

THE TENNESSEE EASTMAN HIKING & PADDLING NEWS

February 1999

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NEXT TWO MONTHS AT A GLANCE				
Feb 7	Family/Beginner Hike: Warrior's Path, Devils Backbone	E	N. Wilson	423-239-7554
Feb 13	AT Hike: Spivey Gap to Nolichucky River	M-D	P. Cairnes	423-239-6058
Feb 20	South Beyond 6000: Plott Balsam and Yellow Face **CANCELLED**	D	G. Luttrell	423-239-9854
Feb 21	Leader's Choice	IV-V	M. Morrow	423-245-1201
Feb 27	AT Hike: US 25/70 - Allen Gap	M	N. Dotson	423-245-8316
Mar 5	Maintenance Dinner	FUN	B. Stowell	423-239-7697
Mar 6	Family/Beginner Hike: Bays Mountain Park	E	B. Stowell	423-239-7697
Mar 7	Leader's Choice	IV-V	M. Morrow	423-245-1201
Mar 20	Winter Dinner Meeting	FUN	C. Fritz	423-477-4669
Mar 20	Southwest Virginia Creeks	II-III	B. Becker	423-288-5886
Mar 21	More Southwest Virginia Creeks	II-III	B. Becker	423-288-5886
Mar 27	Lower Nolichucky or Lower Watauga	II	T. Pridgen	423-245-5975

Club Membership Benefits and Activities

Steering Committee reporting

Over the last several years our club's membership has seen significant changes in the workplace, but the benefits and activities of membership really haven't changed all that much. We still have dinner meetings twice a year; a schedule of hikes, paddling trips, and maintenance activities; and a monthly newsletter. However, the number of participants and different individuals taking part in outings and events has declined over the years. This trend is rather disconcerting for many of us who have been actively involved in the organizational aspects of the club.

There have been many changes in how we do our work and how we communicate. The associations people develop in the workplace sometimes extend outside of work. However, the busy workplace and the dynamics of family responsibilities often are huge time constraints, especially for personal family time. The Steering Committee and active

club volunteers are seeing the same people involved in activities, but we realize there are many more club members who are not actively participating. This is rather troubling and will be a serious focus of attention in the upcoming months.

The club is currently reviewing its functions, services, and benefits. Improved communication is one area that we are working on. Thanks to Steve Banks, we now have a Web site with an incredible amount of information and pictures describing our club's activities. This is an excellent tool for disseminating information, especially to non-Eastman Chemical Company employees. Our newsletter has been upgraded to include more information about current activities, events, and issues as well as including more personal touches with photos and clip art. Our interaction with area sporting goods stores is still part of our dinner meetings, and these same business owners offer discounts to club members for purchasing non-sale merchandise in their stores. Our club rental equipment continues to be heavily used, and new equipment is continuously added to replace older equipment.

In the upcoming months we plan to survey our membership to see what other services or activities you would like to see. Some ideas implemented so far are to offer more family-oriented hikes or relatively easier hikes as opposed to the more lengthy, strenuous hikes. Providing opportunities for non-Eastman Chemical Company employees to participate in activities is something we've offered in the past but haven't communicated very well to the community. We would like to improve in this area as well. There's always a need for volunteers to lead or participate in hikes, paddling trips, or maintenance trips. Increased participation in a variety of ways while meeting membership needs is our ultimate goal. We'd like to find out what our members want changed or added. So when the opportunity comes, please take a few minutes to complete the survey and return it as soon as possible.

TEHCC Dinner Meeting

Sharon's Barbecue has been reserved for the TEHCC Winter Dinner Meeting, scheduled for March 20. Sharon's needs a head count seven days before the meeting, so all of the reservations need to be received by March 12.

Winter Paddlers Party

Saturday, February 20, 1999 (7 p.m. - 11 p.m.)

ATTENTION PADDLERS and other interested club members: You and your family are invited to a Winter Paddlers' Party. This will be a joint party with Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club (TEHCC) members and our friends from the Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts (APEs). APEs is an elite paddling organization based out of Erwin, Tennessee. The party will be at the Eastman Lodge.

We will have a covered dish dinner. The APEs (great club name) will provide meat, bread, soft drinks, cups, plates, napkins, and eating utensils. Everyone should bring an appetizer, vegetable, salad, or dessert or two along with an appropriate serving utensil. Of course, it's BYOB if desired. If you have any questions, call Mike Morrow at 245-1201.

We will have exciting whitewater videos and a paddling gear display by Mahoney's. As an added treat, Ed Montgomery will present a slide show of the TEHCC/APEs on the Green River in Utah. This will be VERY entertaining!

Come on out and enjoy the fun, food, and fellowship at the inaugural Joint TEHCC/APEs Winter Paddlers' Party.

Annual AT Maintenance About to Begin...Volunteers Needed

The TEHCC Maintenance Season will be upon us in a few weeks, as we approach the month of February, which begins winter blowdown removal. So far this has been a mild year compared to past seasons, but we all know that February and March are unpredictable. Teams will be forming to do blowdown removal and winter damage assessments on a frequent basis on Saturdays, and we'll be needing volunteers to help staff the teams. We actually have several sections of trail that also need maintenance team leaders as well. So if you're at all interested in getting out of the house to relieve stress or lose some weight, this is a productive way to accomplish both! Also, if you know of anyone that would be interested, ask them if they would want to go or lead a team. The personal approach is the best solution; we just have to ask. Contact Steve Perri (423-349-5091) or Bill Stowell (423-239-7697) for more information.

Scheduled Activities

Hike Leaders Needed for ATC Radford 1999 Biennial Meeting

reporting

The Appalachian Trail Conference Biennial meeting is scheduled for July 9-16, 1999, and will be held at Radford College in Virginia. This meeting is cohosted by TEHCC, and we are still in need of some volunteers for leading hikes. Hikes are typically held at various times throughout the week, so if you have an opportunity to spend some time away from work and want to contribute, what better way than to sign up to lead a hike? If you'd like to lead a hike, let Collins Chew (423-239-6237) know, and we'd be glad to get you on the schedule.



Warrior's Path State Park--Devil's Backbone, February 7

Leader: Nancy Wilson, Phone: 239-7554. Rating: Easy

We will meet at the swimming pool parking lot at Warrior's Path State Park and carpool to the trailhead. Devil's Backbone is a beautiful and diverse trail close to home. There will be good views of the lake from our two climbs, rushing water in Fall Creek, and a loop through an old farm on our five-mile trek. Bring water and dress appropriately for the weather.

AT Hike: Spivey Gap to Nolichucky River, February 13

Leader: Phyllis Cairnes, 239-6058. Rating: Moderate

Come out and enjoy a 10.2-mile hike on the AT from Spivey Gap (U.S. 19W in N.C.) to Nolichucky River (Erwin area) through dense laurel and rhododendron. The trail crosses along the broad shoulder of Flattop Mtn., through Devils Creek Gap, past No Business Knob Shelter on to the crest of Cliff Ridge, with fine views of the Nolichucky River. Climbing totals 1,500 ft., with several small stream crossings. Appropriate cold weather gear and hiking boots are necessary. Bring food and water. Meet at 8 a.m. in parking area between McDonald's and Burger King in Colonial Heights. If you plan to go, contact hike leader.

South Beyond 6000 Hike, Plott Balsam and Yellow Face, February 20

****CANCELLED****

Leader: , 239-9854. Rating: Difficult

This hike will involve an early departure and late return to/from Kingsport and will be strenuous, in possibly severe winter conditions. Contact the hike leader for further details.

AT Hike: Tanyard Gap (US 25/70) to Allen Gap, February 27

Leader: , 245-8316. Rating: Moderate

Here's a hike for those of you who, like me, enjoy bagging fire towers. This nine-mile hike starts by a climb up Rich Mountain, from 2,234 to 3,643 feet. The view from the Rich Mountain fire tower will likely be the only expansive view we will enjoy--but there's more to a hike than panoramas. We will also visit the Spring Mountain shelter (similar elevation to Rich Mountain), built in 1938, and--who knows?--perhaps there will be snow. Be prepared for such (dress warmly, with layers), and pack a lunch. (We may do the hike in the other direction if it appears that doing so would favor getting good views from Rich Mountain. And no, you don't *have* to enjoy fire towers to come along!) We will meet in Colonial Heights in the parking lot between Burger King and McDonald's at 8:00 a.m.

Winter Backpack Trip: Mt. Rogers

Originally scheduled January 23-24

Leader: , 239-9854. Rating: Moderate

We'll hike to Thomas Knob Shelter for this midwinter backpack trip. Gear for extremely cold, windy conditions required for outdoor exposure at 5,000+ ft. elevations. Due to unforeseen circumstances, this backpack trip could not be done on Jan. 23-24. If you are interested in doing this hike later, contact the hike leader.

For the record:

AT Hike: Camp Creek Bald to Allen Gap, January 9

Leader:

This hike was postponed and will be rescheduled later in the year.

AT Section Maintenance and Special Projects

Maintenance Dinner

This year's maintenance dinner will be held in Building 310 (Eastman Employee Center) Room 219 from 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Friday, March 5, 1999. Cost will be \$2-\$3. Please notify Bill Stowell (239-7697) if you are planning to attend so we can plan the amount of food needed. Hope you can make it. See you there.

Sept. 9, Trail Rehab

C. B. Willis reporting

The trail south of Iron Mountain Gap and 1/4 mile south of Low Cap had been eroding badly. The Old Timers' Hiking Club maintenance group -- Sam Kinley, Dick Lewis, Bob Miller, Waymon Mumpower, Neil Ottenfeld, Sandra Perry, Ed Schell, Clyde Taylor, and C. B. Willis--reinforced the bank and stabilized the trail in this section. Total: 81 person-hours.

Jan. 11, Trail Rehab Project

Collins Chew, Derrick Stowell, Frank Williams, and Ed Oliver worked on trail rehab between Watauga Dam and Watauga Lake Shelter. We also installed a post trail north of the old road that the TVA has recently graded and seeded. The post was needed to mark the trail well enough so that hikers will not get lost. Total: 32 person-hours.

Jan. 16, Third Saturday Maintenance

Bill Stowell reporting

The Third Saturday maintenance trip took place on January 16, 1999. We split into two groups. Ed Oliver, Carl Fritz, John Thompson, and Ted Malone went to the Big Falls at Elk Park to continue flagging the AT trail relocation proposed for that area. The rest -- Bill and Derrick Stowell, Bruce and Mary Cunningham, and Bill Cheek -- went to complete the trail rehab work that has been going on between Watauga Dam and Watauga Lake shelter. Bruce Cunningham and Bill Cheek put in some steps, and the others completed the digging. The trail is in good shape from Watauga Dam Road to the shelter. I would like to welcome Bill Cheek, a new maintainer, to our group. He was a member of PATH and moved to this area and will be helping us with our maintenance projects. Total: 74 person-hours.

Jan. 16, Blowdown Removal

Bill Berry reporting

Walked from Spivey Gap to No Business Knob. Removed several blowdowns from the trail, but it was not as bad as I had expected. There are a few big trees still across the trail. Leaving Spivey Gap going north, the first tree is 100 ft. below the first bridge. It is dead, but a chain saw would be better than an ax. The next two are north of the service road at the gate; these can be stepped over. About 1.75 miles from Devil Creek, a big tree fell, taking 15 feet of the trail with it. I did not have any tools for digging with me, but I can repair this in about a week. Just north of this damage, there is a large tree down across the trail. I cut everything from around it, and you can get across without much trouble. The trail from Spivey to No Business is in good shape; I blazed north and south last summer. If someone cuts the trees, please let me know so I will know what tools to take the next time. Total: 9 person-hours.

Jan. 19, Trail Relocation

Bruce Cunningham, Bill Elderbrock, Ed Oliver, and Morgan Sommerville continued flagging the Appalachian Trail relocation near Elk River Falls. We concentrated on the trail between the stream at Sugar Hollow and the summit of Big Pine Mountain. We left some holes in the flag line, especially near the lower meadow. We saw signs of horse traffic in the area where we were flagging. We also saw evidence of horse traffic on the Appalachian Trail between Sugar Hollow and Big Pine Mountain. It looks like any trail in this general area is likely to have some horse traffic on it. We may need to be sure that we build the relocation in such a way that some horse traffic will not destroy the trail. Over 75 percent of the relocation between Campbell Hollow Road and Big Pine Mountain has now been flagged. Total: 44 person-hours.

Jan. 26, Trail Rehab Project

Bruce Cunningham, Bill Elderbrock, Frank Williams, and Ed Oliver determined the layout for the new bog bridges trail south of Tenn 91. We then walked trail north from Tenn 91 for about a mile. We installed water bars, repaired treadway, and cut any blowdowns on this section of trail. This section will still need annual maintenance. We targeted areas that the annual maintenance teams don't have time to address. Total: 32 person-hours.

Trip Report

AT Hike, Jan. 9

On Saturday, January 9th, five daring Eastman employees and their guests gathered on a brisk afternoon to enjoy a pleasant winter hike along the Appalachian Trail. This jolly bunch included The Raven (Steve Humphrey), The Tortoise (Chris Niederer), The NorthFacer (Mike Herndon), The Marlow Man (Chad Marlow) and his wife, and yet unnicknamed Kenrick Venett. They met about 1:30 at the USA Rafting campground near Erwin on the banks of the Nolichucky River to begin this most enjoyable seven-mile hike. After a drive up to Indian Grave Gap above Erwin, one mile below "Beauty Spot," the crew started the hike with a mile or so of uphill terrain followed by some comfortable trekking along the ridge. The Marlows' dog Chloe made sure that the octet did not get off the snow-covered trail. This entire hike was a veritable winter wonderland coupled with subfreezing temperatures and a constant snow flurry -- all the great elements of a January hike. There was great camaraderie in this crew both on the trail and during a quick late lunch break at the one shelter along the trail. The hike concluded with a steep three-mile descent (a bear to hike in the other direction!!) and the fording of several shallow streams -- small tributaries of the mighty Nolichucky River, which flowed directly parallel to the AT at the hike's end. The hike was concluded at the abandoned campground, which in a few months will be filled with eager whitewater rafters. This hike was probably rated easy to moderate, so for a large group like this one, it was a pleasant way to spend a cold January Saturday afternoon.

Trip Report

Nancy Wilson reporting

Greenbelt Hills to Exchange Place, Jan. 10

To submit an article for the newsletter, contact:

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