



# The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

January 2010

[tehcc.org](http://tehcc.org)

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*To submit an article for the Newsletter, send an email to:  
[news@tehcc.org](mailto:news@tehcc.org). Articles should be submitted by the 15<sup>th</sup> of  
the month.*

## From the Chair

*(Steering Committee Chair Tim Schaefer)*

I'd like to begin my first message as Chair by thanking Jake Mitchell for his great year of service. The club has grown in many great ways under his involvement. My personal goal for TEHCC while I am chair, and I hope the Steering Team agrees, is to add more types of events to our calendar so that all of our members can get value from it. Knowing that hiking and paddling for many can be a more personal excursion, I would like to see us add events that go beyond a standard 'out and back' trip. Some ideas are gear or trip reviews, 'educational' hikes, and group campouts. There could even be some trail runs as I attempt to run our segment of the AT this year (in sections of course!). The Steering Team and I will be meeting in a couple of weeks to plan 2010 activities and I encourage everyone to send me their ideas on how the club can better support you, our members, this year. Please send all ideas, comments, criticisms, and suggestions to [chair@tehcc.org](mailto:chair@tehcc.org).

Lastly, this is the year of our deadline to get enough signups to make the TN AT license plate happen. We are well short of our requirement to have 1,000 signups for the plate to make it happen. We are pursuing options to help us along the way, but ultimately we need people like you, your family, and your friends to sign up for a plate. We cannot do it alone. Even if you already have a different specialty plate, we encourage you to switch to this

plate, if only for this year, to help get it started. A model of success is the North Carolina AT specialty plate which has raised over \$330,000 for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. Projects funded through this program include scenic easements, shelter improvements, workshops for teacher training for a Trail to Every Classroom, tool repair and maintenance, rare plant and old growth forest tracking and cataloguing, and the installation of bear cables (aerial food storage systems) at ten shelter sites. Expect more news on this initiative during the year!

## TEHCC Rental Equipment Form Updated

*Submitted by Vic Hasler, Rental Equipment Coordinator ([rental@tehcc.org](mailto:rental@tehcc.org))*

The TEHCC rental equipment form has been updated to address two ongoing issues around tent stakes and equipment damage.

- A line was added on the front side for the club member to enter the number of tent stakes during check-out. On the reverse side, there is now a blank for the Eastman Recreation Center staff to enter the number of usable stakes returned. Hopefully, both numbers are always the same.
- The price of replacement stakes was increased to \$1/stake for easy math. A basic 7" aluminum hook stake is now \$0.75, so the prior \$0.50 per stake was not covering its replacement cost. The stakes must also be returned in **usable** (not extremely bent) condition **and separate from the tent bag**, or pay for replacement. (For reference, titanium stakes run roughly \$3-4 each.)
- The reverse side of the form also has a line to confirm that the equipment is not wet. A simple feel by hand is adequate to determine if a tent is damp. If still wet, then the club member is required to take and finish drying the equipment (no charge for the delay). This change is needed to avoid mildew which will completely ruin the equipment.

- Finally, short lines are added before the seven key points of the agreement for the club member to initial during check-out to indicate his/her understanding; bringing more emphasis to these expectations.

Thanks to the Recreation Office for handling the actual renting of equipment which remains a popular benefit of the club.

## **Volunteer Opportunity - 2011 ATC Biennial Conference Camping Coordinator**

*Joe DeLoach reporting*

The 2011 Appalachian Trail Biennial Conference will be held July 1-8 at Emory & Henry College, less than an hour from most of the Tri-Cities and a few miles north of Abingdon. The Trail-maintaining Central and Southwest Virginia clubs are the host clubs for the event. We've been approached about an opportunity to help with camping, which will be available on campus. The job entails lining off the open areas on the first day to maximize the number of tents; monitoring the attendees as they set up; arranging a hospitality area with table and chairs under a covered patio; and just generally keeping the area under control. This will likely be required for only the first weekend of the meeting, and the duties can be shared with other volunteers. In compensation, the coordinator could stay at the camping area in an air-conditioned house that sleeps five people. The house has two bathrooms, one for men and one for women, along with kitchen facilities. If you are or might be interested, please contact [Joe DeLoach](#).

## **New Volunteer Opportunities on the Appalachian Trail**

*Carl Fritz reporting*

TEHCC proudly maintains 135 miles of the AT from Damascus to Spivey Gap. It happens solely because of volunteers like you. In 2010 we are introducing two new opportunities for you to get outside and help with this effort without having to wield a Pulaski, scythe or saw. One opportunity is to pick up trash around Watauga Lake near Shook Branch several times a year. The other new opportunity is to monitor one of our sixteen shelters several times a year.

Compared to most of our trail, Watauga Lake has more trash during the summer because it is close to Route 321 and because non-hikers camp near the lake and Oliver Hollow Road. Dave and Carol Dunham and Brian Paley have maintained the trail from Shook Branch to Wilbur Dam Road for several years and have done a great job. However, it is difficult to pick up the trash as well as cut blowdowns, cut weeds, etc. on the same outing. Volunteers who are willing to pick up the trash several times especially during the summer would greatly enhance the appearance along the trail. Since the trash is fairly close to a road, it does not need to be toted far.

Likewise, our sixteen shelters are assigned to whoever has responsibility for that trail section. It would be highly desirable for a person or persons to act as shelter monitors to check specifically on the shelter several times during the hiking season. Some checklist items would include: checking for leaks, general condition of shelter, log book replacement, minor trash pickup, water source condition, etc. Many of these items the monitor could correct. For larger projects other volunteers would help.

Also we have needs for volunteers to take a trail section in 2010. Currently, our 135 miles of trail are divided into 34 sections. Some of these sections currently lack a person to be responsible to help cut blowdowns, trim back yearly growth, cut weeds, paint blazes, and clean waterbars. If we have extra willing maintainers we can reduce the length of some sections. Again, projects too large for the section maintainers can be handled by special crews.

If you are interested in any of these volunteer opportunities for 2010, please contact [Carl Fritz](#) via email or at 423-477-4669.

## **Mount LeConte Lodge (Smoky Mountains), Saturday-Sunday, July 10-11, 2010**

*Steve Falling reporting*

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 \$128 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 Steve Falling, 423-239-5502, for availability. You must be a TEHCC member to participate in this outing. You can find out more about Mount LeConte Lodge at [www.leconte-lodge.com/about.html](http://www.leconte-lodge.com/about.html).

## **Kayak Pool Sessions at Freedom Hall**

*Deb Reynolds reporting*

Freedom Hall in Johnson City has changed the time for the pool kayak sessions on Tuesday nights from 7:00-9:00 pm to 7:10-9:10 pm. This was enacted to give people in the water aerobics class the chance to get out of the pool and change before we start coming in with our boats. Please wait until 7:10 P.M. before entering the facility. There is a swim meet on January 12, 2010 that will prohibit

us from using the pool on that night. If you are interested in learning more about kayaking or improving your skills, these pool sessions are the place to be. Typically there are extra kayaks and accessories available. Bring a PFD and be ready to get wet.



## TEHCC Welcomes New Members

Please welcome the following new members for January:

Tony Scott

Ed McEntire

## Event Schedule – Next Two Months

For the latest, up-to-date information, see [tehcc.org/schedule](http://tehcc.org/schedule)

Date	Description	Rating	Leader	Contact
Jan 1	Friday Hikers: Chimney Top	C/3/B	Collins Chew	<a href="mailto:vcchew@chartertn.net">vcchew@chartertn.net</a>
Jan 8	Friday Hikers: Little Stony Creek	B/3/C	Collins Chew	<a href="mailto:vcchew@chartertn.net">vcchew@chartertn.net</a>
Jan 23-24	SB6K/S900M: Big Cataloochee	AA/2/A	<a href="#">Jake Mitchell</a>	423-963-8654
Feb 13	Couples Hike: Pinnacle Natural Area Preserve	C/4/C	<a href="#">Ed Montgomery</a>	<a href="mailto:emonty@eastman.com">emonty@eastman.com</a>
Feb 26	National Paddling Film Festival, Frankfurt, KY	Fun	<a href="#">Ed Montgomery</a>	<a href="mailto:emonty@eastman.com">emonty@eastman.com</a>

## Description of Upcoming Events

### *Recurring Events*

#### **Fridays: Friday Hikers**

Join 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 further away leave at 7:30am. Contact [Collins Chew](#) to be added to the distribution list.

#### **Tuesdays: Johnson City roll practice**

Come join the Jackson Action Wagon (J.A.W.), APEs, and other paddlers from around our region at the Freedom Hall Pool in Johnson City, TN from 7:10 to 9:10 pm every Tuesday for tips and tricks about basic kayaking skills and learning how to roll. Have you already mastered the basics and have a bomb proof roll? There is still a lot of fun to be had at our pool session by practicing your flat-water freestyle moves and fellowshiping with other paddlers in a nice warm water environment. Admission to the pool is \$2, rolling advice is free! Contact the pool office (423- 461-4872) for session confirmation or questions regarding the facility. Please note: The J.A.W. does provide the current fleet of boats for demo at the pool session, but neither the pool nor the J.A.W. provides paddling equipment (paddle, spray skirt, etc...) for these sessions. If you are just starting out in the sport and do not have your own equipment, please post a message on the APEs yahoo group site or send [Wesley](#) an e-mail asking other members to bring extra equipment if possible. We will try our best to get you outfitted for the night!

#### **Weekly AT Trail Maintenance, most Tuesdays**

Join a group of maintainers who work somewhere on our 135-mile section each week, usually on Tuesdays. Contact Carl Fritz ([atmaint@tehcc.org](mailto:atmaint@tehcc.org)) for dates and meeting places.

### *Scheduled Events*

#### **Friday Hikers: Chimney Top, January 1, 2010**

Leader: [Collins Chew](#)

We will have a short hike to Chimney Top on January 1, 2010. This is the little volcano-shaped mountain seen just to the left of Bays Mountain when viewed from Kingsport. The hike is only 3 miles, but it is quite steep, particularly at the top, which is ringed with cliffs. The drive is about 20 miles one-way. This will allow us to sleep a bit later after the New Year eve festivities and get home early to hog jowl, black eyed-peas and bowl games. Another group or two is planning the same hike that day. We are accepting the hospitality of Mary and Dane Faulkner who own the mountain and plan to discourage hunting on their land that day. Bring water,

snack, and appropriate clothing. Meet at the regular place between McDonalds and State of Franklin Bank in Colonial Heights at 9:00 A.M. on Friday.

### **SB6K/S900M: Big Cataloochee, January 23-24, 2010**

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

Jake Mitchell will lead a SB6K/S900M/FUN winter hike in the Smokies. This is a 14-mile round-trip loop beginning and ending at Cataloochee Ranch. Day 1 we will ascend the Pretty Hollow Gap Trail to the Mount Sterling Ridge Trail and summit Big Cataloochee. Night will be spent at Laurel Gap Shelter. Day 2 we will return to Cataloochee Ranch via Pin Oak Road. This hike is highly weather-dependent. If you are interested, contact Jake Mitchell ([jacobmmitchell@gmail.com](mailto:jacobmmitchell@gmail.com), 423-963-8654). Note: If the road into Cataloochee is closed, an alternate winter hike will be scheduled - possibly Grayson Highlands.

### **Couples Hike: Pinnacle Nature Preserve, February 13, 2010**

*Leader: [Ed Montgomery](#)*

This will be a pleasant, easy 3-4 mile hike complete with swinging bridge, two waterfalls and the PINNACLE. The hike will include a big pre-Valentine's Day lunch stop (1/2 mile down the trail) at a designated picnic area, complete with picnic tables and bathrooms. This is a perfect hike for couples and could be considered a Valentine's Day gift for some. Note: Hike will be cancelled for extreme cold. Contact [Ed Montgomery](#) if interested.

## **For the Record**



### **Friday Hikers: Sand Cave and White Rocks, November 27, 2009**

*Collins Chew reporting*

We had a glorious, cool day for the 9-mile hike to Sand Cave and White Rocks in Cumberland Gap National Park. There was a dusting of snow on the slopes in Kentucky; the sky was deep blue with a touch of haze. As we have had for several weeks in a row, we had a number of first timers with us. Hikers were: Jud Barry, Kevin Barry (first timer visiting from Nashville), Duer (first timer), Bob Harvey, Phil Hiatt, Jeff Kelleher (last time before returning to California), Joy Moon (first timer on vacation from Chicago), Kim Peters (returning from a long leave of absence), Peter Privon (visiting from Greenville, SC), Anna Sherrill, and Collins Chew.

### **Natural Tunnel State Park, November 28, 2009**

*Vic Hasler reporting*

The wide reach of the TEHCC newsletter on the internet was again seen when Joy Moon from the Chicago area decided to stay another night in Kingsport to participate on this hike. Just the two of us had the entire Natural Tunnel SP to ourselves for the sunny morning. Unfortunately, the Purchase Ridge and Tunnel trails were both closed for maintenance, so we explored the park on trails to the Lover's Leap overlook, Gorge Ridge return to the visitors' center, and Spring Hollow down to the north tunnel entrance. Timing was right for two empty coal trains to enter and exit the tunnel during our travels. We finished off by walking around the Wilderness Road blockhouse, before returning to Kingsport for a late lunch. This was a very easy and sunny day of hiking.

### **Friday Hikers: Warriors Path State Park, December 4, 2009**

*Collins Chew reporting*



*Collins hikes with cell phone  
Photo courtesy of Ken Buchannan*

This hike was under cloudy sky and was somewhat uncoordinated. A total of 19 people were involved, although the most we ever had together at one time was 14 and two were never with the large group. We don't know if anyone went to Bays Mountain Park, the original destination, which was closed for the wolf hunt. The change caused at least one hiker to miss the major group for a time. Several others missed the start for other reasons (one even ended up on the Virginia Creeper Trail out of frustration). The major contingent met at the regular time and started on the Sinking Water Trail in Warriors Path State Park; then most moved to the Devils Backbone and Fall Creek Loop in the same park. The rest of the hike is too involved for details. Some missed the main crowd at the start and changes in the plan related to over exertion and alternate trails. Various ailments and desires to leave early further complicated things. Most found the experience pleasant. Cell phones proved very valuable. Other hikers and dogs (one set from Wisconsin) were out as well. One dog was very interested in our lunches, but failed to obtain any goodies. Hikers were: Olin Babb, Ken Buchanan, Cliff, Anne Cosby, June Donaldson, Debbi Dula, Carol and Dave Dunham, Judith Foster, Bob Harvey, Allison Hewson, Carol Idol, Heather Jacob, Jerry Jones, Chuck Mather, Larry Miller, Patty Jo Nachman, an unidentified jogger who helped with the over exertion problem, and Collins Chew.

## Friday Hikers: Steele Creek Park, December 11, 2009

*Collins Chew reporting*

We had a very nice, quite cool hike today in Steele Creek Park, Bristol, Tenn. There was no wind. By adjusting layers, hats and gloves to fit the up- and down-hill sections, we stayed within our comfort zones for the most part. We did hikes in the Trinkle Hollow area (Northeast end) of the Park before lunch and returned by the trails southwest of the lake for about 6 miles total. We lunched on the dam. The views are quite good with the leaves off the trees. Hikers were: Heather Jacob, Jerry Jones, first timer Ann Yungmeyer, and Collins Chew.



## AT Maintenance Reports

**Reporting:** Daryel Anderson

**Date:** November 28, 2009

**Purpose:** Scout and clear trail

**Location:** Section 1, South 2.5 miles from Damascus

**People:** Anne Maio and Daryel Anderson

**Summary:** We removed four blowdowns and cleared brush from the Trail. One southbound hiker was going at full speed.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** December 1, 2009

**Purpose:** Dig Trail relocation

**Location:** Section 7, North of Wilbur Dam Road

**People:** Paul Benfield, Richard Carter, Carol Dunham, Dave Dunham, Carl Fritz, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** On a beautiful December day we finished the last of the relocations north of Wilbur Dam Road. We started these relocations in April of this year. Thanks to a lot of help from Club members, hikers, and students, this difficult building of sidehill trail in rocky terrain is complete. Hopefully, we'll have yet another day this winter in this area to do some rehab of the old trail.

**Reporting:** Joe DeLoach

**Date:** December 3, 2009

**Purpose:** AT Committee Meeting

**Location:** Kingsport

**People:** Joe DeLoach, Dave Dunham, Carl Fritz, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Steve Perri, Kim Peters, Jeff Siirola, and Paul Worsham

**Summary:** Several significant expenditures have been identified for 2010: installation of guttering, replacement of boards, and painting at the Overmountain Shelter; hiker-volunteer patches; and at least helping subsidize HardCore shirts, with 2010 being the tenth anniversary. We will submit several grant proposals to the L. L. Bean and North Carolina license plate programs. Bob reported that several locations along the AT have started HardCore programs like ours and a contingent from Vermont wants to work with us this year. Current HardCore plans are to work one day on Pond Mountain and one day on Beartown Mountain. Several frequent maintainers are interested in wilderness first aid training, and there is support for purchasing a defibrillator if we can get one at a good price. Ed is looking into equipment to move gravel on Round Bald; we may have a path forward to do this in 2010. An extension of the Big Laurel Branch Wilderness several miles north has been proposed; Wilderness provides additional protection for the AT, but makes maintenance more difficult since power tools are not allowed.

**Reporting:** Daryel Anderson

**Date:** December 8, 2009

**Purpose:** Cut blowdown

**Location:** Section 1, One-tenth mile south of the park (Damascus)

**People:** Susan Erdeky and Anne Maio

**Summary:** Anne went for a short walk on Section 1. She knew the neighborhood access trail was blocked by a limb, so she went up from Water Street. Only 1/10 mile up, just past the neighborhood access trail, was a hip-high 8" blowdown. It was snow-covered, of course. She couldn't get over it, under it, or around it, without walking through snowy brush way off the trail. Anne decided she would need some help to cut it and went back home. The next morning Susan went back with Anne and they cut the blowdown.

**Reporting:** Ed Oliver

**Date:** December 10, 2009

**Purpose:** Check out gravel haulers

**Location:** Asheville

**People:** Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery, Ed Oliver

**Summary:** Paul, Ted, and Ed traveled to a rental company in Asheville to visually inspect a small model Yanmar tracked vehicle. It carries a ton and is only about 38-inches wide. They were impressed with its handling and stability. It may be the device of choice for hauling gravel on Round Bald.

**Reporting:** Richard Carter

**Date:** December 10, 2009

**Purpose:** Clear blowdowns

**Location:** Section 1, Damascus to TN/VA state line

**People:** Richard Carter, Anne Maio

**Summary:** We hiked from Damascus to the state line and back. We cut six fairly major blowdowns with a bow saw and cleared approximately 8 to 10 lesser ones; plus cleared debris from the windstorm of the days just before. About 2 to 3 miles south of town, we discovered three more major blowdowns too large to cut with the bow saw; looks like they will require a chain saw.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** December 11, 2009

**Purpose:** Cut blowdowns

**Location:** Section 9b, Hampton trailhead to south Pond and south of shelter

**People:** Richard Carter, David Dunham, Carl Fritz, Bob Peoples

**Summary:** We cut about seven blowdowns from Hampton Trailhead to above railroad grade on south Pond and to south of shelter. There were only two bad ones. A 24-inch oak on south Pond is still precariously perched, but hikers can get across trail now.

**Reporting:** Paul Benfield

**Date:** December 11, 2009

**Purpose:** Cut blowdowns

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

**People:** Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Ted Mowery, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** Paul, Ken, Ted and Tim removed some minor branches on the existing trail. They cut a step out of a 30-inch poplar that had blown down near the parking lot at Shook Branch. On the new unopened trail, they cleared a blowdown mass of trees on the old road.

**Reporting:** Joe DeLoach

**Date:** December 11, 2009

**Purpose:** Clear blowdowns

**Location:** Section 7, about 1.6 miles from Wilbur Dam Road to big hemlocks

**People:** Craig DeLoach and Joe DeLoach

**Summary:** New sidehill trails can receive a lot of damage from hikers walking around blowdowns, so we wanted to check this newly completed section. We cut four obstructing blowdowns and tossed numerous smaller limbs out of the way. One large one remains, but is an easy stepover on the ground and is serving as a good waterbar. The uppermost relocation came out very nice.

**Reporting:** Joe DeLoach

**Date:** December 12, 2009

**Purpose:** Clear blowdowns

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

**People:** Craig DeLoach and Joe DeLoach

**Summary:** We cut eight large and numerous smaller blowdowns out of our section; several were significant obstructions. There was no damage to the shelter from the recent wind. The new signs placed at the Trail crossing by the Forest Service look good.

**Reporting:** Jake Mitchell

**Date:** December 12, 2009

**Purpose:** ATC Invasive Exotic Species Workshop

**Location:** Section 19, Near railroad tracks between Indian Grave Gap and Nolichucky River

**People:** Jake Mitchell, Paul Benfield, Debbie Stearn, Kellie Moran

**Summary:** Members of the TEHCC joined John O'Dell from ATC and two from the Carolina Mountain Club to learn to identify invasive exotic species and to practice removing them. We met at Uncle Johnny's and spent the first hour reviewing materials in the hostel around the wood stove. We spent the rest of the time just past the railroad tracks removing multiflora rose, privet and honeysuckle. We removed everything under the power line and started moving back toward the RR crossing.



**Reporting:** Tim McClain

**Date:** December 12, 2009

**Purpose:** Respond to reports of blowdowns

**Location:** Section 3b, Trail north of US 421 to McQueens Knob

**People:** Tim McClain

**Summary:** The purpose of this trip was to clear some blowdowns that were reported before Thanksgiving. Apparently the high winds the week of December 6th also contributed to the blowdowns as there were many trees down in this area. Using a bow saw, I was able to clear the Trail from US 421 to the top of McQueen's knob. There are still quite a few step-overs or easy walk-arounds, which I will try to get on a return trip with Steve Banks and his chainsaw. If necessary, these would be OK to leave until early spring.

**Reporting:** Joe DeLoach

**Date:** December 22, 2009

**Purpose:** Sharpen crosscut saw

**Location:** Home

**People:** Paul Benfield

**Summary:** Sharpening crosscut saws and setting of their teeth has become a lost art. Thanks to Paul Benfield for knowing how to do this and for doing so with a one-person crosscut we have had in the Club room for years.

**Reporting:** Jake Mitchell

**Date:** December 23, 2009

**Purpose:** Clear blowdowns and play in the snow

**Location:** Section 9, Shook Branch to Pond Flats

**People:** Jake Mitchell

**Summary:** I set out to enjoy the snow in the woods and clear blowdowns. I cleared more obstructions that I can count. I lost count at 20. I made it about 3/4 up the mountain before turning around. I left 4 major blowdowns for the cross cut. One is about 100 yards north of the Pond Mountain sign; one is halfway between there and the lookout; and two others are just before the lookout within feet of each other. The largest mess was just past the lookout. Rhodies completely block the trail, with about 10 branches across the trail of at least 2" diameter. It took me 30 minutes to remove these. Other than that, it was a beautiful day in the snow - especially when the sun came out.

**Reporting:** Scott VanDam

**Date:** December 26, 2009

**Purpose:** Check assigned trail section after major snow storm

**Location:** Section 12a, Hostel to Bitter End

**People:** Scott VanDam

**Summary:** I walked to Bitter End with a handsaw following the major snow storm. I came upon one major blow down, which I was able to half cut/half drag out of the Trail. One advantage of maintaining your section in the winter is all the different animal tracks to be seen: deer, fox, and rabbit being most frequent. I cut some smaller pines that were bent over the Trail, heavy with snow.