

# HIKING & PADDLING NEWS

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## HIKING

### TEHCC MULTI-CLUB MEET

**(Scheduled: 1-4 Sept 95)**

*Steve Perri reporting*

TEHCC is hosting the 1995 A.T. Multi-Club Meet Sept. 1-4, 1995 at Buffalo Mountain Camp in Johnson City. The Multi-Club is a weekend long activity where the Southern A.T. Maintaining Clubs get together for a series of recreational hikes, excursions, eating, and socializing. I would like to encourage any Club member or Trail Adopter to take advantage of this opportunity to meet people with various backgrounds as it really is a fun weekend. We have a registration form available for those who would like to stay either in cabins or camping areas. Camping is \$9.00/person for the weekend or \$18.00/person for the weekend staying in the cabins. Late registration for accommodations will be available up to Sept. 2nd. For more information or a registration form contact any Steering Committee member or Steve Perri at 615-349-5091.

### A.T. - RANGELEY TO MONSON, MAINE

**(Scheduled: Sat, 9 Sept thru Sat, 16 Sept 95)**

*Leader: Kevin Edgar (615.239.5742)*

*Rating: Difficult*

This will be a combination of day hikes and backpacking through the varied terrain of north-central Maine. We will backpack the high and beautiful Saddlebacks, then day-hike to and across the mighty Kennebec River, ending up in the beloved trail town of Monson. Portions of our hiking will be fairly flat, while the Saddlebacks have a rather saw tooth character with much climbing and descending. From our previous trips, we know that this part of Maine is a lovely place. It is chock-full of high mountains, pristine lakes, moose, loons, and quaint New England towns. For more details on the trip and/or

to sign up, call Kevin Edgar at 615-239-5742.

### **SPIVEY GAP TO NOLICHUCKY RIVER**

**(Scheduled: Sat, 16 Sept 95)**

*Leader: Cris Moorehouse (615.246.7283)*

*Rating: Moderate to Difficult, 10.2 miles*

We plan to meet at B-215 parking lot at 8 AM for a 8:15 departure. We will drop a car or two off at the Nolichucky River and then drive to Spivey Gap. This hike is rated difficult because of the distance involved. Bring lunch, water, and raingear if you think necessary. Call Cris Moorehouse at 246-7283 for more information.

### **PUBLIC LANDS DAY**

**(Scheduled: Sat, 16 Sept 95)**

*Frank Williams reporting*

The first meeting to plan Public Lands Day for 1995 was held July 17. The event has been scheduled for Saturday, Sept 16 and volunteers will be needed to work on the project selected. At a meeting held at the Kingsport Chamber of Commerce on July 31, it was decided to help erect a split rail fence at Exchange Place. (Other candidate projects included: building a play structure at Riverview playground, trail relocation on Cliff Ridge, and building a wheel chair accessible fishing station on an existing fishing pier.) The possibility of having displays set up by various conservation organizations at Exchange Place for Public Lands Day was also discussed. This would reintroduce the educational theme to Publics Lands Day. This possibility will be further investigated. A meeting will be held at the Kingsport Chamber of Commerce, 151 East Main Street at 4 PM, September 6 to finalize plans.

### **U.S. 321 TO WATAUGA DAM ROAD**

**(Scheduled: Sat, 30 Sept 95)**

*Leader: Cris Moorehouse (615.246.7283)*

*Rating: Easy to Moderate*

Plan to meet at B-215 parking lot at 8:15 AM for a 8:30 departure. Bring lunch, water, and raingear as needed. We will drop a car off at Watauga Dam Road and drive around to U.S. 321. This hike is only 4 miles and should be an easy one. If we are in the woods about 10 AM we should be out by 2 PM. Call Cris Moorehouse at 246-7283 for details.

### **ROGERS RIDGE HIKE**

**(Scheduled: Sat, 7 Oct 95)**

*Leader: Joe DeLoach (Telephone 615.753.7903)*

*Rating: Difficult*

This is a hike you won't want to miss. Rogers Ridge leads from the Laurel Bloomery area of Johnson County to the mountains where Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia join. The peaks are expansive balds, nearly 5000 feet in elevation, which rival the splendor of the Roan Highlands. The hike up Rogers Ridge is about 6.5 miles each way. There are a couple of notably steep stretches, one right at the start and one in the middle of the hike, but the rest is easy to moderate. The last couple of miles is in the balds with super views of the nearby Grayson Highlands all the way down past Erwin. There is a scattering of Fraser fir near the top. Fall comes early to this high country so we should be right at the peak of fall color, without fighting the crowds - we may have the whole trip to ourselves. We'll leave from Colonial Heights at 7:45 AM; meet in the

parking lot between Burger King and McDonald's. Please let me know if you plan to attend, and come join us!

## **PADDLING**

### **HIWASSEE RIVER, TENNESSEE**

**(Scheduled: Sat - Sun, 16-17 Sept 95)**

*Leader: Ed Montgomery (615.357.8721)*

*Rating: II*

This scenic river offers excellent class II whitewater and great family camping at Gee Creek Campground. We will meet at Gee Creek Campground on Sept. 16 at 11:00am, combine boats and head for the put-in below the dam. We will take-out at Reliance and a lunch is scheduled. The H2O is very cold and standard safety equipment is required (floatation, PFD, throw rope, and spare paddle). We may run the river on Sunday depending on the generating schedule and the group's interest. I will be camping (with family) on both Friday and Saturday at Gee Creek. Please preregister for this annual September trip. See you on the river!

### **FRENCH BROAD**

**(Scheduled: Sat, 23 Sept 95)**

*Leader: Rick Culbertson (615.239.9795)*

*Rating: II-III*

Contact trip leader for details.

### **NOLICHUCKY GORGE**

**(Scheduled: Sat, 30 Sept 95)**

*Leader: Bob Tonnies (615.477.8126)*

*Rating: III-IV*

It's hard to say, but we should have some water by the time this weekend rolls around. Chances are the colors will be starting to change also. Assuming the water is at a reasonable level, this will be a good trip for first timers; we'll take the time to choose lines for first timers through the significant rapids. Please contact trip leader to make shuttle arrangements.

## **FOR THE RECORD**

### **1995 MOUNT LECONTE TRAIL TRIP (AKA WE'RE A LOT SMARTER THAN THOSE OTHER FOOLS, OR WALSTOF)**

**8-9 July 95**

*(David Allen reporting)*

The annual hiking club Mt LeConte Trail Trip was held on the weekend of July 8th and 9th, and I don't believe a better weekend could be had! The trail hikers this year ascended to the Lodge in 3 groups, all arriving at the top via the Alum Cave Trail. The clear skies afforded wonderful views of the valley below during the hike, and the beautiful weather also brought the boomers and chipmunks out in force to fight over Shawn's dropped grapes. The first group up was the Dawn/Dave/Barry/Shawn group, who passed Linda and Mike near the top, as they found a quiet place to sit, read, and enjoy the day. Dawn, Dave, Barry, and Shawn finished the 5.5 mile hike up at about 1:45,

followed quickly by Linda and Mike. We were greeted by a year-old black bear who was trying to get into the kitchen and get the evening's dessert- chocolate chip cookies (apparently all of nature enjoys chocolate chips cookies!). The bear, his mother, and a sibling had arrived at the lodge 2-3 weeks earlier, and when Momma Bear left, Baby Bear decided he liked it there! After watching the bear for a while, Dawn, Dave and Barry decided it was time to string up the hammocks and curl up with a good book and hot chocolate, complete with hammock-side service. (Note time reference: this was about the time the Creek Walkers were hitting the top of the ridge and beginning the 4 hour bushwhack!) A couple hours of strenuous relaxing was only interrupted by a woman who asked Dave to be bear bait and escort her back to the lodge. Apparently just below the hammock spot, the bear had crossed the trail just in front of her. Dave gladly escorted her back to the lodge, thinking all the time that he could probably out-run her if the bear showed up again, and that it was a good excuse for more hot chocolate anyway.

After the hammock time, we returned for dinner and met up with Neil, Betty, Dan, and Martha, who had just arrived via Alum Cave Trail and Cherokee, North Carolina. A pleasant dinner, spent worrying about the Creek Walkers until the staff assured us they would be fed when they arrived, was followed by a pleasant sunset at Cliff Tops. Returning to camp, we stopped by and chatted with the Creek Walkers, who looked a bit bleary-eyed, so we left them alone. Eight of us were the only survivors who stayed up past sunset, some of us playing cards in the lodge until way past 10!

The following morning, Dave, Barry, and Shawn awoke before sunset and headed up to Myrtle Point to watch the sunrise. Barry sprinted up the mountain thinking the sunrise service was at 6 am, and not sunrise. The three of us spent 25 minutes enjoying the morning colors, after which the Minister, his fiancé, and the Ottenfelds and Espeys joined us for an inspiring sunrise. After breakfast, we packed up and headed home, with 6 of us heading back down Alum Cave and 4 of us joining the Creek Walkers on the Trillium Gap Trail. For some reason, we kept having to stop and wait for the Creek Group. Hmmm.

Administering first aid to the Creek Hikers this year were: Dave Allen, Dan and Martha Espey, Linda and Mike Jewell, Shawn Kerrick, Betty and Neil Ottenfeld, Barry Street, and Dawn Stewart.

## **YELLOW MOUNTAIN BARN/SHELTER**

**15-17 July**

*(Ed Oliver reporting)*

On Saturday, we removed the wooden shakes from the front of the barn and installed lathes on all of the back portion of the roof and part of the front of the roof. A thunderstorm during the afternoon stopped the work for the remainder of Saturday. On Sunday, we installed the lathes on the rest of the front part of the roof and installed all but three of the pieces of metal roofing on the back side of the roof. About 20% of the roofing was installed on the front portion of the roof Sunday with Fred and Bob completing the job on Monday afternoon. Fred reported the roof got a good test late Sunday evening with a very heavy rain - no leaks.

Those who worked on this project worked hard but had a good time. We met lots of hikers on Saturday and a few on Sunday. We shared the barn with over 15 scouts Saturday night. Ted Malone treated us to a great FROGMORE stew Saturday night. He prepared so much that we were unable to eat all of it. We gave the remainder to the

scouts who devoured the potatoes, corn, onions, sausages, and shrimp. Darrol Nickels discovered that many building supply places close early on Saturday. Darrol had to drive all the way to Asheville to get some additional supplies Saturday afternoon. We were beginning to worry about him just before he returned.

Materials for the roof were provided by the Forest Service through a cost share grant. Future projects for the barn include adding a picnic table and covering the three inches of dust on the floor with gravel. Many thanks to Fred Lashley and Bob Smith who used their climbing gear on the very steep front side. Total hours for this three day weekend was 210. Ted discovered a hidden talent for climbing on roofs while others of us confirmed that we were not comfortable on the front side of a roof as high as that of the barn. One of our group discovered that a roll of toilet paper moves faster downhill than does a person with his pants down around his ankles!

Helping on this project, which started last year, were Bruce and Mary Cunningham, Darrol Nickels, Frank Williams, Joe DeLoach, Ed Oliver, Cris Moorehouse, Ted Malone, Jim Mann, Ted Mowery, Fred Lashley and Bob Smith. Special thanks also to David McFee of the Toecane Ranger District.

## **WATAUGA GORGE**

**24 June 95**

*(Bob Tonnies reporting)*

*(Note: This wasn't a TEHCC trip and it's rather long, but we were a bit short of material this month so I've included it. - Bob T.)*

I'd been pestering Dewey Fuller, Scott Sparks and Jim McDarmont for some time about taking me on a first-time Watauga run. Unfortunately, the Watauga came up on a Friday and I had a lot going on at work, so when Jim McDarmont called to ask if I was interested in running, there was no way I could get the day off. As luck would have it, though, the river level held (about 290 cfs) and things looked good for a Saturday run.

Steve Gubser and I were congratulating ourselves on being early for a change as we were heading up to Elizabethton that Saturday morning. That is until Steve asked me if I'd remembered to bring the spare spray skirt he'd wanted to borrow for the trip. Oops... Unfortunately we were only 10 minutes ahead of schedule and it was at least 20 minutes back to the house, so it looked as we were going to be a pretty late. Luckily we called Shawn, at home and she was able to meet us half way with the skirt. We still showed up about 30 minutes late -- pulled into the parking lot just as Dewey was calling to ask where we'd gotten to.

An awful lot of people had decided to run the Watauga that Saturday. Our party consisted of six boaters; three who knew the river and three who were first timers. Besides us at least ten other boaters put in within a few minutes of us. We started out the run with a traffic jam of 16 boats trying to eddy hop down the river. Luckily, we decided to break up relatively early. The large number of paddlers led to a traffic jam at the put-in also with a large number of vehicles being jammed into a small area.

So we all got on the river and started warming up. Scott pointed out a good spot for us to work on eddy hopping. So I lined up for the eddy move, got some good lean going in and hit it too low. It was questionable about whether I could still catch it and I worked at paddling furiously up into it.

Now I can make all sorts of excuses about how I've been paddling another boat for the last couple of months or how I'd done a lot of outfitting on my Crossfire the night before

so I needed some time to get used to it, but the plain fact is that I missed it. Of course everyone at the put-in knew this because I slid off a small ledge backwards and slammed my tail into a rock, creating a reverberating boom that caused everyone to look over. At this point, Dewey, Jim and Scott have to be having second thoughts about shepherding me down. First, I'm late and then I'm blowing straightforward eddy moves.

Luckily things didn't continue along those lines for me. We moved down the river, eddy hopping as we went. One thing about the Watauga is its continuity. Steve and Jamie were nailing the eddies real well. Scott and Jim made the river look easy, but they were working hard to make sure the first timers didn't end up in the wrong spot. And as usual, Dewey was consistently catching eddies that I wouldn't even think about. The old hands kept remarking about how much the river had changed since the flood several months ago.

Things were pretty uneventful until we got to Hydro. Here was a rapid to get the pulse going! Miss the boof at the top and you can look forward to a nasty ride down to the bottom drop (if you're lucky enough not to get hung up somewhere in between). Miss your line at the bottom and you can look forward to spending some time in the hole. Although I was somewhat off my ideal line over the first drop, I was lucky enough not to have any real problems because of it.

Further on down was where our party had some real fun. After moving through Light Water rapid, Scott was leading the way in an innocuous looking boulder garden when his boat hung up on a new rock in the route. I could see him deciding whether he should stay in and try to work his boat off or bail out. As his boat settled down about a foot, he opted to bail. Of course, right after he bailed, his boat changed its mind, sat up off the rock and proceeded to float down the river, leaving Scott on the rock.

Jim and I had gotten out of our boats to help with what looked like a broach, so it took some time for Jim to head down the river after the runaway kayak. I stayed behind to give Scott a line to the bank. The rescue of Scott's paddle was relatively quick.

Unfortunately, the headstart the boat had gave it just enough time to sequester itself someplace where it could watch our futile attempts to find it.

We ended up heading down river without it. This was a lot of work for Scott, since he had to hike the rugged terrain of the gorge on one side of the river until it became impassable and then swim or be ferried across the river to the other side. We continued in the mode until we reached the Falls, which is where Scott left us.

Before moving onto the Falls, one note about Heavy Water rapid: there is a new, hard-to-avoid shelf on your line as you exit the staging eddy just above the heaviest water portion of the rapid. This difficulty gave me reason to portage, although Dewey, Jamie and Jim made it look easy. My decision may also have had something to do with one of our guide kayakers recently losing his boat.

At Watauga Falls, everyone got out to scout. I'm thinking, "It looks like a good drop, but it's not that big a deal." Then I got a better look at the hole and the feeder eddy. And then Scott pointed out the rock ledge that you piton if you don't come over the falls with the right angle on the right line. And then I decided that I'll savor this drop for another day. The open boaters showed the kayakers how it's done here with both Jamie and Dewey having successful runs. Jamie "chose" a somewhat unorthodox approach but executed an excellent landing. Dewey had, by his own admission, his best Falls run ever -- a picture perfect line and landing. He made it look so easy, I'd almost wished I

hadn't already carried.

Following the Falls we figured it'd be a cake walk down to the lake, but we were to have one more run-in. Negotiating a drop whose name I don't know (it may have none) Steve flipped. Unfortunately, the water was fairly shallow in this stretch and Steve was forced to push off some of the rocks with his arms. To do this, he had to let go of his paddle. This is the last Steve saw of the paddle that day. This actually worked out pretty well, because Dewey just happened to be carrying Scott's paddle along as extra baggage. I'm guessing that Steve did this on purpose to relieve Dewey of the burden of transporting this ungainly paddle in his boat.

From here on down, the biggest problem we had to deal with was the oncoming storm. We'd heard thunder most of the day and it'd rained some, but nothing to worry about. As luck would have it, we were just making it to the take out when the heavens opened up. We were thinking about poor Scott waiting for us up at the road as the deluge came down. We must have mentioned him a half dozen times as we were opening the traditional take-out beers. Luckily, we had the foresight to save a couple for him. They were just the thing needed for attitude adjustment when we picked him up at the state line on the way back to the vehicles at the put-in.

*To contribute an article to the TEHCC News, contact the editor, Bob Tonnies, B-65, TED (615.477.8126). All contributions should be received by the 15th of the month to be included in the following month's newsletter.*

**TERC HIKING & CANOEING CLUB  
P.O. Box 511  
Kingsport, Tennessee 37662**