

THE TENNESSEE EASTMAN HIKING & PADDLING NEWS

July, 1998

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NEXT TWO MONTHS AT A GLANCE				
July 2-5	Paddling Trip: Nantahala Multi-Activity Weekend	I-?	B. Dayvolt	423-288-9703
July 11	Mt. LeConte Trail Hike	M	S. Falling	423-239-5502
July 11	Mt. LeConte Creek Hike	D	D. Fuller	423-794-7340
July 9	TEHCC Steering Committee Meeting, B-310, Rm 114	E	J. Mayo	423-349-4244
July 19	Paddling Trip: Watauga Below the Dam	II	E. Montgomery	423-229-6332
July 23	Bays Mtn. Moonlight Hike (Thur), Fun Fest	E	J. Mayo	423-349-4244
July 25	Konnarock Crew Work Week: July 23-30	M	J. DeLoach	423-753-7903
July 25	AT Hike: Garden Mt. to VA 622/USFS 222	M	C. Chew	423-239-6237
Aug 1	AT Hike: Grayson Highland (Va) - Hurricane Campground	D	R. Colberg	423-288-8333
Aug 13	TEHCC Steering Committee Meeting, B-310, Rm 114	E	J. Mayo	423-349-4244
Aug 15	Paddling Trip: New River Gorge	III-IV	M. Morrow	423-245-1201
Aug 22	AT Hike: Iron Mt Gap to Indian Grave Gap	M	N. Dotson	423-245-8316
Aug 29	AT Hike: Laurel Creek (Va 615) to I-77	M	C. Chew	423-239-6237
Aug 29	Nolichucky Gorge 1st Timers Trip	III-IV	D. Fuller	423-764-7340



Appalachian Trail Conference Holds Biennial Club Presidents

Retreat, June 19-21

Steve Perri Reporting

I attended the biennial retreat of ATC June 19-21 as the representative from TEHCC in place for our club President, Jan Mayo. The goal of the retreat was for the AT maintaining club presidents to gain a better understanding of how ATC and the Clubs can work together to better manage the AT over the next 50 years. The meeting focused on: planning, ATC programs that provide support to the clubs, present and future management challenges, and to get acquainted and

have fun.

There are currently 31 AT maintaining clubs that work with ATC, the National Park Service, and the USFS to manage the AT through 14 states. The ATC currently has about 24,000 members and a staff of about 34 full and part-time people that help coordinate the numerous programs and tasks associated with managing the trail. The AT is very unique in that it is the longest contiguous trail as part of the National Park system and is maintained solely by volunteers.

Numerous concerns of management issues were voiced by club representatives including: volunteers (care, age and recruitment), primitive maintenance, powerline threats, highway proposals, relationships with agency partners, chain saw issues, wilderness issues, communication tower installations, urban growth pressures, horse and other non-foot travel competition, hiker group sizes, ice storm damage, and timber theft. The most common concerns were: volunteer retention/recruiting, proposed communication tower and powerline installations near trail viewsheds, the proposed Saddleback Mt. expansion in ME and hiker group size. Overwhelmingly, volunteer recruitment and retention were of the greatest concern of all club presidents. A fair amount of the weekend was devoted to workshops focusing on issues including: group and commercial use of the AT, telecommunication issues, critical incidents management, corridor and boundary monitoring, outreach success stories, volunteer recognition, Chainsaw Agreements and training, and how to respond to urban growth threats to the trail. I had some familiarity with most of these discussions since the topics were reviewed at the Southern Regional Management meeting this year in March which I had also attended.

Edward Clark gave a presentation on "The Challenges of AT Leadership in the Next 50 yrs and Being Effective Club and Conference Leaders." Ed is President and Founder of the Wildlife Center of Virginia and has conducted motivational leadership workshops in the past for ATC. I personally learned a great deal about a number of issues we can improve upon as a club to develop a more strategic and systematic program for membership recruitment and volunteer recognition.

Overall, I learned a great deal about how ATC is organized and works with agency partners to manage the AT. The meeting offered an excellent opportunity to have many informal discussions with other club members to share key experiences. I also became more aware of the issues that other clubs as well as our own club is struggling with. We have many commonalities in some regards, but differences as well due to our geography, membership demographics, and population density and proximity of users of the trail. I am glad I had the opportunity to attend this meeting.

SCHEDULED HIKES / ACTIVITIES

Third Saturday Special Project, July 18

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

We have several options available depending on the number of people interested in working. Please contact Ed Oliver at 423-349-6668 for more details.

Konnarock Crew Appalachian Trail Work (Scheduled for July 23-27, July 30-August 3, August 6-10, and August 13-17)

Leader: Joe DeLoach, (Telephone 423-753-7903)

This year we have four consecutive weeks of Konnarock Crew time, enough to get a lot of work done on our Trail section. Our original plan was to have Konnarock help with the Round Bald Relocation, which is the reason for the consecutive weeks. At press time, it looks unlikely that we will have the necessary approvals and the logistics to work on this project. We do have a backup, the Little Rock Knob Relocation, ready to go. This is a very scenic area on which we started relocating the Trail last year to avoid the very steep climb/descent, depending on your point of view, of Little Rock Knob.

There is no inherent problem with sections of the Appalachian Trail being steep, but in most areas of the South this leads to erosion which is not only damaging to the resource but dangerous. With good Club participation, we could finish this relocation in 1998. Konnarock works Thursday afternoons, all day Friday-Sunday, and Monday mornings. Volunteers are needed any of those days but we will have organized trips departing from Burger King in Colonial Heights on the Saturdays and Sundays.

Contact Joe if you're interested in helping or for up-to-date information on the project.

AT Hike: AT in SW VA, Garden Mtn. to Va. 622/USFS 222.

July 25

Leader: Collins Chew, Rating: Moderate, Phone: 423-239-6237

This AT hike is the Northernmost of those scheduled to cover SW Virginia this year and includes hiking above the beautiful farms of Burkes Garden before descending to the uninhabited forests of Poor Valley. The car shuttle is rather long and on dirt roads so the day will be rather long. After driving through Marion, VA, we will spot a car(s) at USFS 222 (continuation of VA 625 and drive to the crest of Garden Mountain at VA.623. From there we will hike the rocky crest of Garden Mountain on the AT to Chestnut Knob with it's great views and unusual shelter, then descend along the AT to Poor Valley and the car. We must then return to the hike starting point and return home through the lovely farming area of Burkes Garden and on through Tazewell, VA. to home. Bring lunch, water, raingear, and appropriate clothing. Hiking distance 10.8 miles on relatively easy trail. Total driving distance including shuttle about 240 miles. (If there are enough to have a group going each way, the dirt road travel will be greatly reduced.) Meet between McDonalds and Burger King in Colonial Heights on Saturday, July 25, 1998 at 8:00 a.m. Call for more info.

AT Hike: Grayson Highlands to Fox Creek (VA 603), Aug. 1

Leader: Richard Colberg, 423-288-8333; Rating: Moderate (10.3 mi, 2000 ft elevation gain).

Grayson Highlands State Park is one of my favorite places to hike. Come join me on this hike from Grayson Highlands to Fox Creek (VA 603). [Note: I've shortened this hike from the one (from Grayson

Highlands to Hurricane Campground) originally announced in the six-month calendar.] Along the way, we should have excellent views of the surrounding mountains from the balds in Grayson Highlands and the meadows on Stone and Pine Mountains. We'll also hike through pleasant hardwood forests. We should see wild ponies in Grayson Highlands, and possibly horses on Stone Mountain south of Scales. Bring appropriate clothing, lunch and water. Meet in the parking lot between McDonalds and Burger King in Colonial Heights at 7:45 a.m. for an 8:00 a.m. departure. Call for more information.

Special Announcements

Multi-Club Meet: September 4-7

The 1998 ATC Multi-Club Meet will be hosted by the Old Dominion Trail Club on Labor Day weekend. The event will take place at Sherando Lake, VA (near Waynesboro). Registration will be available at the site and will not require pre-registration. More details will follow in the next issue of the newsletter.

Canoeing at Natural Tunnel State Park

Natural Tunnel State Park offers guided trips on the Clinch River for anyone interested in pleasant outings on the river. Outings can be arranged through the week since weekends tend to book up quickly. For more information, call the park at 540-940-2674.

Partner-up for Hikes

TEHCC offers opportunities for organized hikes/trips for those who are unfamiliar with trail locations or specific hiking goals. A more rigorous program of hikes is Beyond South 6000. This is an organized program to climb the South's tallest peaks. For more info or to look for partners contact Garry Luttrell at 423-239-9854. Less strenuous hikes are available for anyone just interested in getting outdoors. Just check out our 6 month calendar, newsletter or website: <<http://home.naxs.com/tehcc>> for schedules and contacts.

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AT Section Maintenance and Special Projects

- **Feb 19: AT Maintenance (John Thompson Reporting)**
On Feb. 19 John Kiefer and John Thompson checked storm damage on the AT for about 1 mile south from Watauga Lake up Pond Mountain. Damage was heavy and one spot was impassable with a 24 in. blowdown. After clearing a space under it, we cleared about 10 higher areas of rhodos plus small trees. We found about six 10-18 in. blowdowns which we were unable to remove with bow saws.
- **May 9: AT Maintenance (Garry Luttrell Reporting)**
I carried out routine maintenance on my section from Carvers Gap to Yellow Mt. Gap. Sign 14.3 still has 'Roan Highlands' shelter on it and we need new water signs with arrows at Stan Murray Shelter.
- **May 20: AT Maintenance (Ed Oliver Reporting)**
We flagged a relocation trail north of Spivey Gap. This relocation is at the request of the Forest Service. However, it will accomplish the same objective as a planned relocation on the same section of trail. This relo will eliminate a marginal section of trail. The Forest Service will let us know when the relo has been approved. The construction will be done by either TEHC or USFS.
- **May 23: AT Maintenance (Joe DeLoach Reporting)**

Craig DeLoach, Joe DeLoach, and Ed Oliver carried out maintenance from Campbell Hollow Road to Bitter End. Ed met us at Bitter End and dropped us off at Campbell Hollow Road. The plan was to paint the blazes and clip. It started raining the minute we got out of Ed's car and rained intermittently the rest of the day, so we just clipped. There was nothing out of the ordinary to do. Bitter End road had a sign saying that it was closed May 15 - July 15 to allow turkeys to raise their young. There is a very pretty stand of pink lady-slippers just a little ways trail south of the Laurel Fork Bridge.

- **May 24: AT Maintenance (Bill Berry Reporting)**

I conducted some routine Spring growth maintenance from Spivey Gap to No Business Knob Shelter. I clipped, weeded, worked on root balls, checked on shelter. The trail is in good shape.

- **May 24: AT Maintenance (Dixie Hoilman Reporting)**

Dixie, Fred and Jeff Hoilman conducted maintenance from Carver's Gap to Yellow Mtn Gap. We were on an overnight trip from Carver's Gap to the Yellow Mountain Barn. We clipped all the way to the Barn and picked up some trash at Stan Murray. Sunday night was spent at the barn with about 35 other hikers. Marianne Skeen and a few others from the Georgia Club were there also. All hikers were very appreciative of what we had done with the barn. Seems as if the picnic table as well as the sleeping platforms downstairs are being used for the cooking area. One comment that most all of the hikers had about the barn was that it could use some nails to hang up their packs. Some people were tenting in the flat area where the brick house used to be.

- **June 6: AT Maintenance (Ed Oliver Reporting)**

On Saturday, June 6, Mary and Bruce Cunningham, Bill and Derrick Stowell, and Ed Oliver attempted to do annual maintenance (cut weeds and annual growth between TN91 and Turkey Pen Gap. Bill and Derrick walked up the road from Hurley Hollow to Turkey Pen Gap and started cutting weeds and lopping branches. They soon ran into a mess of downed trees starting a short distance trail north of Turkey Pen Gap. The storm that did so much damage in Stoney Creek and Shady Valley apparently crossed Iron Mountain in the area between Turkey Pen Gap and Iron Mountain Shelter. Trees are down at the rate of 12 to 15 per mile. Many of the trees are large (18 to 24 inches in diameter). The rest of the group started at Tenn. 91 and cut weeds and lopped in the direction of Turkey Pen Gap. **(Webmaster's note: due to abuse by hikers, the Hurley Hollow access point has been CLOSED. DO NOT use this access point.)**

- **June 7: AT Maintenance (Ted Malone Reporting)**

Ted and Wendy Malone conducted a trail assessment from Hwy 91 to Damascus. The plan was to hike to each road crossing and walk in for 15 to 20 minutes and check for blowdowns or spot hikers and ask them. At Hwy 91 we met two hikers and gave them a ride to Damascus. They gave the following info: they noted the two blowdowns just south of Vandeventer that we have on record. From Vandeventer to the next shelter, Iron Mountain, is a mess. They remembered most of the trees being large. One of the largest fell on the fire pit at Iron Mountain shelter just barely missing it. There was a lot of wind at Hwy 421 Sunday afternoon but no trees down within fifteen minutes walk on either side. I did not hike in as far at Abingdon Gap and did not see any trail damage or blowdowns there. I talked to the few hikers that I could find in Damascus and all reported scatter trees down between Hwy 91 and Damascus. Most said that it was ok north of Vandeventer when they came thru.

- **June 11-12: AT Maintenance (Ed Oliver Reporting)**

Ted Malone, Bill and Derrick Stowell, and Ed Oliver walked from Tenn. 91 to Iron Mountain Shelter, spent the night, and cut out the blowdowns from the shelter to Turkey Pen Gap the next day. We were met by Roby Phillipi from the Forest Service. He helped us cut the blowdowns. All the blowdowns have been removed from this section of trail. ([Webmaster's note: access to the A.T. at Turkey Pen Gap has been CLOSED](#))

- **June 12: AT Maintenance (Dick Burow Reporting)**

Suzanne, Dick, and Grandson Nathan Burow went from Watauga Dam Road to Griffith Branch on the AT around Watauga Lake. We cut 15 blowdowns and worked on the path around two root balls. About six of the blowdowns were over 12". We had lunch at the shelter which was in good condition. Nathan cut a small path out of the hillside above the root ball about 5 minutes north of the shelter. We put two logs at the base of this path to help keep it from falling into the hole. Future work of filling the hole with dirt from the root ball would be helpful. The other root ball about 10 minutes south of the dam is passable with some toe holes we cut in the path. I used my new freighter frame to carry my chain saws. It is very comfortable for the heavy load. I think I now have a good system to carry chain saws. I will be happy to share information on the design.

- **June 14: AT Maintenance (Ed Oliver Reporting)**

On June 14, Bruce and Mary Cunningham cut weeds from Low Gap (US421) to a point about 2 miles trail south of US421. They met some hikers who said that the remainder of this section (US 421 to TN91) has some weeds but no real weed problem. Bruce said that the weeds on this section were higher and thicker than he had ever seen them. It appears that the wet spring and summer has resulted in a great crop of weeds. Other hikers said that the section from Abingdon Gap Shelter to US421 is very bad for weeds. It looks like many of the sections of trail in our area may have weeds waist high or higher at this time.

Hike Trip Reports

Hike Report: Mt. Rogers HQ to Groseclose, VA, May 23

Bill Stowell Reporting

Bill & Derrick Stowell, Kent & Nancy Wilson, Hugh and Marilyn Thompson, and Bill Little completed this trail section as part of the continuing hike series in VA. We drove to Groseclose and parked 2 cars at the DQ for obvious reasons. We then drove to Mt. Rogers HQ and began hiking in the rain. It rained off and on. We ate lunch at the shelter and hiked the rest of the way with no rain. This is a nice section with some views and interesting descent to the shelter with a stream and blooming rhodos. There are also some open fields that afford some nice views.

Hike Report: Sams Gap to Spivey Gap, May 31

Neil Dotson Reporting

A 'moody mountain' indeed, although the main mood we experienced at the top was stormy. The hike up from Sams Gap was a pleasant hike, with plenty of wildflowers to enjoy: Solomon's Seal but as much if not more False Solomon's Seal, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Squaw Root, May Apple, and Wild Geranium, among others. The Trillium was past its prime, and we only saw scattered White Fringed Phacelia near the top. The rumblings (besides those from our stomachs) began just before lunch. After

eating our fill, we decided to continue but before we could reach the bald the storm hit, forcing us to take a 45-minute break under a rock. The thunder receded, and we made our way across the bald - quickly, to beat a visible second shower, feared to be approaching. Nearby mountains, including what was likely the Black Mountains, could be seen disappearing into the rain. The shelter between Big and Little Balds is quite nice: bunks and even a privy at some distance. Little Bald isn't - bald, that is (there are no views, at least in the summer, from this knob) and the steepness made us think it more than little. That may say more about us than the trail: socks were nicely soaked by this time, after walking through tall wet grass since reaching the Big Bald. We did enjoy views towards Flattop Mountains from High Rocks about 2 miles this side of Spivey Gap - definitely worth the scramble up the hill. Surviving and, yes, even enjoying this 14-mile, 9-hour outing were Michael Ekart, Dean Webster and Neil Dotson.

Hike Report: Roan Highlands and Grassy Ridge, June 13

Steve Perri Reporting

The forewarning of rain on my hikes turned out to be quite appropriate for this hike. A severe storm rolled through before dawn and gave an initial appearance which was questionable until we began the hike. At Carvers Gap the view trail north was clear with high winds whereas trail south was clouded in. So we headed up the trail only seeing a few other groups. The flame and yellow azalea were really awesome! The rhododendron also appeared to be peaked in bloomage this weekend as opposed to the festival scheduled for the 20th. We ate on Grassy Ridge behind a rock outcropping to afford protection from the wind. The clouds gave enough of a break to allow some blue sky making for a really colorful viewshed of the intense green foliage with all the blooms and dark blue and white clouds and occasional blue sky. We experienced some showers on the way back lasting about 10 min and then it cleared up again. So we made the right decision to go this day to enjoy our casual trek and watch the Roan Groan bike riders struggle to the top. Those enjoying this trip: Marilyn and Hugh Tompson, Victor Hasler, Steve Perri, and Fritz the Jack Russell Terrier.

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

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