

# Mountain High Hikers Newsflash August 26, 2009

One Club, Many Parts

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## Lake Winfield Scott Hike, Picnic, and Short Membership Meeting this Saturday, August 29<sup>th</sup> 9:00 until.....

Come one, come all! Hikes begin at 9:00, picnic around 1:00. See previous Newsflash for all details.

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### What's New:

Check out [www.mountainhighhikers.org](http://www.mountainhighhikers.org) and see what's new! You are now able to download the latest Newsflash, club apparel order forms, revised membership renewal/new member form, and hike schedules. There are also links to report a trail problem or to change your mailing or e-mail address. For culinary minded hikers, there is even a great pecan bar recipe. Other ideas are "in the works." Keep looking!

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### Hike Update:

UPDATE on Sept 8th short Hike: The scheduled hike is a NEW CLUB HIKE to **Emery Creek Falls, in the Cohuttas**, 5 miles in and out. The hike ends with a pair of waterfalls: The first is 40-50 ft high, the second is about 15 ft high. The walk is along Emery Creek and involves about 9 stream crossings each way (18 RT). **With all of the summer rain, the creek is running high so Strongly suggest bringing poles, and water shoes or old hiking boots, you will get wet up to your ankles** - should be nice and cool down by the creek. Optional meal out in Ellijay.

Pam Sullivan

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The Article below appeared in the Cherokee Sentinel on July 22, 2009

**The land abuts Fires Creek Basin on the north side. Land Trust for the Little Tennessee is really making great strides in the conservation area. Visit their website for more information on their mission.**

## “A conservation success story in the making

Land trust purchases 28-acre forest, trout streams in Vengeance Creek

**Philip Moore Contributing writer**



**PHOTO BY Ralph Preston/Contributed**  
**Ramp Cove Branch flows across the**  
**28-acre property near Marble. The**  
**forest is on track to be conserved.**

A century from now, a child will still have the opportunity to catch her first speckled trout in the cold, plunging waters of Ramp Cove Branch. Hikers and hunters will still climb the steep ridges above the creek. And springtime will continue to witness wake-robin trilliums and halberd-leaved violets emerging beneath poplars near the water's edge.

Thanks to a willing landowner, the support of the local US Forest Service District Office, and the Land Trust for the Little Tennessee, 28 pristine wooded acres in the Vengeance Creek community will be conserved and eventually be added to the National Forest System.

Jackie McClure, a local realtor, heads a small company that owned the land. McClure felt that the wild, rugged property was not the best site for development and should be conserved if possible. He contacted the Forest Service last year with an offer to sell the tract, which is entirely surrounded by National Forest land. The Forest Service showed interest in the property, but was unable to purchase it at the time, and referred McClure to the Land Trust for the Little Tennessee (LTLT). LTLT is a membership based, non-profit land conservation group serving landowners in the far western counties of North Carolina.

Through the continued generosity of its donors, LTLT maintains a revolving fund that allows it to consider prime conservation opportunities, such as the Vengeance Creek property, when they arise. With McClure's commitment to conserving the land and the Forest Service's interest in ultimately owning the tract, LTLT chose to "bridge" the funding between McClure and the Forest Service and purchased the property in June. LTLT plans to convey the property to the Forest Service when the agency has acquisition funds available.

The property is truly a prime conservation prize. Lying in Ramp Cove in the Valley River watershed, the tract shares a mile of boundary with National Forest. Over a half mile of clear mountain streams flow across the property, including Ramp Cove Branch which is designated as wild trout waters by the Wildlife Resources Commission. Hemlocks, tulip poplars, and wildflowers are particularly abundant on the land, which is fully forested. Portions of a rock wall and foundation are all that remain of an old homesite near the upper end of the tract, while the highest point on the property affords a spectacular winter view of the Snowbird Mountains.

In not selling the property for development, McClure realizes he chose the less lucrative option. He feels he made the right decision, however. "I'm glad the Forest Service can get the land. I didn't want to see [houses] go in up there."

TheLand Trust for the Little Tennessee welcomes donor support for its mission of conserving the waters, forests, farms, and heritage of the upper Little Tennessee and Hiwassee River valleys in western North Carolina ([www.ltl.org](http://www.ltl.org)). LTLT occasionally purchases property but typically conserves land via donated conservation easements, which allow landowners to retain ownership of their land while voluntarily agreeing to avoid or limit development, and which often generate significant tax benefits. LTLT's representative in our area is Philip Moore, who grew up in Clay County. He can be reached at 361-7884 or at [pmoore@ltlt.org](mailto:pmoore@ltlt.org)."

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### **Kudos to Maintainers**

Liz, a friend of Phyllis Loman, writes:

"I brought a group on Chunky Gal to Boteler Peak today. I have been anxious to do so since you told me how much work your hiking club trail maintenance group has done on it. Nice job and thank you! It was very well marked with nice new, sturdy stairs. The view was more spectacular than I thought it would be. What a sweet vista! It's an even better hike now."

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### **Trail Maintenance Report**

**By: John Quinlan**

"Thursday, 20 August, saw six hardy MHH volunteers conduct trail maintenance in GA. The trails worked were Helton Creek Falls and DeSoto Falls. We began with Helton Creek and soon encountered a number of water drainage problems. We cleaned out, and in some cases created, drains to alleviate some of the flooded sections of trail and did minor lopping on overhanging vegetation. As some of the steps (wooden boxed rectangles) were also flooded we found some gravel and improvised a carrying method to transport this gravel down to the lower steps and filled these boxes thus forcing the water out and thereby eliminating some muddy stepping inside the rectangles. We also scraped off slimy mud that had been borne by water to the middle of the trail. By this action we eliminated much muddy walking that was formerly on the trail. What we thought would be a very short stop turned out to be a more substantial effort.

We then headed to DeSoto Falls. Shortly after arriving, we met three campers who advised of fallen limbs blocking the trail and another tree leaning perilously over the trail. Fortunately Tom Shope, the equipment maintenance and caretaker guru, brought a chain saw and together with a hand saw and loppers we made short work of these problems. Once again we ran into more water problems; much of which David Kuykendall of the FS had asked us to address. This became really hard work as we used Pulaskis and fire rakes to dig out and shovel mud from the trail. What we noted was that water borne mud that had

oozed downhill and filled water runoffs thus allowing water to run right over the bars and continue down the trail creating very wet and sometimes muddy conditions. This then became the major effort of the day and due to high humidity we soon were soaked. As wet as we were we almost did not mind the rain which then blew in. After a short respite and a cold drink, we then finished up by going to the lower falls lopping at the lower end along the creek and then more mud removal in water bars further up the trail as we moved toward the falls.

As expected all that "pick and Shovel" work was fatiguing especially in that humidity. The good news was that each person really pitched in and worked hard and by rotating equipment around the entire crew we kept our work productivity at high level. O special note is that despite the hard often muddy work this crew was in high spirits the whole day. Once again I am humbled by these wonderful volunteers, their work ethic, and superior attitude! Amazing what "a few good men" can accomplish.

Special mention too should be made of the excellent hospitality afforded to us by the two campground hosts at DeSoto Falls.

Your MHH volunteers this day were:

Tom Shope, Rod Whitefield, Don Chesbro, Bob Stone, Brian Blue, John Quinlan

If you should see any of them please thank them for the hard and continuing work that they do so willingly; and do come join us!"



## **Virginia Journeys 2011**

A long way away, but tentatively mark your calendar as the 38<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy will meet at Emory & Henry College in Emory, Virginia July 1 through 8, 2011. This makes a great vacation as there are hikes, workshops, exhibits plus great socialization with fellow trail community friends. More information will be forthcoming from [www.appalachiantrail.org](http://www.appalachiantrail.org)



## **Upcoming Activity Preview**

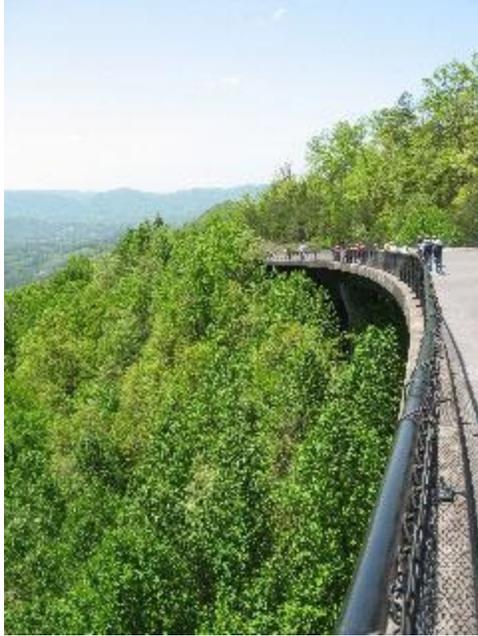
SAVE THE DATE.....ANOTHER BIKE TRIP.

The last MHH Bike trip was SO popular we are having another, Wednesday Sept 30th, this time to the Silver Comet Bike trail to the west of Atlanta, we will do about 20 miles of paved relatively flat trail with a lunch stop at a restaurant in the middle. Final detail to come in the next few weeks, but keep the date open. Pam Sullivan

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## Foothills Parkway Segments Open to Public

### Un-completed Section Re-opens to Recreational Use



Managers at Great Smoky Mountains National Park have announced that the section of the uncompleted Foothills Parkway extending west from Wears Valley Road has b

een re-opened to non-motorized recreational use.

Kevin FitzGerald, Deputy Superintendent at the Smokies said, "Now that construction activity has been completed for the time being, we welcome the public to hike, ride their bikes or bring their horses onto both sections of the unfinished Parkway. People can go in either from Wears Valley and travel about 4 miles to the dead-end at the Missing Link or they can come in at the Walland end and travel over 9 miles before they have to turn around. The 1.25 miles of the Missing Link between the two partly finished sections is very rugged and overgrown and is closed to horses and bikes and not recommended to hikers."

The Park expects to close both sections again when construction resumes: next spring on the Walland end, and sometime in the summer or fall of 2010 on the Wears Valley segment

