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<u><a href="#">NEXT TWO MONTHS</a></u>				
			<u>Leader</u>	
Dec 8	Elk Park Trail to Houston Ridge/ Elk River Falls	C/4/B	Vic Hasler	239-0388

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

## A.T. Enhancements Through Grants

### *Carl Fritz Reporting*

During 2007 we have been able to improve our section of the the A.T. by partnering with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) to obtain some grants. First, about \$1800 was provided through the [North Carolina License Plate program](#) to purchase two new chainsaws, reequip our five old chainsaws, which are 15 to 25 years old, and get some accessories like wedges and fuel bottles. These chainsaws are used not only to cut blowdowns, but to clear trail relocations, cut waterbars, cut steps, cut cribbing, cut bridges, cut materials for shelters, etc. An example of work completed this year is the wooden fence and accessible stile just north of TN 91 on the Osborne property. We also have built a total of 2.4 miles of new trail to replace steep and eroding areas.



*Installing the stile at the Osborne Tract*

L.L. Bean also provided us a little over \$1200 for three grants through the ATC Grants for Clubs programs. With these funds we were able to totally replace the sleeping platform and its support in Abingdon Gap Shelter. The old plywood platform had been installed over log bunks and the logs were flexing. We also installed a new bog bridge and redid a couple of bog bridges just south of Campbell Hollow Road.



Bill

*Murdoch, Daryel Anderson and Ted Mowery installing bog bridge, photo courtesy of Ken Buchanan*



The majority of the L.L. Bean funds purchased 750 trail volunteer patches which we use for reinforcement of nontraditional trail volunteers. We have an outreach program with hikers and college students to win their hearts and minds towards future trail and recreation work. Bob Peoples has led this effort, which has resulted in 1664 such volunteers in the first eight years. The patches are only awarded for first time volunteers with TEHCC. We recruited 262 more of these non-traditional trail volunteers in the first eleven months of 2007. 85% were college students from three universities; Appalachian State, East Tennessee State and Wright State. 13% were hikers. (In another Outreach program we also

recruited 94 hikers in May as part of Damascus Trail Days.) Many of these college students experienced the A.T. for their first time. Most hikers and college students experienced trail maintenance for their first time. The hikers usually sew their patches on their pack that evening. The patch symbolizes their giving back to the trail. As signs of success in winning hearts, six hikers who worked with us in June actively sought other maintenance opportunities further north on the A.T. A couple of ASU students were so excited about their experience they organized another group of students to come out with us about a month later. With these volunteers we built over one mile of new trail, did some routine trail maintenance and completed the two other LL Bean grants of installing the sleeping platform at Abingdon Gap Shelter and the new bog bridge near Campbell Hollow Rd.



*Installing the Abingdon Gap Shelter Sleeping platform, photo courtesy of Carl Fritz*

Just as important as the grants are the many TEHCC maintaining volunteers who make these programs successful.

## **Call for Hikes: January - March 2008**

*Neil Dotson pleading*

It is time to be thinking about hikes for the winter quarter, January - March 2008. There are many advantages to hiking in the winter (no snakes, better views, even if of a brown landscape) and there are many who enjoy it or even prefer it. I can testify as to how delighted my children are to find icicles on the rock walls, or the patches of snow, and so look forward to being out at this time of year. So, you can find those willing to brave the cold, even for a family hike. If you would like to contribute by leading a hike, send me a note or call me, letting me know:

- what hike you'd like to lead (where),
- what day you'd like to lead it (when), and
- the difficulty rating (see current calendar for the rating system, but if this is confusing, I will try to help).

Generally, hikes are scheduled for Saturdays, and currently these are all open - but Fridays can gather a crowd as well, among those retirees, or folks on shift work or alternative

schedules. For the winter months, lower altitude trails might be preferable, although I've led folks up Rich Mt. in the Smokies before the vernal equinox. I'd like any responses by Friday, December 14. You can reach me through the following e-mail address below.

Thanks and be seeing you!

Neil Dotson

quarterly schedule coordinator

423-224-0557 (days)

e-mail:

## **TEHCC Rental Equipment: HT-12 – 10' x 10' Nylon Dining Fly or Shelter**

*Submitted by Vic Hasler, Rental Equipment Coordinator*

We're headed towards the end of these articles for club rental tents with only four more types to go (and then on to packs). So, why do we have a nylon fly available as a club? The primary intention was likely to provide shelter over a group cooking/eating area in case of inclement weather. The fly has 21 ties arrayed along one side, so with a couple of short rope sections, it can have flexibility on set up. A second use is as a tarp shelter. There are several internet postings on how to use a tarp as a light weight shelter with trekking poles or trees. (Take a piece of plastic as a groundcloth.) At 29 ounces, this nylon tarp would not be considered ultra light by backpacking standard, but is likely lighter than similar sized tarps available from the local mega discount store. The rental rate is set at the lowest rate of \$2 for a weekend; \$3 for longer. Consider trying this tarp if you have either need.



## **TEHCC Welcomes New Members**

William Grady

Dwain Bryan

New members are eligible for a free dinner at the next Dinner Meeting.

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

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

**Elk Park Trail to Houston Ridge/Elk River Falls: December 8, 2007**

*Leader: Vic Hasler, 239-0388;*

*Rating: C/4/B*

Up on Houston Ridge is a memorial plaque for Stan Murray. (Picture at right was taken in 2001 by Steve Wilson.) Searching the club website, I can find only one hike report for the Elk Park Trail. Bill Stowell reported that they followed Gary Luttrell doing maintenance in Oct 1998. My proposal is for a short, but strenuous day hike to burn off some holiday cheer. Meet in Colonial Heights at 8:30 a.m. for carpooling the 50-mile drive to Elk Park, NC. We'll hike the 2 miles up to the ridge to enjoy the pinnacle views down on Elk Park, Cranberry, and over to Grandfather Mt. I would also like to drive up to see the Elk River Falls before returning to Kingsport by late afternoon. Dress appropriately for cold and wind (which is hard to imagine when I am writing this notice on a 93°F day in August). e-mail or call me with any questions.



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

### **S900M Road Prong Trail, Chimney Tops, October 13, 2007**

*Kent and Nancy Wilson reporting*

On this beautiful fall day, eight hikers made the trip from Kingsport to the Smokey Mountains along with the crowds of leaf peepers. We started this 6.5 mile hike at Indian Gap off the Clingman's Dome Road. Even though the description of the Road Prong Trail mentions lots of creek crossings with possible wading, the low water level made all the crossings easy rock hops. The climb up to Chimney Tops was brutal but well worth the effort for the views. The leaves were just beginning to turn. Making this trip were Greg, Tyler, and Anna Whitlock, Emmett, Renee, and Phillip Dougherty, and Kent and Nancy Wilson.

*Photos courtesy of Kent Wilson*



*Nancy Wilson, Tyler Whitlock, Renee Dougherty, Phillip Dougherty, Emmett Dougherty, Anna Whitlock, Greg Whitlock*



*Renee & Nancy Lunch on Chimney Tops*





*Renee and Chimney Top*

## ***S900M Smokey Mountain Backpack, October 27-28, 2007***

*Kent and Nancy Wilson reporting*

This group of eager hikers met early Saturday morning for the trip to the Smokey Mountains. The crowds were not as heavy as the previous two weekends. We started hiking at Clingman's Dome Road on A.T./Mountains To Sea trail and followed the A.T. for 0.2 miles past Mt. Collins Shelter, then headed down the Sugarlands Mountain Trail to the Rough Creek Trail. We stopped for lunch at the trail junction, then followed the Little River Trail to the Goshen Prong Trail and Campsite 23. The views off the ridge on the Sugarlands Mountain Trail were fantastic. Enough of the leaves were off the trees that there were good views into the valley. We were able to see Mt. LeConte, Gatlinburg, and the

Newfound Gap Road. We dropped about 3,000 feet on the Rough Creek trail and then climbed another 500 ft on the Goshen Prong Trail. The Goshen Prong Trail was beautiful as it followed Goshen Prong with many small cascades. After spending a cool night (no campfires allowed in the back country because of the dry weather), we then climbed 3,500 ft in about 8 miles on the Goshen Prong Trail until it met the A.T., then followed the A.T. ending the hike at Clingman's Dome with beautiful weather and views. Making this 20 mile trip were Kim Peters, Taylor Pickard, and Kent and Nancy Wilson.

*Click on picture to see full size*



Kim and Taylor during lunch break at Rough Creek Trail Junction



Kent and Nancy eating lunch at Rough Creek Trail Junction



Rough Creek



Kent, Nancy and Taylor take a break on Rough Creek Trail



Cascade on Goshen Prong Trail



Kent, Nancy and Taylor on the Goshen Prong Trail



Kim at a cave along the Goshen Prong Trail



Taylor and Kim eating lunch at the junction of Goshen Prong and A.T.



View from the A.T.



View of Mt. LeConte from the A.T.



Nancy at Clingman's Dome



View from Clingman's Dome

## **Bitter End to Dennis Cove, November 10, 2007**

*Joe DeLoach reporting*

With 2007 marking our 60th anniversary as an A.T.-maintaining Club, we wanted to hold a hike to showcase some of our recent efforts. This year the Club completed a long series of A.T. relocations begun several years ago on White Rocks Mountain. When this section of Trail was originally laid out in 1954, it went straight up and down a lot of knobs and wet areas. Not only does this make the hiking tough, it creates the potential for erosion as the water likes to run straight down through what turns into a ditch. Such sections can be unsafe to descend as well. We set out on the crisp morning of November 10 hiking north from Bitter End, with many thanks to Bob Peoples for shuttling us from his hostel in Dennis Cove. The relocations were fantastic, allowing our hikers to enjoy the scenery of a late fall day with fall color still lingering. With leaves off there are a few glimpses into upper Laurel Fork valley and back towards Beech Mountain, but most of the views are close up until reaching a great overlook that the Trail builders cleared not far Trail south of the Moreland Gap Shelter. This made for a good lunch spot with views of the Roan Highlands. The hiking got tougher after passing the northernmost relocation which moved the Trail off where the White Rocks Fire Tower used to be. There was no longer a benefit to that climb after the tower was removed, and that area had been prone to run-ins with non-hikers, but it was very unfortunate that vandalism to the tower forced its removal by the Forest Service. At the previous evening's dinner meeting, Hugh Thompson told me that the tower had originally been on top of Roan Mountain! The steep descents which followed were made more treacherous by the fallen leaves, making us glad that more relocations are planned in this area. After reaching the side trail to Coon Den Falls, the grades moderated for the remainder of the hike as this was part of a Konnarock Crew relocation many years ago through the old Senter farm into Dennis Cove. We got to do some maintenance ourselves on this hike, clearing a substantial blowdown tangle south of the shelter and several smaller blowdowns and briars north of the Canute Place. Our hikers included Donna Ashby, Emmett Dougherty, Mary Fanslow, Kat Johnson, Kim Peters, John Rousch, and Joe DeLoach.



*Joe and Emmett contemplate removing a blowdown*



*The trail is clear!*



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

### **Carl Fritz, A.T. Maintenance Coordinator, reporting:**

We are approaching the end of another hiking season and have done a great job maintaining our 132 miles of trail. Per Jeff Siirrola's data from October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2007, we have worked 2078 hours doing routine maintenance. We posted 8930 hours for special projects during that same period.

Besides the things outside of our control, like litter problems, lack of water, and some bear problems, we have kept the trail in good shape. A number of hikers have contacted me with compliments for our efforts.

It is getting to be time to establish trail assignments for 2008. There are already some known changes, like the gaining of several adopters and loss of current leaders. Some have agreed to adopt more trail. And I hope to reduce the length of a couple difficult sections. Let me know if you are aware of possible additional volunteers or if you want to take on more trail. Please let me know of any possible changes by December 8.

Thank you, to all the A.T. maintainers, for the work you do.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** October 27, 2007

**Purpose:** Dig Trail Relocation

**Location:** Section 12d, North of Bear Branch bridge

**People:** Paul Benfield, Carl Fritz, Mike Hupko, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Jeff Siirola, Tim Stewart, Ben Trotter; ASU: Kara Brown, Andrew Jacobs, Brad Heath, Jordan Duke, Josh Gardner, Lia Kennedy, Laura Ashby, Brooke Leftis, Alannah Sawhill, Derek Davidson, Tiffanie Pinion, Christopher Farthing, Jesse Dean, Brian Chavez, Chad DeHartchock, Robert Rowell, Andrea Roller, Richard Carp, David Land, Clayton Pennell, Karla McGinnis, Kenneth Knight, Jordan Stafford, Annesley Palacdy, Jeffery Guin

**Summary:** The Appalachian State University students and a few professors came out on this fine fall day to dig trail and that they did. With the leadership of TEHCC members, we were able to dig about 500 feet of new trail.

**Reporting:** Joe DeLoach

**Date:** November 2, 2007

**Purpose:** Planning Meeting

**Location:** Kingsport

**People:** Collins Chew, Bruce Cunningham, Joe DeLoach, Jim Foster, Carl Fritz, Ed Oliver, Steve Perri, and Kim Peters

**Summary:** The purpose of this meeting was to plan and prioritize potential A.T. relocations for the coming years, in advance of our semi-annual meeting with the Forest Service and ATC. Ed Oliver was very well organized with lists of relocations that are either approved and in process of construction, submitted for approval, or were identified in past Optimal Location Reviews. Ed characterized the different work groups we have and their ability to work on these potential relocations; for example, the large student groups need to get close to the work site and are not well suited to tackle technically challenging projects such as the upper portions of Unaka Mountain. These characterizations aided us greatly in deciding on priorities. Our next major projects after completing the ongoing Unaka Mountain and 19E-Bishop Hollow relocations will be south of Damascus and in the Roan Highlands, both of which have been submitted for approval. We need to identify other projects to get flagged and in the approval process. The group decided that relocations around Watauga Lake, proposed some time ago to improve lake views, would be the next ones to propose. This requires approval by not only the Forest Service, but probably TVA also. To streamline the approval process, the Forest Service has expressed a desire to lump projects together that are fairly close, though not directly connected. There are two, possibly three, potential relocations which are fairly close, on Pond and Iron Mountains. We'll present these proposals at the November 7 A.T. Partnership Meeting for reaction from the Forest Service, ATC, and TVA. If positive, we could start flagging soon thereafter.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** November 6, 2007

**Purpose:** Flag Relocation

**Location:** Section 7, Trail north of Watauga Dam Road

**People:** Jim Foster, Ed Oliver

**Summary:** Ed and Jim explored possible trail relocations to reduce the steep climb just

north of Watauga Dam Road. Large boulders and rough terrain are major obstacles. But there is potential by using both the side towards Watauga Lake and the side towards Wilbur Lake. There are some naturally occurring views of Watauga Lake. Another trip is required to attempt to define a possible path.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** November 6, 2007

**Purpose:** Rehab Trail and Cut Relocation on Unaka Mountain

**Location:** Section 18, North side of Unaka Mountain

**People:** Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Bruce Cunningham, Carl Fritz, Mike Hupko, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** We cut out the 400-foot relocation north of the major Konnarock relocation in preparation for next year. We rehabbed the trail we built with Konnarock over the last two years. One area required a permanent rock step; another required widening by removing rock; and some check steps required filling on back side. We also buried 20 feet of 4-inch field drain with a sleeve to fix a wet area. Further south and higher on Unaka Mt. we started rehabbing about 500 feet of trail to better drain the water and to make it easier to walk across the roots by using rocks to crib and soil to back fill.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** November 7, 2007

**Purpose:** Flag Relocation

**Location:** Section 8, U.S. 321 to Watauga Lake Shelter

**People:** Andrew Downs, Jim Foster, Ed Oliver

**Summary:** Jim, Ed, and Andrew explored trail relocations mostly from U.S. 321 to Watauga Lake Shelter to take advantage of more lake views. The trail relocations appear to be easy and will improve the hiking experience. Another couple of trips will be required to do the flagging.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** November 7, 2007

**Purpose:** Purchase Chain Saw Parts

**Location:** Mars Hill, NC

**People:** Bruce Cunningham, Carl Fritz

**Summary:** We completed the purchase of chain saw parts to upgrade our equipment, thanks to the North Carolina ATC license plate grant.

**Reporting:** Joe DeLoach

**Date:** November 7, 2007

**Purpose:** Semi-Annual A.T. Partnership Meeting

**Location:** Forest Service office in Unicoi

**People:** Collins Chew, Bruce Cunningham, Joe DeLoach, Jim Foster, Carl Fritz, Ed Oliver, and Bob Peoples

**Summary:** In addition to the TEHCC attendees, Morgan Sommerville and Andrew Downs from ATC attended, as did Forest Service Appalachian District Ranger Tina Tilley, Nolichucky/Unaka District Ranger Terry Bowerman, Watauga District Ranger Don Palmer, and Forest Service personnel Dave Ferguson, Joe McGuinness, Mike Rice, Mark Robison, Greg Salansky, and Cheryl Summers. After introductions, we reviewed our 2007 accomplishments, with a **Club record of slightly over 11,000 hours spent on Trail**



**maintenance during the fiscal year.** Ed and Carl described our major project plans for 2008 and future years. We have these mapped out through 2016! The Forest Service presented their plans for prescribed burns in 2008 and succeeding years, and one small timber harvest near Low Gap on Holston Mountain which will not have a visual impact on the A.T. The Cherokee National Forest has a formal program to eradicate noxious and invasive species with the Forest, and asked that maintainers and hikers who observe such species contact them. We informed the Forest Service of the continuing trash problems at Bear Branch Road, and of the horse use observed this year between Unaka Mountain and Clyde Smith Shelter. The Forest Service agreed to handle maintenance of the relocation across the Osborne Tract to meet accessibility guidelines. Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 30. The 3:00 PM start time was very popular with agency personnel, compared to recent meetings starting at 5:00 PM.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** November 13, 2007

**Purpose:** Check Mountaineer Falls Shelter with Fire Officer and Pickup Trash

**Location:** Mountaineer Falls Shelter and Bear Branch Road

**People:** Bruce Cunningham

**Summary:** Bruce met with Greg Salansky, USFS District Assistant Fire Management Officer, and inspected Mountaineer Falls Shelter. Twisting Falls area is scheduled for a prescribed burn in 2008. Since this area includes the shelter, they did a thorough inspection of the area. There is little material to burn around the shelter. They will start the burn on the A.T. and direct it away from the shelter. They will have one person at the shelter as long as the fire is alive. The water source and nearby campsites will also be avoided. Bruce also picked up about three bags of trash at Bear Branch Road. He found that a rake is useful for collecting the garbage. The trail itself and the hillside next to the road are clear.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** November 13, 2007

**Purpose:** Rehab Trail

**Location:** Section 18, North side of Unaka Mountain

**People:** Paul Benfield, Carl Fritz, Mike Hupko, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** We finished the trail rehab on a section on the north side of Unaka with rock steps and rock cribbing. We covered many of exposed roots with soil and built a number of water diversions. Ted and Paul finished backfilling all the steps on the new relocation so they are easier to walk.

**Reporting:** David Dunham

**Date:** November 13, 2007

**Purpose:** Route and Flag New Trail Relocation

**Location:** Section 8, Shook Branch to Watauga Lake Shelter

**People:** Dave Dunham, Carol Dunham, Ed Oliver, Jim Foster

**Summary:** We flagged a new trail relocation around Watauga Lake, dropping the trail down close to the lake, then up toward the shelter. This new relocation, when complete, will make the hike from Shook Branch to Watauga Dam Road one of the most scenic of the low-land hikes on our section. It follows the lake most of the way to the shelter and through some beautiful old home sites where many plants and flowers still abound.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** November 17, 2007

**Purpose:** Dig Trail Relocation

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

**People:** Paul Benfield, Carl Fritz, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Tim Stewart, Mark Peters; ASU: Matt Parsons, Jenny Thomas; ETSU: Tina Clarke, Matt Gorman, Weston Ward, Chazz Hughes, Katie Winer, Philip Rogers, Mohamed Zobaa, Mary Dykes, Daniel Yacykewych, Kevin O'Donnell; HIKERS: Autumn Hensley, Toby McCord, Greg Rost

**Summary:** We dug about 450 feet of trail on this cool day. Ten folks from East Tennessee State University, two Appalachian State University Trail Crew, three hikers, and a new local participant, Mark Peters, helped us with this fine achievement.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** November 20, 2007

**Purpose:** Check Relocation with USFS

**Location:** Section 1, First hill south coming out of Damascus

**People:** Jim Foster and Ed Oliver

**Summary:** Jim and Ed walked the entire proposed flag line with William K. Cober of Mount Rogers USFS. William has laid out many trails in West Virginia and was impressed with the proposed improvement in the A.T. He also agreed with the one-switchback route rather than the three-switchback route. The flags for the three switchbacks were thus removed. He is confident that they can approve this relocation before our August 2008 outing with Watauga College. He will contact Joe DeLoach and Ed when they have the surveys scheduled.

**Reporting:** Jim Foster

**Date:** November 23, 2007

**Purpose:** Walk Trail to Remove Blowdowns

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

**People:** Jim Foster

**Summary:** I removed four blowdowns from Hughes Gap to Greasy Creek Gap. I had intended to check terrain for possible relocation at Little Rock Knob; but due to snow and icy conditions, I had to put that on hold. There are some overhead blowdowns that will require future attention. Everything else looked good, especially the snow and rime ice.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** November 27, 2007

**Purpose:** Rehab Trail

**Location:** Section 19 from Indian Grave Gap to Nolichucky River, Bridges to first major switchback

**People:** Ken Buchanan, Dave Dunham, Carl Fritz, Bob Peoples

**Summary:** We installed nine rock steps at the first switchback. Some of us counted the steps as twelve since we moved and reset one rock four times. It will be known as Dave's rock. We also rehabbed about 60 feet of trail just north of the single log bridge and added some rock stepping stones.

Can you guess which rock is Dave's rock?



**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** November 27, 2007

**Purpose:** Rehab Trail

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

**People:** Daryel Anderson, Paul Benfield, Jim Foster, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** There were some minor problems with trail we dug in 2006. For example, the side-to-side slope was too great after the trail was walked. A couple of places had sloughed. This crew worked hard to stay warm in the 30° temperatures with fog and wind. They rehabbed all but about 20% of this trail relocation.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** November 28, 2007

**Purpose:** Flag Relocation

**Location:** Section 7, Initial Climb North from Watauga Dam Road

**People:** Jim Foster, Ed Oliver

**Summary:** Ed and Jim continued their flagging of a trail relocation north of Watauga Dam Road. It appears that we can successfully remove the worst of the steep part and may pick up some better views of the lakes. One more trip will be required to finalize this relocation.