

# THE TENNESSEE EASTMAN HIKING & PADDLING NEWS

April 2009

tehcc.org

Note: To submit an article, send an email to:

- [Coming Events, April - May](#)
- [Spring Dinner Meeting](#)
- [TEHCC Rental Equipment, HB-31,32](#)
- [Nolichucky River Cleanup and Celebration](#)
- [Flagging to Avoid Ice in the Roan Highlands](#)
- [Cancellation of Intro to Touring Class](#)
- [Paddle to the Grill](#)
- [Beginner/Novice Whitewater Kayaking Clinic](#)
- [TEHCC Welcomes New Members](#)
- [Scheduled Events](#)
- [For the Record](#)
- [A.T. Maintenance Reports](#)

## COMING EVENTS

April - May

<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Leader</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Apr 2	Rental Equipment Inspection	Worthwhile		423-229-2557
Apr 11	Float and Fish the Holston River	Class I	Randy Van Der Aa	423-378-6900
Apr 14	TEHCC Two-fer Tuesdays	Fun	Marc Schurger	
Apr 17	Spring Dinner Meeting	Fun		423-963-8654
Apr 17-19	East Coast Canoe and Kayak Festival	Fun	Debbie Briscoe	
Apr 18	F/B - Ponies at Grayson Highlands	C/4/C		423-229-6244
Apr 18	Trail Relocation at Yellow Mt. Gap with ASU students	Maintenance		423-477-4669
Apr 18	North Fork Holston River	Class I	Ed Montgomery	

Apr 23	Workshop: Packing Kayak/Canoe for Overnight Trips	Informative	Deb Reynolds	
Apr 24-25	Grassy Ridge Overnight	B/4/C		423-963-8654
Apr 25	Trail relocation at Cherry Gap with ETSU students	Maintenance		423-477-4669
May 2-3	Cumberland Gap NHP – Ridge Trail	A/3/B		423-229-6244
May 2-3	Fontana Overnight Kayak Trip	Flatwater		423-914-4070
May 9	Spring Wildflower Hike – AT to Little Rock Knob	B/3/C	Joe DeLoach	423-753-7263
May 12	TEHCC Two-fer Tuesdays	Fun	Marc Schurger	
May 15-17	30th Anniversary Bluestone River Trip	Class I-III	Terry Dougherty	423-323-2647
May 17-18	HardCore	Maintenance	Carl Fritz	
May 22-25	Smoky Mountain Backpack (SM900)	AA/2/B		423-239-7554
May 25	SB6K - Plott Balsams	B/3/B		423-963-8654
May 30	20 Miler on the Virginia Creeper	AA/1/C	Vic Hasler	423-239-0388

For more information, see [Schedule](#)

---

## Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club Spring Dinner Meeting Friday April 17, 2009

Spring time is almost here, Spring fever is in the air and it is time for our annual TEHCC Spring Dinner meeting. We would like to extend an invitation for you to join us for good drinks, good food and good times. The guest speaker will be Diana Niland. She will speak about her 2008 thru hike of the Appalachian Trail. She will also provide the photo slide show during Happy

"Trails" Hour. Diana is the women's soccer coach at Virginia Inter mont College and the faculty advisor of VIC's newly formed Outdoor Club.

Once again the meal will be catered by the Troutdale Dining Room - one of the finest restaurants in the Tri-Cities. The dinner meeting will be held at the Eastman Lodge.

Event	Time	Details
Happy "Trails" Hour	5:30pm-6:30pm	Soft Drinks \$0.50, beer or wine for \$1.00, or BYOB
<b>Special Slide Show</b>	<b>5:30pm-6:30pm</b>	<b>Diana Niland's AT Slide Show</b>
Dinner	6:30pm-7:15pm	Lasagna and all the fixins (\$15/Adult, \$8/Child 12 & under)
Welcome and 2009 Key Initiatives	7:15pm-7:45pm	- TN AT License Plate Update - Increase membership participation
Awards	7:45pm-8:15pm	Annual Club Awards, Trail Maintenance Awards and Patches
<b>Special Program</b>	<b>8:30pm-9:30pm</b>	<b>Diana Niland's 2008 AT Thru Hike</b>

There is no charge for attending the program only, but if you would like to eat, please submit your reservation by **April 13, 2009**.

Click [here](#) to open printable reservation form. Fill out the form and send it with a check made out to Jake Mitchell via plant mail, Building 284 or to:

Jake Mitchell  
183 Eastern Star Rd  
Kingsport, TN 37663

---

## **TEHCC Rental Equipment: HB-31,32 – Vaude Accept 55+10 Backpacks**

*Submitted by , Rental Equipment Coordinator*

The club's rental equipment gives members a chance to try out different items or fill in a need for a trip. After talking with the owner and a sales person at Mahoney's in Johnson City, I decided to purchase a pair of Vaude Accept internal frame packs due to their quick and easy adjustment over a diverse set of people. The torso length can be adjusted even after being strapped onto your back with the Tergolight harness. It is an internal frame with panel access capable of 40+ pound loads. Hydration bladder compartment. An unusual feature is the built-in rain cover at the bottom – which is bright orange.



The purchase cost for these backpacks runs \$150-166. Vendor website is [www.libertymtn.com](http://www.libertymtn.com). Comparable to the Granite Gear Nimbus Latitude and Meridian packs under consideration, but a third less expensive. The club continues to update the rental equipment, so ideas are welcomed.



## Nolichucky River Cleanup and Celebration

**June 13, 2009**

The **Appalachian Paddling Enthusiast's** are hosting the annual Nolichucky River cleanup at **Riverpark Campground** (formerly Big Rock Campground) on **Saturday, June 13**. Registration starts at 10:00 AM in the Gazebo. Participants will be assigned into Clean Teams and provided maps of clean-up locations. There are plenty of clean-up opportunities of key areas for non-boaters as well as areas designated for individuals with their own boats or rafts.

**FREE FOOD AND ENTERTAINMENT!!!!** After the clean-up, there will be food and live music at the **Riverpark Campground's** Pavilion. Bring a lawn chair, kick back with a cold one, and know that you did something good for the river we all enjoy so much.

**WIN PRIZES FROM OUR SPONSORS!!!!** During the entertainment, we will be drawing

tickets for fantastic prizes.

**Helpful information:** Showers and restrooms are on premises. Be prepared with appropriate footwear, sunscreen, bug repellent, etc. Rafts, pickup trucks, and trailers will be helpful and appreciated. Consider bringing a packed lunch, boating equipment, rain gear, chairs, family, and friends. During the post clean-up activities, please keep alcoholic beverages in coozies or cups.

For more information contact Anna or Toney Davis at (423) 743-7855 or by e-mail at

---

## **Flagging to Avoid Ice in the Roan Highlands**

*Joe DeLoach reporting*

Sometime between March 6 and March 20, at least one part of the AT between Cloudland and Carvers Gap was flagged with orange ribbons a little ways off the uphill side of the Trail. The flags were apparently put up to suggest a route for hikers to get around an icy stretch of the Trail, which is common on Roan Mountain during winter months and should be expected by hikers. However, these flags were tied right through a patch of federally endangered plants which are found on very few other places on Earth. This area is the subject of restoration activities by several agencies and organizations, including TEHCC. A flurry of weekend notes and phone calls resulted in the flags being removed. We have no idea at present whether someone affiliated with TEHCC did this, or whether it was a well-meaning hiker. If someone with TEHCC though did this, we ask you to please never do so again. There are many factors to consider with management of the Appalachian Trail, and our AT Committee should be consulted before taking what may appear to be helpful but are actually harmful actions to the environment and which put the Club in a bad light.

---

## **Cancellation of Intro to Touring Class**

*Debbie Reynolds reporting*

This class originally scheduled for February 5, was cancelled at the last minute due to what the instructor and I thought was no interest. I recently learned at least 5 folks showed up. I apologize for the inconvenience and in the future will ensure to include in the notices the need to contact either me or the instructor if you plan to attend. We will reschedule this class for a time when it is warmer and near the water, perhaps Duck Island, so anyone interested can try out a canoe or kayak.

---

## **Paddle to the Grill**

*Debbie Reynolds reporting*

Starting June 4 and occurring weekly on Thursdays during the summer, we will meet at an easy take-out point on Boone Lake and paddle to a local eatery. Our current choices are starting at Winged Deer Park and paddling to Sunny's Marina or starting at Boone Dam and paddling to the Marker 2 Grille at Lakeview Marina. As we may be paddling back during low or no light, please have a stern light for your boat. You can order from: <http://www.boatersworld.com>. We will be glad to add other locations. You can contact or for specific details as to time and which location for which week. We also plan to have the locations on the [TEHCC schedule](#). The event will be cancelled in the event of thunder, high winds or hard rains. This event is in conjunction with the APES paddling club.

---

# Learn to Kayak!!

**Beginner/Novice Whitewater Kayaking Clinic  
June 13-14, 2009**



You know you want to. You've been thinking about it, how fun it might be. You see the occasional car with a couple boats on top or pass by one of the many great rivers in the area and think to yourself, "I think I could dig the whole kayaking thing." Well, now's your chance!! The 37<sup>th</sup> annual "Whitewater School", sponsored by the Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts (APEs) and the Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club, will be held June 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> in the Tri-Cities area. The clinic is designed for anyone wanting to learn the fundamentals of whitewater kayaking—fundamentals that will ensure a fun and safe time on the river. No previous experience is necessary. Instruction will consist of one day on flat water and one day on the river. As in the past, there will continue to be a strong emphasis on river safety. Participants will be responsible for providing their own gear and transportation, although loaner gear is available on a first come basis.

**Minimum required gear:** Whitewater kayak, double-bladed (kayak) paddle, helmet, spray skirt and PFD (life jacket). All boats must have air bags. Additionally, it is recommended that each

student bring river shoes/sandals, a change of clothes in a waterproof bag and a rain jacket. Students are responsible for bringing their own lunch.

**Schedule:** June 13 (Sat) Lake instruction, 8am—4pm

Location: Warrior's Path State Park.

*Students must participate on Saturday to participate on Sunday.*

June 14 (Sun) River Trip, class II, 9am—4pm

Location: Lower Nolichucky River.

**Note:** Instructors reserve the right to exclude anyone if they believe safety will be compromised.

**Cost:** **\$75** per student payable by May 31<sup>st</sup> (which includes a \$5 ACA event membership fee and a \$15 APE's membership fee). If you are already a member of either organization, deduct that portion of the cost.

**Registration:** Click [here](#) to open printable reservation form. Complete and return the form and mail it along with your check for \$75 made out to Scott Fisher by May 31<sup>st</sup> to:

**Scott Fisher**  
**23 Highland St.**  
**Weaverville, NC 28787**

**Questions:** Contact ,(276)698-4644.



## **TEHCC Welcomes New Members**

Gina Valk-Weatherford

Gregory T. Anderson

Gerald Anderson

Ron W. Arnold

---



## **Scheduled Events**

For more information, see [Schedule](#)

### **Rental Equipment Inspection – Lunchtime Edition Thursday, April 2, 2008, 11am-1pm Eastman Recreation Center, Room 115**

*Leader: , Rental equipment coordinator, 423-229-2557*

I'm trying a different approach this year. The equipment inspection will be during a long lunch to hopefully allow more Steering Committee and club members to participate. We'll set up as many tents as we can and look over all of the other rental equipment to ensure that it is in good condition. Please come help us out if you would like to see the club's rental camping equipment actually set up. Pizza and drinks are provided for all volunteers. Let Vic know beforehand if you have preference on pizza and soft drinks/water (contact info above), or else just show up.

Even if you cannot take advantage of this opportunity, please look at the equipment links being set up on the TEHCC rental equipment webpage, [tehcc.org/rentals](http://tehcc.org/rentals). Any feedback is welcomed so that this continuing effort benefits the club membership.

### **Float and Fish the Holston River from Laurel Run park to Christians Bend, April 11 2009**

*Leader: Randy Van Der Aa, 423-378-6900*

We will meet at 8:30am at the Wal-Mart on Stone Drive, south west corner of parking lot. We will figure out the shuttle logistics from there. My cell phone is 423-967-0594 or home phone 423-378-6900. Please call before 8pm Monday to Thursday or before 10pm Friday and weekends. Remember to bring, fishing license, fishing gear and pfd. A small anchor may be useful, I use old window weights because they don't hang up. Bring a cooler for fish if you plan to keep any. Most of the fish will probably be small mouth bass. It will be a long day because we will go slow and fish. If you don't want to fish we can put your car at the take out and you can leave when you want to.

### **TEHCC Two-fer Tuesdays, April 14, 2009**



*Leader:*

This is the first of an informal after-work monthly get-together at Kingsport Grocery which will take place on the second Tuesday of each month. All TEHCC Members, Affiliates and friends are invited to attend and get to know other members of the club, learn about their favorite (or secret) hike/paddle, swap trail stories, learn about upcoming activities and generally enjoy the company of like-minded hikers and paddlers. We will meet around 5 pm on the second floor of Kingsport Grocery. (Kingsport Grocery offers \$2 drafts on Tuesday). This would also be a great opportunity to recruit new members and increase existing member participation in upcoming outings and events. For details or information contact Marc Schurger or .

### **East Coast Canoe and Kayak Festival, April 17-19, 2009**

*Leader:*

This festival is held at James Island County Park, Charleston, SC. Debbie Briscoe attended last year and is leading a group there again. This event has it all: presentations, classes, paddling events and plenty of promoters showing their new products. This is a great place to try different types and models of kayaks for recreational and touring paddles. Debbie will be tent camping at the location. Contact Debbie if you want to go. The link to the festival is <http://www.ccprc.com>.

### **Family hike: Ponies at Grayson Highlands, April 18, 2009**

*Leader:* , 423-229-6244

*Rating:* C/4/C

The next installment of my bimonthly family/beginner hikes will be to see the ponies at Grayson Highlands State Park in Virginia. I'm hoping to see more baby ponies like I did this time of year last year. We'll hike out to see the ponies and keep hiking until the kids wear out. We'll also have an outdoor picnic at some point if it's warm enough. There will be toddlers so I'm anticipating a 1 to 4 mile hike if we have kids on foot or more if they all can get into backpacks and the carriers don't mind. We will leave around 9am and return by 5pm. Contact Tim Schaefer for details and to arrange transportation and meeting times.

### **North Fork Holston River, April 18, 2009**

*Leader:*

*Rating:* Class I

This trip will be from Carter's Valley to 11W on the north fork of the Holston. The rating is class 1. Contact the leader if you are interested.

### **Trail Relocation at Yellow Mountain Gap with ASU Students, Saturday April 18, 2009**

*Leader:* , 423-477-4669

Trail relocation near Yellow Mountain Gap with ASU students. Car pooling from Kingsport and Johnson City will be arranged if necessary. Contact Carl Fritz if interested.

### **Workshop: Packing Kayak/Canoe for Overnight Trips, Thursday April 23, 2009**

*Leader:*

A new class has been scheduled for those interested in doing overnight trips on the water. Rich Ruhlen and Marc Schurger are leading this workshop at Mountain Sports Ltd in Bristol, VA (exit 3) on April 23. The time is 6pm to 7pm. A back-up date is on April 30, in the event of a cancellation. For planning purposes, please notify Deb Reynolds if you plan on coming. Rich and Marc are very experienced in camping and between the two have camped on trips with lakes, rivers, everglades and sea ranging from Canada to the Gulf. This is truly a 'less is more' experience. Come to the workshop to learn the tricks of the trade.

Direction to Mountain Sports: From I-81, take Exit 3 in Virginia into Bristol. Mountain Sports will be on your left about 1-1 ½ miles.

### **Grassy Ridge Overnight, April 24-25, 2009**

*Leader:* , 423-963-8654

*Rating:* B/4/C

Jake Mitchell will be leading a short overnight backpacking trip to Grassy Ridge from Carvers Gap. We will leave at 4 or 5pm on Friday afternoon from Kingsport area and return by mid day Saturday. This hike would be ideal for beginners, couples, those that are time constrained, and dog lovers. We will be trail-initiating Jake's 2 new pups. Round trip is 5 miles. This trip is extremely weather dependent. Final decisions on weather and departure times will be made 1-2 days prior to the hike. Contact the Jake if you are interested.

### **Trail Relocation near Cherry Gap with ETSU Students, Saturday April 25, 2009**

*Leader:* , 423-477-4669

We will be working on a trail relocation near Cherry Gap with a group of students from ETSU. Car pooling from Kingsport and Johnson City can be arranged upon request. Contact Carl Fritz if interested.

### **Cumberland Gap NHP – Ridge Trail, May 2nd-3rd, 2009**

*Leader:* , 423-229-6244

*Rating:* A/3/B (per day)

Join us for a trip to Cumberland Gap National Historical Park. If we get enough takers to make a two car trip reasonable, it will be for a 2-day, 1-night, 20 mile backpacking trip up to the ridge from Ewing and head to the KY-VA-TN Tri-State Peak staying near the Hensley Settlement for

the night. The alternate one car plan is to loop hike parking at the west end of the park with a stay at Gibson Camp. All indications say that this is a beautiful place with lots of good vistas. We welcome all skill levels down to first time backpackers to join us. If you're interested contact the hike leader.

### **Fontana Overnight Kayak Trip - Great trip for first timers, May 2-3, 2009**

*Leader: , 423-914-4070*

*Rating: Flatwater*

This event follows the workshop at Mountain Sports Ltd on April 23 which will provide instruction / advice on how to pack a kayak or canoe. This is excellent timing for first timers.

We are going to do a self contained over night at Fontana Lake. We will paddle over to Eagle Creek and camp. This will be an easy trip (I promise) and suitable for any first time trip of this type. This is a short paddle, so skill and endurance is not a factor.

### **Spring Wildflower Hike – AT to Little Rock Knob, May 9, 2009**

*Leader: Joe DeLoach, 423-753-7263*

*Rating: B/3/C*

The relocation of the AT on Little Rock Knob in the 1990's not only solved some major erosion problems and made for a much easier climb and safer descent, it moved the Trail from a dry and not particularly scenic gulch to some rich woods with many spring wildflowers. Near the top in early May is a particularly good display of trout lilies, trilliums, spring beauties, and other nice flowers. We may get lucky and see pink lady slippers in bloom at the lower elevations. The reward for this hike of around 5 miles also includes the cliffs on top which provide great views to the north and west. We'll gather at 8:30 AM in the parking lot between McDonald's and the bank in Colonial Heights for the drive to Hughes Gap and the climb to Little Rock Knob. A Johnson City meeting location can be arranged on request. Please contact Joe for more information or if you'd like to go.

### **30th Anniversary Bluestone River Trip, May 15-17, 2009**

*Leader: Terry Dougherty, 423-323-2647*

*Rating: Class I-III*

The longest running river trip in the Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoe Club's history will celebrate its 30th year on May 15-17, 2009 and it promises to be a special fun event. Our fearless leader has reserved rooms at the unique Pipestem River Lodge for May 15 and May 16. Please contact Terry ASAP @ 423-323-2647 to sign-up for the trip. Family camping is also available in the park. The term "family" normally indicates close kin folk, but Dave Ingram, Rick Culbertson and Kurt "Coach" Koffman expanded the definition to include "birds of a feather" associates. See the local Park Rangers for the rest of the story.

We will be paddling the upper Bluestone (class II-III) on May 16 and the lower Bluestone (class I-II) on May 17. The lower run is suitable for kids, dogs and winos. Speaking of wine, the Bluestone Happy Hour will be expanded this year to include a grill out and wine tasting on May 16 (weather permitting). Please plan to bring a food item or two to share, wine of choice and a good attitude for happy hour. For questions, road conditions and happy hour input please contact Ed Montgomery @ 423-247-7795.

For those who have not attended this trip before, the Pipestem River Lodge is located on the scenic Bluestone River at the end of day one paddling and is the ultimate take-out. The lodge is only accessible by tram or hiking trail which adds to the uniqueness of the trip. We will start day two from here and take-out on the Bluestone Lake. Of course, all paddling is dictated by water levels. Terry will make the call based on his 29 years of experience (some good – some bad) with input from his much better half.

We are looking forward to seeing all the old timers, family members and new comers on this special 30th Anniversary Bluestone River Trip!

### **Hard Core, May 17-18, 2009**

*Leader:* , 423-477-4669

*Rating:* Maintenance

The annual Hard Core trail maintenance event occurs the Sunday and Monday following Damascus Trail Days. Sunday we will be working north of Wilbur Dam Road towards Vandeventer Shelter and Monday we will be in the Roan Highlands near Overmountain Shelter. Contact Carl if you are interested in participating. Dinner will be provided each evening for all participants.

### **S900M - Smoky Mountain Backpack, May 22-25 2009**

*Leaders:* , 423-239-7554

*Rating:* A/2/B

Kent and Nancy Wilson will lead a Smoky Mountain 900 miler hike Memorial Day weekend. We will be leaving Kingsport around 11:00 on Friday May 22 driving to the Kephardt Prong Tr. on Newfound Gap Road. We'll hike into Kephart shelter (2.0 mi), drop packs and do an out and back on Sweat Heifer Cr. Tr. (7.4 mi). Total Friday mileage is 9.4. If you can't leave early, you can still meet us for the night at the shelter.

On Sat., we will hike Grassy Branch Tr. (2.5 mi) to Dry Sluice Tr. for an out and back to the AT (2.6 mi), then Dry Sluice to Cabin Flats (2.9 mi), Cabin Flats to Bradley Fork (.5 mi), then Bradley Fork to Hughes Ridge Tr. (3.3 mi) and Hughes to Pecks Corner Shelter (2.0). Total Saturday mileage is 13.8 and can be shortened by avoiding the out and back on Dry Sluice.

On Sun., we will take Hughes Ridge Tr. to Enloe Creek T. (4.7 mi), then do an out and back on Enloe to campsite #47 (5.0 mi), then take Chasteen Creek Tr. to Bradley Fork, (4.4 mi), then

Bradley Fork to Smokemont (1.2 mi). Total Sunday mileage is 15.3. It can be shortened by avoiding the out and back to campsite #47. We will camp at Smokemont.

On Mon., we will take Beech Gap Tr. II to Hyatt Ridge Tr. (2.8 mi), then Hyatt to campsite #44 (1.8), then Hyatt to Enloe Creek Tr. to campsite #47 (1.7 mi), then Enloe Creek to campsite #47 (2.0 mi), then Hyatt to Straight Fork Rd. (1.8 mi.). Total mileage is 10.1 mi. An optional out and back Beech Gap I to Balsam Mtn. trail (5.0 mi) can be added if desired.

Because of the busy weekend and the need to make reservations at the shelters, we need to know of your intentions early. We will be making reservations for the shelters on April 22. Please let us know before this date if you are interested in coming for all or part of the weekend. It will be a great time together and we will cover a lot of trails. Hope you can join us.

### **SB6K: Plott Balsams, May 25, 2009**

*Leader:* , 423-963-8654

*Rating:* B/3/B

Jake Mitchell will be leading a South Beyond 6000 hike to the Plott Balsams of western NC. The Plott Balsams are located about 45 minutes west of Asheville along the Blue Ridge Parkway. There are four 6000 footers in this area - Yellow Face, Waterrock Knob, Lyn Lowry and Plott Balsalm. This hike requires some bushwhacking so pants and sleeves would be a good idea. Total hiking is 8 miles and starts from the Waterrock Knob parking area on the Blue Ridge Parkway. We will go out to Plott Balsalm and back, eat lunch at the parking area and then cross the road to do Yellow Face. Plan is to leave Kingsport at 8am and car pool since only one car is necessary. Contact Jake Mitchell if you are interested.

### **20 Miler on the Virginia Creeper, May 30, 2009**

*Leader:* Vic Hasler, 423-239-0388

*Rating:* AA/1/C

For the Hiking merit badge, Boy Scouts must “take a hike of 20 continuous miles in one day”. A scout from Troop 48 is working on this badge in his pursuit of the Eagle rank this year, and has selected the Virginia Creeper trail to achieve this longer distance. This hike notice is an invitation for club members and other scouts working on this goal to join us. The actual hike will depend on what transportation options are available that Saturday. (Proposed is Straight Branch to Abingdon.) Meet to leave from the Colonial Heights McDonalds at 7AM (sun rises at 6:14) with proper clothing, plenty of water, and trail lunch/snacks for the 45-60 minute drive to the trailhead. This rare “1” speed hike will be at a faster pace in order to be done by before dinner, which will be enjoyed at a group choice location before returning home. (FYI, sunset is 8:42PM that day).

### **Mount LeConte Lodge (Smoky Mountains), July 11-12, 2009**

*Leader: Steve Falling, 423-239-5502*

*Rating: B/3/B*

For the past 30+ years the Hiking Club has organized a summer weekend trip to Mount LeConte Lodge in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. This lodge (elevation 6593 ft) can only be reached by hiking trail. Supplies are brought in by llama train once a week. The hiking distance to the lodge is 5.5 to 7.8 miles one-way depending on the route. The package price this year is \$121 per person which includes supper on Saturday, lodging for the night, and breakfast on Sunday. We have eight reservations in two five-person cabins (double bunk beds and a single!). If you are interested in one or more of these reservations please contact the hike leader for availability. You can find out more about Mount LeConte Lodge at [leconte-lodge.com](http://leconte-lodge.com).

---



## **For the Record**

### **AT: Sam's Gap to Devil's Fork Gap, February 28, 2009**

*Jake Mitchell reporting*

Jake Mitchell lead an 8.5 mile hike from Sam's Gap to Devil's Fork Gap south on the AT. The trip started out with 11 participants and dwindled to 7 once the rain became obvious. We lost the rain-fearing Montgomery clan. The 7 that did brave the elements were Jake Mitchell and 6 from the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club. We met at Devil's Fork Gap at 10am and shuttled back to Sam's Gap for a 10:30 start.

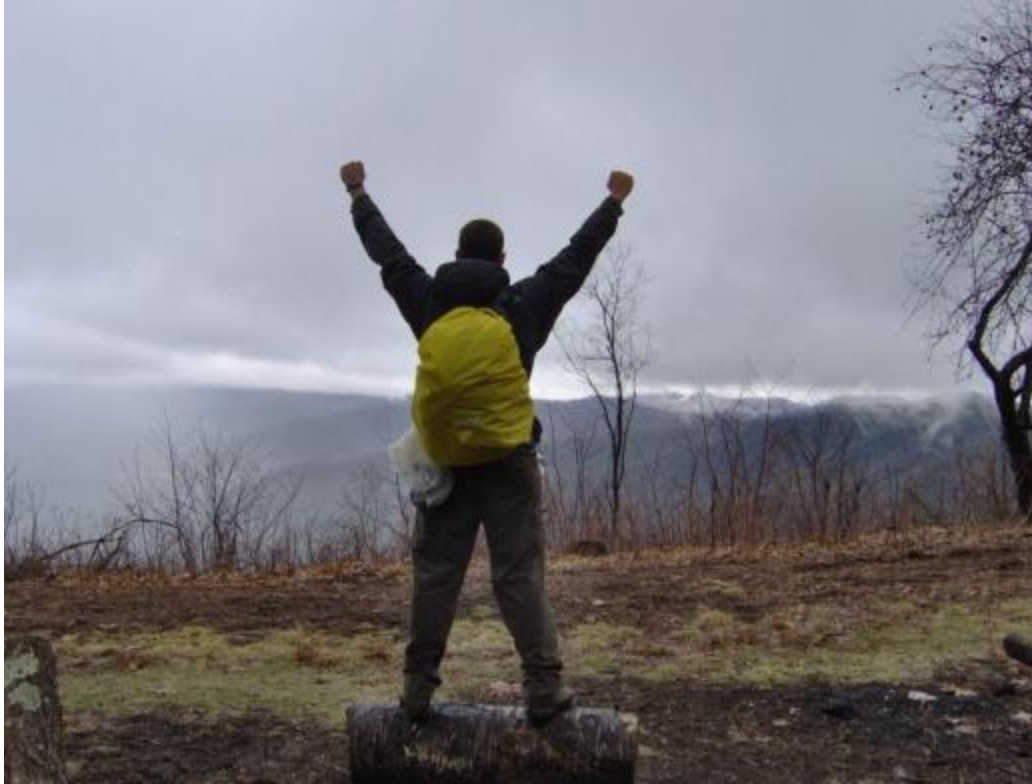


L-R: Greg, Laura, Val, Mark, Pat, and Chuck of SMHC @ I-26



The rain quit about the time we started hiking and we enjoyed a cool 45-50 degree hike for most of the day. We stopped around 12 for a snack at Hog Back Ridge Shelter to find some interesting art work by some bored hikers.

We also encountered a section hiker that got unlost when he heard us taking a break and found his way back to the Trail. He walked with us until we finished. The best views of the day were at Sugarloaf Gap where Jake stopped for his signature mountain pose.



The rain started back up 30 minutes before finishing making for a wet end to the hike. Lots of bear scat was seen at no less than 10 locations. There was also significant ATV activity and some trash that we carried out. Overall, it turned out to be a satisfying day with Jake knocking 8.5 miles off his 20 year AT section hiking plan, recruiting at least one new TEHCC affiliate and making plans for the upcoming backpacking trip from Devil's Fork Gap to Hot Springs.



## A.T. Maintenance Reports

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** February 20, 2009

**Purpose:** Maintenance Dinner

**Location:** Eastman Lodge

**People:** 42 in attendance

**Summary:** Thanks to Mary Cunningham and Ed Oliver we enjoyed a delicious dinner including dessert. We reviewed our 2008 accomplishments and the positive comments about our section from hikers. We summarized maintenance practices for 2009 including some special projects. For those unable to attend, enjoy a safe and memorable 2009 trail maintenance year.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** February 26, 2009



**Purpose:** Remove blowdowns

**Location:** Section 11a, Near White Rocks old fire tower

**People:** Bob Peoples

**Summary:** Bob with a hand saw removed the major tangle near the previous fire tower at White Rocks. He also removed some other minor blowdowns between Dennis Cove and there. There are still several large step overs. But Bob was able to remove the branches to make them easier.

**Reporting:** Jim Foster

**Date:** March 5, 2009

**Purpose:** Drop off new shelter register

**Location:** Section 18, Clyde Smith Shelter

**People:** Jim Foster

**Summary:** I walked in fairly deep snow from Tiger Creek to Clyde Smith Shelter and dropped off the new shelter register. I also checked and cleaned out the water source and cleaned up a few items from inside the shelter. There's still a broom, but no shovel. I met two hikers coming from Hughes Gap; they reported deep snow, but no blowdowns.

**Reporting:** Daryel Anderson

**Date:** March 5, 2009

**Purpose:** Complete clearing the blue-blaze trail to the spring

**Location:** Section 1, Two miles south from Damascus

**People:** Daryel Anderson, Anne Maio, Elania Smith, Richard Smith, John Stout, Bob Widner

**Summary:** The trail is now clear down to the spring.

**Reporting:** Michael Ray

**Date:** March 5 2009

**Purpose:** Check Trail condition cut and remove blowdowns

**Location:** Section 12d, US 19E to Campbell Hollow Road

**People:** Sam Robinette, Steve Poteat, Dale Douthat, Michael Ray

**Summary:** This was our first trip of the season on this section. We had a report of some trees down. We cut more than a half-dozen blowdowns from our section. Two were rather large trees; one just south of Buck Mountain Road and the other near the northern end of the latest relo, about a half mile north of the creek. A large tree is still down across the trail a couple hundred yards south of the cemetery; but it is on flat ground and is easy to go around. We plan to go back soon with more than hand saws to cut this tree out of the trail. Between 2 and 4 inches of snow were on the ground from the prior Sunday snowfall.



Dale, Sam, and Steve. Photo courtesy of Michael Ray.

**Reporting:** Bruce Cunningham

**Date:** March 6, 2009

**Purpose:** Improve trail

**Location:** Section 10, Dennis Cove Road north to bridge

**People:** Ed Oliver, Bruce Cunningham, Paul Benfield, Ben Trotter

**Summary:** We made needed trail repairs between Dennis Cove Road and the bridge.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** March 6, 2009

**Purpose:** Rehab trail

**Location:** Section 10, Just trail north of Laurel Falls

**People:** Carl Fritz, Brian Paley, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** We continued the onslaught on the big rock obstacles trail north of the falls. We finished cribbing and making steps out of the large rock we pulverized last week; and successfully got one large chunk off the top of the second large rock nearby. Then we placed two large rock steps in front, so both of these rocks are now easy walk-overs. This work was a natural extension of the rock work done by Konnarock several years ago. The only remaining undesirable rock is at the point in the river that seems impervious. We have an alternate strategy to crib it further.



Brian Paley splitting rock



Final steps

**Reporting:** Joe DeLoach

**Date:** March 6, 2009

**Purpose:** Clear blowdowns and replace shelter register and shovel

**Location:** Section 15, Carvers Gap to Cloudland

**People:** Craig DeLoach, Joe DeLoach

**Summary:** The weather hadn't warmed enough to melt snow up to a foot deep and some very slick, icy stretches on the way up Roan Mountain. There were no blowdowns. We placed a new shelter logbook and a short fiberglass-handled shovel at the shelter. We'll need to focus on redigging some of the drainage ditches the Forest Service constructed to more effectively get water off the Trail and hopefully make it less icy.

**Reporting:** Tim McClain

**Date:** March 7, 2009

**Purpose:** Early spring maintenance

**Location:** Section 3b, Spring to US 421

**People:** Tim McClain, David Neeley, Logan Neeley, Chase Belcher

**Summary:** We removed two blowdowns, cleared the water bars, repainted blazes, did clipping, and removed two bags of trash from around the parking area on US 421. This section is now cleared of blowdowns and is in good shape.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** March 8, 2009

**Purpose:** Measure Trail Curves

**Location:** Section 14b, Round Bald

**People:** Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples

**Summary:** We need to move more gravel up Round Bald, but we need to go on the AT. Ed and Bob took measurements of three critical curves in trail which will limit equipment.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** March 9, 2009

**Purpose:** Propose modifications for Curley Maple Gap Shelter

**Location:** Section 19, Curley Maple Gap Shelter

**People:** Jim Foster, Carl Fritz, Ed Oliver

**Summary:** The existing Curley Maple Gap shelter has block walls with one sleeping platform and a low steel roof which is badly deformed. We would like to modify the structure by increasing wall height slightly and installing a new steel roof with gable ends. The roof will provide more protection in front so that rain will not blow into shelter easily and there can be a small eating table. With the different roof design, we can install a second sleeping platform above the first one to accommodate 12 hikers rather than 6. The existing Curley Maple Gap Shelter foundation and first three rows of blocks will be used as the support for the new dimensional wood walls. Most of the existing wood in the current shelter will be reused in the new shelter. The external walls will be board and batten; the roof will be a brown steel. This modified shelter will look very similar to the Mountaineer Falls Shelter except it will have a different foundation. This proposal has been submitted for US Forest Service and ATC approvals.

**Reporting:** Jim Foster

**Date:** March 10, 2009

**Purpose:** Continue flagging trail relocation between Hughes Gap and Roan Mountain

**Location:** Section 15, Trail north of Ash Gap to Roan Mountain

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

**Summary:** We flagged just north of Ash Gap from where we had left off last trip. The terrain is difficult, but we were able to make some worthwhile adjustments. One more trip and we should finish.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** March 11, 2009

**Purpose:** Remove blowdowns

**Location:** Section 6, 2 miles north of Vandeventer Shelter

**People:** Adam Archual

**Summary:** Adam, armed with a hand saw and loppers, went to explore a blowdown reported north of Vandeventer Shelter. He accessed from Wilbur Dam Rd and found the blowdown about two miles north of the shelter. It was a large blowdown and had brought down a number of smaller trees. The trail was effectively blocked with no easy bypass. Adam cleared the smaller stuff. The main tree limb is still about hip high but can be gotten over. It will be scheduled for removal within the next couple months.

**Reporting:** Jim Foster

**Date:** March 18, 2009

**Purpose:** Finish flagging relocation

**Location:** Section 15, Trail north of Ash Gap to top of Roan Mountain

**People:** Bob Peoples, Ed Oliver, Jim Foster

**Summary:** We completed the flagging of the relocation from Hughes Gap trail north to the top of Roan Mountain. Bob used the wheel to measure and document the many relocation crossings of the existing trail north of Ash Gap. There is concern that we can actually show them all on a map of normal scale. Let's just say the new trail won't go straight up the mountain. We will now submit for approval.

**Reporting:** Old Timers Hiking Club

**Date:** March 18, 2009

**Purpose:** Normal spring maintenance

**Location:** Section 17, Switchback on north side of Unaka Mt to Cherry Gap

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

**Summary:** We cut two standing dead trees near the Trail and removed nine others from the Trail. The largest was about 15 inches in diameter. We removed leaves from the water bars, cleaned up around the shelter, and fixed the spring pipe someone had removed from the best-flowing spring. We also identified and marked several locations needing treadway work. We met a north-bound hiker who said there's a tree that was difficult to get around, north of Low Gap. It must have been beyond where we worked today.

**Reporting:** Joe DeLoach

**Date:** March 18, 2009

**Purpose:** Semi-annual Appalachian Trail Partnership Meeting

**Location:** Watauga Ranger District office, Unicoi

**People:** Paul Benfield, Bruce Cunningham, Joe DeLoach, Jim Foster, Carl Fritz, Ted Mowery, Ed Oliver

**Summary:** Each spring and fall, we meet with representatives from the two National Forests through which our Trail sections run and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) to discuss management issues affecting the AT. The most recent meeting was held on March 18 and was attended by District Ranger Don Palmer and Mike Rice from the Cherokee National Forest (CNF) Watauga Ranger District (RD), Cheryl Summers from the CNF Nolichucky/Unaka RD, Joe McGuinness and Dave Ferguson from the CNF North Zone, David McFee and Brandon Jones from the Pisgah National Forest Appalachian RD, and Morgan Sommerville from ATC. Following is a summary of topics discussed.

The Watauga RD have proposed a new work center at Rat Branch on Watauga Lake and mentioned potential shower facilities for hikers. We advised them to check with the Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area on their experience with locating and managing such facilities. While this would be well received by AT hikers, the demand may not be so great with the hostels in Dennis Cove; and there is no practical way to limit use to hikers. A "feeder trail" would need to be built to connect the AT to the work center. The Watauga RD will take these considerations into account before finalizing their decision.

After sharing 2008 TEHCC accomplishments, Carl reviewed major project plans for 2009. We

plan an extensive modification to the Curley Maple Gap Shelter this fall using a grant from the LL Bean AT Grant program. We will continue a series of AT relocations between Little Hump and Grassy Ridge. We will concentrate on the areas between Yellow Mt. Gap and Stan Murray Shelter with HardCore in May and between the shelter and Grassy Ridge with Konnarock in July and August. We also hope to start a relocation Trail north of Wilbur Dam Road with HardCore in May. The Forest Service believes they can complete all the necessary approvals in time for prep work to begin in early May, with HardCore slated to work on Sunday May 17. We typically submit nearby projects as one package for approval. So the relo north of Wilbur Dam Road is part of a proposal to relocate Trail sections between Shook Branch and the Watauga Lake Shelter and on the south side of Pond Mountain. After that, our next major project is between Hughes Gap and Cloudland; approval to be handled by the Cherokee NF. We will submit that request very soon and are hoping for approval by 2010. We continue to investigate robust equipment that can haul gravel up Round Bald without excessive impact to the environment.

The Forest Service is working on signs for road crossings and Trailheads. Many of ours are not well marked and we occasionally receive complaints from hikers trying to find the AT. March and April are the prime months for prescribed burns, with the largest one near the AT in the CNF near McQueens Gap on Holston Mountain. Forest Service personnel shuttle hikers around the burns. The Watauga RD hope to graze cattle on the Osborne Farm on Cross Mountain this year. The CNF is performing watershed assessments, with one planned for drainage from the Roan Highlands in 2009. There is a plan to redraw CNF district boundaries so that all of Carter, Johnson, and Sullivan Counties will be in the Watauga RD, and all of Unicoi County will be in the Nolichucky RD. The Unaka RD would be eliminated. This proposal awaits action at the regional and national level.

Morgan reviewed the ATC policy on geocaching. National Forests allow geocaching but permits are required. Morgan also reviewed policies on approval of side and connecting trails and on approval of management plans and project proposals.

**Reporting:** David Dunham

**Date:** March 20, 2009

**Purpose:** Routine maintenance

**Location:** Section 8, Shook Branch to Wilbur Dam Road.

**People:** David Dunham, Carol Dunham, Chuck Mather, Bob Harvey, June Donaldson, Jan Mather

**Summary:** We cut back weeds and cleaned the shelter. We also picked up multiple bags of trash and removed one blowdown. I also removed about 15 live 40-caliber shells from the shelter.

**Reporting:** Old Timers Hiking Club

**Date:** March 20, 2009

**Purpose:** Spring maintenance

**Location:** Section 16 & 17, Mostly south of Iron Mt Gap

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

**Summary:** We placed a new wooden sign about 100 yards north of Iron Mountain Gap (Section

16). We cut two trees from Trail, 1/2 to 1 mile south of Low Gap. We also checked the new section of trail on north Unaka Mt and removed several small branches. Mike procured, stained, and mounted signs on the posts. We are planning several work days for April involving most of the Old Timers Club.



**Reporting:** Randall Simpson

**Date:** March 21, 2009

**Purpose:** Clear debris and paint blazes

**Location:** Section 19, Chestoa to Curly Maple Gap Shelter

**People:** Randall Simpson

**Summary:** I cleared Trail; cut some small blowdowns from Trail. There is one large blowdown in the Trail about 10 minutes in after crossing the rail road tracks. I repainted all the blazes both ways. The shelter's spring has plenty of water at this time. The shelter also has plenty of graffiti.

**Reporting:** Steve Banks

**Date:** March 21, 2009

**Purpose:** Cut blowdowns, clear waterbars

**Location:** Section 3a, Abingdon Gap Shelter to spring south of McQueens Gap

**People:** Tim McClain, Steve Banks

**Summary:** On a beautiful spring day, we cut blowdowns, cleaned out waterbars, picked up litter, and deposited a new register at Abingdon Gap Shelter.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** March 21, 2009

**Purpose:** Rehab trail

**Location:** Section 10, Just trail north of Laurel Falls

**People:** Paul Benfield, Dave Clark, Bruce Cunningham, Mary Cunningham, Carl Fritz, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart, Adam Archaul, Jeff Silverman, Ben Worren, Luke Faisant, Rebecca Grant, John Cuthbertson, Carrie Holt, Katie Corolla, Jinggaan Liu, Daniel Yacykewych, Kevin O'Donnell

**Summary:** With the help of five from ETSU plus four hikers, we finished conquering most of rocks just north of Laurel Falls. We successfully cribbed the sloping rock at river so it just holds rock steps now. We also repaired most of the rocky trail from there to the falls.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** March 21, 2009

**Purpose:** Flag relocation

**Location:** Section 11a, South of Dennis Cove

**People:** Mike Hupko, Ed Oliver

**Summary:** Ed and Mike explored potential relocations south of Dennis Cove. Relocations look promising

**Reporting:** Chad Tate

**Date:** March 21, 2009

**Purpose:** Clear blowdowns

**Location:** Section 13b, Doll Flats to Big Hump

**People:** Chad Tate

**Summary:** I hiked from 19E to Big Hump and cleared several blowdowns that could be cleared using a handsaw. Two blowdown areas that required hikers to detour off-trail were cleared; so all of 19E to Big Hump is now passable. However, there are 4 or 5 areas that require a chainsaw to clear completely. These areas require high stepping or a slight-to-moderate limbo for clearance. I took pictures of these areas and will send them to the appropriate folks. For now, this section is "clear enough" for thru-hikers, but the referenced blowdowns will require chainsaw maintenance in the near future.

**Reporting:** Jake Mitchell

**Date:** March 21, 2009

**Purpose:** Cut brush back and remove blowdowns

**Location:** Section 9b, Hampton trailhead to Pond Flats

**People:** Jake Mitchell, Bill Fuller

**Summary:** Bill and I met around noon at the Hampton trailhead to remove reported blowdowns and to cut brush. We removed one blowdown and left two or three easy stepovers on the blue blaze. We then went up Pond Mountain where we removed three more blowdowns with the last one being a large deadfall about halfway up the mountain that took us about 15 minutes to



remove. We ran out of daylight and left two large blowdowns on the south side of Pond just before the top. There are also a handful of stepovers on the north side. We will return soon from the Shook Branch side to cut brush, blaze and remove the rest of the blowdowns. The spring on Pond Flats was flowing well and the pond was actually holding water!

**Reporting:** Bill Allen

**Date:** March 21, 2009

**Purpose:** Maintain Trail, remove blowdowns, pickup garbage, clean up shelter

**Location:** Section 5, From Cross Mtn Road to Iron Mtn Shelter

**People:** Judy Allen, Bill Allen

**Summary:** Trail from Cross Mtn Road to Iron Mtn Shelter is in good shape. We removed six small blow downs and one large trash bag full of trash. Most of the trash was collected at the parking area near the NF gate on Cross Mtn Road. Iron Mtn Shelter is in good shape. A new notebook has been placed at the shelter. The two water sources on this section look good as well. We cut back some of the early briar growth, but will return later to make sure the trail is clear and to repaint some blazes.

**Reporting:** Steve Wilson

**Date:** March 21, 2009

**Purpose:** Springtime Trail Maintenance

**Location:** Section 2, Abingdon Gap Shelter to Damascus

**People:** Steve Perri, Mike Nash, Jeff Siirola, Steve Wilson

**Summary:** On a beautiful spring day, we cleared blown down trees, lopped branches, cleaned water bars, and painted blazes. We found and removed eight blowdowns in Section 2. As we hiked down to Damascus, we cleared the five reported blown down trees in Section 1. We saw four hikers on the trail, including one thru-hiker with the trail- name Grumpy. The trail is clear and in good shape.

**Reporting:** Scott VanDam

**Date:** March 22 & 23, 2009

**Purpose:** Cut back spring growth

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

**People:** Scott VanDam

**Summary:** I picked up trash at Walnut Mountain Road trailhead, cut back mountain laurel growth on trail from Walnut Mtn road to Bitter end, cut some briars, moved some rocks improving treadway along Laurel Fork creek, cut out a few smaller blow downs

**Reporting:** Collins Chew

**Date:** March 23, 2009

**Purpose:** Paint Blazes

**Location:** Secion 4a, US 421 to Double Springs Shelter

**People:** Larry Miller, Collins Chew

**Summary:** The blazes were painted in both directions. A few blowdowns and some storm debris were removed. Several backpackers were on the trail and it was a beautiful day.

**Reporting:** Bruce Cunningham

**Date:** March 24, 2009

**Purpose:** Remove blowdowns, upgrade water bars, pickup trash

**Location:** Sections 12d, 13a and 13b, Bear Branch Road and Doll Flats to Bradley Gap

**People:** Ken Buchanan, Bill Elderbrock, Bruce Cunningham, Dave Dunham

**Summary:** We cut two reported large blowdowns, one each on sections 13a and 13b plus several smaller ones nearby. We cleaned all waterbars on 13a from 19E to "S" curve going south from 19E. By previous standards, it was a very light day with only two bags of trash picked up at Bear Branch Road.

---