

THE TENNESSEE EASTMAN HIKING & PADDLING NEWS

June, 1997

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<u>NEXT TWO MONTHS AT A GLANCE</u>			
June 7	Konnarock Maintenance Crew : Little Rock Knob	Worthwhile	J. DeLoach
June 7	Nolichucky Gorge Paddling Trip	Class III-IV	D. Fuller
June 7	Hike: Virgin Falls Wilderness, - Crossville, Tennessee	Moderate	C. Chew
June 7	Hike: Falls of Little Stoney, Hanging Rock	Moderate	S. Perri
June 14	AT Hike: Indian Grave Gap to Nolichucky River	Moderate	J. Wilson
June 21	Third Saturday Maintenance: Little Rock Knob Rehab	Worthwhile	E. Oliver
June 28	AT Day Hikes: Vermont	Difficult	K. Edgar
June 28	Backpack / Fly Fishing - Slickrock Creek	Moderate	T. Malone
July 12	Mt LeConte Trail Trip	Moderate	S. Falling
July 12	Mt LeConte Creek Trip	Moderate	D. Fuller
July 19	Third Saturday Maintenance: Special Projects	Worthwhile	E. Oliver



[New Bridge Constructed Over Laurel Fork, Trail South of Bitter End, April 12](#)

Joe DeLoach Reporting

Fifteen of us ignored the weather forecast and the drizzle to build a bridge. We knew beforehand that the bridge over Laurel Fork, Trail south of Bitter End, was rickety and needed to be replaced. Our timing was good as when we reached the bridge on Saturday morning, we found that it had collapsed! Several Club members had drilled the holes and generally prepared the bridge for installation earlier in the week, so once we got the material to the site, it went up pretty quickly. It took all of us, and we could have used more, to carry the material in almost a mile from Bitter End to the creek. Several people had to make three trips, with considerable up and down, and Steve Wilson was pretty impressive at carrying a 4 foot 10"x10" footing by himself (while four of us carried the other one). The work by and large went very well. We did have one mishap when Derrick slipped and got his finger hit with a hammer. He was taken to the hospital but nothing was broken. Once we completed the bridge, we took some of the old planks and used them to build two bog bridges close to Bitter End. It was an extremely productive day. Helping were Steve Banks, Collins Chew, Mary Cunningham, Joe DeLoach, Carl Fritz, John Kiefer, Tim McClain, Ted Malone, Bill Murdoch, Darrol Nickels, Ed Oliver, Steve Perri, Bill Stowell, Derrick Stowell, and Steve Wilson.

<p><u>Konnarock Crew Work Schedule with</u></p>

<u>TEHCC</u>		
	June 5-9:	Little Rock Knob
	July 10-14:	Little Rock Knob
	July 24-28:	Little Rock Knob
	August 14-18:	Laurel Fork Gorge

Keep these dates in mind. The club's support for Konnarock Crew work is important to the volunteers. Come out and learn some new trail building techniques as well as provide a benefit to the trail!

SCHEDULED HIKES / ACTIVITIES

Konnarock Crew - Little Rock Knob Relocation, June 5-9

Leader: Joe DeLoach

We have four weeks of Konnarock Crew time to work on Appalachian Trail projects this summer. This year the Crew will work on a relocation on the Trail north side of Little Rock Knob and on continuing the repair work in Laurel Fork Gorge. The Little Rock Knob Relo is a new project to replace the very steep and eroded section of Trail between Hughes Gap and the top of Little Rock Knob. The new section will not only improve the safety and stability of the path but will provide great views of the Roan Highlands which are currently absent. Volunteers who work at least five days with the Konnarock Crew receive a T-shirt and a year's free membership in ATC. Volunteers are encouraged to help the Crew at any time but there will be scheduled trips on Saturday and Sunday, June 7-8. These will depart from the parking lot between Burger King and McDonalds in Colonial Heights at 8:00a.m. Bring lunch, work gloves, and plenty of water. Please contact Joe for more information.

Nolichucky Gorge Paddling Trip, June 7

Leader: Dewey Fuller

The Noli Gorge is a spectacularly scenic class III-IV run through mostly National Forest. For more information on the trip, call Dewey Fuller.

Hike: Falls of Little Stoney, Hanging Rock, June 7

Leader: Steve Perri, Rating: Moderate

This hike should provide a new opportunity for view of Stoney Falls for many of us new to the area. More time will allow us to see Hanging Rock. Plan on meeting in the parking area between McDonalds and Burger King in Colonial Heights at 8:00 a.m. Call Steve Perri for more information.

Hike: Virgin Falls, June 6-7

Leader: Collins Chew, Rating: Moderate

This hike will explore the trails and caves of the Virgin Falls pocket wilderness provided by Bowaters Corp. at the Cumberland Plateau. In order to have a full day of exploring, we will drive to Crossville, Tennessee on Friday night and stay in a motel. Then we will drive 25 miles to the trail head on Saturday morning and hike to the various caves and overlooks of this fascinating area at the edge of the Cumberland Plateau. The scenery should be spectacular with cliffs and the Caney Fork River to view along the way to the beds of limestone which contain the caves. Virgin Falls refers to a creek which issues from a cave to directly plunge over a 110 foot cliff and then reenter another cave. We will return to Kingsport on Saturday night. Bring what you need for the motel, appropriate clothing for the

weather, good shoes or boots, lunch, water (from Motel, actually), good flashlights for peeking in the caves (not serious spelunking at all). There are several side trails so some of the distance is optional. Call Collins Chew for reservations, information or details.

AT Hike: Indian Grave Gap to Nolichucky River, June 14

Leader: Jill Wilson, Easy-Moderate

Last year while hiking the 126 miles that the club maintains, I found this section the most enjoyable, since it is a little over six miles and generally is down hill. Bring lunch, water and a rain jacket. Meet at the parking lot between McDonalds and Burger King in Colonial Heights at 8:00 a.m. With some good weather, this hike should be very pleasant and enjoyable.

Third Saturday AT Maintenance: Special Projects, June 21

Leader: Ed Oliver

We will be working on the rehab/relo of the trail at Laurel Falls on the third Saturday in June. No special skills are required. We should be able to significantly improve a bad section of trail that has lots of use by hikers. Come out and help us make a major improvement in the trail. Meet in the parking area between McDonalds and Burger King in Colonial Heights at 8:00 a.m. Call Ed Oliver for more information. Also let me know if you know ahead of time that you will go so that I can bring enough tools.

AT Dayhikes, Vermont, June 28 - July 6

Leader: Kevin Edgar, Rating: Difficult

We will begin our hiking traverse of the Vermont mountains on the AT near Bennington, close to the Massachusetts border. A series of dayhikes will take us north to Sherburne Pass near Rutland, then northeast to the Connecticut River at the New Hampshire border. We'll taste the balsam-scented Vermont air atop such peaks as Killington, Glastenbury Mt., and Peru Peak. At night we'll stay at B&Bs and country inns in the scenic and well-preserved little towns of Vermont. There's lots to do up there for those who might like to come but don't want to hike EVERY day. Contact the leader to preregister or for more information; don't delay as the accomodations will fill up fast this time of year.



Slickrock Creek Backpacking/Fly Fishing Trip, June 28-29

Leader: Ted Malone

Rating: backpacking - moderate, fly fishing - not required

Plans are to drive down on Friday, June 27 after work and spend the night somewhere. It's a long drive for Saturday morning and I would rather be hiking then spending time driving to the trail head. The trail head is a parking area across from Cheoah Dam. We'll hike northwest along Calderwood Lake for about a mile and a half then turn south and hike up Slickrock Creek until we find a good spot to camp. For about 5 or 6 miles, Slickrock is the border between Tennessee and North Carolina and as the name implies, is in the Joyce Kilmer Slickrock Wilderness Area. Call for the rest of the details.



MULTICLUB 1997

The 1997 Multiclub on Labor Day Weekend will be hosted by PATH and OCTV at Stoney Fork Campground in Wytheville, VA. The campground is located in the Jefferson National Forest close to the AT. Plans are beginning to include a full schedule of hikes along some of the most beautiful sections of the AT in Southwest Virginia; from the Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area, to vistas overlooking scenic, rural Burke's Garden. OCTV is arranging evening entertainment for everyone. In addition, a number of recreational and historic attractions

and opportunities are available nearby. The New River Trail offers a multiple use trail for those who want to bring their bicycles. Others who are interested in history can tour Burke's Garden, or visit Shot Tower, the Settler's Museum or the historic buildings and museums in Wytheville. This is the annual family reunion of the southern maintaining clubs, and is an excellent opportunity to hike, socialize, and learn about other clubs. More detailed information will be available soon. For more information, contact Steve Wilson.

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AT Section Maintenance and Special Projects

- **April 18-20: Trail Rehab in Laurel Fork Gorge**

Konnarock and TEHCC members worked with the crew, funded by Bruce Cunningham and led by Fred Lashley, on rehabilitating the section of the AT leading down from the old railroad grade to Laurel Fork Falls. This is a very steep and rocky slope involving mostly rock step and cribbing construction. The weather hampered work somewhat - it drizzled all day Saturday and snowed Friday morning! - but good progress was made. Three different areas were concentrated on, two of which are nearly finished. There is still plenty of work to do - Fred estimated that a crew could spend an entire season on this Trail section! Club members participating on this work project include: Steve Banks, Bruce Cunningham, Mary Cunningham, Joe Deloach, Ed Oliver, Bill Stowell, Derrick Stowell, and Frank Williams.

- **April 24: Abingdon Gap to Damascus Trail Maintenance**

Scout Troop #117 from Damascus cleared the trail from Damascus to Abingdon Shelter. The spring at the shelter was cleaned up, and about 18-20 blowdowns were removed. Those participating in this effort include: Tim Widener (Leader), Aaron Widener, Bob Martin, Drew Martin, Joey Arden, Eugene Moretz, Matthew Hubble, Michael Hubble, Daniel Shear, Tom Wilson, Dwayne Heath.

- **April 24-27: Trail Rehab at Laurel Falls**

Club members worked with the special trail crew to continue the work on trail rehab in Laurel Fork Gorge. The steps and cribbing between the old railroad grade and the falls were worked on. All three sections of trail that the special team targeted for repair were completed by 4 p.m. Sunday. The crew and club members worked Thursday thru Sunday, April 24 thru 27 on this project. Unlike the previous week, the weather cooperated and the rain held off until after the last step was installed. The rehab makes this section of trail much safer to hike. Many hikers stopped long enough to thank us for the work. Club members helping one or more days along with their contributing hours for the entire project are as follows:

Steve Banks	1 Day	10 hours
Bruce Cunningham	5 Days	54 hours
Mary Cunningham	3 Days	33 hours

Joe DeLoach	2 Days	24 hours
Ed Oliver	6 Days	59 hours
Morgan Sommerville	1 Day	5 hours
Bill Stowell	5 Days	53 hours
Derrick Stowell	4 Days	43 hours
John Thompson	1 Day	11 hours
Frank Williams	4 Days	42 hours

Total Effort: 344 hours

- **May 3: Backbone Rock to Virginia State Line Trail Maintenance**

Clipped and cleared weeds up the blueblaze trail, and spent most of the time on the section south of the stateline, where there was a greater need for work. Those participating in this activity include Garry Luttrell and Frank Williams.

- **May 4: Blowdown Removal and Trail Rehab on Pond Mountain**

Derrick and Bill Stowell removed two remaining trees blocking the trail on the Shook Branch to Laurel Fork Gorge section. One was a blow down accross the trail. The other was overhead causing hikers to walk on the edge of the trial. Some minor trail rehab was done to fix the trail.

- **May 4: AT Maintenance Trail North of Bitter End**

Mary and Bruce Cunningham continued cutting back the rhododendrons and improving the stream crossings trail north of Bitter End. They got about 1/2 mile more of trail cleared.

- **May 10: AT Maintenance Tenn. 91 to U.S. 421**

Greg Kramer and Tim Frederick conducted maintenance from Tenn. 91 to U.S. 421. Seven blowdowns were removed as well as conducting routine maintenance and painting blazes. It was an excellent day to be out on the trail.

- **May 10: AT Maintenance Trail North of Bitter End**

Mary and Bruce Cunningham, Steve Perri, and Frank Williams continued cutting back the rhododendrons and improving the stream crossings trail north of Bitter End. Trail improvements were made to about 3 miles trail north of Bitter End.

- **May 14: Cut Out Blowdowns Between Doll Flats and Hump Mountain and Install Gate at North End of Hump Mountain**

Cris & Theona Moorehouse, Frank Williams, and Ed Oliver removed the two large blowdowns between Doll Flats and Hump Mountain. Each person tried their skill at using the chain saw. Theona was the only one who didn't get the saw hung. Also removed a couple of smaller blowdowns. A swinging gate was installed at the stile on the trail north side of Hump Mountain. The gate may be a little narrow. We are planning to increase the width by adding about 3.5 inches to the width. The day was nice with high clouds but good visibility. Several wildflowers were in bloom.

Spring Wildflower Hike, April 26

Joe DeLoach Reporting

Both the flowers and the weatherman helped this year's Spring Wildflower Hike, on the AT from Sams Gap to Devil's Fork Gap, lived up to its billing. Finding the Trail in Sams Gap is somewhat of a challenge, especially heading Trail south. Walk down from the state line about 150 yards and you'll see a double blaze on the right guardrail. The Carolina Mountain Club has put in a nice relocation winding through a field with good views of Mt. Mitchell, and which takes out much of the steep grade from the former route. There were nice flowers the entire way, especially in the mile or so descending from Sugarloaf Gap to Boone Cove Rd. This is another CMC relo and features a pretty waterfall in addition to the flowers. We ran into Bill Berry and harassed him for doing Trail maintenance with CMC

instead of us. The only problem with the hike was that it was nearly nine miles, somewhat long to be able to enjoy the flowers. We'll try for a shorter hike next year. Participants in addition to the author were Neil Dotson, Alan and Jana Lewis, Lois Mansfield, Manley and Orieta Mitchell, Rachel Monderer, and Donna and Doug Niemi.

Wilderness Rules After Catastrophic Storm Events

Steve Perri Reporting

In the March issue of the TEHCC News, a report of the controversial topic on chainsaw usage in wilderness areas after severe storms was summarized highlighting the concerns both pro and con. The question of the use of mechanized equipment for AT maintenance in wilderness areas was posed to our readership. A few comments were received as a result of that article and are outlined below:

- It is my feeling that NO motorized equipment be used in wilderness areas. That would also apply to trail maintenance. If a lower level of maintenance results; so be it.
- Of the 48% of respondents that said no, what percentage actually go out and work on trail clean up or clearing? Perhaps many of those not in favor of power tools don't have first-hand experience to realize what is involved in clearing debris from this level of damage.
- Response to poll: 1. If you don't use the trail or don't maintain it you don't get a vote. 2. Arguments against chainsaw use are bull. In 1950 a hurricane went through the Adirondak State Park that had and has forever wild management policy. Two billion bdft of timber was flattened, the policy was suspended and low impact logging was allowed to remove fuel and salvage a resource from the park. This temporary change did not establish a precedent nor move the park closer to development. On the other hand, I can cut a 4" tree with an ax as quick as you can cut it with a dinky chainsaw, like you might be willing to carry 5 miles; and two experienced people with a real cross cut can make short work of cutting an 24" tree. I would trade wet legs for someone cutting grass along the trail with a weedeater. The labor is getting the cut pieces out of the way and getting people to where the work needs to be done. I would favor the use of horses, mules, bikes or whatever for the transportation of people and supplies during extreme situations.
- Anyone who has done any trail maintenance knows that it is easier to use a chainsaw rather than an ax. I believe that in emergency situations it would be fine and possibly an annual moratorium to allow maintenance in these designated areas would be in order.

As a result of the damage from Hurricane Opal in 1995, several AT Trail Clubs requested the approval from the USFS to use chainsaws in wilderness to clear the trail in a timely and safe manner. That request was denied by the USFS Supervisor and was considered to be a curt decision without assessing the extent of the damage. Since then, ATC and the USFS have worked closely together to outline a formal process to make a request for using chainsaws in wilderness areas after an initial assessment of conditions. The decision still lies with the USFS Supervisor and will be decided case-by-case with considerations for both Wilderness values and AT values. The decision will be based on the categories of safety of maintainers, safety of users and resource damage. There will be emphasis on timeliness, use patterns, season of use, and specific location. Special consideration will be given to the consequences of closing the trail.

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