OLD TIMERS HIKING CLUB SCHEDULE

Jan - Feb - Mar 2026

Founded August of 1991 by CB Willis and Don Frederick and named by Jim Widener

35 Years of Hiking and Counting

All distances on the Appalachian Trail are taken from the A.T. Guide, 2023 Edition

Mon, Jan 5	**Introduction to Warriers' Path State Park in Kingsport (about 7 miles, easy):** We'll start the hike at the park's north entrance in the parking lot for the former pool near the park office. Note: the park office has restrooms. We'll hike along Patrick Henry Lake by the campground for about 1.5 miles. We will then proceed down to and around Duck Island, which was once the teenage place to cruise. You might notice the rowing shells and dock. From there, we will hike past the boat docks (sorry Lunch Bunch, the restaurant is seasonally closed) and boat launch to the top of the cliffs. (Note: the hike leader will bear no responsibility for those with a death wish that jump into the frigid waters below.) We'll then hike the former RR bed to the turnaround point at the boundary of the park near The Domtar Paper Mill lodge and frisbee golf course. Form up and depart Kroger at 8:00 am. Meet the hike leader at Warriors Path Parking lot at 8:30 am where the signup sheet will be. Hike leader: Haitièn (Jeff Marek), 423-276-9160, jcmareksr@gmail.com.
Wed, Jan 7	**Beartree Lake Loop (8.2 miles, moderate):** We will start at Beartree Lake, east of Damascus, going uphill on the Beartree Gap Trail 2.6 miles to Shaw Gap. We'll then hike west on the Iron Mountain Trail (currently the Appalachian Trail reroute) and return for 3.2 miles. Then we will return 1.6 miles down on the Beartree Gap Trail and take Yancy Trail down 0.3 miles to the lake. Finally, we'll walk 0.5 miles around the lake to return to the vehicles. Form up and depart Kroger at 8:00 am. Meet the hike leader at I-81, Exit 14, Park & Ride in Abingdon at 8:45 am. Hike leader: Marcia Pruner, 276-614-5504.
Mon, Jan 12	**Lone Oak Trail (4 to 7 miles, moderate):** Choose where you turn around for a 4-to-7-mile moderate hike. Like switchbacks? Then this trail is for you. See another side of Buffalo Mountain on this trail, which is usually impeccably maintained. Follow switchbacks until we reach Buffalo's Tip Top. Those who want a shorter hike can turn around here. For the longer version, we will descend Tip Top and hike to the White Rocks overlook, then return. Due to very limited parking, please form car pools. Form up and depart Kroger at 8:00 am. Hike Leader: Jeannine Edwards; 901-351-1779; jeannine21@bellsouth.net.
Wed, Jan 14	*****SPECIAL EVENT***** **Doe River Gorge Hike (5 miles, easy) + Brunch in the Depot:** An easy 5-mile hike in/out on the original Tweetsie railroad line. We will meet at Doe River Gorge Christian Camp in Hampton for our annual rock ice adventure to the first rail trestle and back. Plenty of parking for all. After the hike, we will meet for a pot-luck brunch with some refreshments. More details and the start time of this

	event will be announced beforehand. Leaders: Rich Ritter 765-414-4253 and Tim Richardson 423-747-6352.
Mon, Jan 19 Martin Luther King Day National Holiday	**Indian Grave Gap to Beauty Spot and maybe Beyond (5 to 8 miles, moderate):** In the winter, this site is often incredible, filled with rime ice and snow. If the weather cooperates, Beauty Spot bald gives us an almost 360-degree view of the surrounding mountains and towns. We will hike north on the AT from Indian Grave Gap to Beauty Spot. This is the turn-around place for the shorter 5-mile hike. Or you can continue with the leader to the Gap and return for the longer 8-mile hike. Note: Depending on the weather, this may require a later start time, so watch your email the night before. Otherwise, we will form up and depart Kroger at 8:00 am. Hike Leader: Jeannine Edwards, 901-351-1779, jeannine21@bellsouth.net.
Wed, Jan 21	**Jonesborough Visitor's Center to Persimmon Ridge Park and back (6 miles, easy to moderate):** A 6-mile hike that will take us through downtown Jonesborough and up the walking trail to hike the dirt trails at Persimmon Ridge. Form up and depart Kroger at 8:00 am. Meet the hike leader at the Jonesborough Visitor's Center parking lot at 8:20 am. Hike Leader: Teresa Pickett, 423-552-4126, teresapickett@yahoo.com.
Mon, Jan 26	**'Crazy 8' on the Buffalo Mountain trails (up to 6 miles, moderate):** Get views with a good workout as we climb Buffalo Mountain's steepest trails while making a (loosely) figure eight pattern in this city park. We start at the Harris Pavilion and head north east up White Rock Loop, checking out JC views from Huckleberry Knob and Sunset Point before turning onto the fairly steep Fork Knob back up to White Rock Loop. Then we climb to the park's highest point: Tip Top, where we turn around and continue southeast on White Rock back down towards the Pavilion, where you can finish your hike (about 3 miles), or continue up the other loop of our '8': we'll head west on White Rock Loop to the Noggin, a steep uphill climb to check out the views from White Rock, and then head south west on White Rock Loop back to the Pavilion (about 3 miles). Form up and depart Kroger at 8 am, or meet at the Harris Pavilion in the upper parking lot at 8:20 am. Hike Leader: Kit Parks, 910-340-2807, kit.parks@yahoo.com.
Wed, Jan 28	**Low Gap to McQueen's Knob and back (6.6 miles, moderate):** From Low Gap we'll hike on the AT north to the Emergency Shelter near McQueen's Knob and return. Form up and depart Kroger 8:00 am. Meet the hike leader at Food City in Elizabethton where the signup sheet will be. Be ready to depart Food City at 8:20 am. Depart when the group from Kroger arrives. Hike Leader: Lisa Millburn, 435-840-2685, lisa_millburn@hotmail.com.
Mon, Feb 2	**Open Date/TBD:** We will keep this date open to shift hikes around or re-schedule a postponed hike. If none of these occur, a hike will be provided ahead of time.
Wed, Feb 4	**Hwy 91/Cross Mtn Trailhead to Grindstaff Monument (6.8 miles, moderate):** A moderate in/out hike south on the AT from Cross Mountain to the Grindstaff monument for a 6.8-mile hike. For those that want a longer hike, you can hike 1.3 miles further (one way) and turn around at Iron Mountain Shelter for a total hike distance of 9.4 miles. Form up and depart Kroger at 8 am. We'll make a second stop at the Food City in Elizabethton at 8:20 am where the hike

	leader will be. Be ready to depart Food City at 8:20; depart after the group arrives from Kroger. Hike Leader: Lisa Millburn, 435-840-2685, lisa_millburn@hotmail.com.
Mon, Feb 9	**Shook Branch to Watauga Dam or Wilbur Dam Road and return (6 or 8+ miles, moderate):** We'll start at the Shook Branch Trailhead and hike north on the AT to Watauga Dam. In winter, the bare trees give a better view of the waters of Watauga Lake and the surrounding mountains. You can return from the dam for a 6-mile moderate hike, or go a bit further on the AT to Wilbur Dam Road for an 8-mile+ hike. We can pause for snacks at the dam and have some wonderful views before returning to our starting point or trekking on a bit further on the AT. Form up and depart Kroger at 8:00 am. We'll make a second stop at the Food City in Elizabethton. Be ready to depart Food City at 8:20; depart after the group arrives from Kroger. Hike Leader: Jeannine Edwards, 901-351-1779, jeannine21@bellsouth.net.
Wed, Feb 11	**Laurel Fork Falls from U.S. 321 (5 miles, moderate):** We will hike the blue blazed trail to the AT to these beautiful falls. Some easy spots, some strenuous ones, and a couple that are tricky. On the way back, we can opt to return via the blue blazed high-water trail that takes us by the remains of Laurel Fork Shelter and possibly down to a lesser, but very beautiful, waterfall. Form up and depart Kroger at 8:00 am. We'll make a second stop at the Food City in Elizabethton. Be ready to depart Food City at 8:20; depart after the group arrives from Kroger. Hike Leader: Jeannine Edwards, 901-351-1779, jeannine21@bellsouth.net.
Mon, Feb 16 President's Day National Holiday	**Pinnacle Tower Trail (9.8 miles, moderate):** A moderate hike to the tower via the Pinnacle Trail in the Cherokee Forest at Unicoi. Lots of nice switchbacks can take you to the tower and back for a total of 9.8 miles—or less, if you choose. As this is an in-out hike, with well-marked miles, it is easy to set your own goals. Trailhead is located on I-26, Exit 32. Trailhead is on the right. Form up and depart Kroger at 8:00 am or meet at the trailhead for a hike start time of 8:30 am. Hike Leader: Kit Parks, 910-340-2807, kit.parks@yahoo.com.
Wed, Feb 18	**Devil's Backbone and Fall Creek Loop at Warrior's Path State Park (4+ miles, moderate):** Devil's Backbone is somewhat rocky and steep, rewarded by some good views. On the loop, the trail is gentler, with a cascading creek and a grassy meadow where wildlife can sometimes be seen. If desired, you can hike the lakeside trails for another couple of miles. Form up and depart Kroger at 8:00 am. Meet the hike leader at the park's north entrance in the parking lot for the former pool near the park office at 8:30 am. From there, we will drive to the trailhead. Hike Leader: Dave Polon, 423-302-8368, DPolon123@yahoo.com.
Mon, Feb 23	**Shook Branch across Pond Mountain to the Land of Fallen Trees and return (7-8 miles, moderate to strenuous):** This is an in-out hike. From Shook Branch, we will follow the AT up and across Pond Mountain, to the Land of Fallen Trees, where we will turn around. When we return, we will stop for a snack at the top of Pond Mountain. The high elevation pond of Pond Mountain is a rare phenomenon in mature topography and often dries up. See if you can find it. Form up and depart Kroger at 8:00 am. We'll make a second stop at the Food City in Elizabethton. Be ready to depart Food City at 8:20; depart after the group

	arrives from Kroger. Hike Leader: Jeannine Edwards, 901-351-1779, jeannine21@bellsouth.net.
Wed, Feb 25	**Open Date/TBD:** We will keep this date open to shift hikes around or re-schedule a postponed hike. If none of these occur, a hike will be provided ahead of time.
Mon, Mar 2	**Sams Gap to Hogback Ridge Shelter to Rice Gap (4.6 or 8 miles, moderate):** This in/out hike follows the AT along the Tennessee/North Carolina border. We will hike to the summit at High Rock (4460'), then on about half a mile to the blue blaze trail to the shelter for those who want a little reprieve. Those who want a shorter hike (4.6 miles) can return by their same path from this point. Those wanting a longer hike will continue to Rice Gap before returning for a hike of about 8 miles. Form up and depart Kroger at 8:00 am. Hike Leader: Jeannine Edwards, 901-351-1779, jeannine21@bellsouth.net.
Wed, Mar 4	**Sugar Hollow Park in Bristol, VA (6 to 8 miles, moderate):** We can alter the distance as a group. The many trails wind around a small park and provide alternatives to shorten or lengthen the hike. Rocky Top, White Top View, Deer Tail Chase, Fox Trot, Cave Loop, & Black Forest are some of the trails we will walk along with the wetlands. Form up and depart Kroger at 8:00 am. Meet the hike leader at Sugar Hollow Park (near I-81 exit #7 across from the Target Shopping Center) in the park's first parking lot on the left. Hike Leader: Marcia Pruner 276-614-5504.
Sun, Mar 8	**Daylight Savings Begins. Set Clocks Forward One Hour**
Mon, Mar 9	**Open Date/TBD:** We will keep this date open to shift hikes around or re-schedule a postponed hike. If none of these occur, a hike will be provided ahead of time.
Wed, Mar 11	**Tanyard Gap to Hot Springs (5.9 miles, moderate):** After dropping off a shuttle vehicle in Hot Springs, we'll hike the AT south from Tanyard Gap to Hot Springs. After the hike we may eat at the Spring Creek Tavern, which was severely damaged by Hurricane Helene and is now open. Form your carpools with people that may stay for lunch and those that may not. Form up and depart Kroger at 8:00 am. We'll make a second stop at the Ingles in Jonesborough. Be ready to depart Ingles at 8:20 am, depart after the group from Krogers arrives. Hike Leader: Willie Tyree, 1-757-374-2233, gpawillie@gmail.com.
Mon, Mar 16	**Laurel Run Park to Bays Mountain Park (7.3 miles, moderate):** This is a shuttle hike from Laurel Run Park in Church Hill to Bays Mountain Park in Kingsport. We'll first drop cars at Bays Mountain and then head to Laurel Run Park to start our hike. We'll follow Laurel Run Trail, pausing at about a mile to admire two beautiful waterfalls. Then we'll continue on Laurel Run Trail, Kiner Hollow Trail, and Indian Pipes Trail until we reach the historic CCC-built firetower at about 5.3 miles. We'll pause here to give anyone a chance to climb the firetower and enjoy the view. Then we'll continue on the Firetower Trail, Lake Road, Towhee Trail, and Lakeside Trail until we reach the Nature Center at Bays Mountain. Form up and depart Kroger at 8:00 am. Hike Leader: Eric Hyche, 423-943-5965, ehyche@gmail.com.
Wed, Mar 18	**Rocky Fork Loop (9.8 miles, strenuous):** We'll hike a backcountry loop in Lamar Alexander Rocky Fork State Park. From the parking lot, we'll hike the

	Rocky Fork Trail to the Headwaters Trail, Blockstand Creek Trail, Flint Creek Trail and back to the Rocky Fork Trail. From there, we'll return to the parking lot. This is a popular trail for birding, hiking, and walking, but you can still enjoy some solitude during quieter times of day. Form up and depart Kroger at 8:00 am. Hike Leader: Dave Polon, 423-302-8368, DPolon123@yahoo.com.
Fri, Mar 20	**Spring Equinox: Spring begins at 10:46 am.**
Mon, Mar 23	**Carvers Gap to Grassy Ridge and return (6 to 7 miles, moderate):** Our first hike of Spring! Starting at Carvers Gap, we will follow the AT north past Round Bald and Jane Bald, then take a side trail to Grassy Ridge. This mountain has incredible views any time of the year. Form up and depart Kroger at 8:00 am. Meet the hike leader at Food City in Elizabethton. Be ready to depart Food City at 8:20 am, depart when the group from Kroger arrives. Hike Leader: Dave Polon, 423-302-8368, DPolon123@yahoo.com.
Wed, Mar 25	**McQueens Gap to Backbone Rock (8.6 miles, moderate):** We will drop a car at the Backbone Rock parking area and proceed to McQueens Gap to start our hike. This hike on the AT starts high on the ridge of Holston Mountain and involves little climbing. We will follow the ridge to the intersection with the Backbone Rock Trail where we will descend 2.3 miles to our cars. Form up and depart Kroger at 8:00 am. Meet the hike leader at Food City in Elizabethton. Be ready to depart Food City at 8:20 am, depart when the group from Kroger arrives. Hike Leader: Teresa Pickett, 423-552-4126, teresapickett@yahoo.com.
Mon, Mar 30	**Dick Creek Falls (7.1 miles round-trip, moderate):** If you like hiking to waterfalls and don't mind a little bushwhacking, this is the hike for you. We will start off at Rock Creek Recreation Area near Erwin and hike about 2.5 miles to Lower Dick Creek Falls. Then we'll hike another 0.8 miles to reach beautiful Upper Dick Creek Falls. Then we'll go another 0.1 miles to reach Upper Upper Dick Creek Falls (yes, that's really its name). Then, if you're brave enough, you can bushwhack another hundred yards or so to reach the lesser-known Upper Upper Upper Dick Creek Falls. So, on this single hike, you can visit four beautiful waterfalls. Form up and depart Kroger at 8:00 am. Hike Leader: Eric Hyche, 423-943-5965, ehyche@gmail.com.
Wed, Apr 1	**Big Creek Trail in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (11.6 miles, strenuous):** This trail is 5.8 miles one way, but since it is an in/out, anyone can turn around at any time. Only strenuous because of the distance. Most of it is along Big Creek and is a gentle climb. This area has lots of history, and is in NC. Although the forest reclaimed itself, this side of the park was heavily logged by the Crestmont Logging Company. We pass sites of CCC builds, Mouse Creek Falls and the Midnight Hole. Reminder: Parking passes are required. $5 per day and can be bought there. NOTE THE EARLIER DEPARTURE TIME: Form up and depart Kroger at 7:30 am. Meet the hike leader at Ingles in Jonesborough where the signup sheet will be. Be ready to depart Jonesborough at 8:00 am. Hike Leader: Joy Cook 423-913-2220, joyfulhikr@aol.com.
Sun, Apr 5	**Easter Sunday**

Come join us! On most hikes, we leave Kroger, 112 Sunset Drive, Johnson City, TN (near the Flying Pig BBQ) each Mon and Wed at 8:00 am. **Showtime is 7:45-7:50 am** so we can sign hikers in and form carpools. **We leave at 8:00 am sharp!** Please check the hike descriptions for the meeting times. On some hikes we may depart earlier or later. Some hikes have a second stop at Food City in Elizabethton, Ingles in Jonesborough, Food City in Weber City, VA or the Park & Ride, Exit 14 on I-81, VA. Those that drive to these second stops will be **ready to depart at the time on the hike description and leave as soon as those from Kroger arrive.**

Bring lunch/snack, PLENTY of water, and gas money. We suggest that 10 cents per mile per person should be the approximate rate. Make sure your driver is properly compensated for his/her expenses and effort.

Each person should carry a small first aid kit, you should also carry a little extra food just in case. Bring raingear (it may rain where the hike is even if the weather here does not say rain) Most important, bring yourself and a smile and come enjoy our hikes!!!

When leaving the trailheads, please ensure all cars that are leaving start, especially in the winter. No one wants to be left behind in the middle of the woods with a dead battery and no cell service.

Everyone is welcome, member or not. Everyone will treat each other with the dignity and respect that every person deserves. Any personal conduct adverse to the best interests of the Old Timers Hiking Club and its members will result in suspension and or dismissal from the club and all its activities.

We are an alcohol/drug-free activity. Drinking alcohol is prohibited before the hikes, during the hikes, or at any trailhead. Participation in club activities carries with it the obligation to hold the club and its representatives free of liability for individual safety.

Treasurer and person to give your membership dues (per year/per family$10.00): Rich Ritter, 1125 Biltmore Dr, Piney Flats, TN 37686; 765-414-4253; Richieritch1.0@gmail.com

Secretary/Activities Director/Webmaster: Dave Polon, 423-302-8368; DPolon123@yahoo.com

Trail Work Coordinator: Rich Ritter, 765-414-4253

Website---http://oldtimershikingclub.weebly.com