



# The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

December 2014

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

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## From the Chair

*Brien Lewis, Steering Committee Chair*

As my year as chair comes to a close, I would like to share a few club accomplishments and share my appreciation for those who work to keep this club active in the hiking community.

In 2014, around 82 different hikers participated on 30 scheduled hikes as a part of our Sunday Hiking Program! What a great turn out! Hopefully as the inquisitive reader of this newsletter, you have enjoyed the dozens of trip reports through the year highlighting the adventures of our club and

community members. Thanks to all of our hike leaders who made these trips possible: Barry Griggs, Vic Hasler, R. Blankenbecler, Terry Dougherty, Tim Schaefer, Tim McClain, Mike Watts, Mary Fanslow, Garry Luttrell, Brien Lewis and Bill Tindall. If you are interested in leading a hike next year, please feel free to contact us for more information. Stay tuned for the kick-off of our 2015 program!

With the remaining budget for the 2014 year, we plan to support the A.T. maintainers by purchasing some much needed tools, as well as looking into buying some new rental equipment such as a backpacking stove. The remainder of our funds will be donated to the Appalachian Trail Committee, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, and Bays Mountain to support trail maintenance efforts.

Thank you for your support over the past year and I would ask that you give the same to Steve Ankabrandt as he assumes the chair for the TEHCC Steering Committee for the 2015 year.

## 2014-2015 Deer Hunting Seasons

*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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## Membership Drive

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*Tim Schaefer reporting*

It's nearly a new year, which means it's time for membership renewal. For those who were already going to [renew](#), THANK YOU! You can stop reading, because apparently you're already on board with everything I have to say. So you don't feel left out, here's a picture of Arnold from Diff'rent Strokes meeting Knight Rider. The rest can stick around and read my top five reasons to renew.



*How cool is that?*

### 5. Discounts

We often joke that hiking is great because all you need are shoes, sometimes qualified with the word 'good.' Apparently shirt and pants are optional.



*Not just shoes*

The truth is that there are not only shoes, but coats, underlayers, overlayers, midlayers, submidlayers, outeroverlayers, etc. and I've only made it to the top half of your body. Four outfitters in our area have graciously offered to provide our card carrying members a 10% discount, usually restricted to hiking and footwear.

- [Mahoney's](#) (Johnson City, TN) – 10% discount on hiking gear and footwear
- [Mountain Sports, Ltd.](#) (Bristol, VA) – 10% discount
- [Mount Rogers Outfitters](#) (Damascus, VA) – 10% discount
- [Highlands Ski and Outdoor Center](#) (Abingdon, VA) – 10% discount on hiking gear and footwear

## 4. Funding our website

Unless you're one of the 13 people that get the newsletter mailed to you, you are benefiting from the funds from dues used to pay our internet hosting fees (the 13 of you are benefiting from Eastman's copiers, shhhh!)



*What I go through for 13 of you*

Our website has newsletters that go back to 1976. I was born in 1976! [Collins Chew was picking blueberries](#) the year I was born and I can find that in seconds thanks to those of you who payed dues allowing that information to be online.

## 3. The trail wiki

“Hey! You're double dipping” you might say, since the wiki is part of web hosting. So what, I wanted five items and I wanted to highlight the trail wiki. Our wiki has [every trail that I or Vic know about in our area](#), plus some. If you know of others that aren't included, please let us know. Our hope is that it can get you to the trail head, let you know what to expect when you get there, and maybe even suggest some neat non-trail things to see, eat, or do when you're out that way. Your dues again, make that possible.

## 2. Supporting trail maintenance

I often like to say that our membership dues of \$5 (Eastman) or \$10 (Affiliates) should be considered yearly trail head fees for our section of the A.T. I've easily spent that in a weekend, if not on a single hike, paying for park or trail head fees.



*Never seen on the AT around us*

Well over half of our revenue goes directly to support maintenance activities in our area; specifically our 134 miles of the A.T. that we have committed to maintain. Have you noticed the nicely maintained trails around Carvers Gap, or seen a fallen tree cut and thrown to the side of the trail?

Our dues are what pay for the equipment (not the time!) that people use to make that possible.

## 1. Being a part of the local hiking and canoeing community

If I haven't convinced you yet, this is my final chance. As a member of TEHCC, you are part of a group of people just like you, those who love to get outdoors on a trail or on a river and just enjoy the beauty that nature has graciously provided us. We have several outings a year ([check our schedule](#)) including a renewed focus to have at least weekly outings during the primary 40 weeks of our hiking and canoeing season. In addition, we have social gatherings at least twice a year at our dinner meetings. Lastly, if you think we're missing something that a local hiking club should have, well you're exactly the person we want in the club; so come on! Sign up! [Become a member today!](#)

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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
Dec 16	TEHCC Steering Committee	Brien Lewis	<a href="mailto:chair@tehcc.org">chair@tehcc.org</a>

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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](mailto:Wesley.R.Bradley@tehcc.org), 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](mailto:Wesley.R.Bradley@tehcc.org). 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](mailto:Carl.Fritz@tehcc.org), 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](mailto:George.Mauger@tehcc.org), 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](mailto:George.Mauger@tehcc.org) (864-414-0296). For additional event details, click [here](#).

### Scheduled Events

#### **TEHCC Steering Committee meeting, Tue, December 16, 11:30am – 1:00pm**

Contact: [Brien Lewis](mailto:Brien.Lewis@tehcc.org), [chair@tehcc.org](mailto:chair@tehcc.org)

Location: *Eastman Chemical Company, Kingsport, TN; Bldg 75 - Room 407*

The Steering Committee guides the general program for the club. Meetings are held monthly at lunchtime and are open to all TEHCC members. Members who are not current Eastman employees need to contact a member of the Steering Committee at least the day prior to arrange for a temporary pass.



There are no other events scheduled for this month. Happy holidays!

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## For the Record

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### The Search for Wild Ponies of Grayson Highlands, October 9, 2014

*Garry S. Luttrell, reporting*

Our son Billy, his wife Joy, and seven kids, are becoming missionaries, serving the Caribbean Ministries Association of Chattanooga. They have heard me talk about Grayson Highlands and the wild ponies, and they decided to add seeing the ponies to their "Bucket List" of things to do before they leave the country. The original plan was to leave Joy and the three youngest at our house; but at the last minute, they decided that everyone would go, even 10-month-old Zeke. It was a good decision; the fall colors were great, it was a lovely day, and we saw lots of ponies, as seen in the photos. We started at Massie Gap and followed the Rhododendron Trail to Wilburn Ridge; then we returned to Massie Gap via the A.T. and horse trails. As we were driving on Highway U.S. 58 back to Tennessee, we noticed a black cloud in the western sky. We were told that the only gas station for miles around in any direction was at Whitetop Mtn, but before we could pump enough gas to make it home, the sky opened-up, and you guessed it – it rained by the buckets full. On the next day, the rain forced us to postpone the next "Bucket List" item, canoeing on Warrior's Path Lake.



*L to R: Billy, Zeke, Sophia, Kassie, Katy, Joshua, Holland, Savannah, & Joy*



### Steele Creek Park, Loop around Lake, Sunday, November 9, 2014

*Vic Hasler reporting*

The five-mile walk completely around Steele Creek Park Lake can be readily accomplished in three hours – with several breaks. Starting from the Rooster Front Park entrance, Lake Ridge Trail immediately climbs to become a sidehill cut above the cascading Steele Creek. Once the earthen dam is passed, the route travels up along the drainage stream into a hollow – sometimes the two merged for a muddy path. Some trail relocations were observed to make the tread more stable and suitable for mountain biking. After wandering the ridge line, a pair of switchbacks reached the boardwalk over to the nature museum. Rest rooms are available at the lodge. The park roadway was used to jump over to the completely level Lakeside Trail for a speedy return to the original parking lot.

Being later fall, the sun was already lower in the sky as the hike began, thus illuminated the rust, brown, and golden leaves remaining on the trees. The shadows grew as the day passed, so layered clothing was suitable as the air chilled – but overall a very comfortable hike to accomplish in an afternoon. The trail was shared with a few mountain bikers, families and couples walking, and an occasional trail runner hooked up to a music device. In today's hiking group were Reba Stapleton, Eleanor Aulds, and Vic Hasler.

## Nolichucky Gorge Paddling Trip, Sunday, November 9, 2014

*George Mauger reporting*

Sunday afternoon saw cloudless skies and relatively warm temperatures; perfect for a day paddling down the Nolichucky Gorge. Nine paddlers, including two from TEHCC, grouped up early in the afternoon and put on to the river in Poplar, NC. The water level was a bit low, but crystal clear. You could catch glimpses of catfish and trout pretty easily if you could manage to take your eyes off the beautiful autumn colors of the trees. Other wildlife decided to grace us with their presence as well just as we crossed into Tennessee. The paddlers up front were able to watch a family of 3 otters playing in the water for a few minutes while the group in back had the chance to see a black bear on the river right bank. The final portion of the trip saw mostly low flat water which allowed the paddlers to enjoy the serenity of the final colors of fall surrounding the gorge. Big thanks to Wesley Bradley of the Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts (APEs) for organizing and leading a wonderful trip down the river. A personal thank you to his wife Jennifer Bradley for being brave enough to navigate the front of my new Jackson Kayak Dynamic Duo on its maiden trip – hopefully her training will allow me to get my son on the river soon! SYOTR!



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## A.T. Maintenance Reports

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**Reporting:** Lynn DiFiore

**Date:** 10/9/2014

**Purpose:** Routine Maintenance

**Location:** Section 14b, Overmountain Shelter to Bradley Gap

**People:** Lynn DiFiore

**Summary:** I picked up a moderate amount of trash at the barn and Bradley Gap campsites, cleaned up blue blazes from barn to trail, blue blazed spring at Bradley Gap, and removed limbs from the trail. I saw numerous day and section hikers and one SOBO. All springs are running well.

**Reporting:** Kim Peters

**Date:** 10/27/2014

**Purpose:** Measure relocation

**Location:** Section 6, TN 91 to Wilbur Dam Road

**People:** Kim Peters

**Summary:** The purpose of this trip was to measure the relocation near Turkeypen Gap that SAWS completed this summer. I hiked in from TN 91, started measuring with the wheel at the spring just south of Iron Mountain Shelter and finished at Vandeventer Shelter. The data has been given to Vic Hasler. The SAWS did a fine job on the relocation. I almost missed it! It wasn't until I saw some recently painted blazes and noticed a freshly cut bank under the blanket of fallen leaves that I realized I was on the relo.

It was lovely weather to be out in the woods and I met many southbounders and several section hikers. The spring at Iron Mtn Shelter is flowing well. There is water at the spring south of Turkeypen Gap, but it is not piped as the guidebook states. I spoke to some section hikers who said they were able to get water at the Vandeventer Shelter source but struggled with the climb down and back out. The spring three miles north of Wilbur Dam Road has water, but it is very low. I was able to collect some there. There are quite a few step-over blowdowns, but no major obstructions on this section of trail.

**Reporting:** Rick Lott

**Date:** 10/28/2014

**Purpose:** Remove blowdown

**Location:** Section 12d, Campbell Hollow Road to Buck Mountain Church

**People:** Rick Lott, Vicki Lott

**Summary:** We cut a 20-22" blowdown between Buck Mountain Church and Campbell Hollow Road that was reported by Joe Morris. It looked like a small microburst had gone through the area. A lot of trees were down and all the rhodos were leaning over in one direction.

**Reporting:** Bob Peoples

**Date:** 10/30/2014

**Purpose:** Lop rhodos

**Location:** Section 10, Hampton trailhead to Dennis Cove Road

**People:** Jack Tarlin

**Summary:** "Baltimore Jack" cut back rhododendron from Hampton to Dennis Cove to improve the trail.

**Reporting:** Richard Carter

**Date:** 10/30/2014

**Purpose:** Cut blowdown and do general maintenance

**Location:** Section 14b, Stan Murray Shelter and switchbacks south of shelter

**People:** Richard Carter

**Summary:** I hiked the section to check on the condition, cut and removed a blowdown just below the first switchback, checked the spring which was flowing slowly but adequately, cut several dozen encroaching briars, took several pictures to document the condition of the deteriorating foundation of the back of the shelter, and picked up and carried out a copious amount of trash. I noted a couple of wet areas, that I need to drain on a future trip when I have digging tools, and more briars that need cutting.

**Reporting:** Mike Hupko

**Date:** 10/30/2014

**Purpose:** Repair Trail

**Location:** Section 18, Indian Grave Gap north about 0.4 miles

**People:** Judy Middlemas, Eric Middlemas, Faye Guinn, Howard Guinn, Ernie Hartford, Wayne Jones, Mike Hupko

**Summary:** We harvested locust logs at Iron Mountain Gap area and transported them to Indian Grave Gap area for installation as cribbing and waterbars. We then installed side logs and repaired and leveled about 40 feet of trail. We also installed three new waterbars and removed two trees leaning over the trail and one tree across the trail.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 10/30/2014

**Purpose:** Dig relocation and remove boulder

**Location:** Section 1, Backbone Rock Trail

**People:** Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Pat Loven, Ted Mowery, Kim Peters, George Thorpe

**Summary:** A large boulder had slid onto the rock steps leaving the parking lot. The Trail was practically blocked. Reuben Potter and Brandon helped our crew remove this major boulder. (One of our returning sledge hammers was worn considerably.) Our crew continued to build the relocation closest to the parking lot which we started in the fall with ASU.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 10/30/2014

**Purpose:** Dig relocation

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

**People:** Carl Fritz, Jim Foster, Greg Kramer, Joe Morris, Bob Peoples, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart, "Forager"

**Summary:** Jim scouted his section and removed some blowdowns including those near Greasy Creek Gap recently reported by a hiker. There are still some chainsaw-sized blowdowns that we may get in ten days. We concentrated on digging the relo between Little Rock Knob and Clyde Smith Shelter. We were able to put in locust log steps at switchback. One more day with a good sized group may allow us to finish this relo. "Forager", a south bounder, hiked 53 miles in two and a half days from Kincora to work with us! It was a beautiful fall day to be on the trail.

**Reporting:** Jim Chambers

**Date:** 10/30/2014

**Purpose:** Remove blowdowns

**Location:** Section 12b, South of Walnut Mountain Road

**People:** Jim Chambers, Mike Price (Lumpy)

**Summary:** Lumpy and I removed a very large and complex tangle of blowdowns just south of Walnut Mountain Road.

**Reporting:** Scott Alan

**Date:** 11/2/2014

**Purpose:** Remove blowdowns

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

**People:** Scott Alan

**Summary:** Following the early Halloween winter storm, I went out to clear trail. Unfortunately the wet storms weighed down the

laurels in this section and required many to be cut because they were leaning too low across the trail. I first tried to knock the snow out of them, and if they didn't spring back with good trail clearance, I cut them. The trail from the hostel to Bitter End is in good condition now; I will do the other half next outing.

**Reporting:** Paul Benfield

**Date:** 11/4/2014

**Purpose:** Trail Maintenance

**Location:** Section 4b, TN91 to Double Springs Shelter

**People:** Paul Benfield

**Summary:** I removed limbs and rhodo breakdown trees from the trail. The blazes are in good shape and the waterbars are clear. The shovel, broom and logbook are at the shelter. Everything is in good condition. The snow was melting but I saw no leaks at the shelter. I saw the largest bear tracks I've ever encountered about 1/2 mile south of the shelter; they were around 4"x 5".

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 11/5/2014

**Purpose:** Finish Koonford Bridge

**Location:** Section 10, Koonford Bridge

**People:** Carl Fritz, Mary Jane Fritz

**Summary:** We lacked some specialized tools during the previous outing to the bridge. This time we used a shipping auger to drill into a tree to install the cable rather than girdle the tree. Also, we used a draw knife to shape some of the top handrail half-lap junctions so that the handrail is smoother.

**Reporting:** Joe Morris

**Date:** 11/5/2014

**Purpose:** Remove blowdowns

**Location:** Section 9b, Pond Flats

**People:** Joe Morris, Robin Dean, Jim Chambers

**Summary:** SOBO Hikers advised a "blowdown group" was making the trail all but impassable on the southside of Pond Mountain. Robin and I removed the oaks underneath a large pine that had taken two other trees with it during the recent storm. Jim "Just Jim" Chambers came to the rescue and guided the removal of the 2-foot diameter pine that was precariously perched about 30 feet on an upslope above the blue-blaze intersection. We removed some other minor tangles and avoided the rain. It's going to be a long year without our buddy Jim around!

**Reporting:** Scott Alan

**Date:** 11/6/2014

**Purpose:** General maintenance

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

**People:** Scott Alan

**Summary:** Following the early season snow storm, I went out to check the section. I cut back overhanging laurels and removed blowdowns. Some of the downed trees were locust hardwood, difficult to cut with a handsaw. This section is now in good condition.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 11/8/2014

**Purpose:** Dig relocation and cut blowdowns

**Location:** Section 16a, South of Little Rock Knob

**People:** John Beaudet, Jim Chambers, Robin Dean, Jim Foster, Carl Fritz, Joe Morris, Bill Murdoch, Rhee Patrick, Bob Peoples, Mike Price, John Robbins, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart, Jack Tarlin; ASU Trail Crew: Ben Banick, Hali Burbridge, Jeremiah Bolick, Kati Jean VanElten, Trevar Gagnon, Maggie Phipps, Meghan Walker, Walter Mingiedurff, Robert Alvis

**Summary:** We had a cool but sunny day to complete the last major relocation on this section. This was started by Konnarock, continued by Wright State University and completed by ASU Trail Crew. Six of the nine from ASU were first timers; and all stayed the evening at Kincora with a pasta dinner cooked by Baltimore Jack. We were able to do an excellent job of finishing this relocation and opening it. We were also able to cut all the blowdowns from Hughes Gap to Clyde Smith Shelter thanks to our sawyer, "Just Jim", who is leaving on his one year warrior hike. This section should be clear of blowdowns. A number of our tools were repaired and sharpened after much recent use.

**Reporting:** Paul Benfield

**Date:** 11/8/2014

**Purpose:** Dig trail

**Location:** Section 5, 1/2 mile south of TN 91

**People:** Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery



**Summary:** This relocation is completed except for blazing and tying in each end of the relo. We dug around 75 feet of sidehill and removed all deadfalls and fallen limbs from the new relo.

**Reporting:** Steve Perri

**Date:** 11/10/2014

**Purpose:** Attend Roan Stewardship Meeting

**Location:** Mars Hill, NC

**People:** Steve Perri

**Summary:** The meeting of the Roan Stewardship Council was held at the Pisgah USFS office in Mars Hill. This group meets twice a year to share info on activities and programs associated with the Roan Highlands. This report is focused on items pertaining to the A.T. There was good news on acquisitions in that a new piece of property near Carvers Gap is being acquired and another is being donated. Another tract near Yellow Mtn is also being acquired. Several monitoring programs are underway including: rare plants, flying squirrel, golden-winged warblers, invasive plants, and feral hogs. John Odell reported the intent to have more signage trail-north of Carvers Gap to improve hiker education and reinforce leave-no-trace principles. There was general agreement to do this and to perhaps encourage use of only existing designated fire rings and not create new ones. John Odell shared higher impact measures from expanded use at Roan High Knob. Possible confinement or containment can be achieved by iceberging or stringing areas. The next meeting is likely to be a whole day to cover topics in more detail next year.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 11/11/2014

**Purpose:** Assess trail

**Location:** Upper half of Section 13a and lower half of Section 14a

**People:** Jim Foster, Carl Fritz, Bob Peoples, George Thorpe

**Summary:** We assessed trail condition from the power line above Wildermine to the open area on Hump Mountain. There are many rooty and sloughing areas that need to be addressed by redigging or by installing locust logs and backfilling. There are several rocky areas that need improving. We removed some minor broken rhodos and other obstructions and we installed a missing step. The location of these problems have been recorded by GPS.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 11/13/2014

**Purpose:** Rehab trail

**Location:** Section 9b, Hampton Blue-Blazed trail

**People:** Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Carl Fritz, Ted Mowery, Kim Peters

**Summary:** We started rehabbing the trail on the sloping, rocky area beside the stream before the intersection with the A.T. With rock cribbing we made good progress on the end closest to Hampton. More remains to be done.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 11/13/2014

**Purpose:** Rehab trail

**Location:** Section 9b, South side of Pond Mountain

**People:** Richard Carter, Joe Morris, Bill Murdoch, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** The crew rehabbed about 120 feet of trail on the south side of Pond Mountain to improve some very poor trail.

**Reporting:** Vic Hasler

**Date:** 11/14/2014

**Purpose:** Remove uphill woody growth

**Location:** Section 19b, From Nolichucky River outfitter to 0.5 mile trail south

**People:** Vic Hasler

**Summary:** Trail maintenance can be therapy – refreshing after several days of working through some frustrating paperwork. I completed a few yard jobs at home to “warm up” to the just-below-freezing temperatures, and then decided to go ahead with plans to work on the woody growth trail-south of the outfitters. I removed anything uphill the loppers could reach, and then went back through to take out very small pines and two step-over blowdowns with a small axe so that the trail path centerline will be followed instead of walking on the lower edge. A knit cap under the hard hat was sufficiently warm – except when the hat fell off and bounced 150’ down the steep hillside to rest at the cliff edge. The forest blocked the cold breeze and spitting snow, so I was able to thoroughly cover the 0.5 mile distance to just past the 9” blowdown, which opened up the trail corridor. I’ll need another afternoon to address the 0.5 mile north of the railroad tracks, while BSA Troop 48 is scheduled to work the section from the outfitter to the shelter on Saturday, November 29th.

**Reporting:** Steve Perri

**Date:** 11/18/2014

**Purpose:** A.T. Committee Meeting

**Location:** Kingsport, TN

**People:** Steve Perri, Vic Hasler, Carl Fritz, Tim Stewart, Kim Peters, Ted Mowery, Paul Benfield, Ed Oliver

**Summary:** Vic Hasler was elected new A.T. Committee Chair. Steve Perri is heading to Raleigh, NC for a two year assignment. Steve will stay as RPC rep and keep his maintenance section.

**Relo Projects for 2015:** (1) Konnarock - 2015 location is likely the farthest remaining relocation south of TN 91 (on Iron Mtn) using all four weeks. Steve and Carl will develop the paperwork to submit to ATC; (2) ASU - We are planning for south of TN 91 on Cross Mtn relocations; (3) Hardcore – We will primarily rehab between power line below Doll Flats to Hump Mtn. We will likely spend Day 1 near Hump Mtn and Day 2 below Doll Flats; (4) Backbone Rock – This is lower priority, so may possibly be a future Konnarock project.

**TEHCC Special Projects:** Wilder Mine campsites - NEPA paperwork might require survey in June-to-August timeframe for campsite, thus it may not be available for 2015 peak season. Laurel Fork Bridge Repair – We plan to design and purchase materials for two Laurel Fork Bridges; no construction until 2016. Coordinating with Alice Cohen, we will participate in a Wilderness Review process to assess potential changes to the bridge materials or to the design. 3rd Saturdays – General maintenance and possible shelter repainting; perhaps scrubbing as a first test.

**A.T. Trail Assessment:** We reviewed a presentation created by Matt Robinson (NPS) for how the process works now and what might be done to improve estimates and funding. Steve Perri counter proposal is to submit a bridge, shelter, and a trail section. For Koonford Bridge we know the purchase costs, ~\$6,500 and 2,631 hrs. Costs were a little higher than expected for Koonford due to additional pier support and other supplies. We will see if we can apply for funds from the A.T. license plate to cover the additional material costs of about \$1600. We discussed the ATC Strategic Plan Update and reviewed one pager on the appalachiantrail.org website. Steve Perri is on a task force looking at the 2017 biennial, given the new focus areas of the ATC strategic plan.

**Local Management Plan (LMP) Update:** Vic has tackled updating the LMP since the 1987 official release and 2006 last partial revision. The following topics were discussed: (A) Trail Campsite List for Group Sites and/or Multiple Tent Sites - Committee recommends we not adopt a policy for group sites. We will however maintain a list of locations that accommodate options for overnight stays with space for more than one tent site. (B) Committee confirmed the official name of “Mountaineer Falls” Shelter, thus ATC information (data and guide books, interactive map) will be updated in future publications. (C) Removed reference to “White Rocks Firetower” from shelter table as this location is not of interest, being too close to roadway. (D) Current format for Annual Maintenance Plan is the “TEHCC Major A.T. Projects” list assembled by Carl; thus most recent version can be referenced in the LMP. (E) Bridges – A useful effort would be to gather good digital photographs and bridge size measurements into A.T. Committee SharePoint folder. (F) Partner list was pulled out into two separate tables. The ATC Southern Region Directory is a good reference source. (G) Still need to obtain more of the agencies agreements to make the LMP complete. Action plan continues to be developed with general policies/ideas to help guide ongoing leadership.

**General Announcements:**

- Pisgah National Forest Revision Plan & ATC Strategic Plan Update
- Roan Stewardship Meeting
- Status of “Just Jim” Hike – The Steering Committee may discuss funding at end-of-year budget resolution
- B-310 Tool Room – Need a responsible Eastman employee or retiree to maintain.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 11/20/2014

**Purpose:** Rehab trail

**Location:** Section 10, Hampton Blue-Blazed trail

**People:** Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Richard Carter, Carl Fritz, Joe Morris, Bill Murdoch, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Tim Stewart, Lindsay Fleming

**Summary:** We continued our work on the sloping rocks beside Laurel Fork and before junction with A.T. We gathered many rocks and locust side-logs. More will be needed. With much sweat in cold weather, we significantly improved another 80 feet of trail.

**Reporting:** Bill Murdoch

**Date:** 11/21/2014

**Purpose:** Final touches on Koonford Bridge

**Location:** Section 10, Koonford Bridge

**People:** Bill Murdoch

**Summary:** Bill added some needed cable clamps to tie individual major components in case the bridge is ever washed out. This should be the finishing touch to this bridge.

**Reporting:** Vic Hasler

**Date:** 11/21/2014

**Purpose:** More uphill-side brush removal

**Location:** Section 19b, Halfway between Nolichucky River bridge and outfitter

**People:** Vic Hasler

**Summary:** Brush trimming was completed on the center quarter mile of trail halfway between the Nolichucky River bridge and outfitter during the sunny afternoon. This part of the trail could also use some rehab in short stretches to address sloughing debris, which was slightly challenging to walk on under the bed of fallen leaves. Next work on this specific portion will be to approach from the south to address the rhododendron along the sidehill relocation.

**Reporting:** Lynn DiFiore

**Date:** 11/21/2014

**Purpose:** Routine maintenance

**Location:** Section 14b, Stan Murray Shelter to Bradley Gap

**People:** Lynn DiFiore

**Summary:** I picked up a small amount of trash at the barn and replaced the register. I also cut out four blowdowns (8-10" size) and removed numerous limbs that had fallen on the trail. I cleaned all waterbars and rolling dips, and removed a new fire-ring that had been constructed near Overmountain Trail. The trail was very muddy and slick, but overall in good condition. There was still a good bit of snow on the north slopes near Bradley Gap. All springs were running well. I met three SOBO hikers who were planning to stay at the barn.

**Reporting:** Mike Hupko

**Date:** 11/21/2014

**Purpose:** Clear reported blowdowns

**Location:** Section 18, Deep Gap to Beauty Spot

**People:** Howard Guinn, Mike Hupko

**Summary:** We cleared two reported blowdowns and removed four other trees partially blocking the trail which were not reported. We cut many low-hanging branches over the trail and picked up trash at one campsite.

**Reporting:** Vic Hasler

**Date:** 11/21/2014

**Purpose:** Measure trail relocation south of Little Rock Knob

**Location:** Section 16a, Hughes Gap to Clyde Smith Shelter

**People:** Vic Hasler

**Summary:** Yet another relocation was opened in this section on November 8, 2014 with assistance of the ASU Trail Crew. Measurements taken this day found the new route, which addresses the previous tread erosion problem, to be 1,385 feet, versus the prior path of 685 feet. The trail distance from Little Rock Knob highpoint to the Clyde Smith Shelter sign is 1.2 miles, thus adding another 0.1 mile to the 0.2 mile previously reported back in August. The shelter was found in good condition with eight logbook entries in November. A bit of trash was hauled out from there on a fast walk back to truck through inch snow.

**Reporting:** John Robbins

**Date:** 11/22/2014

**Purpose:** Routine Maintenance

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

**People:** John Robbins

**Summary:** I cut out and removed many 4-8" blowdowns, cleared a lot of limbs that had fallen on the trail, and cleaned all waterbars. The spring is running well and the trail is in good shape. I also picked up trash from both trailheads at US 421.

**Reporting:** George Thorpe

**Date:** 11/22/2014

**Purpose:** Wilderness First Aid Training

**Location:** Franklin, NC

**People:** George Thorpe

**Summary:** ATC sponsored Wilderness First Aid Training November 22 and 23 in Franklin, NC. George attended this two day training to be better prepared on A.T. maintenance outings.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 11/25/2014

**Purpose:** Flag relocations and rehab trail

**Location:** Section 18, FS 230 to Beauty Spot

**People:** Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Carl Fritz, Mike Hupko, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters

**Summary:** We covered much of the trail from the 230 switchback to Beauty Spot Gap. Two relocations are needed to eliminate very

steep and rooty trail. Each one will add a switchback but eliminate other trail turns. There is also a need to rehab, especially just south of the 230 switchback. There is plenty of rock to move and for building steps and cribs. We did 220 feet of significant trail rehab at Beauty Spot Gap.

**Reporting:** Vic Hasler

**Date:** 11/25/2014

**Purpose:** Remove blowdowns

**Location:** Section 19b, Indian Grave Gap to outfitter

**People:** John Beaudet, Vic Hasler

**Summary:** Several blowdowns were removed, including a pair of hanging 16-18" diameter trunks roughly one mile north and south of Curley Maple Gap shelter. Fallen brush was also cleared between Indian Grave Gap and the outfitter. The half-dozen waterbars and channels south of the shelter were cleaned. Only three backpackers were seen on the trail today. After lunch, John went to work on his house, while Vic returned to finish lopping the remaining quarter-mile south to finish the section from the outfitter to the river for this year. More old trash was hauled out from around the campsite near the neighborhood.