

TENNESSEE TRAILS

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Calendar:

July 21, Hike, Walls of Jericho, David Stidham, leader.

August 5, Nashville Chapter hike, Narrows of the Harpeth, John Hart.

August 18-19, Weekend on the Hiwassee, David Rhyme.

Sept. 4-9, Fifth National Trails Symposium, Duluth, Minn.

The Nashville Chapter will be the host for the July TTA membership activity. This will be a trip to the Walls of Jericho on Saturday, July 21, led by David Stidham. David writes:

We will meet at the National Guard headquarters on U. S. 64 a few miles west of Winchester (Franklin Co.) at 9:00 a.m. CDT. The Nashville folks can meet at the Cumberland Museum at 7:30 a.m. to carpool. East Tennessee folks may want to make similar arrangements. The hike will begin on top of the Cumberland Plateau and follow old logging trails down the escarpment to Turkey Creek. About a mile of off-trail walking will take us to the head of a beautiful gorge lined with towering cliffs - the Walls of Jericho.

Caves, unique rock formations and the best swimming hole around await us there. Bring your swim wear. It will be worth it. Without backtracking, we will ascend the escarpment via old trails. The round trip hiking distance will be 6 to 8 miles. The old trails are Class II, but expect some long grades to get back on top of the Plateau. The off-trail stream bed will require some rock-hopping, but mostly flat rock work. There will be a tricky climb to the head of the gorge which will require a handline, provided by the leader. Topographic maps of the region are Pitcher Ridge, Tenn., and Hytop.

Bill Sterling of the North Alabama Backpackers wrote to David about recent developments concerning the lands which include the Walls of Jericho. Here are some excerpts from his letter:

"As you probably know, the "Walls are part of an area that is currently being promoted as a new National Forest, and, more specifically, is part of the Carter estate, which is in litigation.

"The establishment of the Cumberland Plateau National Forest is a major goal of the people of northern Alabama and southern Tennessee. It is appropriate that the responsible agencies representing trails interests abide by the wishes of those who administer the lands upon which we build and utilize our trails. On behalf of the Alabama Trails Association, North Alabama Backpackers, the Alabama Conservancy, and numerous hunting clubs and individuals, we request your support of the Cumberland Plateau National Forest, and your compliance with the requests of the landowners in this area. (Obtain permission before using the area.)

"Further information regarding the Cumberland Plateau National Forest project may be obtained from the North Alabama Backpackers, Rt. 2, Box 109, Trinity, AL 35673, (205) 355-0400, or the Carter Mountain Committee, Franklin County Courthouse, Winchester, TN 37398."

The Tennessee Conservation League adopted a resolution at its annual meeting in Chattanooga March 3, 1979, endorsing the establishment of the Cumberland Plateau National Forest, with Carter Mountain, the estate of the late Harry Lee Carter as the core. The Carter Mountain lands include about 50,000 acres in Franklin County and 20,000 acres in adjoining Jackson County, Alabama.

Carl M. Clark, president of the Kentucky Trails Association, has sent a "special message" to participants in the 1978 Southeast Trail Conference, soliciting invitations from prospective hosts for the 1980 conference.

Tennessee Trails Association hosted the first two Southeast Conferences and was co-host with-KyTA for the 1978 Conference.

The 1980 SE Trail Conference would be a good chance for the Alabama Backpackers to promote interest in the Cumberland Plateau National Forest. TTA would no doubt help again, as usual.

The Big Hill Pond National Recreation Trail was dedicated Friday, June 22. Part of this system is described in our book, TENNESSEE TRAILS. In his invitation to the dedication, Tim McCall, Assistant Commissioner of Conservation, wrote: "Located in McNairy County in what will eventually be a State Environmental Education Area, the trail system is composed of two loops. One loop, the Turkey Call Trail, has two shelters for overnight backpackers. The other loop circumvents Big Hill Pond and a large lake."

The Sheltoewe Trace in Daniel Boone National Forest in Kentucky was dedicated as a National Recreation Trail Saturday, June 23, at Cumberland Falls State Resort Park, scene of the 1978 SE Trails Conference. Grimes Slaughter helped with negotiations with Stearns Coal and Lumber Co. last year for permission to route a trail across their lands, connecting the Sheltoewe Trace with our John Muir Trail in Pickett State Park. The Sheltoewe Trace is the 100th National Recreation Trail in the system.

TTA's writing members, Nick Sullivan of the Nashville Tennessean and Evan Means, editor of TENNESSEE TRAILS, were in Albuquerque, New Mexico for the 52nd annual conference of the Outdoor Writers Association of America and couldn't cover the dedications. Evan is a past president of OWAA.

Our book, TENNESSEE TRAILS, is doing well. There seems to have been a mixup between The East Woods Press and their wholesaler in Nashville, but we hope that has been resolved. Tell your bookstore contacts to order copies direct from The East Woods Press, 820 East Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28203.

Blue Ridge backpack store in the Knoxville area had sold out its first order of TENNESSEE TRAILS by the end of May, as had the backpack outfitter Russell Fryer visited in Gatlinburg. Gateway Book Stores, in Knoxville, Oak Ridge and Gatlinburg, finally made contact with the publisher after their wholesaler showed none in stock and none on order, and had a supply by June 13.

The Editor spent a weekend after the OWAA meeting with N. T. "Red" Salvin, who worked with us on the Cumberland Trail several years ago, in Green Valley, Arizona. Red has ordered two copies of the book, one for himself and one for the Green Valley Public Library.

Donald Ledin, trail administrator for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, is handling registration for the Fifth National Trails Symposium, to be held in Duluth September 4-9. Highlights of the event will include an evening boat tour and reception in Duluth Harbor on the 4th; field trips to visit city, state and federal trails; a banquet and entertainment on Thursday, and a live TV debate on Friday.

For information, write to Donald Ledin, Department of Natural Resources, Box 39, Centennial Building, St. Paul, MN 55155.

We are indebted to Jeannette Fitzwilliams for a copy of the Virginia Trails Association NEWS. Jeannette has retired from Government and is devoting full time to VTA. Those who have met her at various trail conferences know that she is a hard worker.

This issue of TENNESSEE TRAILS is late because the Editor didn't get back from the Southwest until June 26. The deadline for the August issue will be July 20. Send us your news.

A reservation card for the Weekend on the Hiwassee is enclosed with this issue. We'll give full details next month.