



Mountain High Hikers Newsflash November 1, 2009

Wintertime Necessities – It's time to Inventory your Pack Contents

Cold weather presents many challenges for hikers. The weather may quickly change from balmy to freezing without warning. Wearing layers is the best choice, so that you can quickly add or remove a garment to keep comfortable. Extra goodies need to be stashed in our packs. A pair of gloves and HAND WARMERS (many of our Floridian friends are not familiar with these) can make a huge difference to our comfort level. Hand warmers are very inexpensive and can be purchased at any outdoor hiking or sporting goods store. Take them out of the package and place in your gloves for a toasty effect for many hours. They do not take up much room in your backpack either. A good pair of waterproof rain pants and rain jacket with hood takes little room when compacted and really can be a lifesaver in cold, wet weather. An extra pair of socks is another good idea and again, takes little room in your pack. Your feet will thank you if your socks become cold and soggy from a creek crossing. Gaiters (also spelled gaitors) are also helpful in preventing snow from entering your boots. A reflective space blanket (less than \$2) in case of an emergency is another "must have" item.

Be safe – be prepared for any type of weather this time of year.

Raven Rock Ridge Information

Ever wonder about the plane crash site along Raven Rock Ridge off the AT in the Standing Indian area? Our friend, Michael Hodgson, has a natural curiosity and is an expert researcher. He forwarded the following information: "I was in Murphy and Hayesville, NC the last few days doing some research. Regarding the plane on Raven Rock Ridge, the plane was a 6-seat Cessna and crashed in November 1973. The pilot, the only person onboard, was M.S. Riddell (48 years old) from Winnona, Mississippi."

**Save the Date – May 20-23, 2010 (Thursday – Sunday)
Southeastern Foot Trails Coalition Conference**

Hiking, presentations, entertainment, and great food are a few of the features of this conference to be held at DuBose Conference Center in Monteagle, Tennessee. www.southeastfoottrails.org

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Cades Cove Loop Road will be closed in Spring, 2010

GSMNP managers announced plans to rehabilitate the Cades Cove Loop Road in the spring. The Park plans to close the road to all use from March 1 through May 21, 2010. This will affect trails off the Cades Cove Road.

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I-40 Closed at MM 3 near Tennessee

Most of you already know that a landslide recently occurred at mile marker 3 in Haywood County near the Tennessee border. It may take up to 3 months to clear and repair the road. The interstate is closed at mile marker 451, according to the patrol. From Asheville, travelers are advised to take I-26 to Johnson City, TN to I-81 and then south to I-40. The last exit open on I-40 westbound is Exit 20, which is for US 276 to Maggie Valley. Travelers to Cherokee can take US 276 south to US 19 into Cherokee, Eastbound I-40 traffic in TN is being routed onto I-81 to Johnson City to I-26 eastbound then back to I-40 in Asheville.

Ed.Note: I was in Asheville the morning after the slide occurred and message boards along the Interstate were already warning and diverting traffic onto alternate roads. Travelers might expect some delays especially on the west and north sides of Asheville area.

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Fires Creek History

How Fires Creek Got Its Name

The name 'Fires Creek' is supposed to have originated with Sam Fires, a Cherokee Indian who lived in the area. The name appears on several of the Cherokee Rolls. An Army survey map of 1837-38 indicates the mouth of Fires Creek and an uninhabited structure nearby. Another shows an occupied structure belonging to 'Cloud,' the son of Sam Fires. So there was a house or structure on each side of Fires Creek where it empties into the Hiwassee River.

The name "Fires" would explain why most local residents pronounce "Fires" with two syllables as if spelled "Fires's" – the possessive form – and thus, spoken as "**Fires-es** Creek."

Bristol Cabin: Was there a Bristol Cabin or someone named Bristol living in Fires Creek? A family by the name of Bristol did indeed live there. In 1977, the FS wrote a letter responding to one written by Mr. Paul Fundling and stated "The cabin you refer to is Bristol Cabin. It is approximately 90 plus years old. It rents for \$6.00 per day and can sleep ten comfortably on

bunk beds. It has gas lights, stove and refrigerator. A half bath with shower is available. Pots, pans, and dishes are included. The cabin is within a Bear Sanctuary with all types of hunting in their respective seasons. Bear hunting is not good here as there are few if any to be found.” In 1979, Mr. Jack Bristol presented a bill of sale to remove “this property and all debris resulting from the salvage operation.”

Other family names in evidence today are:

F.P. Cover and Sons owned and operated a tannery in Andrews - **The Cover Trail**
William Leatherwood, Samuel Leatherwood, their son S.J. (Shadrick Jefferson Leatherwood - **Leatherwood Falls** is on the land which Samuel Leatherwood claimed when he settled there in 1839. Leatherwood Falls was initially called “Mill Branch.”

Tom Osborne – **Tom’s Cove Branch**

John and Mary Huskins – **Huskins Branch** – They probably lived in the small cabin (as indicated by existing structural remains) just to the east of the branch. Based on current evidence, the cabin may have been as small as about 15 x 18 feet. It had a dry-laid stone fireplace at one end of the structure.

Information taken from “A Brief History of the Leatherwood Falls Area” and “A Brief History of the Huskins Branch Area” By Bill Lea, Interpretive Specialist, U.S. Forest Service

Any mistakes made in giving a brief outline of these articles are solely the fault of the editor of the Newsflash.

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A Happy Backpacker – From an e-mail sent to John Ray: (Be Sure to Look at her Pics)

On Wed, Oct 14, 2009 at 12:28 PM, casey mcmahan wrote:

“John -- Fire's Creek is fantastic... loved it. We didn't make it quite as far as i'd hoped, but no big deal. we headed up the Bald Springs Trail. we missed the turn where the trail heads up the ridge, away from the creek but eventually figured out our mistake (this is very soon after the trailhead). i meant to build a cairn there on our way out, but forgot. there's a misleading cairn up river that needs to be removed. past this turn the trail is easy to follow until the very end. the upper reaches of this trail fade in and out. luckily, the trail hugs the creek all the way up to the top of the ridge so it wasn't hard to figure out. we set up camp in a rhoddie tunnel near where Bald Spring Tr intersects the loop trail. there were several blow downs along Bald Spring, but none were hard to get around.

the next day we crossed PotRock and Tusquitee and simply came back down the Far Bald Spring Trail and down the Forest Service Rd. Far Bald Spring Tr is beautiful. the upper fields were absolutely caked in goldenrod and white and purple asters (at least i think that's what it was).

oh, and my ailing volvo made it up the gravel road to Bald Spring Trailhead with no problem. it was slow going, but the road wasn't that bad at all.

thanks again for your help in planning this outing. your guide arrived in the mail just in time. i hope to finish the loop sometime soon. let me know if there's anything i can do to help keep development out of Fires Creek.

here are my pics:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/jcmcmahan49/FiresCreekNantahalaOct2009?feat=directlink>

casey”

Maintenance Plan for November

By: John Quinlan

The Trail Maintenance Plan for Nov 09 will consist of the following:

1. 5 Nov: Tusquittee Bald via Far Bald Springs; split team with some continuing on to Bob Allison and some returning via Far Bald to recover vehicles.
2. 12 Nov: NC; lan for two teams (Fires Creek) and (Chunky Gal) where there are "make-up" areas needing attention.
3. 19 Nov: GA: New area for us; the Coleman River Trail in Chattooga Ranger District.
4. 26 Nov: Happy Thanksgiving to all-not a work day!"

Trail Maintenance Report

By: John Quinlan

Thursday, 22 Oct 09 saw nine hardworking volunteers show up for some very much needed yet dirty work. Work it was as we working on the Rock House Creek Trail to create seven new water bars some 12-24 inches wide, reinforced by much hand labor with rocks, timber and rebar. To get there is always exciting as we traveling to Big Stamp in two 4-wheel drive vehicles. As in GA two weeks prior the real heroes were the drivers and their vehicles. Coming thru in spectacular fashion were Steve Sutherlin in the Big White Ford Diesel and Don Chesebro's Jeep Grand Cherokee. These two vehicles hauled the nine of us and Lots of equipment ranging from Pulaski's, fire rake, Mccloud, chain saw axe, drill, rebar etc to dig out and rock line a channel for water to drain clear of the trail. To really do the job right required much sweat, use of hands, and in the process no one escaped "clean". The really gritty award goes to Dave Richardson who was certainly not afraid to get his hands dirty. He was into those ditches as the water literally gushed forth-and continued gushing the whole time. Hours later with the sun shining the trail had actually begun to dry out a bit. The amount and volume of water that continued to pour forth amazed all of us. Jack Dugger was in his element as he worked very hard to keep all of us on track. He continually offered useful feedback (along with Dave) on how we were doing. Having a professional surveyor and Civil Engineer "on staff" materially assisted us in the accomplishment of our mission. One can truly say that we made great progress to help ensure that this section of some 100 yards of slick muddy trail was made a whole lot safer for passage. Kudos to all those folks who made the trip. Will not leave out Tom Shope who as our newest Chain saw qualified did us all proud by cutting a number of trees including a tricky one that was under considerable spring back tension. Good job Tom. Richard Sullivan, Gary Thompson, Steve Jersey, and John Quinlan slugged it out in the trenches to earn for themselves the "coveted "sore back" award as a souvenir. After returning back to Big Stamp we enjoyed cold drinks provided by your club. These were greatly appreciated. Later four of us (Tom, Richard, John were driven by Don-our Jeep chauffer) to investigate the FS road (340) reportedly blocked past the concrete bridge that leads to Far Bald Springs/Shinbone trails to determine if there were any clearing done and whether or not we might use this access for the 5 Nov work trip to Tusquittee Bald. The really good news is that we will be able to get thru there with some work on either our part of the FS. I have asked Bill Champion of the FS for some heavy eq to finish the clearing of that road. For now it is marginally passable in a narrow vehicle. We sincerely hope it will be widened to near full road width by the time it can be so gratefully be put to good use.

Once again I am very grateful for the hard work put forth and must say thanks too for the personal eq and supplies brought along by Jack and Dave to allow a better finished result. Kudos gentlemen!!!"

Check out “Dirty Dave” Having the Time of His Life – Mud Play for Kids:



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Scouting Report for November 10 Long Hike and Start Changed to 8:30

By: Irene Reiner

Frances and I scouted the Bartram Trail to Cheoah Bald yesterday. The creek is in full cry resulting in a truly glorious, spectacular experience. There are five bridges on the trail, one near the beginning and four on the upper reaches. There is one crossing about a mile in requiring wading across and four other creek crossing with no bridges. I hope that the log bridges we fashioned will still be there on the 10th as they worked well. All in all I did not feel that the creek crossings are a deterrent and stress that this is a particularly beautiful hike it is also the most strenuous in our hiking radius.

HIKING STICKS ARE ABSOLUTELY REQUIRED!!!

Due to the crossings and the steepness of the trail hiking sticks are essential. This is not a hike for those just wanting to see if they can do it - it is extremely taxing and I ask that only those willing to face the reality of a 3,000 foot elevation gain in five miles attempt to do it. The rewards are many.

I would be proud to say that we averaged two miles an hour but it took four hours to reach Cheoah Bald, we did spend considerable time building the log bridges and clearing some debris off the trail. It took three hours to return due to the steepness and slippery conditions of the trail.

I hope you will send this out as a Newsflash so that folks who are unaware of the high degree of difficulty can weigh their decision to make this hike.

Thank you.....Irene Reiner

Editors Note: Hike start changed to meet at 8:30 rather than previously scheduled time due to projected times to complete the hike.

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