

April 2007

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

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<u>NEXT TWO MONTHS</u>				
			<u>Leader</u>	
April 13	Nantahala Run (as part of NOC Spring Splash, April 13-15)	II-III	Joe Harrison	423-773-8085 or
April 14	Upper Catawba Falls, Black Mountain, NC	B/2/B	Steve Kasten	
April 21	Spring Dinner Meeting	Fun	Kent Wilson	
April 21	AT relocation at Weedy Gap with college students	Maintenance	Carl Fritz	
April 28	S900M: Wildflower Hike: Whiteoak Sink and Chestnut Top	B/4/C	Garry Luttrell	423-239-9854
April 28	Spring Wildflower Hike - Sugarloaf Gap	B/3/C	Joe Deloach	
May 3-5 (Thurs.-Sat.)	French Broad River Festival	Various, from I to IV	Bryan Hogan	276-393-4985 or
May 12-13 (Sat./Sun.)	28th Anniversary Bluestone River Trip	II-III	Terry Dougherty	423-323-2647
May 20/21 (Sun./Mon.)	Hard Core	Maintenance	Carl Fritz	
May 26-28 (Sat.-Mon.)	APE's Memorial Day Soirée	Various, from II to IV	Bryan Hogan	276-393-4985 or

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

Spring Dinner Meeting Saturday, April 21, 2007

Make your plans now to attend the Spring Dinner meeting. This year we are going all out to have a special and memorable event! Our meal will be catered by the Troutdale Dining Room – one of the finest restaurants in the Tri-Cities – at a very reasonable price.

When: Saturday, April 21th, 2007 starting at 6:00 pm
Where: Eastman Lodge, 404 Bays Mountain Road, Kingsport, TN
Program:



Paddling Utah's San Juan River, presented by Ed Montgomery. Ed has been a TEHCC member and paddling enthusiast for many years, and is well known for his scenic and entertaining paddling programs. He is also an active member of the APEs (Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts).



Awards! Door Prizes! Silent auction!

Catered by Troutdale Dining Room, Bristol, TN
Reservations need to be received by **April 17**.
Click [here](#) to open printable reservation form.



Spring 2007 Auction of TEHCC Rental Equipment

Submitted by Vic Hasler, Rental Equipment Coordinator,

Thanks to Kent and Nancy Wilson, Kim Peters, Terry Oldfield, and Michael Ray for helping to set up all of the rental tents at the March work party. By the end of the session, we were experts at putting up A-frame tents – both with sleeves and clips. Kent fixed a tent pole that was repaired incorrectly, and loved setting up large tents...

The work group recommended this year that three tents be put up for auction at the club's Spring Dinner Meeting. The goal is to turn over the equipment to keep it in newer condition. HT-11, shown below (photo courtesy of Michael Ray) is a gray Eureka Alpine Meadow. This older tent is no longer manufactured in a 2-man configuration. It is an unusual A-frame design with a hoop over the midsection to increase interior room. The problem is that the fly is sticky because someone returned it wet. The main tent is usable, but would require a light-weight tarp to cover the ventilation opening during rainy weather. Otherwise, it could be a fair weather play tent.



HT-22 is a green and gold four person Diamond Free Spirit 4 with rainfly. It was the twin to the former HT-21 that was sold in 2002. It is a basic A-frame design. Unfortunately, like HT-11, it was put away wet; thus has an odor which might be addressed with some time in full sunshine.

The former HT-8, green Eureka Timberline 2, will be sold with tent, new fly, and tent poles in new pole bag, but not the vestibule (kept for its replacement) or tent stakes (general pool). The main problem is that the slide zipper on the tent has had a history of separating. If this problem is fixed, then an inexpensive tent can be realized, or the parts can be used for other tents.

There is also a chance that other used equipment might be available for bid if arrangements can be made.

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

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



Catawba Falls, NC April 14, 2007

Leader: Steve Kasten, 423-349-0967;

Rating: B/3/B

This 5-mile hike will feature one of North Carolina's most beautiful waterfalls, Catawba Falls, which is over 100' in height. It is in the Pisgah National Forest but is difficult to reach because it is surrounded by private land. We have received permission to enter through Ridgecrest Boys Camp in Black Mountain, a 1.5-hour drive from Kingsport. The overall climb is about 1000 ft. with several strenuous sections and multiple water crossings where you might get

your feet wet. Bring food and water for lunch at the falls. We will meet at 8:00 AM next to McDonald's in Colonial Heights.

S900M: Wildflower Hike: Whiteoak Sink and Chestnut Top, April 28, 2007

Leader: G. S. Luttrell, 423-239-9854;

Rating: B/4/C



During the Schoolhouse Gap hike on February 10th, 2007 (see March newsletter), we got a glimpse of Whiteoak Sink, a one-square-mile sunken valley, which we thought would be well worth a return trip for wildflowers. Well, this is that return trip, with options. The first option will be a short easy hike in and out to Whiteoak Sink using the Schoolhouse Gap Trail: 4.2 miles with less than 500 ft of climbing. The *Hiking Trails of the Smokies* book says of the Chestnut Top Trail: "Chestnut Top is perhaps the most spectacular wildflower trail in the park." So, after a visit to Whiteoak Sink, the second option hike will continue up to Schoolhouse Gap, then follow the Chestnut Top trail to the "Wye:" 8.3 miles with 1100 ft of climbing. This will be a casual hike with frequent stops for identifying and photographing wildflowers. Contact the hike leader by phone or email for further information and meeting details.

Spring Wildflower Hike - AT to Sugarloaf Gap, Saturday, April 28, 2007



Leader: Joe Deloach, 423-753-7263

Rating: A/2/B

While in 2006 we focused on our section of the Appalachian Trail, there is a considerable portion of the AT maintained by other clubs that is about as close to the Tri-Cities as our section. This applies to much of the trail in Unicoi County, which includes some very scenic areas. We'll hike to one such area with a profusion of spring wildflowers, from Devils Fork Gap north to Sugarloaf Gap. This hike of around 2.5 miles each way leads through an old farmstead, past a small, pretty waterfall, and beyond into a carpet of trilliums, spring beauties, Dutchman's breeches, and many other wildflower varieties. Past the waterfall the Trail makes a steady, but not too steep, climb to Sugarloaf Gap, elevation 4000'. The nearby sharp peak of Sugarloaf Mountain, elevation 4560', is an easily recognizable mountain from throughout the area. If the group is up for continuing, it's about a mile further to some great views from Frozen Knob, elevation 4579'. We'll plan to meet and depart at 8:00 AM from the parking area between McDonald's and the bank in Colonial Heights. The drive to the trailhead is about one hour. Bring rain gear and layers of clothing; April in the mountains can be quite unpredictable.

Special Activity and Trip Reports (Past)

Doe River Gorge, January 27, 2007

Neil Dotson reporting



We were granted, and greatly enjoyed, what was the warmest day in nearly a 4-week period – a perfect day for a hike, comfortable and clear. The real delight of this hike - beyond the fact that the hike leader didn't have to carry his youngest son the entire way like the time before – was enjoyed by all: icicles. The railroad tracks one hikes along at Doe River Gorge are on the south side of the gorge. So we were walking along the north-facing side, and (as you can see in the phot) there were glorious collections of icicles at various points. The fact that it was the warmest day in a while also presented the greatest risk of that hike: melting icicles. One would hear a sharp report from above, and down would tumble large chunks of ice. (All survived the hike unscathed.) We walked to the point where the railroad bed appears to emerge from the steep part of the gorge, and where the tracks start getting rusty and the weeds grown up. Apparently, this was the end of the line used by the Christian camp, who had given us permission for the hike. We then returned to the camp.



Pictured are the hikers, except the photographer, Patricia Dotson, who is shown with the youngest son in the icicle picture above (click on icicle picture to enlarge). From left to right are Kim Peters, Robin and Noah McMillan, Neil and Joseph Dotson, Kat Johnson, and Daniel and Elizabeth Dotson. After the hike, some of the hikers enjoyed a barbecue lunch at Ridgewood in Bluff City.

Little Stoney Creek Falls, March 10, 2007

Vic Hasler reporting

The group choice was Little Stoney Creek; so Kent and Nancy Wilson and Vic Hasler drove up from Kingsport (taking only 50 minutes instead of the 80 minutes given in the hike plan). Alice Kemp, who recently moved to Abingdon, joined us at the trailhead at 10AM. The trail had been recently maintained, including removal of several blowdowns, so was in excellent condition. The group enjoyed good conversation while admiring the cascades and large boulders in the gorge. We ate lunch at the upper waterfall. The main group returned quickly down the trail to get back for other business, while Vic took a slower pace to again enjoy the scenery. Part of the fun of being a hike leader is showing off a favorite place... and this is one of mine.



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

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: February 22, 2007

Purpose: Flag trail relocation

Location: Backbone Rock Trail

People: Jim Foster, Ted Mowery, Ed Oliver

Summary: Jim, Ted, and Ed finished flagging the potential relocation of Backbone Rock Trail to reduce the grade to about 15 to 18%. This will require about 5200 feet of new trail.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: February 23, 2007

Purpose: 2007 Maintenance Dinner

Location: Eastman Lodge

People: Dave Dunham, Carol Dunham, Collins Chew, Ken Buchanan, Pat Buchanan, Michael Ray, Dale Douthat, Tim McClain, Benjamin Trotter, Mike Hupko, Howard Guinn, CB Willis, Scott VanDam, Ron Frey, Darrol Nickels, John Thompson, Paul Benfield, Randall Simpson, Jim Foster, Bob Peoples, Bill Elderbrock, Don Baker, Jeff Sirola, Ed Oliver, Bruce Cunningham, Mary Cunningham, Steve Perri, Carl Fritz

Summary: We kicked off the 2007 AT maintenance with a fine dinner of chicken and bean casserole, tossed salad, garlic bread, and dessert, thanks to Mary Cunningham and Ed Oliver. We discussed the upcoming maintenance season after everyone received their packet for the section of trail they are responsible for this year. Above all else, be safe and have fun this year.

Reporting: CB Willis for the Old Timers Hiking Club

Date: February 24, 2007

Purpose: Clear known blowdowns and inspect trail

Location: Section 16b, Iron Mountain Gap to Greasy Creek Gap

People: Howard Guinn, Faye Guinn, Mike Hupko, Marsha Hupko

Summary: Eleven trees were cut from the trail. The largest was about 20 inches in

diameter. The trail was inspected to determine needed maintenance.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: February 27, 2007

Purpose: Remove blowdowns and clear vista

Location: Section 16a, Hump Mt to 19E

People: Bruce Cunningham, Carl Fritz, Tim Stewart, Benjamin Trotter

Summary: We first cleared a double stacked blowdown near 19E. After removing some limbs from the overhead blowdown, we safely cut a section out of the lower blowdown which was across trail. Tim and Carl walked from Dolls Flat to Hump and only found some minor blowdowns which we cleared. Bruce and Ben recleared the vista below Dolls Flat of rhodos and small trees. Vista should remain clear for five years. Two more rather large blowdowns were removed between Dolls Flat and 19E. Bruce and Ben had time to put the last piece of lathe on Bear Branch Bridge. AT at Bear Branch Rd is covered with about eight inches of trash.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: February 27, 2007

Purpose: Remove blowdown and repair water bars

Location: Sections 15 and 16a, north and south of Hughes Gap

People: Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery, Ed Oliver

Summary: Ben, Ted, and Ed removed a leaner close to Little Rock Knob. They then cleaned waterbars just north of Hughes Gap. They also restaked several of these waterbars. They discovered the ground was still frozen under the top inch.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: February 27, 2007

Purpose: Biannual Northeast TN & Northwest NC Appalachian Trail Partnership Meeting

Location: Unicoi Ranger Station

People: Bruce Cunningham, Carl Fritz, Ed Oliver, Steve Perri, Jeff Siirola, Tim Stewart, Benjamin Trotter

Summary: We had our biannual meeting with ATC, three USFS districts, and TVA. Mostly, we discussed items that would impact either the AT or other agencies in 2007.

Reporting: Steve Banks

Date: February 28, 2007

Purpose: Clear waterbars and check section

Location: Section 3a, Abingdon Gap Shelter to McQueens Knob

People: Steve Banks

Summary: I cleaned out all the waterbars between McQueens Knob and Abingdon Gap Shelter, and removed all the blowdowns except one that is too big for a handsaw. It is about halfway between McQueens Gap Road and Abingdon Gap Shelter, and is easy to get around. The trail and both shelters are in good shape, though the register is almost full and the broom is worn out. While checking the trail between Abingdon Gap Shelter and the spring, I saw two deer, who showed more interest in continuing to eat than running away from me.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: February 28, 2007

Purpose: Deliver new register to shelter and check trail condition

Location: Section 16a, Hughes Gap to Greasy Creek Gap

People: Jim Foster

Summary: I delivered the new register to Clyde Smith. I also cut two small blowdowns, picked up some trash, and repaired the spring at Greasy Creek. Someone had removed the pipe and thrown it over to the side. There's a fairly large blowdown on the blue blaze to Clyde Smith; it can be circumvented but should be removed just the same.

Reporting: Garry Luttrell

Date: March 2, 2007

Purpose: Annual trail maintenance

Location: Section 5, TN 91 to Iron Mountain Shelter

People: Gether Irick, Garry Luttrell

Summary: It was a little cool and windy, but also sunny and clear; a great day to enjoy great views from Iron Mtn. We removed many blowdowns up to 8 inches in diameter; but left one 12-inch stepover about 1/2 mile north of the shelter. The shelter was in great shape. We left a new logbook and carried out two bags of trash. We installed a "Foot Travel Only" sign 0.1 mi. from Hwy 91. We left this AT section in great shape.

Reporting: Collins Chew

Date: March 2, 2007

Purpose: Clear blowdowns, clip brush, pickup trash

Location: Sections 4a and 4b, Low Gap to Cross Mountain

People: Olin Babb, Lee Bockman, Carol Broderson, Collins Chew, Carol Dunham, Dave Dunham, Chuck Mather, Larry Miller, Taylor Pickard

Summary: We cleared many blowdowns, some large. We also clipped brush and carried out trash over the 6 1/2 mile section between Low Gap and Cross Mountain. The day was perfect with blue skies. We left only one blowdown, about 20 inches in diameter, and flat on the trail.

Reporting: Bill Stowell

Date: March 3, 2007

Purpose: Trim rhododendrons and cut small blowdowns

Location: Section 19, USA Rafting to Curley Maple Shelter

People: Bill Stowell, Houston the Dog

Summary: Houston and I started walking toward the shelter from USA Rafting. I lopped rhodos and cut small blowdowns along the way. There is a larger blowdown (6 to 8 inch) chest high about 1/4 mile south of the shelter that I couldn't cut with the small saw. Also the switch-back where the trail leaves the creek and starts to climb steeply needs to have steps put in or dug down. The shelter roof is leaking as there was water on the back of the platform. The tree cut down that was hanging over the shelter hit the back corner of the roof. It didn't break any wood, but put a large dent in the roof.

Reporting: Tim McClain

Date: March 3, 2007

Purpose: Inspect and maintain trail

Location: Section 3b, Spring to U.S. 421

People: Tim McClain, Peggy McClain

Summary: We painted trail blazes in both directions. We also cleaned out water bars, clipped woody growth, and cleaned and dug out the spring to improve the pool. There are

about four blowdowns on this section, but none of them need to be removed urgently. We will go back to take care of the blowdowns on March 16.

Reporting: S. Alan VanDam

Date: March 3 and 4, 2007

Purpose: Inspect and maintain trail

Location: Section 12a, Bitter End to Walnut Mountain Road

People: Scott VanDam

Summary: Congrats are due the folks who designed and rerouted this section. It is very well designed and requires minimal maintenance. I cut two blowdowns with a handsaw and cut briars. The bridge across Laurel fork was inspected and is in good condition. A standard green and white AT sign was put up about midway at a utility easement crossing area where ATV abuse has been observed recently. The trail is now open for hikers.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: March 6, 2007

Purpose: Build stile and fence on accessible trail

Location: Section 4b, Osborne Tract at trailhead south of TN 91

People: Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Bruce Cunningham, Carl Fritz, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Ben Trotter, Tim Stewart

Summary: Using nearby locusts, we built thirty-two feet of rail fence along the lower side of the ramp. We also set all eight posts for the accessible stile. Another trip should allow us to complete the stile and some more fence. We will also do a minor trail reroute through the stile and repair the sloughing bank on the upper side of the ramp.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: March 10, 2007

Purpose: Cut blowdown

Location: Section 10, Near Koonford Bridge

People: Bob Peoples and hiker Darrell

Summary: Bob and Darrell cleared a blowdown with a crosscut near Koonford Bridge.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: March 13, 2007

Purpose: Install accessible trail

Location: Section 4b, Osborne Tract at trailhead south of TN 91

People: Steve Banks, Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Bruce Cunningham, Carol Dunahm, Dave Dunham, Carl Fritz, Tim Stewart, Ben Trotter

Summary: We rerouted the gravel trail through the stile. Also, we cut back the uphill bank of the entrance trail ramp and sloped it closer to 45 degrees. We re-sodded this slope, put locust logs on the lower side of trail and re-graveled the trail. We completed installing the locust posts for the fences and stile. We put up most of the locust rails, but ran through four batteries on a cordless drill. We resorted to braces and bits, but eventually ran out of arm power. Next week several volunteers will complete this project and we will have used over 30 pounds of lag screws.



Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: March 13, 2007

Purpose: Check trail relocations

Location: Section 14b, north of Stan Murray Shelter

People: Jim Foster, Ted Mowery, Ed Oliver

Summary: Jim, Ted and Ed reviewed some of the relocations and freshened some of the flags. They decided that existing flag lines were on the preferred locations.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: March 13, 2007

Purpose: Recruit ETSU students

Location: ETSU

People: Bob Peoples

Summary: Bob was invited to speak at a 90-minute class about AT maintenance. Also speaking were Kevin O'Donnell and Rick Wallace. Rick introduced Bob by reading an article from the Washington Post that said all hikers should stay at Kincora Hostel. The most likely college sponsorship of AT maintenance will be with service learning. A fraternity representative also expressed interest in participating.

Reporting: Joe DeLoach

Date: March 13, 2007

Purpose: Cut blowdowns and clean brush

Location: Section 19, Chestoa to Nolichucky outfitter site

People: Craig DeLoach

Summary: Craig cut blowdowns, briars, and brush. There weren't many blowdowns, a couple of large stepovers, but not obstructing trail. The blazes need to be repainted.

Reporting: Howard Guinn

Date: March 14, 2007

Purpose: Work on necessary spring maintenance

Location: Section 16b, Iron Mountain Gap to Greasy Creek Gap

People: Howard Guinn, Faye Guinn

Summary: We cleaned out water bars and cleared trail of six small blowdowns and one large blowdown. We also picked up trash at trail head and in the apple orchard.

Reporting: Tim McClain

Date: March 17, 2007

Purpose: Remove blowdowns and clear water bars

Location: Section 3a, McQueens Gap to US 421

People: Steve Banks, Tim McClain

Summary: Tim McClain and Steve Banks looked for some green on the trail this St. Pat's Day, but all we found was white (snow). It was a cold, windy day! We cut out about seven blowdowns, none of which were serious trail obstructions. We also cleared all the waterbars.

Reporting: CB Willis for the Old Timers Hiking Club

Date: March 18, 2007

Purpose: Regular spring maintenance

Location: Section 18, Indian Grave Gap to Beauty Spot

People: Mike Hupko, Marsha Hupko, Howard Guinn, Faye Guinn

Summary: We cleaned out water bars, cut five trees from across trail, and cut back overhanging branches.

Reporting: CB Willis for the Old Timers Hiking Club

Date: March 19, 2007

Purpose: Regular spring maintenance

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to the switchback just south of Low Gap

People: Bob Miller, CB Willis, Dave McMillin, Bill Mitchell, Carl Kincheloe, Faye Guinn, Howard Guinn, Kent Gangshirt, Mike Hupko

Summary: We cleaned out water bars, cut seven trees from across trail, and upgraded some treadway. We cleaned up around Cherry Gap shelter, left a new broom and log book, and checked the spring. We also trimmed some laurel/rhododendron and other hard-stemmed growth encroaching the trail.

Reporting: Bruce Cunningham

Date: March 20, 2007

Purpose: Spring check-up

Location: Section 1, Damascus to Backbone Rock Trail

People: Tim Steward, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples, Bill Elderbrock, Bruce Cunningham, Hiker James Lemtz with hiker dog "IRIE"

Summary: We clipped, painted blazes (including blue blazes), dug out all water bars, and removed three large blowdowns and many small ones. The trail is in great shape.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: March 20, 2007

Purpose: Finish accessible stile and trailhead

Location: Section 4b, just trail north of TN 91

People: Steve Banks, Steven Banks, Paul Benfield, Dave Dunham

Summary: These folks finished installing locust rails on accessible stile and adjoining fence. They also finished sodding the uphill side of the trailhead entrance ramp, and tamped the fresh gravel on the widened ramp.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: March 20 and 21, 2007

Purpose: Walk AT relocations in Roan Highlands

Location: Yellow Mt Gap to Grassy Ridge, and Bradley Gap to Yellow Mt. Gap

People: Andrew Downs, Jim Foster, Carl Fritz

Summary: We walked the proposed AT relocations with USFS personnel, Dave McFee and Cleve Fox. They collected GPS data as a preliminary for their NEPA studies; decision on these relocations is targeted for September.

Reporting: Ben Trotter

Date: March 22, 2007

Purpose: Check trail condition

Location: Section 12b, Elk River campsite to Mountaineer Falls Shelter

People: Ben Trotter

Summary: I hiked in from Big Falls to the Mountaineer Falls Shelter and worked on a couple blowdowns and hangers in the vicinity of the Elk River connector. There is a blazed tree blowdown about a quarter mile northbound. In the next quarter mile, there is another major blowdown blocking the trail (barely passable, est. 30 footer/30" diameter). The Mountaineer Falls Shelter is in great condition.

Reporting: CB Willis for the Old Timers Hiking Club

Date: March 28, 2007

Purpose: Scheduled spring maintenance

Location: Sections 17 and 18, from Low Gap to Section 18 switchback and to Beauty Spot

People: Carl Kincheloe, Waymon Mumpower, Daryl Loyd, Kent Gangshirt, Bill Mitchell, Gil Derouen, David McMillin, Susan Peters, Mike Hupko, Howard Guinn, Fay Guinn, Luke Carter, CB Willis

Summary: We inspected trail from Low Gap to Beauty Spot, cleaned winter debris, cut seven trees (leaners and dead trees subject to falling on the treadway), installed new water bar on south side of Unaka Mountain, refreshed blazes, clipped hard-stemmed growth encroaching the trail and removed some litter.