



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

December 2009

tehcc.org

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To submit an article for the Newsletter, send an email to:
news@tehcc.org. Articles should be submitted by the 15th of
the month.

From the Chair

(Steering Committee Chair and Office Chair)

This will be my swan song as TEHCC Steering Committee chair...for now. I want to thank all of the TEHCC Leadership for their efforts in making this year an extremely successful one. We got better at everything – nothing withheld. What we did not accomplish in 2009 is on deck for 2010. That doesn't mean we are going to sit on our haunches though. Here's a taste of what's to come: Wilderness First Aid course, joint event with Smoky Mountains Hiking Club, National Trails Day event, completion of major trail maintenance projects, bigger and better dinner meetings and much more. You will still be able to find me as the new Events Coordinator. You'll be in good hands with Tim Schaefer, the new Chair. I hope everyone has a wonderful Christmas and takes the opportunity to get outside!

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

TEHCC Fall Dinner Meeting

Tim Schaefer reporting

TEHCC held its annual Fall Dinner Meeting at the Eastman Lodge on Friday, November 13th, with nearly ninety people attending! We had a great social hour with photos and book sale by Johnny Molloy, drinks by Ed and Marc, and gear display by Mahoney's. There were plenty of great conversations about hiking and paddling adventures of the past and those planned for the future. Special thanks go to our guest speaker Johnny Molloy, Mahoney's for the gear display and door prizes, Merrell for door prizes, and Phil's Dream Pit for catering.

Jake Mitchell began the presentation with an update on our Key Initiatives. We have over half of the minimum required for the license plate and we're pursuing options for sponsorship to help with the remaining plates. We thanked our departing steering team members, Stuart Everett and Ed Montgomery. We also welcomed our newly elected steering team members Kevin Barham, Josh Henri, and Ian Powell; and announced the 2010 steering team chair, Tim Schaefer.

Next we recognized the hard work of our trail maintenance volunteers, acknowledging a record of over 11,000 volunteer hours and another year of no injuries or incidents, performing needed service to our local trail systems. We had a lot of great trail additions and rehab in 2009 and have great plans for shelter renovations and trail relocations in 2010.

After the recognitions, we were ready for our guest speaker Johnny Molloy. Johnny resides in Johnson City and is an adventurer and writer. His love of the outdoors leads him to spend over 1/3 of the year camping. He has spent over 650 days backpacking within the Smoky Mountains alone. He shared some of that love, talking about his recent trek on the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST), a 1400-mile trail traversing the Florida landscape. He compared the FNST to the better known and more frequently hiked Appalachian Trail, highlighting the unique challenges and beauty of the FNST, complete with great stories and wonderful pictures.

We tried a few new things for this dinner meeting, most notably moving it to Friday and having it catered by Phil's Dream Pit to offer a lower cost meal. As the dinner meetings are held for you, our members, we welcome your comments and suggestions.

Membership Renewal

It's that time again for membership renewal. Eastman employees' membership is automatically renewed by ERC so they can ignore this. Retirees need not worry either unless they receive a hardcopy newsletter for \$5 annually. Affiliate members need to renew their membership as soon as possible by filling out the [membership application](#) and sending it in. You won't find a better deal than ten bucks a year. Invite others to join in the TEHCC fun!

Note: If you are a non-employee and plan on taking advantage of the TEHCC's discount at Mountain Sports, Mahoney's or Mount Rogers Outfitters, make sure to get a membership card. Contact Judy Allen, membership coordinator for info (membership@tehcc.org or 229-4253).

Appalachian Trail Conservancy Invasive Plant Control Workshop

December 5, 2009

Joe DeLoach reporting

Invasive species have been recognized as one of the Four Great Threats to America's National Forests. In addition to the blight which wiped out the chestnut and the hemlock woolly adelgid which is wreaking havoc in our forests today, invasive plants can quickly overtake a native forest. Forests along the Appalachian Trail are no exception and can be particularly susceptible to invasive species, with sunlight coming through from Trail clearing and seeds being spread by hikers. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy and the Forest Service have been working to combat the spread of invasive plants through a series of workshops. These workshops are held in Wilderness areas and in areas where invasive plants are gaining a foothold. One such area on our Trail section is along the Nolichucky River near Chestoa. Invasive species such as multiflora rose, privet, tree of heaven, princess tree, Japanese honeysuckle, and other invasive plants can be found in that area. Volunteers are encouraged to participate in the second of two workshops starting at 9:00 AM on December 5 at the Chestoa Bridge. At the workshop, we'll learn about the threats invasive plants pose to native species, learn how to identify 15 of the most threatening species in our region, and receive training on tools and techniques to eradicate them. Then we'll put our skills to work along the Trail. ATC and the Forest Service will provide equipment; volunteers should bring lunch, water, and clothing appropriate for late fall weather, definitely including a long sleeve shirt. For this event volunteers must be over the age of 18. We'll plan to meet near Parkway Discount Wine & Liquor on South Roan Street in Johnson City at 8:30 and carpool to Chestoa. Please contact Joe (423-753-7263, joedelo@eastman.com) if you're interested in volunteering at the December 5th workshop.

TEHCC Member Completes AT

Judith Foster reporting

A friend and I began the trail at Springer, April 13, 1996, and throughout the next 13 years, 119 trips, we obsessively followed a south to north contiguous route with few exceptions. Hiking trips year-round continued until we reached the higher elevations in NH in December 2005. Snow did not deter us. We found it to be our favorite time to be on the trail - no snakes, no bugs, no poison ivy, no footprints (except for animals) - a sparkling, clean white, beautiful forest trail. I wrote a journal entry for each of our trips, and took pictures unless batteries failed in the cold weather. We completed our adventure at Katahdin on September 6, 2009.

My association with TEHCC began in early 2000, I believe, but my main contact has been with the Friday Hikers.

Event Schedule – Next Two Months

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

| Date | Description | Rating | Leader | Contact |
|-----------|---|------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Dec 5 | ATC Invasive Plant Control Workshop | Worthwhile | Joe DeLoach | 423-753-7263 |
| Dec 8 | Two-Fer Tuesday | Fun | Marc Schurger | |
| Dec 11 | Friday Hikers: Boogerman Trail in the GSMNP | | Collins Chew | vcchew@chartertn.net |
| Dec 18-19 | Christmas Backpacking Trip | | Jake Mitchell | 423-963-8654 |

Description of Upcoming Events

TEHCC Two-Fer Tuesdays, December 8, 2009

Leader: *Marc Schurger*

Join other TEHCC members at Kingsport Grocery Company every second Tuesday for \$2 drafts and good times talking about the great outdoors. We will meet around 5 pm on the second floor of Kingsport Grocery. For more details, contact either Marc Schurger or Ed Montgomery.

Friday Hikers

Leader: *[Collins Chew](#)*

Join several members of the TEHCC and other hiking enthusiasts for Friday hikes in the northeast Tennessee, western North Carolina and southwest Virginia area. Trips typically leave from the parking lot between McDonald's and State of Franklin Bank in Colonial Heights at 8 am. Trips to places farther away leave at 7:30 am. Contact [Collins Chew](#) to be added to the distribution list.

3rd Annual Christmas Backpacking Trip, December 18-19, 2009

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

Jake Mitchell will lead the third annual Christmas backpacking trip on the Appalachian Trail. Previous trips have included a driving snowstorm in the Roan highlands and balmy 50 degree temperatures in Damascus. This year, we will be doing a simple 7 mile almost-loop on the AT and Hampton Blue Blaze starting from Shook Branch and ending at the Blue Blaze parking lot. We will overnight at Pond Flats. Some of you may recognize this as Jake's maintenance section so be prepared to wield pruners for some light trail maintenance. Plans will be to leave Friday afternoon and return mid-day on Saturday. Note: This is not a section for the faint of heart as there is long stretches of climbing and downhill. Contact Jake if you are interested.



For the Record



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

Jake Mitchell reporting

AT: Allen Gap to Hot Springs Distance: 9 Miles (at least that was the plan)

We (Jake, Sharon Burnette and Ryn Shealy) started out on Friday by driving from my house to Hot Springs. Bluff Mountain Outfitters shuttled us back to Allen Gap for a 2:15pm start. We went 'low and slow' over a couple of tough climbs for about 4 miles before reaching Spring Mountain Shelter around 5pm.

Friday's temps were spectacular, but it was obvious that a front was coming. The wind was very strong. I set up camp in the shelter. Ryn set up his ENO hammock just down the hill and Sharon used my Hubba Hubba to the side of the shelter. The night was very windy and moist. I waged war against shelter mice by blocking all their log exit and entry points - or so I thought. After a couple of games of Rummy, a SOBO thru hiker arrived. I asked him his name and he said "Six String." I met him in Vermont! No way could I forget the guy carrying a guitar. He had just gotten some trail magic at Allen Gap. Some family had fed him a feast, hence his late arrival.

Saturday was foggy and wet to begin. We thought the rain had blown over since it did not rain at all before reaching Rich Mountain fire tower. After checking out the fire tower and taking a Brady Bunch-esque pic, it started to sprinkle, then shower, then downpour.



We hustled 3 miles to Tanyard Gap with no end in sight for the rain. Shortly before reaching the road, I made the executive decision to hitch-hike into Hot Springs, get my truck and come back for Sharon and Ryn. It was a great place to do that since they could sit under the bridge and I could be back in 10 minutes. My plan worked perfectly. I got picked up about 3 minutes after starting to thumb it and was back in 10. We threw our wet gear in my truck and made haste to

Greeneville for a gluttonous trip to the KFC buffet. Overall, it was a very educational trip. Ryn and Sharon were able to test new gear, try other people's gear and figure out what they needed to change to make backpacking life easier and lighter. A day trip from Tanyard Gap to Hot Springs will be scheduled sometime in the future.

AT – Newfound Gap to Clingmans Dome, October 30, 2009, Friday Hikers

Collins Chew reporting

Except for a few minutes of cold, windy mist at the beginning and end of our hike, we had delightful October weather for the 8.4 mile AT hike from Newfound Gap to Clingmans Dome. Leaves were in beautiful color low and gone high. A number of guest hikers provided us with new stories and opportunities to repeat our old ones. When we were spotting cars at Clingmans Dome, there was a beautiful cloud deck to the horizon below the road. Red berries of American Mountain Ash provided many splashes of color. We managed to split into three groups for most of the hike. George Privon (my grandson) brought Aleya, Ryan and Charles from UVa and points north. Susan Mount visited from London, England; Jeff Kelleher, visiting Law Professor at UT, joined us. Regular hikers were Anne Cosby, Carol and Dave Dunham, Judith Foster, Larry Miller, Anna Sherrill, and Collins Chew.

AT – Elk Garden to Summit Cut, November 6, 2009, Friday Hikers

Collins Chew reporting

The day was beautiful for the 6.9-mile hike on the AT from Elk Garden to Summit Cut. The leaves were down so we had great views almost all the time but particularly at lunch from a grassy knoll on Whitetop Mountain. Again we had a number of new people with lots of interesting conversation. First timers were: Eloise Kaeck from Green Mountain, NC, Pat Smail from Staunton, VA, Lamar Adcock from Greenville, Joanie Gallo from Elizabethton, and Carrie Hughes, from fairly close but I forget exactly where. Regular hikers were: Olin Babb, Lee Bockman, Carol Broderson, Jerry Case, Anne Cosby, Bob Harvey, Carol Idol, Jan and Chuck Mather, and Collins Chew.

Buffalo Mountain Park, November 13, 2009, Friday Hikers

Collins Chew reporting

Some said it was the finest day of the year, cool and clear for our 6-mile hike on the perimeter trails of Buffalo Mountain Park in Johnson City. With leaves off the trees, there were almost continuous views and the clarity was such that many landmarks were identified. Our one, lone wild flower was a closed gentian. Who should show up at lunch on White Rocks but my old hiking buddy, Doug Lowman, with his hiking companion, Jerry Shilling. Hikers were: Olin Babb, Anne Cosby, June Donaldson, Peggy Durham visiting from Florida, Judith Foster, first-timer Barry Griggs, Bob Harvey, Heather Jacobs, Jerry Jones, Jeff Kelleher, Nancy Wilson and Collins Chew. Collins took Jeff and Peggy on a tour of the Gray Fossil Site on the way home.



AT Maintenance Reports

Reporting: Ed Oliver

Date: October 16, 2009

Purpose: Watauga Lake relo

Location: Section 8, Watauga Lake

People: Daryl Anderson, Carol Dunham, Dave Dunham, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart; UT: Juliann Harrison, Adam Cole, Katie Mittura, Meg Goddard, Malory Halpin, Kenn Seymore, Sarah Fadule, Nia Jherit, Blain Tatge, DeAsmen Wloh, Bridget Wade, Britta Roach, Blake Price, Aemish Patel, Lindsay Smith, Ali Karpenko, Chelsea Oliver, Charity Avery, Andrew Puryear, Samantha Edwards, Pamela Dossay, Courtney Winters, Nathan Talbot

Summary: On October 16, TEHCC club members were joined by twenty-three University of Tennessee students to work on the Appalachian Trail relocation around Watauga Lake. Despite the rainy day, the students seemed to enjoy working on the trail. We essentially completed section 5 of the relo and worked on sections 7 and 8.

Reporting: David Dunham

Date: November 2, 2009

Purpose: Routine maintenance

Location: Section 8, Shook Branch and Wilbur Dam Road

People: David Dunham, Carol Dunham

Summary: We installed an AT post on the trail south on Wilbur Dam road. Some people have had trouble finding the trail southbound. We then went to Shook Branch and removed four blowdowns and one nasty springpole on the way to the shelter. We cleaned the shelter and delivered a new broom. The last blowdown was right beside the entrance to the shelter; so we cut it up and stacked it for firewood for the hikers.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: November 3, 2009

Purpose: Dig Trail relocation and rehab Trail

Location: Sections 14a & 14b, North of Yellow Mountain Gap to Grassy Ridge

People: Daryel Anderson, Ken Buchanan, Richard Carter, Bruce Cunningham, Dave Dunham, Jim Foster, Carl Fritz, Ted Mowery, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Tim Stewart

Summary: We divided into about four groups and conquered a lot of projects. Dave and Bruce rehabbed the muddy area near Overmountain Shelter where the blue-blaze trail leaves the road. They also cleaned all the waterbars going north from Yellow Mountain Gap, rehabbed a wet area south of Yellow Mountain Gap, and checked out all the water sources at shelter. Someone has taken the pipes at water sources. Ed and Jim finished reflagging the relocation just north of Stan Murray Shelter. They also spray painted it so it can be reflagged more easily if necessary. Daryel, Kim, and Ted dug about 150 feet of new trail on the north end of the relocation Jim and Ed were flagging. The rest of us finished the two rels that the Rocky Top and Konnarock Crews worked. The rels are official AT now. We also used major rocks to repair a large wet area caused by a wet-weather spring half-way between the two shelters.

Reporting: Old Timers Hiking Club

Date: November 4, 2009

Purpose: Work on needed improvements and needed maintenance

Location: Section 18, Beauty Spot Gap to Indian Grave Gap

People: Mike Hupko, Ernie Hartford, Eric Noblet, Franklin Montenegro, Gil Derouen, Wayne Jones, Jim Robinson, Harry Ford, Kent Ganshirt, Dave McMillin, Lou Haase, Susan Peters, Howard Guinn, Faye Guinn, Jerry Mayne, Jerry Jones, CB Willis

Summary: We built three new water bars between FS 230 and the power lines and refurbished one old water bar. We also pruned and lopped the Trail from Indian Grave Gap to FS 230 and cleaned water bars from FS 230 to Beauty Spot. In the Beauty Spot Gap open area we reworked about 50 feet of trail, and on the way back to Beauty Spot, we cleaned several dips and lopped. We found that the stile near the Beauty Spot Parking area is just about gone and the AT from the non-existing stile to the top of Beauty Spot to the southern end of the open area looks like a field road where 4x4 trucks have driven (probably close to 0.5 miles). Also the large trash dump near the AT just north of Beauty Spot is still there. This item was reported to USFS about 2 months ago and is now visible from FS 230.

Reporting: Kim Peters

Date: November 8, 2009

Purpose: Check trail and shelter

Location: Section 7, Wilbur Dam Road to Vandeventer Shelter

People: Kat Johnson, Kim Peters

Summary: What a wonderful weekend to be outdoors! We gave the greenbriar a final wacking, so hopefully it won't be so bad next year. We picked up several bags of trash at the shelter and cleaned out the gutters. The log book I left there on the last trip is missing (perhaps used to start a fire?) and the broom handle was broken in half - but not burned as it is aluminum! We saw several hunters, one group dragging a deer down the trail, and several hikers; all were most appreciative of the new relo.

Reporting: Old Timers Hiking Club

Date: November 9, 2009

Purpose: Check out trail and do needed repairs

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to Cherry Gap

People: Mike Hupko, Marsha Hupko

Summary: We cleaned out water bars and dips, made two new water bars, lopped along the trail, and cut loose roots. We removed several trees/branches from the trail, the greatest being about 10" in diameter, and leveled about 40 to 50 feet of side-sloping treadway. Several other sections of trail need leveling. We located a locust tree for steps near a switchback that needs upgrading. We met five southbound section hikers and one southbound through hiker.

Reporting: Bruce Cunningham

Date: November 12, 2009

Purpose: Winterize new shelter materials

Location: Forest Service work area

People: Ed Oliver, Bruce Cunningham, Bill Elderbrock, Ted Mowery

Summary: We repacked (winterized) new shelter materials stored at the Forest Service yard.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: November 13, 2009

Purpose: Cutout relocation

Location: Section 8, South of Watauga Lake shelter

People: Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Carl Fritz, Mike Hupko, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart

Summary: We finished cutting out trees and shrubs from the main relocation starting just south of Watauga Lake Shelter.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: November 14, 2009

Purpose: Dig Trail relocation

Location: Section 8, Just trail south of Watauga Lake shelter

People: Paul Benfield, Dave Clark, Carl Fritz, Mike Hupko, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart; ASU: Jordan Duke, Emilie Young, Kelsey Hall, Alexander Wilkins, Ashby Gale, Sean Sullivan, Maura Weaver, Denna Tirrell, Anthony Marino, Ryn MacArthur, Meredith Allen, Janelle Gamez, Brian Satterwhite

Summary: Seven ASU Trail Crew and six ASU dorm students joined us to build 380 feet of trail. The roots are tough, but they are yielding. About four more days in here with small groups or the Tuesday group may finish all these relocations.

Reporting: Old Timers Hiking Club

Date: November 16, 2009

Purpose: Complete needed trail improvements

Location: Section 16b, Iron Mountain Gap to Weedy Gap

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

Summary: We cleaned water bars and dips from IMG to Weedy Gap; cleared a dead fallen apple tree in the orchard and stacked the wood for firewood. We also cleared several trees from the trail and cut six standing trees near the trail. The spring at the orchard was cleaned out to improve the flow, and we removed a wire cage that was around a small apple tree. The cage had been knocked down and the apple tree had died. We met one section hiker and one through hiker.

Reporting: Joe DeLoach

Date: November 20, 2009

Purpose: Roan Stewardship Committee and Curley Maple Access Scouting

Location: Headquarters of National Forests in North Carolina in Asheville

People: Joe DeLoach

Summary: TEHCC participates in the Roan Stewardship Committee, a fairly large group made up of agencies and organizations who participate in various aspects of management on Roan Mountain. Two working groups have been set up for Balds Management and Rare Plant Protection. The Balds Management group is making more effort to restore some of the already encroached grassy balds, as opposed to managing already open areas. These activities include use of power tools to cut trees and shrubs along the margins of the balds. The Forest Service recently provided a chainsaw certification class to volunteers for such work. The goat project appears to be successful; more volunteers are being sought to help with their tending in 2010. The Rare Plant Protection group is eager to see the kick-off of a Recreation Subcommittee to help monitor and control impact to rare plants. The Pisgah National Forest has received economic stimulus funds to repave parking areas and garden trails on Roan Mountain and to replace the wooden overlook in the gardens. On the way home, I drove to the area we are considering for access for the Curley Maple Gap Shelter renovation. I found a route that might be better than the others that have been investigated. We will explore this more fully after hunting season.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: November 21, 2009

Purpose: Dig Trail Relocation

Location: Section 8, South of Watauga Lake Shelter

People: Paul Benfield, Richard Carter, Carol Dunham, Dave Dunham, Carl Fritz, Mike Hupko, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart; Elizabethton High School: Quincy Jackson, Grace Shields, David LaPorte, Nathan LaPorte, Luke Martinez

Summary: Thanks to David LaPorte, an Elizabethton High School senior, for arranging this outing for four friends. With the fine weather we were able to dig another 420 feet of trail.

Reporting: Joe DeLoach

Date: November 21, 2009

Purpose: Appalachian Trail Invasive Plant Eradication Workshop

Location: Section 19, First half-mile north of Chestoa

People: Joe DeLoach and Debbie Stern

Summary: This was the first of two workshops sponsored by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy on identification and control of invasive and exotic plants along the Trail. John O'Dell from the Asheville ATC office proved to be a very knowledgeable and hard working instructor. James Brooks from the Johnson City Press joined us through the morning, which started with a review of the common invasive plants in our area. We then hiked across the railroad tracks to attack the privet and multiflora rose that infest the

area. John showed us cutting techniques and optimal methods for applying herbicide. We wiped out a considerable area for a small group (see before and after photos below). I hope other volunteers can join the second workshop on December 5.

