



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

June 2009

tehcc.org

In this issue:

[From the Chair](#)

[TEHCC Participation Survey](#)

[Volunteers needed for FunFest Moonlight Hike](#)

[Damascus Hard Core 2009](#)

[Konnarock Crew - Grassy Ridge Relocation](#)

[Retiree and Affiliate Membership Cards](#)

[TEHCC Welcomes New Members](#)

[Event Schedule – Next Two Months](#)

[Description of Upcoming Events](#)

[For the Record](#)

[AT Maintenance Reports](#)

From the Chair

(Steering Committee Chair and Office Chair)

In an effort to keep the TEHCC membership abreast of what's going on, we are going to try something new. Each month, the TEHCC Steering Committee Chair will provide a few comments about what the Steering Committee is up to and how the Club's members can be involved. Perfect segue. This year, one of our key initiatives is to boost membership participation. We want to increase the percentage of current members that participate in Club functions. To better understand what the Club's membership wants, we developed the 2009 Participation Survey that you should have received via email or hard copy. Being an analytically driven culture at Eastman, we want to

uncover actionable results from the surveys so that the TEHCC can better serve its membership (no control charts will be used). So far, we only have a 12% response rate. This is your chance to speak so speak up! The July edition of this article will outline the survey results and what we are doing to act upon them. Happy Trails!

Jake Mitchell, 2009 TEHCC Steering Committee Chair, chair@tehcc.org

TEHCC Participation Survey

The **TEHCC Leadership Team** invites you to participate in our 2009 Participation Survey. We are continually striving to improve the quality and content of our events. The survey only has 11 questions and 9 of them are multiple choice. It should not take you more than a few minutes. Take it [here](#). (Note: this link only works on the Eastman network).

Your feedback is much appreciated!

Volunteers needed for FunFest Moonlight Hike



TEHCC will once again co-sponsor the Kingsport FunFest Moonlight Hike at Bays Mountain Park. This popular event attracts 300-500 participants each year. The hike traverses 2.5 miles around the lake. We need at least twelve volunteers to assist the Bays Mountain Park Association with this event. The responsibilities are minimal – show up 30 minutes early, stand at a trail junction with a flashlight or headlamp and make sure nobody gets lost. Contact [Tom Boyd](#) if interested, 423-229-1395.

Damascus Hard Core, May 17-18, 2009

Carl Fritz reporting

The ninth annual Damascus Hard Core, held Sunday, May 17, and Monday, May 18, is now history. And it was a very exciting event! We hoped the Saturday night rains would clear sufficiently by mid-morning Sunday, and they did. Monday was a beautiful blue-sky day. Every year, people come to socialize and work at this event, and this year, they found plenty of both. Fortunately, no serious injuries occurred, even with all the rock work. 139 people, including 29 club members and guests from ATC and TVA, plus 110 hikers worked 2282 hours to make this two-day event a tremendous success. We built 4500 feet of very difficult sidehill relocations in these two days. This exceeds our record of 3800 feet built in 2008; and it is by far the most difficult trail overall that we have built with Hard Core.



Difficult side-hill digging



Almost finished trail

On Sunday, 26 Club members and guests, plus 99 hikers, built 2250 feet of trail in the wilderness north of Wilbur Dam Road. You will now notice a significant drop in trail grade shortly after entering the wilderness as compared to the previous trail. "Camo" and his rock crew built a very impressive rock trail over a rock outcropping. Another group, directed by Bob Peoples, built a couple of rock-stepped switchbacks. Many of the other eight work crews had to do rock cribbing. Jeff Siirola and Ted Mowery's crew had little rock work, but had to avoid exposure to rocks falling from rock crews on the trail above them. The local grouse had an opportunity to harass more people than normal. It even harassed a black Labrador retriever until the dog got loose from its leash. This new trail was white blazed by hikers and opened before supper. Dinner was served by Mary Cunningham and her crew at the nearby TVA visitor's center at Watauga Lake.



Dinner being served at Watauga Dam Visitor Center



Ed enjoys the strawberry shortcake



Carl and Bob prepare to hand out awards and patches



Handing out Hammer's Hard Core hats

On Monday, 12 Club members and guests, plus 90 hikers, built another 2250 feet of trail between Grassy Ridge and Stan Murray Shelter. More rock work was needed here than expected. "Camo" and crew built a large rock staircase at a switchback; they had to haul rock a couple of hundred feet. Likewise, Bob's group installed a set of rock stairs at another switchback. Again the hikers painted white blazes on this new trail and opened it.

Thanks to everyone for achieving these major trail improvements to eliminate steep and eroding sections of the AT. Club members, guests, and hikers readily volunteered to take on major tasks. Participants received a Damascus Hard Core patch or rocker. Most participants received caps donated by "Hammer." "Camo's" rock crew received t-shirts supplied by "Flying Porkchop".

As usual, several people deserve special mention for making this Hard Core event a success.

- Bob Peoples is the motivator and logistics man, plus he finds or provides housing for all the hikers. Many stayed at Kincora Hostel. "Baltimore Jack" oversees the meal preparation for Monday evening. Dinner included about thirty pounds of spaghetti, soup, salad, garlic bread and dessert.
- The North Carolina AT License Plate Fund provided most of the money to cover this Monday evening meal. If you live in North Carolina consider getting a specialty AT license plate.
- Bruce and Mary Cunningham provided most of the meal for everyone on Sunday evening. Mary prepared barbecue, coleslaw, baked beans and fresh strawberry short cake. Carol Dunham and Mary Jane Fritz prepared a tossed salad. Several also prepared strawberries.
- TVA, as coordinated by Aurora Moldovanyi, allowed us access to their property and facilities.
- Mike Rice of USFS Watauga Ranger District loaned us pulaskis and fire rakes. Mike Hupko coordinated the movement of these tools.

These TEHCC members, affiliates, and guests participated this year:

Daryel Anderson, Gregg Anderson, Steven Banks, Steve Banks, Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Pat Buchanan, Bruce Cunningham, Mary Cunningham, Joe DeLoach, Andrew Downs (ATC), Carol Dunham, Dave Dunham, Carl Fritz, Mary Jane Fritz, Mike Hupko, Kat Johnson, Leanna Joyner (ATC), Julie Judkins (ATC), Jim Mann, Jake Mitchell, Aurora Moldovanyi (TVA), Ted Mowery, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Steve Perri, Kim Peters, Jeff Siirola, Tim Stewart.

Konnarock Crew - Grassy Ridge Relocation,

July 2-6 and July 30-August 3, 2009

Leader: [Joe DeLoach](#), 423-753-7263)

When our section of the Appalachian Trail was routed across the Roan Highlands in 1954, much of it was laid out to go straight up and down the ridges. This makes for steep hiking and bad erosion. We've been

addressing these problems through relocations for many years. Probably our worst remaining section is between Yellow Mountain Gap south to the shoulder of Grassy Ridge. Hard Core and student groups have already made many improvements. This summer we'll work with the Konnarock Crew to relocate the longest remaining section, south of the Stan Murray Shelter towards Grassy Ridge. The Crew arrives on Thursday and works until Monday morning. Volunteers are sought for any of these days; however, the most productive days to volunteer are the full days of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Volunteers who work at least five days with Konnarock qualify for a T-shirt; which won't be easy with only two weeks this year. We'll meet at 8:30 AM at the parking lot near Parkway Discount Wine and Liquor on South Roan Street in Johnson City. Other meeting spots can be arranged on request. Bring lunch, work gloves, and plenty of water. Please contact Joe if you're interested in coming so we'll have tools ready, or for more information.

Retiree and Affiliate Membership Cards

Membership cards are available for Retirees and Program Affiliates. These cards can be used as proof of club membership in order to receive discounts at local outfitters. If you are an Eastman retiree or an Affiliate member and would like a membership card, please contact [Judy Allen](#), 229-4253.



TEHCC Welcomes New Members

Please welcome the following new member for June:

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Event Schedule – Next Two Months

For the latest, up-to-date information, see tehcc.org/schedule

Date	Description	Rating	Leader	Contact
June 4	Paddle to the Grill (every Thursday in June)	Flatwater	Deb Reynolds	dlreynolds@eastman.com
June 6	Bays Mt. to Laurel Run	B/3/C	Ed Montgomery	Ed.Montgomery@tehcc.org
June 6	Local Warrior's Path Hiking Trails	Family	Tim Schaefer	423-229-6244
June 6	Lower Watauga River (every Saturday)	Class I-II	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
June 9	TEHCC Two-fer Tuesdays	Fun	Marc Schurger	marc.schurger@tehcc.org
June 13	Beginner Whitewater Kayak Clinic	Educational	Scott Fisher	276-698-4644
June 13	Nolichucky River Cleanup	Worthwhile	Anna and Toney Davis	423-743-7855
June 20	Grassy Ridge Moonlight Hike	B/3/C	Jake Mitchell	423-963-8654
June 26-28	AT2175: Devils Fork Gap to Allen Gap, NC	AA/3/A	Jake Mitchell	423-963-8654
June 27	Lower Watauga	Class I-II	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
July 1-5	S900M: Smokies Backpack	A/2/B	Kent and Nancy Wilson	423-239-7554
July 2-6	Konnarock Crew	Maintenance	Joe DeLoach	423-753-7263

July 11-12	Mount LeConte Lodge	B/3/B	Steve Falling	423-239-5502
July 14	TEHCC Two-fer Tuesdays	Fun	Marc Schurger	marc.schurger@tehcc.org
July 16	FunFest Moonlight Hike	Fun	Tom Boyd	423-229-1395
Jul 30-Aug 3	Konnarock Crew	Maintenance	Joe DeLoach	423-753-7263

Description of Upcoming Events

Paddle to the Grill, June 4, 2009

Leaders: [Deb Reynolds](#) and [Debbie Briscoe](#)

Rating: Flatwater

This weekly event is finally here! On Thursday, June 4, bring your recreation or touring kayak/canoe to the second boat launch at Winged Deer Park to paddle to Sonny's Marina & Café for dinner and a social hour, then paddle back. We plan to launch at 6:30. As we may be paddling back during low or no light, please have a stern light for your boat; PFD's are mandatory. If you need a stern light, try the following link <http://www.boatbandit.com/portable-stern-light>. You can also search on-line for a portable stern light. A bow light is also recommended but not mandatory.

Bays Mt. to Laurel Run, June 6, 2009

Leader: [Ed Montgomery](#)

Rating: B/3/C

Ed Montgomery will be leading a National Trails Day hike from Bays Mountain Park to Laurel Park in Church Hill. Contact Ed if you are interested.

Family Hike: Warrior's Path Hiking Trails, June 6, 2009

Leader: [Tim Schaefer](#), 423-229-6244

Rating: C/4/C

Come and find some hiking trails that we have right in our collective backyard. My June edition of the family/toddler friendly hikes will be to the Warrior's Path hiking trails. We have several to choose from; my favorites being Devil's Backbone and Sinking Waters. I'll firm up the plans as we get closer to the date. Both are great for after (or before) work hikes, so come with us for some fun and to find these local and easily accessible trails. We will do either a late morning hike just before lunch, or an early afternoon hike depending on people's interest. Contact the hike leader for details.

Lower Watauga River, June 6, 2009

Leader: [Debbie Briscoe](#), 423-534-3636

Rating: Class I-II

Debbie will lead Class I-II Trips on the Lower Watauga River "most" Saturday afternoons from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The meeting place is at Riverside Park behind the Carmen Dugger Sports Complex in Elizabethton, TN at 3:00 PM. Bring cold-water gear and a snack. Check first to see if we are on, because in times of low water we may move the run to whatever is running.

TEHCC Two-fer Tuesdays, June 9, 2009

Leader: Marc Schurger

This is an informal after-work monthly get-together at Kingsport Grocery that takes 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 is also a great opportunity to recruit new members and increase member participation in upcoming outings and events. For more details, contact either [Marc Schurger](#) or [Ed Montgomery](#).

Grassy Ridge Moonlight Hike, June 20, 2009

Leader: [Jake Mitchell](#), 423-963-8654

Rating: B/3/C

Jake will lead an easy moonlight hike to Grassy Ridge for some meteor watching (he hopes) from Carvers Gap. If you have never night hiked, you are missing out. If the moon is clear, it is an exhilarating experience. Headlamps or flashlights are a must. Hot chocolate and fine beverages are good too. Contact Jake if interested.

AT2175: Devils Fork Gap to Allen Gap - June 26-28

Leader: [Jake Mitchell](#), 423-963-8654

Rating: AA/3/A

Jake Mitchell will lead a shakedown hike to prepare for the Club trip to Vermont for the ATC Biennial Conference. The plan is to leave no later than 4pm from Jake's house on Friday afternoon and head towards Allen Gap. Based on the number of attendees, we will either take two cars or arrange for a shuttle back to Devils Fork Gap. On Friday evening, we will hike to Flint Mountain Shelter or beyond (3-5 miles). On Saturday, we will continue on to Little Laurel Shelter or beyond (12-14 miles). On Sunday morning, we will finish the trip to Allen Gap and take it to house. Depending on the attendees, this trip can be shortened to two days by going all the way to Allen Gap on Saturday. Bear bagging paraphernalia is a must in this area, so prepare accordingly.

S900M: Smokies Backpack, July 1-5, 2009

Leaders: [Kent and Nancy Wilson](#), 423-239-7554

Rating: A/2/B

Kent and Nancy Wilson will lead a Smokies 900-Miler backpack the 4th of July weekend. On Wed July 1 after work, we'll drive to Fontana, NC and spend the night at the "Fontana Hilton" (AT Shelter). On July 2, we'll take a boat across Fontana Lake to Campsite #81. We'll take the Lakeshore Trail to #86, then Hazel Creek Trail to #83, where we'll drop packs and do an out-and-back on the Bone Valley Trail. We'll continue on Hazel Creek to #82 where we'll set up camp (15.6 miles). On July 3, we'll day hike the Hazel Creek Trail, Welch Ridge Trail, out-and-back to High Rocks, the Cold Spring Gap Trail and return for the second night at campsite #82 (16.8 miles). On July 4, we'll take the Hazel Creek Trail to the Jenkins Ridge Trail and spend the night at Spence Field Shelter (13.4 miles). On July 5, we'll take the Eagle Creek Trail, Lost Cove Trail and AT back to our cars at Fontana (15.1 miles). The mileage can be shortened for anyone who wishes by opting out of the Bone Valley hike, the long loop hike on the second day, and taking Eagle Creek all the way to Fontana instead of Lost Cove and the AT. This should be a fun and challenging weekend with lots of Smokies miles in a more remote area of the park. Since we need to make reservations at campsite #83, at Spence Field Shelter, and for the boat ride across Fontana Lake, pre-registration is a necessity; so please let us know if you plan to join us by June 1. We will try to have an alternate hike planned in case we cannot get reservations. Hope you can join us.

Konnarock Crew – Grassy Ridge Relocation, July 2-6 and July 30 - August 3, 2009

Leader: [Joe DeLoach](#), 423-753-7263 [See article above...](#)

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.

For the Record



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

Tim Schaefer reporting

What a wet weekend! We had four people total, three club members and one hopefully returning member, show up for this wet backpacking trip. Despite repeated threats of serious thunderstorms, Chris convinced me to keep the plan on schedule. We were welcomed with a downpour Saturday morning, but after spending time to drop a car off at Pinnacle, it cleared up within minutes onto the trail. We quickly shed the rain coats and we had a fairly dry rest-of-the-day. The diversion to Sand Cave for lunch was well worth it and quite impressive. At that point we were on the ridge, but the low hanging clouds that were with us almost all weekend kept the viewing distance to a minimum. Hensley Camp was a nice carved out section right off the trail and a good spot for our tents. A gentle rain began over night that came and went for the remainder of the trip. We woke up the next morning and hiked nearly non-stop, eventually completely drenched, for the next 12 miles back to the car. Attending were Tim Schaefer, Noah McMillan, Chris Garrett, and Tim Arrowsmith.



Sasquatch (Tim A.) sighting at Sand Cave



Camping at Hensley Camp in the fog (Chris)



The wet group nearly done with the Sunday hike (Tim A., Noah, Chris)

Fontana Lake Paddling Trip, May 2-3, 2009

Deb Reynolds reporting

The Fontana Lake Paddling Trip to Eagle Creek campsite was led by Gary Kilpatrick. This trip was only 4-5 miles of paddling with a single night stay, and therefore was easy for beginners. I was definitely a beginner, with no previous overnight experience using a kayak or other boat, although I have backpacked. The previous week, a class on packing for overnight trips was held at Mtn. Sports Ltd. It was very timely, helping me to know what to bring and where to put my food and clothes versus the tent and sleeping bag. I didn't weigh what I took and I know my equipment is on the small side, but I was very pleasantly surprised at how little impact the additional weight had on my kayak when it was distributed along the length of the boat. I had kayaked with my 20-lb dog in the past and putting 20 lb right in the middle definitely affected my ability to turn.

Although we had rain going down to Fontana, the weather was dry and the lake was extremely calm on Saturday. Our group of seven met at the Fontana boat dock and eased our way to Eagle Creek. Another group of four from Asheville was at the campground for kayaking and fishing, but they were very open to our group sharing the area. A downpour started in the middle of the night and did not let up until we were packing to paddle back to our cars. The water again was extremely calm with a very clear reflection of the mountains and trees on the water.

I would highly recommend this site for a longer overnight trip. The Eagle Creek campsite is large with some wooded and some cleared out areas, has a large, very clear creek right next to the site, which sounds wonderful at night, covering up conversation and other night noises. With low water levels, a hike into the camping area would be required. We did not have this problem with the recent rain.

Smokies 900 Miler, Hen Wallow Falls, May 9, 2009

Garry Luttrell reporting



The Hike Notice for this hike was advertised as Mt. Sterling Loop, NC Side; but, on Friday, the weather was awful, and more of the same was forecast for Saturday. So, indoor activities made more sense. Earlier in the week I suggested a shorter hike, and got a response from two who were interested; but, both decided to opt-out on Saturday. I decided to drive on to the Cosby picnic area and hike to Hen Wallow Falls. Most of the hike was dry, except for rain for the last mile. Water flow at the falls was pretty good (see photo). I'll try again later on the Mt. Sterling Loop Hike.

Holston River Trip, May 23, 2009

Deb Reynolds reporting

Debbie Brisco, Kent Marsh and I left Laurel Run for a lazy trip to Christian's Bend at 11am and returned about 2pm. We found a neighborhood park to eat lunch in, not too far above Christian's Bend. The water was surprisingly low compared to my previous trips and we were able to surf a bit. After take-out, we drove to the next driveway downriver and talked to the owner of the property there. Last year, we ate lunch there and they indicated they were going to open up the land for campers and have a place for paddlers to stop for a rest break. Plans are still in place and we were invited to drop our cars there instead of the ramp up the road due to the high use there. There are no plans to charge paddlers for the use of the facilities, which includes a real shower room. We estimated the actual time on the river was about 2 hours.



AT Maintenance Reports

Reporting: Joe DeLoach

Date: April 4, 2009

Purpose: Appalachian Trail Southern Partnership Meeting

Location: Arden, North Carolina

People: Bruce Cunningham, Mary Cunningham, and Joe DeLoach

Summary: Bruce Cunningham and Joe DeLoach are TEHCC representatives on the AT Deep South Regional Partnership Committee, which meets in the spring with our counterparts in Central/SW Virginia at the Southern Partnership Meeting. The presentation Jake Mitchell made the previous evening on our website drew some good comments. The 2011 ATC biennial conference will be held at nearby Emory and Henry College near Abingdon. We will be a sponsoring club of the 2013 conference at Western Carolina University. We still have work to do to update our Local Management Plan, which describes our practices for managing our section of the Appalachian Trail.

Reporting: Joe DeLoach

Date: April 5, 2009

Purpose: Konnarock Crew project selection meeting

Location: Arden, North Carolina

People: Joe DeLoach

Summary: Each year a committee selects the amount of Konnarock Crew time each southern AT-maintaining club will receive. A tie-in to the federal budget cycle causes this determination to be made five years in advance; so this meeting was to discuss 2014 projects. We asked for three weeks of Crew time to work on relocations between Hughes Gap and Cloudland and were awarded those three weeks.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: April 25, 2009

Purpose: Dig Trail relocation

Location: Section 17, Cherry Gap

People: Paul Benfield, Bruce Cunningham, Mary Cunningham, Jim Foster, Carl Fritz, Marsha Hupko, Mike Hupko, Chris Martin, Ted Mowery, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart; ETSU: Michael Schneider, Michael Cummins, Daniel Yacykewych, Aaron Scott, Molly Rutemeyer, Rebecca Catron, Ted Catron, Matt Wampler, S C Hadley, Abigail James, Veronica Weidner, Michelle Summers, Kevin O'Donnell

Summary: With a good turn out from the Club and ETSU on a very hot spring day, we opened all of the remaining relocations in the Cherry Gap area. We dug about 900 feet of trail, some of which was very difficult to build. We need one more day with a small crew to do some final polish work.

Reporting: Steve Perri

Date: April 25, 2009

Purpose: Annual maintenance

Location: Section 12C, Sugar Hollow Creek to Campbell Hollow Road

People: Mike Nash, Jeff Sirola, Steve Perri, Steve Wilson

Summary: We split into two groups, one working from Campbell Hollow Rd and the other from Sugar Hollow Creek. Blazes were painted in both directions, rhodos were lopped, and the stairs north of Jones falls were cleaned out. The stairs had a lot of soil and debris built up and the bottom six logs were buried below all this. The steps are now more level. We re-strung the barbed wire at the stile near the open area since it had been cut and moved out of the way. No signs of horse riding thus far. The USFS plans to mow the open area along the river in early June and October, so we will plan a trip to cut weeds in August.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: April 28, 2009

Purpose: Dig Trail relocation

Location: Section 7, North of Wilbur Dam Rd

People: Ken Buchanan, Bruce Cunningham, Bill Elderbrock, Carl Fritz, Ted Mowery, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Aaron Scott, Tim Stewart, Ben Trotter; HIKERS: Ben Tarpley, Teigan Gulliver, Baltimore Jack, Fran James, Ben Cowan

Summary: We dug the first section of trail to insure it could be done under these conditions. We were successful, so the rest should be possible. We scouted out all of the other relocations and decided to put most of them in eventually. Some large rocks will need to be moved and some large blowdowns cut.

Reporting: Daryel Anderson

Date: April 28, 2009

Purpose: Scout and clear Trail

Location: Section 1, Damascus south to Backbone Rock Trail then down to Backbone Rock

People: Anne Maio and Daryel Anderson

Summary: We hiked south from Damascus and found one 14-inch walkover blowdown about 3 miles in. No other problems to the Backbone Rock trail were encountered. We hiked down Backbone Rock trail to go out. There are several blowdowns along this path, but the trail is easily hiked downhill.

Reporting: Joe DeLoach

Date: April 30, 2009

Purpose: AT Committee Meeting

Location: Kingsport

People: Collins Chew, Joe DeLoach, Carl Fritz, Ed Oliver, Steve Perri, Jeff Sirola, and Paul Worsham

Summary: We are still working on ways to get gravel to Round Bald for rehab. The Forest Service has approved our renovation plans for the Curley Maple Gap Shelter. Joe will adopt the side trail to Grassy Ridge. We will add modification of the Apple House Shelter to our work plans. TEHCC will be a sponsoring club for the 2013 ATC biennial conference at Western Carolina. We need to supply two representatives to the conference planning committee. We have asked the Forest Service to identify and communicate officially designated horse trails in the Unaka Mountain area in hopes of getting horses off the AT. Several club members with ties to Unicoi County who may be willing to help with the AT Community Partnership were identified.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: May 5, 2009

Purpose: Prepare relo for Hard Core

Location: Section 7, North of Wilbur Dam Road

People: Daryel Anderson, Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Dave Dunham, Bill Elderbrock, Jim Foster, Carl Fritz, Mike Hupko, Ted Mowery, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Aaron Scott, Tim Stewart; HIKERS: Lee Manning, Jones Brokaw, Nick Dasek, Lori Robertson, Heather Edmondson

Summary: We continued to prepare the relocations for Hard Core by cutting out some more sections, doing some rock work, installing pin flags, and cutting several large blowdowns with crosscut saws.

Reporting: Paul Benfield

Date: May 7, 2009

Purpose: Trail maintenance

Location: Section 4b, TN Hwy 91 to Double Springs Shelter

People: Paul Benfield

Summary: I removed one blowdown, cleaned out water-bars, and cleaned out water ditches across the trail. The Accessible Trail needs mowing, so I will return and mow it next week. The Accessible Trail needs to be sprayed in late spring or early summer as weeds and grass are coming up in it. Although we caulked the nail heads on the Double Springs Shelter, it is leaking pretty bad and needs some attention.

Reporting: Steve Banks

Date: May 9, 2009

Purpose: Trail maintenance

Location: Section 3a, Abingdon Gap Shelter to Spring

People: Beth, Charlie, Sam, and Burts Compton, Steve Banks

Summary: We refreshed the blazes on the AT in both directions and the blue blazes on the trail between Abingdon Gap Shelter and its spring. We posted a green and white AT sign south of McQueens Gap, left a register at the McQueens Knob "emergency" shelter (aka "The Holiday Inn"), and picked up two large bags of litter at McQueens Gap. We gave soft drinks and cookies to six thru-hikers who enjoyed the unexpected "trail magic"! An unusually large number of gnats and biting flies were bothersome when we started, but later the wind picked up and kept them at bay.

Reporting: Joe DeLoach

Date: May 10, 2009

Purpose: Purchase tools and inspect Trail

Location: Section 12d, First mile north of US Hwy 19E

People: Joe DeLoach

Summary: Using residual funds from our North Carolina and LL Bean grants, I purchased a rock bar in Banner Elk, NC. On the way back I stopped at 19E and walked the first portion of the trail north of Bear Branch Road. There was no trash at the road crossing. I broke back some small blowdowns and briars; there will be plenty to do under the power line crossing. A large blowdown has come down about a half-mile north of 19E, but is easy to walk around.

Reporting: Paul Benfield

Date: May 11, 2009

Purpose: Cut grass on Osborne Farm

Location: Section 4b, Osborne Farm (Between Double Springs Shelter and TN Hwy 91)

People: Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery

Summary: We mowed and trimmed the grass on the Accessible Trail and the rest of the Trail across the Osborne Farm.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: May 12, 2009

Purpose: Dig Trail relocation

Location: Section 7, North of Wilbur Dam Road

People: Daryel Anderson, Paul Benfield, Bruce Cunningham, Dave Dunham, Bill Elderbrock, Carl Fritz, Ted Mowery, Ed Oliver, Brian Paley, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart; HIKERS: Genius, The Extreme Optimist, Vegemite

Summary: We continued exploring and digging some more difficult places in preparation for Hard Core. Most of us survived a grouse attack. Ted and Dave were victimized. Bill and Bruce posted signs to reroute hikers onto roads at Shook Branch since Watauga Lake has flooded several sections of trail. Fishermen are boat fishing for bass on some parts of AT.

Reporting: Scott VanDam

Date: May 16, 2009

Purpose: Improve treadway along Laurel Fork

Location: Section 12a, Along Laurel Fork Creek

People: Scott VanDam

Summary: Where the trail is heavily worn and muddy along Laurel Fork, I dug holes and placed flat rocks in them to improve treadway. I removed several slanted slippery rocks. It is a smoother walk along the creek for several hundred feet now.

Reporting: Joe DeLoach

Date: May 16, 2009

Purpose: Measure and evaluate sign

Location: Section 1, State-line boundary between Damascus and Backbone Rock Trail

People: Joe DeLoach

Summary: Interest has been expressed in replacing the old sign welcoming northbound AT hikers to the Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area (MRNRA). The MRNRA is willing to replace it and asked us about desired wording and dimensions. I measured the existing sign and checked the condition of the posts. The existing sign is bolted very close to the top of the posts with the top right corner blown out. The posts are stable and in fairly good condition, except for some deterioration on top worsened by the bolts being so high. I cut three blowdowns, one of which was about 9 inches diameter about 0.5 miles Trail north of the boundary.

Reporting: David Dunham

Date: May 20, 2009

Purpose: Routine maintenance

Location: Section 8, Wilbur Dam Road to US Hwy 321

People: David Dunham, Bruce Cunningham

Summary: We cut weeds, trimmed multiflora rose, removed two small blowdowns, and cleaned the shelter.

Reporting: Old Timers Hiking Club

Date: May 20, 2009

Purpose: General maintenance

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to Low Gap

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

Summary: We removed four trees from the trail, dug five new dips in soggy areas, laid stepping stones in a boggy area of the trail, and rebuilt about twenty feet of trail. We also repaired the trail where a tree had fallen and left a large hole about two feet deep and five to six feet across. We built a rock crib in the hole and filled it to level the trail. Areas needing additional work were noted; work that can be done during the summer maintenance trips.

Reporting: Michael Watts

Date: May 21, 2009

Purpose: Clear blow downs

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

People: Michael Watts, Mary Watts

Summary: Mary and I cleared tangles of blowdowns that had been reported by hikers.

Reporting: Michael Ray

Date: May 21, 2009

Purpose: General maintenance

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

People: Dale Douthat, Seth Douthat, Taiyi "Tom" Yan, Forrest Cline, Ethan Ingram, Michael Ray

Summary: We used three string trimmers to mow our section of trail from 19E to Campbell Hollow Road. We also clipped branches and briars, and repaired damage from a large tree that was right along the edge of the trail and had fallen a few months ago. It is located on the recent relop up hill from Bear Branch. We still have another set of fallen trees a couple-hundred yards north of the cemetery. If I counted correctly, we met ten northbound thru hikers that were all thankful for our efforts. Taiyi is an exchange student from China. I think he enjoyed the experience.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: May 23, 2009

Purpose: Flag relocation and check trail for obstructions

Location: Section 16a, Greasy Creek Gap to just south of Little Rock Knob

People: Ed Oliver, Jim Foster

Summary: Ed and I flagged three separate sections for relocation and cleared three blowdowns from the trail. This was done within about a three-mile section of trail from Greasy Creek Gap to just south of Little Rock Knob.

Reporting: Carl Fritz and Bruce Cunningham

Date: May 26, 2009

Purpose: Fine tune Trail relocation

Location: Section 7, Just north of Wilbur Dam Road

People: Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Bruce Cunningham, Ted Mowery, Ed Oliver

Summary: This group finished polishing the newly opened trail completed by Hard Core a week ago. We added some rock steps, removed some rock obstacles, cut back rhodo stubs and cut back the upper bank closer to 45 degrees. This relo is now in great shape and hikers are commenting positively about the improvement.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: May 26, 2009

Purpose: Fine tune Trail relocation

Location: Section 14b, Stan Murray Shelter to Grassy Ridge

People: Richard Carter, Jim Foster, Carl Fritz, Tim Stewart

Summary: We rehabbed the set of steps in the middle of the 2008 Hard Core relo. The newly opened relo, with Hard Core a week ago, needed some finish work. Five rock steps were added to complete the uppermost switchback. Additional rock steps and cribs were added in that same area. The unpacked, fresh, black soil has been saturated and is like greased lightning. Even the deer are sliding around. Jim covered about 500 feet of trail with leaf litter. We plan to do some more finish work. Jim and Carl inspected the flag lines for the upcoming Konnarock work.