



Mountain High Hikers Newsflash November 10, 2009

Just Discovered – Hop Tree – 100th Native Tree

Park rangers have just discovered the 100th species of tree native to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. It's a Hop Tree, sometimes called Wafer Ash. Its Latin name is *Ptelea trifoliata*.

This small tree or shrub of the citrus family has a straight trunk, rarely grows taller than 20 feet, and is a host for Giant Swallowtails and Tiger Swallowtails.



Photo from Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center

It is found from Canada to Florida, but is nowhere abundant. The name is derived from the fact that its fruit was once believed to be a viable substitute for hops in beer making. The oddball arbor's other claim to fame is that its bark and flowers both have a foul smell.

Besides raising the tally on park biodiversity, it's also a welcome relief for park interpreters and scribes for whom stating "99 species of native trees live in the park," always seemed awkward and slightly inadequate.

The hop trees were discovered on property recently added to the park in a land swap involving TVA and other entities. They are located on the extreme west end near Calderwood Lake and Highway 129.

From GSMA – October 2009 edition

So, You Wanna Be A Peakbagger?

Georgia 4000-foot Peaks

Ranked Peaks have 160 feet of Clean [Prominence](#)

| Rank | Peak Name | Elev-Ft | Prom-Ft | Range Name | Isol-Mi |
|----------------------|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1. | Brasstown Bald | 4783 | 2107 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 16 |
| 2. | Rabun Bald | 4696 | 1016 | South NC Blue Ridge Crest | 11 |
| 3. | Dicks Knob | 4600+ | 160 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 1 |
| 4. | Hightower Bald | 4568 | 808 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 2 |
| 5. | South Wolfpen Ridge | 4561 | 201 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 1 |
| 6. | Blood Mountain | 4440+ | 1476 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 11 |
| 7. | Tray Mountain | 4430 | 1481 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 8 |
| 8. | Grassy Ridge | 4400+ | 231 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 1 |
| 9. | Chimneytop Mountain | 4383 | 223 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 1 |
| 10. | Slaughter Mountain | 4338 | 458 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 1 |
| 11. | Coosa Bald | 4280+ | 960 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 2 |
| 11. | Double Spring Knob | 4280+ | 920 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 6 |
| 13. | Eagle Mountain | 4240+ | 600 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 4 |
| 14. | Brier Creek Bald | 4163 | 323 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 1 |
| 15. | Cowpen Mountain | 4151 | 1551 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 8 |
| 16. | Rich Knob | 4132 | 252 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 1 |
| 17. | Sassafras Knob | 4121 | 321 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 2 |
| 18. | Flat Top | 4114 | 354 | South NC Blue Ridge Crest | 1 |
| 19. | Alex Mountain | 4080+ | 360 | South NC Blue Ridge Crest | 1 |
| 20. | Big Bald Mountain | 4075 | 1755 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 17 |
| 21. | Mayapple Knob | 4054 | 174 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 1 |
| 22. | Rich Mountain | 4040+ | 331 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 1 |
| 22. | Double Knob South | 4040+ | 160 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 2 |
| 22. | Horsetrough Mountain | 4040+ | 1008 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 4 |
| 25. | Bald Mountain | 4005 | 885 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 4 |
| 26. | Rocky Mountain | 4000+ | 880 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 2 |
| 26. | Rattlesnake Knob | 4000+ | 160 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 1 |
| 26. | Spaniards Knob | 4000+ | 689 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 2 |
| 26. | Blue Mountain | 4000+ | 400 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 3 |
| | Tray Mountain-Southeast Peak | 4400+ | 0 | Georgia Blue Ridge | 0 |

For further information

<http://peakbagger.com/list.aspx?lid=21470&sort=RankNum&u=ft>

Stay Home, Watch TV, Get Inspired!

For those of you who receive National Geographic Television, make sure you catch the debut of “Wild Spaces: The Appalachian Trail.” The 50-minute documentary covers one of the places we care so deeply about protecting.

Show Times:

November 10 at 8 p.m. and 11 p.m. EST

November 17 at 4 p.m. EST

Who is this Guy? Could it be Morgancreek, aka Jim Morgan?



“We drove 2200 miles to walk 137, go figure.” A sense of adventure and a magical trail lures many to through hike or section hike the AT. Jim has been at it a while as he started section hiking in 1999. Although he has walked much of the trail, he still has sections to fill in New Hampshire and Maine. This year’s journey with friend Gary Galloway included a section from Bennington VT to Hanover NH.

They averaged a little over 11.4 miles a day, in 12 days, the shortest was 9 miles and the longest was 15. Most days they were hiking by 8 am and in shelter by 1 to 4 pm. He was in his sleeping bag by dark. He experienced 6 days of rain, 6 days without. Jim stayed in shelters except for one night when he went to resupply and stayed at the inn at the long trail near Rutland. There he was rewarded by an Irish pub that was celebrating the 250 anniversary of Guinness Beer. (Now that’s true “trail magic” at its best.)

Along the way Jim meet south bounders hiking to “where the Magnolias” bloom. He also met the 182th employee hired by Microsoft who was into light weight hiking. (Hey bet he could easily afford the costly light weight equipment.) He also met an ATC officer, Jeff Marion in one shelter. Jeff has been instrumental in lowering camping impact by building raised tent platforms at camp sites. The ATC plays such an important role in the trail.

Jim celebrated his 67th birthday while on the trail. Whether he celebrated with his favorite trail food of peanut butter and semi-sweet chocolate remains unknown! He remarks that at Stratton Ski area he got a free ride on the gondola to the bottom and purchased a \$16 cheeseburger. (Ouch.)

Morgancreek’s favorite part of the trail completed to date was the Shenandoah National Park. He states that he is in awe of others in MHH who have hiked all of the AT. Jim says “it is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters in the end.”

MHH has AT completers: Jerry Carnes (Rockkicker), John Orr (Radar), Bert Kunze (The Bavarian), Virginia Lane, and still section hikers: Bill Oswald (Oz), Wayne Buchanan, Greg Lane, and of course, MorganCreek.

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A tired MHH group after shopping at “Sacks Sixth Avenue Store” at Tate City Mall



Rock City—Move Over!

Trail Maintenance Report **By: John Quinlan**

"Thursday, 5 Nov, saw 8 highly motivated MHH volunteers head to Fires Creek for what would be a long day of trail maintenance. We did our final link up with all of our folks at the Leatherwood Falls picnic area in Fires Creek. We then drove 45-50 minutes to the trailhead at Far Bald Springs Trail. This process was made possible by the Tusquittee Ranger District having just cleared a portion of the FS road approx 1.6 miles past the concrete bridge. There had been two mud/tree slides in this area blocking the road. Enroute to the trailhead we met Manny an FS equipment operator who was heading to the same area to clear game plots. Being a newer employee we were happy to help him confirm some his directions. We headed up the long steep trail (1.8 miles) with our heavy equipment load; including three brushcutters and two chain saws. We reached the Rim and then proceeded East to the intersection of the Chunky Gal trail. There we ate lunch, primarily to avoid the high winds Thursday and afterward headed up to Tusquittee Bald-one of the highest points on the Rim Trail at 5240 feet. There, due to the previous year's hard work of now retired Ranger Terry B. Dickey last October 08 we primarily could use our heavy duty brushcutters, instead of chain saws, to cut back the vegetation that had grown, in some cases, to four feet in one year. Last year Terry strenuously worked to reopen the view looking toward Nantahala Lake that had become totally obscured over time. Four of us, Richard Sullivan, Rod Whitefield, Bob Stone (one of "Few Good Men"-for those with a military background), and John Quinlan continued down to Bob Allison Campground using the Chunky Gal trail to clear vegetation and blowdowns that had occurred over the past year. Once we past the Big Buckeye Tree on the way down we realized that we had completed all of the Chunky Gal trail for 2009.

The remaining four Tom Shope, Jim Morgan, Ralph Aanensen, and, of course, another "good woman" Bobbi Lehoullier (our only lady on the trail with us this day!) stayed on top to finish clearing the area AND, for the very first time, cutting open yet another lake view-this time facing the other direction back to Lake Chatuge. So trail users now have one peak with two lake views of two separate lakes. Tusquittee Bald is the only peak in our area where I know that this is possible.

When the four got down to Bob Allison we were met by a true trail angel in the form of Pam Sullivan who had agreed to pick us up at the end of our long, tiring day. Not only did we get our transportation but she brought food!! She brought

grapes, nuts, and really scrumptious cookies. Guess which we all chose? You could say the nutritious grapes but you'd be wrong. WE ALL devoured those cookies! Thank you from all of us, Pam.

Back in Hayesville we rejoined Tom and the equipment vehicle and sorted the gear out for next weeks' trek on both the Chunky Gal and Fires Creek trails. We plan to hit both areas, staffing permitting, to clean up some areas that need special attention. We extend to all an invitation to join us on the 12th of Nov for what will be an easier day! See the web site for details.

Once again I owe great thanks to each one of these dedicated trail volunteers. As Steve Lohr has so correctly said, and I echo, 'We could not do it (have these trail open, blazed, and safe for trail users) without you.'

Thanks to all, John



Vote for Caption:

Equipment Maintainer Worked To Exhaustion! _____

MHHer Wowed By View _____

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“Duke Power will be releasing an extraordinary amount of water through the spillway of the Nantahala Lake Dam from now until January to facilitate some repairs to their power generating system (they need lower water levels in the lake to accomplish the work). The water being released on a continuous basis will flood a part of the road below the dam (known as the "concrete ford"), making it impassable and will block the Bartram Trail that normally uses that road. Water levels in the Nantahala River will be higher than normal for this time of year.

If you plan on hiking in the Nantahala Lake and/or Gorge area or traversing the Nantahala River below the Lake, you are encouraged to stay informed on the status of this increased water flow by visiting the Duke Power Website:

<http://www.duke-energy.com/lakes/nantahala/nantahala-lake-levels.asp> "Date Lake Message Updated".