

# THE TENNESSEE EASTMAN HIKING & PADDLING NEWS

March, 1998

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| NEXT TWO MONTHS AT A GLANCE |  |            |                  |
|-----------------------------|--|------------|------------------|
| Feb. 28                     | AT Hike: Poor Valley (VA 625) - Burkes Garden          | M          | V. C. Chew       |
| Mar. 7                      | AT Hike: Hurricane Campground - S. Fk. Holston (VA)    | M          | B. Stow ell      |
| <b>Mar. 12</b>              | <b>TEHCC Steering Committee Meeting, B-310, Rm 114</b> | <b>E</b>   | <b>J. Mayo</b>   |
| Mar. 14                     | Paddle Trip: Whitetop Laurel                           | III+       | D. Fuller        |
| Mar. 14                     | S. Fk. Holston (VA) - Mt. Rogers HQ                    | M          | B. Stow ell      |
| <b>Mar. 21</b>              | <b>Third Saturday Maintenance Trip</b>                 | <b>E-M</b> | <b>E. Oliver</b> |
| Mar. 22                     | Paddle Trip: Spring Creek                              | III-IV     | M. Morrow        |
| Mar. 28                     | Hike: South Beyond 6000                                | D          | G. Luttrell      |
| <b>Mar. 28</b>              | <b>Winter Dinner Meeting</b>                           | <b>F</b>   | <b>J. Mayo</b>   |
| Apr. 4                      | AT Hike: Elk Garden (VA 600) - Grayson Highlands       | M          | K. McDavid       |
| <b>Apr. 9</b>               | <b>TEHCC Steering Committee Meeting, B-310, Rm 114</b> | <b>E</b>   | <b>J. Mayo</b>   |
| Apr. 10                     | 2-Day Trip: Canoe/Camp/Trout Fishing - Eagle Creek     | E          | G. Luttrell      |
| Apr. 10                     | Paddle Trip: Chattooga Section IV                      | IV-V       | M. Morrow        |
| Apr. 11                     | ATC Trail Skills Workshop: Shook Branch                | M          | J. DeLoach       |
| Apr. 18                     | AT Hike: Indian Grave Gap - Nolichucky River           | M          | S. Wilson        |
| Apr. 18                     | Paddle Trip: South Toe River                           | II-III     | E. Montgomery    |
| Apr. 25                     | Ramsey Cascades (Smoky Mountains)                      | M          | R. Colberg       |
| Apr. 26                     | Sunday Hike: Bad Branch                                | E          | G. Luttrell      |

## TEHCC to Co-Host Appalachian Trail Skills Workshop, April 11

### *Joe DeLoach Reporting*

The Appalachian Trail Conference is sponsoring a series of workshops covering many aspects of Trail maintenance. We are hosting one of these, called Basic Trail Maintenance, on April 11. It will be held at Shook Branch Recreation Area on Watauga Lake and will cover worker safety, use and maintenance of hand tools, clearing brush, blazing, clearing waterbars, blowdown removal, overnight facility maintenance, and sanitation. Other workshops include Trail Construction, Trail Design, Rock Work, Drainage, Chainsaw Certification, Crosscut Saw Maintenance (note - we are trying to get a

local class for this), and Wilderness First Aid Certification. These begin in late February and run through October at various locations in the south. There is a lot to be learned at these workshops, and Trail volunteers are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity. For details on the classes, please contact Joe DeLoach.

## **TEHCC Winter Dinner Meeting, March 28**

### *Jan Mayo Reporting*

The winter dinner meeting will be held at the Eastman Lodge on March 28, 1998. The social hour will begin at 5:00 p.m., dinner at 6:00 p.m. and the program at 7:00 p.m. The dinner will be catered by Wright's Cafeteria and the outing vendor will be Rocky Top Trail Shop. Dinner will be buffet style with roast beef, mesquite chicken and rice, new potatoes, green beans, fresh cream corn, tossed salad, rolls, coffee and tea. The cost of the meal is \$11.00/person.

The program will be presented by Dwayne Stutzman and Alan Householder on the North Carolina Mountains-to-Sea Trail. The concept of the North Carolina Mountains-to-Sea Trail as developed in the 1970's, was to create a "NC Trails System." This would be accomplished by creating a "trunk trail" across the state, and encouraging municipal and county governments and grass roots organization to create additional trails in their jurisdictions which, when connected to the Mountains-to-Sea Trail would "connect" the citizens of the state's urban areas with it's natural and scenic areas via the NC Trails System. The trail is being planned, built and maintained by volunteers, with assistance from the NC Division of Parks and Recreation Trails Program. To date, 380 miles of an estimated 800 miles of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail have been completed. Approximately 100 additional miles are in currently in the planning stage.

**To make a dinner reservation, please return this form**

**by March 25, 1998 to:**

Jan Mayo B-280B, or

Frank Williams: 2346 Inglewood Drive, Kingsport, Tennessee  
37664

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Meals: \_\_\_\_\_

Checks should be made payable to the person you send the reservation to)

## **SCHEDULED HIKES / ACTIVITIES**

### **AT Hike, Burkes Garden (VA623) to VA 625, February 28**

*Leader: Collins Chew*

This will be another in a series of hikes to cover the AT in Southwest Virginia. It will start on Garden Mountain above Burkes Garden, climb to Chestnut Knob and drop down to VA 625 in Poor Valley. The hike will be 10.8 miles with a relatively long car shuttle on dirt roads. There should be about 1,500 feet of climbing. Total driving distance should be around 200 miles. Bring adequate clothing for the weather, lunch, and water. We will meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot between Burger King and McDonald's in Colonial Heights. The hike may be cancelled or altered for inclement weather or icy roads. For more information, call Collins Chew at 423-239-6237.

### **Paddle Trip: Whitetop Laurel, March 14**

*Leader: Dewey Fuller, Rating: III+*

Contact Trip Leader for details.

## **Hike Trip: S. Fork of Holston River to Mt Rogers HQ, March 14**

*Leader: Bill Stowell, Rating: Moderate*

We will meet at Burger King at 7:30 a.m. The hike will begin at the south fork of the Holston River and end at Mt. Rogers Headquarters. This is an 8 mile moderate hike. Contact Bill Stowell.

### **Third Saturday Special Project, March 21, 1998**

*Leader: Ed Oliver, Rating: Easy-Moderate*

We will devote the Third Saturday in March to removing blowdowns from our section of the trail. We need people who are comfortable using chain saws and people who don't use chain saws to help with this work. Please let me know if you can help so that I can arrange to have sufficient tools. We will split into teams of two to three people, walk sections of the trail and remove blowdowns. We will use chain saws, bow saws, cross-cuts saws, etc to get this work done. In addition to needing people to do the cutting, we need people to help pull the limbs, etc off the trail. Meet at the parking area between McDonald's and Burger King in Colonial Heights at 8:00 a.m. Call me at 349-6668 if you can help or if you have any questions.

### **Paddle Trip: Spring Creek, March 22**

*Leader: Mike Morrow, Rating: III-IV*

Contact Trip Leader for details.

### **South Beyond 6000 Hike, March 28**

*Leader: Garry Luttrell, Rating: Difficult*

Contact Trip Leader for details and meeting time.

## **Special Announcements**



### **Club Rental Equipment Moved Back to B-310**

The rental equipment for camping and paddling has been moved from B-89 to the Recreation Store in B-310. All equipment will be available for rental as previously. Garry Luttrell and several other volunteers have worked to get all the gear ready for the busy Summer season. Thanks Garry for the extra effort to get all the equipment in working order!

### **TEHCC Toolroom Spring-Cleaned**

Bruce Cunningham and Frank Williams labored many hours to clean up the toolroom in the basement

of B-310. They cleaned the floors, straightened files, organized tools and placed them on the hangers on the walls, and cleaned up the paint equipment. It was a chore in desperate need. Many thanks for a job well done Bruce and Frank!



## **Watauga and Unaka Ranger District Offices Move to New Facility in Unicoi**

The Unaka and Watauga Ranger District offices and personnel recently combined office headquarters in one facility to reduce overhead costs. They are now located in Unicoi in a brand new building. The new phone number for the offices will be 423-735-1500.

## **TEHCC Website Hit-Reports to be Discontinued**

The website for TEHCC will no longer be able to monitor the number of hits or activities by viewers beginning in 1998. Tricon has discontinued the support of monitoring activities for organizations and clubs to minimize costs. We will continue to provide up to date information about the Club and our activities as in the past with Steve Banks as our Webmaster. Viewership has increased steadily. Our last report is as follows:

### **Web Site Statistics for Dec., 1997**

- Hits: 13,539
- Files requested: 597
- 845 different people from 18 different countries looked at one or more pages in our web site.

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## **Damage Assessment of Laurel Fork Gorge Bridges, Feb. 18**

*Ed Oliver Reporting*

John Kiefer and Ed Oliver met Morgan Sommerville of ATC and three representatives from the U.S. Forest Service near Hampton on Feb. 18. We hiked in and inspected the site of the lower and middle bridges that were washed away in the recent flood. During this assessment, we also tried to find a route between the middle and lower bridges that would not require crossing the creek. This alternative would eliminate the need to replace the bridges.

However, we could not find a suitable route due to the steep walls and loose stone. We ultimately reached the decision that the best thing to do would be to replace these two bridges. We also concluded that replacing the bridges would be within normal maintenance on the Appalachian Trail and therefore would not require an Environmental Assessment study. Since the bridges are located in a designated Wilderness area, the Forest Service representatives said the bridges should not be steel, which was the support structure for the previous bridges. We can however, use local materials or materials such as salt treated pine lumber to replace the bridges. We are free to use metal fasteners (nails, bolts, etc.). However, the bridge design(s) have to be approved by the Forest Service engineer. We can use rock and masonry or log cribs filled with rocks for piers for the bridges. The club, ATC and the Forest Service will look for bridge designs and will try to decide on the design within the next few weeks. In the meantime, access to the falls is only available from Dennis Cove since the Koonford Bridge has been temporarily fixed. This inspection trip was very educational. It was great to have the people necessary to make the decision on the bridges - at the site - at the same time.

*Repaired Koonford Bridge - Photo Courtesy of Neil Dotson*

## **AT Section Maintenance and Special Projects**

- **Jan. 20: AT Maintenance (Ed Oliver Reporting)**

On Tuesday, January 20, 1998 Bruce Cunningham, John Kiefer, Frank Williams, and Ed Oliver completed the relocation at the upper end of Oglesby's Branch near Spivey Gap. We still need to paint a few blazes on the relocation and install some crush and fill in a couple of locations.

However, we decided that the new trail is already much easier to walk than the old trail. This relo replaces a steep section of trail at the upper end of the stream. We had a beautiful day for this work. The sky was clear and blue and the ground and trees were covered with up to an inch of snow.

- **Feb. 6: AT Maintenance (Ed Oliver Reporting)**

Bruce Cunningham, Frank Oglesby, and Ed Oliver drove to Nolichucky Expeditions and walked trail north. We carried chain saws, bow saws, and loppers. We found numerous tangles of small hemlocks and rhododendrons. We shook the snow off the hemlocks so that they would have a chance to straighten up. We cut back the rhododendrons. We found several large trees across the trail. One tree was on one of the bridges across Jones Creek. We removed the tree. The tree broke about a foot off the handrail on one end of the bridge. We managed to clear about 1.5 miles of trail. Then we drove to Indian Grave Gap to see what conditions were there. The snow was too deep at Indian Grave Gap to attempt to walk the trail and remove blowdowns. The snow will need to melt more at high elevations before we can get in and start removing blowdowns.

- **Feb. 7: AT Maintenance (Ed Oliver Reporting)**

Bruce and Mary Cunningham, Bill and Derrick Stowell and Ed Oliver continued the work of removing blowdowns between the Chestoa Bridge and Curley Maple Gap. Bruce and Mary removed all the blowdowns between Nolichucky Expeditions and the Chestoa Bridge. There are a couple of spots on this section that will need some pulaski work later. They walked a short distance from the bridge towards Cliff Ridge. They found evidence of someone already at work removing blowdowns on this section. Later, we met Craig Haire, the adopter for the Nolichucky River to Temple Hill Gap section. He had been working on his section of trail. He plans to continue his work until he gets all the blowdowns removed. We told him to let the club know if he

needs help. Bill and Derrick Stowell and Ed Oliver continued up Jones Branch. We found more tangles of rhododendrons and even more large trees down on the trail. We were able to remove all the blowdowns between Nolichucky Expeditions and a point about 1/2 miles trail south of Curley Maple Shelter. Based on what we found, there are probably a lot of trees down between Damascus and Spivey Gap.

- **Feb. 14: AT Maintenance (Bill Stowell Reporting)**  
Frank Oglesby, Derrick Stowell, and Bill Stowell drove to Damascus and began cutting soon after entering the woods. This area was heavily damaged. One section was so bad we didn't know where the trail used to be. Derrick had to climb over around 50 feet of trees to find the other side of the trail so we would know where to cut. This area had many pines. We cleared maybe 1 mile of trail. We made it on to the road and cut a 24 inch red oak to finish the day. This was the worst blowdown mess I have seen.
- **Feb. 14: AT Maintenance (Joe DeLoach Reporting)**  
Phyllis Cairnes, Bruce Cunningham, Mary Cunningham, Joe DeLoach, Ed Oliver, Mary Ellen Ress, and Jeff Siirola split into two groups to remove blowdowns on the trail. The Cunninghams, Phyllis and Mary Ellen worked from Watauga Dam Road to within about 1/2 mile of the Vandeventer Shelter. They reported more trees down at lower elevations. They ran into a very large tree, at least three feet in diameter, about 1/2 mile south of the shelter which needs to be removed. They cleared everything to that point. Jeff, Ed, and Joe cleared from 19E to Campbell Hollow Road. The stile at High Point has had the steps removed from the Trail north side, all but the top one. There was no sign of the boards, and we need to replace them (three or four). We then drove to Shook Branch and cut from there to the Wilderness boundary on Pond Mountain. There were more blowdowns here; it seems that the blowdowns are worse at lower elevations, possibly due to the snow being wetter and heavier there and possibly due to more pines which pick up snow and snap easily.

## Trip Reports

### **Hike Report: Chadwell Gap Trail to Hensley Settlement, Cumberland Gap National Park, Jan. 16**

*Collins Chew, Reporting*

This was a delightful hike of about seven miles with the most enjoyment from the interesting companionship and conversation rather than ideal weather and views. The ascent and descent of Cumberland Mountain was under cool, cloudy conditions through woods and under the great, sheer cliffs. The ridgewalk was in dense fog with occasional blowing rain and a bit of snow. We followed the fences through the cleared Hensley Settlement fields to prevent becoming lost and could only see the abandoned houses when we approached within 50 feet of them. After lunch on a porch, we were pretty chilly but did see all the houses and farms except one that apparently was not near a fence line. Hikers: Bob Harvey, Don Kreh, Ed Shackelford, and Collins Chew.

### **Hike Report: Mt. Rogers HQ to South Fork Holston River, Jan 24, 1998**

*Collins Chew Reporting*

The two weeks of rain and predictions of snow made the 10 mile dirt road to the planned trail head

seem unattractive and indicated development of plan B. At the Wilson's suggestion, we hiked Mt. Rogers HQ to the South Fork Holston River (7.9 miles) as they were going to have to miss Bill Stowell's hike there on March 14. The hike was under almost continuous light snow which whitened the ground and decorated the trees but never got deep. The hike was quite pleasant with interesting conversation throughout the trip except for on a few steeper uphill and while contemplating the snow-white road near the Mt. Rogers HQ on the return drive. Unfortunately, missed communication deprived us of the company of Owen Holbrook who tried to meet us along the originally planned route. Hikers: Emmett Dougherty, Hugh Thompson, Kent and Nancy Wilson, and Collins Chew.

## **Hike Report: Formerly to Coon Den Falls, Feb. 7, 1998**

*Neil Dotson Reporting*

Three hearty souls (Neil Dotson, Patricia Lopez and Steve Perri) ventured forth to Dennis Cove to find around 6 inches of snow remaining on the ground and fog still hanging in the air. Undaunted, we began travelling south on the AT but encountered far too many downed trees to make reasonable progress. Saws were drawn and we cut our way back to the road. Somewhat daunted, we walked down the road to see if we could get to the falls via the blue-blazed trail, but were greeted by rhododendron heavy with snow, forcing us to leave the aloof Coon Den Falls unconquered that day. Quite daunted but determined to respond to this cruel jest, we did impromptu trail maintenance, carving out a decent path on the AT north from Dennis Cove to just shy of the Koonford Bridge. We then retreated (quite wet), one of our number gaining great amusement by launching snowballs at the others, and told tales of our victories over a late lunch at the Classic Malt Shop in Elizabethton.

## **Hike Report: Doe River Gorge Hike: Feb. 14, 1998**

*Steve Perri Reporting*

This Valentine's Day hike through the Doe River Gorge was a pleasant trip with the 50° weather and sunny skies. We checked in with the caretaker and signed a release form since the property is owned by the Doe River Gorge group. We walked around and noted they had done a nice job fixing up about 5 railcars as overnight dwellings from the former railroad cars and installed teepees for primitive overnight camping. We then ventured into the gorge, through the two tunnels, and hiked all the way to the trussell over the river. Considering all the snow that had fallen a few weeks ago, this trip could have been worse since the owners cleared downed-trees from the railroad grade about a mile in. So we had only the last mile or so to amble our way through the downed-trees. After a brief rest at the trail end, we hiked out and returned home by 1:00 p.m. Those enjoying this trip were: Les and Judy Toledo, Barbara and Jim Marasia, and Steve Perri.

**To Submit an article for  
the newsletter, contact:**

Steve Perri

180 Peppertree Drive

Kingsport, Tennessee 37664

TEHCC Website: <http://www.tehcc.org>