

TRIP REPORT
Tusquitee Bald – 6 June 2010
Bernard Elias Favorite Hikes # 2

Bernard's route started at Old Road Gap to which he drove from Andrews. That access has been closed for some years. Bernard's return trail down Big Choga Creek can no longer be found. So, we modified trip a little. The approach was up the tail end of the Chunky Gal Trail. We followed Big Tuni Creek up to the big Buckeyes, then up a few zig-zags to the ridge, over to Dead Line Ridge, across the isthmus, and finally a frontal assault of the face of Tusquitee, where we lunched. Our exit from the Bald was via Bernard's incoming route. The modified route eliminates all backtracking.

Tusquitee is pronounced "tus-quit-ee," pronouncing the "quit" in the middle as the word "quit." Horace Kephart favored us with this gem. The peak has an unusual roaming bench mark. No one knows the Indian name for that.

Twelve stalwart hikers set out in light rain. By noon the rain had stopped but we had entered cloudland. Word-pictures were painted of the looming peaks of Signal Bald and Tusquitee Bald, and of the piled up ridges reaching far into the distance.

John Ray, author of the Chunky Gal and Fires Creek Rim Trail Guide took over for a while after lunch. He led us on a side trip to the other large, little known and rarely visited bald near the summit, and clued us in on where the springs could easily be found by those who might like to return and camp out there. He then led us on the Rim Trail segment along the ridge to County Corners.

Along the trail we saw plenty of late blooming flame Azaleas, and on the downhill, a plethora of efts, mostly red ones.

Eleven cheerful hikers sighed with relief when we reached Old Road Gap and the end of a knee braking descent. From there we had a level hike out to our shuttle car.

The name of the twelfth hiker is being withheld to protect the innocent.

Ted.

