



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

September 2009

tehcc.org

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From the Chair

(Steering Committee Chair and Office Chair)

If I was to ask each TEHCC member how often they went on a hiking or paddling outing, I am positive it would be much more frequently than our schedule indicates. From casual conversations and the TEHCC survey, it is evident our membership is in the woods or on the water every chance they get. Why not share it with others? Many Club members are looking for opportunities to learn a new hobby like hiking, backpacking, canoeing, or kayaking. Many are also looking for companions to share these activities with for social and safety reasons. Leading a hiking or paddling trip is not much harder than doing it yourself. Check out these guidelines from TEHCC.org, http://tehcc.org/hiking_leading_a_hike.htm. I know what

you're thinking now. "I never plan a trip in time to get it in the newsletter." That's ok! Our new Google Calendar gives us the ability to update it instantly. Just send a note to the Events Coordinator, schedules@tehcc.org or myself and we will take care of it. Also, see the article below about the new Facebook group – another way to network with fellow Club members.

Happy Trails!

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

TEHCC is now on Facebook!

Jake Mitchell reporting

Jake has created a "Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club" page on Facebook (www.facebook.com). It has a wall where comments, links and videos can be posted, a place to put photo galleries and a discussion board. This is a great place to post hikes that are not scheduled in time for the newsletter and to network with other TEHCCers. Many of you may think Facebook is a just some waste of time that the kids are in to. Some of it is that, but it is also a great tool for networking. If you have a Facebook account, search for "Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club" and become a fan of the page. Feel free to post anything to the page as well.

For the Record - 2009 Konnarock Crew

Joe DeLoach reporting

This year, the club's work with the Konnarock Crew included relocation of the AT just south of the Stan Murray Shelter, replacing some of the many steep, gullied sections of Trail descending from Grassy Ridge. We had fewer weeks of Konnarock Crew time than in most years, only two this summer. Rainy weather the second week and difficulty in finding suitable rock or logs for steps contributed to the project being less productive than we would have liked. We installed two switchbacks however and nearly completed a third with a long staircase before the rains drove us out. Our club showed good support for the Crew and the project, with 13 volunteers contributing 425 total hours. Seven club members worked

at least 40 hours with the Crew and earned T-shirts. Those members are Paul Benfield, Joe DeLoach, Carl Fritz, Kat Johnson, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, and George (Kojac) Summers.

Appalachian Trail Silver Service Awards

Joe DeLoach reporting

At the Appalachian Trail Conservancy biennial conferences, volunteers with at least 25 and 50 years' service to the AT are recognized with Silver and Gold volunteer service awards, respectively. At the 2009 conference, Carl Fritz, Bill Murdoch, Michael Watts, and Paul Worsham were recognized with the Silver Service award. We thank these dedicated volunteers and others who also received awards for their continuing service to the Club and to the Appalachian Trail!



TEHCC Welcomes New Members

Please welcome the following new members for July:

Bruce Darby

Lisa Cross

Cindy Kelly

Event Schedule – Next Two Months

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

Date	Description	Rating	Leader	Contact
Sept 3	Paddle to the Grill - end of year picnic	Fun	Deb Reynolds	423-723-7017
Sept 4-7	Backpack: S900M: Forney Creek to Noland Creek	AA/2/A	Kent and Nancy Wilson	akwilson@eastman.com
Sept 8	Two-Fer Tuesday	Fun	Marc Schurger	marc.schurger@tehcc.org
Sept 26	SB6K: Black Mountain Circuit	B/2/B	Jake Mitchell	423-963-8654
Oct 10	AT: Hughes Gap to Iron Mountain Gap and Beyond	A/2/A	Vic Hasler	hvhasler@eastman.com
Oct 22	Backpacking 101	Informative	Jake Mitchell	423-963-8654
Oct 24	Hike to Shady Valley TNC Nature Preserve	F/B Informative	Tim Schaefer	423-229-6244
Oct 30-31	Beginners Backpack Trip	TBD	Jake Mitchell	423-963-8654

Description of Upcoming Events

Paddle to the Grill End-of-Year Picnic, September 3, 2009

Leader: [Deb Reynolds](#), 423-723-7017

The Paddle to the Grill has been a very successful event with weather interrupting only one week (as of the time of this writing) since it started on June 5. With all the storms we have had this summer, it is exciting that this section of lake has managed to escape the thunder and lightning that was normally present elsewhere in the Tri-Cities. We plan to end the series of paddles with a picnic at Winged Deer Park at the Meredith Pavilion which is right next to the boat entry we have been using all summer.

TEHCC and Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts (APES) have been working together to provide more touring events. BBQ, and paper stuff will be provided by the APES. TEHCC is pitching in for the drinks and dessert. Attendees should bring a side dish to share. If you haven't been able to attend one of these events, make this your first one! We can discuss the

types of events to do next year in addition to this one. We will be eating at 6pm with paddling to follow; so bring your kayak and gear as usual.

Please RSVP to Deb Reynolds by September 1 to ensure we have enough food.

Backpack: S900M: Forney Creek to Noland Creek, September 4 – 7, 2009

Leaders: [Kent and Nancy Wilson](#)

Rating: AA/2/A

Kent and Nancy Wilson will lead a Smokies 900 Miler backpacking trip on the following trails: Forney Creek, Jonas Creek, Bear Creek, Springhouse Branch, Forney Ridge and possibly Noland Creek. More details forthcoming. Hike rating is AA/2/A. Contact Kent Wilson if you are interested.

TEHCC Two-Fer Tuesdays, September 8 and October 13, 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](#).

SB6K: Black Mountain Circuit, September 26, 2009

Leader: [Jake Mitchell](#)

Rating: B/2/B

Jake Mitchell will lead a South Beyond 6000 hike in the Black Mountains. Aptly named, the Black Mountain Circuit, this eight-mile hike will include the summits of Mounts Mitchell, Gibbes, Hallback and Craig. Of special note, we will get to see the new observation platform on Mount Mitchell which was replaced and opened this year. We will leave the Tri-Cities area at 9am and return around dinner time. Contact Jake Mitchell if you are interested.

AT: Hughes Gap to Iron Mountain Gap and Beyond, October 10, 2009

Leader: [Vic Hasler](#)

Rating: A/2/A

This hike is a ten-miler to be counted towards the BSA Hiking merit badge. The plan is to drop off a car at the TN-NC state line on TN107, and then continue driving to Hughes Gap. The 8.1-mile section from Hughes to Iron Mountain Gap will be completed. Then hopefully, two drivers can take the dropped-off car to get the other, while the merit-badge hikers continue southbound for another mile and then come back to complete the ten mile total. For geocachers, there are seven hides along this hike route. Some will require extra 200-ft detours; thus we will search only if the overall hike is proceeding at an acceptable pace. We will meet in the parking lot between McDonalds and State of Franklin Bank in Colonial Heights at 8:00 a.m. Bring water, lunch, and appropriate layered clothing.

Backpacking 101, October 22, 2009, 5pm to 7pm, Eastman Employee Center, Rm 219

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

Rating: Informative

If you've ever been out hiking and come across a campsite or shelter and thought, "I would like to try backpacking, but I don't know how to get started," or if you're just curious how others do it, join Jake for a discussion on overnight backpacking. Discussions will include gear, technique, safety, and planning and will be open to questions and comments.

F/B Hike to Shady Valley TNC Nature Preserve, October 24, 2009

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

Rating: C/4/C

TEHCC members recently met with members of The Nature Conservancy Shady Valley office about their work in the area. Plans are being made for a TNC-led hike through the preserve with discussion of the wetlands habitat and the animals they are trying to restore and protect, including the native cranberry and bog turtle. More details will be posted in the next newsletter.

Beginner's Backpacking Trip, October 30-31, 2009

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

This trip is a follow up to the Backpacking 101 class to be held the previous week. The location is yet to be determined.

For the Record



AT: Blackstack Cliffs to Big Firescald Knob and back south to Allen Gap, August 1, 2009

Vic Hasler reporting



Lunchtime view off Blackstack Cliff, note blue sky and green valley

This purpose of this hike was two-fold. One was to enjoy the great overlooking views up along the Bald Mountains in Greene County. First stroke of luck on this day was the sunny sky after a week of mostly soaking rain. Once the spur trail (blue blaze in the middle of a paved road) was located up on Camp Creek Bald, the group hit the AT northbound all the way to Big Firescald Knob. The blueberries were in season, thus some grazing was enjoyed while looking out into TN and NC. At this point, the group reversed direction and headed southbound back to the Blackstack Cliffs where it was decided that this would be the best vista for lunch. Note that the spur trail required some serious hacking through the laurels to reach the actual cliffs. The second purpose of the trip was to complete at least ten miles for the Hiking merit badge, so the group continued on the trail down, down, down past Little Laurel Shelter (where the log book noted the many rainy days) to Allen Gap. No

further vistas along this section, just walking in the woods with a few blowdowns. We met a solo hiking gentleman from PA who used a van and a small motorcycle to shuttle himself. The entire hike ended up being a total distance of 11 miles per a GPS receiver. The second stroke of luck was reaching the staged car at the bottom just before a cloudburst opened up on the mountain, which we drove through heading back up to retrieve the truck. A final stroke of luck was stopping at the Brick Oven Pizzeria in Greeneville where two baskets of breadsticks were devoured while delicious supreme and vegi pizzas were being baked. Having a great day hiking were Jerry Schlather, Life Scout Matt McConnell, and Vic Hasler.

Grassy Ridge Moonlight Hike, August 15, 2009

Jake Mitchell reporting

Timeline

Friday: Tim says he wants to go, so one other person besides me.

Tuesday: I make the executive call to cancel the hike.

Thursday: Kevin and Jenny want to go.

Thursday: Sharon wants to go.

Thursday: Hike is back on.

Thursday: Greg wants to go.

Thursday: Robert and family want to go.

Saturday: We hike!

The first half of the hike was superb. We all arrived within 10 minutes of each other at Carvers Gap. I gave the hike leader spiel and we headed up Round Bald. The weather was ideal with the starting temp around 70° and a nice breeze. The views were magnificent on the Tennessee side, but the clouds rolled towards us from North Carolina. The timing was looking perfect to soak up the sunset right after arriving at the top of Grassy Ridge. Fortunately, on the way we saw the Baa-tany Goat Project in action and the two Polar Bear sized dogs in the paddock with them. We saw 5 minutes of sunset before the last 5 minutes before the clouds started in on us. The temperature immediately dropped 15-20° and we all started putting on more clothes. After some food and no break in the clouds, we all donned our headlamps and went

back the way we came. A few temporary breaks in the clouds let us see the stars. We arrived back at Carvers Gap at 10pm on the dot. We didn't get much star gazing in, but the exercise and fresh air were wonderful.



The 13 intrepid souls on the trip were:

Jake Mitchell, Greg Anderson, Kevin and Jenny Barham, Tim, Peggy and Lisa McClain, Sharon Burnette, Robert, Lorrie, Natalie and Reid Smith and Alex Williams (from Siberia, really!)

New England Hikes, August 17-25, 2009

Kent and Nancy Wilson reporting

Kent and Nancy Wilson attended the Appalachian Trail Festival in Rutland, VT, which was great fun with lots of food, hikes, entertainment and friends each day. We stayed from Friday to Monday and hiked to Mt. Abraham on Saturday via the Battell Trail to the Long Trail and to Mt. Ellen via the Jerusalem Trail to the Long Trail on Sunday. Both mountains are on the list for New England above 4000'. The Long Trail was rugged and lived up to its reputation of lots of mud. We had nice views both days.

On Monday we drove to the White Mountains of New Hampshire; then did a two day backpack to bag Owlshead. The fords were large and very cold. The final mile is a bushwack up a rock slide. Wednesday we hiked North and Middle Tripyramids for two more peaks. The Pine Bend Brook Trail was very steep at the summit area. We returned on the Sabbaday Falls Trail which was also very steep with added bogs and major creek crossings. On Thursday, we hiked to Mt. Whiteface and to Mt. Passaconaway via the Blueberry Ledges Trail, Rollins Trail and Dicey Mill Trails. Blueberry was especially noteworthy with its large flat rock slabs with yummy blueberries for picking; then we got to the steeper sections. Being a wilderness area, they had removed about 12 steel ladder type rungs from a sheer rock face. We stood on a tree root, lunged for a hand hold, clung for dear life walking the seam and used fingers in the old holes where the bars had been to pull up enough to belly crawl the rest of the way. I'm glad we didn't have to go down. The other rock faces were all fun. I think maybe a wilderness style ladder might be appropriate and we plan to contact that district. It rained all night and was raining again on Friday, so we packed up and headed for home. Mt. Isolation is our only remaining peak of the 48 in NH. We decided to save it for a beautiful day, when the 10 stream crossings wouldn't be so high. It was a great trip. We hiked six days and climbed 3500-4500 feet each day.



AT Maintenance Reports

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: July 28, 2009

Purpose: Cut weeds and lop

Location: Section 15, Cloudland to Hughes Gap

People: Gether Irick

Summary: I started at Hughes Gap on Tuesday and cut a 6-ft wide "boulevard" ~1/4 mile up just past the first 120° switchback. Someone had been working on the water bars, and the trail was actually in pretty good shape from the last maintenance. I widened the weed cutting because the large weeds were starting to hang over the trail. I then went to the Cloudland site and cut briars and weeds, and trimmed hemlock growth South to where the undergrowth thinned out. I pulled into my driveway just as the predicted rain storm hit.

Reporting: Steve Wilson

Date: July 31, 2009

Purpose: USFS Chainsaw Recertification Class

Location: Watauga Ranger District, Unicoi, TN

People: Steve Wilson

Summary: On Friday, July 31st and August 1, the Watauga District Forest Service staff held a chainsaw recertification class in Unicoi, TN. The instructors, Matthew Gilbert, Neal Studdard, & Reuben Potter, were all experienced sawyers with unique insight. The class consisted of three hours of classroom instructions and six hours of field evaluations. The field work was in the forest just off Sciota Road in Unicoi, where we observed and demonstrated our skills at dealing with spring poles, techniques in limping, bucking, and falling trees. The students were from four different groups, which made for diverse discussions. Four participants were from Back Country Horsemen of East Tennessee (www.BCHET.org) – including Herb Heinze & Tom Connor; two were from Mid Appalachian Highlands Club - Suzanne Seiler & James Price; and two were Forest Service employees getting recertified. Since this class overlapped with a Konnarock Crew weekend, I was the only person from TEHCC. Other hiking club members are electing to take the fall class.

Reporting: Kim Peters

Date: August 4, 2009

Purpose: Check trail and shelter

Location: Section 7, Wilbur Dam Road to Vandeventer Shelter

People: Kim Peters

Summary: I checked Trail for weed growth and clipped briars. The weeds are not as bad as I expected given the rain we've had, but Trail still needs weeding in some sections. I will plan another trip for that. I placed a new register, sign and broom at the shelter and picked up trash. There was surprisingly little trash. There is some new graffiti on the shelter which was interesting. It said, "When Bob Peoples stays here, the mice bring him food." I fought my way through the stinging nettles to check the water source (ouch! - luckily I found some jewel weed), which is flowing well and felt wonderfully cool on this warm day. I cleaned out 6 fire rings (why do people always try to burn aluminum foil?) and scattered 5 of them only leaving the one at the shelter. There is a blowdown about 0.5 miles south of the shelter which fell parallel to the trail blocking it in two places. I cleared the smaller limbs so it only blocks the trail in one place now. The main trunk is about waist high and at least 12 inches in diameter. Luckily it is in a flat place and can be walked around. I will come back later with a larger saw. On the way back I startled a momma bear and her cub on the ridge just south of the spring (which also has good water thanks to the recent rains). The cub climbed a tree and momma took off down the ridge. I continued down the trail at a slightly accelerated pace. The new trail that Hardcore put in looks good and makes the walk much more pleasant. I only wish the next two switchbacks were done, as those steep places are hard on the knees after a long day.

Reporting: Carl Fritz
Date: August 5, 2009
Purpose: Prepare for Trail relo
Location: Section 8, Watauga Lake
People: Paul Benfield, Ed Oliver
Summary: Ed and Paul scouted some of the relocations planned for late August with ASU. Logistics are still being planned.

Reporting: Garry Luttrell
Date: August 6, 2009
Purpose: Cut weeds
Location: Section 15, Cloudland to Hughes Gap
People: Gether Irick, Garry Luttrell
Summary: Gether and I spent the cool, no-rain day cutting weeds from Cloudland to Hughes Gap.

Reporting: Steve Perri
Date: August 9, 2009
Purpose: Cut weeds
Location: Section 12C, Elk River
People: Steve Perri, Tisha Perri
Summary: We cut weeds along Elk River from stile to Sugar Hollow Creek. The weeds were only 2 to 2.5 feet high. We lopped along the way back.

Reporting: David Dunham
Date: August 10, 2009
Purpose: Routine maintenance
Location: Section 8, Wilbur Dam Road to US Hwy 321
People: David Dunham, Carol Dunham, Ken Buchanan, Pat Buchanan, Paul Benfield
Summary: We began at Wilbur Dam Road and continued to Shook Branch. We lopped branches, cut weeds with a string trimmer, cleaned all water bars on the section, cleaned the shelter, replaced the journal, improved the entrance to the shelter (by removing some rocks and smoothing out the trail), repaired a step on the trail, and picked up numerous bags of trash from the campsites. A new campsite has been established on the Shook Branch end that is being heavily used, resulting in lots of trash. This campsite is right on the trail.

Reporting: Paul Benfield
Date: August 11, 2009
Purpose: Trail maintenance
Location: Section 4b, Osborne Farm
People: Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery
Summary: We mowed the Accessible Trail and the Appalachian Trail across the Osborne Farm.

Reporting: Carl Fritz
Date: August 13, 2009
Purpose: Cut weeds
Location: Section 6, Iron Mountain Shelter to Big Laurel Branch Wilderness boundary
People: Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Dave Dunham, Carl Fritz, Mike Hupko, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Tim Stewart
Summary: We successfully cut weeds from Iron Mountain Shelter to Wilderness boundary. There were a couple of weedy patches close to the power line and they were significant the last two miles before wilderness boundary. ATV traffic is keeping them down in the middle. About a mile south of spring and camping site there was an old dead tree blowdown that made it difficult to walk. We were able to break a 12-inch limb off so it is an easier stepover. The spring two miles south of Turkey Pen Gap probably needs to be reworked with combination pipe and buckets to make a more permanent and dependable water source.

The morning had started off badly with Dave getting a wasp sting to the finger while he was opening the Forest Service gate. The finger and part of his hand was badly swollen; medication may have eased the problem. Then we stuck one of

the trucks on forest service road. During the scurry one hydration bladder emptied its contents in a truck. With the bad start we finished in record time thanks to the great help.

Reporting: Daryel Anderson

Date: August 13, 2009

Purpose: Cut blowdowns and clean water bars

Location: Section 1, First 2.5 miles from Damascus and side trail to spring

People: Anne Maio, Daryel Anderson

Summary: We cut three trees that were across the AT and cleared a great deal of brush and larger trees blocking the lower end of the side trail to the spring. The spring is flowing nicely. About a tenth of a mile further south of the spring cut-off is an interesting area of huge old logs on the side of the trail that the bears are taking apart to find food.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: August 15, 2009

Purpose: Check possible trail relocation and kiosk

Location: Section 1, Damascus Community Park

People: Carl Fritz, Ed Oliver

Summary: We walked the Damascus Community Park to assess whether the AT should take an alternate existing path and the need for a possible kiosk with AT information.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: August 18, 2009

Purpose: Cut out Trail relocation and blowdown

Location: Section 8, Shook Branch to Watauga Lake Shelter

People: Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Rob Edwards, Carl Fritz, Mike Hupko, Ted Mowery, Ed Oliver, Kim Peters, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart

Summary: We cut out considerably more relocation further north toward Watauga Lake Shelter. Camp areas were cleaner than normal, but we cleaned everything up. Since we were approaching shelter area we cut out the 18-inch blowdown. As we were packing to leave, we heard a crack and rumble, looked down hill and barely could see a tree coming down. Surely, that did not fall on trail! But we better check. Sure enough; an old snag with grape vines came right across trail near blue blaze trail to shelter.

Reporting: Joe DeLoach

Date: August 20, 2009

Purpose: AT Committee Meeting

Location: Kingsport

People: Paul Benfield, Joe DeLoach, Dave Dunham, Carl Fritz, Ted Mowery, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Jeff Siirola

Summary: The Mt. Rogers NRA will procure a new sign for the boundary with the Cherokee NF in their next fiscal year. We will check on land ownership and necessary approvals for a minor relo of the AT in the Damascus Town Park, and would like to use an existing kiosk there for AT information. We will look for adopters for the trashy campsites around Watauga Lake. We agreed that the maintenance awards should be split between the Spring and Fall Dinner Meetings and the Maintainers Dinner. Joe will work on updating our Local Management Plan for Committee review and approval.

Reporting: Paul Benfield

Date: August 21, 2009

Purpose: Cut blowdowns

Location: Section 12b, north of Mountaineer Falls Shelter

People: Paul Benfield, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart

Summary: We bucked up the top half of a 2-foot chestnut oak that had come down bringing down several other trees completely blocking about 30 feet of trail. We also removed other blowdowns and rhododendrons that were hindering travel on the AT.

Reporting: Jake Mitchell

Date: August 22, 2009

Purpose: Cut back weeds and clear blowdowns

Location: Section 9, Shook Branch to Hampton trailhead

People: Jake Mitchell, Greg Anderson

Summary: We started from Shook Branch at 11:15 and it took us 5 hours to reach Pond Flats. Trail is in great condition. Blazes are bright and visible. We met Bill Fuller a little below Pond Flats on the other side to complete our shuttle. We cut weeds from Shook Branch to the AT/blue-blaze junction and back to the Hampton trail head. We removed 9 to 10 blow downs. The only one we left is a step over about 40 yards from the Pond Flats stream. Bill plans to come back soon and use a weed trimmer with a blade under the power line on the blue blaze.

Reporting: Bill Fuller

Date: August 22, 2009

Purpose: Cut weeds and clear blowdowns

Location: Section 9b, Pond Flats to Hampton trailhead

People: Bill Fuller

Summary: I took the swing blade, hand-loppers, and small saw and hiked the Hampton blue-blaze and the entire south side of Pond Mountain. I spent most of my time clearing weeds on the railroad grade along with cutting the upper side of the trail as I climbed the switchbacks. Once I neared the top of Pond, I joined up with Jake and Greg (who came up from the north side) and we returned together down the southern side of the mountain where we cleared a small blowdown. We also cut more weeds and trimmed brush along the way. Once back at the blue-blaze we picked up a lot of trash, especially as we got closer to the road. I need to return soon with the string-trimmer to clear brush under the powerline cut of the blue-blaze. Thanks to Jake and Greg's help on the north side, all of Pond Mountain should be in great shape.