PHOC Kicks off the New Year with a Hike to Hanging Rock State Park

Our rating system provides a useful, general gauge of a hike’s difficulty. It factors in distance and elevation gain and is intended to help you choose hikes that you will find most enjoyable.

**R0-R10** These are more walks than hikes. They’re usually close to home, the trails are flat, and distances are generally short. An after-dinner walk around the block would be rated R1 or R2. Our Wednesday Night Walks are R5.

**R10-R20** Most of these hikes will be in the lower mountains and foothills. Distances will be about 5-8 miles, with vertical ranging from 500-1000 feet...not easy if you’re new to hiking! Trails will be dirt and rock. As long as you’re in moderately good shape, you should be able to enjoy the outing.

**R20-R30** Hikes in the low end of this range will be too hard and overly stressful for many new members. Plan on an all-day trip, with at least 4 hours of continuous hiking in rugged and steep terrain. At a minimum, be sure to pack two quarts of water, lunch, a snack, and rain gear.

**R30-R40** These are strenuous hikes. They will usually be 10+ miles, with climbs of 2000+ feet. They’re appropriate only for those who have done a number of lower rated hikes.

**R40+** These hikes are usually 12 or more miles with 3000 feet or more of elevation gain. They’re appropriate only for fit, experienced hikers. Check with hike leader about the trip if you are wanting to do this trip for the first time.

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### Outings Protocol

- Inform the outing leader you are going to attend. Arrive early for the outing.
- If you carpool, reimburse your driver for driving costs. A suggested amount is $4.00 for each hour of driving.
- Always take snacks, lunch, water and rain gear.
- Bring extra clothes to change into after the outing.
- To keep vehicles clean and the air fresh, always carry something to hold muddy boots and sweaty clothes for the ride back from a hike.
- Your participation is at your own risk.

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### Piedmont Environmental Center Map
Outings

The Wednesday Night Walkers will meet every Wednesday evening in the parking lot beside Tex & Shirley’s at the Friendly Shopping Center at 6:30 pm for a brisk walk before dinner. The group will have rotating leaders. The leaders are Carol Hamley, John Hanson, Barbara Kennedy and Lana Regan. The group will go to dinner after the walk. If bad weather cancels the walk, the group will still meet at 6:30 and go to dinner.

March 4 Wednesday Night Walk and Dinner

March 7 Brinegar Cabin
Saturday Doughton Park

Let’s hike up the Cedar Ridge trail in Blue Ridge Doughton Park to Brinegar Cabin, sit on or with our backs to the wall, or on the grass by the cabin, and talk, have a nice lunch, and then hike back down Cedar Ridge again to the cars. The trail up to Brinegar Cabin is a steady pull for 4 miles, but this is an out-and-back and all reasonable paces will be accommodated. Please call for time and place. [R-35, 9 miles].

March 8 Lake Brandt Loop
Sunday @1:30 pm Greensboro Watershed Trails

Green, and Owls Roost watershed trails that comprise the Lake Brandt Loop. Portions of the hike will be on the lake Brandt Greenway. When we are at the Owls Roost trailhead, just after passing the Palmetto Trail trailhead, there will be an option to continue on the Greenway back to Bur-Mil Park for those who do not want to do the Owls Roost Trail portion of the hike. Proceed North on 220, past Horse Pen Creek Rd, then right at the traffic light at Owls Roost, and then left into Bur-Mil Park. Bear right at the club house, park in the circular driveway at the bottom of the hill, just below the Wildlife Center. No need to call, but please do if you have questions. [11 mi, R-15].

March 11 Wednesday Night Walk and Dinner

March 12 Monthly Meeting
Thursday Bur-Mil Park Club House

Refreshments and fellowship at 7:00. Business meeting at 7:30. Gale Magann will present our program. She will lead us along her October hikes in Bryce, Zion, and Grand Canyon NP.

March 14 US National Whitewater Center, Charlotte

Let’s meet at 1:30 pm at the Wildlife Center in Bur-Mil Park and hike the Piedmont, Nat Green, and Owls Roost watershed trails that comprise the Lake Brandt Loop. Portions of the hike will be on the lake Brandt Greenway. When we are at the Owls Roost trailhead, just after passing the Palmetto Trail trailhead, there will be an option to continue on the Greenway back to Bur-Mil Park for those who do not want to do the Owls Roost Trail portion of the hike. Proceed North on 220, past Horse Pen Creek Rd, then right at the traffic light at Owls Roost, and then left into Bur-Mil Park. Bear right at the club house, park in the circular driveway at the bottom of the hill, just below the Wildlife Center. No need to call, but please do if you have questions. [11 mi, R-15].

March 14 US National Whitewater Center, Charlotte

Please join me for a trip to the Whitewater Center in Charlotte for kayaking and other activities. The 3 options are as follows:

1) pay for parking ($5/car) and walk around the center to see all it has to offer, listen
to live music, watch the man-made river being dyed green and watch kayakers and rafters having a fun time.

2) for the whitewater paddler with all his/her own gear – pay $25/pp and kayak all day on the man made river, and do all the above ($5 for parking)

3) for the adventurous – zipline, high ropes course, mountain bike, whitewater raft, flatwater kayak and paddleboard, obstacle course, climbing wall and all the other activities. ($55/pp) and $5 parking.

For those interested in carpooling, I will work out meeting places along with a time.

March 14 Doughton Park Loop Saturday
Doughton Park Loop
lowescal@aol.com

Please join me in hiking the beautiful Doughton Park loop trail, up Cedar Ridge and down Flat Rock Ridge trails. Panoramic views in the spring. This hike is for fit and experienced hikers, bring lunch, plenty of water and rain gear; the weather can be unpredictable. Please call or email me for details. [16.5 miles, 3,500 feet, R-52].

March 15 Guilford Courthouse Sunday
National Military Park, Greensboro

This is an historical hike and lecture that reviews the events of March 15, 1781 when General Nathanael Greene’s revolutionary army was defeated by Lord Cornwallis’s British troops. This battle led directly to the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, Virginia on October 19, just seven months later. We will view a film, a map lecture, the exhibits in the museum, and hike the military park to see the actual location of the events. This is an easy four-mile hike. We will start at 8:30 am to finish in time to see the special reenactments offered. Meet at the Guilford Courthouse National Military Park headquarters building front porch (not to be confused with the Tannenbaum Village) on New Garden Road at the corner of Old Battleground Road. 4 miles [R4].

March 18 Wednesday Night Walk and Dinner
March 18
Wednesday Night Walk and Dinner

March 21 South Mountains State Park Saturday
South Mountains State Park
Outer Loop

The best time of year to hike what I call the “outer loop” of the South Mountains State Park is in on a warm winter day or in early spring, when the bare deciduous trees afford unobstructed panoramic views of the many peaks we like to hike and the heat of the sun brings out the lovely scent of the evergreens lining long stretches of the trail meandering up the ridge. This is a new addition to the PHOC’s hikes portfolio, a variant on the park’s inner loop, with which many of you are familiar. We will start and finish on familiar trails (such as Horseridge, Possum, Upper Falls, and the High Shoals Falls loop), but will venture further out on the Horseridge trail and along Lower CCC, Fox, and Jacob’s Branch trails. A great portion of the hike will be on a soft, wide trail, gentle to the feet, and conducive to socializing. If the weather is right, we will take our lunch basking in the
sun that shines through the gentle sway of the tall evergreens that line the trail. We will also go through rhododendron groves, cross a stream a few times over rocks and over bridges, and experience a couple of steeper but shorter climbs. And of course, we will finish the hike by visiting the spectacular falls. Our current reading is a distance of 11 miles and 2400 feet of elevation gain [R-35]. Call or email for meeting times and places.

March 22
Sunday at 1:30 pm
Bald Eagle Trail
Lake Higgins Watershed Trail

Let’s meet at 1:30 pm at the Lake Higgins watershed trailhead for an out and back total of 8 easy miles. Proceed North on 220 (aka Battleground Ave), past the turnoff at Owl’s Roost Road to Bur Mil Park, past the spillway at the bottom of the hill, and then left onto Hamburg Mill Road. Proceed past the Marina entrance gate at the top of the hill, and park in the gravel parking lot on the left just past the fence. [R-7].

March 25
Wednesday Night Walk and Dinner

March 26
Thursday @ 7:00 pm
Taste of Thai
1500 Mill St

Please join me at 7:00 pm to enjoy some authentic Thai food in a relaxing setting. I believe they have won the best Thai food in the triad for several years. Please call or email me by Tuesday, March 24th, so I can let them know we are coming. Hope to see you there.

March 28
Saturday
Rock Castle Gorge
Stuart, VA

Only about 75 miles away is one of the prettiest and most interesting hikes we do. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at GSO Shoney’s, or 9:00 a.m. at Hardee’s in Stuart, Va. This hike involves 2-3 miles of steep walking, 3-4 miles of panoramic views, and 4 miles of downhill, through the woods, and creekside. Please contact me if you plan to participate. [11 miles, R-41].

March 29
Sunday @ 1:30 pm
Lake Brandt Loop
Greensboro Watershed Trails

Let’s meet at 1:30 PM at the Wildlife Center in Bur-Mil Park and hike the Piedmont, Nat Green, and Owls Roost watershed trails that comprise the Lake Brandt Loop. Portions of the hike will be on the Lake Brandt Greenway. When we are at the Owls Roost trailhead, just after passing the Palmetto Trail trailhead, there will be an option to continue on the Greenway back to Bur-Mil Park for those who do not want to do the Owls Roost Trail portion of the hike. Proceed North on 220, past Horse Pen Creek Rd, then right at the traffic light at Owls Roost, and then left into Bur Mil Park. Bear right at the club house, park in the circular driveway at the bottom of the hill, just below the Wildlife Center. No need to call, but please do if you have questions. [11 mi, R-15].

April 1
Wednesday Night Walk and Dinner
April 4  Appalachian Trail @
Saturday  Whitetop Mtn., Mt Rogers
Recreation Area, VA

This will be a shuttle hike that includes the portion of the Appalachian Trail over the shoulder of Whitetop Mountain from VA 601 to Elk Garden. One interesting feature of this section of the hiking route is the change in vegetation from trees typical of the southern Appalachians to ones common in the central Appalachians. Views from the side of Whitetop toward the mountains of northwestern North Carolina and eastern Tennessee can be outstanding. At Elk Garden where half of the cars will be parked, the outing participants who wish can continue on the AT to the southern side of Mount Rogers and a beautiful viewing point overlooking a high meadow where ponies often graze. The popular dinner stop in Sparta following hikes in the Mount Rogers area is an excellent family-owned Mexican restaurant, Mis Arados. Bring water, lunch, and rain gear. If interested in this outing, contact John, preferably by noon on Friday before the hike.

To Elk Garden only: 7 miles, 2000 feet, R-27; to the side of Mount Rogers with return to Elk Garden: 13 miles, 3000 feet, R-43.

April 5  Nat Greene Trail
Sunday  Greensboro Watershed

Join me for a 5.2 mile up and back hike on the Nat Greene trail. We’ll leave from the Lake Brandt Marina at 2:00 and follow this trail to the greenway, which will be our turning around point. Meet at the trailhead at the end of the parking lot. Email or call if you have questions. [5.2 miles, R-7]

April 8  Wednesday Night Walk and
Dinner

April 9  Pho Hien Vuong
Thursday  4109-A Spring Garden St

Let’s meet for dinner at 7 pm at the Vietnamese restaurant, Pho Hien Vuong on Spring Garden St. This is an informal, casual atmosphere restaurant with outstanding food. Please call or email me before Thursday so I can let them know how many will be attending.
April 11  Rock Castle Gorge  Woolwine, VA

Join me on a Spring day for a club favorite loop hike. We start at the end of CCC camp road off Route 8 beyond Woolwine, VA. Once we finish a steep uphill through some woods we are rewarded with open meadows and scenic views along the Blue Ridge Parkway. We’ll lunch at the old AT shelter. Afterwards as we descent into the gorge we’ll see gigantic boulders. The final stretch back to the cars is beside a mountain stream. Please email me for times and locations. Winston and Greensboro folks will meet at Hardee’s in Stuart, VA on the way. [11 miles, 3000 ft, R-41].

April 11  Nat Greene/Palmetto Trails  Lake Brandt

Join me for an 8-mile hike on the Nat Greene and Palmetto trails. These are pretty trails with views of Lake Brandt. We will meet at the Lake Brandt Marina - Nat Greene watershed trailhead (on the left as you enter the marina parking lot) at 9:00 am. Bring water and a snack. Call me or email me if you have questions. [8 miles, R-12].

April 12  Bur-Mil/Piedmont Trail Hike  Lake Brandt

Let’s meet at noon at the Wildlife Center in Bur Mil Park and hike the Owls Roost watershed trail to the Greenway, then back again on the Greenway in time for the club Spring Fling. Proceed North on 220, past Horse Pen Creek on the left, then right at the traffic light at Owls Roost, and then left into Bur Mil Park. Bear right at the club house, park in the circular drive way at the bottom of the hill. Email if questions; no need to call. [5 mi.]
April 12  Spring Fling
Sunday @ 2:00 pm  Bur-Mil Park - Shelter #2
Social@PiedmontHikingand
OutingClub.org

Join us at 2 pm for our annual celebration of spring with a good ole American Cook Out! Bring your favorite side dish, appetizer or dessert to share. Bring a serving utensil for your dish. The club will provide hot dogs, hamburgers, plates, cups, silverware, tea and soda. Bur-Mil Park regulations allow beer and wine in all shelters, but no glass containers are allowed so attendees who want to bring their own adult beverages should bear this in mind. Enjoy fishing, hiking, biking, volleyball or visiting with friends. Festivities and meal begin at 2:00 pm at Bur-Mil Park off of Owl’s Roost Road in Greensboro. Meet at shelter #2 on the left just past the swimming pool. Please RSVP via email so we know how many burgers and hot dogs to provide.

April 15  Wednesday Night Walk and Dinner

April 17-19  Hot Springs Trailfest Weekend
Friday-Sunday  AT Hike
Hot Springs, NC

Join me for Trailfest in Hot Springs. Hot springs is the only real “trail town” in NC with the AT going through Main Street. Each spring the town has a Trailfest Weekend to celebrate the hiker community. Although the exact schedule is not yet published, events in prior years have included lots of music, camp stove cook-off, hiker parade, ropes courses, climbing wall, etc. In addition to the festival events, there are plenty of outdoor activities in Hot Springs such as hiking and paddling.

There will be something for everyone this weekend. I am planning to lead a 7- to 14-mile hike (exact length to be determined by participants) on the AT on Saturday morning. The plan is to go after work on Friday, hike Saturday, enjoy the festival, have dinner as a group Saturday night and drive home on Sunday. Hot Springs offers camping by the river, lots of B&B’s, hostels and motels. Everyone is responsible for their own accommodations. Please contact me if you have questions or plan to attend.

April 17-19  Merchants Millpond State Park
Friday-Sunday  Gatesville, NC

Join us for a canoe/kayak/camping trip to Merchants Millpond, NC’s most unique state park. On Saturday we will paddle the 760-acre lake which has ancient moss draped cypress trees and areas totally covered in sunburst water lilies. We hope to be able to paddle upstream and view a 1000+ year old cypress tree; a nature religious moment. Sunday morning we will paddle Bennett’s Creek, a black water creek flowing to the Chowan River. Yes, we hope to see some water snakes and a few resident alligators in comfortable non-intimidating encounters. The bothersome bugs should not have emerged however, to see a tick would not be unexpected. We will leave Friday morning for the 4½ hour drive to the NE corner of NC and then canoe a mile to a beautiful hardwood island campsite. First time boaters and campers are welcome. Boats can be arranged. Call me for more details. See the park’s website at www.ncparks.gov.
This challenging two-version hike will be on the Appalachian Trail between Carvers Gap and US 19E. Roan Mountain is an ecological wonder, and this is one of the AT’s most scenic stretches — perfect for a crisp fall day. One group will start from US 19E and hike the 15 miles to Carvers Gap climbing 5300 vertical feet. Another group will begin at Carvers Gap and cover the same 15 miles; while climbing 2600 vertical feet, their end point will be at a lower elevation than their start. The groups will meet up on the trail and exchange car keys, eliminating the need for a long shuttle. This hike is for fit and experienced hikers only. Bring water, lunch and rain gear, as the weather can be unpredictable. Please email or call David for further details, meeting time and place, preferably prior to Friday before the hike. Uphill: 15 miles, 5300 feet, R-68; Downhill: 15 miles, 2600 feet, R-41.

Let’s meet at 1:30 PM for an easy, scenic hike along the wooded southern edge of Lake Townsend. From Battleground Ave or Lawndale, proceed east on Pisgah Church, continue east on Lees Chapel, bear left at Brightwood School, turn left at the T at Rudd Station Road, cross over the RR tracks and keep straight on South Shore Road for about 1/3 of a mile. Park in the gravel parking lot on your left. Allow about fifteen minutes drive time from Battleground. No need to call. [8 mi, R-8]

Join me for two of my favorite things – hiking and drinking wine. We will start with a moderate hike of approximately 7 miles and 1600 feet of elevation gain. The hiking route will include a portion of the Stone Mountain loop, as well as Cedar Rock and Wolf Rock trails. We’ll have to move along on the trail in order to get to McRitchie Winery and Ciderworks to partake in various libations and enjoy a potluck lunch that we bring ourselves to their grounds. Participation is limited, so contact me for additional details.

Join me for a nice workout at Hanging Rock. We will begin at the Visitor Center and proceed to Wolf Rock. From there we will continue to Cook’s Wall out and back, and eventually make our way to the Moore’s Knob Trail, up to the fire tower, where, if the weather cooperates, the views will be magnificent. From Moore’s Knob, we will descend by the stairs, eventually making our way back to the visitor center. Bring water, lunch, and rain gear. Call or email for meeting times and places. +/- 9 miles; 2000 ft. elevation gain; R-29.
This hike will take us on a beautiful stretch of the AT, north of Roan Mountain, between 19E and Walnut Mountain. This is a revival of a once beloved hike. A few of us recently decided to check it out again and we hiked it a couple of times, each time in a different direction between the two end points. The south to north version (19E to Walnut Mountain) is the more strenuous version (3100 feet of elevation gain). The north to south version is easier (only 2400 feet of elevation gain) but it offers the best views of the Roan Mountain area. The trail is overall gentle to the feet, with no great terrain challenges, and there are two waterfalls, one of which is accessed via an off-trail spur. As this trail runs along many rhododendron groves, late April should be a wonderful time of year to enjoy the deep dark green and healthy texture of the foliage as the bushes are getting ready to open up in full bloom. We estimate the distance to be 11 miles.

**Plan A** is to hike the easier version (2400 feet, R35) and it will involve a shuttle. However, if there is a sufficient number of hikers who would like to do the more strenuous version (3100 feet, R42), we will move to **Plan B**, a key exchange hike, which will allow each hiker to choose his/her version. If we go to Plan B, I will lead the easier version (Walnut Mountain to 19E) and David Memory will lead the more strenuous version (19E to Walnut Mountain). The decision will be made the morning of the hike when all hikers are accounted for, ready and willing. Call or email for meeting times and places.

Let’s meet at 1:30 PM at the Wildlife Center in Bur-Mil Park and hike the Owls Roost watershed trail to the Greenway, and then back again, using the fire lane trail for part of the return trip. Proceed North on 220, past Horse Pen Creek Rd (on the left), then right at the traffic light at Owls Roost, and then left into Bur-Mil Park. Bear right at the club house, park in the circular driveway at the bottom of the hill, just below the Wildlife Center. No need to call, but please do if you have questions. [7 mi, R-9].

**April 26, 27, 28, 29**  
**Shenandoah National Park, Virginia**

**When:** Leave GSO on April 26 (Sunday), April 27 (Monday), April 28 (Tuesday), and Depart Shenandoah Park to return GSO on April 29 (Wednesday.)

**Where:** Shenandoah National Park, Virginia

**Drive time:** Approximately 4½ hours, 242 miles

**Skyland Lodge:** Rooms are estimated at $120 per night plus tax for 2 Queen Beds with double occupancy. There may be a Promotional discount available for the third night that is not yet finalized for the park system concession for 2015. I have reserved several rooms and you may make your own at 877-847-1919. Ask for the PHOC room rate.
will update room finance after contacting the park in early February. Transportation to the park, roommate assignments and meals to the park will be on your own.

**Big Meadows Campground:** There is opportunity to camp at the Big Meadows Campground. Reservations are required. Call 800-365-2267 or 877-444-6777 or visit www.recreation.gov. Showers, camp store, laundry, water. This campground is 10 miles away from Skyland Lodge on the Skyline Drive through the park. Additionally, there are several good hikes near the Campground such as the “Rapidan Camp” made famous by Presidents Roosevelt and Hoover.

**Activity:** As some would call it — this is a “destination” trip to stay in the Skyland Lodge and Shenandoah Park. The opportunity will be available to hike a variety of trails and difficulties. Suggestions for hikes will be made at a later date. Gale and others have been to this park and we have information for you to select from. You may also like to research information regarding the area on your own in the months prior to the trip. Other recreation opportunities for exploring “Luray Caverns”, discovering other landmarks or doing nothing but sitting and enjoying the park from the Lodge. Gale Magann and Lynette Tullos will be co-leading this trip opportunity.

**Participants:** approximately 12 people. All levels welcome! You will be able to plan your personal activity level from various area offerings.

Rooms will need to be reserved under your name and financial card as soon as possible to hold the accommodation. I will update to interested individuals as soon as the park reservations confirms rate in early February. Please come and enjoy this wonderful opportunity and let us know soon!

**April 27**  
**Power Walk**  
**Monday**  
**Greensboro City Greenways**

We will walk 7 miles on the city greenway maintaining at least a 4 mph pace. Our objective is a good cardio workout. If you are working up to this pace, we will catch you on the way back since it will be an out and back. Please email or call for time and location.

**April 29**  
**Wednesday Night Walk and Dinner**

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**Don’t let this be the last issue of the Trailmarker that you receive!**

If renewing your membership for 2015 has slipped your mind, please take a moment to renew your membership soon. You can renew with the click of a button (or two) at the “Join or Renew Now” burst at the website, or by using the membership renewal form on page 15 of this issue of the Trailmarker if you prefer to support our U.S. Postal Service. As a final reminder, after February 15th, PHOC Google Groups broadcast messages and future Trailmarkers will only be sent to members whose membership dues have been paid for the year.