



# 2020 TRACE NOTES

Helpful information for your adventure  
on the Hiker Challenge.

Start Point— Divide Road

End Point— Charit Creek Lodge Trail Head Parking

**WEATHER DECISION** Weather decision will be made on Friday afternoon by 2 P.M. If you do not hear of a change, via Facebook or Twitter or email, then come on.



## Fall—October—The Best Month to Hike the Trace

Leaves changing. Temps falling. Camp fires blazing. Fall, October is to many the best month to hike the Trace. Visibility is greater as trees go bare. This section will not disappoint. You now will spend the entire hike in the woods crossing several small streams that should be full enough and provide great water sources. Excellent signage and blazing will make it easier to confidently hike through the Big South Fork.

The Trace takes you past some great sites like the John Muir Overlook, No Business, Maude's Crack, and Charit Lodge. Prepare for the weather. Be ready to enjoy your second to last weekend on the Trace.

**FRIDAY NIGHT CAMPOUT:** You can choose to camp at Charit tail head or if you want services like a shower, rest room, electricity you should book a site at Bandy Creek Campground. The campground is about 45 minute drive to Charit Trailhead. To get to the campground you first need to get to Oneida Tennessee. Best way is down I-75 to Williamsburg exit number 11 and head west on Highway 92 to Stearns. When you intersect Highway 27 you go left south. 27 takes you to Oneida, 25 miles away. When you come into Oneida you will turn right onto West Third street at the Funeral Home.

This is state highway 297. Follow 297 to Black Oak Baptist Church, BE CAREFUL here as 297 goes left. Follow 297 now Leatherwood Road into the Big South Fork, past the Park Service Headquarters. Be careful as you wind your way down the steep hill and across Leatherwood Ford bridge. Trail head on right. As you climb back up the hill be alert for right turn to Bandy Creek. There are signs. The campground is on your right as you come into the area. There is an entrance across from the Visitor Center. Enter and go right til you find the STA campsites. The numbers will be texted on Friday afternoon to those coming in on Friday.

**Shuttle Info:** The shuttle will leave from Charit Lodge Trail Head at 7:30 for Divide Road. Take your keys make sure your vehicle is locked. To get to Charit Lodge trail head. Cross over from Highway 27 at Oneida (see instruction above) at the top of the Gorge climb, Bandy Creek is on right. Continue straight. Stay on 297 until intersect with Highway 154. Stay on 154 for about 5 miles til you come to Divide Road on right. This is a gravel / dirt road. There is a sign to Pickett State Park at the turn. Do NOT go to Pickett. Follow Divide Road til you see the sign for Charit Lodge parking. Do NOT take Twin Arches.



## **Section Ten + Trace Notes:**

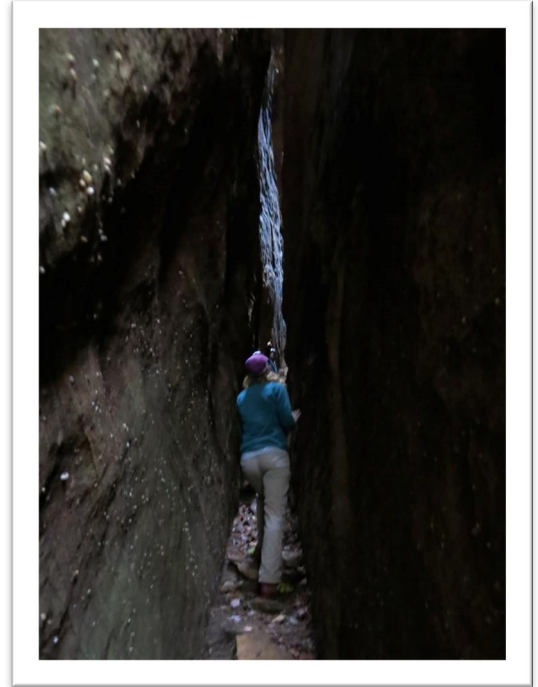
### **Divide Road to Charit Trail Head**

18 miles

**Saturday:** Because of the Covid situation, and lack of shuttle support at this time, we have had to make adjustments to where you start this dayhike. Faster hikers and those intending to make this hike into a two day hike, will be taken to Divide Road. Those on the one day lets get it done today plan will start hiking from Charit Lodge Trail Head as soon as they check in with the hike coordinator.

**SATURDAY:** The start point should be familiar. You are now heading into the heart of the Big South Fork, zig zagging your way toward the river, then Charit Lodge. The Trace is now collocated with the John Muir Trail so you have two sets of blazes to help along with lots of signs. Just past mile 279, about 5 miles past Divide Road, be alert for intersecting trail and signs. Mile 282 is John Muir Overlook, a MUST SEE, STOP for lunch destination. Remember to keep an eye on your water as you will have to use local sources for this portion of the hike. Just before mile 285 you will come upon a sign and a nice place to camp. It is also the way up to Maude's Crack. Its easy to miss so maybe look for someone to be standing in the woods to direct you. It is worth the 15 minute climb to the top. If you are making this hike a two day affair, this is a nice soft place to camp. Remember to grab water where you see it.

The Trace is wide and well marked as you loop around the cliff line and then down the long hill. At the bottom be alert for an intersecting trail from the left. You will go right and intersect the Trace along the river. Be prepared to walk on the side of the trail as the center is probably deep with mud as the Trace is shared here with horseback riders. The river will be on your left. LEFT. If it is on your right, guess what? You need to turn around.



2.5 miles down river you intersect Station Camp where you go right and away from the river. which takes you to Charit Lodge —the oldest continuously operating lodge in the National Park System.

As you come down the gravel road you will see the Lodge on your left. In normal times we would camp here and you could take advantage of the facilities. But Covid restrictions prohibit us from even entering the property. But you only have a couple miles to go to your car. Past the Lodge the Trace is on the road for about 5 minutes then you go left onto the bridge

and at the end go right and up the hillside and the valley. This is a steep climb out to the old road. You go straight up the road. **DO NOT TAKE** the turn off to the left where you head back into the woods. Continue on the gravel road for 5 minutes and you will see the gate and the trail head where you parked.

**Water:** You should start with at least two liters of water. Water is available from the river but small streams may be dry. Treat all water.

**Water Obstacles / other Obstacles:** Water shoes are optional. There is a creek walk on Saturday at Marks Branch Falls and if you want to go into Great Meadows.

**5 lb. Drop:** The 5 lb. drop is NOT in effect.

**Maps:** The south map set covers this section.