

# THE TENNESSEE EASTMAN HIKING & PADDLING NEWS

M ay, 1998

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NEXT TWO MONTHS AT A GLANCE			
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May 2	Paddle Trip: Bluestone River, WV (2 Days)	II+	T. Dougherty
May 9	AT Hike: Groseclose, VA to VA 42	M-D	B. Stowell
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May 14	TEHCC Steering Committee Meeting, B-310, Rm 114	E	J. Mayo
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May 16	Canoe School River Trips (2 Days)	II	B. Dayvolt
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May 16	Third Saturday Maintenance	Worthwhile	E. Oliver
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June 13	Hike: Roan Highlands	M	S. Perri
June 13	Paddle Trip: Pigeon River	III-IV	S. Ernst
June 20	Third Saturday Maintenance	Worthwhile	E. Oliver
June 21	Paddle Trip: Ramsey Cascades	IV	M. Morrow
June 21	Paddle Trip: Middle Prong of the Little Pigeon	III	M. Morrow
June 27	Hike: Gregory Bald (Smoky Mountains)	D	N. Dotson

## TEHCC Winter Dinner Meeting

*Steve Perri reporting*

TEHCC held its annual Winter Dinner Meeting at the Eastman Lodge on Saturday, March 28th. Dwayne Stutzman and Alan Householder provided the evening's program on the North Carolina Mountains-to-Sea Trail. Dwayne provided an overview of the trail's design and intention to be the main trunk of a number of trails to be ultimately added on to form a NC Trails System. The trail was originally conceived in the 1970's and has been slowly developed with about 380 miles completed of an estimated 800.

Alan provided an overview of his experience as the first through-hiker of the trail. The trail setting currently is much more primitive in the mountain areas compared to the AT since streams don't have

as many bridges and water sources can be fewer. The lower elevation areas of the trail are often part of residential settings which removes the remote feeling associated with the mountain environment. In retrospect, Alan thought that a combination of hiking and biking would be a great combination or alternative to just an entire hiking experience. But, he has completed the trail during a one season hike, much to his credit.



TEHCC Awardees (L-R): Bruce and Mary Cunningham (Stan Murray Award),

Derrick Stowell (Maintainer of the Year). *Photo Courtesy of Steve Wilson.*

Several awards were presented that evening to recognize significant contributions and accomplishments. Those presented with Plaques were: Hiker of the Year; Kevin Edgar, Maintainer of the Year; Derrick Stowell, and the Stan Murray Award; Mary and Bruce Cunningham. Kevin put in lots of miles last year to complete the AT. Derrick Stowell, age 17, is one of our most active members and has truly put forth a lot of hours and many trips for maintenance. Mary and Bruce Cunningham were presented with the Stan Murray award as co-awardees. The Cunninghams are really a very active team and have contributed a great deal to the trail over the years. During the last several years they have individually been one of the top five maintainers in hours. They have also been very generous by financially sponsoring special work crews to do work on the AT. A list of items presented and the number of items include the following: Club Patches for volunteer hours since 1993; 50 h (13), 100 h (3), 250 h (5), 500 h (4), 2,000 h (1), 3,000 (1). A total of 36 members received complimentary t-shirts designed by LuAnn Mack-Drinkard for contributing 50 h or more during the 1997 calendar year as part of the Club's anniversary celebration of maintaining the AT for 50 years.

## SCHEDULED HIKES / ACTIVITIES



### **Spring Wildflower Hike: Buffalo Mountain - Lady Slipper Loop, May 2**

*Leader: Joe DeLoach, Rating: Easy*

We have been taking our spring wildflower hikes to moist woods which feature flowers such as trilliums, Dutchman's Britches, and iris. This year, we'll head for a dry woods but the display should be just as nice. In late April and early May, Buffalo Mountain above Johnson City has one of the most profuse blooms of pink lady slippers anywhere. We once counted over 200 along the trails. There are also flame azaleas in bloom that time of year. We'll walk along the designated Lady Slipper Loop, which is only about 1/2 mile from the parking area. For those who wish, we'll continue to the crest of the mountain at

the White Rocks, which has fine views towards Roan and Holston Mountains. We'll take our time and enjoy the flowers, and the hike should be suitable for all ages. Plan to meet at 9:00 AM in the parking lot between Burger King and McDonald's in Colonial Heights. Bring water and lunch. Please contact Joe for more information.

### **Canoe Trip: Bluestone River-WV, May 2-3**

*Leader: Terry Dougherty, Rating: Class II+*

This is year twenty for this trip. Day 1 will be from Spanishburg to Mt. Creek Lodge and on day 2 (Sun.) we will take out at Bluestone Lake. On average we have enjoyed good water, good weather, good food and drink, and very good friends. Call for more information.

### **AT Day Hike: Groseclose, VA to VA 42, May 9**

*Leader: Bill Stowell, Rating: Moderate-Difficult*

Meet at Burger King in Colonial Heights to leave at 7:30AM. This is a drive to the Wytheville area. The hike is 12 miles and crosses Big Walker Mountain. It covers from O'Lystery picnic area on VA 42 to Groseclose VA near I-81. Let me know if you are going.

## **Third Saturday Special Project, May 16**

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

We hope to have approval for the bridges in Laurel Fork Gorge in time to work on them on the third Saturday in May. If we don't have approval for the bridges, we will work on one of the other special projects on the Appalachian Trail. Meet at the parking area between Burger King and McDonalds in Colonial Heights at 8:00 a.m. If possible, please contact Ed Oliver so that I'll know how many tools to bring.

### **AT Day Hike: Groseclose, VA to VA 16, May 23**

*Leader: Bill Stowell, Rating: Moderate-Difficult*

Meet at Burger King in Colonial Heights to leave at 7:30 a.m. This hike is from Groseclose, VA near I-81 to VA 16 (Mt. Rogers HQ). It covers 11.5 miles. Let me know if you are going.

### **AT Day Hike: Sams Gap to Spivey Gap, May 30**

*Leader: Neil Dotson, Rating: Moderate*

The high Appalachian meadows of Big Bald (5516 ft.) are likely the main attraction for this hike, but in addition to the panoramic views from there, we may expect views from High Rocks near the Spivey Gap end and perhaps some wildflowers still remaining between Street Gap and the summit. A person more reasonable and well-organized would do this 13.6-mile hike as an overnight backpack trip, but your cheerful hike leader lacks those amiable qualities - and so be prepared for a long day and don't plan to go clogging that night. If we have enough people and someone willing and able to lead a second group, we'll do a key swap - else we will all hike northwards on the trail: a 1700-foot climb from Sams Gap followed by a 2300-foot descent to Spivey Gap. We plan to meet in Colonial Heights between Burger King and McDonalds at 7:30 a.m. Be prepared for any weather on this moody mountain and bring lunch and plenty of water. For more information, call Neil Dotson.

## **Hike Notice: Mt. LeConte Creek Trip July 11-12**

*Leader Jon Mather, Rating: Extremely Difficult*

The LeConte Creek Trip is an off-trail ascent of Mt. LeConte via one the creeks that run off the mountain. This trip involves scrambling up and around very steep cascades as well as lots of bushwhacking through thick undergrowth, stinging nettles, and blowdowns. Typical trips take from 8 to 12 hours with very little time for resting. Once at the top, hopefully before dark, the group will be staying

at LeConte Lodge, a rustic inn with cabins, real beds with clean sheets, and a dining room. For more trip details contact Jon Mather. The \$75.50 per person cost of lodging includes dinner Saturday evening and breakfast the next morning. Confirm your reservations for the trip by sending a check, payable to Jon, to Jon Mather, 1011 Woodstone Drive Kingsport, Tennessee 37663. Often, all of the reservations are not taken by those wishing to go up the creek. If you would like to go on the waiting list to hike up the trail, let Jon know and he will contact you before June 11 if there is an opening.

## **Hike Notice: Mt. LeConte Trail Trip July 11-12**

*Leader Steve Falling, Rating: Moderate*

The Hiking Club will repeat its annual assault of Mt. LeConte in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. We will hike up on Saturday, spend the night in two small cabins and hike back down on Sunday. The distance is 5.5 to 7.8 miles one-way depending on the route. The cost per person is \$75.50. This price covers supper on Saturday, lodging for the night and breakfast on Sunday. The hike is rated moderate. For more information contact Steve Falling.

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## **Volunteers Needed - Appalachian Trail Natural Heritage Inventory**

*Joe DeLoach Reporting*

The Appalachian Trail Conference recently sponsored a survey of the Trail corridor for rare and endangered plant species. Many were found along our section; including six more sites identified in the most recent survey from Hump Mountain to Damascus. Several Club members are monitoring sites identified in a previous survey, and others are sought for these six sites. The monitoring is not an onerous task; a yearly inspection trip and report is all that is required. Please contact Joe if you're interested in helping with this. If you know someone outside the Club that might be interested, please encourage them to contact me as well.

## **TEHCC Website Software**

*Steve Banks Reporting*

The Club has one copy of Hot Dog Pro software for managing web sites that is available. The software was originally paid for by TEHCC and is available for anyone who would like to make a donation. Proceeds for the donation will go to TEHCC. Contact Steve Banks if interested in this software.

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

- **Mar 14: AT Maintenance (Ted Malone Reporting)**  
Dixie and Fred Hoilman, Kathy Lewis, and Pat Buchanan hiked from Indian Grave Gap to Chestoa. They cut 4 new big blowdowns that had fallen since Feb 21 and they removed the large 30in hemlock 1/2 mile below the shelter. The trail is clear from top to bottom. Fred also sliced off the top of the log bridge on Jones Branch.
- **Mar 14: AT Maintenance (Greg Kramer Reporting)**  
On March 14th Greg Kramer and Tim Frederick did trail maintenance on Section 7, Watauga Dam to Vandeventer shelter. Being too cold to paint we mostly went to trim back on brush and remove small blow downs. We were very successful in both, but we had limited time so we didn't make it to Vandeventer before returning. Weather was windy on top of the mountain. We flushed 5 grouse

and saw some animal footprint the size of my palm in the little snow on the trail. We will return soon, because we did have two large blow downs both very near Vandeventer. The second was marked with orange flagging. We did meet three through hikers who had decided to start here, this day, in Tennessee and plan to go to Maine and then return here at the end of the season to finish south to Georgia. One person of the three had completed the trail in 1993.

- **Mar 15: AT Maintenance (Ted Malone Reporting)**  
LuAnn Mack-Drinkard worked to clear the trail on Section 19, from Noli Exp to Chestoa Bridge. LuAnn's initial goal was to go and work on a rootball but wound up clearing several blowdowns with a bowsaw. The trail is clear and rootball is patched.
- **Mar 19: AT Maintenance (Old Timer Hiking Club Reporting)**  
Dick Lewis, Bob Miller, Waymon Mumpower, Neil Ottenfeld, Wayne Sparks, Bob Spencer, Alex Stollberg, Clyde Taylor, and Malcolm Wolf worked to clear trail on Section 17 - Cherry Gap to Low Gap. This trail was cleared of winter debris and blowdowns. We cleared the two large trees which had been down since last fall but had to leave one 18" obstruction just a little south of Cherry Gap. This one can be easily stepped over and we'll wait until our next trip. The shelter at Cherry Gap is in good condition. We cleaned the two springs at the shelter. Water flow is good. We still need to complete the section from the entrance to Low Gap south to Beauty Spot Gap, a distance of about 4 miles. We haven't scheduled another work day on the AT until May but we will try to find a day during the next 2-3 weeks to complete the winter clean up. The problem now is the heavy snow on Unaka Mtn and the F/S road making access difficult without more 4WDs. We'll get it done. We are aware of several hundred feet of trail needing leveling and shoring up near iron Mtn Gap and south of Cherry Gap. We plan to schedule this work in the spring.
- **Mar 27: AT Maintenance (Ed Oliver Reporting)**  
John Thompson, Frank Williams, and Darrol Nickels walked to the location of the middle bridge in Laurel Fork Gorge. They measured the distance across the creek so that they will know how long the replacement bridge will need to be.
- **Apr 2: AT Maintenance (Bill Stowell Reporting)**  
Bill and Derrick Stowell rehab'd the trail from Laurel Fork Shelter to the water source. We also cut an 18 inch oak tree on the blue blaze towards the falls that was causing people to walk on the edge of the trail. We put out a fire that some stupid camper left burning at the camping area near Dennis Cove and broke up a fire ring someone built in the trail. We also carried out a fair amount of trash.
- **Apr 3: AT Maintenance (Ed Oliver Reporting)**  
Darrol Nickels and Ed Oliver met with Jan Edwards and Pete Irvine from the USFS on Friday, April 3, 1998. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss possible bridge designs for the two lower bridges in Laurel Fork Gorge. The meeting was very useful. We decided on what we think is the best design for these two bridges. Pete will contact the USFS people in Cleveland and see if they will agree with our recommendation.
- **Apr 4: AT Maintenance (Carl Fritz Reporting)**  
Frank Williams, Jeff Sirola and Carl Fritz cut the blowdowns between 19E and Hump Mountain. Most of the blowdowns were closer to 19E. One blowdown that is 24 inches in diameter and about a mile in from 19E still needs to be cut out. The Apple Barn Shelter is in good shape. The clouds and drizzle accounted for one large unidentified animal crossing between Jeff and Frank.

- **Apr 9: AT Maintenance (Ed Oliver Reporting)**  
On Thursday, April 9, 1998, Ray Hunt and Darrol Nickels met with USFS people in Burnsville, North Carolina to discuss open areas along the Appalachian Trail and the appropriate wording and issues associated with management of Balds in the revision of the Cherokee National Forest Management Plan.
- **Apr 11: AT Maintenance (Bill Stowell Reporting)**  
On Saturday, April 11, Bruce and Mary Cunningham and Frank Williams cut the large blowdown trail south of US 19E. They were aided in this work by a hiker from Elizabethton who stopped for almost an hour to help. They then repaired the steps on the stile located trail south of Isaac's Cemetery. They carried in planks for the steps. However, they found the old planks near the stile and used them to replace the steps. They then cut all the blowdowns between Shook Branch and the Watauga Lake Shelter.
- **Apr 12: AT Maintenance (Bill Stowell Reporting)**  
Bruce Cunningham, Darrol Nickels, Derrick and Bill Stowell met with David Horton of Powell Construction Company and his son Nathaniel to evaluate the bridge sites in Laurel Fork Gorge. We discussed designs and possible sites. We hiked from the lower bridge site up the left side of the creek where people have formed a "deer trail" to the middle bridge site. We crossed a log above the middle bridge and walked past the lower bridge site and crossed the creek at a ford. No decisions were made. Bruce will be in contact with Powell Construction for a follow up. We think a pier can be installed at the lower bridge site and build a conventional wood bridge there. The lower bridge needs to be done first so materials can be carried to the middle bridge. There was some speculation about putting a trail up the left side of the stream where the "deer trail" is. Maybe Fred could look at it and give an opinion of this idea.

## Hike Trip Reports

### **Hike Report: Sand Cave and White Rocks, Cumberland Mountain, April 11**

#### *Neil Dotson Reporting*

From Kingsport, it is around a ninety-minute drive to Ewing Virginia, 14 miles shy of Cumberland Gap off 58. Ascending the mountain from Ewing puts one near the eastern end of the Ridge Trail, with the Sand Cave on the Kentucky side and the White Rocks cliffs on the Virginia side. The hike is an 8-mile there-and-back with a loop atop the mountain to visit these popular attractions. After the climb to the ridge we descended a bit on the north side to the cave, which really is remarkable: a vast cave, maybe football-field-sized, with a steeply sloped sandy floor, difficult to climb. A waterfall graces one end of the cave opening. After lunch in the cave, we escaped the increasing crowd by heading over to the cliffs, which are the most impressive I've seen in the Appalachians - though that may say more about me and my travels than about them! Quite sheer and high, these cliffs look as if they would be at home in the West. A maze of trails atop the cliffs affords many places to look south to Clinch Mountain (and perhaps the Smokies beyond), east to Chimneytop, west toward the Gap and even to the northwest. The weather was pleasant and air had a springtime clarity, so we enjoyed the views from the cliffs - and the views of the cliffs from several points on the descent, as the trees were still leafless. After

returning to the car, we ventured down to the gap to drive through the much-heralded new tunnel. Enjoying this early spring hike, whilst dodging sure signs of horse travel, were Neil Dotson, Steve Falling, Patricia Lopez, and Steve Perri.

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

Steve Perri  
180 Peppertree Drive  
Kingsport, Tennessee 37664