

# THE TENNESSEE EASTMAN HIKING & PADDLING NEWS

June, 1998

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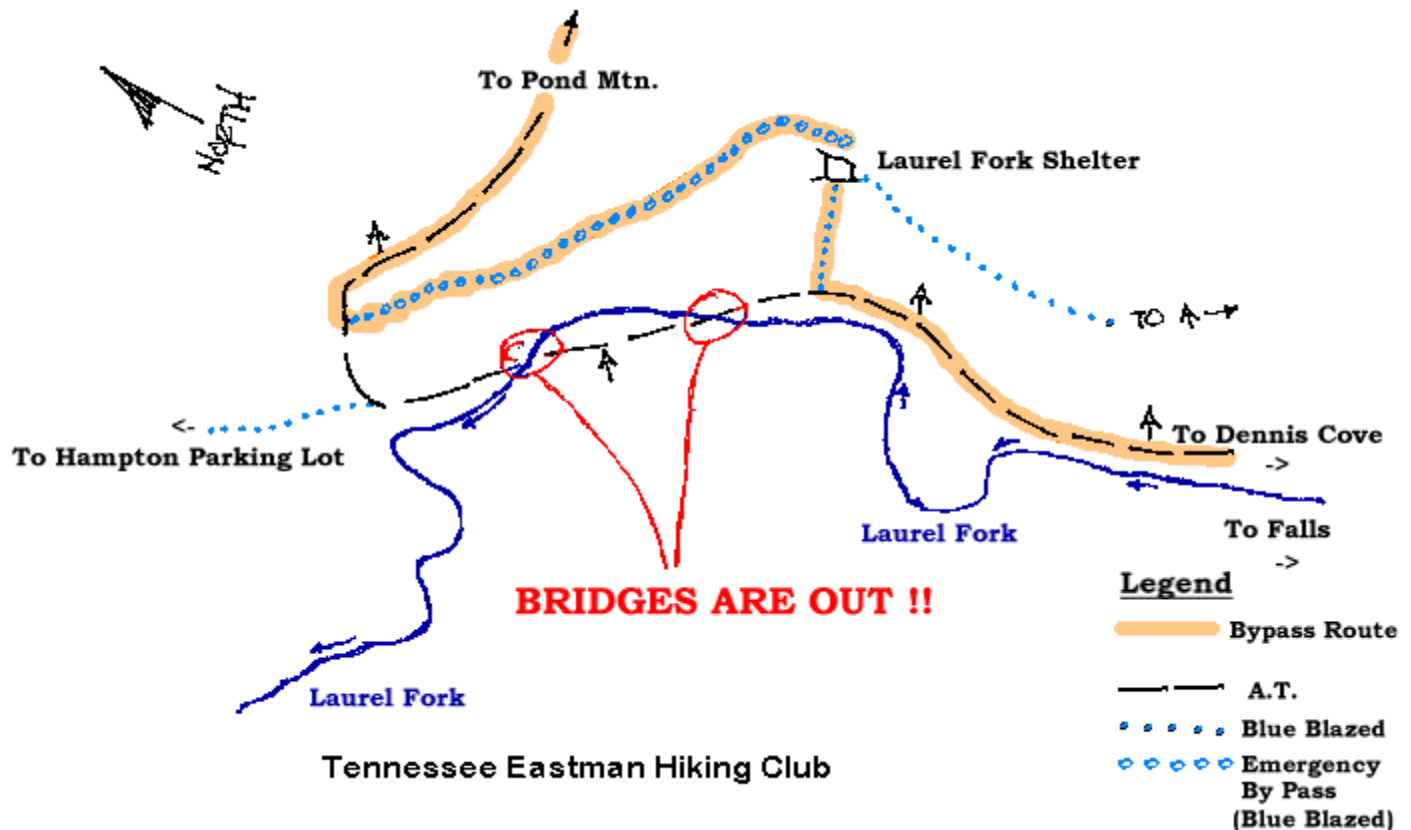
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NEXT TWO MONTHS AT A GLANCE			
June 6	Paddle Trip: Chattooga Section III	III	R. Culbertson
<b>June 11</b>	<b>TEHCC Steering Committee Meeting, B-310, Rm 114</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>J. Mayo</b>
June 13	Hike: Roan Highlands	M	S. Perri
June 13	Paddle Trip: Pigeon River	III-IV	S. Ernst
<b>June 20</b>	<b>Third Saturday Maintenance</b>	<b>Worthwhile</b>	<b>E. Oliver</b>
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
July 11	Mt. LeConte Trail Hike	M	S. Falling
July 11	Mt. LeConte Creek Hike	D	D. Fuller
<b>July 9</b>	<b>TEHCC Steering Committee Meeting, B-310, Rm 114</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>J. Mayo</b>
<b>July 25</b>	<b>Konnarock Crew Work Week: July 23-30</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>J. DeLoach</b>
July 25	AT Hike: Garden Mt. to VA 622/USFS 222	M	C. Chew
July 25	AT Hike: Grayson Highland (VA) - Hurricane Campground	D	R. Colberg

## TEHCC Opens Temporary Trail in Laurel Fork Gorge

*Ed Oliver reporting*

TEHCC has opened a temporary relocation in Laurel Fork Gorge as an alternative for hikers during the interim period so that the USFS may develop a more definitive plan for funding, design, and construction of the replacement bridges. The Club recommended that this relocation be given a high priority for hiker safety since the bridges are not expected to be replaced during this year's hiking season. The concern for hiker safety has been pointed out to the USFS since weekend and through-hikers have been wading across the water at times when the water level is on the order of 3-4 feet deep. Crossing the stream with backpacks or even without packs can be extremely hazardous and is not recommended.



Map by Ted Malone and Steve Banks

Thanks to a great turnout, we were able to reopen the trail on the old railroad grade between the water source for the Laurel Fork Shelter and the point at which the present Appalachian Trail leaves the railroad grade on its climb up Pond Mountain. We removed the blowdowns, did any needed clipping, and constructed rough trails to get into and out of the old trestle crossings. This trail will offer hikers a way to get through the lower portion of the gorge without having to cross the creek where the middle and lower bridges are out. The portion of the trail close to the water source is the most difficult to cross. We may need to do some additional work at that location. Those helping with this work were Mary and Bruce Cunningham, Bill Cook, Frank Williams, Bill & Derrick Stowell, Bob & Pat Peoples, and Ed Oliver from TEHC and the following thru hikers (trail names) Rooster, Mountain Jam, Oklahoma, Alphabet Soup, Mainer, April Moon, Disco, Fishing Bear, Lemmondrop, Mo, Nut, John Ellis (Farther), Tom Park, and The Lost Osprey. The club and the trail owes a special thanks to all these people, especially Bob and Pat Peoples (the owners on the hostel in Dennis Cove) and to the 14 thru hikers who decided to delay their hike in order to help with this work. One or more of the thru hikers said that the work on Saturday gave them a different appreciation of trail maintenance and trail maintainers.

The only sad note to report for the trip is that Bruce slid down while scouting one of the trestle crossings. He did not get hurt. However, the seat of his trail pants is no more. Let's hope that Bruce will continue to help on the trail even though he will have to choose another pair of pants to wear!

## SCHEDULED HIKES / ACTIVITIES

### **Canoe Trip: Chattooga River Section III, June 6-7**

*Leader: Rick Culbertson, 423-239-9795, Rating: Class III*

We will meet at the Visitor's Center at 12:00 p.m. on June 6. We will canoe half of section III on Sat. and finish on Sunday. We will walk up a trail on Sat. and camp out there Sat. night. Hopefully we don't have a repeat of last year's rainstorm Sat. night. Call Rick Culbertson for further details.

### **Hike: Roan Highlands - Grassy Ridge, June 13**

*Leader: Steve Perri, 423-349-5091, Rating: Moderate*

This hike was planned in mind to view the rhododendrons and flame azalea which bloom at their peak during the middle to end of June. We will hike from Carver's Gap heading trail north traversing the balds to reach Grassy Ridge. The hike is rated moderate due to some required elevation gain and just under a 6 mile round trip hike. We plan to meet in Colonial Heights between Burger King and McDonalds at 8:00 a.m. Be prepared for any weather on this hike (it usually rains on my hikes) and bring lunch and plenty of water. For more information or potential weather infringements, call Steve Perri at 423-349-5091.

### **Third Saturday Special Project, June 20**

*Leader: Ed Oliver, 423-349-6668, Rating: Easy-Moderate*

Please contact Ed Oliver at 423-349-6668 for more details.

### **Hike: Gregory Bald, June 27**

*Leader: Neil Dotson, 423-245-8316, Rating: Difficult*

You might think your hike leader is starting a series "Bald Beyond 5000", given that this follows 4 weeks after the planned Big Bald hike - but I've no grand designs here. What is really attractive about Gregory Bald is neither altitude nor views (although those should be great if the air is clear), but the multitude of flame azaleas which should be in bloom at the time of our hike. But there's yet more on this, "one of the finest hikes in the Great Smoky Mountains": for example, some old-growth tuliptrees (some greater than 50 inches in diameter) on the way up. And the way up is steep; we begin our ascent from around 2000 ft. at the end of Forge Creek Road and climb to about 5000 ft. at the bald, on this 11-mile there-and-back. Given the length of the hike and distance we have to travel (to the far west end of the Smokies, off Cades Cove), we will meet in Colonial Heights between Burger King and McDonalds at 7:30 a.m. - the usual place but pushing the envelope with regard to time. Bring lunch, plenty of water and raingear - and plan for this to be an all-day trip (we may want to catch dinner on the way back).

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

*Leader Jon Mather, 423-239-6766, 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, 423-239-5502, 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.

## Special Announcements



### TEHCC Website Address Change

High technology requires a rapid pace for change... and so now the Club has a new website address. Please make a note of the new address and pass this along to anyone you know who may need to be aware of the change.

< <http://home.naxs.com/tehcc> >

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## Wilderness Ethics - Extreme Guidelines Regarding Cell Phones

*Steve Perri Reporting*

The Center for Appalachian Trail Studies will be using and promoting the following guideline for cell phone use in all Center publications (including Trailplace, The Thru-hiker's Handbook, The Thru-hiker's Planning Guide, etc.)...

"On the Appalachian Trail, cell phones should be used in the same places, and with the same degree of privacy, that one would use when handling bowel movements." This guideline is clear, simple, and easy to understand. We will be seeking to have other AT organizations join the Center in making this the accepted cell phone standard for the Appalachian Trail.

I hope no one is offended by this guideline. I have already violated this guideline by the operation of a cell phone in Big Laurel Branch Wilderness. I'm sure when Congress passed the Wilderness Act they had no idea that cell phone use would proliferate the boundries of wilderness. I guess that would hold true for pagers, GPS devices and laptops?!

## AT Section Maintenance and Special Projects

- **Apr 3: AT Maintenance (CB Willis Reporting)**  
Sandra Perry, Clyde Taylor, CB Willis, Malcolm Wolf, Dick Lewis, Bob Miller, Waymon Mumpower,

and Neil Ottenfeld cleared the section of trail from Low Gap to Beauty Spot and 1/4 mile trail south below Cherry Gap Shelter. We cleared blowdowns with bow saws and will come back with chainsaw for 5 big blowdowns. A team of two spent all day at the Cherry Gap shelter clearing blowdowns and installing a 2" pvc pipe at the spring. We removed a fire ring that was too close to the shelter, changed registers and left a long handled spade. The 50th Anniversary t-shirts are much welcomed, thanks.... CB Willis

- **Apr 6: AT Maintenance (CB Willis Reporting)**  
Sandra Perry, Waymon Mumpower, Wayne Sparks, and CB Willis worked Section 18 between south side of Unaka Mtn and Beauty Spot Gap. We removed the five large blowdowns. NOTE: we plan to level and widen two short sections of the trail, one just south of Iron Mtn Gap and one just south of Cherry Gap shelter. We will do the usual weeding around June 15th.
- **Apr 15: AT Maintenance (CB Willis Reporting)**  
Huston Fortner, Ed Schell, Bob Spencer, Clyde Taylor, Wayne Sparks, Sandra Perry, Nancy Kinkead, and Neil Ottenfeld worked Sections 9 and 10. This was a pleasure hike but as always we take along saws, loppers and garbage bags...used all three. We removed some fall overs and clipped where needed and also carried out garbage. TWO BIG BLOWDOWNS REMAIN that can be stepped over or around.
- **Apr 17: AT Maintenance (Bill Berry Reporting)**  
Bill Berry worked on this adopted trail section from Spivey Gap to No Business Knob Shelter. I painted blazes and repaired treadway that had been damaged by the blowdowns from the winter storms. All the section is passable and most of it in good condition. I plan to go back in and complete the remainder of the trail repair.
- **Apr 18: AT Maintenance (Corey Paulson Reporting)**  
Corey Paulson (Outdoor Pgm Dir), Eddie Kitson, and Karen Dempsey (Mahoney's Crew) worked on our adopted section from Carver's Gap north to the Stan Murray Shelter for a distance of 2.9 miles. We clipped annual growth, removed some step overs and cleaned out the shelter. We plan a return trip in June to cut weeds.
- **Apr 25: AT Maintenance (Steve Wilson Reporting)**  
Steve and Jill Wilson hiked from Indian Grave Gap to the Nolichucky River (USA Raft) clearing brush from the trail. During this pleasant six-mile hike, we experienced highlights of friendly through hikers at the Curley Maple Shelter and some nice wild flowers. The trail was reasonably clear with only a couple of duck-under blow downs. The hikers agreed that the trail is in good shape.
- **May 1: AT Special Project Trip (Ed Oliver Reporting)**  
Ray Hunt, Bruce Cunningham, Darrol Nickels and Ed Oliver met with Morgan Sommerville (ATC) and 6 USFS personnel at the Forest Service offices in Unicoi, Tennessee to discuss the bridges in Laurel Fork Gorge. The Forest Service stated that they were committed to replacing the bridges in Laurel Fork Gorge. They will have a bridge design and will complete any needed engineering by the end of October of 1998. They will secure funding and complete the construction of the bridges by the end of summer of 1999 (earlier if possible). TEHC will have input to the design and will be allowed to choose to do as much of the construction as the club is able and willing to do.
- **May 2: 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.

- **May 3: AT Maintenance (Kevin Edgar Reporting)**

Kevin Edgar, Eric Dowty, Darrel and Gail Wilder, and Kent Wilson worked on Section 16 from Iron Mt. Gap to Hughes Gap. They blazed, clipped back uphill side, light weeding and carried out three bags of trash from the Clyde Smith Shelter. The shelter is in excellent condition. Side hill north of Greasy Cr. Gap is in poor shape (sloughing off, very slippery when wet). Recommendation is to redig or put trail on ridgecrest. There is a large pile of trash/garbage 10-20 feet on the NC side of Hughes Gap. Perhaps about 10 bags full. All signs in place and in good condition.

- **May 6: AT Special Proj. Trip (Bruce Cunningham Reporting)**

Bruce Cunningham, John Kiefer, Bob Peoples and four thru hikers (Bryan Webb - trail name Captain, Craig Hall - Mouse Trap, Jeff Wilson - Stick Man, Tim Wilson - Stargazer, and Jack Tarun - Baltimore Jack) constructed a 23 foot ladder to provide a safe route up the old railroad trestle near Laurel Fork Shelter. This ladder provides a safe way for hikers to get from the shelter to the Appalachian Trail on Pond Mountain without crossing the creek in the lower portion of Laurel Fork Gorge. They also installed some steps in the next trestle crossing trail north of the water source. There is some more work that could be done to improve the trail at the trestle crossings.

- **May 9: AT Maintenance (Ed Oliver Reporting)**

Mary and Bruce Cunningham delivered the Laurel Fork Gorge trail reroute signs to Bob Peoples who will install them. They also put similar signs in the Watauga Lake Shelter and the Apple House Shelter. They cut weeds on each side of US19E, between Isaacs Cemetery and Buck Mountain Road, and around Watauga Lake. They picked up trash around Watauga Lake. They reported two blowdowns near Watauga Lake.

- **May 9: AT Maintenance (Garry Luttrell Reporting)**

We drove to the end of Roaring Fork Road, and hiked up to Yellow Mtn. Gap. Frank Williams and John Thompson clipped, removed a few blowdowns, and blazed to Bradley Gap. Garry Luttrell cut briars, and removed a few blowdowns to Grassy Ridge; replaced the arrow directing hikers to the left at Grassy Ridge and placed the wooden Stan Murray sign at the SM shelter. After some drying in the afternoon, blazes were painted between the shelters. The trail south of SM Shelter has been washed out pretty bad and hikers are making parallel trails in several spots. Two other areas washed out, but not as bad as trail south of YM Gap and trail north of Little Hump. We carried out a large bag of trash from the shelters.

- **May 16: AT Maintenance (Bill Stowell Reporting)**

Ed Oliver, Joe Deloach, Frank Williams, Derrick Stowell and Bill Stowell worked to put the finishing touches on the TEMPORARY trail (blue blazed) that is to be used until the bridges are replaced in Laurel Fork Gorge. A new treadway was constructed in the first trestle crossing. Also other places between there and the water source were cleaned up. On the hike in we cut a new trail up the hill where the mud slide area had destroyed the old trail near Hampton.

- **May 16: AT Maintenance (Steve Perri Reporting)**

Steve Perri, Neil Dotson, Julia Fischer, and Susan Monnier carried out this year's annual maintenance on Section 4. We used the Cunningham spray paint which worked very easily. We clipped the usual overgrowth and removed a few dead trees. We picked up trash at the shelter and at the campsite near the shelter. We put the TEHCC note log book in the shelter along with another one that was half full. The shelter appears to be in good shape as well as the trail in general.

## **Hike Trip Reports**

### **Hike Report: Hike Report: Groseclose, VA to VA 42, May 9**

#### *Bill Stowell Reporting*

We met at 7:30 for the long drive to place the cars. We drove to Marion and took VA 16 to VA 42 to the Picnic area. We left two cars and drove back to Marion and up to Exit 54 to start the hike. We started hiking at 10:30. This is an 11.8 mile hike. The rain held off ( I don't allow rain on my hikes) and it turned out to be a pleasant day. This is a beautiful section to hike with some good views. The only bad part was the last mile to VA42 is a section on private land. The trail was muddy from all the rain and the cows have destroyed the tread way. Along for the hike were Bill Stowell, Derrick Stowell, Tom Dossier, Kent Wilson, Nancy Wilson, and Mary Ellen Ress.

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

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