottinger (828) 389-1830

07 Cherokee Hiking Club Coosa Backcountry Hike (Jasper) - 12.4-mile moderate to strenuous hike with Bear Hair Gap option (3.6 miles). Visit the Cherokee Hiking Club website - www.geocities.com/cherokeehike/

10 Mountain High Hikers Benton MacKaye Hike (Blairsville) - 9am -Moderate hike from Hwy 60 across Toonowee Mountain to the Toccoa River suspension bridge and return on FS816, for a round trip of about 6.5 miles. AL Sandy Nicolette (828) 389-3045.

10 Mountain High Hikers Unicoi Gap Hike (Hiawassee) - 9am -Moderate-Strenuous 8.8-mile hike from Unicoi Gap to Chattahoochee Gap returning on the A.T. Expect rough and rocky footing. AL Ralph Duggan 706-348-7265.

14 Kennesaw Mt National Battlefield Trail Workday - 9am - (4 hours) AL Richard Angeli (770) 356-4265 or tuney@mindspring.com.

15 Cherokee Hiking Club Kennesaw Mountain Hike - 1pm-Distance to be determined. Visit the Cherokee Hiking Club website - www.geocities.com/cherokeehike/

17 Mountain High Hikers Raven Cliffs Hike - 9am - A moderate 5-mile round trip hike along a cascading mountain stream to towering cliffs with two waterfalls. Some difficult footing due to erosion. AL Bob Wilson (706) 745-1879.

19 Mountain High Hikers Trail Work Day (Blairsville) AL Guy Burger 1-706-374-5491

21 Cherokee Hiking Club Bartram Trail Hike (Jasper) - 7am 10-mile moderate to strenuous hike leaning more towards strenuous. This trail is in North Carolina. Visit the Cherokee Hiking Club website - www.geocities.com/cherokeehike/

JUNE

11 Kennesaw Mt National Battlefield Trail Workday - 9am (4 hours) AL Richard Angeli (770) 356-4265 - tuney@mindspring.com

11 Cherokee Hiking Club Standing Indian Shelter A.T. day hike (campout optional - Jasper). 7am This is a section coming out of Deep Gap. The shelter is .2 miles from the trailhead and we will camp there. From there, there is a 10.4-mile loop trail we can do (moderate). Sunday hike can be planned on Saturday. Visit the Cherokee Hiking Club website - www.geocities.com/cherokeehike/

NORTH CAROLINA

MAY

21 Friends of the Mt to Sea Trail / Central Blue Ridge Task Force Work Day - 8:30am-5pm
Help the Central Blue Ridge Task Force work on the Mountain to Sea Trail from Black Mountain Campground to Becon Heights. Visit the website for more details: www.ncmst.org

JUNE

18 Friends of the Mt to Sea Trail / Central Blue Ridge Task Force Work Day - 8:30am-5pm
Help the Central Blue Ridge Task Force work on the Mountain to Sea Trail from Black Mountain Campground to Becon Heights. Visit the website for more details: www.ncmst.org

TENNESSEE

MAY

- 01 **Tennessee Trails Association River Bluff Walk**
AL John Martin (901) 386-3722
- 07 **Friends of Beaman / TTA 1st Saturday Hike: Beam Park** (Nashville) - <http://www.tennesseetrails.org/calendar.p>
- 08 **Chattanooga Hiking Club Rock Creek Day Hi** (Hamilton County) - 7-miles. This segment was completed during the Cumberland Trail's Spring Breakaway program in March. We will start out on the top of Bakewell Mountain north Hamilton County. The wildflowers should be blooming the upper part of the gorge. There are a few creek crossings. Yes, there is elevation gain- we will be descending into the creek gorge. AL Caroline Woener. Visit the CHC online hiking.chattanooga.net for more information.
- 14 **Cove Lake Chapter / TTA Moonbow Trail Hike**. Hike from Cumberland Falls to Dogslaughter Falls, KY. AL Rich Helm (423) 562-1110.
- 21 **Murfreesboro Chapter / TTA 2nd Annual Yard Sale Fundraiser**. - AL Phil Stillwell phillstilwe@cs.com.
- 22 **Cumberland Trail Conference The Big Dig III: Roanoke Possum/Soddy Segment** - The 3rd Annual Big Dig program continues work on the Cumberland Trail May 22-June 1. Housing and meals provided by the CTC. This is a great opportunity for all to help build trail. AL CTC (931) 456-62 or mark.stanfill@frontiernet.net.
- 24 **Nashville Chapter / TTA Monthly Meeting**.
AL Jim Johnson (615) 356-6246.

JUNE

- 18 **Murfreesboro Chapter / TTA Savage Gulf Loop Day Hike** (Greutli). AL Fount Bertram (615) 765-5357 fwbertram@heartoftn.net.
- 19 **Cove Lake Chapter / TTA Cumberland Gap National Historic Park** AL Vance Lawson (423) 562-6856

REGIONAL

APRIL

- 28-01 3rd Southeastern Foot Trails Conference (AHS) @ Table Rock SP, Pickens, SC. Details online at www.americanhiking.org or by email to Jeffrey Hunter at jhunter@americanhiking.org.



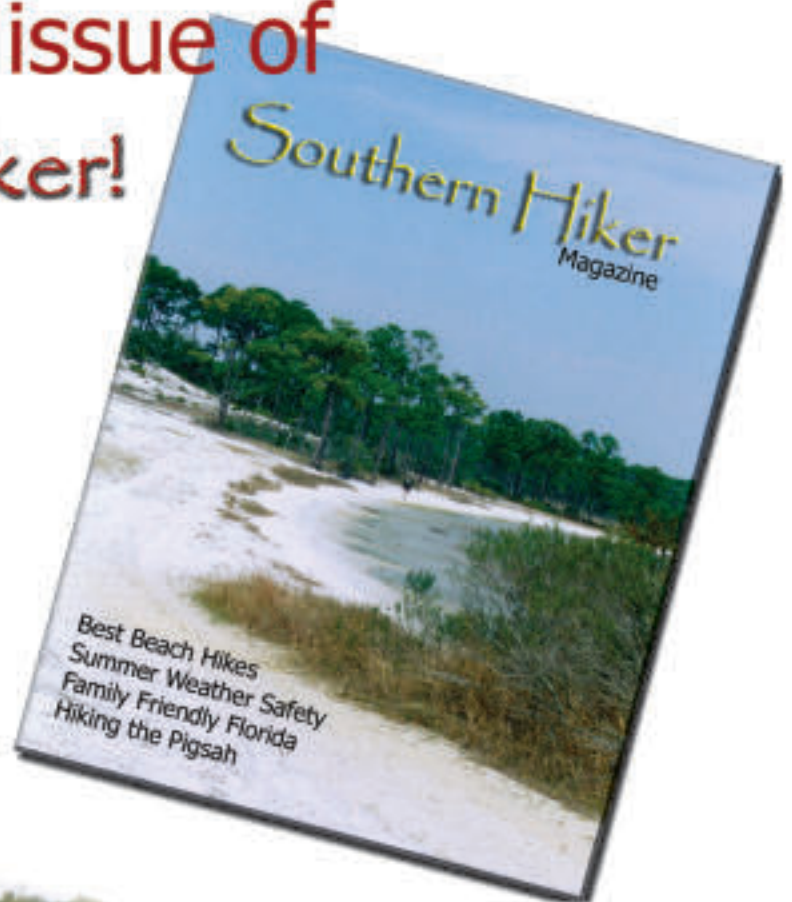
Join friends old and new and celebrate the rich history of preserving and protecting the Appalachian Trail at the 35th Biennial Appalachian Trail Conference Meeting July 1st-8th, 2005 at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, TN!

8 full days of workshops, hikes, entertainment, great food and fellowship! To register or for more information visit www.southernhighlands2005.org.

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Parting Shots

DOG DAYS!

This pup enjoys a dip
in Hurricane Creek along
the trail at the Walls
of Jericho

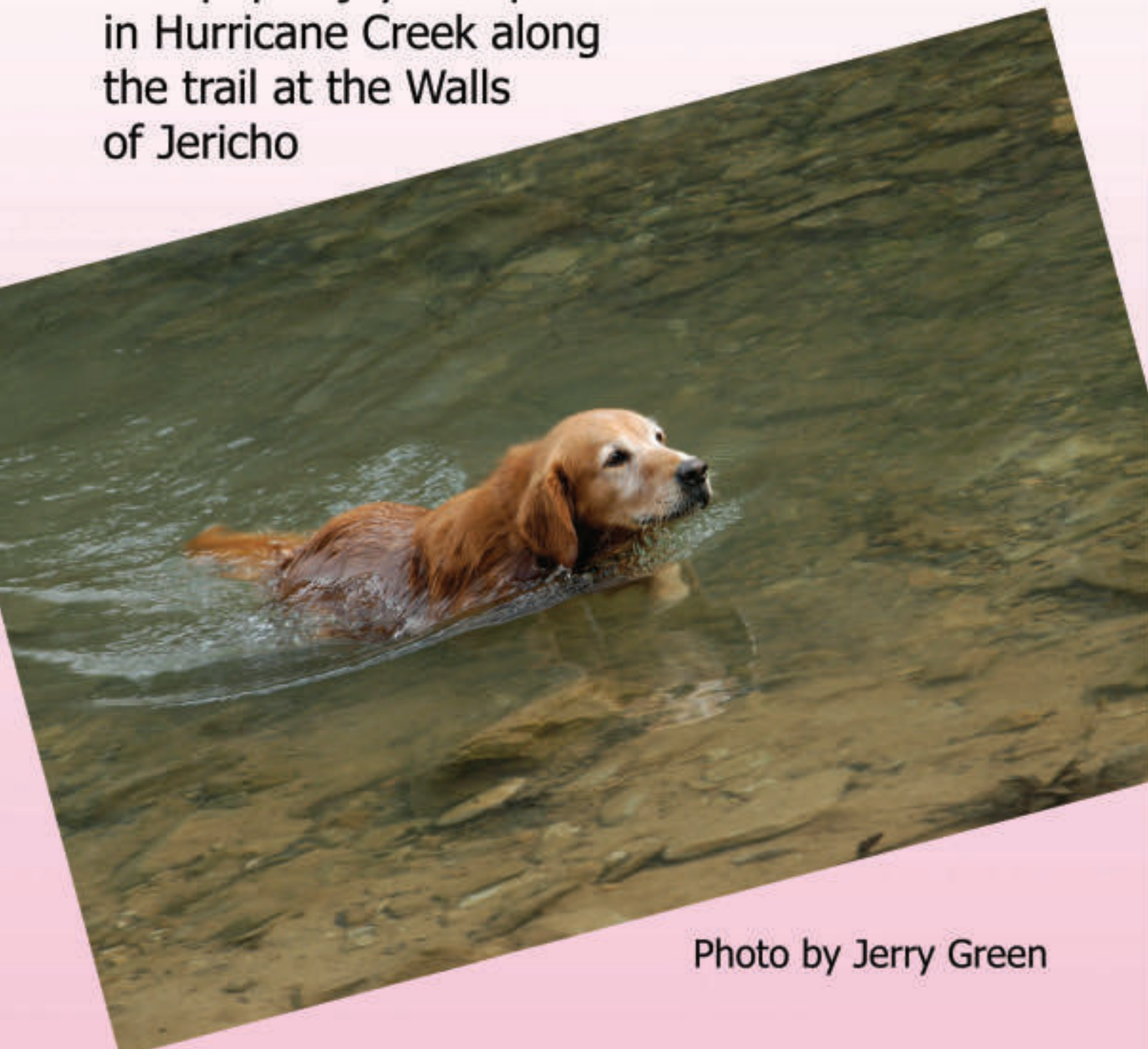


Photo by Jerry Green

3rd Southeastern Foot Trails Conference

April 28 - May 1, 2005, Table Rock State Park - Pickens, SC

Come to beautiful Upstate South Carolina for an exciting conference featuring outstanding educational sessions, great hiking, live entertainment, and much more!



For more information or to register for the conference, please visit the American Hiking Society at www.AmericanHiking.org

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