

THE TENNESSEE EASTMAN HIKING & PADDLING NEWS

June 1999

www

Contents

- [Next Two Months At A Glance](#)
- [Bridge Replacement in Laurel Fork Gorge](#)
- [1998 TEHCC Top Maintainers](#)
- [Konnarock Crew - Wilder Mine Hollow Relocation](#)
- [Scheduled Activities and Trip Reports](#)
- [AT Section Maintenance and Special Projects](#)

NEXT TWO MONTHS AT A GLANCE				
Jun 5	Family/Beginner Hike: Smokies Hike/Swim/Fish - Mouse Creek Falls	E	E. Oliver	423-349-6668
Jun 5-6	Chattooga Section III	III	R. Culbertson	423-239-9795
Jun 12	Smokies Dayhike: Thunderhead Mountain	D	N. Dotson	423-245-8316
Jun 13	Leader's Choice	IV-V	M. Morrow	423-245-1201
Jun 19	Third Saturday Maintenance		B. Stowell	423-239-7697
Jun 19	Roan Mountain Rhododendron Hike	M	S. Perri	423-349-5091
Jun 26	AT: Carvers Gap - Grassy Ridge	E-M	S. Falling	423-239-5502
Jul 9-16	Radford 99 National ATC Meeting	FUN	C. Chew	423-239-6237
Jul 10-11	Mt. LeConte Creek Hike (Smokies)	D!	D. Fuller	423-764-7340
Jul 22	Fun Fest Moonlight Hike	E	C. Fritz	423-477-4669

Bridge Replacement in Laurel Fork Gorge

Submitted by the USDA Forest Service

On January 7 and 8 1998, a major flood event occurred in portions of Carter County, Tennessee. The flood was caused by a combination of an extended, heavy rain and melting of the snowpack in higher elevations of the water tower area. The flood inundated the Roan Mountain River and Laurel Fork Creek around the communities of Roan Mountain and Hampton. Although the event was not a large scale, it was very devastating in scale, resulting in seven deaths and millions of dollars of property damage. The flood was estimated to be a 100-year flood event. The affected area was declared a state and federal (FEMA) disaster area. One impact of the flood was the destruction of two Appalachian Trail footbridges over Laurel Fork Creek in the Roan Mountain National Forest. Both of these bridges were constructed in 1985 of steel bar joist stringers and wood timbers. Both were 46-foot spans. Both bridges were totally destroyed, including all decking, stringers, and three concrete abutments.

Soon after the flood, the Tennessee Eastman Hiking Club (TEHC), the Appalachian Trail Conference (ATC), and the USDA Forest Service began discussing alternatives for a permanent resolution. The process was complex, due to the scale (and therefore high cost) of the two bridges, and the fact that the area is within the Pond Mountain Wilderness. The Wilderness designation meant that no motorized equipment could be used in bridge reconstruction, and people had to determine what type of bridges were compatible with Wilderness values while being structurally sound. The two bridges were constructed prior to Wilderness designation in 1986. A bulldozer was used to get materials to the site.

tools were used throughout the construction. Those were not options now. The resolution had to consider standards appropriate for the A.T. as a National Scenic Trail including the Optimal Location Review (OLR) documentation, and the needs and standards appropriate within Congressionally-designated Wilderness standards include both nationwide standards mandated by Congress, and specific Wilderness standards through the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) planning process.

By May of 1998, TEHC, working with the Forest Service, had developed a temporary blue-blaze bypass route approximately 1.3 miles long, preventing hikers from choosing between a paved-road bypass or attempting hazardous creek crossings. Water level in Laurel Fork Creek varies greatly by season and rainfall, but can rise or more in late spring. All brushing and trail clearing was done using primitive tools. The consensus decision the best permanent solution was replacement of the two bridges in their existing locations with a design that met Wilderness standards.

Cherokee National Forest engineering, trail, and Wilderness specialists researched nationwide for appropriate equipment and materials. It was determined that the construction of the bridges without mechanized equipment in a time hopefully prior to 1999 thru-hiking season, was beyond the abilities of TEHC volunteers and local Forest Service personnel, and the Forest Service issued a request for bids. The Cherokee National Forest determined this project was the top trail priority forest-wide. Jim Moran, a contractor based in Abingdon, Virginia, and with his experience on "primitive skill" projects for the National Park Service, was the successful bidder. The contract was awarded in February, 1999, with a not-to-exceed date of June 20, 1999.

Mr. Moran prefabricated the wooden (pressure-treated pine lumber) decking and rail materials. All materials, concrete and four 50-foot long stringers of pressure-treated poles, were transported to the sites using six mules to Johnny Reed of the Roan Mountain community. Mr. Reed logs with horses and mules. The bridge sites are 1.5 miles from the nearest road access outside the Wilderness.

Mr. Moran and his crew worked diligently and the weather cooperated, enabling the construction to proceed. The bridges were completed and opened for hikers April 28, 1999, and the temporary blue-blaze route was closed. The remains of the steel bar joists will be removed from the Wilderness by mule team. The new bridges are a foot or 24-30 inches higher than the old bridges, making them less susceptible to future flood events.

1998 TEHCC Top Maintainers

Bill Stowell reporting

Many people put out a lot of effort to help maintain the Appalachian Trail. In 1998 we had 6850 volunteer hours by 211 people. The top maintainers accounted for 3240 hours or 47% of the total. The following people were the top maintainers in 1998: Ed Oliver, Derrick Stowell, Bill Stowell, Frank Williams, Bruce Cunningham, Joe DeLoach, Peoples, Darrol Nickels, Mary Cunningham, Steve Perri, Dixie Hoilman, Fred Hoilman, John Thompson, and others. TEHCC is always in need of more people to help maintain the AT. Here is some information on the top maintainers to demonstrate the need for more help. Of the top 14 maintainers: one will be leaving for college, eight are near retirement, three are 65 plus years old, three are adopters and only three are current Eastman employees. I hope everyone has time to come out and help.

Konnarock Crew

Wilder Mine Hollow Relocation

Joe DeLoach reporting

We have four consecutive weeks of Konnarock this year, the last two in June (June 3-7 and June 10-14). We are working for the four consecutive weeks in hopes of relocating the Trail on Round Bald, since once that project is started it will be finished quickly. Otherwise it is far from ideal to have consecutive weeks, since normally our volunteer

Konnarock come from a small core group within the Club and people have other things to do. So, it will be our goal this year to have more Club participation in our project with the Konnarock Crew. These are fun projects with different jobs for different folks, and it would really be nice to see some fresh faces. Details of the project are in the newsletter; volunteers are sought any day but especially Friday-Sunday of each week. For more information on how to volunteer, please contact Joe DeLoach.

Scheduled Activities and Trip Reports

Family/Beginner Hike: Mouse Creek Falls Hike, June 5

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

This is an easy hike along an old railroad grade in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. This hike is suitable for beginners, families, or anyone who enjoys a leisurely hike. We will drive to the Big Creek Ranger Station and hike about 3 miles to Mouse Creek Falls. We will return by the same trail. The trail follows Big Creek which is one of the beautiful mountain streams in the park. The stream has trout and also has several places where you can go fishing. Bring your swim suit if you want to take a dip in the cold, clear waters. If anyone is interested, we can continue on the old railroad grade past the falls until we decide to turn around and head back to the cars. Bring water and snacks. Meet at the parking area between McDonalds and Burger King in Colonial Heights at 8:00 AM. For additional information, contact Ed Oliver at (423) 349-6668.

Hike: Smokies Dayhike: Thunderhead Mtn, June 12

Leader: Neil Dotson, 423-245-6105, Rating: Difficult

Tired of cramped-up city life, feeling trapped like a duck in a pen? Large phone bills got you down? Still looking for a strange ursine / feline hybrids? Then this hike is for you - if you're willing to do the 12.5 mile there-and-back hike with a steep climb of about 3750 feet. We will be hiking up the Lead Cove trail from Laurel Creek Road (before getting to the Bote Cove), then up the Bote Mt. trail, and then trail north on the A.T. to Thunderhead Mt., the highest point in the park. Although views are obscured at the peak, there are some fine views shy of the peak at a pair of peaks called - uh, I forget. Anyway, given the length of the hike and the distance we have to travel to the trailhead, meet in Colonial Heights between Burger King and McDonalds at 7:00 a.m. Bring plenty of water, raingear, lunch, and your own corn, if you wish, since none grows locally. Plan for this to be an all-day trip; we may want to catch a ride way back.

Roan Mountain Rhododendron Hike, June 19

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

This hike is somewhat vague in the title but involves hiking from Carvers Gap to Grassy Ridge. This same hike is likely be offered the following weekend by Steve Falling since it rains on my hikes anyway! This hike should be a good time for spotting the blooms of the rhodos. I'm considering a late morning departure, say 10:00 a.m. as opposed to 8:00 a.m. to allow for the clouds to burn off. However, this is flexible. Plan to bring lunch, water, and of course a raincoat just in case. The round trip distance is 5-6 miles. We'll meet in Colonial Heights between Burger King and McDonalds. Contact the trip leader for more details and to firm up the time.

AT Hike: Carvers Gap to Grassy Ridge, June 26

Leader: Steve Falling, 239-5502. Rating: Easy to moderate

One of the most beautiful places in East Tennessee is the Roan Highlands. In particular, the section of trail between Carvers Gap and Grassy Ridge is always a treat. The broad, grassy balds have an abundance of wild rhododendrons. We hope this trip is timed to hit the bloom near its peak. The temperature is much lower at this elevation so bring appropriate clothing and rain gear. Also bring lunch, water, sunscreen, hat, camera, etc. This is about a 6 mile hike although a shorter trip may be taken if desired. Therefore I rate the trip easy to moderate. We will meet in Colonial Heights between McDonalds and Burger King in Colonial Heights at 8:00 a.m.

Fun Fest: Bays Mountain Moonlight Hike, July 22

Leader: Carl Fritz, 477-4669. Rating: Easy

This is the annual stroll around the lake at dusk. The hike starts at 8:00 PM. Usually, some animals are seen. It is a great hike for children. Refreshments are usually served after this pleasant outing. We need about 10 volunteers to insure that no one wanders off in the dark. This is accomplished by the volunteers hiking at the front line and a volunteer standing guard at each connecting trail until all others have passed. Call the hike leader for help.

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

Neil Dotson Reporting

It's a puzzle, that although I did the entire hike I can only report half of it. The answer is that the group quickly split into two portions, fast and slow moving, with your humbled hike leader struggling at the end. The hike up Rich Mountain had some nice backwards glances at Mill Ridge (a bald some of us had hiked across 4 weeks before) and the Rich Mountain firetower. The detour to the Rich Mountain fire tower - at least partly responsible for the slowness of the hike - provided nice views of the nearby mountains. It appears to still be in some kind of use, with new hinges on the doors and all locked up. There were still small patches of snow on the north sides of Rich and Spring Mountains. The nice texture of white on brown, and enough snow for a one-ball snowball fight. We lunched at the Spring Mountain Camp. A very light rain began after lunch, but never enough to hide the towers atop Camp Creek Bald, of which there were nice views toward the end of the hike. Timing was excellent; the first group had completed the car shuttle by the time we got out of the woods. Making the hike leader acutely aware of how out of shape he was, were Hugh and Marianna, Phylis Cairnes, and Kent and Nancy Wilson. Rolla Wade supplied air support.

Hike Report: AT Indian Grave Gap to Chestoa Bridge, April 24

Steve Banks reporting

The weather was cool, and it looked like rain, as we set out from Indian Grave Gap. But the clouds gradually cleared and by the time we arrived at Curley Maple Gap Shelter, the weather was sunny with a few scattered clouds. We encountered 20 thru-hikers, including six at the shelter where we ate lunch. Some of the thru-hikers trail names were Bagel, Sunshine, Bearbait, and Snail. The shelter is in good shape; we used the new broom to sweep it clean and carried out the small amount of trash from the shelter. The register is almost full and should be replaced. The trail has blowdowns at 19 and 111 minutes from Indian Grave Gap, and also one about 5 minutes north of USA Road. The trail needs some rehab work in a few places between Indian Grave Gap and the shelter. The Nolichucky relocation, constructed in the late 1980's by TEHCC and the Konnarock Crew, is in great shape and is still a marvel of trail engineering. During the hike we saw many wildflowers, including fire pinks, sweet Ceciley, wild lily of the valley (just coming up), cancer root, Bird-on-the-Wing or Fringed Polygala, crested dwarf iris, Vasey's Wake-Robin tree, Solomon's seal, and different types of violets. We also saw a Fraser magnolia in bloom. Participating in the hike were Freda Kuo, and Mary and Steve Banks.

AT Section Maintenance and Special Projects

Third Saturday Maintenance

Bill Stowell reporting

We will not have an organized 3rd Saturday project for June. We hope people will come out and support the trail with the Konnarock Crew. After 4 weeks of Konnarock we should be ready for a rest.

Flagging for Trail Relocation, April 24

Bill Stowell reporting

Ed Oliver, Bill Stowell, Derrick Stowell, and Kevin O'Donnell flagged the proposed relocation route from Walnut Mountain Road into Slide Hollow. This completes all the flagging from Campbell Hollow Road to Walnut Mountain Road.

two proposed routes in this area, one utilizing Pine Mountain and the other a more gentle route with 2 possible sites. We encourage any one who has an interest to look at these routes. If you have any questions contact me. Total: 28 hours.

Trail Maintenance: Spivey to Temple Hill Gap, April 24

Bill Berry reporting

I walked from Spivey to Temple Hill Gap. The Trail is in good shape, no blow downs and the burning done for maintenance service did no damage at all. The burning may have helped with the weeds. I did some cutting from shelter to Temple Hill. Total: 7 hours.

Flag Trail Relocations Walnut Mtn Road, April 27

Ed Oliver reporting

Frank Williams and Ed Oliver continued flagging relocations trail north of Walnut Mountain Road. Unless something bad with the flagged routes occurs, we think that we have found good relocations to avoid the numerous steep descents and ascents out of the four or more stream crossings within the first 1.5 miles trail north of Walnut Mountain Road. We completed flagging about 60% of the relocations. We should complete this work in one more trip. Each relocation is relatively short and can be installed in one or two days by the club. Total: 20 hours.

Trail Maintenance: Temple Hill Gap, April 23

Craig Haire reporting

I completed clearing the blowdowns north of Temple Hill Gap. On a hike this past week, a friend and I cleared the trail had been across the trail for about a year, on the stone steps north of and down hill from Doll Flats. The rest of the trail from 19E to Carvers Gap is in pretty good shape. I also did some clearing a few weeks ago between Walnut Mountain Road and the Coon Den Falls trail, but more work still needs to be done there. Total: 10 hours.

Grip Hoist Training Class, May 1-2

Bill Stowell reporting

Bill and Derrick Stowell attended a two-day training class on the use of Grip hoist. The first day was some basic and basic grip hoist techniques the second day was advanced techniques. We actually got to rig up high clearance transport larger rocks. We got to stay at the Konnarock base camp and train with some of the Konnarock staff. Fred Lashley taught the class. Total: 40 hours.

Complete Flagging Trail Relo Walnut Mtn. Road, May 5

Ed Oliver reporting

Bruce Cunningham, Bill Elderbrock, Darrol Nickels, Frank Williams, & Ed Oliver either flagged relocations north of Walnut Mountain Road or walked the flag lines between Walnut Mountain Road, the Elk River, and Big Pine. We completed flagging the relocations trail north of Walnut Mountain Road. The group that walked the flag lines north of Walnut Mountain Road had some suggestions about the route. These suggestions will be considered. Total: 10 hours.

Dismantle Temporary Relocation, May 2

Steve Perri reporting

Steve Perri, Frank Oglesby, John Thompson inspected the bridge since the completion and removed signs at the Hampton blue-blaze/AT junction. The USFS has asked us to remove the signs, blazes, and stop maintenance on the temporary relo. All visible indications of the signage of the temporary relo are now removed. Total: 12 hours.

Maintenance: Hughes Gap-Little Rock Knob, May 8

Bill Stowell reporting

We started at Hughes Gap and cleared blow downs to Little Rock Knob. The largest one was almost too big for a chain saw. We also rehabbed some trail where it needed it and dug out around a root ball. At Little Rock Knob we cleared out the vista which had overgrown. We went down the back side of Little Rock Knob to get a blow down that was blocking the trail there. Along for this trip were: Bill Stowell, Bruce & Mary Cunningham, Waylon Jenkins, I

and Joe Deloach. Total: 48 hours.

Annual Trail Maintenance, May 9

Steve Perri reporting

Bruce and Mary Cunningham and I worked on our section of trail from Walnut Mt. Road to Campbell Hollow for an hour looking at an alternative flagline for traversing a hillside to join up with one of Ed's proposed flaglines. The one we walked was a direct route with only one short section with a grade of greater than 11%. The remainder of the time we spent cutting out rhodos and blowdowns between Walnut Mt Road and Campbell Hollow. This portion of the Section is Cunningham approved. Total: 24 hours.

Old Timer's Trail Maintenance, May 12

C.B. Willis reporting

We cleared several previously identified blowdowns between Little Bald Knob and Low Gap. Regretfully there are more we have to go back for as our fine chain saw balked on us. These two are no real problem as one of them but we will remove them later. We carried a picnic table in to the Cherry Gap shelter and assembled it. For future reference we wish we had assembled at home and then reassembled at the shelter since the label on the table stating "screw holes drilled" isn't exactly accurate. Anyway, with some ingenuity, the table is in place. Participants on the trip were Ben Pat Bailey, Heuston Fortner, Nancy Kinhead, Dick Lewis, Sam Lloyd, Waymon Mumpower, Sandra Perry, Ed Schell, Ed Shackelford, Wayne Sparks, Bob Spencer, Clyde Taylor, C. B. Willis, and M. Total 120 hours.

Clear Field At Doll Flats, May 13

Ed Oliver reporting

Bruce & Mary Cunningham, Darrol Nickels, Frank Williams, and Ed Oliver worked on the open area at Doll Flats. We collected all the cut trees into piles and we cut additional trees to help maintain the view in the future. This area was mowed to keep it open. We also cut many of the tree stumps off at ground level so that it will be easier to remove. One more trip will be required to complete this work. There are twenty or more trees to cut and several more to be cut off. Total: 45 hours.

To submit an article for the newsletter, contact:

Shannon Stanforth

1122 Catawba Street

Kingsport, Tennessee 37660

423-246-5414