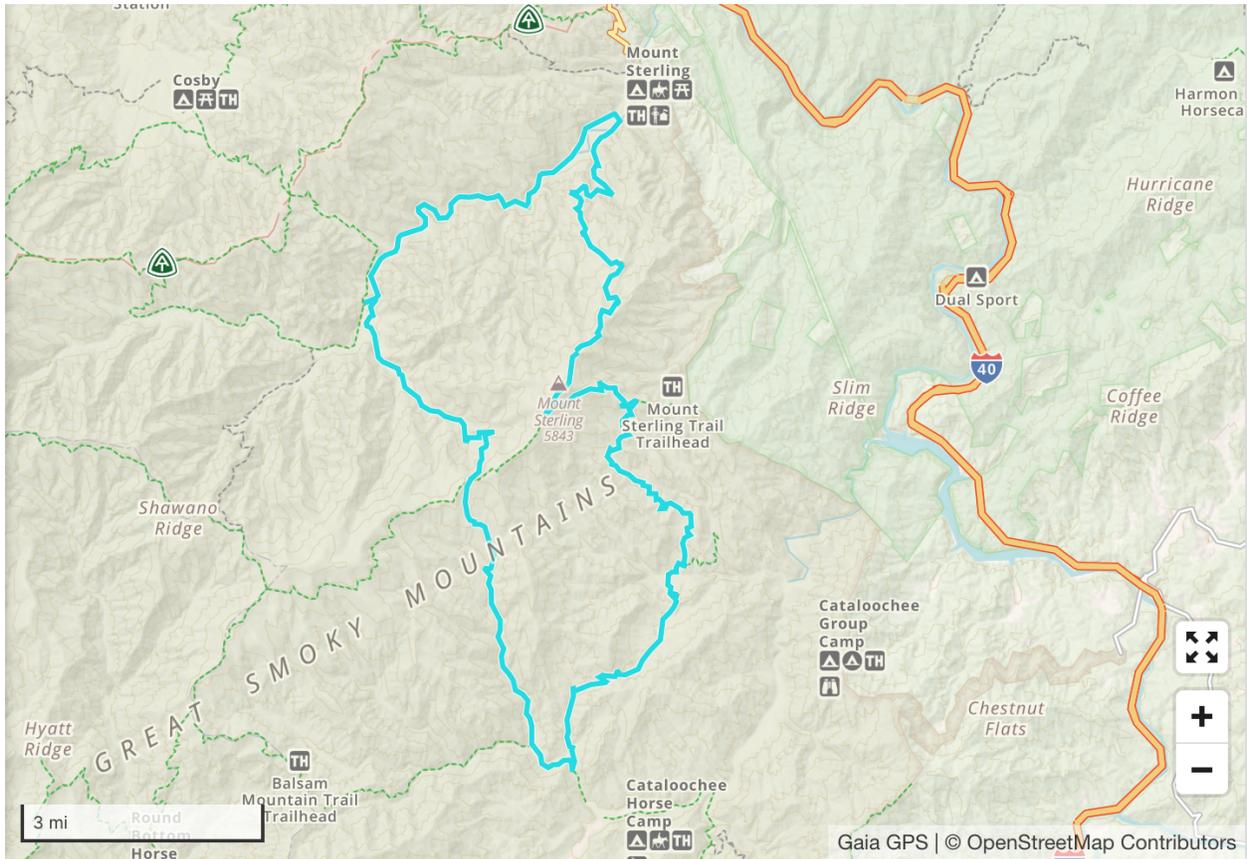


9/17-9/20

# GHOSTS

## GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NP



### Description

This loop through the eastern part of the Smokies is haunted with ghosts of many different landscapes past. During the last ice age, the glaciers pushed many species of plants and animals south where they took refuge in what is now this part of the range. As the glaciers receded, the changing climate left islands of these spruce-fir forests and northern hardwood forests stranded up on the highest elevations of the park – forest types more commonly found in eastern Canada or New England. In slightly more recent memory, old growth forests saved from logging by their remoteness hint at what thousands of square miles across the east coast used to look like. Mixed into these areas are the “ghost forests”, stark grey stands of dead Fraser fir trees or hemlocks ravaged by non-native insects. We will also pass through the abandoned and restored structures of Little Cataloochee, the former site of a 19th century community that lasted

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until the creation of the national park. We will talk about the presence of the Cherokee people who hunted and grazed the coves before European settlers. What does it feel like to walk through the visible and invisible layers of a place in the present?

We will hike 5-10 miles a day to explore different elevation forests. At night, relaxing together over dinner and a fire, we'll share our experiences of these multiple landscapes and our own ghost stories from the woods.

## Trip Details

### Itinerary

Day	Description	Mileage
1	Hike Big Creek trail to Walnut Bottom (campsite 37)	5
2	Hike through Pretty Hollow Gap to campsite 39	8
3	Hike through Little Cataloochee and Long Bunk to top of Mt. Sterling	11
4	Hike Baxter Creek back to car	6

Total Mileage: 30

Difficulty: Moderate. There's a fair amount of up and down but we will take it at an easy pace. Some parts could be rocky and we will be crossing streams several times

**Link to Map** [HERE](#)

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## Elevation



Ascent **9,073 ft**

Descent **9,103 ft**

Max Elevation **5,850 ft**

Min Elevation **1,753 ft**

## Expected Conditions

- Weather
  - Highs in 60s, lows in 40s, prepare for wind on Mt. Sterling. Also there's a very good possibility of rain periodically.
- Trail
  - Some parts could be rocky and we will be crossing streams several times, so sturdy shoes, hiking poles recommended
- Water
  - Plenty of water sources, but be prepared to be able to carry 2-3 L
- Gear Considerations
  - With stream crossings, make sure you have an extra pair of dry socks and a way to keep your pack contents dry in any damp or rainy conditions.

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## Getting to the Trailhead

- We will meet at Big Creek Trailhead Friday Morning
- Permits- Christina will obtain, each participant will reimburse for the \$15 each

## Additional Notes