

Southern Hiker

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

SMOKIN'!

A primer to hiking the Great Smokies!

Come Together!

The "official" hiking season wraps up with "not-to-miss" conferences

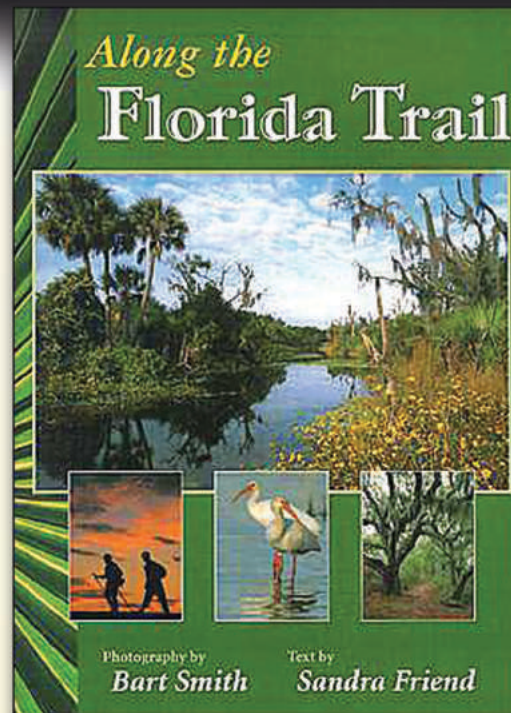
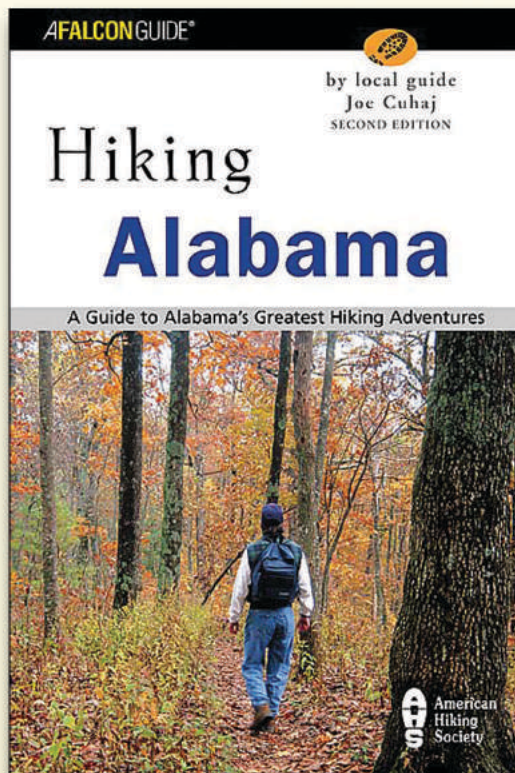
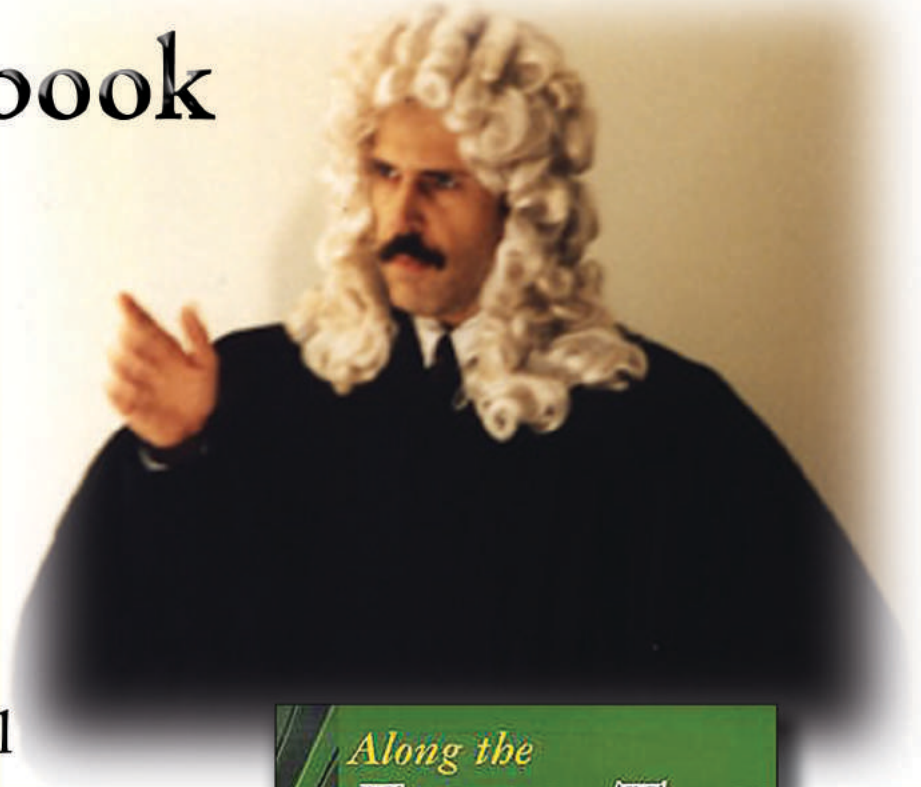
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March 2005 / Vol. 1 - No. 2 \$4.95

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alabama.sierraclub.org/montgomery.html

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Photo by
Danny Bernstein

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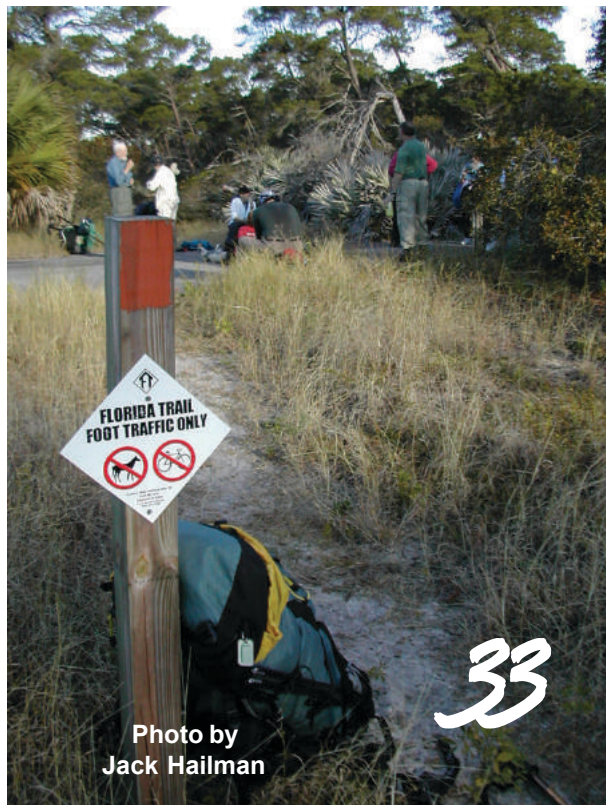


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A gorgeous Smoky Mountain sunrise
(photo by Joe Boyd)



The Kiosk

We couldn't be happier with the reception you have given us and our premier issue of Southern Hiker. Thank you for the great response. We look forward to incorporating your ideas and suggestions into future issues. With the response we received, we can only get better. And please, if you do have comments, suggestions, stories, or photos, feel free to send them our way. We'd love to share them with the hiking community. Just mail or email them to us. The addresses can be found on page 4.

With that said, it's on to business. First things first, I'd like to welcome hikers and backpackers in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee into the Southern Hiker family! With this issue we expand our coverage to include these states and we look forward to bringing the trails and adventures your states have to offer to our readers.

I can't believe how many people wrote about the little "faux pas" in last month's Kiosk. It was pointed out, and rather quickly I might add, that the photo of me spelunking in the 70's was omitted. Was it an error by the printer? Was it an intentional omission by the publisher? The world may never know. But for those of you requesting it, that scary photo I told you about last month is featured here – under protest, of course.

We have a couple of apologies. First to our friends at the Alabama Trails Association. Our friend Linda Wilson wrote and pointed out the omission of the ATA in our story about the E.C.T. The omission was unintentional and Linda was kind enough to write an article for us that will fill in the blanks about the great work the group does. You can read all about it in this issue.

And we had planned an article on the Alabama portion of the Walls of Jericho hike, one of the most anticipated and talked about trails in the state. Due to editorial constraints the article has been pushed to the May issue.

Spring is fast approaching and with it the "technical" end of the hiking season. We all know that the south can be a great four-season hiking destination with some fantastic hiking opportunities available even in the heat of summer, but when spring arrives we have a feeling that it's the end. It's a feeling akin to leaving school when you were a kid for summer vacation – parting ways with friends that you might not see again until the fall. But before the end of the season, there are a few last chances to meet up with friends, learn new tricks, and have a real hiking blowout at the last hiking conferences of the year.

In this issue we'll look at some of the ones you shouldn't miss including the Alabama Hiking Trail Society and Florida Trails Association conferences in March and the big Southeastern Foot Trails Conference the last weekend of April at Table Rock State Park in South Carolina. I'm pleased to announce that Southern Hiker will be a part of the event. The event will bring us important information about our sport but more importantly, raise money for the 5,000-miles of trail that fall under the management of the AHS. We look forward to meeting all of you at one of these conferences. I'll be wearing a name tag, not that goofy Budweiser hat!



Happy Trails –
Joe Cuhaj | Editor

It's Our World

Environmental news about the world we live in

N.C. vs T.V.A.

The legal counsel for the Tennessee Valley Authority recently responded to a lawsuit filed by the North Carolina attorney general which claims that the nation's largest power company was in violation of the Clean-Air Act by emitting sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide and other pollutants into the atmosphere from coal-fired plants which drifts into North Carolina. The suit states that the TVA failed to install the appropriate technology to reduce these emissions during upgrades in the 1980's.

Attorney Maureen Dunn stated that the TVA was already committed to six billion dollars in emission controls which she says is more than North Carolina's own utilities. Dunn went on to say that the lawsuit could hurt the regional economy.

TVA has 59 coal-fired boilers at 11 plants in Alabama, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Tennessee.

John Shipp, TVA's vice president for environmental affairs, commented on the suit saying that "the projects at the heart of the allegations are the same types of upgrades routinely made at utility plants nationwide, including those in North Carolina. We are spending billions of dollars to reduce emissions. We are undeterred in our resolve to reduce emissions, in spite of all these lawsuits."

According to the TVA, the agency has an annual budget of \$7 billion from power sales, spending \$2.6 billion over 11 years to reduce fossil plant emissions through 2010. Shipp said that these numbers will reduce nitrogen oxide emissions by 75 percent. However the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, a frequent critic of the TVA, says that the numbers aren't quite accurate and that even half of the TVA's coal-fired power plants won't have the best available controls, even after 2010.

The battle begins and Southern Hiker will keep you posted on the outcome.



Fishing for Trouble

A recent report by the Sierra Club shows that one of every six fish bought at large supermarkets in the Atlanta area was found to be contaminated with high levels of mercury, posing a risk to newborn babies and pregnant women.

Sierra's Scott Goldstein purchased salmon, catfish, bass, and tuna from three of the largest grocery store chains in the Atlanta area and took them to an independent lab for testing. The results showed that the tuna and bass had levels of mercury well above federal safety standards.

The Sierra Club attributes the levels to coal burning power plants in the region whose emissions fall into lakes and streams with rain. Sierra's research identified hundreds of rivers and lakes in the state with tainted fish.

The Georgia Sierra Club, as well as the national organization is asking President Bush to enforce the Clean Air Act which mandates a 90% reduction in mercury emissions by the year 2008.

Close Monitoring of Florida Scrub-Jay Requested

Reed Bowman with the Archbold Biological Station and the JayWatch program in Florida are asking birders and hikers to help spot check for the Florida scrub-jay when they are out on the trail.

The Florida scrub-jay is the only species of birds found exclusively in Florida. Prior to 1993 the only method for monitoring and tracking the scrub-jay population was through what was called a "mega-survey" in which hundreds of volunteers would trek out periodically to watch the birds. Since then, the JayWatch program was created by the Nature Conservancy. The program asks volunteers to do "spot checks" instead of the mega-surveys. In this way, scientists can receive better information on population trends and how well management methods are working, such as prescribed burning of underbrush which restores scrub where the jays like to store acorns.

Find out more about JayWatch and monitoring the Florida scrub-jay by contacting the Nature Conservancy office at Tiger Creek at 863-635-7506.



Want to get your message out to walkers, hikers, backpackers, birders, naturalists, environmentalists and outdoor enthusiasts?

"Southern Hiker" is the ONLY magazine of its kind, dedicated to bringing the adventure of hitting the southern trails to the doorstep of the people you want to get your business' message to. Whatever your business you won't find a better marketing value than "Southern Hiker". Find out how "Southern Hiker" can help you! Call our sales staff at (251) 533-1812.

TIP US!

A few tips of the trade from your fellow hikers.

Fishing Kit by J. Roland / Decatur, AL

If you like to drop a line now and then while on the trail, you can make a REAL Pocket Fisherman.

You'll need:

- An empty 35mm film case
- A small, empty thread spool
- Fishing line
- Fishhook

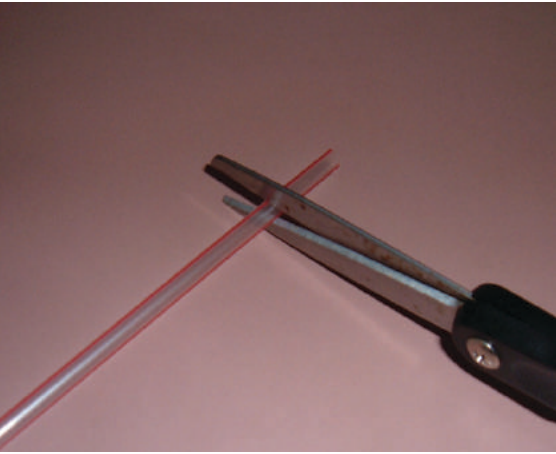
Wrap the fishing line around the spool. Tie the loose end to the hook and place all of this into the case. When you get to that pond or lake, take the spool and hook out. Take the end with the hook on it and lay the line across the opening of the film case. Snap the cap back on and drop the case with the hook dangling from it into the water. The case will act as a bobber.



Homemade Insect Repelling Candle by T. Kirkland West Pt., GA

You will need a small, thick candle and citronella. Drill a hole 1-inch deep near the wick at the top of the candle. Pour citronella into the hole and cover it with melted wax.

Got a tip to make hiking easier, lighter, or more fun? We'd like to hear it! Send your tips to editor@southernhiker.com or by mail to Southern Hiker 10286 Rebel Rd., Daphne, AL 36526



Quick / Lightweight Condiment Holder by G. Brady / Verbena, AL

Take plastic drinking straws (the straight ones, not the ones with the elbow). Cut off $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of each end. Fold one end over and place one of the cut ends over the fold to hold it in place. A small piece of tape, any kind, will hold the cap on. Repeatedly push the open end of the straw into the condiment until it is packed. Fold the open end over as you did with the opposite end and cap it with the remaining end piece. Again, a small piece of tape will hold it in place. Mark the straw with a permanent marker.



Stove Maintenance by T. Wilson

Help keep your white gas stove running at peak performance by removing harmful deposits with a capful of carburetor cleaner every now and then. Simply pour it into the unit's tank after a few uses.

Walk Softly

by Richard Angeli

Is trail work practicing Leave No Trace ethics? The answer to that question is a resounding YES. When we improve a trail by adjusting the grade, improving the drainage, or even when we build stone steps, we apply several of the Leave No Trace principles as we work.

One is the second Leave No Trace principle: “Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces”. Our experience as trail maintainers enables us to ensure that our trails are more durable.

Another principle is “Plan Ahead and Prepare”. That is exactly what we do when we evaluate the current impacts of visitors and the environment on the trail and make adjustments accordingly in our construction to take these into account.

One other principle is to “Be Considerate of Other Visitors”. Nothing is more considerate of visitors than a well designed trail on a scenic route with the right amount of grade and challenge that is well maintained and well drained for comfortable travel.

Indeed, trail work is practicing Leave No Trace ethics. In addition, mentoring others and teaching them the skills that go into good trail construction helps spread the word.

In that regard, we are grateful to the many members of the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club who are helping to launch the fledgling KEMOTrail Corps at Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park.

With 2,880 acres in the park, 18 miles of trails, more than 1.5 million visitors a year, and only 3 permanent National Park Service staff to take care of all maintenance in the park, most of the trails are in need of some maintenance

and several sections will have to be closed, rerouted and rehabilitated.

The KEMOTrail Corps meets the second Saturday of the month to work on the trails at Kennesaw Mountain. For more information you can visit www.kemotrailcorps.org on the world wide web, send an E-mail to kemotrailcorps@yahoo.com , or you can just show up at the service yard near the Visitor Center at 8:00AM on any second Saturday.



*Trail work being done by the KemoTrail Corps
(Photo courtesy KemoTrail Corps)*

Not all hikes have to be out in the wilderness as we find out in this hike around....

Historic Kissimmee

by Steve Rajtar

This is one of a series of walking trails established in the communities of Florida to make it easy to learn about the history and architecture of our state. To begin this 11.3-mile route (which can easily be shortened to accommodate your needs), from Interstate 4 head south on US 441 through downtown Kissimmee, turn southeast on Drury Ave., and southwest on Lakeshore Blvd. to park at Lakefront Park.

This trail begins on former railroad land and initially passes by the Tohopekaliga Yacht Club, reminding one of the early days when Kissimmee was a center both for rail traffic and the construction of boats which would run cargo to Punta Rassa on the Gulf of Mexico. After passing a series of monuments that commemorate war veterans and city employees, it comes to the home of the Kissimmee All-States Tourist Club, organized in 1924 to attract tourists to the area. Adjacent to it is the Community House, built in 1926 as a center for social activities.

Next door is easily the most unusual site along the route, the 50-foot tall Monument of States (see photo). It was completed in 1943 with the support of the KAST Club, and features decorative stucco and concrete plaques, and

about 1,500 stones from the first 48 states (Alaska and Hawaii were added later) and 22 foreign countries. Most of the stones were collected by Dr. C.W. Bressler-Pettis and his wife during their driving trips which covered 350,000 miles. Dr. Bressler-Pettis also sculpted a 562-pound concrete eagle which sits at the top.

After passing by the sites of several pioneer stores which are now just memories, the trail arrives at the Osceola County Courthouse. Today, it is a large complex of modern buildings, but one three-story structure on the square retains its original Italianate architectural style. It was built of brick in 1890, and is the oldest surviving courthouse in Florida to retain its appearance and remain as a government building. There's a good reason for that. The deed from the previous



Only a hint remains of the glorious facade of the the Osceola County High School.

owner contains a clause that states that if it is ever used for anything other than a courthouse, the entire property will revert to its heirs. That includes the grounds, which were used for legal hangings until 1912.

The trail winds through several residential neighborhoods, passing by a variety of styles of 19th Century homes - Folk Victorian, Bungalow, Queen Anne, Frame Vernacular, Neoclassical Revival, Mediterranean Revival, Colonial Revival and even one good example of Tudor Revival. Also noted are the sites of several homes which no longer survive, including the log cabin built by a Mr. Matthews and rented to Capt. Rufus E. Rose, who laid out the street pattern of the settlement and named Ruby Ave. and Mabbette, Clay and Amory Sts. after members of his family.

The trail passes within site of the Kissimmee Airport, which has an international distinction. In 1908, the Kissimmee Valley Gazette published a story about an ordinance being proposed for operation of the airport, dealing with limits on flights, licensing of pilots, and specifications for brakes, lights and signal systems. It was authored by the city attorney as a joke, following the collision of an airplane with a cow earlier that year. The ordinance received much publicity and was taken seriously, becoming the model for the aviation legislation of France, Germany and several cities in the U.S. It was known in Kissimmee to be a tongue-in-cheek article, and did not locally become law.

Hikers pass several stately churches from a wide variety of denominations, including First



The First Presbyterian Church which dates to 1886 is the oldest surviving church in Osceola County.

Presbyterian, which dates from 1886 and is the oldest surviving church in Osceola County. It is constructed with a style known as Late Gothic Revival, Wooden Gothic or Steamboat Gothic, as the wooden trim is of the type often used on that era's steamboats.

Two of the more imposing structures are the former high school and the former newspaper office. The Osceola County High School stands amidst weeds, having been relegated to being a storage facility since 1964. Sections of the walls have been removed, creating a bona fide ruin which only hints at the imposing edifice it must have been when erected in 1925. The former Kissimmee Valley Gazette building remains striking because of its unusual shape and its use of contrasting white dentil trim against dark red brick. Built in 1912, it resembles the New York City Flat Iron Building erected ten years before, each to utilize as much as possible the available land of their triangular-shaped lots.

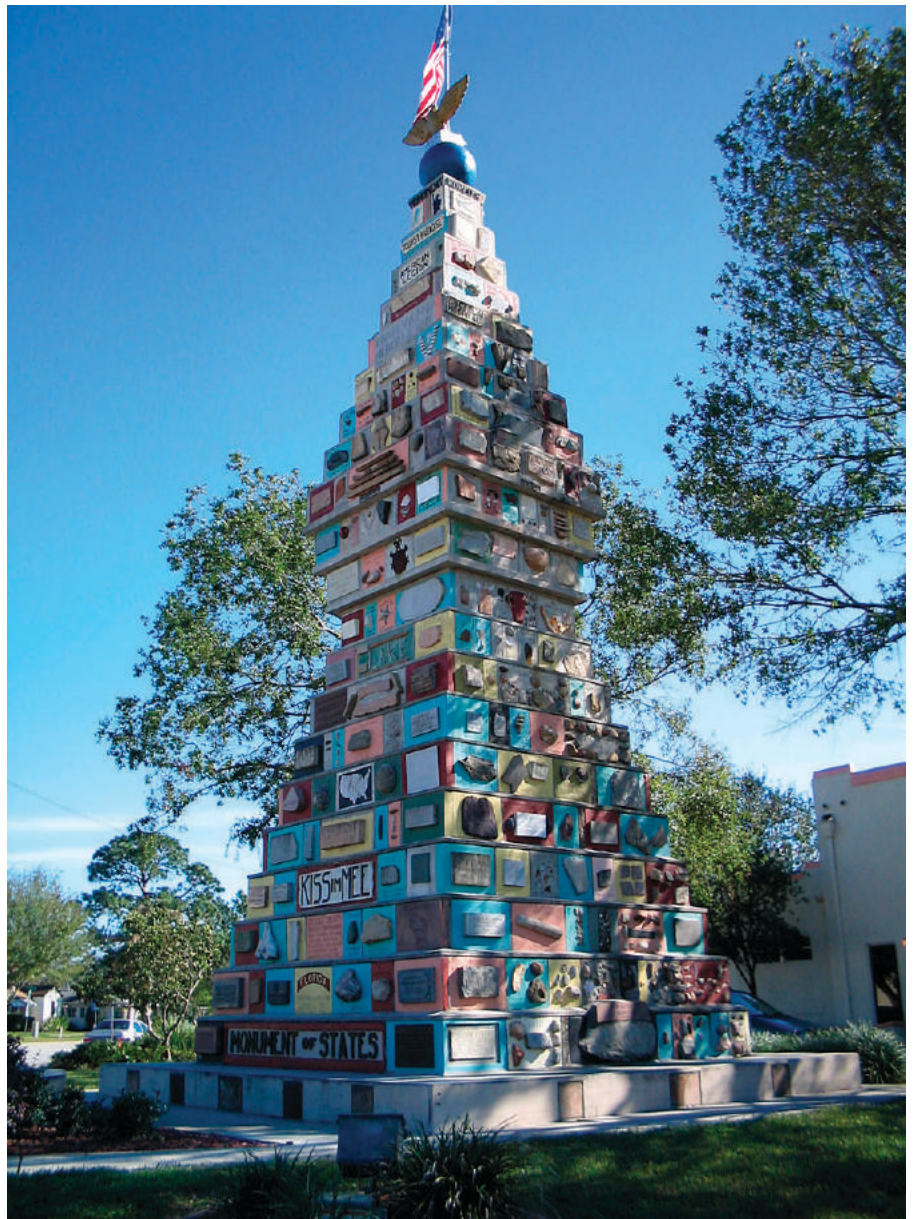
The trail concludes with a walk past the old shops of Broadway, some having changed numerous times since Kissimmee was truly a "cow town". The wide

Still retaining its original Italianate architectural style is the Osceola Courthouse from 1890.



thoroughfare was once covered with Bermuda grass and boardwalks ran where the sidewalks now are. In between, Mayor Aderhold allowed cows to roam, so they could feed and keep the grass at an acceptable height. Today, humans take care of the nicely-landscaped median.

Steve Rajtar has developed "hike plans" for the Kissimmee trail and over 150 other historical strolls. Each plan includes detailed information about the sites. To obtain free copies of this and other hike plans, write to Steve Rajtar, 1614 Bimini Dr., Orlando, FL 32806, or by e-mail to rajtar@aol.com.



Built in 1943, this 50-foot tall structure pays homage to the state and 22 foreign countries.



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A chance to catch up with friends old and new before the “official” hiking season ends....

Come Together!

by Joe Cuhaj and Sandra Friend

Although we know that the south is a four-season hiking destination (save for those unbearably high heat and humidity days) technically speaking the hiking season “ends” shortly but not without fanfare. Several not-to-miss conferences are on tap to round out the season.

ALABAMA:

First up is the Alabama Hiking Trail Society’s annual conference. This year the AHTS returns to a favorite haunt, the Blue Lake Methodist Assembly in the Conecuh National Forest (Andalusia, AL). The conference will be held March 4th – 6th.

While still in its infancy, Alabama’s official statewide hiking organization knows how to do a conference right. The atmosphere is laid back and jovial as attendees can take part in a number of activities, lectures, and discussions.

This year should be no different as the festivities begin Friday afternoon with registration and fellowship around the campfire. Things really get underway on Saturday when from 8am until noon a wide range of speakers will give presentations. Among the more notable presenters will be Bill Matthews’ discussion of hiking

Ireland; Skip Essman will provide attendees with an overview of Leave No Trace ethics; Greg Lein will talk about the Alabama Forever Wild program and their efforts to acquire and protect land throughout the state; and Jimmy Harris will speak on the Alabama Wildlife Federation.

After lunch attendees can either take part in hikes through Conecuh National Forest or a backpack workshop where they will learn about gear and lightweight packing.

The day will wrap up with a barbecue chicken dinner, entertainment provided by students from Lurleen B. Wallace Community College in Andalusia, and the event’s

keynote speaker, Vernon Compton with the National Forest Service. And don’t forget the silent auction as well with some really great items being auctioned off.

Information on registration and an updated schedule can be found at the AHTS website – www.hikealabama.org, by email at ahts@hikealabama.org, or by phone at (334) 244-1579.

FLORIDA:

By the banks of the historic and scenic Suwannee River, members of the Florida Trail Association will once again gather

A good looking group if ever there was one - Attendees at last year's FTA conference pose for a group shot.



for fun and fellowship at their Annual Conference, a highlight of their hiking season. This year, the FTA will repeat a very popular venue – Spirit of the Suwannee Music Park, best known for their concerts and excellent camping facilities – just north of Live Oak on US 129. The event will be held March 18th-20th. The theme for this year’s event is “The Florida Trail: Our Living Legacy...Footsteps to the Future.”

Friday afternoon kicks off with workshops and presentations on birding, hiking gear, and historic Florida cattle ranching. Friday evening, enjoy slide shows from long distance trails around the world, and join in late-night camaraderie around the campfire out in the field. Saturday is the busy day, with four separate tracks of workshops to choose from, plus ongoing hikes, paddling trips, and other active adventures. In the Hiking Track, learn about ultralight hiking, listen to tales from the trails, and talk about the reality of creating a Southeast Regional Trails System. The Trail Track will offer a two-hour workshop by the famed Leave No Trace traveling trainers, plus demonstrations of trail maintenance tools, safety equipment, and Florida Trail staff available for your questions at the Trail Tent. Florida history takes center stage in the Culture & Heritage track, where Jim Miller, President of the Florida Archeological Council, will offer a discussion on archeology and women in period dress will talk about Florida’s role in the “War Between the States.” Field trips will be offered to local heritage sites, including the Drew Mansion in Ellaville. Finally, families are encouraged to get outdoors together in the Family Adventure track. Learn about Florida’s creatures and habitats or take part in a hands-on activity.

The event will also celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the USDA Forest Service with our friends Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl, as well as Dave Holland, the Director of Recreation for the USDA Forest Service from Washington, D.C., and Gary Werner, the Executive Director of the Partnership for the National Scenic Trails. Florida’s environmental troubadour, Dale Crider, will lead families on nature hikes with songs in the woods, and The Blues Rangers, a lively blues band from the DeSoto National Forest in Mississippi, will serenade us after the excitement of the annual fundraising auction.

For more information and a registration form, visit the Florida Trail website at www.floridatrail.org or call 877-HIKE-FLA. Last minute on-site registrations are welcome, but will not include meals. You must make your own arrangements with Spirit of the Suwannee Music Park (386-364-1683) for camping; ask for the conference rate.

SOUTHEASTERN FOOT TRAILS CONFERENCE

You couldn’t pick a more picturesque venue for a conference than Table Rock State Park, Pickens, SC, the site of this year’s Southeastern Foot Trails Conference sponsored by the American Hiking Society.



Finally to wrap it all up, the big Southeastern Foot Trails Conference sponsored by the AHS at Table Rock State Park, Pickens, SC. While most of the sessions scheduled are geared more towards clubs and organizations, individual hikers will garner plenty of information themselves.

There is no way we could possibly list all of the scheduled sessions scheduled for this event, but some of the more notable discussions include a presentation on sustainable trail maintenance by Dr. Jeff Marion with the US Geological Survey, an outdoor writers roundtable with a host of

experienced authors including Sandra Friend, trails and conservation in Chattanooga with Dr. Robert Keller of the University of Tennessee, and GPS mapping applications for beginner with Dave Wetmore. And that's only a fraction of the planned scheduled events.

Now remember, your attendance at any of these conferences helps these organizations further their missions – to enhance and protect the hiking experience and natural beauty of the areas they represent. So get out there and plan on attending one of these conferences.



Hiking 101

Blisters



There is an old adage used in the equestrian world: If you've never fallen off, you're not really a horseman. Some people use a similar saying when it comes to hiking: If you've never had a blister, you're not really a hiker. Wrong on both counts.

Once again a little preparation will prevent most blisters from occurring but they do happen and when they do, many people don't know how to properly treat them.

Blisters are fluid-filled bubbles on the skin. These nasties are caused in a variety of ways: Excessive heat exposure such as sunburn, exposure to freezing temperatures, spider bites, but more often than not by friction, specifically the rubbing of something against the skin, such as boots.

Trail treatment is fairly easy and straight forward but it depends on the blister itself. If the blister is unbroken and smaller than 1-inch in width, do not break it. If possible, leave it uncovered. We all know that's virtually impossible if you're on the trail and need to keep those boots on. In that case if the blister is in an area without much pressure, simply loosely bandage it, securing it with tape – but don't let the tape touch the blister.

If the blister is in an area that receives pressure, use moleskin cut in the shape of a doughnut with the center hole leaving the blister open.

For unbroken blisters larger than 1-inch be sure to first wash your hands with soap and water. Drain the blister by first wiping a needle with rubbing alcohol or antiseptic wipe. Gently puncture the edge of the blister with the needle and press the fluid toward the hole you just made.

Once drained, wash the area with soap and water and pat it dry with clean, dry gauze. Do not remove the flap of skin unless it becomes dirty or tears. Instead, smooth it flat. Apply an antibiotic ointment and a sterile bandage. Be sure to change the bandage if it becomes dirty or wet.

If the blister is already broken, follow the same steps outlined above for a large unbroken blister, without the draining of course.

Once home, keep the area open as much as possible and watch for signs of worsening which can include: red streaks from the affected area, swollen lymph nodes, fever or chills, or increased pain and swelling around the area.

But of course as is always the case, prevention is the best medicine and the best way to prevent blisters is to avoid wearing tight boots or ones that rub your feet, and if necessary, break in those boots before heading out on a long trek.

Cahaba (Alabama) Chapter of the



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FOUNDED 1892

A Greater Birmingham, AL.
based environmental and
conservation organization
with many outdoor related
activities, the Cahaba
Chapter represents more
than a thousand Sierra Club
members in Birmingham
and North Central Alabama.

Visit us on the web at

alabama.sierraclub.org/cahaba/

A Smokies Primer

by Danny Bernstein

We're the Smoky Mountains hikers
We have nothing else to do
We spend our spare time hiking
Like others seldom do.

That's the 900 miler song, sung to the tune of "The Yellow Rose of Texas" by a group who has hiked all the maintained trails in the Smokies. To accomplish this goal, most 900 Miler Club members end up hiking 1,500 miles, repeating many sections.

If national parks have specialties, the Smokies is known as a hiker's park. The scenery is diverse: mountain views, old-growth trees, waterfalls, streams, and more shades of green than a paint chart. Trails are well-signposted, wide and easy to follow. The comfortable backcountry campsites and the spacious front-country campgrounds make the park an excellent first-time, family camping destination. Yet with all these amenities, wilderness hangs on in the rhododendrons and mountain laurels, the signature flowers of the area, which can be found in bloom from late March until August, depending on the altitude.

Wildflowers, from the first bloodroot in early spring to the last asters and goldenrods in the fall, line many trails. Even the most industrious hiker, focused on covering miles, will slow down to smell the flowers.

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park, one of the most biodiverse areas in the world, straddles Tennessee and North Carolina. Newfound Gap Road (U.S. 441), which travels north-south from Cherokee, North Carolina to Gatlinburg, Tennessee, forms the backbone of the park and climbs to over 5,000 feet at Newfound Gap.

Although the Smokies may be the most visited national park in the country, only the roads and parking lots are congested. With hundreds of miles of trails, even popular trails are not very busy. One mile off the road and you see few people. If you want a formula, try this one: "Crowds diminish according to the square of the distance from the nearest road and the cube of the elevation above it." This means that the

further off the road you go and the more you have to climb, the fewer people you will see.

I was reminded of the "crowds" formula when I walked up to Gregory Bald last summer. At 8 A.M., the trailhead on Forge Creek Road, off the Cades Cove loop, had two cars. I started out early because the hike, 11 miles round trip and 3,000 ft. of elevation gain, was a solid day. After three hours of climbing, I reached the bald, a flat, mowed area at the top of the mountain, a perfect summer destination with brilliant azaleas in mid June and blueberries in August. On this beautiful summer weekday, I had met five people.

Andrews Bald, requires less effort and the flame azaleas and rhododendrons are just as dazzling. However, true to formula, this spot attracts more visitors since Andrews Bald is only 1.8 miles and 500 feet downhill all the way; people tend to forget



Cataloochee was the largest settlement in the Smokies, supporting about 1,200 people at its maximum. The first families came in 1836, attracted by good farm land and abundant forests. Twenty years later, with the next generation of settlers, the valley became overcrowded. The newcomers migrated over Noland Gap to the next valley, which they named Little Cataloochee. A hundred years later, the settlements prospered with schools, churches and post offices. The residents were so self-sufficient that they barely felt the depression in the 1930s and took in relatives who had left the region and were suffering in the outside world. The people in Cataloochee were isolated. Even in the twentieth century, women would only leave the valley once a year to go into town.

that they have to turn around and climb back up to their car. The trailhead is at the end of the Clingman's Dome Road. After visiting Andrews Bald, you can climb the tower at the top of Clingman's Dome and be "on top of old Smoky".

Balds are historically and biologically unique to the area. The large open grassy fields could have been formed by Indians who burned the land to encourage animals, lightning strikes or animal grazing. The National Park Service maintains both balds because they are so popular; other balds in the Smokies are filling in with vegetation since settlers left and took their cattle with them in the 1930s.

For me, meeting friendly and energetic people on the trail is one of the highlights of hiking. That's why I love the camaraderie at Le Conte Lodge, on top of Mt. Le Conte at 6,593 feet. Le Conte Lodge, which can only be reached by foot, is luxurious considering its location. The cabins are fully furnished; no need to bring a sleeping bag. They serve a hearty dinner and breakfast so all I carry in addition to day-hiking gear is a toothbrush and a small towel.

After dinner, guests gather for the outstanding sunset at Cliff Top, a wide expanse of rocks a short way from the lodge. The next morning, I quietly creep out of my cabin and walk the half-mile to Myrtle Point to watch the sunrise, an unforgettable and more private experience.

Mt. Le Conte can be reached by five different trails. My favorite combination is going up the Boulevard Trail (8.2 miles, 2,600 ft. altitude gain) and coming down the Alum Cave Trail (5.1 miles, 2,600 ft. down).

For a quiet, out-of-the-way entrance with good hiking and fascinating artifacts, head for Cataloochee in the Southeastern section of the park on the North Carolina side. Cataloochee is not untouched wilderness; nothing in the Smokies is. White pioneers arrived in the late 18th century and most of the Smokies were settled by the time the area became a national park in 1934.

Like communities throughout the area, the people of Cataloochee were forced to sell their land to the government and move out when the park was formed. The National Park Service burned many buildings, concerned that the residents would sneak back to their homes. The Cataloochee valley went from wilderness to community back to (a modified) wilderness in less than a hundred years.

A few artifacts were saved; churches, houses, barns and a school. They are not laid out neatly in a circle like Cades Cove. In Cataloochee, the



buildings are in their original places and you need to search for them. You can drive into Big Cataloochee but you must walk or ride a horse to reach Little Cataloochee. To understand history at your own pace, I recommend Cataloochee instead of a frustrating drive around crowded Cades Cove.

If you are lucky and go very early, at dusk or in cold weather, you might even see the elk. Elk were native to the area but became extinct before the Civil War. Now 52 elk have been reintroduced back as an experiment and are doing well. Nothing restricts the elk physically to Cataloochee, so in a few years, they might spread out all over the park and into neighboring national forests.

Due to deed restrictions imposed when the park was established, there are no entrance fees. I count 16 entrances into the Smokies, the most popular being from Gatlinburg. It is easy to criticize Gatlinburg, famous for its 20,000 motel rooms, fast food and T-shirt shops. I keep returning to Gatlinburg because it is an easy reference point to popular trails in the northern areas of the park. From Gatlinburg, you can explore the Smokies from several directions. Gatlinburg and other gateway towns is what keeps the commercialism out of the park itself. In the park, you can't buy a meal or take a

shower. If you want showers, restaurant meals and a bed, besides Gatlinburg, you can stay in Cherokee, the Indian reservation on the North Carolina side, or Townsend, Tennessee, west of Gatlinburg, which prides itself as the quiet side of the Smokies.

If you want to stay in the park, the drive-in, front country campsites are well equipped with tent pads, picnic tables, cold running waters and group sites but no showers or hookups. The three most popular campgrounds, Cades Cove, Elkmont and Smokemont, take reservations but the others are on first-come, first-serve basis.

Miles of intersecting trails and over 70 miles of the Appalachian Trail allow loop hikes that can keep you backpacking for weeks. You need to stay in either a designated shelter or backcountry campsites. All shelters and some campsites require reservations. Both are well laid out with fire rings and the all-important pack suspension devices, meant to keep your food away from the bears.

Though Smokey the bear did not come from the Smokies, over 1,800 black bears live in the park. Bears are shy so your chances of seeing even the tail end of a bear dashing into the woods are slim.

If a hiking trip in the Smokies hooks you into coming back, keep track of the trails you have hiked. If you do all the trails and document when you did each section of trail, you, too, will sing the 900 Miler Club theme song.

Things to know:

Park Contacts:

Great Smoky Mountains N.P. official web site: www.nps.gov/grsm

Accommodations:

LeConte Lodge (www.leconte-lodge.com) starts accepting reservations on October 1 for the next season. Contact them at reservations@leconte-lodge.com or (865) 429-5704

To reserve space in a shelter or backcountry campsite, call (865) 436-1231

Books / Maps:

The Great Smoky Mountain Association (www.smokiesstore.org) has the best selection of books and maps. Association volunteers run the bookstores in the visitor centers. Though they are very friendly, most volunteers are not hikers and may steer you to more colorful, less serious hiking resources.

The best hiking guide is the *Hiking Trails of the Smokies 2003* published by the association which describes accurately every maintained trail in the park, including history and wildflowers.

For the clearest map of the hiking trails, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, National Geographic Trails Illustrated # 229

Hiking Clubs / Organization:

900 Miler Club:
members.aol.com/g900miler

Smoky Mountain Hiking Club, based in Knoxville, TN: www.smhclub.org

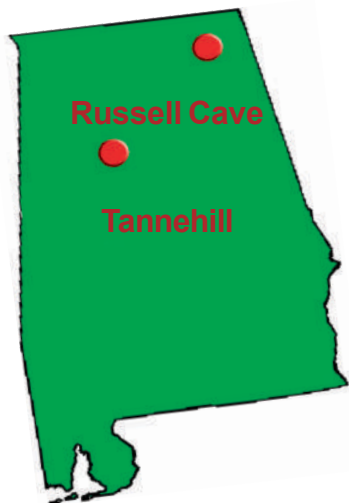
Carolina Mountain Club, based in Asheville, NC:
www.carolinamtclub.org



Looking to get away for a day or two?
Then try one of these...

Weekend Getaways

Alabama



Russell Cave (Bridgeport, AL)

Tucked away almost unnoticed in the extreme northeast corner of Alabama lies Russell Cave National Monument, the only National Park facility in the state. Within the walls of this impressive cave lies a continuous 9,000-year record of human existence and the history of the lifestyles and development of early southeastern Native Americans through this time period.

Declared a national Monument by President Kennedy in 1961, the facility offers a Nice, but steep, mountain hike and a boardwalk trail into the cave itself.

Rangers present programs on a variety of topics, a movie on the history of the cave is shown throughout the day, and the visitor's center has a display of artifacts. Caving is allowed by special permit. Each April, the cave is the site of the American Indian Educational Event that draws thousands of spectators (see this month's calendar).



Getting There

From Bridgeport, AL, take CR 75, crossing US 72 until you get to the intersection of CR 75 and CR98. Take CR 98 8-miles to the park entrance.

Information

www.nps.gov/ruca/
(256) 495-2672

Hours Open all year 8am-4:30pm - Closed major holidays.

Fees Free admission

Events: April 30 American Indian Educational Event (see calendar)

Tannehill Historic State Park

In 1830, Birmingham and the surrounding area rivaled Pittsburgh in its steel producing ability thanks to Daniel Hillman who came to Alabama from Pennsylvania and built a forge along Roupes Creek. Eventually three furnaces were constructed on this site by slave labor, the furnaces helping provide the Confederate army with munitions. After being destroyed by the Union army in 1865, the site fell into decline and nearly vanished until it was uncovered in the 1970's. Today, the main furnace has been reconstructed to its original working condition and is the center piece of this park. Hiking trails loop through the grounds past many of the historic buildings including the Alabama Iron and Steel Museum and to the slave cemetery.

Every weekend is packed with activity from spring to fall including small craft shops where artisans create their wares.



Getting There

Take I-465 exit #1 (Bessemer/McCalla), turning left onto Eastern Valley Rd. Travel 7.3 miles and turn left at the Tannehill sign.

Information www.tannehill.org (205) 477-5711

Hours Open year round, 7am-sunset
Fees \$3.00 day-use fee, \$10.00 primitive camping, \$16.00 improved camping.

Events/Attractions

Visit the park's website for a list of scheduled events.

Florida



Apalachicola Bluffs (Bristol, FL)

It's called the Apalachicola Ravines Region. It's here that we find the Nature Conservancy's Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines Preserve. This 6,294-acre preserve protects one of the few remaining steephead ravines in the region and a wide and diverse population of flora and fauna. Some of the species of plants and animals can only be found here in the preserve while others are more common to the Appalachian Mountains – but you'll find them here. For hikers the 3.5-mile out-and-back Garden of Eden Trail will take you directly to the edge of the 135-foot high bluff with spectacular views of the Apalachicola River. Legend has it that this is the site of the original Garden of Eden. Pay a visit and you be the judge.



Photo by Sandra Friend

Getting There Take I-10 exit #174 and turn left onto FL 12. Travel 20.3-miles and turn left at the flashing light in Greensboro. Look for the "Garden of Eden Trail" sign on the right as you get close to Bristol and make a right there onto Garden of Eden Rd. The trailhead is .4-miles from the turn.

Information Nature Conservancy
(850) 643-2756

Hours Open year round
down to dusk

Fees Free Admission

Georgia



Amicalola Falls

The Cherokee gave this spectacular mountain its name: Amicalola – "tumbling waters", an appropriate name but an understatement. Water from an unobtrusive creek builds at the top of the mountain and then "tumbles" in a spectacular cascade 729-feet. A hiking trail that consists of a wooden staircase (over 400) and a

combination of dirt and recycled rubber footpath takes you to the base (or the top) of the mountain alongside the falls with fantastic views all along the route. The best time to see the falls is in the fall or winter. The recently renovated 57-room Amicalola Lodge is a great respite if you're traveling with family otherwise, make reservations and take a hike to the Len Foote Hike Inn (January issue). And of course, Amicalola is the gateway to the Appalachian Trail. The park hosts a variety of educational programs throughout the year.



Getting There Take GA 400 to GA 53 to Dawsonville, turning right onto Elliott Family Parkway (Hwy 183). Take Hwy 183 until it ends at GA 52. Turn right and travel 1-mile.

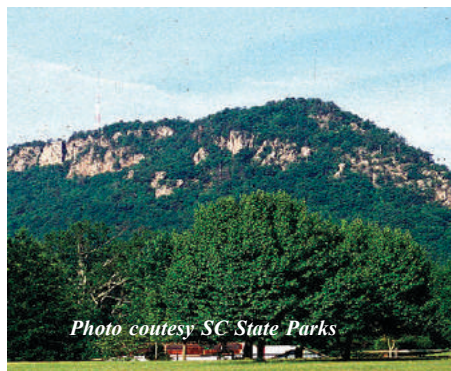
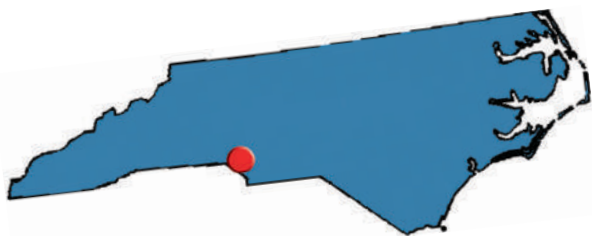
Information (706) 265-8888

Hours Open year round down to dusk

Fees Free admission. Camping: \$17-19

Events/Attractions March 5-6: Backpack workshop and celebration of the AT / April 9-10: Flower Power with wildflowers, tie-dyed t-shirts, and more. Call (800) 573-9656 Ext 681.

North Carolina



Crowders Mountain State Park

The 5,090-acre Crowders Mountain State Park is accentuated by two peaks that tower over 1,500-feet above the piedmont and among them, 14-miles of trails ringed in mountain laurel and wildflowers take you to spectacular views from the rocky cliffs of either Crowders Mountain or Kings Pinnacle. If you're not into the climb several other paths lead you past beautiful aquatic gardens. In addition there are plenty of opportunities for you rock climbers (contact the Ranger office for regulations) and canoeing.

Getting There Take I-85 exit #8 (Highway 161). Take Hwy 161 south ½ mile. Follow signs to main gate.

Information

www.ncsparks.net
(704) 853-5375

Hours March-Oct. 8am-7pm,
Apr/May/Sept 8am-8pm

Fees Free admission.
Camping – \$9/day.

Events/Attractions

Contact the Ranger office to find out about educational and interpretive programs.



South Carolina



Anne Springs Close Greenway

Situated on 2,000-acres of oak, hickory, and dogwood forest, the Anne Springs Close Greenway is a gem amidst urban sprawl. Shimmering lakes and rolling green pastures await you on this unique property as well as 32-miles of trails. The property was donated to the community by the eight children of Anne Springs Close. Within the boundaries of the Greenway you will discover over 190 species of wildflowers and a wide variety of birds and wildlife. Several lakes including the 30-acre Lake Haigler add to the serenity found here. History abounds as well with the Nation Ford Road, part of the Great Philadelphia wagon road, used by Native Americans and settlers for hundreds of years. There is an 1800 log cabin and a 1780's hall.

Getting There

From Charlotte take I-77 exit 90. If coming from the north turn left otherwise turn right and travel 2.6-miles. The entrance is to the left.

Information

Leroysprings.com/greenway.html

Hours Open 7-days a week, 7am-sunset

Fees \$2 day-use fee. Primitive camping: \$10 (reservation required)

Events/Attractions

April 26: Spring Wildflower Walk

Tennessee

South Cumberland State Park

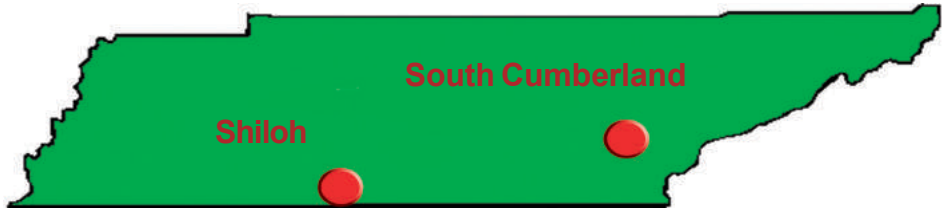


Photo courtesy TN State Parks

Shiloh National Military Park

Established in 1894, the Shiloh National Military Park preserves the site of the first major battle in the western theater of the Civil War, a decisive victory for the Union that allowed them to advance and control the railway system of the region. It is recommended that once you arrive to take in the orientation film to get an overview of the battle. Afterwards, it's off to take in a little history and the beauty of the area. A combination of walking trails and roadways combine to take you step by step through the battle and to beautiful views of the Tennessee River from Pittsburg Landing. Various living history events are offered throughout the year with Memorial Day weekend being the biggest as the park celebrates the anniversary of the battle. And during the spring and fall, Rangers lead special educational hikes.

Perched high atop the Cumberland Plateau is one of the newest state parks in Tennessee, South Cumberland. What makes South Cumberland unique is that it has ten distinct units in four separate counties. The visitor's center hosts a variety of programs (call for a schedule) and a museum highlights the natural and historical history of the region. Some of the more notable units to visit include the Buggy Top Cave Tour, Sewanee Natural Bridge, Foster Falls, and one of our favorite places: Savage Gulf. The "Gulf" is comprised of three canyons: Savage, Big Creek, and Collins. The Savage Gulf Trail, a 10-mile strenuous hike, takes you right to the edge—LITERALLY—with absolutely breathtaking views of the chasm.



Tell us about your favorite weekend getaway. Send it to editor@southernhiker.com

Getting There

Take I-24 exit #134 and turn right. Go to Monteagle and turn left onto Highway 41. Travel 3-miles. The visitors center is on the left.

Information

(931) 924-2980

Hours 8am-4:30pm

Fees Free admission

Getting There From Lexington, TN, take Highway 22 South. From Memphis take Highway 57 East to Highway 22 North.

Information (731) 689-5696

Hours Open all year. Park: 8am-5pm, Interpretive Center: 8:30am-4:30pm, closed Christmas.

Fees \$3.00 day-use

Events/Attractions

Memorial Day Weekend – Battle of Shiloh Anniversary: Re-enactors provide a living history of the battle and honor America's men and women who gave their lives in defense of our country in all wars.

Gear Guide

Hammocks



In this day of ultra-lightweight packing, everyone is looking to shed a few pounds off the back and more and more we're seeing backpackers toting along a hammock for overnight camping.

For those of you not familiar with the latest and greatest in backpacking shelters, we're not talking about the green and white striped hammock with matching pillow you would find in a backyard. Backpacking hammocks are basically tents with rain flies and netting but without the fuss of poles, stakes, ground cloths, the need for mattresses, and creates no footprint on the environment.

So what do these "tree-hangers" find in sleeping above terra-firma rather than on it? Plenty! First, of course, hammocks are generally more lightweight than a conventional pack tent. Some of the lighter models weigh in at less than one pound.

Those who enjoy hammocks say that they are stress relievers and are more comfortable than one would think. And there is usually no problem finding a place to pitch your hammock especially in the southeast. All you need are two decent sized trees about 9-feet apart. It doesn't matter what the

gradient of the ground is or what the underlying surface is like. In other words you won't be finding yourself sleeping on a rock in the middle of the night.

There are a few considerations to hammock swinging that one should take into account before taking to the trees and whether or not they are important to you or not. One is that there is no vestibule. This means that gear will have to be stored away from the hammock out of convenient reach. Of course if you're in bear country, this is a mute point since you'll be hanging it anyway. But if you're hunkered down in a rain storm and want to grab those Pop-Tarts out of your pack, it becomes a problem. In addition,

access to the use of your stove becomes inconvenient in the same situation. Important or not?

Hammocks are generally single person affairs so if you do find yourself in inclement weather you will be removed from your partners. Important or not?

The main fear everyone has when using a hammock is tying it to a tree. No, you can't screw a bolt into an oak tree! First, make sure that the hammock has sturdy enough ropes. Polypropylene is a good choice, it doesn't stretch like nylon but nylon is stronger. DON'T use rain fly ropes to tie your hammock off with! They just aren't made for



Fig A - The Speer "Pea Pod" is designed to cover the hammock and block the elements. By being on the outside, it's insulation can not be compressed.

that. A better choice would be hammock straps. Wrap them once or twice around the tree then tie it off. Simple. Which ever type rope you use, inspect it often for wear before your trips.

The best knots for keeping you in suspended slumber is a simple bowline. Rain flies should be tied off with a taut-line hitch. This will make it easy to tighten the fly.

Another thing to watch for - this should go without saying but you know how that goes – don't tie your hammock to dead or dying trees.

When considering a hammock for shelter, you should consider whether or not it has drip rings. These little devices attach to the ropes and cause water to drip to the ground instead of down the ropes and into your sleeping space.

As you shop, read and heed the manufacturer's weight limits, and don't lie about your weight! Be honest and safe.

There are two main players in the hammock market – Hennessy and Speer. There are several differences between the two brands. The main difference is the way you get into the hammock. Hennessy has a bottom entry, the Speer a side entry.

One big problem with hammocks is trying to keep warm. Speer has addressed this with what they call the "Pea Pod" (Fig A). Basically it's a sleeping bag that covers the hammock. By being on the outside it does not compress from body weight which means it doesn't lose its ability to insulate and it blocks wind and the elements.

A popular model Speer hammock is the model 8.0. The hammock comes with a super



Two popular hammocks among "tree-hangers" includes the Speer 8.0 that (below) that weighs in at 2lbs and holds 250lbs and the Hennessy Ultralight Backpacker (above) that weighs 1.15 lbs.



large rain fly that easily adjusts down for stormy weather. The complete system weighs in at 2 pounds, but at a hefty price of \$199. If you're handy at the sewing machine, you can purchase the same hammock in kit form for \$99.

Hennessy is currently a favorite among hikers. One of their more popular models is the Ultra Light Backpacker A-Sym. Weighing in at 1 pound 15 ounces the A-Sym can convert into a chair or lounger just by hooking it to a pair of hiking poles. Entry is through their patented

"easy entry", which is through the bottom. The opening then automatically snaps shut as your weight tensions the entrance with Velcro closure. The unit runs for \$169.00.

Whether you're into ultra-lightweight packing, want a comfortable night sleep, or just hate leveling and erecting that tent, you may just want to become a "tree-hanger" yourself.

Thanks to Marie Amott with the Alabama Hiking Trail Society for help in putting together this installment of Gear Guide.

Photo Gallery

by Larry O. Gay

Our photo gallery this month is by freelance photographer Larry O. Gay of Bessemer, AL. Larry's images have caught some of the beauty of Alabama that many of us miss. As Larry tells us, his goal is to showcase the beauty that God gave us. We feel he's on the right track! The following photos were taken at Oak Mountain State Park and Tannehill State Historic Park.



To view more of Larry's work or to find out how to obtain copies of his photographs visit these websites:

Nature in Alabama - larryotto2.oceansfree.com
Images from Birmingham - larryogay1.oceansfree.com
Abstracts of Nature - larryogay3.oceansfree.com



Sweet Home Alabama!



The Alabama Hiking Trail Society - dedicated to providing outstanding hiking adventures for everyone and a catalyst for the completion of the Eastern Continental Trail.

Don't miss the 4th Annual AHTS Conference
March 4-6, 2004 at Blue Lake Methodist Assembly,
Andalusia, AL.

www.hikealabama.org

AHTS, 1425 I-85 Pkwy, Ste. I, Montgomery, AL 36106
ahts@hikealabama.org / (334) 244-1579

PUTTING PSYCHIATRISTS OUT OF BUSINESS: The A.T.A. by Carroll Wilson

One of the founding members of the Alabama Trails Association in the mid-1980s was Michael Leonard, a Birmingham attorney and Alabama Conservancy activist. Leonard had read that Benton MacKaye's original vision was an Appalachian Trail that stretched to and through the 2000+ hills of East Central Alabama. A cartographer by avocation, Leonard began to imagine possible routes that would extend Alabama's Pinhoti Trail to the Benton MacKaye Trail – and ultimately the Appalachian Trail – in north Georgia.

In those infancy years, the Alabama Hiking Association, as it was christened by its progenitors, involved itself in the building of the Skyway Loop Trail in the Talladega National Forest south of Cheaha State Park. Another early project was a section of Pinhoti Trail on Duggar Mountain, Alabama's second highest (now the Duggar Mountain Wilderness Area). The Duggar Mountain project was discontinued in 1988 after the U. S. Forest Service itself decided to extend the Pinhoti Trail through the Talladega National Forest from its terminus at that time near Coleman Lake past Rabbit Town Road to U. S. Hwy 278 east of Piedmont (including Duggar Mountain). Meanwhile, Gerald Willis, a Piedmont Statehouse representative and landowner, donated a corridor easement for the Pinhoti from U. S. 278 over Davis and Indian Mountains to a point just west of the Georgia line. The ATA began building the Pinhoti over Davis Mountain in 1989. A final boost for the trail came in 1997 when the Alabama Forever Wild Land Trust purchased land for a trail corridor to the Georgia line.

Another 1989 milestone was the start of the Sipsey Wilderness trail maintenance project. The ATA currently maintains FS 203, 207 and 200 trails, an effort redoubled after pine beetle damage in the 90s and after September

2004's Tropical Storm Ivan toppled pines and hardwoods in the wilderness. Hikers are asked to be patient, as complete clearing of Sipsey Wilderness trails may take months, even years.

In the early 90s the AHA changed its name to the Alabama Trails Association in an effort to stress the trail building and maintenance functions of the organization. Michael Leonard moved on to a new job in North Carolina but still remains the primary trail planner. Tony Cooley, a Birmingham hydrogeologist, gathered the reins of the presidency and new leadership from towns such as Jasper, Cullman, Montgomery and Scottsboro. A truly statewide organization emerged. Still some early work trips consisted of only two or three individuals. Trail builders struggled against pessimism and despair.

Another infusion of leadership came in the form of Marty Dominy of the Atlanta area, a veteran Appalachian/Benton MacKaye Trails builder and cartographer. Dominy accomplished most of the Pinhoti route flagging on Davis and Indian Mountains during the 1990s. Cooley deserves much of the credit for the high trail design standards on the Pinhoti extension. Many an ATA worker grumbled under her breath when Tony required more work on a side-hilling task. His influence has won the ATA kudos from Pinhoti through-hikers all over the country. The ATA does have hikes occasionally, especially on National Trails Day which is

the first Saturday in June. Sometimes on a hike you will hear, "This trail is not up to ATA standards; we wouldn't have left this sapling stump in the middle of the trail".

The Georgia Pinhoti Trail Association, a hybrid group with mountain bikers and horse riders as well as hikers, was born in the early nineties. The GPTA continues to lead the Pinhoti Trail extension effort across northwest Georgia.

Some have criticized the ATA for taking ten years to build twelve miles of trail. But constructing a trail that doesn't need constant maintenance over two stony mountains is formidable. And it was felt that working a person five hours a day and seeing him again the next month was more prudent and productive than one back-breaking contribution. Also, the lack of foot traffic needed to compact the trail meant some workdays were necessarily devoted to maintenance on trail already constructed.

Camaraderie became as important as accomplishment. "We're not just building trail, we're building



The dedicated trail builders of the ATA at work on a swing bridge along the Pinhoti.

friendships,” became the mantra. One ATA president told a newspaper reporter in 1998, “What we’re trying to do out here is put psychiatrists out of business. If anxious, depressed or bewildered people ever discover how much better they feel after a walk on this trail over these mountains, it may well be the end of the headshrinker business.” Some recently completed tasks include a bridge over Hurricane Creek, a trail shelter on Davis Mountain and a tent platform at the foot of Indian Mountain.

Today the Pinhoti Trail snakes from State Hwy 77 near Waldo to the Georgia line, approximately 120 miles. The ATA awaits the Conservation Fund of Atlanta’s purchase of a Pinhoti Trail corridor from Temple-Inland Timber Company. That acquisition will permit the ATA to construct another two and a half miles of Pinhoti Trail to the first paved road (Jackson Chapel) in Floyd County, Georgia. Sixty-five miles of Pinhoti have been finished in Georgia, mostly on public land. Still to be

completely planned is an easement or title-permitted route across the Coosa River Valley, including Rome, Georgia where there is little public land and a panoply of individual and corporate landowners. That may take several more years.

Another coming attraction: On the south end, the Talladega District of the U. S. Forest Service will soon employ a contractor with the assignment to build another twelve miles of Pinhoti Trail from Hwy 77 over Horn and Bull’s Gap Mountains to State Hwy 148 east of Sylacauga. An informal coalition of trail builder groups, including the ATA, the Appalachian Trail Club of Alabama, and the Bellsouth Telephone Pioneers, will collaborate to build about twenty-five to thirty per cent of the twelve miles.

Of course, the ATA supports the efforts of the Alabama Hiking Trail Society and the Florida Trails Association to complete the last link in an Eastern Continental Trail through south Alabama to the Florida Trail. But the ATA membership feels strongly that the Pinhoti Trail segment

from the Georgia line to the southern end of the Talladega National Forest should retain its name PINHOTI TRAIL.

To contact the ATA for membership information or trail work schedules visit our website at www.alabamatrailsasso.org.

The ATA will be sponsoring another volunteer vacation May 1-7 this year. For details contact the American Hiking Society.


Hike the Pinhoti – you won’t regret it.

Editor’s Note: We apologize for any confusion after our feature story on the Eastern Continental Trail in the January issue. The E.C.T. is a series of trails connected together to form the route such as the A.T., Florida NST, etc. The trails along the route retain their names. No organization is planning to rename the Pinhoti Trail.



Construction of the Davis Mountain Shelter along the Pinhoti Trail in Alabama.

Exploring the Ocean to Lake Trail

A photograph showing three hikers from behind as they walk along a trail. They are carrying large, dark-colored backpacks. The hiker in the foreground is wearing a dark jacket and light-colored pants. The hiker in the middle is wearing a green shirt and shorts. The hiker in the background is wearing a bright orange shirt and blue shorts. The trail is surrounded by tall, thin pine trees and dry grass under a clear blue sky.

I've never taken a backpacking trip where I fried my socks, but here I was in the middle of some of the wildest land that Palm Beach County has to offer, and my socks were as crispy as a burnt marshmallow. It was a strange end to one of my toughest days backpacking in Florida. But let me explain.

This adventure started with an inquiry from a couple of my best backpacking buddies, Paul "Bearbag Hanger" Guyon and Bob "LWOP" Coveney, who'd already pushed my endurance levels for longest miles backpacked in a day (17) and wettest hike ever to get back to a car to rescue stranded hikers (16 miles in a soaked-to-the-skin downpour on the Suwannee River). So we had some history in taking on weather, water, and distance. But this was a little different. They were charting the plan, not I. And the plan was to follow a route under development for a brand-new 70-some-odd mile trail recently dubbed the "Ocean to Lake Trail," since it started at the Atlantic Ocean at Hobe Sound and ended on Lake Okeechobee



As the first colors of dawn seep into the dark sky, Palm Beach County Commissioner Jeff Koons arrives, as does John Jamason, director of Channel 20, the county's public affairs cable channel. On-camera interviews commence. Our backpackers shoulder their packs and pose for video and photos for the Palm Beach Post, then head out to the copper-colored sea to dip a foot in the waves and pick up a seashell to carry on their journey. While the eventual plan is to have the trail be a wilderness corridor, there's one section that can never be—the walk from the beach to the mainland. We follow a sidewalk under a shady canopy and up and over the bridge over the Intracoastal Waterway, then follow Old A1A out of Hobe Sound and up to US 1, walking on the road between the sandy dunes of Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge. Following US

1 briefly, we enter Jonathan Dickinson State Park through the back gate, where packs come off at the water spigot at the trail crossing for a rest break.

at Port Mayaca. Parts of the trail had been in place for more than a decade, and it was the vision of Dean Drake, Trails Coordinator for the Loxahatchee Chapter of the Florida Trail Association, that kept it going. Dean and his trusty colleagues, including section leader extraordinaire Bea Rogers, attended numerous meetings with land managers and worked with an alphabet soup of agencies ranging from the DEP (Florida State Parks) and ERM (Palm Beach County Environmental Resource Management) to FWC (Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission) and SFWMD (South Florida Water Management District) to define a potential wilderness corridor across a county that's better known for its millionaire lifestyles and upscale shopping than for a walk in the woods. Years of planning culminated in this opportunity. When the coalition of agencies finished piecing together a corridor of public lands on the Martin-Palm Beach County border, Dean was asked to go ahead and plan a route. With major help from other volunteers, he did.

The trail system at Jonathan Dickinson, carefully tended by the Loxahatchee Chapter, is one of my favorites in Florida. It traverses massive ancient dunes of sparkling white sand, topped with sand pines (fewer now, after the 2004 hurricane season), moss, and wildflowers. It circles around prairies and ponds, ducks through bayhead swamps and cypress domes, and immerses you in the immensity of the slash pine / saw palmetto forest. It enters tropical hammocks along Kitching Creek, where wild coffee and ferns grow to enormous size. And it's one of the best places in Florida to see a diverse array of spring wildflowers. Beth Burger, who's the section leader for Corbett Wildlife Management Area, studies wildflowers on her job with the county, and she stops and gets down on hands and

knees several times as we hike, pointing out beautiful examples of terrestrial orchids. She can rattle off those scientific names one after the other, but I only remember common names, like the foxglove and bearded grass-pink.

It's hardly mid-afternoon when we reach the evening's campsite. I bid adieu to the group, as I must give a talk the next morning at a conference. I feel a sense of loss missing what Bob described as the "most fun of the journey," a morning of following flags through the leafy wild and scenic floodplain of the Loxahatchee River, crossing creeks on boards and logs or wading across shallows, and ducking underneath the bridges where I-95 and Florida's Turnpike cross the river side by side. I rejoin the group as a backpacker at a convenience store along Indiantown Road, where they eagerly dash in to use indoor plumbing, buy coffee and cold drinks, and suck down ice cream and hot dogs.

Our next adventure is a guided walk through Riverbend Park, a county park that's been under development for nearly a decade and is still not open to the public. Park manager John Street escorts us down the crushed limestone path, pausing in the middle of his

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Our next adventure is a guided walk through Riverbend Park, a county park that's been under development for nearly a decade and is still not open to the public. Park manager John Street escorts us down the crushed limestone path, pausing in the middle of his



interpretive talk to provide us with cold water and fresh oranges. Once out the back gate of the park, we're onto the canal system that – in this early iteration of the trail route – will lead us back into the wilderness at Corbett Wildlife Management Area. Our encampment that night is ruffled by an incursion of ATVs that rumble past on the dike above; knowing they don't belong in the Loxahatchee Slough Natural Area, I call a friend to alert the sheriff's office.

A gray day follows, our third day on the trail a long walk along the dike with no shade and the threat of thunderstorms. It's heartening to see Dean Drake's truck at a road crossing, where he offers snacks and cold drinks and the encouraging words that the finalized trail route will cross the canal and head into the pine woods. The thundershowers break along a lonely open stretch of road paralleling the canal, and I'm soaked to the skin before I can pull out my raingear. Thank goodness arrangements were made in advance to stay at the Everglades Youth Camp. As our bedraggled crew arrives, we are upgraded from tent sites to cabins, and blessed with the prospect of a hot shower and the ability to prepare a meal under a covered shelter, looking out at the rain.

Day four is the one that sucks the life out of me. I'd volunteered to push a measuring wheel across Corbett to update our map, and within a few hours I realized that the amount of wading across and around wet prairies we did was making this task more difficult than usual—especially with a full pack on. At first, the splendor of the wilderness made up for my exhaustion, walking across vast open prairies with thousands of wildflowers, and through stands of pine flatwoods with thick saw palmetto understory. The trail in Corbett is maintained to wilderness standards, so the footpath is narrow but distinct. We were pushing an 11-mile day, and it was cold. With wet feet, I was colder. And then we reached the first of the cypress swamps. Frankly, it surprised the hell out of me. Cypress swamps in northern Palm Beach County? I called it "Little Cypress," since the terrain and

habitat matched its big brother to the southwest. And then we hit The Wall—a miles-long strand of densely packed cypress trees festooned with bromeliads, mosses, and orchids. The orange blazes led us through "The Hole in the Wall," a route

Dean scouted years ago. Wading shin deep through cold water, we eventually reached higher ground. But pushing a measuring wheel through shin-deep water...well, Bob and Paul kept careful watch on me the rest of the way to the campsite. I almost gave up when Dean met us at the South Grade with more goodies, but pushed on to Little Gopher with the rest—and then handed him my wheel. I knew I couldn't handle another day that strenuous tomorrow.

Dean had started a campfire, and with all of us wet and cold, it seemed like a great idea (to me, who instigated the whole thing) to strip off sodden socks, stuff them on palmetto stems, and toast them over the open fire. It did wonders for my cotton blend socks, but then I toasted the synthetics—and by the time I'd smelled burning petroleum, they were fried to a crispy crunch. Willie Howard, Outdoors Columnist from the

Palm Beach Post, found his way into camp with his 4-wheel-drive and came to interview us; his son Sam had fun feeding the flames, as did John Jamason (complete with video gear), eager to film us on the last couple days of hiking. As we slogged through more cypress strands and sawgrass prairies in the morning, I was especially thankful I'd left the measuring wheel with Dean. As the trail diverged from the forest roads and headed out across open prairies, it made me feel small and alone in the wilderness, since our hikers had strung out over an hour's distance—but the sweep was still behind me. Corbett remained wild and swampy almost up to the border of Dupuis Reserve, where we squeezed through a gate and headed up the connector trail to the loop where our next campsite awaited. I found orchids growing in marshy areas, and heard deer crashing through the underbrush under the tall pines. At one point, the route followed a firebreak which had just been disked, making for extremely difficult walking. But as we ventured farther in,

the park-like setting reminded me of the loops at Lake Kissimmee State Park, where live oaks form a dense canopy and the understory is open as far as the eye can see. It felt like it took forever to hike, however, and it turned out the mileage on the sign at the Corbett-Dupuis boundary was off by more than a mile. But it was more than made up for. At our last night's camp Fred Davis, Land Stewardship Director of the South Florida Water Management District, surprised us (he'd hiked in to meet us earlier that day) with an unexpected treat—dinner! A pot of chili bubbled on the campfire, and no beer tasted better than the cold one in the ice chest. With salad, brownies, and other goodies, we had an incredible hiker feed.

Our final day on the trail took some coordination and logistics, as we were to hike through areas that were "perhaps trail" but not finalized on the master plan. After an hour on the Dupuis

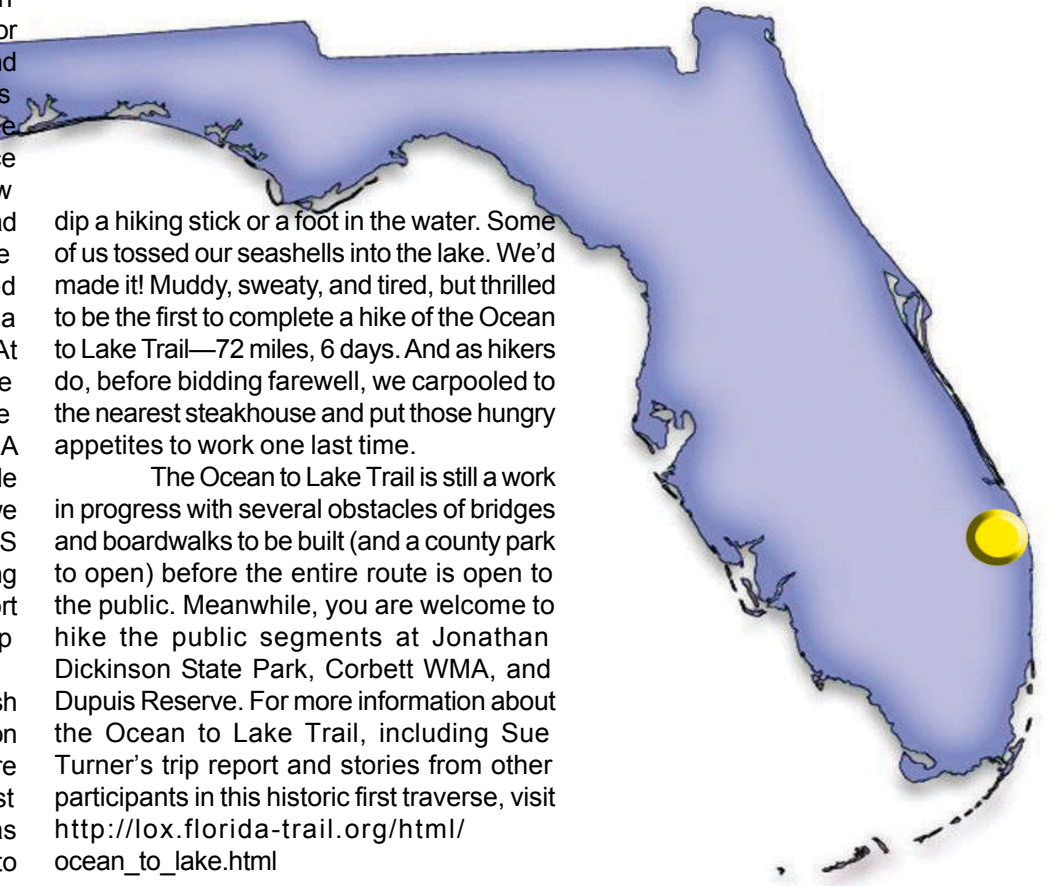


Loop, we met Bea Rogers and Dean Drake, and they led us along a connector between our existing trails in Dupuis and at Lake Okeechobee. And the rains returned, ever so lightly. From the pine forests of Dupuis we hopped the fence into a cow pasture, dodging the cow patties, and then ended up on a dirt road through a sugar cane field, where hundreds of wood storks had gathered in the cut cane and took to the sky in a great loft of feathers at our approach. At the railroad tracks, we could see the Herbert Hoover Dike around Lake Okeechobee, but we couldn't get to it! A canal blocked the way, too deep to wade and too alligator-infested to swim. So we continued north along the shoulder of US 441 for another three miles, hiking along the edges of the sugar cane fields to Port Mayaca, where the rest of the group waited for us stragglers atop the dike.

The magic moment: a joyful rush down the steep slope, then the realization that there was no natural shoreline here at the Port Mayaca Dam—the closest we could get to Lake Okeechobee was to walk on wire cages filled with rocks to

dip a hiking stick or a foot in the water. Some of us tossed our seashells into the lake. We'd made it! Muddy, sweaty, and tired, but thrilled to be the first to complete a hike of the Ocean to Lake Trail—72 miles, 6 days. And as hikers do, before bidding farewell, we carpoled to the nearest steakhouse and put those hungry appetites to work one last time.

The Ocean to Lake Trail is still a work in progress with several obstacles of bridges and boardwalks to be built (and a county park to open) before the entire route is open to the public. Meanwhile, you are welcome to hike the public segments at Jonathan Dickinson State Park, Corbett WMA, and Dupuis Reserve. For more information about the Ocean to Lake Trail, including Sue Turner's trip report and stories from other participants in this historic first traverse, visit http://lox.florida-trail.org/html/ocean_to_lake.html



What's New

Outback Water Filtration System by Bota of Boulder

Easy to carry, easy to use, and guaranteed to remove 99.9% of the nasties in our water such as Giardia Lamblia and Cryptosporidium cysts. The fine folks at Bota tell us that the intricate matrix is a labyrinth of inert, synthetic polymers, molecular sieves and microspheres designed to trap the organisms but not interfere with water flow, so you get safe water in an instant. Weighing in at 22oz (empty) the MSRP is \$19.99.



EOS Headlamp by Princeton Tec

Following a homerun last year with the first focusable L.E.D. lighting system, Princeton Tec introduces the EOS Headlamp. The EOS gathers light and reflects it outward making it more efficient and intense. The Lexan L.E.D. produces a true white light. The light will run for about 2 hours in high output mode, 9.5 hours in medium. Weight (with 3 AAA cell batteries) is 15 grams. MSRP - \$38.99.



Garmin GPS 60

Packed with all the features of their more expensive full color display models, the new Garmin GPS 60 brings the cost down by substituting the display with a large, high-resolution (160x240) LED backlit, 4-level grayscale display. Battery life is rated "best in the industry" with an average time of 28-hours on two AA batteries. The unit has 24MB of internal memory and can store 500 waypoints, 50 routes, and 10,000 track points, has a geocaching mode, GPS games, and has both a USB and serial connection for easy data transfers. And that's only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to features. Weight: 5.4 oz. MSRP: \$192.85.



Taco Tent from Nemo Equipment



A new way of setting up camp from Nemo – the inflatable Taco Tent. No poles! This minimalist 2-person tent has a single airbeam that substitutes for poles and can be inflated in 30-seconds with the included foot pump. The airbeam uses double layer construction with an abrasion resistant outer layer and an airtight inner polyurethane bladder. The tent comes with a spare bladder and self-adhesive repair patches just in case, has two mesh doors, and a variety of vents for air circulation. Weight: 5.5 lbs.

MSRP:

Moxie Pack by Camelbak

A day pack for all occasions, the new Moxie by Camelbak easily converts from a sling-pack to day pack in seconds plus hold plenty of water for whatever your outing may be. The back is lined with an air mesh to keep you cool while the harness is lined with Velvetex for shoulder comfort. The pack itself has two zippered compartments.

The water bladder holds up to 70 oz. Weight (empty) 1.8 lbs. MSRP: \$70.00



XLT Audubon Monoculars by Sheltered Wings

If you're looking for an all-purpose yet lightweight set of binoculars to pack along, take a look at the XLT Audubon Monoculars from Sheltered Wings.

Weighing in at only 2.2 ounces, the XLT allows you to zoom in to view wild flowers or insects as close as 36 inches but with enough power to take in distant views. MSRP: \$34.95.




Pack Cookery

Newbies to the sport of hiking and backpacking often ask, "Aren't recipes like these rather over indulgent and hard to prepare on the trail? Wouldn't a PB&J sandwich be just fine?" That might be true, but besides being a source of needed protein and energy, these meals are a welcome treat after a hard day on the trail.

Give them a try:

Shell Noodle Surprise


The surprise? The surprise is how quick, easy, and tasty this little dish is



3 cups Pasta Shells (small size)
2 cups Dried Tomatoes cut in half
2 Tbsp Powdered Shortening
3 tsp Dried Basil
1 tsp Garlic powder
1 pkg Onion Soup mix
1 pkg Cream of Mushroom Soup mix
6 cups Water

At home:
Mix ingredients in a Ziplock bag. You may want to tape it closed.

At camp:
Bring water to boil, add mix from bag and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat, put cover on pot, let stand 5-minutes, fluff and enjoy.



1 cup Dried Fruit (Your choice - apples & peaches are our favorites)
¼ cup packed brown sugar
¼ tsp ground cinnamon
pinch of nutmeg
¼ cup Bisquick
1 ½ cups water

At home:


Mix 1 tsp brown sugar and Bisquick in Ziplock bag.
Mix other ingredients into a separate Ziplock bag.

At camp:

In large pot or skillet with lid, boil 1 ½ cups of water with fruit. Simmer 5 minutes. Put 1 tbsp water into the Ziplock bag with the Bisquick mix and mix well. Cut hole in bottom of Bisquick bag and squeeze it over the fruit mix. Continue cooking for 5 minutes.

Fruit Cobbler

Leave room for desert!
A little Bisquick, some dried fruit and viola! A desert Grandma would be proud of!





Trail Chili

A great little cool weather recipe that tosses in a bit of canola oil. The oil provides that fat taste but no oil flavor.

A great little cool weather recipe that tosses in a bit of canola oil. The oil provides that fat taste but no oil flavor.

- ½ cup dehydrated hamburger
- 3 tbsp of your favorite chili seasonings combined
- 1 tbsp dehydrated chopped onions
- 1 pkg Ramen noodles (just the noodles)
- 1 tbsp canola oil
- 2 cups Water

At camp:

In a pot bring 2 cups of water to boil. Put in all ingredients and simmer for 3 minutes or until it is as thick as you like.



Nuevo Pig-in-a-Poke

These stuffed pastries can be eaten warm by steaming in aluminum foil over a pot of boiling water or right out of the bag.

- (4) 8 oz cans of Pillsbury Dinner Rolls
- 1 ½ lb of bacon
- 1 large onion
- ½ lb ham
- Water
- Flour
- 2 Egg Whites

At home:

Chop bacon, onion and ham into small pieces. Put onion and bacon in skillet and just cover with water. Simmer until all water evaporates leaving only bacon fat, onion and bacon. Stir in the ham. Place mixture into fridge to cool down. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Roll individual dinner rolls on a floured surface until they are flat. Put a spoonful of the bacon/ham/onion mix inside each roll dough. Pinch the roll shut with a little milk or water and place on a lightly greased baking sheet. Glaze with egg whites and bake for about 15 minutes or until brown. Let cool to room temperature then refrigerate until ready to pack along.





Southern Hiker 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

March

04-06 4th Annual AHTS Trails Days conference @ Blue Lake Methodist Assembly, Andalusia (Conecuh N.F.), AL. For registration and schedule, visit AHTS online at www.hikealabama.org or email Johnny Brewer at jbrewer@lbwcc.edu.

13 Pinhoti Hike (Montgomery Chapter Sierra Club) Leisurely 4.2-mile trip on the trail along ridgelines near Cheaha SP. AL John Ackerman (334) 361-4732.

25-27 Pinhoti Trail Beginners & Spring Wildflower Hikes (Appalachian Trail Club of Alabama): Day one will be the beginners hike. 8-miles easy/moderate. The second day is a dayhike into the Dugger Wilderness. 5-mile easy/moderate loop. AL Tom Coffield - pinhoti@bellsouth.net, day 2 AL Carl Sloan – csloan@hiwaay.net

26 Trough Springs History Hike (Land Trust of Huntsville) Moderate 3-mile hike in honor of Huntsville's bicentennial. Trip begins at Monte Sano S.P. following old and new trails to the spring. David Young will discuss the historical significance of Trough Springs including the surrender of Lt. Col. Johnston in the Civil War. AL LT of Huntsville (256) 534-5263

April

06 Collier Creek Canyon Day Hike (Cahaba Chapter Sierra Club) Off-trail hike along a tributary of Bushy Creek in the Bankhead National Forest. AL Cahaba Sierra Club alabama.sierraclub.org/cahaba/calendar.htm

09-11 Bird Banding / Watching (Montgomery Chapter Sierra Club) Overnight birding trip to Fort Morgan peninsula in south Alabama. AL John Ackerman (334) 361-4732.

10 Bayou Swamp Tour (Land Trust of Huntsville) Easy one-hour trip to discover colorful azaleas, native ferns, six springs, and bubbling creeks in north Madison County. AL LT of Huntsville (256) 534-5263

16 Rainbow Mountain Wildflower Stroll (Land Trust of Huntsville) Easy to moderate 2-3 hour trip to explore the amazing array of wildflowers Rainbow Mt. has to offer. AL LT of Huntsville (256) 534-5263

17 Unique Blossomwood – The Beautiful Wildflower of the Trail (Land Trust of Huntsville) East to moderate one-hour trek with Lynne Wenegar on a discovery tour of the trail named for, you guessed it, its beautiful wildflowers. AL LT of Huntsville (256) 534-5263

24 Are You Sure You Know Rainbow Mountain? (Land Trust of Huntsville) 1-1 ½ hour moderate hike with Charlie Chesser on the wild side of Rainbow Mountain. AL LT of Huntsville (256) 534-5263.

30-01 American Indian Educational Event (Russell Cave National Monument, Bridgeport, AL) A weekend full of demonstrations demonstrating the Native American way of life over the centuries including dancing, music, arrowhead making, and stories. 10am-4pm each day, free admission. AL Sheila Reed (256) 495-2672.

Florida

March

03 Cross Florida Greenway Trail Maintenance (FTA) General FT maintenance while hiking through this historic area. Located just south of Ocala. Wear old clothes & hat. Bring gloves, water, snacks, lunch, etc. AL Bob Jones – jonesat11@peoplepc.com

05 Bradwell Bay Wilderness Swamp Slog (Apalachee Chapter FTA) 8-mile strenuous hike through the Apalachicola National Forest, one of the largest swamp forests in the US and rated one of the 10 toughest hikes in the country. AL Kent Wimmer – kwimmer@fs.fed.us.

08 "Linda's Backpacking Tales" (Apalachee Chapter FTA) Linda Patton will share slides and stories of her adventures. Location US Forest Service conference room in Tallahassee. AL Paul Kirkpatrick – (850) 894-3224.

12 Olustee Section Trail Maintenance (FTA) Trail clearing and blazing in the Lake Butler Forest. AL Frank Orser – fworser@hotmail.com

18-20 FTA Conference, Live Oak, FL. Details online at www.florida-trail.org or by calling the FTA at (877) HIKE-FL.

20 "Discover Downtown West Palm Beach Walk" (Loxahatchee Chapter FTA) A leisurely walk through the town. Breakfast afterward. AL Jane Holden (561) 478-1472.

April

09-10 Overnight Backpack trip at Jonathan Dickinson SP (Loxahatchee Chapter FTA) Moderate trip. AL Steve Meyers (561) 641-1168.

12 "Grand Canyon Rafting and Hiking" (Apalachee Chapter FTA) Howard Pardue shares his adventures in the canyon including a rim-to-rim hike. AL Paul Kirkpatrick – (850) 894-3224.

Georgia

March

12 TN/NC Extension Construction Work Trip (Benton Mackaye Trail Association): Will be working on trail segments south from Sandy Gap. Visit BMTA online for contact info: www.bmta.org.

12 Kennesaw Mountain Work Day (KEMOTrail Corps). AL Richard Angeli – tuney@mindspring.com.

April

09 Kennesaw Mountain Work Day (KEMOTrail Corps). AL Richard Angeli – tuney@mindspring.com.



Little River Canyon, Alabama

North Carolina

March

01 Jack Rabbitt Trail Hike (Mountain High Hikers) – 2.4-mile easy loop on Lake Chatuge, NC. Visit the MHH website for contact info at www.mountainhighhikers.org.

01 Miller Trek (Mountain High Hikers) – 6.5-mile moderate loop with an elevation change of 1400-feet. Location – Brasstown Valley Resort. Visit the MHH website for contact info at www.mountainhighhikers.org.

08 Arkaquah Trail (Mountain High Hikers) From Trackrock to Brasstown Bald parking lot. 7.8-mile strenuous hike ascending 2,100-feet, descending 1,400-feet. Visit the MHH website for contact info at www.mountainhighhikers.org.

27 Horse Range Ridge Trails Hike (Carolina Mountain Club) 12.7-mile strenuous hike with 4,000-foot ascent. Visit the CMC website at www.carolinamtclub.com for contact info.

April

03 Sam's Gap to Hog Back Ridge Hike (Carolina Mountain Club) Moderate in-and-out hike on the AT. Early spring wildflower viewing. Visit the CMC website at www.carolinaclub.com for contact info.

05 Turtletown Creek Falls (Mountain High Hikers) Near Farner, TN. 4-mile moderate round trip to two of the prettiest waterfalls in the area. Visit the MHH website for contact info at www.mountainhighhikers.org.

South Carolina

April

28 Table Rock Hike (Palmetto Conservation Foundation) Pickens, SC. A hike To kick-off the SEFTC conference. AL Yon Lambert – (800) 416-8937 or ylambert@palmettoconservation.org

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.

Tennessee

April

02 Walls of Jericho Hike (Tennessee Trails Association – Nashville Chapter). Visit the TTA website for contact info at www.tennesseetrails.org.

23 Piney River Wildflower Hike (Tennessee Trails Association – Nashville Chapter). Visit the TTA website for contact info at www.tennesseetrails.org.

30 Frozen Head Wildflower Hike (Tennessee Trails Association – Nashville Chapter). Visit the TTA website for contact info at www.tennesseetrails.org.



**The voice of the American hiker...
The heart of the hiking community.**

www.americanhiker.org

Club Directory

There are plenty of great clubs and organizations around the southeast that provide outstanding walking, hiking, and backpacking activities, but most importantly help to promote, protect, and maintain our southern trails. Visit these clubs online for more information and consider becoming a member. And if you have a walking, hiking, or backpacking club you'd like our readers to know about, send the info to editor@southernhiker.com. We will also include a link on our website SOUTHERNHIKER.COM.



ALABAMA

Alabama Hiking Trail Society
Montgomery, AL –
www.hikealabama.org

Alabama Trail Association
Birmingham, AL –
www.alabamatrailsassoc.org

**Appalachian Trail Club
of Alabama**
Birmingham, AL –
www.pinhoti.org

FLORIDA

Florida Trails Association
Gainesville, FL
www.florida-trail.org

GEORGIA

**Benton MacKaye
Trail Association**
Atlanta, GA - www.bmta.org

**Georgia Appalachian
Trail Club**
Cumming, GA
www.georgia-atclub.org

Georgia Pinhoti Trail Association
Rome, GA
www.georgiapinhoti.org

Kennesaw Mountain Trail Corps
kemotrailcorps.org

Mountain High Hikers
Blairsville, GA –
www.mountainhighhikers.org

NORTH CAROLINA

Carolina Mountain Club
Asheville, NC
www.carolinamtclub.com

**Friends of Mountain to
Sea Trail**
Adance, NC - www.ncmst.org

SOUTH CAROLINA

Foothills Trail Conference
Greenville, SC –
www.foothillstrail.org

TENNESSEE

Chattanooga Hiking Club
Chattanooga, TN
hiking.chattanooga.net

Cumberland Trail Conference
Crossville, TN
www.cumberlandtrail.org

**Great Smoky Mountains
900 Miler Club**
Maryville, TN
members.aol.com/g900miler

Smokey Mountains Hiking Club
Johnson City, TN
www.smhclub.org

**Tennessee Eastman Hiking
& Canoe Club**
Kingsport, TN – www.tehcc.org

Tennessee Trails Association
Nashville, TN
www.tennesseetrails.org

**University of Tennessee
Canoe & Hiking Club**
web.utk.edu/~canoehik/
about/main.html

REGIONAL

American Hiking Society
Silver Spring, MD
www.americanhiking.org

Appalachian Trail Conference
Harpers Ferry, WV
www.appalachiantrail.org

In the next issue of
Southern Hiker

We'll fill you in on regional plans for
National Trails Day

Take a trip down the most anticipated
hiking destination in the south -
Alabama and Tennessee's Walls of
Jericho
The Chattanooga Outdoor
Initiative

Saving the land for all -
Alabama's Forever Wild

We'll get wild with our photo essay -
Wildflowers of Florida



On Sale May 20th!

Parting Shots



A sneak peek at next month's issue and our article on Alabama and Tennessee's newest and most talked about hike, "The Walls of Jericho".

**Photo by
Jerry Green**



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Florida Trail Association



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877-HIKE-FLA
www.floridatrail.org

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

