

Hiking

BY JENNIFER BARDONER

Pot Point Trail

Did you resolve to get out more? Be more active? Winter hikes can be a great way to do both, while recharging thanks to the peace and quiet that comes with the seemingly deserted landscape. (You'll still be sharing it with plenty of wildlife and, bonus: They'll be easier to spot.)

Just outside of town lies a wonderful winter hike, the Pot Point Trail. It's well-marked, easily accessible and will take you along the shoreline as well as offer an uphill challenge if you're looking for that.

"You're meandering through the woods and down along the water; the trail offers a bunch of different things — old



Chattanooga Hiking Club members help with the reroute of the top section of the trail.

hardwood forest, it takes you along the river, it even goes through a butterfly garden," says Tennessee River Gorge Trust field technician Mariah Prescott. Come spring, look for monarch butterflies in the garden, as well as other species attracted to native wildflowers, the collage of delicate blooms a sight unto themselves.

This time of year, the butterfly garden is a good spot to birdwatch, says Prescott.

Distance: 3.5-mile loop

Difficulty: Moderate.

Some sections are steep, as you journey uphill nearly 1,000 feet to Azalea Point, but there are plenty of parts that will allow you to catch your breath



PHOTO COURTESY OF TRGT

while simultaneously taking your breath away. "It's pretty family-friendly," Prescott says. "Every type of person can walk or run on this trail."

Perfect for: Families, day adventurers, new hikers
"It's close enough to the city that you can get there in 25 minutes but also feel like you're in the wilderness."

Trail time: The top section of trail was recently rerouted inland, to take it off an old logging road used by firefighters in the case of forest fires — which happened a few years ago. "It's still the same 3 1/2-mile trail it was before," Prescott says, adding, "It gets you to part of the woods you wouldn't have seen." Her favorite section is still at the top, where a boulder field bespeaks grand stories and imaginings.



PHOTO: KEVIN LIVINGOOD, COURTESY OF TRGT

Lookout Mountain Vacation Rentals now manages visits to the historic Pot Point Cabin located on Tennessee River and owned by the Tennessee River Gorge Trust.

HISTORY LESSON

The Pot Point Cabin, from which the trail takes its name and terminus, was built in 1835. Its age is evident in the construction: The timber was hand-hewn, reclaimed from a ship that wrecked on the Boiling Pot rapid close to where the cabin stands sentinel over the now-tame river below.

The house was renovated and expanded in 1993, leaving the original structure largely intact, but adding modern-day amenities and a great room with floor-to-ceiling windows from which to take in the view. The two decks outside help capitalize on the house's position on 400 protected acres, making it a popular secluded spot for weddings and other celebrations. The cabin sleeps up to 10 people, and can be rented for getaways or events. Not only will you be treated to a setting unlike any other, you'll be helping to protect it. The rental price helps benefit TRGT.

Visit trgt.org/potpoint to learn more.