



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

July 2015

tehcc.org

In this Issue

[Paddling Tips](#)

[Bear Activity along TEHCC Section](#)

[Oldest and Youngest Volunteers at Hard Core](#)

[Beginner Whitewater Kayak Course](#)

[TN A.T. License Plate Funds Completion of Koonford Bridge](#)

[TEHCC Welcomes New Members](#)

[Event Schedule – Next Two Months](#)

[Details of Upcoming Events](#)

[For the Record](#)

[A.T. Maintenance Reports](#)

Paddling Tips

Submitted by Andrea Gass

Planning to paddle some of our local rivers as an exciting or relaxing trip with friends and family this summer? It's great to get out and explore the natural beauties that rivers like the Nolichucky, Holston, Clinch, and many others provide, but going unprepared for the conditions can have disastrous results. American Whitewater sponsors and advocates for paddling safety across the nation. This national organization has a website dedicated to providing information about rivers including accident reports, water conditions, rain gauges, rapid names, and other important information needed to keep you safe on the river this summer. Whether you're planning a wicked Class V rafting trip or just a lazy-day float, be sure to check www.americanwhitewater.org for specifics about the river you plan to visit.

Before hitting the water, be sure to follow these safety tips provided by American Whitewater's Safety Program:

- Wear your Life Jacket regardless of boat type or difficulty of water. A third of all whitewater accidents could have been prevented if the victim was wearing a life vest; many deaths occur in very easy rapids!
- Avoid alcohol and illegal drugs. Alcohol dulls reflexes and survival responses and is often linked to fatalities. Celebrate at your campsite or home.
- Know the river to prevent unpleasant surprises. Find out what lies downstream. Check the AW site, guidebooks, Google earth, and get advice from paddlers who have been there!
- Avoid extremes of weather and water. Very high flows and cold temperatures pose special challenges to paddlers. If you don't have the specialized gear and skills needed, wait until conditions improve.
- Avoid dams. Small low-head dams are responsible for over 8% of river fatalities. Most are much worse than they look! Know the location of dams before launching on a river, and avoid getting too close to the upstream or downstream sides of them.

For more useful advice, consult the AW Safety Code at <https://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Wiki/safety:start>. It contains many costly-lessons-learned by the whitewater paddling community over the last 50+ years!

Bear Activity along TEHCC Section

Summary by Vic Hasler

Three reports have been recently received of bear activity along the TEHCC section. On June 13th, hikers were disturbed by a bear at Low Gap on Unaka Mountain who would not leave their campsite. The next day, a juvenile bear was encountered around Cherry Gap Shelter, roughly a mile from the first incident, who again did not want to leave. The leader used bear spray in an attempt to negatively reinforce the bear, which returned that evening to take a pack. The pack did not contain food, which was properly hung. On June 15th, a third report was made for three miles south of Mountaineer Falls Shelter. Along the trail it was apparent there was a lot of bear activity. Necessary precautions to limit risk of encountering a bear were taken including hanging bear bags 50 feet or more from the campsite. ATC and USFS have been notified or provided information on all of these incidents.



Oldest and Youngest Volunteers at Hard Core

Submitted by Carl Fritz



Paul Benfield and Rio Berry

For the last six years of Hard Core, two individuals have consistently been the youngest and the oldest volunteers in the field. Rio Berry who is only five has actually been in the field for six years, as “Gaia” his mother was pregnant with him the first year. She carried him up the mountains his first several trips as a very young child. For those of you who have been on these adventures you will remember those hard climbs up south side of Pond Mountain or north side of White Rocks Mountain. Paul Benfield is 80 this year and has been in the field with Hard Core every year since joining with the club in 2002. They represent the spanning of four or five generations. Tim Stewart was able to snap a picture of the two of them after the Sunday evening Hard Core dinner.

Beginner Whitewater Kayak Course, August 29 - 30

Submitted by Andrea Gass

If you’ve ever thought how much fun it would be to learn how to kayak, you’re in luck!! APEs will be hosting a second Beginner Whitewater Kayak Class. The Beginner Whitewater Kayak Course, sponsored by the Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts (APEs) and TEHCC will be held August 29-30 in the Tri-Cities area. The clinic is designed for anyone wanting to learn the fundamentals of whitewater kayaking that will ensure a fun and safe time on the river. No previous experience is necessary. Instruction will consist of one day on flat water and one day on the river. As in the past, there will be a strong emphasis on safety. Participants will be responsible for providing their own gear and transportation, although loaner gear is available on a first come basis. Cost is \$75 per student (which includes a \$5 ACA event membership fee and a \$10 APEs membership fee). If you are already a member of either organization, deduct that portion from the cost. **Registration deadline is August 22.** Register online [here](#). Event info and registration details can be found [here](#).

TN A.T. License Plate Grant Funds Completion of Koonford Bridge

Carl Fritz reporting

Thanks to the cooperation of Watauga Ranger District of the U.S. Forest Service, the Appalachian Trail Conference, and many TEHCC volunteers, the 61-foot Koonford Bridge was successfully replaced in the fall of 2014.

- 2-year project to design, obtain and modify materials, and install
- 53 individuals contributed 2640 hours in 38 events
- Location: 0.8 miles trail north of Dennis Cove Trailhead
- Three spans total 61 feet in length
- Rock piers were enlarged to accommodate the four-foot rather than two-foot wide bridge
- Large rocks were moved to act as breakwaters
- Trail was improved to accommodate the new bridge and movement of materials on the 0.8-mile trek
- Materials moved: 12 tons total, including 4 tons dry concrete and mortar, 5 tons new bridge materials, 1 ton removal of dimensional lumber from old bridge, and 2 tons of tools

The bridge was designed in early 2013. We purchased a majority of the wood and hardware for Koonford Bridge in late 2013. ATC provided \$5260 from federal funds to cover those costs. We knew we would have to purchase concrete, mortar, and rebar when we built the bridge. We did not think we could estimate these well ahead of time and we did not want to store dry concrete for a year because it would draw moisture and clump. More miscellaneous items were needed as we determined how we would move materials. Other unusual items included renting a catwalk for a temporary bridge for a day and caulk to seal between the concrete and sills. We invested \$864 for these additional items and were awarded a Tennessee A.T. License Plate grant in 2015 to cover these additional costs. The TN and NC license plates are continuing to fund many of the A.T. needs in our area.

TEHCC Welcomes New Members

Patricia Stevens
Jessica Palmer
Becky Goodman
Tim Rogers

David Stevens
Herbert Ellis
Peter Miller

Gary Griffith
Nicki Stinson
Aaron Holland

Walker Hutsell
Dominica Wong
Derick Bowman

Event Schedule – Next Two Months

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

Date	Description	Leader	Contact
July 2	Paddle to the Grill	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
July 3-5	4 th of July Watagua Run & Campout	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
July 10	Controlling Invasive Plants along Jones Branch	Vic Hasler	423-239-0388
July 12	F/B: Buffalo Mountain “Grand Circuit”	Tim Schaefer	423-302-0846
July 16	F/B: FunFest “New” Moonlight Hike	William Werner	423-408-4469
July 17-24	ATC Biennial Conference		
July 18	Third Saturday Hiking with Tools	Kim Peters	423-366-0128
July 18	Lower Watauga, Class I-II	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
July 19	Laurel Fork Falls , from Dennis Cove	Yancey Appling	864-508-2754
July 20-27	Invasive Plant Management	Carl Fritz or Tim Stewart	
July 21	TEHCC Steering Committee Meeting	Steve Ankbrandt	
July 24-25	APE’s Advanced Swift Water Rescue Course	Scott Fisher	276-698-4644
Aug 7-9	New River Paddle/Camp	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
Aug 16	Steele Creek Park, Lake Loop	Tim Schaefer	423-302-0846
Aug 22	APE’s Nolichucky Gorge 1st Timers Trip & Picnic	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
Aug 29-30	APE’s Beginner Whitewater Kayak Course	Ryan Shealy	423-963-6066

Standard Hike Information

Hikes leaving from “Colonial Heights” gather 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. “Gate City” spot is up on the hill above US23 at Kane Street intersection (traffic light) by Food Lion. All hikes will leave promptly to stay on schedule. Carpooling is encouraged with passengers providing a few dollars each towards gas.

Bring adequate water, snack/lunch, clothing appropriate for the weather, comfortable footwear, headgear/sun protection, 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 the 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 for 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.

Details of Upcoming Events

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

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@riverapes.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](http://www.kingsportaquaticcenter.com)! During the summer months, the outdoor pool is closed off to the public and available specifically for kayaker use with occasional opportunities to play in the lazy river. 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@riverapes.org) (864-414-0296). For additional event details, click [here](#).

Every Other Saturday, Lower Watauga, Class I and II, 3 – 7 pm

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

We will launch from Riverside Park in Elizabethton behind the Ballpark at 3 pm 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 dinner food in town. Please be prepared for cold water and wear appropriate gear.

Directions: From W Elk Ave. in Elizabethton, turn between the Krystal Burger and Rite-Aid onto West Mill Street. Take the first street on Left onto Ash Street. Follow that street to the end and you will see the river. Turn left and pull into the small paved parking area near a covered picnic area. Look for boats!

Thursday Evenings During the Summer: Paddle to the Grill, 6:30 pm

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

Bring your touring kayak or canoe to meet with the Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts (www.riverapes.org) and TEHCC. Meet at 6:30 at Boonedocks Restaurant, Boone Lake Marina, 452 Sportsman Dock Rd, Piney Flats. We will launch by 7:00 pm to paddle the 3 miles (which takes about an hour) to Davis Marina (641 Buffalo Rd, Blountville), have dinner and social time, then paddle back by moonlight! As we may be paddling back during low or no light, please have a stern light for your boat, and PFDs are mandatory. For more information, contact Debbie Briscoe.

3rd Saturday, Hiking with Tools!

Contact: [Kim Peters](mailto:Kim.Peters@tehcc.org), 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 waterbars and painting blazes. All tools will be furnished and no prior experience required! Contact [Kim](mailto:Kim.Peters@tehcc.org) for details and meeting time and place.

Scheduled Events

Paddle to the Grill, Thursday, July 2, 2015

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

Starting July 2, Davis Boat Dock is reopening with new management. They have remodeled the building into a restaurant and will be open 7 days a week for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Boonedocks Restaurant, our regular place, is not going to be open on Thursdays this year. So with a little effort, we can paddle the opposite direction of what we have been doing to have a grill to paddle to; starting at Boonedocks and paddling to the renewed Davis Marina and Restaurant! Here's where the "effort" comes in....The carry for the boats is a loooong way from where we have to park our vehicles and until TVA OKs the marinas' extension of their ramps, we cannot drive any closer. We either have to sweat the carry or use a kayak cart. Kayak carts can be ordered from a number of places online for about \$35 and up. So I am officially announcing.....Paddle To The Grill, weekly on Thursdays at 6:30 pm.

4th of July Watauga Run and Campout, Friday, July 3 – Sunday, July 5, 2015

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

[Riverstone Campground](http://www.riverstoneshuttle.com), 785 Herb Hodge Road, Johnson City, TN 37601



Come camp and paddle with us on Friday and Saturday night and stay down on the cool banks of the Watauga River! Normally the lake is backed up to this campground with flat, still water. But with the lake down, it flows fast and cold just like the upper part of the river right by the campground.

Friday Night: Get your site. Come set up camp and enjoy a fire with us in the group site.

Saturday: River run. Load up boats at 1:00 and drive to the dam to put in. We'll paddle the whole river right to the boat ramp at the campground and be finished for the day! This is a 5-6 hour float, so bring plenty of water and snacks, sunscreen and cold water gear as always. Note: If you aren't camping and just want to paddle, meet us at the campground by 12:00 for the shuttle.

Saturday Night: Pot Luck Dinner. Please bring a covered dish for a meal in the pavilion for after we get off the river.

We have a group rate for both nights and we can split the cost among us as a one or two night stay. PLEASE contact me with which nights you are camping and if you are in a tent or a hammock. I need commitments to make sure we have the camping space we need, so please contact me! There is a covered pavilion with picnic tables for our cookout; and also bathrooms. For the kids, there is a playground with swings, slides (not water slides) and seesaws. I've always wanted to do an overnight on the Watauga and hope to make this an annual event! Please come help make this a success! If interested, contact Debbie Briscoe, ldcakes@hotmail.com.

Controlling Invasive Plants along Jones Branch, Friday, July 10, 2015

Contact: [Vic Hasler](mailto:Vic.Hasler@usfs.gov) (423-239-0388) or [Clifton Avery](mailto:Clifton.Avery@usfs.gov) (ATC)

In the rhododendron-filled bottomland along the A.T. corridor in the Jones Branch, infestations of Chinese yam and tree-of-heaven have been observed just short of the second bridge when headed northbound from the outfitters. This event is to control the spread of these two invasive plants which can grow rapidly to form dense thickets overrunning the native vegetation. The vines and small trees will be pulled and dug. If USFS personnel can join, then larger trees (8-10" diameter by 60-80' tall) will be cut and the stems painted with herbicide.

Appropriate equipment for the day includes work gloves, boots or sturdy shoes, long pants (due to lots of stinging nettle), shirt (pack one with long sleeves), plus lunch and plenty of water. Optional safety glasses will be provided if you don't have a pair already.

Let the event leaders know of your interest as car pools will leave at 8 am from both Kingsport, TN (below McDonalds in Colonial Heights) and Asheville, NC (SORO office at 160A Zillicoa Street). Everyone will assembly at the outfitters on the Nolichucky River by 9 am, and then walk roughly 0.75 mile to the infestations. Come for a half-day or longer to help control this invasion!

Note: It is expected that the Jones Branch area will be addressed during the morning, so then we'll head after more tree-of-heaven at Temple Hill Gap during the afternoon.

F/B: Buffalo Mountain "Grand Circuit," Sunday, July 12, 2015

Contact: [Tim Schaefer](mailto:Tim.Schaefer@tehcc.org), 423-302-0846

Rating: Medium 2.1 mile walk around Buffalo Mountain.

Come with us to explore a nearby park system for fun and for updating the wiki. There will be children and maybe dogs. We'll hike as all feet are able, but the goal will be to complete the Cascade Trail also known as The Grand Circuit, the circumnavigation of the park. Contact Tim Schaefer for meeting location coordination and details.

F/B: FunFest "New" Moonlight Hike, Thursday, July 16, 2015

Contact: [William Werner](mailto:William.Werner@tehcc.org), 423-408-4469

Rating: Easy 2.5 mile walk around the lake at night on Lakeside and Holly Trails.

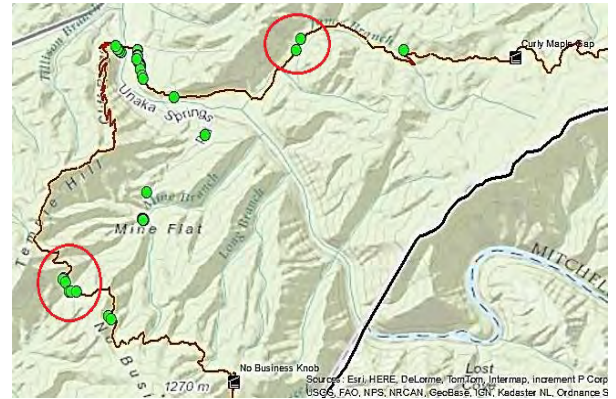
The hike title is because this year's date falls on a "New Moon," thus no chance for moonlight. TEHCC has been co-sponsoring the Kingsport FunFest Moonlight Hike at Bays Mountain Park since before 1993. Over the years, this popular event has attracted larger and larger crowds. Parking space is tight up at the center; therefore, in order to control the number of vehicles, this year's Moonlight Hike will again be a ticketed event with only 350 tickets being distributed. However, TEHCC volunteers helping with the event will not be required to have an entrance ticket. To minimize the number of TEHCC cars, if you have fewer than four people, then let's gather at the Eastman lodge back parking lot at 7 pm to carpool (half-hour later than last year which was a bit early). Otherwise, be at the back side of the visitor center facing the lake by 7:30 pm. The hike itself kicks off at 8 pm from the dam near the visitors' center. Bring your own flashlight/headlamp (and spare batteries), water, insect repellent, and charged cell phone. We'll start at the front of the walkers, and then be assigned specific intersections to direct traffic along the right path. Overall, TEHCC needs to cover roughly a dozen places with one or two people each. The event ends with a headcount back at the visitors' center by 10 pm. (Tradition is also a gift certificate to the park store for the volunteer guessing closest to the total number of people who took the hike per the official counter.) If you are interested in assisting with this event or have any questions, please contact me.

Laurel Fork Falls, from Dennis Cove, Sunday, July 19, 2015

Contact: [Yancey Appling](mailto:Yancey.Appling@tehcc.org), 864-508-2754

Rating: Moderate, 2.6 miles

This popular destination is one of the larger waterfalls in the area, with an approach along an old railroad bed followed by a challenging scramble down to the falls. We will meet in Johnson City behind Parkway Discount Wine and Liquor just off I-26 Exit 24 at the intersection of University Parkway and South Roan Street at 1:25 pm and be back by 5:30 pm. Remember to bring water, a snack, sunscreen, appropriate footwear, and clothing suitable for summer hiking. Please contact the hike leader in advance for questions or to sign up for the hike.



Invasive Plant Management Opportunity, July 20 – 27, 2015

Contact: [Tim Stewart](mailto:Tim.Stewart@tehcc.org) or Carl Fritz, atvolunteer@tehcc.org

A crew from the Southeastern Exotic Plant Management Team is working with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy on the A.T. south and north of US 19E the week of July 20-27. The primary task will be cutting and spraying multiflora rose in the areas of Bishop Hollow, Charlie Johnson and Wilder Mine Hollow. They will also be working to eradicate Chinese Yam and Oriental Bittersweet. Volunteers are welcome. We will most likely be using loppers or trimmers with metal blades. If interested, contact Tim Stewart or Carl Fritz.

TEHCC Steering Committee Meeting, Tuesday, July 21, 2015, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Contact: Steve Ankabrandt, 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.

APEs Advanced Swift Water Rescue Course, Friday, July 24 and Saturday, July 25, 2015

Contact: Scott Fisher, 276-698-4644

Location: Friday: Nolichucky Gorge Campground, Erwin, TN; Saturday: Nolochucky Gorge

Description: 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.

Course Prerequisites: Students are required to have completed an ACA Basic Swiftwater Rescue Course and should be comfortable on Class III water. All paddle craft are welcome. Participants should be in good health and overall fitness, possess solid swimming ability, and be comfortable swimming in moving current during river drills. Participants should dress appropriately for weather and temperature, and should expect to be in the water for extended periods of time.

Minimum Personal Gear: Type III PFD designed for whitewater use (Rescue PFD is recommended but not required), whitewater helmet, protective clothing suitable for extended swimming in cold water, protective footwear, boat, paddle, whistle, throw rope, 15+ feet of one inch tubular nylon webbing, 2 locking carabiners, and 2 prusik loops (2 x 6-8 feet pieces of 4-5 millimeter polypropylene cord)

Cost: \$70; APEs members can deduct \$10; ACA members can further deduct \$5. Register online at <http://www.riverapes.org/registration.html>. For more information, contact Scott Fisher at 276-698-4644.

For the Record

Spring Wildflower Hike, May 9, 2015

Joe DeLoach reporting

For this year's installment of our annual spring wildflower hike, we chose the Appalachian Trail from Highway 19E to Doll Flats. Our record of 40 species found was years ago between 19E and the edge of Hump Mountain. We might have matched that if we'd gone farther this year, finding 31 varieties without going beyond Doll Flats. Showy orchis and fringed phacelia highlighted the lower elevations, moving into erect trilliums and wood anemones in the middle, with early spring trout lilies hanging on at Doll Flats. The flower of the day was jack in the pulpit; we saw some great specimens and a lot of them in the upper half of the hike. We also saw evidence of much hard work by dedicated TEHCC volunteers who had cut and peeled locust logs, some quite large, and stakes for trail rehabilitation with Hard Core the following weekend. Doll Flats makes a great place for a siesta on a warm sunny day. Joe lost his bet with Kim that we would find more species of flowers than we would see Appalachian Trail thru-hikers, and it wasn't close. Next year we'll shoot for earlier in the spring and the different varieties it brings. Hikers for this outing were Serita Blankenbecler, Phyllis Cairnes, Denise Hardin, Kim Peters, and Joe DeLoach.

Konnarock Crew Improving Backbone Rock Trail, May 30 – June 3 and June 10 – 14, 2015

Carl Fritz reporting

The Konnarock Crew spent two work weeks working on the next to the highest relocation on Backbone Rock Trail. The objective was to decrease the very steep grades on this trail. Konnarock Crew numbered 10 to 12 each day. During these two weeks 19 TEHCC members and friends contributed 247 volunteer hours in helping them. Both weeks were hot and in the first week there were heavy afternoon showers. Many on the crew experienced their first trail work and even their first camping. Digging sidehill trail in fields of small rocks, roots, and duff holes was challenging, but everyone persevered and opened the 1980-foot relocation on the last day.

Thanks to the Nature Conservancy for providing an excellent camping site for the crew. TEHCC provided a dinner for the crew on the last evening of each week. Ed Oliver prepared the barbecue, pasta salad, baked beans, coleslaw and banana pudding. The crew enthusiastically appreciated the good food and not having to wash dishes! The club members and friends who participated were: Daryl Anderson, Karen Benfield, Scotty Bowman, Ken Buchanan, Richard Carter, Jim Chambers, Jim Floyd, Carl Fritz, Pat Loven, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Bill Murdoch, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Reuben Potter, Tim Stewart, George Thorpe, Allison Williams.

Little Stony Creek Falls, Hanging Rock Recreation Area, Sunday, June 14, 2015

William Werner reporting

The humidity was high for this otherwise pleasant hike down the Stony Creek gorge. Hikers Vic Hasler and William Werner enjoyed some early rhododendron blooms and colorful dragonflies and millipedes. A quick off-trail ascent of "Noodlehead Rock" yielded an obscure geocache. Toward the bottom of the trail, damage from a previous washout is still extant and a permanent fix will require some significant repair work. However, the trail is still passable with caution. Visitors coming from the bottom should also be aware of an active wasp nest on the sign at the trailhead. On the way home, the hikers visited Bear Rock for the wide vista and found some nearly ripe blueberries.

A.T.: Bridges and Rhododendron of Jones Branch, Sunday, June 21, 2015

Vic Hasler reporting

The white rhododendron was in peak bloom for this easy (but hot!) hike on Fathers' Day. The group assembled from different locations to travel to the busy outfitters for parking. Heading northbound on the Appalachian Trail, the hikers crossed the four wood bridges pausing to admire the blooms and other features along this section. Just over two hours were needed for the three mile round trip. Participating were Jiyu Chen, Jean Xu, Felicity Chen, Kyle Chen, Sen Li, Xiaorong Wang, Amy Liu, Danny Liu, Denise Hardin, Clark Hasler, and Vic Hasler.



Rhododendron maximum L. (great laurel)



Hikers on third bridge



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Received via TEHCC.org on Friday, June 12, 2015

Amy Halberstadt writes: Actually this is just a big Thank You! I just recently hiked this section for 9 days and am so appreciative of the volunteers who keep up this section and maintain the shelters and the trail itself. Thanks very much!

P.S. What a glorious time to hike with gorgeous views, mountain laurel everywhere, and so many flowers abloom!

Reporting: Gayle Riddervold

Date: 5/28/2015

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

Location: Section 13, US 19E to Doll Flats

People: Gayle Riddervold, Becky Kinder

Summary: We walked half way up the trail, trimming small branches and stinging nettle. We also picked up a few aluminum cans near the trailhead. We encountered several hikers camping below the trailhead who complimented the hiking club for the recent rehab up near Doll Flats. They also reported no blow downs. The new campsite was clean too.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 5/29/2015

Purpose: Confirm location of invasive species

Location: Section 19b, Curley Maple Gap Shelter to Nolichucky River, Around RR tracks and second trail bridge

People: Vic Hasler

Summary: Multiple tasks were planned for this section check. First was to confirm the location of the new kiosk being installed as an Eagle project – and to examine the messaging on the existing kiosk in the Chestoa recreation area. Second was to pull reported garlic mustard along the railroad tracks. I found and removed a couple bags of trash – and the springs from an old truck bench seat, but nothing right along the trail. Six pounds of garlic mustard were removed from beside Jones Branch Road; so TEHCC has successfully completed the ATC Garlic Mustard Challenge with 135 pounds total. Next, I searched for tree-of-heaven and Chinese yam just short of the second trail bridge. The mountain laurel was in full bloom. Three previously dismantled fire rings have been reconstructed, while two others remained gone. I encountered a significant amount of stinging nettle – and then figured out the tree-of-heaven by locating several dozen plants, including a pair 8-10” in diameter by 60-80’ tall. However, no Chinese yam was seen. To verify my observations, I swung by the ranger office in Unicoi to check with Joe McGuinness. Finally, I transported a couple of flip-flopping hikers from the Erwin McDonald’s to I-81 Exit 59, as they were heading quickly to Damascus. Overall, an active afternoon in the woods.



Beautiful Mountain Laurel

Reporting: Lynn DiFiore

Date: 5/30/2015

Purpose: Cut annual growth

Location: Section 14b, Overmountain shelter to Bradley Gap

People: Lynn DiFiore

Summary: I used a brushcutter to clear annual growth from the trail and removed a moderate amount of trash from the barn. I also removed a fire ring from a newly created campsite before Little Hump. I saw many section and day hikers - very few thru hikers.

Reporting: John Robbins

Date: 5/30/2015

Purpose: Cut weeds

Location: Sections 3b and 3a, US 421 to Spring, and onward to emergency shelter

People: John Robbins

Summary: It was a perfect day to continue cutting weeds in the section. I completed 3B and continued north almost reaching the emergency shelter. I cleared waterbars along the way and broke up three fire rings. There were about 20 thru hikers and 10 day hikers that passed me, all very appreciative of our trail maintenance activities.

Reporting: Lynn DiFiore

Date: 5/31/2015

Purpose: Cut annual growth

Location: Section 14b, Overmountain Shelter to Stan Murray Shelter

People: Lynn DiFiore

Summary: I used a brush cutter to finish cutting annual growth and removed a moderate amount of trash from Stan Murray Shelter. I finally got to meet Roan Naturalist/Ridgerunner Lee! Still signs of active ATV use on the TN side of Buckeye Gap, but they do not appear to be accessing the trail.

Reporting: Brian Paley

Date: 6/3/2015

Purpose: Trim weeds

Location: Section 8, US 321 to Forest Service gate

People: Brian Paley

Summary: I cut back very overgrown weeds around Watauga Lake up to US 321.

Reporting: Ken Murray

Date: 6/5/2015

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

Location: Section 20b, Temple Hill Gap to No Business Knob Shelter and return

People: Ken and Lotta Murray

Summary: We did routine summer clipping. There were no blowdowns and only three hikers. The bubble seems to have passed.

Reporting: Dan Firth

Date: 6/6/2015

Purpose: Rare Plant and Invasive Species Monitoring

Location: Section 12b, Walnut Mountain Road to Sugar Hollow Creek

People: Dan Firth

Summary: I spent a beautiful day exploring the section and searching for two rare target species of plants. I found a small patch of garlic mustard near the junction of the A.T. and Walnut Mountain Road. The total garlic mustard pulled was one pound. The plants did not look as if they had dropped their seeds.

Reporting: Dan Firth

Date: 6/7/2015

Purpose: Rare Plant Monitoring

Location: Section 13, US 19E to Doll Flats

People: Dan Firth

Summary: I searched for two rare plant species, and found one definitively.

Reporting: Joe DeLoach

Date: 6/7/2015

Purpose: Lop briars and other annual growth

Location: Section 15a, Near Carvers Gap and near Cloudland

People: Joe DeLoach

Summary: I started at Carvers Gap and clipped blackberries and lopped brush to the old Hack Line Road. I also cut one small blowdown and improved drainage in a couple of areas. I then went to Cloudland and cut areas that were thick with blackberries near the top, at Toll House Gap, and in a sunny spot between Toll House Gap and the side trail to Roan High Knob. I also lopped brush, picked up trash, reset some of the stakes used for the steps, and blocked some side paths around the steps along the way. The section will need blazing next time. Rhododendron are already blooming atop Roan and are near their peak in Carvers Gap and on Round Bald.

Reporting: Terry Oldfield

Date: 6/7/2015

Purpose: Maintain Shelter

Location: Section 4b, Double Springs Shelter

People: John Frey, Terry Oldfield

Summary: We hiked to Double Springs Shelter from TN 91. On the way, we clipped briars and other weeds encroaching the trail, and cut one small blowdown. We left a new log book at the shelter and picked up trash. Everything looked good at the shelter and the spring. The trail is clear. We saw 10 thru-hikers; several of them complimented the condition of the trail.

Reporting: Craig Haire

Date: 6/8/2015

Purpose: Clear trailside overgrowth

Location: Section 20a, North end of section, near Nolichucky River

People: Craig Haire

Summary: I whacked weeds near the road. Some brainless oafs had cut across the first switchback at the road, excoriating the bank. I tried to block it off the best I could.

Reporting: Pat Loven

Date: 6/9/2015

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

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

People: Patrick Loven, Pat Loven

Summary: We drove to the top of White Rock Mountain and worked trail north from Canute Place to just beyond the recent relocations. Our main tasks included trimming rhododendron, briars, and nettle, and sawing out several 'step-overs.' We saw eight hikers during the day.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 6/9/2015

Purpose: Accompany John Odell on invasive plant survey

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

People: Fred Jablonski, Jim Foster

Summary: Fred (first timer) and myself accompanied John Odell of the ATC on an invasive plant survey. He found none thankfully, but we did get to cut a small blowdown. The trail was muddy but in good shape.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 6/9/2015

Purpose: Accompany John Odell on invasive plant survey

Location: Section 16b, Greasy Creek Gap to Iron Mountain Gap

People: Fred Jablonski, Jim Foster

Summary: Fred and I continued with John Odell on the plant survey to Iron Mountain Gap. John didn't find anything and the trail was free of obstructions. By the way, this is John's next to last week with the ATC. He will be missed and we wish him well.

Reporting: Ed Oliver

Date: 6/11/2015

Purpose: Repair rock steps

Location: Section 1, Backbone Rock Trail

People: Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery, Ed Oliver

Summary: During the winter, a large rock fell on the mortared steps near the parking lot. The large rock was successfully removed during the winter, but the freeze/thaw cycle destroyed about four steps. We removed all the rocks and rebuilt the stairs using old rocks plus some new. The stairs look great again and are safe to walk.

Reporting: Craig Haire

Date: 6/13/2015

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 19a, Indian Grave Gap to Curley Maple Gap Shelter

People: Craig Haire

Summary: While doing a club hike, I cut three trees from across the trail with my 12" Greenworks chainsaw; one of the trees was more than 12" in diameter.

Reporting: Craig Haire

Date: 6/13/2015

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

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

People: Craig Haire

Summary: Continuing the club hike, I cleared two trees between the shelter and the outfitters, and two more between the outfitters and Chestoa. For the first time, the battery gave out during the last cut, and I switched to my spare battery to finish. It was a very pleasant day.

Reporting: Mike Hupko

Date: 6/13/2015

Purpose: Summer Maintenance

Location: Section 18, Deep Gap to Beauty Spot

People: Marsha Hupko, Mike Hupko

Summary: We mowed a section of the A.T. in the Deep Gap area and also the trail to the spring. We mowed the open area at Beauty Spot Gap and mowed a section from the Beauty Spot Spring to the north end of Beauty Spot. We also picked up trash at Deep Gap, Beauty Spot Gap and the parking area at Beauty Spot.

Reporting: Mike Hupko

Date: 6/15/2015

Purpose: Summer Maintenance

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

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

Summary: We mowed weeds, lopped small overhanging branches, removed branches from the trail, and cleaned waterbars from Iron Mountain Gap to Weedy Gap. The spring at the orchard was flowing well.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 6/17/2015

Purpose: Trim weeds from trail

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

People: Fred Jablonski, John Tomko, Bruce Darby, Jim Foster

Summary: Two of us started at Hughes Gap and the other two at Greasy Creek and we trimmed the whole section of weeds. We met several hikers on this warm day and they were grateful for the weed trimming. The trail is in very good shape.

Reporting: Richard Carter

Date: 6/18/2015

Purpose: Place sign and do maintenance

Location: Section 14c, Stan Murray Shelter to Carvers Gap

People: Richard Carter

Summary: I posted our new trailhead sign, replacing the old one which was outdated because it indicated the presence of the Apple House Shelter. I then spent the remainder of my day cutting briars and bushes encroaching the trail on the south side of Jane Bald.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 6/18/2015

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

Location: Section 9b, Hampton Blue-Blaze and Pond Mountain

People: Joe Morris

Summary: I cut seasonal growth and removed an 8" blowdown on the blue-blaze approach near the cemetery trail intersection. Another large blowdown was above it, which I did not remove because of safety concerns. The blue-blaze trail is passable. The parking lot was full at the Hampton trailhead on this hot and muggy afternoon.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 6/18/2015

Purpose: Improve spring and lath bridges

Location: Section 5, Half-mile south of TN 91

People: Daryl Anderson, Ken Buchanan, Carl Fritz, Pat Loven, Joe Morris, Bill Murdoch, Brian Paley, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Tim Stewart

Summary: Bill, Ken and Tim redug the spring, placed a modified 5-gallon bucket with lid as a collection basin and piped it for easy access. They achieved a concentrated water flow. The rest of us worked on putting new lath on bog bridges and doing some minor trail rehab.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 6/18/2015

Purpose: Repair rock cairns

Location: Section 4b, Osborne Farm

People: Paul Benfield, Collin Edwards, Ted Mowery, George Thorpe

Summary: This group reworked all the rock cairns on the Osborne Farm. They dug them in and mortared them together if there were multiple rocks. They also drove t-posts beside them so the cattle don't push them over. There were only three hikers today.

Reporting: Kevin Sedgwick

Date: 6/19/2015

Purpose: Routine Maintenance; Paint blazes

Location: Section 12d, Campbell Hollow Road to US 19E

People: Kevin Sedgwick, Gloria Sedgwick

Summary: We repainted blazes and broke up fire rings at two campsites. We tried to pull dead fall onto ATV tracks on the hill south above the cemetery to block the path. Hikers are missing the turn and following the ATV tracks downhill. Better blazing is needed. We cut back multiflora rose, rhodos and briars, especially in the Bishop Hollow area and in open fields. We met several thru hikers.

Reporting: Kim Peters

Date: 6/20/2015

Purpose: Weed and lop

Location: Section 5, TN 91 to Grindstaff Monument

People: Jim Floyd, Lorri Mirrer, Kat Johnson, Kim Peters

Summary: For this 3rd-Saturday "Hiking with Tools" trip, we lopped rhododendron and whacked weeds using swingblades from TN 91 to the Grindstaff Monument. We met lots of hikers. Almost all of them thanked us for our work and one asked if we "had enough gas for those weed eaters." Apparently we did not, as we decided to turn around when we reached the Grindstaff Monument. To make the day perfect, we got caught in a heavy rain shower while walking back, guaranteeing that we arrived back at the car soaking wet - about the same time the rain stopped. Much thanks to Lorri Mirrer who traveled all the way from Charlotte to help out on the trail.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 6/20/2015

Purpose: GPS these trail sections

Location: Sections 15a and 15b, Hughes Gap to Carvers Gap

People: Jim Foster

Summary: I did GPS readings for these two trail sections.

Reporting: Paul Benfield

Date: 6/20/2015

Purpose: Mow Trail

Location: Section 4b, Osborne Farm

People: Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery

Summary: We mowed and trimmed weeks along the Accessible Trail across the Osborne Farm. We also painted all the blazes across the farm. All of the cairns are still standing and looking good. The Accessible Trail needs to be sprayed. Lots of section and thru hikers were out hiking.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 6/21/2015

Purpose: Light trail maintenance while admiring white rhododendron blooms

Location: Section 19b, Nolichucky River Outfitters to fourth bridge

People: Vic Hasler

Summary: A scheduled club hike gave an opportunity to view this trail section after the heavy usage by the thru-hiker wave. The single wide path north of the outfitters to the switchback in the bottomland is very passable – thanks in part to recent efforts by Craig Haire in removing two blowdowns. Summer growth was primarily stinging nettle and dog hobble narrowing the trail, which could be addressed with a swing blade – or just wearing long pants. A log step near the fourth bridge has broken free. Some light trimming was performed, along with hauling out a bag of trash from two campsites and a few beverage containers that had been tossed into the woods. The stream under the first bridge was not flowing, while the streams under the other three bridges had moving water.

Reporting: John Robbins

Date: 6/22/2015

Purpose: General Maintenance

Location: Section 3b, US 421 to spring

People: John Robbins, Joanne Robbins

Summary: We trimmed back briars, cleaned out waterbars, and removed several small blowdowns. There is a large, chest-high blowdown about two miles north of 421 (right before the camp area). I removed all the secondary limbs and made the hiker walk-around safer, but it will need to be removed with a chain saw. We packed out some trash and cleaned up at the trailhead. The spring is flowing well. We ran into thru-hiker "Mule" who worked with us on Hard Core, and met several section hikers including a girl scout troop. The trail is in good shape.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 6/23/2015

Purpose: GPS trail

Location: Sections 13 and 14, Carvers Gap to US 19E

People: Bruce Darby, Jim Foster

Summary: Bruce and I walked from Carvers Gap to US 19E to GPS the trail for ATC. All of the new relocations are now included. This whole section of trail is in excellent shape. Some mowing has been done, which was greatly appreciated. The new rehab north of Hump Mountain looks great and made the descent a little more pleasant.

Reporting: Mike Hupko

Date: 6/24/2015

Purpose: Mow and clear trail

Location: Section 18, Beauty Spot to Indian Grave Gap

People: David Douthat, Jeannine Edwards, Faye Guinn, Howard Guinn, Marsha Hupko, Mike Hupko, Wayne Jones, David Polon, Lana Scott, and Tim Shipley

Summary: We mowed, lopped and picked up trash on the trail from Beauty Spot to Indian Grave Gap.

Reporting: Paul Benfield

Date: 6/24/2015

Purpose: Mow campground and trails

Location: Section 14b, Overmountain Shelter

People: Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery

Summary: We mowed the campground and the trails to the barn and privy. We almost waited too long; the grass and weeds were almost too high to mow. The shelter is clean and the water sources are flowing well.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 06/25/2015

Purpose: Cut blowdown

Location: Section 3b, 2 miles north of US 421

People: Carl Fritz, John Robbins

Summary: We cut a chest-high blowdown that was an obstacle 2 miles north of US 421.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 06/25/2015

Purpose: Cut weeds and clear waterbars

Location: Section 4a, US 421 to Double Springs Shelter

People: Jim Floyd, Carl Fritz, Bill Murdoch, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart, George Thorpe

Summary: Many hikers were out today. We got a majority of the worst of the weeds. Probably three people are still needed for another day. Waterbars were cleaned out to about 3/4 mile south of Berry Fields. George encountered one bear on the trail, but it quickly left.

Reporting: Paul Benfield

Date: 06/25/2015

Purpose: Open relocation

Location: Section 5, 1/4 mile south of TN 91

People: Ed Olliver, Ted Mowery, Paul Benfield

Summary: We opened a new location of the A.T. south of TN 91. We cut yearly growth and raked the new location. We also blazed the relo and removed old blazes on the old section. Some work is still needed on the north end of the relocation, which we expect to complete next week.

Reporting: Kim Peters

Date: 06/25/2015

Purpose: Maintain shelter, weed, and lop

Location: Section 5, Grindstaff Monument to Iron Mountain Shelter

People: Kevin Sedgwick, Phyllis Cairnes, Kim Peters

Summary: We finished weeding and lopping from the Grindstaff Monument out to Iron Mtn Shelter. We (again) dismantled a fire ring built at the monument and three others at the shelter and picked up trash. The shelter area was surprisingly clean. I need to bring a broom out next visit. The water source at the shelter was low, but flowing. The newly reworked spring was also flowing well. We walked back out on the newly opened relo. This section is in good shape.