



# The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

November 2014

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

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## From the Chair

*Brien Lewis, Steering Committee Chair*

I hope that each of you has found some time to set aside from your busy schedule to enjoy the beautiful fall weather we have had. The cool breeze, dazzling colors and crunch of leaves under foot are quintessential Fall. After the leaves are down, trail maintenance is needed to clear them from water bars; thus volunteers are wanted who enjoy a steady walk with some stops to wield a tool. Cold weather has driven the paddlers indoors with practice sessions at the aquatic centers on Tuesdays in Johnson City and Thursdays in Kingsport.

As 2014 winds down, so ends another round of TEHCC committee members' duty. Terry Dougherty, Tim McClain and Garry Luttrell will rotate off the committee after serving the 2013-2014 term. I will stay on the committee for another year as past chair, and Steve Ankabrandt will

assume the chair position for 2015. Our slate of committee members for the 2015-2016 term are Andrea Ramsey Gass, Yancey Appling, and William Werner. Each of these individuals will bring a unique perspective to the committee and we are excited to have their participation. Finally, please take a moment to review the biographies of the new Steering Committee members and then welcome them with a vote of confirmation. Communicate with them regarding what direction you would like to see the club head over the next two years, and physically support the activities you enjoy, so that we know to continue those aspects. Ideas for 2015 dinner speakers are also desired to have relevant programs.

## 2015 Steering Committee Nominees

The TEHCC Steering Committee would like to recommend the following members for a two year term (2015-2016). Instead of an election, we now have a confirmation step where 50% favorable feedback approves their seating. Biographies are provided below for your reference. Eastman employees can approve or reject the confirmations online [here](#), while retirees can give their consent or not by sending Tim Schaefer an email at [tschaefer@eastman.com](mailto:tschaefer@eastman.com) or by calling him at 423-229-6244 to leave a voice mail. Per the club constitution, non-Eastman employees are not eligible for this action. The deadline is November 22<sup>nd</sup> so the results can be announced in the December newsletter.

### **Andrea Ramsey Gass**

Andrea is a chemical engineering graduate from the University of Kentucky. She started working at Eastman in 2012 in the Coatings and Plastics Esters Department as a development engineer and is now a tech staff engineer in CPE. As a co-op at Eastman, she spent many weekends hiking with fellow students in local areas with Laurel Fork being her favorite! Hiking and camping have always been some of Andrea's favorite outdoor activities, but since she started working at Eastman she has developed a keen interest in whitewater kayaking. The Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts, a local paddling group, introduced Andrea to the sport and now she can't wait to share paddling activities and ideas with TEHCC! SYOTR, See You On The River!

### **Yancey Appling**

Yancey is a technician in the Microbiology Support Lab and is coming up on his one year anniversary with Eastman. He recently moved to the area from Clemson, SC where he grew up. He has been backpacking for 10 years, but spends most of my time rock climbing, hiking, and mountain biking.

## William Werner

William joined Eastman and TEHCC in 2011 and currently works in Global Logistics in Building 280. Moving from Texas to Tennessee in 2001 quickly turned him into an avid day-hiker, and most of his early excursions were done in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park near Townsend. He's now working on a repertoire of favorite hikes that are convenient to the Tri-Cities. In the winter, he skis at Beech Mountain, NC, temperature permitting.

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## TEHCC Fall 2014 Dinner Meeting

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### *Vic Hasler reporting*

A meal and outstanding trip review were enjoyed with friends on Friday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>. The crowd of about 60 actively mingled during Happy Trails to share stories. During this informal time, we heard about the great progress being made on the Koonford Bridge. The menu was kabobs, baked potatoes, salad, and cobblers, which has been relished at some past dinner meetings.

Club business was quickly covered. The TN A.T. tag program continues to provide funds for projects, which Morgan Sommerville noted included support for two land acquisitions of the Atwater property and in the Rocky Fork area. Girl Scout Troop 263 relayed that the club was collecting donations for their project at an animal shelter. So far during 2013, the hike program reports that 75+ unique participants (as some of you are really "unique") have gone on 30+ events. "Plus" because the schedule continues into November with great fall hikes planned. Brien Lewis noted that two incoming steering committee slots had been filled with the need for one more to round out the slate.

A slide highlighted the special maintenance projects completed so far in 2014, including 0.8 miles of trail rehabbed and 1.9 miles of relocations dug. Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS) almost completed a major relocation at Turkeypen Gap on Iron Mountain. Koonford Bridge in Laurel Fork Gorge was currently being replaced. There is ongoing need for maintainers to cover the three rotating sections – and occasionally replace leadership on other segments.

"Just Jim" Chambers is going to embark on a one-year hike of Appalachian Trail beginning Veteran's Day (Nov 11) with the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP). Plans are to make two trips of A.T. (over 4200 miles!) accompanied by at least one disabled veteran at all times. His objectives are to raise donations for the WPP, promote awareness of needs of A.T. and surrounding communities, and encourage local service by volunteering on each of the 31 trail maintaining club sections. TEHCC will be watching and supporting his significant effort.

Over two weeks this year, TEHCC members and the Konnarock Crew dug 1750 feet of sidehill trail near Clyde Smith Shelter, south of Hughes Gap to remove a "pointless up and down" that was eroding and had many waterbars. A 2300-foot relocation started last year was also opened in 2014. This effort was supported by 17 club volunteers with 347 hours. Earning t-shirts for 40 hours minimum (yes, at least 86% of the total) of the hard work were Jim Chambers, Carl Fritz, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Mike Price ("Lumpy"), and George Thorpe.

Appalachian National Scenic Trail Volunteer Recognition program had patches for 100-499 cumulative service hours for Dave McMillan, Greg Kramer, Mike Price, James Lautzenheiser, Gerald Scott, Scotty Bowman, Peter King, Andrew Downs, John Robbins, Mary Jane Fritz, Michael Ray, Brenna Irrer, Wayne Jones, Dan Firth, Donna Dean, Chef Paul, Maura Weaver, Scott Ourth, and Dianna Ristom. Caps for 500-999 hours were given to Joe Morris and L.A. Tarlin. Finally, fleece vests for exceeding 1,000 hours over the years were provided for John Beaudet, Jim Chambers, Daryel Anderson, and George Thorpe.

The \$25 gift cards raffled off during the evening went to Mr. and Mrs. Hanson (speaker's in-laws) plus Steve Perri, who were all sitting at the same table. Conspiracy theories were suggested, but none were proven.

The main program was presented by Ed Montgomery, with the assistance of video-man George Bridwell, about a six-day float trip down the Middle Fork of the Salmon Impassable Canyon section in Idaho. The high-end excursion provided the audience with views of steep valley walls to desert scenery while the crew paddled down the stream with rapids up to Class IV. Many A.T. backpackers would love to have a crew go ahead of them to set up their tent, put out a camp chair, have a cold beverage ready, and cook gourmet meals.

Thanks to the Steering Committee for arranging a fun evening. Ideas from the club membership about possible future speakers and programs would be greatly appreciated.

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## Oliver Hollow Use Restriction Due to Bear Activity

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The National Forest Service lands are closed to most recreation from north of Shook Branch (US 321) to a half-mile north of Wilbur Dam Road. Bears are active in this area. Individuals are only permitted to hike through this area. Please continue hiking through this area without stopping. Watauga Lake Shelter is closed. No preparation or consumption of food or overnight stays allowed. This closure is effective until December 1, 2015. [Oliver Hollow bear closure map](#)

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## Remembering Bill Berry

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### *Ed Oliver reporting*

Bill Berry, one of our most dedicated Appalachian Trail volunteers, died on August 3, 2014. He was 64 years old. He served in the United States Air Force, serving through two tour duties in Vietnam. He was employed for the past thirty-five years as a control tech at Johnson Control.

Bill and his wife enjoyed camping and he developed a passion for maintaining hiking trails. He maintained a couple of trail sections for the Carolina Mountain Club (CMC) for about ten years through 2001. When the Tennessee Eastman Hiking Club decided to begin offering sections of the Appalachian Trail for adoption for maintenance, Bill was interested in the section between Spivey Gap and Chestoa. I remember walking the trail between Spivey Gap and No Business Knob Shelter with Bill. We talked about what needed to be done and about Bill's plans. I was surprised when he said that he would like to have a goal of working on the section once a month. I told him that would be great but that we would be very happy if he could get out three or four times a year. I was amazed at what Bill was able to do for this section of trail in the following years. He eventually adopted the trail section from Spivey Gap to Temple Hill Gap (7.3 miles). I was fortunate enough to be able to work with Bill on this section a few times. He was truly dedicated to trail maintenance. It was always a pleasure to work with him.

Bill was the first TEHCC maintainer who accumulated over 1000 hours by working solely on his trail section. Bill's many hours spent on his trail section resulted in many improvements. This section of the trail and the lives of those who knew Bill have been truly enriched. He will be missed.

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## 2014-2015 Deer Hunting Seasons

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### *Vic Hasler reporting - information also available on the trail wiki*

Many of our local trails pass through national forests where hunting is permitted. For example, hunting is allowed along the Appalachian Trail within national forests and it is lawful to hunt from the Trail itself. Deer hunting is popular in the local mountains and during firearms seasons can pose a greater risk to hikers than bow hunting or hunting for other smaller prey. The upcoming deer hunting seasons in our area are as follows:

#### East Tennessee (Sunday hunting permitted)

Muzzleloader: November 8 – January 4

Gun: November 22 – January 4

Youth: October 25-26, January 10-11

#### Southwest Virginia (Sunday hunting prohibited – except on private property by owner or written permission)

Muzzleloader: November 1-14 and December 13 – January 3

Gun: November 15 – 29

#### Western North Carolina, Watauga and Ashe Counties (Sunday hunting with firearms prohibited, archery allowed)

Blackpowder: September 30 – October 12

Gun: November 22 – January 1

#### Other Western NC Counties (Sunday hunting with firearms prohibited, archery allowed)

Blackpowder: September 29- October 11

Gun: November 24 – December 13

Hikers should note the prohibitions on Sunday hunting in Virginia and North Carolina. Safer hike locations during this time period would be national park lands such as the Great Smoky Mountains, Blue Ridge Parkway, and Cumberland Gap; state parks such as Warrior's Path, Roan Mountain, and Breaks Interstate; and city parks such as Bays and Buffalo Mountain. Many of these parks border land where hunting is permitted and the boundaries are not always evident – with Hampton Creek Cove Natural Area and Buffalo Mountain Park being good examples. Some Virginia state parks, including Grayson Highlands, Natural Tunnel, and Hungry Mother, allow some hunting. Hikers wishing to visit those parks in the fall are encouraged to contact the park offices.

During hunting season, hikers are urged to wear blaze orange. Packs often cover a hiker's back, so a cap and orange ribbons tied to the pack in addition to an orange jacket or vest are encouraged. If you bring your dog, it should wear orange too. Hiking groups tend to cause more commotion than a lone hiker and hiking with others is strongly encouraged in areas where hunting is permitted. Be especially careful the first few days of the season.

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## TEHCC Welcomes New Members

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Luke Collins

Carrie Lloyd

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## Event Schedule – Next Two Months

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

Date	Description	Leader	Contact
Nov 8	Special A.T. Maintenance with ASU Trail Crew	<a href="#">Carl Fritz</a>	
Nov 9	F/B: Steele Creek Park – Loop Around Lake	<a href="#">Vic Hasler</a>	423-239-0388
Nov 15	3 <sup>rd</sup> Saturday Hiking with Tools	<a href="#">Kim Peters</a>	423-366-0128
Nov 16	F/B: <a href="#">Buffalo Mountain Park – White Rock Overlook</a>	<a href="#">Barry Griggs</a>	423-239-5676 or 423-863-4590
Nov 18	TEHCC Steering Committee		

### Standard Hike Information

Hikes leaving from “Colonial Heights” meet at the parking lot below McDonalds, 4317 Fort Henry Drive, which is NW of I-81 Exit 59. “Johnson City” meeting location is behind Parkway Discount Wine & Liquor just off I-81 Exit 24 at the intersection of University Parkway and South Roan Street, which is reached 20 minutes later. All hikes will leave promptly to stay close to schedule. Carpooling is encouraged with passengers providing a few dollars each towards gas.

Bring water, snack, layered clothing appropriate for the weather, comfortable footwear, bug spray, camera, and trekking poles as desired. At the discretion of the hike leader, the family dog can come if friendly and kept on leash. Walking speed is typically 2 mph including rest breaks. For more information, check the trail wiki (click on hike title if underlined for link) or call the hike leader. It is appropriate to contact the hike leader to let them know that you are interested in coming and provide a cell phone number in case plans change by either party.

An activity release form is signed by everyone going on the hike – and it helps capture the names and spelling for the trip report. Good digital photos from the hike are also appreciated for the newsletter and trail wiki.

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## Details of Upcoming Events

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### Recurring Events

#### Tuesday Evenings: Johnson City Roll Practice, 7:30 – 9:00 pm

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

Come join the [J.A.W.](#), [Mahoney’s Outfitters](#), [APEs](#), and other paddlers from our region at Freedom Hall Pool for tips about basic kayaking skills. 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. 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.

Click [here](#) for more information.

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 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 contact [Wesley R. Bradley](#). We will try our best to get you outfitted for the night! Also feel free to contact me for any other questions or comments you may have.

#### Most Thursdays: Weekly A.T. Trail Maintenance

Contact: [Carl Fritz](#), 423-477-4669, [atvolunteer@tehcc.org](mailto:atvolunteer@tehcc.org)

Join a group of maintainers who work somewhere on our 133.6-mile section each week, usually on Thursdays.

#### Thursday Evenings: Kayak Session, Kingsport Aquatic Center, 7 – 9 pm

Contact: [George Mauger](#), 864-414-0296

Interested in kayaking but don’t know where to start? Basic kayaking training and practice is now available in Kingsport on Thursdays at the [Kingsport Aquatic Center](#)! During the winter months (October-April), the indoor pool is sectioned off specifically for kayakers to practice basic paddling techniques. Admission is only \$3 for 2 full hours of fun and Aquatic Center members may attend free! If

you have equipment, you may drop it off outside the door closest to the pool then enter the main door to pay at the front desk. The pool does not provide paddling equipment, but if you are just starting out and do not have your own gear please contact [George Mauger](#) (864-414-0296). For additional event details, click [here](#).

### **3rd Saturday, Hiking with Tools!**

Contact: Kim Peters, [atmaint@tehcc.org](mailto:atmaint@tehcc.org), 423-366-0128

Come out for a day hike somewhere on our beautiful section of trail on the 3rd Saturday of each month and help out on some routine maintenance needs, such as cutting annual growth, cleaning out water bars and painting blazes. All tools will be furnished and no prior experience required! Contact [Kim](#) for details and meeting time and place.

## **Scheduled Events**

### **Special A.T. Maintenance with ASU Trail Crew – Saturday, November 8, 2014**

Leader: [Carl Fritz](#)

The ASU Trail Crew will be joining us to work on a trail relocation [South of Little Rock Knob](#). We will start at Hughes Gap and walk about 2.5 miles to the site. Please contact Carl Fritz [atvolunteer@tehcc.org](mailto:atvolunteer@tehcc.org). This event is scheduled from 8 AM – 5 PM.

### **F/B: Steele Creek Park, Loop around Lake – Sunday, November 9, 2014**

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

Rating: 5 miles around lake

With the shorter days, this Sunday afternoon hike enjoys a walk around the lake in a local park by combining the High Ridge (up-n-down) and North Ridge (flat) trails - with short walk along the roadway to connect. Let's leave at 1 pm from Colonial Heights to arrive at the eastside Rooster Front entrance by 1:45 pm. Bring some water and a hiking stick, if desired. Frequent breaks will be taken on the High Ridge trail to find the series of geocaches hidden along the path. Expected return is 5 pm.

### **F/B: Buffalo Mountain Park, White Rock Overlook – Sunday, November 16, 2014**

Leader: [Barry Griqqs](#) 423-239-5676 or 423-863-4590

Rating: Moderate 3-mile round-trip hike with ~1100-ft elevation up, and then back down

Views of the I-26 valley and mountains to the east from the overlook are the reward for a steep walk up trails or the gravel access road. Leave Colonial Heights at 1:00 pm or Johnson City at 1:20 pm to arrive at the park trailhead by 1:30 pm. Expected return is before sunset.

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## **For the Record**

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### **Lake Keokee Loop Trail, Sunday, September 21, 2014**

*Terry Dougherty reporting*

We started our four-mile hike on the eastern side of the lake in very light rain. The trail was in poor condition with lots of over growth, 15 or more blowdowns, and many log foot bridges rotted out; but the trail tread was good. Views of the lake were very limited from that side. The trail was well marked, but the last serious maintenance was probably ten or more years ago for that side of the lake. After 3 miles of borderline bushwhacking, we came to the dam with very nice views of the lake. The mile of trail from the dam back to the starting point on the western side was in very good condition with nice views of the lake. A few ducks were the only wildlife we saw. This area is isolated and if one wanted to hike without seeing anyone, this might be a good place. Hikers were Mary Tennant and Thresa and Terry Dougherty.

### **ATC Family Hiking Day - Carvers Gap to Grassy Ridge, September 27, 2014**

*Vic Hasler reporting*

What a gorgeous day to be on the Roan balds! The hike to Grassy Ridge was under a deep blue sky with a comfortable temperature and light breeze. The sweeping views of the surrounding lush green terrain were clear and distinct. Other folks also thought it was a great afternoon to be out, as many families and groups were seen walking various distances from Carvers Gap. On this TEHCC hike were Lola and Charles Kelchner, Eugene, Suzanne, and Rachel Dobbs (with Clover on leash), and Vic Hasler.

### **Tweetsie Trail, Sunday, September 28, 2014**

*Barry Griqqs reporting*

On a warm but comfortable Sunday afternoon, our hike began at the trailhead at the intersection of Legion Street and Alabama Street in Johnson City, TN. The parking lot at the trailhead was overflowing, but parking was available in other nearby gravel areas. The trail is obviously very popular with walkers, runners and bikers, especially on weekends, as we were never out of sight of one or more people. With two cancellations and one no-show, this became a Griqqs/Metcalf family hike. My wife Beverly and I were joined by our daughter, Jill Metcalf and her husband, Josh Metcalf. We walked out two miles and back to make it a four-mile hike. The trail



has markers every 0.2 miles, so it's very easy to make the walk/ride whatever distance you like. The finished portion of the trail from Johnson City to Elizabethton is 4.5 miles. It should be a very easy walk for most anyone, with a slight uphill grade when returning to Johnson City. The trail is a very nice addition to our region.

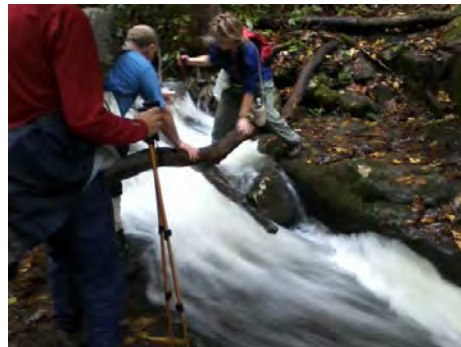
### **Falls of Little Stoney Creek, October 12, 2014 – Joint Hike with Mid-Appalachian Highlands Club**

*R. Blankenbecler reporting*

Two TEHCC hikers met up with 9 MAHC hikers for a bit more of a hiking adventure than anticipated. We left Kingsport in a light rain, but by the time we neared Dungannon the clouds parted and we were rewarded with a nice autumn day. However, due to the recent heavy rains, water levels were very high. If the person who named Little Stoney Creek had first seen it the day we were there, it would have been called Big Stoney River with Rapids! Rocks and fallen leaves on the trail were very slick from the rain and the trail was under standing water in some places. One stream crossing normally done via rock hopping required assistance from fellow hikers by grabbing onto a log and helping hands to make the leap over rapidly moving water. The upper and lower falls were quite impressive and much larger than anyone on the hike remembered from past years. We enjoyed the adventure, as well as the fall colors. We will perhaps try another joint hike in the spring and hope for more TEHCC participation in the future. J. Liu and hike leader R. Blankenbecler comprised the TEHCC contingent on this excellent adventure.



*Options are considered for crossing a rain-swollen stream on the way to the falls*



*Hikers help each other across*



*Lower falls*

### **Pinnacle Mountain Fire Tower, October 19, 2014**

*Barry Griggs reporting*

What a beautiful day for a fall hike in the mountains of east Tennessee! We honestly could not have ordered a more perfect day. Our illustrious group of seven gathered at the trailhead to begin our nine-mile round-trip up to Pinnacle Mountain Fire Tower. The restrooms in the relatively new building at the trailhead provide a convenient beginning in preparation for the lengthy hike. Several other hikers and bikers were also taking advantage of the beautiful day to get out and enjoy God's creation. The trail's many switchbacks make the trail probably the most doable 4.5-mile hike up a mountain anywhere in these parts. It can be completed by even the most casual hiker with a few rest stops on the way if necessary. While leaves are on the trees, the trail is shaded the whole way. The 360-degree views from the top of the tower were spectacular with the reds and yellows really outstanding! Although overall peak color was probably just a few days away, there were many trees that were already in full color. The bright blue sky and clear air allowed maximum visibility for many, many miles.

The hike downhill back to the parking area went very quickly and our group headed for home with mental pictures of beautiful views and several new friends among fellow hikers and lovers of the outdoors. Hikers were Zhufang Liu, Junjia Liu, Lin Liu, Jackie Liu, Jinghua Yuan, Jim Floyd and Barry Griggs.



## Warriors Path State Park - Mountain Bike Trails, October 26, 2014

Vic Hasler reporting

With golden maple leaves fallen thick along the paths, my mind considered several lines from the famous Robert Frost poem: *Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and sorry I could not travel both. And be one traveler, long I stood and looked down one as far as I could to where it bent in the undergrowth... And both that morning equally lay in leaves no step had trodden black. Oh, I kept the first for another day! I'll be back as the winding trail system is very close by for Kingsport, thus able to quickly reach for another afternoon walk. This day I shared the leaf-crunchy trails with a few mountain bike riders, but no other club member.*



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## A.T. Maintenance Reports

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**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 9/25/2014

**Purpose:** Replace Koonford Bridge

**Location:** Section 10, Dennis Cove to Koonford Bridge

**People:** Daryl Anderson, Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Richard Carter, Jim Chambers, Carl Fritz, Becky Kinder, Pat Loven, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Bill Murdoch, Ed Oliver, Brian Paley, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Gayle Riddervold, Kevin Sedgwick, George Thorpe

**Summary:** There was a bad start when one maintainer hit a deer on the way to the car pool site. The rest of the day went much better. We completed drilling sills, and transported and installed them. After making all the dimensional changes to the piers, the bridge is going to be straight and well on the sills. We improved the temporary transport path at the bridge. We definitely improved the roots and rocks on the Appalachian Trail and a temporary bridge was built at the first stream crossing at Dennis Cove.



**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 9/27/2014

**Purpose:** Replace Koonford Bridge

**Location:** Section 10, Dennis Cove to Koonford Bridge

**People:** Paul Benfield, Richard Carter, Carl Fritz, Becky Kinder, Ted Mowery, Bill Murdoch, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Gayle Riddervold, John Robbins, Kevin Sedgwick, George Thorpe

**Summary:** We continued to smooth and widen the trail so bridge materials can be more easily transported. Some significant bumps and dips have been evened out. After several weeks of significant trail rehab, it is now ready. We had 80 to 100 hikers today.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 9/29/2014

**Purpose:** Replace Koonford Bridge

**Location:** Kingsport to Hampton

**People:** Carl Fritz, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples

**Summary:** Much time has been spent making bridge measurements, obtaining tools, and making specialized carts to replace Koonford Bridge.

**Reporting:** Faye Guinn

**Date:** 9/30/2014

**Purpose:** Cut blowdowns

**Location:** Section 16b, Iron Mountain Gap to Big Rock

**People:** Howard Guinn, Faye Guinn

**Summary:** We cut two large fallen trees near the rock and trimmed two fallen apple trees out of the trail; one at the orchard and one just before the open space that is the orchard. We cleaned all the waterbars and checked the spring. I picked up trash at Iron Mountain Gap and at one of the campsites. A four-wheeler had been all over the orchard.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 9/30/2014



**Purpose:** Replace Koonford Bridge

**Location:** Section 10, Koonford Bridge

**People:** Daryl Anderson, John Beaudet, Paul Benfield, Sutton Brown, Ken Buchanan, Robin Dean, Jim Foster, Carl Fritz, Mike Hupko, Becky Kinder, Greg Kramer, Pat Loven, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Bill Murdoch, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Gayle Riddervold, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart, George Thorpe, Nathan Wilcher; Hiker: John Ellison; and 8 Forest Service personnel

**Summary:** Some called this a "really good" day. Others said it was a "fantastic" day. All nine beams are now laying on the bridge spans. When most of the beams are 22 feet long and weigh 400 pounds, that is no small feat. Many thanks to the Forest Service for providing some young muscle to tote some of those beams! Everyone contributed to make this a successful and important day in the rebuilding of the Koonford Bridge.



**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 10/1/2014

**Purpose:** Replace Koonford Bridge

**Location:** Carl's House

**People:** Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Bill Murdoch, Ed Oliver, George Thorpe

**Summary:** We finished preparing posts for the hand rails, sorted hardware, loaded all of the hand rails, posts, and bracing, and assembled tools for another big day tomorrow at the work site.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 10/2/2014

**Purpose:** Replace Koonford Bridge

**Location:** Section 10, Koonford Bridge

**People:** Daryl Anderson, John Beaudet, Paul Benfield, Scotty Bowman, Richard Carter, Carl Fritz, Mike Hupko, Becky Kinder, Greg Kramer, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Bill Murdoch, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Reuben Potter, Gayle Riddervold, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart, George Thorpe

**Summary:** This was the second "fantastic" maintenance day this week. These enthusiastic volunteers hauled in deck boards, cross bracing, handrail posts, more than a hundred pounds of hardware, and many tools. We also up-righted the nine beams, anchored them to the sills with 10" lag screws and angles, installed cross bracing, fastened down 3x8 decking and fastened posts for the handrails. It has been a very successful week!





**Reporting:** Scotty Bowman

**Date:** 10/4/2014

**Purpose:** Clean up shelter and remove trash

**Location:** Section 7, Vandeventer Shelter to Wilbur Dam Road

**People:** Scotty Bowman

**Summary:** It was a brisk Saturday morning when I hiked up to Vandeventer shelter for a little tidying up and trash removal. A couple weeks earlier, I had heard there was a campsite that had a lot of trash and the plan was to seek it out and do a little clean up. I found the site about 2 miles past the shelter traveling trail North; but some good samaritan had already picked up the trash and dropped it off at the shelter. The water sources were pretty much dry between Iron Mountain and Vandeventer shelters. The one at Iron Mountain Shelter was trickling at the pipe and the Vandeventer water source was dry.

**Reporting:** Rick Lott

**Date:** 10/5/2014

**Purpose:** Remove blowdowns

**Location:** Section 12b, Walnut Mountain Road to trail south one mile

**People:** Rick Lott, Vicki Lott

**Summary:** Rick and Vicki took out the two blowdowns trail north of Mountaineer Falls Shelter. One was about a half mile from Walnut Mtn Rd. It was about 12 inches and took two smaller trees down with it. The next one was about another half mile south and was a pretty large 30-inch tree. It took several wedge cuts with a 16" chainsaw to be able to roll it off the trail.

**Reporting:** Ken Murray

**Date:** 10/5/2014

**Purpose:** Routine Maintenance

**Location:** Section 20b, Devils Creek Gap to Spivy Gap

**People:** Ken Murray, Lotta Murray

**Summary:** We clipped brush and cleared blowdowns from Devils Creek Gap to Spivy Gap. The Trail is in good shape. There is one stealth fire ring that needs to be cleaned up and a small blowdown near Spivy Gap that needs a bigger saw.

**Reporting:** John Robbins

**Date:** 10/5/2014

**Purpose:** Routine maintenance

**Location:** Section 3b, Spring to US 421

**People:** John Robbins, Joanne Robbins

**Summary:** We walked to McQueen's Gap, removed several small dead falls, cleaned waterbars, and pruned back briars. We spoke with a couple South Bounders. The Trail is in good shape.

**Reporting:** Craig Haire

**Date:** 10/6/2014

**Purpose:** Rehab treadway

**Location:** Section 20a, Nolichucky River to Temple Hill Gap, north end of section

**People:** Craig Haire

**Summary:** I leveled out a couple of sections where the outsloping was too steep.

**Reporting:** Steve Perri

**Date:** 10/8/2014

**Purpose:** ATC Partnership Meeting

**Location:** Unicoi, TN

**People:** ATC – Morgan Sommerville, John O'Dell, Leanna Joyner; USFS – Cheryl Summers, Matt Fusco, Alice Cohen, Reuben Potter, Matt McCombs, Brandon Jones, Andy Hunter, Allison Williams; TEHCC – Mike Hupko, Bob Peoples, Jim Foster, Tim Stewart, Paul Benfield, Kim Peters, Ted Mowery, Carl Fritz, Steve Perri

**Summary:** Our fall ATC partnership meeting was held at the Watauga Ranger District Service office in Unicoi.

TEHCC reports: Since the April meeting, significant work had been carried out including rehab of about 0.5 mi in the areas near Jane Bald-Stan Murray Shelter, trail South of Clyde Smith Shelter, and Dennis Cove. Trail relos totaled about 1.75 miles consisting of Backbone Rock Blue-blaze (0.7 mi w/ ASU), Little Rock Knob-Greasy Creek Gap (Hard Core and Konnarock), and Hughes Gap – Cloudland. The entire section from Hughes Gap to Cloudland is now complete after 5 yrs, adding 2 miles of trail and eliminating the steep eroding treadway. This project was challenging because of the required rock and drainage work, and the type of soil. The SAWS almost completed the Turkey Pen Gap relo (0.4 mi) this year, but were slowed by poison ivy – this relo will likely be done in one more outing. Work south of TN 91 is ongoing and will include Konnarock work in 2015 or 2016. Koonford Bridge is almost complete thanks

to the retirees and a coordinated effort with USFS staff and the hot shots; project time is almost 2300 hrs to date. For the fiscal year, TEHCC reported 14,819 hrs with 376 events and 442 individuals.

Agency discussions: Andy Hunter was present as the acting ranger for Terry Bowerman; his replacement will be named soon. Allison Williams is a new volunteer coordinator in NC and was present for her first week reporting to work – she will be working in the same building as SORO. Overall agreement exists for adding signage on the northbound side of Carvers Gap to improve hiker education and LNT principles. The thought is to have single-panelled signs located in a way to reduce their presence at the main viewpoints. John O’Dell has info to incorporate and Matt Fusco provided a design template – maybe \$500-700 ea. We’ll need to work with the Roan Stewardship Council to agree on locations. We discussed progress with the A.T. closure around Watauga Lake. The USFS closure process will allow the trail to be reopened from November to a date to be set in the spring. We agreed to make signage changes to reflect this, but will keep websites and printed media with info conveying continual closure through next year to avoid confusion. We will be surveying work needed for the two bridges in Laurel Fork Wilderness. Alice would like us to review the USFS prescription for changes to structures to ensure we are consistent with the minimum requirements. The old Koonford Bridge center span, removed this fall, is planned to go in at Shook Branch to replace an older foot bridge. TEHCC needs to check with Lynn DiFiori for spec suitability. Morgan reminded us to anchor one end of all the bridges in the Wilderness to ensure they don’t wash away in future floods. The USFS is working to relocate the fencing on the Osborne tract; final result is to have the accessible part cow-free. Matt described a long term plan to do more grazing in open areas over time. This could help with reintroduction and expanded habitat for elk. TEHCC has two proposals in to the Watauga district for campsites (Wildermine Hollow grouping and temporary one south of Shook Branch) and a relo for Old Ridge Road near Double Springs. Alice is going to follow up on these. The prescribed burn at Steel House (near Backbone Rock) is planned since it wasn’t done previously. Another is planned near Old Ridge Rd. Hikers will be escorted during the burns.

ATC discussions: Fletcher Medina was hired for the Roan Ridgerunner season in 2014. Fletcher did a good job considering the high number of visitors and issues around conveying LNT. Some visitors felt his message would have more credibility if there was more signage with the same message. Jon suggested having mostly weekend coverage in the future to allow a longer duration and to keep the person fresher. Open area funding got held up this year, then was released at about half (\$35k). John Odell is considering hiring a person next year if funds are available at the same level. Noro virus education seemed to help reduce incidents this year, although more occurrences were reported in VA this year. The kiosk project partnership is in the planning phase as an Eagle Scout Project with Rob Martin assisting. TEHCC will follow up with Rob to keep up with the scout’s proposal to his committee. ATC would like the project to be documented on their updated project form –soon to be released.

Next meeting: April 8, 2015 location TBD.

**Reporting:** Pat Loven

**Date:** 10/8/2014

**Purpose:** Remove blowdown

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

**People:** Pat Loven, Ken Buchanan

**Summary:** Ken and I drove up the jeep road on the south side of White Rock Mountain. We removed a blowdown located about 150 yards north of the jeep road/A.T. intersection.

**Reporting:** Mike Hupko

**Date:** 10/13/2014

**Purpose:** Fall Maintenance

**Location:** Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap south about 1/2 mile

**People:** Mike Hupko

**Summary:** I picked up limbs of various sizes, cut one small tree, rehabbed about 15 feet of trail, cleaned out several dips, and picked up trash at the trail head. I also scouted out the location of locust logs near Iron Mountain Gap for future trail repair.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 10/15/2014

**Purpose:** Replace Koonford Bridge

**Location:** Carl's house

**People:** Ed Oliver, Carl Fritz

**Summary:** Many hours were spent in October to sort and label Koonford bridge hand rails, clean and repair tools like chainsaws used to cut posts, prepare hardware, and locate specialized tools.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 10/16/2014

**Purpose:** Replace Koonford Bridge

**Location:** Section 10, Koonford Bridge area

**People:** Daryel Anderson, John Beaudet, Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Carl Fritz, Mike Hupko, Leanna Joyner, Greg Kramer, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Bill Murdoch, Brian Paley, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Mike Price, Morgan Sommerville, Tim Stewart, Jack Tarlin, George Thorpe,

**Summary:** 50 degrees with light rain all day was not a good harbinger. One maintainer kept saying we were certifiably crazy. But everyone stuck with it and the Koonford Bridge was officially opened! We installed the hand rails with some fitting since the posts and rails were just treated fence posts. Most of the crew worked diligently, rebuilding both approaches to avoid having a 24-inch step to get onto the bridge. They used rocks to raise the trail. At the north end, about sixty feet of trail was rebuilt. Part of the crew removed the temporary bridges close to Dennis Cove and used the soil and rock to make better ramps for the permanent bridges. The transportation trail was brushed in. The opening of the Koonford Bridge was just in time. The temporary locust log bridge was washed out about a day earlier. It was about 25-feet downstream on the north bank and was destroyed by the recent heavy rains. Bill Murdoch came to the rescue late in the day by retrieving his boat trailer at the marina and transporting the 24-foot long beams from the previous bridge to Rat Branch Work Center. What a crew of volunteers!

**Reporting:** Vic Hasler

**Date:** 10/17/2014

**Purpose:** Assess trail section

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

**People:** Vic Hasler

**Summary:** I adopted this 4.2-mile section, and on a sunny Friday, walked the trail to assess its highlights, condition, and needs. Last time I hiked this stretch was in 2007 before the excellent relocation was installed. Highlights are the view into the Nolichucky River gorge, bridges over cascading streams, and the rhododendron when in bloom. The condition was found to be good, although six blowdowns were reported to Carl with directions and pictures. I clipped rhododendron during the hike; the uphill side requires more thorough pruning. The sidehill tread needs some rehab in several places due to severe sloughing. I later discovered that two of the places are rated critical on the ATC assessment from June 2013. Historical data show that this section required nine person-days of routine maintenance, so I will be back with others to keep the trail open.

**Reporting:** Kim Peters

**Date:** 10/17/2014

**Purpose:** Check shelter and trail

**Location:** Section 5, TN 91 to Iron Mountain Shelter

**People:** Phyllis Cairnes, Kim Peters

**Summary:** We hiked out to the shelter, clearing numerous blowdowns along the way. The recent high winds also left a lot of small debris on the trail. Most blowdowns we were able to drag off the trail, but several did require sawing including the top of one large tree which completely blocked the trail. At the shelter, we picked up trash, cleaned up the fire pit and left a new broom and log book. We also installed a sign at the water source visible to north bounders. Not surprisingly after all the rain we have had, the spring is flowing well. On the hike back out we obliterated numerous fire pits and picked up the trash they had accumulated. I lost count of the number of south bounders and weekend hikers that we passed. It was a lovely fall day to be out in the woods.

**Reporting:** Steve Perri

**Date:** 10/18/2014

**Purpose:** ATC SORO Regional Partnership Meeting

**Location:** Asheville, NC

**People:** Vic Hasler, Steve Perri

**Summary:** Our fall ATC partnership meeting was held at the Asheville ATC Regional Office. A range of topics was covered with a full agenda prepared for this all day meeting. Updates from the APPA (Appalachian Trail Park Office) and ATC were provided for the Foundation Document and the ATC strategic plan. The NPS gathered club responses and incorporated those in the current version of the Foundation Document. Expect the next release in January. ATC's strategic plan is now in final form and a one-pager has been prepared highlighting the five areas of focus. We did an exercise to gather representative inputs from clubs to compare how well they aligned with the SORO's 2014 and 2015 budget. Topping the list was Effective Stewardship (~50% of the budget) with Broader Relevancy (3% of the budget) coming in second. Two major policy discussions being developed were Drones and Organized Group Use. Drones have recently become an issue in some locations along the A.T. Fontana Dam was approved for inclusion as an A.T. Community. ATC License Plate fund distributions are changing to award half at the beginning of a project and the remaining half at completion. Group-Use Campsites were discussed to convey how difficult it is to plan for increased hiker traffic; what we could do given inadequate planning time; and what alternative options clubs could provide. Needed most would be a list of campsites having space for multiple tents and consideration of where clubs might construct group sites. The most debated topic was the NPS Forest Management System used for trail assessment and project planning. Compared to other NP units, the A.T. cost measured as current replacement value (project work) is about \$7.31/ft, whereas the average is about \$49.30/ft across all park units. So there exists a bias to provide more funds elsewhere since our project values are so low. APPA and ATC want clubs to reassess their capital plans to



see how we can better represent our project values and potentially bring in three times the level of funds the park is currently allocated. This could represent a lot of time, looking at projects over the past 10 years and possibly doing field inspections/assessments. We think some test cases ought to be established to ensure this activity will justify the time expenditure and desired sensitivity. ATC is also working to update old MOU's across the trail. This is a long-term objective and will take years, but clubs are requested to update their USFS Volunteer Service Agreements and local management plans as a starting point. A new project approval form has been prepared by ATC and clubs are encouraged to use the form for all new projects requiring resources and partner approvals. Detailed notes will be issued at a later date from the SORO office. Please let me know if you're interested in these and I will forward them when they are available.

**Reporting:** Kim Peters

**Date:** 10/18/2014

**Purpose:** 3rd Saturday Hiking with Tools

**Location:** Section 11b, Canute Place to Bitter End

**People:** Joe DeLoach, Terry Oldfield, Mary Fanslow, Tim Stewart, Kim Peters

**Summary:** This was another productive 3rd Saturday - Hiking with Tools trip. We all started at Mooreland Gap Shelter where we picked up trash, cleaned out the fire pit, and left a new log book and broom. Then we split into two groups with Terry and Joe heading south to Bitter End with a chainsaw and Tim, Mary and Kim headed north to the Canute place and back to Mooreland Gap. We all lopped rhododendron and other woody growth and cleared multiple blowdowns ending up at Bitter End at about the same time. It was a long day, but a great day to be out in the woods and we left the trail in much better shape than we found it!

**Reporting:** Mike Hupko

**Date:** 10/20/2014

**Purpose:** Finish fall maintenance

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

**People:** Marsha Hupko, Mike Hupko

**Summary:** From FS 230 to Indian Grave Gap we cleared five trees from the trail, removed smaller branches, and lopped. We set four metal posts with white blazes on Beauty Spot and picked up trash on the trail and in the Beauty Spot parking area.

**Reporting:** Paul Benfield

**Date:** 10/22/2014

**Purpose:** Mow camping area and trails

**Location:** Section 14b, Overmountain Shelter

**People:** Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery

**Summary:** We mowed the camp area and checked the trails; all are in good shape. We policed the barn and camp, and moved rocks as needed. The shelter is in good shape and water is running well. The trail has standing water and is muddy on both sides of the previous ditching about 30 feet from the front of the shelter. This needs work when time is available. It was very cold; temperatures probably in the 30s.

**Reporting:** Paul Benfield

**Date:** 10/22/2014

**Purpose:** Mow accessible Trail

**Location:** Section 4b, Osborne Farm

**People:** Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery

**Summary:** We went to Osborne Farm to check the Accessible Trail. It had been fenced off and the grass was down from the grazing cattle. New fences have been installed and the cattle can no longer get on the trail south of the barn. The fencing off of the Accessible Trail appears to be complete. Four Forest Service personnel were there today and said they were cutting blowdowns to the shelter and tomorrow would paint the blazes to the shelter. The trail had been grazed down, so we did not mow.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 10/23/2014

**Purpose:** Replace Koonford Bridge

**Location:** Section 10, Koonford Bridge

**People:** Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Richard Carter, Jim Chambers, Carl Fritz, Pat Loven, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Bill Murdoch, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Mike Price, Kevin Sedgwick, Jack Tarlin, Tim Stewart, George Thorpe

**Summary:** We completed tasks on the final checklist for Koonford Bridge. The tasks included caulking between sills and concrete, mortaring rocks on concrete caps of piers so concrete is not visible, removing some magic marker markings, riveting the bolts for hand rails so nuts cannot be removed, adding rust reformer to deck screw heads, adding a large cable to tie down the northern and central spans, adding some large rocks as a buffer for dry laid wall on northern end of bridge, and improving the trail approaches. Some of the crew were able to rehab some rocky areas north and south of the bridge. Hopefully, this will be the last major work effort on Koonford Bridge for many years. (See photos next page.)



The gorgeous new Koonford Bridge!



Koonford Bridge crew

**Reporting:** Craig Haire

**Date:** 10/23/2014

**Purpose:** Rehab treadway

**Location:** Section 20a, Nolichucky River to Temple Hill Gap, north end of section

**People:** Craig Haire

**Summary:** Three segments were leveled out that had excessive outsloping.

**Reporting:** Vic Hasler

**Date:** 10/24/2014

**Purpose:** Assess campsites

**Location:** Section 19b, Curley Maple Gap Shelter - Nolichucky River Outfitter, to fourth bridge

**People:** Vic Hasler

**Summary:** I took this Friday afternoon walk to review facilities in this section. After parking at the outfitters, I found the former bridge over a dry gully which is no longer part of the trail after the 2012-13 relocation. The NPS database has seven campsites listed, with three being called deficient. All, but one, are north of the outfitter up to the fourth bridge. The policy of TEHCC is to allow camping all along the trail consistent with resource protection. All campsites within Jones Branch watershed appear to be acceptable per the club policy, while two from the 2006-2008 survey could not be found, thus showing how the locations shift over time. No trash was observed at any of these sites. More rhododendron were clipped, and some of the path was opened up using a medium bow saw. I confirmed a statement from Carl that bow saws easily bind – thus learning to not attempt anything larger than what hands can go around. I backtracked to the southern part of section to check out the one bootleg campsite, which probably should be dismantled because of being too close to a neighborhood. The location also has a significant amount of trash, glass bottles, rusting steel beverage cans, and... a very old refrigerator. I obtained coordinates for the last item to develop a plan for its removal from just inside the USFS land (noting red boundary stripes painted on nearby trees). Finally, four small bags of trash were gathered and hauled out on the way back to the truck. It was a productive afternoon of trail maintenance while enjoying the fall colors.

**Reporting:** Ken and Lotta Murray

**Date:** 10/25/2014

**Purpose:** Routine Maintenance

**Location:** Section 20b, Devils Creek Gap to No Business Knob Shelter

**People:** Ken Murray, Lotta Murray

**Summary:** The Trail is in pretty good shape. This section is clear of brush and blowdowns. There are several short sections where side hill erosion has exposed roots making hiking somewhat challenging. Due to the roots, repair of these areas will probably require cribbing. No Business Knob Shelter is structurally in decent shape. The roof is not leaking. There was quite a bit of trash under the platform and in the firepit. Hopefully after it is painted, the trash problem will diminish. We obliterated one stealth campfire ring.