



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

June 2016

tehcc.org

In this Issue

[Eric Rayfield, 2016 Roan Ridge Runner](#)

[New Members](#)

[Event Schedule – Next Two Months](#)

[Details of Upcoming Events](#)

[For the Record](#)

[A.T. Maintenance Reports](#)



Eric Rayfield, 2016 Roan Ridge Runner

Excerpt by Vic Hasler based on article by Rebekah Price published in the [Elizabethton Star](#)



SAHC photo

Eric points toward his home from up on Grassy Ridge

If you frequent the Roan, you may begin to see some familiar tracks on the trail. Eric Rayfield will spend his summer as the ridge runner. The position is funded by a collaborative effort between the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy with the purpose of educating hikers and conducting research on rare species and hiker behaviors. “His main job is to interact with hikers and people visiting the Roan to teach about “Leave No Trace” ethics on the trail and also to teach them about ecosystems, rare plants, and animals that are found on the Roan” said SAHC Stewardship Director Marquette Crockett. “...and stewardship work, so he’ll dismantle fire rings, pack out trash, do golden wing warbler surveys and blackberry density surveys, among other things.”

“I really am looking forward to being out on the trail every day,” he said. “I love Roan Mountain. It’s a really delicate ecosystem and different than anything else in the world. I’m excited to be out there four days a week and to teach other people about how special this place is.” While completing his work as the ridge runner, he said he might also work on his thesis studying high elevation bumble bees.

Eric is well prepared for this type of work as he has diverse environmental education experience and is currently completing his Masters at Appalachian State University. His undergraduate studies focused on wildlife biology with a minor in outdoor adventure studies at Lees McRae College. Rayfield said he worked in environmental education at the Carolina Raptor Center, where he trained birds of prey and taught with children. He said he also taught backpacking programs at national parks and used to be a backpacking club president at Lees McRae.

TEHCC Welcomes New Member

Randy Phillips

Event Schedule – Next Two Months

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

For information on APE's/TEHCC paddling events, see <http://regions.worldkayak.com/tri-cities/category/regional-events/>.

Date	Description	Contact	Telephone
June 4	West Fork Tuck River Trip, Class III-IV+	Wesley R. Bradley	423-647-1321
June 4-5	APE's Beginner Whitewater Kayak Course	Scott Fisher	276-698-4644
June 9	Paddle to the Grill (Every Thursday)	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
June 11	Lower Watauga River, Class I-II (Biweekly)	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
June 12	F/B: Gardens of Roan and Roan High Bluff	Tim and Carrie Schaefer	423-302-0846
June 18	APE's 15 th Annual Nolichucky River Cleanup	Andrea Parra	434-422-0400
June 21	Steering Committee Meeting, 11:30	William Werner	423-408-4469
June 25	A.T.: "Hike the TEHCC A.T." – Unaka Mountain	Tim Schaefer	423-302-0846
June 25	APE's Beginner Whitewater Canoe Clinic	Scott Fisher	276-698-4644
June 25	Cheoah River Trip, Class IV-V	Wesley R. Bradley	423-647-1321
June 26	APE's Intmd/Adv Whitewater Canoe Clinic	Scott Fisher	276-698-4644
June 26-28	Konnarock Crew – Backbone Rock Trail Relos	Carl Fritz	423-477-4669
July 1-3	Lower Watauga River Campout – Riverstone	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
July 9	A.T.: "Hike the TEHCC A.T." – Location TBD	Tim Schaefer	423-302-0846
July 16	A.T.: F/B Gentry Creek Falls	Tim and Carrie Schaefer	423-302-0846
July 16	APE's Intmd Whitewater Kayak Clinic	Scott Fisher	276-698-4644
July 21	Fun Fest Moonlight Hike, 7:00 pm	Steve Ankabrandt	423-245-3026
July 22	Paddle to Work	Tim Schaefer	423-302-0846
July 22-24	APE's Basic Swift Water Rescue Course	Scott Fisher	276-698-4644

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. The "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. The "Gate City" spot is up on the hill above US 23 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 appreciated for the newsletter and trail wiki.

Details of Upcoming Events

Recurring Events

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

Note: Freedom Hall pool is closed for the summer. This event is cancelled or may be moved to another location. Contact Wesley Bradley for further information.

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.

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: Ryan Shealy, 423-963-6066

Interested in kayaking but don't know where to start? Basic kayak training and practice is available in Kingsport on Thursdays at the [Kingsport Aquatic Center](#)! During the summer, we will be in the outdoor pool, but in case of rain, the center will partition off part of the indoor pool for us. Admission is \$3 for two full hours of fun; Aquatic Center members may attend free! If you have equipment, you may drop it off at the gate to the outdoor pool, or in case of rain, at the door closest to the indoor 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 Ryan Shealy (423-963-6066). For additional event details, click [here](#).

Thursday Evenings Starting June 9: Paddle to the Grill, 6:30 pm

Contact: [Debbie Briscoe](#), 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. PFDs are mandatory. For more information, contact Debbie Briscoe.

Every Other Saturday Starting June 11: Lower Watauga, Class I and II, 3:00 – 7:30 pm

Contact: [Debbie Briscoe](#), 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 to dinner in town. Please be prepared for cold water and wear appropriate gear.

Directions: From W Elk Ave. in Elizabethton, turn at 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 parking area near a covered picnic area.

3rd Saturday, Hiking with Tools!

Contact: Kim Peters, atmaint@tehcc.org, 423-366-0128

Hiking with Tools! is an opportunity to enjoy a day hike on our beautiful section of the A.T. while helping out with some routine maintenance, such as breaking up fire rings, cleaning out waterbars and steps, lopping rhododendron, and painting blazes. All tools will be furnished and no prior experience is required! Last year we typically had four to five people on each trip – with eight new volunteers making a contribution. Contact Kim for hike details, including meeting time and place.

Scheduled Events

F/B: Gardens of Roan and Roan High Bluff, Sunday, June 12, 2016

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

It will be a week before the official rhododendron festival, but come with us and beat the crowds. Maybe they'll be peaking early this year and we'll have a great view. Plan is to do the Gardens of Roan (0.5mi) and Roan High Bluff (2 miles) via Cloudland Trail. We will be departing the Colonial Heights meeting location at 12:30pm sharp. We expect to be at the trail head and departing at 1:45 if you prefer to meet us there. For further information, check the trail wiki or call/e-mail the hike leader. We should be done and back to Kingsport by 6:00 pm. For more info, carpooling, courtesy notice for attending so we know to look for you, contact Tim or Carrie Schaefer, 423-302-0846 or timcarrie@tehcc.org.

TEHCC Steering Committee Meeting, Tuesday, June 21, 2016, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Contact: William Warner, chair@tehcc.org, 423-408-4469

Location: Eastman Chemical Company, Kingsport, TN; Bldg 280, Room L7

The Steering Committee guides the general program for the club. The Committee normally meets at lunchtime on the third Tuesday of each month. Meetings are open to all TEHCC members. Bring your lunch or grab a bite at the B-280 cafeteria. 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 visitor's pass.

A.T.: Deep Gap over Unaka Mountain to Greasy Creek Gap, Saturday, June 25, 2016

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

This is the "June edition" of the plan to hike the TEHCC-maintained section of the A.T. "Hike the TEHCC A.T." is a series of 10-15 mile hikes of the section of the A.T. from Spivey Gap to the Virginia Border (to Damascus in reality). The plan is to always have enough vehicles/people for shuttling so all hikes are one-way. Post trip details and planned future trips can be seen on the [club wiki](#). Contact Tim Schaefer (tim@tehcc.org) to be included in planning communications.

A.T.: Konnarock Crew, Backbone Rock Trail, June 26 – 28, 2016, 8 am – 6 pm

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

TEHCC will join with Konnarock Crew on these three days to continue the trail relocations high on the Backbone Rock Trail. TEHCC members will be staying at home and traveling each day. If interested contact Carl Fritz at atvolunteer@tehcc.org

Fourth of July, Lower Watauga River Campout, July 1 – 3, 2016

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

Riverstone Campground, 785 Herb Hodge Road Johnson City, TN 37601 ([link to map](#))

Come paddle and camp with us on Friday and Saturday nights and stay down on the cool banks of the Watauga River! The campground is very nice, and the cool temperature of the river provides a wonderful relief from the heat in July. 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 this campground.

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

Saturday: Load up for the river run at 11:00 and drive to the dam to put in. If you aren't camping and just want to paddle, meet us at the campground by 10:00 to be in on the shuttle. Because the campground host has agreed to run our shuttle for a nominal fee, we'll be able to paddle the whole river Saturday, 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, a lunch and sunscreen. And you'll still need cold-water gear like always.

Saturday Night: Please bring a covered dish for a pot luck dinner in the pavilion. The covered pavilion has picnic tables and a grill for our cookout.

Sunday Morning: Breakfast and pack out.

The campground has bathrooms and showers, and a playground for the kids! We have a group rate for both nights and we can split the cost among us for a one-night or two-night stay. PLEASE contact me to let me know 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!

A.T.: TBD, Saturday, July 9, 2016

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

This will be the "July edition" of the plan to hike the TEHCC-maintained section of the A.T. Plans are still forming, including the date; so everything is subject to change at this point. We should have enough attendees to handle shuttling, so this is your chance to hike the A.T. without doing it twice (out-and-back). Post trip details and planned future trips can be seen on the [club wiki](#). To be involved with the planning and kept on a mailing list for discussions if generally interested, even if busy on this particular day, contact Tim Schaefer, 423-302-0846 or tim@tehcc.org.

A.T.: F/B Gentry Creek Falls, Sunday, July 16, 2016

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

Summer should be heating up so let's do a wooded hike to see a waterfall. There are numerous creek crossings so plan accordingly (waterproofing boots, practicing your rock hopping, or packing creek shoes). Plan is to hike out, enjoy the falls and eat lunch then return. We'll meet and depart from the Colonial Heights location at 9am and be at the trailhead at 10am. We should be done and back to Kingsport by late afternoon. For more info, carpooling, courtesy notice for attending so we know to look for you, contact Tim or Carrie Schaefer, 423-302-0846 or timcarrie@tehcc.org.

F/B: FunFest Moonlight Hike, Thursday, July 21, 2016

Contact: [Steve Ankastrandt](mailto:Steve.Ankabrandt@tehcc.org), 423-245-3026

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

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 for badges with contact information and to discuss any additional items relevant to the hike. 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. TEHCC volunteers will 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.

Paddle to Work, Friday, July 22, 2016

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

Now here is something a little different. I have had this idea for a while, but never acted on it. Now it is time. Let's paddle to Eastman for our work commute! I figure we can put in at Fort Patrick Henry Dam and paddle in. We can pull ashore near B147. Then tie up the boats and head in for a day of work. After a hard day of work (flexible to leaving after lunch or later in the day) paddle back and go home. Plans are still hazy and I'm flexible on timing and details, so if you want in on the planning, contact paddle leader Tim Schaefer, 423-302-0846 or tim@tehcc.org.

For the Record

Spring Wildflower Hike, Shell Hollow Trail, April 30, 2016

Joe DeLoach reporting

We've held Spring Wildflower Hikes in April or early May in all but a couple years since 1992. This is probably going to be my last one. Two people signed up, one developed a conflict and the other had already been to the original destination Rock Creek Falls; so we decided to go somewhere that person had not already been. We chose the rather obscure Shell Hollow Trail in Hampton Creek Cove State Natural Area. After starting on the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail, the Shell Hollow Trail branches left to an old homesite and to the natural area boundary at Big Ridge, a spur from Little Hump, for about a 2.5-mile round trip from the parking area. Though not as rich as some past wildflower hikes, we did see 15 - 20 species of flowers and flowering trees. The star of the show was fringed phacelia, which formed acres of white carpet especially at the head of the cove. The other highlight was a huge tulip poplar on Big Ridge at the boundary of the natural area. We measured it (with outstretched arms) to be five feet in diameter, rivaling the old growth virgin trees in the Smokies and Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest. This is the largest tree I've ever seen north of the Smokies and is worth the trip. There is also a large elm around 3.5 feet in diameter. It is rare to see one that large any more, in the valley floor. Hampton Creek Cove is managed cooperatively, in part by the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, which has a work trip scheduled for June 4. Joining Joe on the hike was Serita Blankenbecler.

A.T.: Spivey Gap to Nolichucky River, April 30, 2016

Tim Schaefer reporting

For our inaugural outing for the "Hike the TEHCC A.T." we started at the beginning. We did the 11-mile section at our southern terminus at [Spivey Gap to the Nolichucky River](#). We hiked it uphill in the Trail South direction at a time when the bulk of the thru-hikers were coming through. Since we were going in the opposite direction, we saw many hikers. We made it to No Business Knob Shelter for lunch and finished our climb to Spivey Gap by midafternoon. After shuttling ourselves back to the trailhead to pick up the remaining cars, we departed, while some of us provided some local shuttling for the thru-hikers. If you're interested in participating in these hikes, please contact tim@tehcc.org to participate in the planning and coordination. To better help plan the hikes going forward, I created a [wiki page](#) where I plan to list upcoming hikes as well as provide hike details including maps, parking locations, and profile views. Attending this hike were Steve Ankabrandt, Mike Carrier, Jerry Schlather, Tim McClain, and Connie Bentley.

A.T.: Nolichucky River to Deep Gap, May 21, 2016

Tim Schaefer reporting

For our 2nd "Hike the TEHCC A.T.," we went to the next section north covering all of the wiki-documented section of [Nolichucky River to Indian Grave Gap](#) and a little of [Indian Grave Gap to Iron Mountain Gap](#). The weather wasn't very cooperative, but it could have been much worse. We began in a decent rain, no lightning; but it mostly held off in the afternoon leaving us relatively dry hopping back into the cars. This time we hiked in the Trail North direction; but since it was three weeks later than the first A.T. hike (see above) there were significantly fewer thru-hikers. Once we made it to the clearing approaching Beauty Spot, we realized we were right on the line between rain on one side of the ridge and blue skies on the other. Unfortunately, the light drizzle and wet ground discouraged spending any time enjoying the views and relaxing. We did see acres of blackberries growing and suspect you could get your fill in a few months. If you're interested in participating in these hikes in the future, please contact tim@tehcc.org to help in the planning and coordination. To better help plan the hikes going forward, I created a [wiki page](#) where I plan to list upcoming hikes as well as provide hike details including maps, parking locations, and profile views. Attending this hike were Mike Carrier and his son Bill Carrier.



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Reporting: Steve Wilson

Date: 4/19/2016

Purpose: Field Review for Offset Project with USFS and ATC

Location: Section 3b, US 421 (Low Gap) to Spring

People: Steve Wilson, Morgan Sommerville (ATC), Matthew Fusco (USFS)

Summary: The Forest Service is planning an Offset Project in the Watauga Ranger District in Sullivan County. The project's goals are to enhance forest wildlife diversity by removing select trees in selected places and to reduce the risk of wildfires by conducting a controlled burn. These plans are for forest areas just north of the A.T. from Double Springs Shelter to Abingdon Gap Shelter. As a part of the planning process, a field review was conducted with representatives from the USFS, ATC and TEHCC. Matthew Fusco (USFS Forest Architect), Morgan Sommerville (ATC Southern Region Director), and I hiked the nearest A.T. section (Hwy 421 trail north to spring) which might be affected by the plans and reached the conclusion that the plans would not affect the views significantly.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 4/25/2016

Purpose: Blowdown Report

Location: Chestoa to Wilbur Dam Road

People: Aaron Grills, Stephanie Roane

Summary: Aaron and Stephanie are northbound thru-hikers. Ed Oliver knows Aaron well and asked them to record blowdowns. They just got off the trail to attend a wedding in Mexico. Here is their report.

1.8 miles north of Chestoa, 10" tree; 2 miles north of Chestoa, 8" tree; 1 mile south of Curley Maple Shelter, 12" tree; need northbound blaze at Indian Grave Gap

Reporting: Wes Ford

Date: 4/29/2016

Purpose: Check Trail condition

Location: Section 3b, US 421 (Low Gap) to State Line

People: Wes Ford

Summary: I hiked from Low Gap to Damascus. Several trees were down and I will be reporting locations to Jim and Carl. The trail was in good condition, water sources were flowing well, and the shelter was clean. I picked up trash along the way and moved some small trees from trail. I came across six northbound hikers: three section and three thru-hikers. Beautiful day to hike.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 4/29/2016

Purpose: Build cattle fence

Location: Section 4b, Osborne Farm Accessible Trail

People: Daryel Anderson, Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Jim Chambers, Carl Fritz, Danny Harper, Karen Loven, Pat Loven, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Mike Price, Ed Speer, Tim Stewart, George Thorpe, Reuben Potter

Summary: We are building a fence to allow cattle to graze an open, but steep, hillside that cannot be mowed with a tractor. Without grazing, the area will grow trees and block the magnificent vistas. USFS had drilled post holes except in several places where they hit rock. We set many of the wood posts and t-posts. What a beautiful place to work. It will take another work day to finish the posts and bracing.

Reporting: Dan Firth

Date: 5/1/2016

Purpose: Monitor rare plants

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

People: Dan Firth

Summary: In intermittent rain, I monitored five rare plant populations.



Reporting: Jim Chambers

Date: 5/3/2016

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 2a, Abingdon Gap Shelter to Backbone Rock Trail

People: Jim Chambers, Mark "Blacktop" Dole

Summary: We removed all blowdowns between Abingdon Gap Shelter and Backbone Rock Trail.

Reporting: Dean Baird

Date: 5/5/2016

Purpose: Inspect trail section

Location: Section 10, Hampton blue-blaze trail

People: Dean Baird

Summary: I inspected the trail and removed trash. I counted 14 tents; talked to a few northbound hikers at campsites. They knew of no trail damage south of the trail.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 5/6/2016

Purpose: Build cattle fence

Location: Section 4b, Osborne Farm

People: Daryel Anderson, Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Richard Carter, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Pat Loven, Ted Mowery, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Reuben Potter, HIKERS Abe den Harder, Staton Parker, Aaron Grills, Stephanie Roane

Summary: It was in the 40's with a good wind chill, but we stayed busy to generate body heat. The Forest Service had dropped a couple of large locust trees which we skinned and split into posts and rails. We finished setting posts and started working on some of the bracing for the new cattle fence. What a beautiful place to work.



Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 5/7/2016

Purpose: Assess need for trail rehab

Location: Section 2b, Near Abingdon Gap Shelter

People: Kim Peters, Carl Fritz

Summary: We assessed primarily the water trail at Abingdon Gap Shelter as a potential project for an upcoming Order of the Arrow Boy Scout outing. It looks like it will be a good project since some rock steps and some waterbars would help preserve it and make it safer to walk. We saw many section and thru-hikers. Many of the thru-hikers are wanting to hold up for Trail Days.

Reporting: Paul Benfield

Date: 5/9/2016

Purpose: Maintain Trail

Location: Section 14b, Overmountain Shelter

People: Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery

Summary: We mowed and cut weeds at the campground at Overmountain Shelter. We also cut weeds along the trails as needed and picked up trash.

Reporting: Paul Benfield

Date: 5/9/2016

Purpose: Maintain Trail

Location: Section 4b, Osborne Farm

People: Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery

Summary: We mowed and cut weeds where possible along the A.T. and the Accessible Trail across Osborne Farm. We were unable to mow about half of the field near the old house as there were about 30 tents with campers camped there. There were more by the time we left. All appeared to be enjoying themselves.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 5/11/2016

Purpose: Build Cattle Fence

Location: Section 4b, Osborne Farm

People: Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Pat Loven, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart, George Thorpe, Matthew Gilbert

Summary: We endured some heavy rains during the morning. After lunch the rains disappeared and we dried out quickly. We completed setting the locust posts and the t-posts. Also, after splitting more locusts, we installed all the horizontal bracing and some of the diagonal bracing. Wire should start going up next time to create the cattle fence.

Reporting: Pat Loven

Date: 5/13/2016

Purpose: Routine maintenance

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

People: Ken Buchanan, Pat Loven

Summary: First we drove on the jeep road to the top of White Rock. We walked a short distance to the powerline crossing and cut back small trees and other vegetation 2-3 feet away from the trail. Hopefully this will prevent this crossing from becoming overgrown during the summer. The recent wildfire burned into the powerline right-of-way, but new vegetation had already begun to sprout. We then drove to Dennis Cove to address a similar overgrown area just south of the road crossing. We saw only three hikers today. We guessed all the others were in Damascus.

Reporting: Lynn DiFiore

Date: 5/14/2016

Purpose: Routine maintenance

Location: Section 14b, Overmountain Shelter to Bradley Gap

People: Lynn DiFiore, Lyndsey Smith, Brian Schloff

Summary: We made a preemptive strike on the briars along the trail; it looks like it will be a banner year again as some were more than 8 feet tall! We lopped branches, cleared a few small blowdowns, and dispersed another fire ring that showed up on the bald just beyond Little Hump. We removed a moderate amount of trash from the Bradley Gap campsites and a large amount of trash from the barn. All springs are running well. We saw only one thru-hiker and many day/section hikers.

Reporting: Steve Wilson

Date: 5/16/2016

Purpose: Cut locust trees for Boy Scout project

Location: Section 2b, Near Abingdon Gap Shelter

People: Carl Belcher, Steve Wilson

Summary: The goal of this outing was to fell two dead locust trees near Abingdon Gap Shelter and cut them into nine-foot logs. The logs will be used as waterbars to improve drainage for the blue-blaze trail leading to the shelter's water source. We also used the chainsaw to cut down the almost-dead locust tree next to the shelter which was a hazard tree. A new diamond-shaped water sign was placed on another tree to indicate the water trail. We saw about twenty section and thru-hikers who took great interest in observing the chainsaw work in the forest.

Reporting: Joe DeLoach

Date: 5/17/2016

Purpose: Roan Naturalist Orientation

Location: Section 14c, Carvers Gap and just north

People: Joe DeLoach

Summary: This is the fourth year that a ridgerunner or naturalist will have a presence in the Roan Highlands from late May to early August. I met with Marquette Crockett from the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy (SAHC), Amy Snyder from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), Reuben Potter from the Cherokee National Forest Watauga Ranger District, and 2016 Roan Naturalist Eric Rayfield for field orientation. We reviewed policies, guidelines, and some of the situations that have arisen in previous years. Eric's season starts this week. This year as well as last, he is employed by SAHC using A.T. license plate grant funding; but this is really a cooperative effort among both national forests, ATC, SAHC, and TEHCC. This will be the first year that a kiosk, in place just Trail north of Carvers Gap, will provide messaging for visitors, which we hope will help the naturalist. Eric will focus most of his efforts between Overmountain Shelter and Cloudland. He has a distinct advantage over his predecessors by not starting on the very busy Memorial Day weekend.

Reporting: Dean Baird

Date: 5/19/2016

Purpose: Inspect trail and remove trash

Location: Section 10, Hampton trailhead to Dennis Cove Road

People: Curtis Baird, Jennifer Baird, Emily Pons

Summary: We inspected the trail for blowdowns and damage, and the powerline right-of-way for vegetation growing over the trail. We removed trash from campsite firepits and the parking lot.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 5/19/2016

Purpose: Build cattle fence

Location: Section 4b, Osborne Farm

People: Daryl Anderson, Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Carl Fritz, Danny Harper, Pat Loven, Joe Morris, Bob Peoples, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart, Matthew Gilbert, Reuben Potter

Summary: We were in the clouds all day and had to stay working to keep warm. But we started stretching woven wire fencing and established some techniques. Over half of the fence is up now. A couple more days should finish the fence.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 5/19/2016

Purpose: Check trail, clean waterbars, trim annual growth

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

People: Bruce Darby, Jim Foster

Summary: Bruce and I cleaned, clipped, and sawed from one end of the section to the other. We also checked the shelter and delivered a new broom. Someone left a pull cart (many for hauling game) at the shelter. Wonder if we could use it for hauling tin?

Reporting: Kayla Carter

Date: 5/21/2016

Purpose: Cut weeds

Location: Section 12c, Sugar Hollow Creek to Campbell Hollow Road

People: Kayla Carter

Summary: I was planning to have some recruits come help me, but they did not show up. I walked in from Elk River Falls with a swing blade. My sole purpose for this trip was to mitigate the weeds along the Elk River. I cut rhododendron on my way to the weedy area. It took the whole day to cut the weeds by myself with the swizzle stick, which broke about half way through. Rough day, but I got it done. Hope this will reduce tick-borne illness for the hikers that come through. I saw about four thru-hikers and three day hikers. I plan to go back out after the Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards Wilderness Skills Institute and my birthday (June 4) to maintain the rest of my section.

Reporting: Craig Haire

Date: 5/21/2016

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 19b, South end of section near Nolichucky River

People: Craig Haire, Scott Thomsen

Summary: We cut three trees from across the trail. It was a wet, nasty day until it cleared up in the early afternoon.

Reporting: Joe DeLoach

Date: 5/22/2016

Purpose: Maintain section

Location: Section 14c, Stan Murray Shelter to Carvers Gap Grassy Ridge side trail

People: Joe DeLoach

Summary: There was more than I bargained for on this trip. The fences heading through the woods, climbing Round Bald, have been cut in numerous places, and people making shortcuts through is more evident now than at any time since the relocation was first installed. I tied together what I could, but much more work with fresh fencing and a way to provide tension will be needed. I threw brush on the fence and along the volunteer paths that are being created. Volunteer paths paralleling the Trail are also becoming rampant in the open area on the Trail south side of Round Bald. I saw a not-very-tall acquaintance walking down to Carvers Gap, not using the gravel trail at all. When I asked why, she said the steps were too high. Some of them are too high, through frost heaving, compaction, erosion, soil creep, not being installed deeply enough in the first place, or some combination thereof. They would be fine in a low-use backcountry setting, primarily used by avid hikers, but that's not Round Bald. The Trail north side has widened, but is in better shape. The Round Bald sign is illegible. The Jane Bald sign, installed by an unknown person, has become wobbly. The Grassy Ridge trail junction post is in solidly and in good shape. A campfire had escaped near the junction and burned a few acres. I scattered a fire ring and some wood near the junction, and hand-clipped blackberry and brush between the junction and the summit. There was actually a blowdown to contend with; a fir that had brought down some rhododendron.

Reporting: Craig Haire

Date: 5/22/2016

Purpose: Clear trailside overgrowth and remove blowdowns

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

People: Craig Haire, Duchess Vixen

Summary: On this cool, pleasant day, we saw several day-hikers and a few section and thru-hikers. We removed a tree south of the five major switchbacks and one at the north end of switchback #1. We cleared trailside growth with my 4-cycle Husky weed whacker ("Destroyer of Worlds") from switchbacks #3, #4, and #5 and to the ridge.

Reporting: Kevin Sedgwick

Date: 5/23/2016

Purpose: Routine maintenance

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

People: Kevin Sedgwick, Gloria Sedgwick

Summary: The trail was very muddy after all the rain we have had. We met 16 thru-hikers today. We broke apart a few campsites, cleared lots of small to medium blowdowns, and cut back multiflora rose and berries. As always, we pulled limbs across ATV paths to block them from the A.T.

Reporting: Eric Middlemas

Date: 5/25/2016

Purpose: Spring A.T. maintenance

Location: Section 17, Low Gap to Iron Mountain Gap

People: Eric Middlemas, Judy Middlemas, Wayne Jones, Janice Miller, David Douthat, David Fay, Lana Scott, Mike Hupko, Marsha Hupko, Howard Guinn, Faye Guinn

Summary: We removed trail debris, lopped overgrowth, cleaned out waterbars, checked springs at Cherry Gap Shelter, and removed six blowdowns. We also replaced the log book at Cherry Gap Shelter.

Reporting: Pat Loven

Date: 5/26/2016

Purpose: Install fencing

Location: Section 4b, Osborne farm

People: George Thorpe, Pat Loven, Ed Oliver, Tim Stewart, Bob Peoples, Ken Buchanan, Kim Peters, Ted Mowery, Mark Dibble, Matthew Gilbert

Summary: Under threatening skies, we continued installing fence on the Osborne farm. We finished attaching all of the woven wire today - approximately 900 feet. We also opened the four wildlife stiles. Ted mowed and trimmed the trail across the farm. We'll likely be able to complete the fence installation with one more workday. The trail was quite busy with hikers all day.

Reporting: Noah Naseri

Date: 5/28/2016

Purpose: Clean waterbars and lop

Location: Section 4a: US421 to Double Springs Shelter

People: Noah Naseri, Ed Carter

Summary: We cleaned waterbars, cut back limbs and brush, and picked up extraordinarily minimal trash. The grass needs to be cut with a swizzle stick or swing blade.

Reporting: Paul Benfield

Date: 5/28/2016

Purpose: Mow camping area

Location: Section 14b, Overmountain Shelter

People: Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery

Summary: We mowed and cut weeds at the camping area and along all trails at the barn. We also picked up trash at the shelter. There was a church group of about 40 that visited the shelter while we were there. We saw only one hiker.