



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

July 2013

tehcc.org

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From the Chair

Vic Hasler, Steering Committee Chair

The history of this outdoor club contains its remembrance of how much progress has been made in improving the section of the Appalachian Trail under its care. It also recalls the many outings enjoyed by its members on trails and rivers (sometimes, hiking up a stream!) and gathering together for dinners or to tackle specific projects. Two 3-ring binders, containing the TERC Hiking Club history from 1976 thru 1981, have been digitized and

added to the newsletter archives on the tehcc.org website. Communication by Eastman Kodak recreation clubs in the days long before the internet was through the printed TEC company newsletter and flyers mailed to members' work locations. A club historian fortunately assembled these notices and reports using scissors and rubber cement or clear tape into this collection. By now having this record more accessible, the information can be more readily referenced.

So take a look to see how long the club's section was back then. That the \$1 yearly club dues then are equivalent to the current \$5 amount (after inflation). That lobster and oysters were the featured menu at a few dinner meetings. How a section of the Lonesome Pine Trail was constructed by the club in 1978. When a present Steering Committee member was previously in the chair role years earlier. The multiple trips to LeConte Lodge each year. The club helping to establish the western trails in Bays Mountain Park (think past Feagins Gap) in 1976. Relocations to move the AT off roadways. That the upcoming national ATC meeting in 1981 was to be held in Cullowhee, NC (déjà vu).

If you have any club newsletters or flyers from 1982 thru 1992, then we would welcome this treasure trove to fill in the gap in our archives. Otherwise, I guess we could have a continued effort to scan the appropriate pages from the TEC newsletter archive in the Research library.

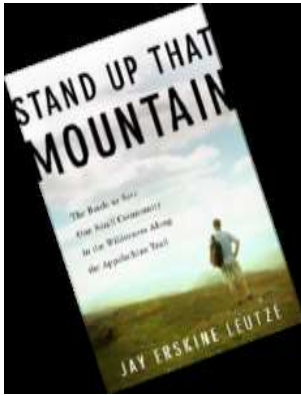
The club membership has endorsed moving forward with updating the TEHCC constitution and bylaws for how the Steering Committee is chosen. Thanks to all who electronically "signed" the petition. The next step is the actual vote to formally approve changing these documents. A separate e-mail will be sent in July to members with a link to a survey for this vote, which needs to be at least 80% favorable to pass. (Those voting to decline the changes should consider themselves nominees for the 2014 election cycle; however, we won't know who you are since the survey/vote is anonymous.)

Welcome Roan Ridgerunner!



We're delighted to welcome Kat Keely to the Roan Ridgerunner position this summer. ATC, Tennessee Eastman Hiking & Canoeing Club, the US Forest Service, and Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy are partnering to fill this new position. It was created to address concerns about recreational impacts to the grassy balds and sensitive plant and animal species. Primary responsibilities include educating visitors about the unique ecology of the area and encouraging them to tread lightly when hiking the Roan Highlands. Since Kat has been on patrol, we are documenting her encounters, discussions and observations. As you might expect, weekend use on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays are noticeably higher than through the week. Last week with the rhododendrons blooming, there were over 100 people visiting Friday and Saturday and over 250 on Sunday. We appreciate the work Kat is able to do to help us with further educating visitors as we look for the balance of providing recreational opportunities without negatively impacting the sensitive environment of the Roan Highlands.

Author Jay Erskine Leutze presents at FunFest



Tuesday, July 16, 6:30pm, Kingsport Higher Education Center Auditorium

Stand Up That Mountain: The Battle to Save One Small Community in the Wilderness Along the Appalachian Trail

Living alone in his wooded mountain retreat, Jay Leutze gets a call from fourteen-year-old, Ashley Cook, and her aunt, Ollie Cox, who say a mining company is intent on tearing down Belview Mountain, the towering peak above their house. Ashley and her family, who live in a little spot known locally as Dog Town, are “mountain people,” with a way of life and speech unique to Appalachia. They suspect the mining company is violating the law and want Jay, a non-practicing attorney, to stop destruction of the mountain. Jay, a devoted naturalist and fisherman, quickly joins their cause.

So begins the epic quest of the “Dog Town Bunch,” a battle that involves fiery public hearings, clandestine surveillance of mine operator’s activities, pressure on public officials, and high-stakes legal brinkmanship in the North Carolina court system. Jay helps assemble a group of environmental

lawyers to battle with the attorneys protecting the mining company’s plan to dynamite the Mountain, which sits next to the Appalachian Trail, the national park that stretches from Maine to Georgia. As the mining company continues to level the forest and erect a rock-crushing plant on the site, Jay’s group searches for a way to stop an act of environmental desecration that will mar the Appalachian Trail forever.

More than the record of a legal battle, *Stand Up That Mountain* takes the reader to a remote corner of Appalachia, a region often stereotyped and little understood, even now in the twenty-first century. An elegant writer, Jay Leutze delivers a powerful story full of remarkable characters, such as “Wingfoot,” an elusive protector of the Trail; a stubborn mining company engineer intent on pulling down the mountain in the face of opposition; and Ron Howell, a retired and legendary North Carolina Superior Court judge known as the “Heel Hound” for his relentless pursuit of legal victory. Jay’s group is joined by national conservation groups who see that the Mountain and Trail must be protected for future generations.

A great contemporary story that demonstrates what is possible when local people set their minds to righting a local wrong, *Stand Up That Mountain* will appeal to conservationists, hikers, attorneys, and readers fascinated by Appalachia and rural life, and anyone interested in a compelling story well told and true.

Event Schedule – Next Two Months

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

Date	Description	Leader	Contact
July 11-15	Konnarock Crew - A.T. Relocation near Clyde Smith Shelter	Joe DeLoach	423-753-7263
July 13-14	Mt. LeConte Lodge	Steve Falling	423-239-5502
July 18	F/B FunFest Moonlight Hike	Marc Schurger	423-229-5921
July 19-26	ATC Biennial Meeting, Cullowee, NC		
July 20	Devil’s Bathtub Hike	Tim Schaefer	423-302-0846
July 20	APE’s and TEHCC Intermediate Whitewater Kayak Clinic	Scott Fisher	276-698-4644
July 28	F/B AT: Indian Grave Gap to Beauty Spot	Vic Hasler	423-239-0388
August 2-3	APE’s and TEHCC Advanced Swiftwater Rescue Course	Scott Fisher	276-698-4644
August 9-11	Annual “Babes on the Waves” River Run, Hiwassee River Class I-II	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
August 16	Relocation at Backbone Rock with ASU Watauga College	Carl Fritz	423-477-4669
August 24	APE’s Nolichucky Gorge 1 st Timers River Trip & Picnic	Wesley R. Bradley	423-647-1321
August 24	APE’s Lower Nolichucky River Trip	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
August 25	Carver’s Gap Berry Picking	Tim Schaefer	423-302-0846

Details of Upcoming Events

Recurring Events

Most Tuesdays: Weekly A.T. Trail Maintenance

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

Tuesdays Evenings: 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 7:30 to 9:00 pm every Tuesday for tips and tricks about basic kayaking and to learn 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. provides 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.). If you do not have your own equipment, please post a message on the APEs yahoo group site or send Wesley an email asking other members to bring extra equipment. We will try our best to get you outfitted for the night!

Thursday Evenings During the Summer: Paddle to the Grill

Bring your recreation or touring kayak/canoe to meet with The Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts & TN Eastman Hiking & Canoeing Club. We will launch at 6:30 pm from "Davis Dock" located in Blountville & paddle to "Boone Docks Restaurant" located at Boone Lake Marina in Piney Flats for dinner & a social hour then paddle back.

As we may be paddling back during low or no light, please have a stern light for your boat & PFD's are mandatory.

Contact [Debbie Briscoe](mailto:Debbie) , 423-534-3636 for more information.

Bi-Weekly on Saturdays, Lower Watauga, Class I and II

We will launch from Riverside Park in Elizabethton behind the Ballpark at 3PM unless there is water elsewhere. Call first to check and see if it's on! Also, we stop for a break about half way down, so don't forget your snacks! We are usually off the water by 7:00 or so and then we can go for Mexican Food in town.

Please be prepared for cold water and wear appropriate gear.

Contact: [Debbie Briscoe](mailto:Debbie), 423-534-3636.

Scheduled Events

Konnarock Crew - July 11 - 15, 2013

Contact: [Joe DeLoach](mailto:Joe), 423-753-7263

A. T. Relocation near Clyde Smith Shelter

For over 30 years the Konnarock Crew has been working with southern Appalachian Trail clubs to accomplish major projects along their sections. They have worked on most of our relocations during that period. This summer with two weeks of Crew time we'll tackle a new one, near the Clyde Smith Shelter between Iron Mt. Gap and Hughes Gap. The existing Trail follows a steep "fall line" which is prone to erode and traverses a summit with no views (known in Trail parlance as a Pointless Up and Down or PUD). The relocation, one of a series in this area, will get closer to the shelter and go through nice rich woods. The Crew arrives on Thursday July 11 and departs around lunchtime on Monday July 15. Volunteers who work at least 40 hours with the Crew are eligible for a Konnarock T-shirt. Volunteers are welcome to work with them anytime they're here, but we concentrate on the full days of Friday-Sunday July 12-14. On those days we'll meet at Parkway Discount Wine and Liquor on South Roan Street in Johnson City at 8:30 AM. The walk in to the work site is very remote and meeting there is not an option, but a meeting point in or near Elizabethton can be arranged in addition to Johnson City. Bring lunch, work gloves, a hardhat if you have one, and plenty of water. Please contact Joe ahead of time so we'll know to look for you and have tools ready.

F/B FunFest Moonlight Hike, July 18, 2013

Contact: [Marc Schurger](mailto:Marc), 423-229-5921

Rating: Easy 2.5 mile hike around the lake

TEHCC will once again co-sponsor the Kingsport FunFest Moonlight Hike at Bays Mountain Park. This popular event attracts 200-500 participants each year. The hike traverses 2.5 miles around the lake on Lakeside and Holly Trails. It kicks off at 8:00PM from the dam near the visitors center. Arrive early as parking has been an issue with shuttle buses now running from the Eastman lodge parking lot. Bring your own flashlight/headlamp, water, and insect repellent. Hike ends with a headcount back at the visitor's center by 10PM.

Club members will be providing guidance and assistance for the hike. Please contact Marc Schurger (229-5921 or mgschurg@eastman.com) if you have any questions.

Devil's Bathtub Hike for the Wiki, Saturday, July 20, 2013

Leader: [Tim Schaefer](#), 423-302-0846

After a recent review of search logs it was learned that [Devil's Bathtub](#) in Jefferson National Forest, Virginia, is one of the more common searches that get people to our Trail Wiki. Reviewing our page shows that it's lacking some standard information for such an apparently popular page. Come join me as I GPS log the hike, take pictures, and take copious notes to fill out the page. The plan is to leave Colonial Heights by 8 am and return by mid afternoon.

APE's and TEHCC Intermediate Whitewater Kayak Clinic, July 20, 2013

Contact: [Scott Fisher](#), 276-698-4644

The Intermediate Whitewater Kayak Course (IWWK) is one in a series of paddling clinics offered through the American Canoe Association (ACA). This one day course is designed to refine and extend the judgment and technique of intermediate paddlers on class III-IV whitewater, with significant focus on improving fundamentals, boat control and river running technique. If you are just getting comfortable on class III water or already have solid class III skills and want to take it the next level, this class is for you. It will be held either on the Nolichucky Gorge or French Broad Sect 9, dependent on water level and overall skill level of the group. Having a somewhat reliable roll is encouraged. Course will be limited to 10 people.

Registration Deadline is 7/13/2013. For more information visit: <http://apes-intermediate-whitewater-kayak-clinic/>

F/B: AT - Indian Grave Gap to Beauty Spot, Sunday, July 28, 2013

Contact: [Vic Hasler](#), 423-239-0388

An easy five mile hike proposed last year for the Girl Scouts Centennial. Beauty Spot is a natural grassy bald (4,437') with spectacular views east of Roan Mountain, south of Black Mountains, and southwest of Big Bald and Flattop Mountains. Erwin can be seen below. Departure time is 1PM from the parking lot below the McDonalds in Colonial Heights. The 37 mile drive down thru Erwin will take roughly 45 minutes. Bring plenty of water, comfortable footwear, and appropriate clothing/sun protection. The hike itself will take less than three hours depending on how much sightseeing time is desired on the bald. Return to Kingsport by 6PM. For further information, check the [trail wiki](#) or call/e-mail the hike leader.

APE's and TEHCC Advanced Swiftwater Rescue Course, August 2-3, 2013

Contact: [Scott Fisher](#), 276-698-4644

The Advanced SWR Course is one in a series of swiftwater rescue courses offered through the American Canoe Association (ACA). This course is aimed at anyone desiring the opportunity to further develop their rescue skills first learned in the Basic Swiftwater Rescue Course. Critical judgment and rescue awareness, impacting both personal and group safety, are emphasized throughout the course. Although new skills may be taught, this class focuses on developing judgment and applying skills in rescue scenarios that were first learned in the basic course. The course will be predominantly scenario based in the context of a river trip—in other words, students will be moving downriver and responding to situations encountered along the way. We feel that this is a logical progression from your previous training in the Basic Swiftwater Rescue Course and will continue to help you refine your judgment and proficiency under realistic conditions that can best be achieved in the dynamic nature of an actual river trip.

Registration Deadline is 7/27/2013. For more information visit: <http://apes-tehcc-advanced-swiftwater-rescue-course/>

Annual "Babes on the Waves" River Run, August 9-11, 2013

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

Hey Gals, It's time!! Time to get together and have our Annual "Babes On The Waves" River Run.

Once again girls we're making it a weekend on the Hiwassee River!

Once a year all the female APE'ets come together to rule the river. All are welcome, even you guy's who don't want to be left out, we don't discriminate, but it's our day and we want to get as many female paddlers out on the water as we can!

So all you Gals out there plan to join us on the water August 9 -11

We're planning on driving down on Friday afternoon and camp at Gee Creek Campground. It is a very nice facility with full amenities. Then paddle on Saturday meeting at the put-in at 12:00 noon. We'll load up and convoy from the campground.

We'll find a place to eat that evening after hot showers back at the campground. A campfire will be great afterwards and I'm bringing Smores!

Campground: <http://www.stateparks.com/hiwassee.html>

Map: <http://goo.gl/maps/z7rgO>

APE's Nolichucky Gorge 1st Timers River Trip & Picnic, August 24, 2013

Leader: [Wesley R. Bradley](#), 423-647-1321

Mark your calendar for Saturday, August 24, 2013 for this fun annual event!

For you new & up coming paddlers this is your chance to paddle the gorge with lower water levels which makes it easier. The class IV's turn into class III's.

Meet at the USA Raft Outpost (take-out) at 11:00 A.M. USA Raft will be shuttling our group up to the put-in using one of their raft buses and a boat trailer! This will make our logistics for shuttling very easy and our cars will be waiting for us back at the take out when we get off the river! Please bring \$5.00 to help cover the cost of this shuttle ride.

APE's Picnic: Meet at the USA Raft Area take-out at 5:30 P.M.

This is our last big "get together" for the year and the APE's will host catering by TBA! We will have tasty food waiting for us at USA Raft when we get off the river! Please feel free to bring any side dishes or deserts to share with the group dinner. If you are an APE's member the dinner will be FREE and non-APE's members can chow down for \$6.00. The club will also provide non-alcoholic beverages for the picnic. If you do wish to bring adult beverages to the picnic, USA Raft has asked that you drink them from a cup (NO glass or cans!). You may also want to bring a folding chair due to limited seating.

After the dinner we will have a quick meeting to discuss plans Gauley Fest, G.A.F., Green Narrows Race, river trips, & set a date for the APE's Winter meeting.

For more information visit: <http://regions.worldkayak.com/tri-cities/2013/06/25/apes-nolichucky-gorge-1st-timers-river-trip-picnic/>

APE's Lower Nolichucky River Trip, August 24, 2013

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

USA Raft Outpost to Sawmill – Class I-II. Plan to play a lot and maybe even stop & go swimming with a snack break included to make it a fun day on the lower!

Meet at the USA Raft Outpost (put-in) at 12:30 P.M. to set shuttle for the Lower Noli Trip.

For more information visit: <http://regions.worldkayak.com/tri-cities/2013/06/25/apes-nolichucky-gorge-1st-timers-river-trip-picnic/>

Carver's Gap Berry Picking, August 25, 2013

Contact: [Tim Schaefer](#), 423-302-0846

Let's enjoy the bounty of the highlands! Bring your buckets and let's pick blueberries and huckleberries on Carver's Gap. We're leaving Colonial Heights at 9 am, expecting to be at the Gap by 11 am. Depending on mood, weather, and berry bounty, the event may also include a trek to the Overmountain Barn Shelter. Hike leader also reserves the right to adjust one week in either direction based on field reports of berry ripening as the date approaches. As always watch our [schedule](#) for the latest updates (or connect our calendar to yours).



For the Record

First of the Season, Lower Watauga River Run, Saturday, June 1, 2013

Debbie Briscoe reporting

Wow, what a great time! The first Lower Watauga River run and we had a really big turnout, 15 boats and 17 paddlers, ten of whom



were women! I had been busy hiking and backpacking all winter and had just returned from my spring vacation in Linville Gorge. So I was very excited to get my boat wet again this season and had this perma-grin all the way to the put-in. As I turned into the parking lot, I was so surprised to see all the boaters already there and the ones who kept pulling in!

Lots of familiar faces and old friends made up the group along with a couple of new folks. It was like a family reunion!! After running shuttle we shoved off into a river that was really high. TVA has been releasing with all three generators since late winter. The high waters in the lake have been at epic proportions that have been over fishing peers and in residents' yards!

It was nearly 90°, so the water felt good. This is the best part about the Watauga; it is so refreshing on hot days, and the good feeling of being on a fun river where you can relax or challenge yourself, always puts big, big smiles on everyone's faces!

Many of us went to the Mexican restaurant after we loaded up and transferred boats. A tradition with us and the finale for the day!

Attending the first Watauga trip of the season were: Debbie Briscoe, Donna Kestner with Gary to help with shuttle, Kaitlin Kestner, Kiley Martin, Joann Pasqua, Pema Butia, Penny Morgan and her friend Jamie (new paddler!), Kathy Foster (who BTW is making a great comeback! Good job Kathy!), Marie Bradford, Gina and Mike Sisk, Barry Allison, David Dixon, Ben Hall, Rich Rhulen, and Whitney Eure. Thank you everyone for attending. It was a blast! The next one will be on June 15th. I hope to see you there!

A.T.: Cloudland to Hughes Gap – June 8, 2013

Vic Hasler reporting

The purpose of this hike was to measure the increased distance of the Appalachian Trail from several relocations opened in 2012 and 2013. None of us (Serita Blankenbecler, Jason Clark, nor Vic Hasler) had ever traveled this section, and this hike was the first with the club for Jason who moved to the area from Michigan in April. A car was dropped at Hughes Gap to allow the group to hike down the ridge line. The rhododendrons at Cloudland were not yet blooming, but bursts of purple were seen by Beartown Mountain. After raining the previous two days, the clouds had moved on, and we had a sunny hike. However, the newer relocations in the spruce forest at the top were a slippery mess as the water drained. The club's measuring wheel (see photo) found that the trail is now 0.24 miles longer between the sharp bend at the former Cloudland Hotel site and the Ash Gap camping site, plus 0.1 mile more after Beartown Mountain to the blue-blaze side trail to water. A repeat of this hike (or at least down to Ash Gap and back) will be needed later in the year after the other flagged relocations are completed.



The Channels Natural Area Preserve, Sunday June 16, 2013

Vic Hasler reporting

Hiking to The Great Channels did not disappoint. The three mile path was lined with mountain laurel, rhododendron, flame azaleas, and other blooms. (See Gary's photo spread below.) Paul was able to find all three traditional geocaches hidden along this trail section. Once upon top, the mountain ridgeline could be enjoyed from the rock outcropping, although darkening clouds were approaching. After a light snack, the crevices were explored for half hour, including helping to search (unsuccessfully) for a lost wallet. The roar of thunder in the distance gave warning that it was time to return to the vehicles; however, only a few drops were encountered once close to Kingsport. Enjoying the hike were Chris, Patti, Paul, and Lydia Garrett, Bill and Judy Tindall, Scott Thomsen, Mike Watt, Garry Luttrell, and Vic Hasler.



Photographs by Garry Luttrell



Mountain Laurel



Flame Azaleas



Rhododendron



Goatsbeard

For the Record - Roan Balds Sunset Hike, June 21, 2013

Joe DeLoach reporting

Heavy rain caused us to postpone our annual Spring Wildflower Hike, and it was already late in the wildflower season, so we decided to make it an evening hike in June to see the rhododendron and azalea on Round and Jane Balds. This turned out to be very

fortuitous, as we hit the azalea in full bloom with the rhododendron just a little past peak, saw the supermoon, and had lovely weather including a great sunset right before storms near Johnson City and Kingsport which did not approach us swallowed it up. Some of our group went to Jane Bald and saw the goats which had come up for the summer a couple of days before. The lighting was great for photographers and the crowds were down compared to the weekends, so we may need to start doing this every year. It was very nice to have nine hikers in addition to the hike leader; they were Kathie Foster, Dina Gyorkie, Denise Hardin, Rita Osborne, Denise and Garland Spears, Jamie and Paul Wagner, and Monika Wiedmann.

Annual Nolichucky River Cleanup, June 22, 2013

Debbie Briscoe reporting

River Cleanup a Success!

It felt like coming home when I pulled up early Saturday morning at USA Raft to get things set up on the porch of the Crockett Cabin. On that very porch is where we had our first big river cleanup 12 years ago and wow did it feel good to be back! Also some of the same band members from that first cleanup were going to be playing again for us later that evening!

It was a busy start with us getting the APE's Banner up and the APE Face banner up. All the while Wesley Bradley was getting his boats on display and our Treasurer Jerry Griffin getting busy with fixing a table with our club t-shirts and stickers. Buffalo Mountain who included Joanne Pasqua and Jason Onks had a very well represented table of their camp with picture boards of the devastation the flood had caused. Bill Finger came with the Team River Runners to help with parking and soon after that I was busy signing volunteers up for the sections of the river we were focusing on to be cleaned up.

USA Raft supplied duckies to several folks who didn't have boats and many brought canoes, large kayaks and rafts to help with the effort. By the time I got on the river to cleanup my section it was mid-day. I could tell that a lot of what we got was from the recent flooding from the spring storms. Lots of things stuck in trees and washed far up on the banks. We found lots of plastic containers, broken glass, cans, lost shoes, a hubcap, but most of all we wanted to get the tires. Tires are a lot of work to get out because they are full of sand and mud. So wallowing out all of that takes a while and is dirty work.

Jerry Griffin and Michael Keesecker were driving to all the spots where the paddlers on the river were stacking up the bags of trash and piles of tires along the road side. That takes a lot of logistics and Jerry is the best at knowing all the roads and how to get there! Thanks Jerry for once again being our road runner!

After we all got back the Kona Ice truck came! It was a cool & refreshing treat after all that hard work and the next welcomed treat was dinner! The BBQ sure was good and it went fast along with potato salad, coleslaw and the APE's signature baked beans. Pal's Tea was the perfect beverage to go with it all and it was all donated by Walmart, Pal's & Texas Roadhouse thanks to our new Social Director Laura Ward.

After dinner our the band started rockin on the stage with a bluesy, rock-a-billy sound that was just marvelous! Our very own Cruise Director Wesley Bradley took the role of Master of Ceremony and started the drawings for all our wonderful prizes! Including the Jackson Boat we had been selling tickets for to help raise money for Buffalo Mountain Camp and Retreat! Scott Mandl was the winner of the Jackson Zen and he was absolutely thrilled. He did not already have a boat but has wanted to learn how to kayak!

We had many other prizes including two \$110.00 gift Certificates from Chaco, a PFD from MTI, a SPOT GPS from Mahoney's, a Swiftwater Rescue Course Scholarship from Landmark Learning, loads of cam straps from NRS and many t-shirts, hats, a cooler, tote bags, & stickers from Mountain Sports, the Nolichucky Hostel, NRS & Mahoney's again and we even threw in a t-shirt or two!

Thanks everyone for all your hard work & dedication. It's a collaborated effort to keep our river clean and pristine for us & future generations to enjoy. And we'll just keep on doing it as long as it's needed!

Buffalo Mountain Park, White Rock Trail, Sunday, June 23, 2013

Brien Lewis reporting

We started at the trailhead around 3:00 PM with partly cloudy skies, a stuffy temperature of 85°F, and plenty of water. This was the first trip up Buffalo Mountain for all attending so we were eager to see the views! The climb up the mountain was pleasant, as the air felt less humid and the temperature dropped with elevation gain. We took our time, noticing the peace and silence of the woods and making nice conversation. We finally made it to what we thought was White Rock, which just turned out to be a small white rock protruding from the ground. We then made our way along the trail to find the real White Rock and took a leisurely rest to enjoy the sunshine, cool breeze and stunning vista. Visibility was pretty good, although a little hazy. We followed White Rock Trail to the antennas and caught the narrow, winding Tower Ridge Trail back down to the trailhead. Finish time was about 5:30, and all had a great time!

Hikers were Brien Lewis, Gerald Scott, Connie Bentley, and Serita Blenkenbecker



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Reporting: Rick Lott

Date: 5/25/2013

Purpose: Cut blowdowns

Location: Section 12c, North of Campbell Hollow Road

People: Rick Lott, Vicki Lott

Summary: I cut 10" and 18" blowdowns. The 18" was lying diagonally across the trail wedged against another tree on the downhill side of the trail. I was able to clear it about half way out of the trail so that it is easy to get by. It is low priority to remove the rest with a larger saw. We cut two 3-4" overhangs on the section; and also a 12" blowdown ½-mile trail north of Hwy 19E.

Reporting: Ted Mowery

Date: 5/27/2013

Purpose: Rehab bog bridge

Location: Section 5, 0.5 miles south of TN 91

People: Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart

Summary: The northern most bog bridge has been a muddy mess. It has a spring and the bog bridge had settled. We raised the bridge about six inches by putting rocks under the supports. We also dug deep ditches around bridge to allow water to escape. These ditches will probably have to be cleared yearly. Also, we added many more rocks to control mud.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 5/27/2013

Purpose: Trail Rehab and Relo

Location: Section 11a, Dennis Cove to Large Boulders

People: John Beaudet, Ken Buchanan, Jim Chambers, Carl Fritz, Joe Morris, Kim Peters, Jack Tarlin

Summary: The large boulders which have been a problem for years are smooth trail now! After several days of beating on them this spring, they have been conquered. We also did a small relo close to Dennis Cove to get out of a slippery steep rut.

Reporting: Joe DeLoach

Date: 5/27/2013

Purpose: Maintain section

Location: Section 15a, Carvers Gap to Cloudland

People: Joe DeLoach

Summary: I cut briars from Cloudland to Roan High Knob Shelter, where I expected large amounts of trash, but found very little thanks to our new Roan Ridgerunner. I then did some rehab to the portion between Carvers Gap and the old Hack Line Road. It did not look nearly as bad as it did in the very wet conditions of early April. I dug out several waterbars and installed a new one.

Reporting: Joe DeLoach

Date: 5/27/2013

Purpose: Check power line route

Location: Section 12d, Along Bear Branch Road

People: Joe DeLoach

Summary: Mountain Electric Cooperative proposes to move a power line, which currently crosses the A.T. between Bear Branch Road and Bishop Hollow, to run up Bear Branch Road. This will be good for both the utility and the Trail, but we wanted to see where they planned to put the poles. None of the marked spaces are close to the Trail-crossing of Bear Branch Road. We will need to remind the utility and Forest Service to watch for hikers while they do the work, and will ask the utility to clear the Trail after any right-of-way clearing they do.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 5/27/2013

Purpose: Construct staircase

Location: Section 9b, Hampton Blue-Blaze and A.T. Intersection

People: Joe Morris

Summary: I constructed a six-step staircase and rehabbed 30 feet of trail adjacent to the new stairs that had sloughed. The Trail and Hampton blue-blaze are in high use by thru and section hikers, and by locals.

Reporting: Michael Ray

Date: 5/29/2013

Purpose: Check trail condition, routine maintenance

Location: Section 19b, Curley Maple Gap Shelter to Nolichucky River

People: Ethan Ingran, Dale Douthat

Summary: Ethan and Dale covered most of the trail from the outfitter on the river to within a half mile of the shelter. They clipped brush, trimmed weeds, and removed one small blowdown. We will get back soon to check what was not covered on this trip.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 5/29/2013

Purpose: Paint blazes

Location: Section 11a, South of Dennis Cove

People: Jack Tarlin

Summary: Jack painted blazes on a trail section that was just opened yesterday.

Reporting: Gayle Riddervold

Date: 5/29/2013

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

Location: Section 13a, US 19E To Doll Flats

People: Gayle Riddervold, Becky Kinder

Summary: Today we walked about 2 miles in, checking waterbars and cutting overhanging vegetation. There was a muddy, wet section on one part of the trail where we laid some flat rocks to serve as stepping stones.

Reporting: Paul Benfield

Date: 5/29/2013

Purpose: Mow Accessible Trail and A.T.

Location: Section 4b, Osborne Farm

People: Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery

Summary: We mowed and trimmed weeds on the Accessible Trail and A.T. across the Osborne Farm. We also removed the cattle refuse from the Accessible Trail and graveled around the stile.

Reporting: Steve Perri

Date: 5/30/2013

Purpose: Attend Forest Plan Revision Meeting

Location: Asheville, NC

People: Steve Perri

Summary: I attended the Pisgah National Forest Plan Revision Meeting in Asheville, NC. This was the second meeting in the process to revise the Plan and is a continuation of gathering public input. The meeting was very well attended. There were three breakout sessions to discuss special designated areas, wildlife habitat creation, and recreational access. The next step in the process, the "planning period," will begin in the fall.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 5/30/2013

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

Location: Section 9b, Pond Flats

People: Joe Morris

Summary: I did routine maintenance, including lopping weeds and greenbrier. I also removed two small blowdowns.

Reporting: Gayle Riddervold

Date: 5/31/2013

Purpose: Take care of unauthorized sign near trailhead

Location: Section 13a, US 19E to Doll Flats

People: Gayle Riddervold, Becky Kinder

Summary: Carl Fritz emailed us about an unauthorized "Steak House" sign after a hiker walked to the restaurant, discovered it was no longer in service, and voiced a concern. The sign was bolted to a tree about 8 feet up. Becky used a 6-foot ladder and I completely spray painted it black.

Reporting: Robert Branch

Date: 6/1/2013

Purpose: Replace thermometer

Location: Section 15a, Carvers Gap

People: Robert Branch

Summary: I replaced the old thermometer on the information sign at Carvers Gap. The old one has set a record of three years without damage. The numbers have been almost sandblasted off by wind-driven ice and were unreadable.

Reporting: Lynn DiFiore

Date: 6/4/2013

Purpose: Cut annual growth

Location: Section 14a, Overmountain Shelter to Stan Murray

People: Lynn DiFiore

Summary: I used a brushcutter to cut annual growth and briars back from trail. Recent rains made this a bigger task than expected as grasses were across the trail in places. I picked up a minimal amount of trash from both shelters (thanks Ridgerunner Kat!). All springs are running well and the trail looks to be in good shape.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 6/4/2013

Purpose: Clean and repair waterbars

Location: Section 14b, Carver's Gap to Engine Gap

People: Paul Benfield, Richard Carter, Jim Foster, Carl Fritz, Becky Kinder, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples, Gayle Riddervolt, Tim Stewart

Summary: We moved gravel back onto the trail where it had washed off, and cleared waterbars. We also added a number of extra small steps and water diversions between Round Bald and Engine Gap. Trail still looks very good. Annual maintenance by a large group should prolong the life of trail significantly.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 6/5/2013

Purpose: Assess Trail

Location: Sections 1, 2, 3, and 4, Damascus to Cross Mountain

People: Joe Morris

Summary: I hiked Tuesday and Wednesday from Damascus to Cross Mountain, TN 91, with Paul Mitchell of ATC for the purpose of doing a trail assessment. I also shuttled Paul back to Cross Mountain on Friday night from Dennis Cove to retrieve his rental car.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 6/5/2013

Purpose: Measure relocations for trail guide

Location: Section 11a, South from Dennis Cove Road

People: Collins Chew, Vic Hasler

Summary: Beating thunderstorms predicted for the following day, the purpose of this trip was to measure two small relocations heading trail south from the trailhead at Dennis Cove. The first was the initial 600 feet leaving the roadway, which opened in 2012. The second after the open field, opened just last week, moved the trail out of a "slippery steep rut" to the other side of a former fence line, and was measured to be 340 feet long. We continued to hike and measure until the next distance featured in the new 14th edition NC/TN guidebook - an overlook at 1.2 miles. The relocation does not change the guide book, being 1.18 mile by GPS and 1.22 mile per the rolling wheel. Collins Chew inspected the "harder rock" in the hillside which has been cut to provide a better tread. He concluded that the rock outcropping was made of Beech Granite, thus harder than the typical quartzite found in the region. Carl Fritz later reported that eight sledges plus some chisels were broken there; never have we broken so many in one place.

Reporting: Craig Haire

Date: 6/8/2013

Purpose: Clear trailside undergrowth

Location: Section 20a, North end of section near road (and Nolichucky River)

People: Craig Haire

Summary: I whacked weeds to clear the trail.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 6/8/2013

Purpose: Measure relocations for trail guide

Location: Section 15b, Cloudland Hotel to Hughes Gap

People: Serita Blankenbecler, Jason Clark, Vic Hasler

Summary: This trip measured the relocations that were completed to address severe trail erosion. After raining for two days, the clouds moved on; however, the newer relocations at the top were a slippery mess on the saturated tread. The trail distance from Cloudland Hotel to Ash Gap has been increased by 0.2 mile versus the 14th edition NC/TN guidebook, while another 0.1 mile was measured between Beartown Mtn and the blue blaze to water. Seven more relocations were observed to be flagged north of Ash Gap to continue moving the trail out of a steep, washed channel.

Reporting: Joe DeLoach

Date: 6/8/2013

Purpose: Cut annual growth

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

People: Joe DeLoach

Summary: I clipped blackberries and other growth along the side trail to Grassy Ridge Bald. Someone has put up a sign denoting the junction of that trail and the A.T.; not official and doesn't look permanent, but it is a sign. I met Roan Ridgerunner Kat Keely hauling trash down from Grassy Ridge. The first rhododendron are starting to bloom on Round Bald, which should be good for our June 21st hike.

Reporting: Scott VanDam

Date: 6/8/2013

Purpose: Cut back weeds and rhodos

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

People: Scott VanDam

Summary: With all the rain we've had lately, brush and weeds along the section have been growing profusely. I cut down weeds, picked up trash, cut three blowdowns with a handsaw, and trimmed back rhodos especially above muddy areas to allow more natural drying of the trail.

Reporting: Steve Perri

Date: 6/9/2013

Purpose: Teleconference with A.T. Partners

Location: Kingsport, TN

People: Steve Perri

Summary: I discussed the recent outbreak of Norovirus on the AT with ATC, USFS and health officials. There was an outbreak of Norovirus last year and again this year in the spring that occurred north of the Smokeys and into VA. Health officials believe it is spread predominantly person to person and is more likely spread where people congregate. The worst for the spread in the southern region is probably over. ATC is developing a coordination plan to provide improved education and precautions. So posters are being prepared, and the ATC and White Blaze websites will be provided with more info for quick release as early as July. A plan will be developed to prepare for 2014 with more info ahead of hiking season to inform hikers: how to reduce potential infection, transmission, decontamination and how to educate volunteers.

Reporting: Steve Perri

Date: 6/9/2013

Purpose: ATC Stewardship Council Nominations Committee Teleconference

Location: Kingsport, TN

People: Steve Perri

Summary: I reviewed the nominations of candidates to ATC's stewardship council and discussed recommendations with the nominating committee.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 6/11/2013

Purpose: Trim weeds

Location: Section 16a, Hughes Gap to Greasy Creek Gap

People: Jim Foster

Summary: I trimmed the weeds from Hughes Gap to Greasy Creek Gap. There were no other obstructions and the trail is in good shape (a little muddy from the recent heavy rains though).

Reporting: Paul Benfield

Date: 6/11/2013

Purpose: Mow trail

Location: Section 4b, Osborne Farm

People: Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery

Summary: We mowed the Accessible Trail and the AT across the Osborne Farm. Mike Rice needs to spray the trail. Also, a small work crew is needed to level and gravel part of the trail.

Reporting: Mike Hupko

Date: 6/12/2013

Purpose: Summer Maintenance

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

People: Bruce Darby, Faye Guinn, Howard Guinn, Susan Peters, Judy Middlemas, Eric Middlemas, Marsha Hupko, Mike Hupko

Summary: We mowed weeds and grass along the trail and to the spring at the orchard, cleaned waterbars, lopped branches and cut several trees.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 6/12/2013

Purpose: Reduce mud and brush

Location: Section 15b, Cloudland to Beartown Mountain

People: Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Richard Carter, Jim Foster, Carl Fritz, Becky Kinder, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples, Gayle Riddervolt, Tim Stewart

Summary: With recent reports of muddy trail and heavy rains at Cloudland two and three days before, we tackled the nine relocations closest to Cloudland. We think the new trail is holding up surprisingly well considering the extremely wet year and heavy hiker traffic. We added some drainage and repaired about 400 feet of muddy trail by adding rock pavers or crushed rock. A young family day hiked down in late afternoon and wore only sandals; their feet were not muddy. Gayle and Becky worked their way towards Beartown Mountain and removed brush. Unfortunately, they encountered eight small blowdowns which they removed, and were unable to get to Beartown Mountain.

Reporting: Bob Peoples

Date: 6/14/2013

Purpose: Cut weeds

Location: Section 11a, Dennis Cove Road to Canute Place

People: Bob Peoples

Summary: Bob cut weeds and brushed on this section. The weeds were not real bad. Tree growth has shaded many previously weedy areas. He removed three minor blowdowns from the recent heavy storms. The new trail opened with Hard Core on White Rocks Mountain is holding up very well.

Reporting: Mike Hupko

Date: 6/14/2013

Purpose: Summer Maintenance

Location: Section 18, FS 230 to Indian Grave Gap

People: Howard Guinn, Mike Hupko

Summary: We used a brush blade to cut back woody growth along the trail; we cut two dead rhodos next to the trail, picked up trash at trail head, and checked on grass growth at Beauty Spot.

Reporting: Scott VanDam

Date: 6/14/2013

Purpose: General Maintenance

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

People: Scott VanDam

Summary: After a strong storm blew thru yesterday, I decided to check the section. Sure enough, several more trees are across the trail, which I was able to saw out with handsaw. I also trimmed back rhodos. Aside from a little mud, this section is now in very good condition. It was a beautiful day for working outside :-)

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 6/14/2013

Purpose: Trim and fill muddy areas

Location: Section 8, US 321 to other side of Watauga Lake

People: Joe Morris

Summary: The purpose of the trip was to trim woody growth with Carl's string trimmer; however, the trail was so muddy I ended up filling a 20-foot long mud bog with rock. I trimmed from US 321 to the iron gate on other side of the lake. A 10-foot section of trail 200 yards NOBO from the US 321 parking area had collapsed due to heavy rains.

Reporting: Steve Wilson

Date: 6/15/2013

Purpose: Cut weeds, lop branches, and clear waterbars

Location: Section 3a, McQueen's Gap to Spring

People: Steve Perri, Steve Wilson

Summary: We cut weeds, lopped branches, and cleaned out waterbars. We also cut branches at the spring to allow access to water further down that should be running later in the summer. This section of trail is in good shape.

Reporting: Tim McClain

Date: 6/16/2013

Purpose: Cut weeds

Location: Section 3b, US 421 to rock wall

People: Tim McClain

Summary: I started at US421 and headed north to cut weeds. As reported, they were very healthy! I was not able to complete the section, but got as far as the rock wall. The south end of this section is typically the worst part. I will return within the next few weeks to complete the section from the rock wall to the spring.