

**Note:** To submit an article for the newsletter, send an email to:

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<u>NEXT TWO MONTHS</u>				
			<u>Leader</u>	
Jan 13-21	Wilderness Wildlife Week, Pigeon Forge, TN	Fun		<a href="http://www.mypigeonforge.com">www.mypigeonforge.com</a>
Jan 27	F/B: Doe River Gorge	C/3/D	Neil Dotson	423-323-3493
Feb 3	A.T. relocation with ETSU students near Iron Mt. Gap	Maintenance	Carl Fritz	
Feb 24	S900M: Leaders Choice	AA/2/A	Garry Luttrell	423-239-9854

For an explanation of the hike ratings, see [Hiking Schedule](#).

## Steering Committee Election Results

*Kent Wilson reporting*

In a very close election we have three new steering committee members. Ed Montgomery, Michael Watts, and Paul Worsham will replace Debi Berry and Olin Babb who rotate off. Kent Wilson will remain on the steering committee as Past Chairman. Thanks to Debi and Olin for all they have done over the last two years.

## Scheduled Hiking, Paddling and Trail Maintenance Opportunities (Future)

For an explanation of the hike ratings, see [Hiking Schedule](#).

### **Doe River Gorge; January 27, 2007**

*Leader: Neil Dotson (423-323-3493)*

*Rating: C/4/D (Easy)*

It's been a few years since I led this day hike to enjoy the autumn colors; although Steve Falling has taken people to Doe River gorge since then for overnight stays. (See the December 2006 newsletter for pictures and a glowing description.) This morning hike can't compete with what

Steve offered in terms of fishing, eating, jigsaw puzzle races, and train rides. It's just a humble little hike, but an easy hike as it is fairly flat (an old railroad bed). We'll hike up the gorge through two tunnels and enjoy views of the river and cliff—until we've gone half as far as we want to go. We'll try to leave around lunchtime, and those who want can grab lunch together on the way back. Dress appropriately for a winter hike, and bring snacks and water. Current plans are to meet in Colonial Heights between McDonalds and the State of Franklin Bank at 8:30 a.m. The property, located just outside of Hampton, Tennessee, belongs to a youth camp; so each participant will need to sign a release for the camp. I will bring the forms the morning of the hike. Call the hike leader for more information, and of course, watch the weather. The tentative snow date is February 10. Note that the hike is near some steep cliffs, so the children will have to be watched carefully.

## Special Activity and Trip Reports (*Past*)

### Buffalo Mountain Park Trails, December 9, 2006

*Vic Hasler reporting*

An official record-tying cold of 9°F greeted the intrepid pair of Dong Zhang and Vic Hasler. The park trailhead was reached shortly after the stated scheduled time due to a "senior moment" by the hike leader in mentally heading off to the wrong Johnson City park. On this grand circular hike of the perimeter, we hiked on the Ladyslipper Loop, up to Tip Top, over to White Rock overlook for lunch, down the White Rock trail to the officially unmaintained but red-blazed Hartsell Hollow Trail, and back to the van by 2 p.m. A major benefit of winter hiking is the great views with the leaves down. At Tip Top, the 360° view was amazing as various parts of the area were pointed out to Dong on his second TEHCC hike. If you thought it was too cold to hike, the energy expended hiking up the mountain quickly warmed us so that layers had to be shed. Also, don't leave your water bottles in the car overnight unless you like slushy drinks.



## A.T. Section Maintenance and Special Project Reports (*Past*)

### Did you know...

TEHCC maintains the fourth longest section of all the A.T. maintaining clubs.

For the reporting period of October 1, 2005 to September 30, 2006, TEHCC also had the fourth most maintenance hours, a total of 10,773 hours donated by 579 volunteers.

**Reporting:** Kim Peters

**Date:** November 5, 2006

**Purpose:** General maintenance, paint blazes

**Location:** Section 12b, Walnut Mountain Road to Sugar Hollow Creek

**People:** Kat Johnson, Kim Peters

**Summary:** We left a car at the Elk River Recreation area then headed out to Walnut Mt. Road to hike back. We painted blazes and clipped some brush. We did not find any significant blowdowns (yay!). We met one section hiker at the shelter and several south bounders, one of whom wanted to paint a blaze and have his picture taken doing so. We obliged of course. His only comment was

that it was harder to do than it looked! It's amazing how slow you can go when painting blazes. With the short days, we just made it back to the car before dark. The trail is in good shape.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** November 28, 2006

**Purpose:** Check out foot bridge

**Location:** Section 8, Foot Bridge at Shook Branch Recreation Area

**People:** Bruce Cunningham, Carl Fritz, Ed Oliver

**Summary:** We, as well as Bob Peoples, attended the retirement celebration for Roby Phillippi from USFS at Watauga Work Center. Afterwards, the three of us went to Watauga Lake to take some measurements of the foot bridge at Shook Branch. The bridge needs a third foot log and the hand rail that was modified last year needs more stabilization. We located a nearby locust for the third log. Hopefully, this winter we can implement these improvements on this bridge.

**Reporting:** Collins Chew

**Date:** November 30, 2006

**Purpose:** Cut reported blowdowns

**Location:** Section 5, 0.4 and 2.7 miles south of Cross Mt. Road

**People:** Matthew Chew, Collins Chew

**Summary:** We cut three reported blowdowns on Cross Mountain and Iron Mountain and did minor clipping.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** December 5, 2006

**Purpose:** Trail relocation

**Location:** Section 17, About one mile south of Iron Mt Gap

**People:** Dave Dunham, Ted Mowery, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples

**Summary:** We installed three steps, three water bars, and repaired a muddy area. It seems as though Bob has acquired another trail name, Pig Pen. He looked like he had wallowed in the mud. Actually, Ed splashed everyone, not once but three times, by throwing rocks into the mud.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** December 5, 2006

**Purpose:** Cut blowdowns and put lathe on bridge

**Location:** North of Hughes Gap, Bear Branch Bridge, and 321 to Watauga Lake Shelter

**People:** Paul Benfield, Bruce Cunningham, Bill Elderbrock

**Summary:** This crew might have set a record. They first went to Hughes Gap to cut some reported blowdowns. With the high winds of last week they encountered more than expected; including two tangles of 7 or 8 trees of 12" to 15". In fact they counted 38 trees they had cut. They only got part way up hill, but scouted and did not see more blowdowns. They also put some lathe on Bear Branch bridge to reduce the slip potential. One more piece of lathe is still needed. Then to make it an even more productive day, they went to Watauga Lake and cut seven more blowdowns. The worst tangle was at the USFS gate.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** December 5, 2006

**Purpose:** Cut hazard trees at Cherry Gap shelter

**Location:** Section 17, Cherry Gap Shelter

**People:** Carl Fritz, Mike Hupko, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** We took appropriate rope and rope puller, plus large chain saw and wedges. Three

nearby trees to shelter were very hollow. Two living ones were about 24" in diameter. All fell appropriately with crashes and the scattering of all personnel. Old Timers have fixed the spring sources so they run strong and are easily accessible; plus the source is covered.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** December 8, 2006

**Purpose:** Purchase shelter and bridge supplies

**Location:** Kingsport stores

**People:** Carl Fritz, Ed Oliver

**Summary:** Thanks to some extra funds in TEHCC coffers, we were able to purchase needed supplies for repairs or renovations for Shook Branch bridge, Roan High Knob shelter, Mountaineer Falls shelter, and Watauga Lake shelter. Plus we were able to get supplies for a new bog bridge close to Cherry Gap.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** December 12, 2006

**Purpose:** Minor modifications to Mountaineer Falls Shelter

**Location:** Section 12b, Mountaineer Falls Shelter

**People:** Paul Benfield, Bruce Cunningham, Bill Elderbrock, Dave Dunham, Carl Fritz, Mike Hupko, Bill Murdoch, Bob Peoples, Linda Proffitt, Ed Oliver, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** We made an official third-floor sleeping loft, since some hikers were already using the area. It is 8 x 6.5 feet. We added additional joists, a ladder, guard rails, and edge rails so water bottles etc. will not easily roll off. This area can sleep up to four hikers. We also added some bracing for the rafters to insure the roof can handle any snow load.



*Photos courtesy of Tim Stewart. Click on photo to enlarge.*

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** December 13, 2006

**Purpose:** Obtain materials for Overmountain Shelter

**Location:** Kingsport; for Section 14a, Stan Murray Shelter

**People:** Carl Fritz, Ed Oliver

**Summary:** Thanks to a grant from the North Carolina license program for ATC, we were able to purchase six sheets of 3/4-inch plywood, paint, and screws to replace the ground level sleeping platform at Overmountain Shelter. We painted the plywood with a primer coat and two coats of porch-and-floor enamel to better preserve it from the elements.

**Reminder:** If you are a NC resident, consider getting an ATC specialty tag. Your first year's membership in ATC is free with the purchase.



**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** December 19, 2006

**Purpose:** Re-do sleeping platform, flag trail, cut blowdown, install water bars

**Location:** Section 14a, 1 mile north of Yellow Mt. Gap to Stan Murray Shelter

**People:** Paul Benfield, Bruce Cunningham, Dave Dunham, Jim Foster, Carl Fritz, Doug Hibshman, Mike Hupko, Chuck Mather, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples

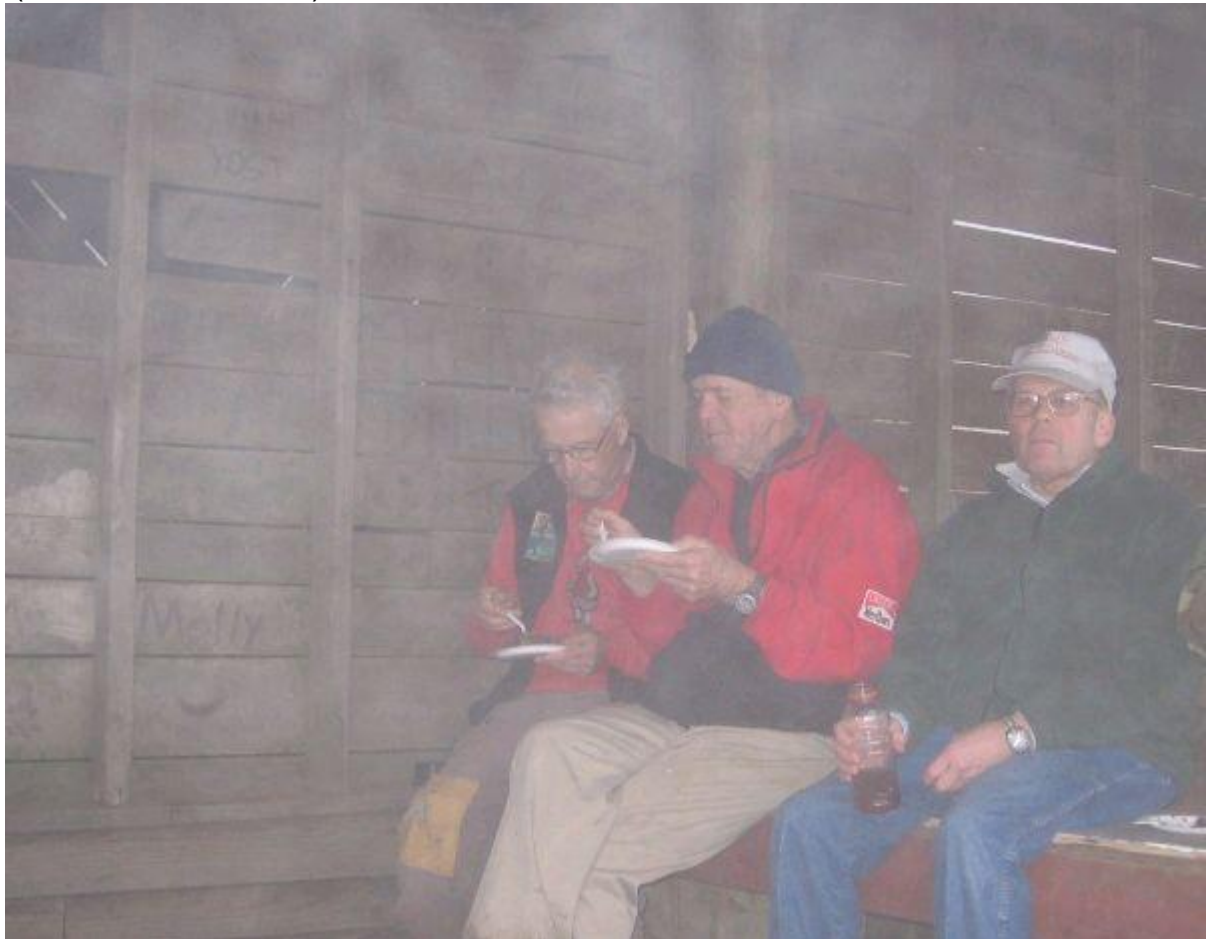
**Summary:** Although we were in fog and light rain all day with 25 feet of visibility, we had a productive day. We installed the six sheets of painted plywood on the ground level sleeping platform.



Half of New Sleeping Platform at Overmountain Shelter - Paul Benfield.

*(Photo courtesy of Carl Fritz. Click on photo to enlarge.)*

We replaced the privy toilet seat. A crew finished the flagging of the trail relocation near Stan Murray Shelter. Another crew removed a very large beech blowdown that had fallen along the length of the A.T. We repaired about seven water bars just north of Yellow Mt. Gap and added another six. We also drained about three large wet areas in the woods. To complete our probable last outing for 2006, we celebrated Bruce Cunningham's upcoming 80th birthday with cake and song! (The cake was better.)



Bruce's 80th Birthday Cake - Bruce Cunningham, Paul Benfield, Mike Hupko

*(Photo courtesy of Carl Fritz)*

