



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

September 2016

tehcc.org

In this Issue

[Thank You... SAWS!](#)

[Save The Date – Fall Dinner Meeting, November 4, 2016](#)

[New Members](#)

[Event Schedule – Next Two Months](#)

[Details of Upcoming Events](#)

[For the Record](#)

[A.T. Maintenance Reports](#)



Thank You... SAWS!

Article by Vic Hasler



Picture Credit – Joshua Fernandez (SAWS)



Picture Credit – Bill Hodge (SAWS)

[Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards \(SAWS\)](#) is a conservation non-profit dedicated to protecting public lands in the Southern Appalachian region. For TEHCC, the group are designated section maintainers for the challenging Big Laurel Branch Wilderness, thus extensive routine maintenance was completed in June.

However, severe July 8th storms knocked down many trees across the Appalachian Trail near Hampton, TN, so this partner was able to put “roving firepower” into this wilderness area by dispatching two six-person crews during July 18- 21. Following rules for working in USFS wilderness, the hard-working crews used non-power tools (such as crosscut saws and wedges shown in the picture) to remove nearly one hundred blowdowns the trail section between Wilbur Dam Road to the spring south of the Vandeventer Shelter. Tennessee Eastman Hiking & Canoeing Club would like express our sincere appreciation for a job well done to reopen the A.T. for the public to enjoy hiking this ridgeline.

Save The Date – Fall Dinner Meeting, November 4, 2016

Submitted by William Werner

The annual Fall Dinner is coming up on Friday, November 4th at the Eastman Lodge from 5:30 to 9:00 pm. Food will be BBQ from Phil's Dream Pit. After dinner, TEHCC's own Steve Ankabrandt will be giving a presentation on his recent backpacking trip on Isle Royale in Lake Superior. Due to its remoteness and the difficulty of access, Isle Royale National Park is the least-visited National Park in the contiguous United States. Registration details will be available in the October newsletter.

Event	Time	Details
Fall Dinner Meeting	5:30pm	Location: Eastman Lodge, Main Banquet Hall 404 Bays Mountain Road, Kingsport, TN
Happy "Trails" Hour	5:30pm-6:30pm	Donations accepted for beer, or BYOB
Dinner: BBQ	6:30pm-7:15pm	Catered by Phil's Dream Pit (\$5 per person)
Club Business	7:15pm-8:00pm	- Update of club activities - Awards
Special Program: Backpacking on Isle Royale	8:00pm-9:00pm	Steve Ankabrandt

TEHCC Welcomes New Members

Scottie Dean	Regina Valk May	Kevin McGuire	Theresa Lawler	Emily Dotson
Joanne Ward	David Ladd	Matthew Williams	Nicole Hardin	David DeRegis
Mike Caughron	Vivian Thacker	Jonathan Timbs	Ephraim Garner	Andrew Champeau
Michelle Obergfell	James Scanlan	Jacob Merook	Seth Elliott	Celin Alvarado
	Stephen Hamby	Jonathan Shumaker	David Berry	

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
September 3	Lower Watauga Class (I-II)	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
September 16	French Broad/ Hot Spring Campout & River Run	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
September 17	APE's Lower Gauley River Trip	Wesley Bradley	423-647-1321
September 17	Hiking with Tools	Kim Peters	423-366-0128
September 24	AT Family Hiking Day	William Werner	423-408-4469
October 15	Hiking with Tools	Kim Peters	423-366-0128
October 15	A.T.: 19E to Walnut Mountain Rd	Tim Schaefer	423-408-4469

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

TEHCC Steering Committee Meeting - Usually every third Tuesday , 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.

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

Contact: [Wesley R. Bradley](mailto: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](mailto:Wesley.R.Bradley). We will try our best to get you outfitted for the night! Also feel free to contact Wesley 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: 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](#).

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

Contact: [Debbie Briscoe](mailto: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](mailto:Kim.Peters), 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 required! Last year we typically had four to five people on each trip – with eight new volunteers making a contribution. Contact Kim Peters (atmaint@tehcc.org) for hike details, including meeting time and place.

Scheduled Events

Section 9 French Broad/ Hot Spring Campout & River Run, September 16, 2016

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

The French Broad, a beautiful river to camp by and a fun river to paddle. If you've been paddling the Lower Watauga & Nolichucky and want to step up a bit this trip is for you! Section 9 is class II-III with warmer water than the Watauga and more ledges to play on & bigger waves than the Nolichucky. It also has a Class III called The Big Pillow that we will scout first. Friday Night* for just the girls (sorry guy's, girls only) I am reserving a natural mineral springs Jacuzzi at the Hot Springs Spa that is across the street from the

campground . If you have never experienced natural mineral waters this is a treat! Please let me know how many are coming by Sept 11 so I can make the spa reservation. \$35.00 for 1-3 persons \$45 Deluxe Tubs (4, 5, and 6) Additional charge of \$10.00 per person over four people. <http://nchotsprings.com/nc-hot-springs-spa-services/> . For those not going to the spa a whole bunch of folks are going into town to the Tavern for dinner.

Saturday Morning: There will be a group breakfast!

Saturday at 12:00 Noon: Meeting at Stack House to set shuttle and run the river from Walnut to Stack House.

Saturday Night: After the paddle there is a Hot Dog Supper and a Raffle for hammock and camping related gear.

Tickets will be for sale and raffle donations will be accepted but are not mandatory. This is an event held every year by my hammock camping group and for the last few years I have offered a river trip in correlation with it to make it a really fun event!

For camping or cabins: <http://nchotsprings.com/nc-hot-springs-resort-lodging/>

Map & Directions: <http://nchotsprings.com/nc-hot-springs-resort-lodging/>

A.T. Family Hiking Day, September 24, 2016

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

Location: A.T Osborne Farm

Take an easy-rated family hike across the open fields with great views into Shady Valley. Continue into forest for as far as the group decides, then return back by the same path for few miles round-trip stroll. Meet at 8:30am in Colonial Heights for just over an hour drive or at the A.T. trailhead parking lot on Hwy TN 91 by 9:30am.

A.T.: 19E to Walnut Mountain Rd, Saturday, October 15, 2016

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

We'll be skipping September of the TEHCC A.T. hike series while I welcome a new little hiker into the family and resuming in October. We will start at 19E and hike our way to Walnut Mountain Rd. This section should include a view of Jones Falls and the Mountaineer Falls Shelter. At a planned 10mi, it may be a shortest of the series. We should have enough attendees to handle shuttling so this is your chance to hike it without doing it twice (out-and-back). All of our planning and post-trip documenting can be found at http://tehcc.org/wiki/Hike_Plans:2016_TEHCC_AT. To be involved with the planning, picking the date, and kept on a mailing list for discussions, contact [Tim Schaefer](mailto:Tim.Schaefer@nc.gov) at 423-302-0846

For the Record

New River Paddle/Camp, August 5-7, 2016

Debbie Briscoe reporting

On the New River for a 3 day 2 night paddle/camp, five of us met at 9 am Friday morning to paddle 32 miles total. The first day we put in at Wagner Access and paddled 11 miles to the New River State Park at 221 Access. We had a storm about halfway, but it blew over pretty quickly and we pressed on to the only portage we had the whole trip at a low bridge. After finally finding the pull out point, which is on the river left all the way up next to the bridge, we pushed the boats under and caught them on the other side.

The second day, we paddled 16 miles in current, which took about 4.5 hours and we stopped at Kings Crossing for a break. That's the area where the public campgrounds are and it was full of people in tubes, rented canoes, and so many campers, it looked like a carnival. We paddled on past to the confluence of the North and South Fork of the river and beyond to Allegheny Access where it was very quiet with one other family there.

We got an early start the next morning to beat the next weather system and knew we could get back to the put in mid-day with only 5 miles to paddle. The take-out is just across the NC/VA line at the SR 93 bridge and we got there in about an hour after packing up. We all agreed this was the most beautiful section of the river with huge rock faces through a meandering river channel of shoals, white rocks and an occasional house with farmland; we even saw an eagle!

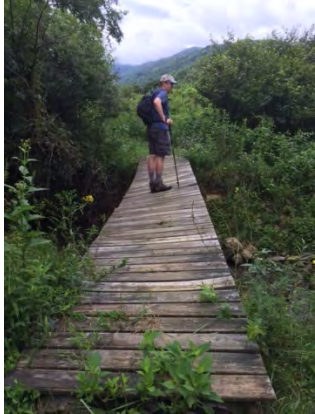
The rangers were very helpful and checked on us each night to see if we made it. They offer wood for sale, there was potable water at each access, a hot shower at 221 access and a pit toilet at Allegheny. It was so nice to float down the river and have such accommodating places to camp, have a good campfire, cook our meals and relax with good company in the backdrop of this beautiful area. We all plan to go back and do it again!

A.T.: Overmountain Victory Trail to 19E, August 20, 2016

Tim Schaefer reporting

I think this will be the hike I send people on if they have enough cars for an easy shuttle and want a unique experience of hiking the A.T.; especially if they want off the beaten path that leads out of Carvers Gap. Also very convenient is the horseshoe shape of the hike, leaving a nice 15 minute drive between the two trail heads of 19E and the Hampton Creek end of the Overmountain Victory Trail (OVMT). We began on the OMVT which was literally a walk through cow pastures including all expected signs of cows and the cows themselves. We found the trail to be fairly well marked with little confusion on where the hike continued. Upon reaching the

A.T. and OMVT crossroads we started our hike to the Humps. The views were just as spectacular when compared to the other half of the Carvers Gap to 19E highlands stretch, but much less crowded. Also well timed was blueberries, blackberries, and apples being ripe and ready for picking. Although the apples were not particularly appealing. As we climbed Big Hump, the rain that had been threatening all morning finally came through, but like many storms in the Roan Highlands, it didn't last much longer than 15 minutes before the sun was back out again. We enjoyed our lunch at the Stan Murray plaque and then completed our hike down to the waiting car at 19E. We completed the outing with some ice cream at Bob's Dairyland. Attending this hike was leader Tim Schaefer, Tim McClain, and Charlie Outlaw. It's a shame more didn't turn out for this excellent day of hiking.



Charlie on the OMVT bridge



Tim M. recloses the gate to contain the cows



Big Hump ascent



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Reporting: Garry Luttrell

Date: 7/11/2016

Purpose: Cut weeds

Location: Section 15b, About halfway to Cloudland

People: Janice and Garry Luttrell

Summary: We cut weeds about halfway down to Cloudland and back.

Reporting: Craig Haire

Date: 7/12/2016

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 10, Hampton trailhead to Dennis Cove Road

People: Craig Haire

Summary: I cleared several medium to large blowdowns, leaving a very large one south of Laurel Fork shelter. I met several day hikers.

Reporting: Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards

Date: 7/17/2016

Purpose: Log out from storm

Location: Section 7, Vandevanter Shelter to Wilbur Dam Road

People: Lauren D'Amato, Kristy Robinson, Jane Windler, Josh Fernandez, Emily Dishongh, Emma Bouchard, Sadie Yinger, Alli Graf, Matthew Baker, Chris Robey, Sina Varshaneh, Alex Hauke, Mason Boring, Alex Mohrman, Nathan Pipenburg, David Cohen, Bill Hodge

Summary: Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards sent both their Central and Southern field crews out to the Big Laurel Branch Wilderness on Monday, July 18th thru Thursday, July 21st in response to damage on the Appalachian Trail from storms that swept through the week prior. Both Wilderness Field Crews worked on the trail north of Wilbur Dam Road. The two 6-person crews were able to clear trees that fell across the trail from Wilbur Dam Road to the spring south of the Vandevanter Shelter, about 3.5 miles. They cleared 73 boles with cross-cuts, cleared 12 crowns with hand-saws and cross-cuts, and worked on re-establishing the tread in a few places where root balls had damaged the trail or trail corridor.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 7/27/2016

Purpose: Check for blowdowns

Location: Sections 16a and 16b, Iron Mountain Gap to Clyde Smith Shelter

People: Jim Foster

Summary: I went back to see if there were any more blowdowns on Howard's section and covered part of mine also. I ended up cutting and dragging five blowdowns out of the trail. Two southbound hikers said that the rest of my section was fine, but another hiker told me there's a large blowdown 1/4 mile North of the shelter. Not sure who to believe, so I guess I'll go back and check it out.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 7/28/2016

Purpose: Check on reported blowdown

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

People: Jim Foster

Summary: I went back to check out the reported blowdown and man did I find one. I got there just as a family of three was trying to work their way through. It was so large you could not safely get around, and so thick you could barely get through. After many cuts with my Corona, I was able to remove enough limbs to make it a passable step over. I will need to go back and finish (trail will need some rehab) with larger saw. I also cleared a few small blowdowns on my way to the shelter.

Reporting: Kim Peters

Date: 7/28/2016

Purpose: Repair trail

Location: Section 4b, Accessible Trail on Osborne Farm

People: Pat Loven, George Thorpe, Ted Mowery, Lilly Kramer, Greg Kramer, Kim Peters, Paul Benfield, Joe Morris, Jim Chambers, Bob Peoples, Ken Buchanan

Summary: A recent storm dropped 4 inches of rain in an hour and washed away much of the accessible trail at the stile leaving a deep ditch. The crew spent all day putting in various water diversions and moving gravel via buckets to fill in the ditch. The trail is now fixed and we sure hope it stays that way. Pat did an excellent job filling in for Carl. He successfully called lunch on time, as well as the more important quitting time, for which we were all grateful on this rather warm day.

Reporting: Kim Peters

Date: 7/29/2016

Purpose: Cut weeds

Location: Section 15b, Hughes Gap to Ash Gap

People: Ed Oliver, Phyllis Cairnes, Rolla Wade, Kim Peters

Summary: On this wonderfully cool and cloudy day in the mountains, we managed to get all the weeds cut from Hughes Gap to Ash Gap and boy did they need it. Rolla and Kim hiked up to Ash Gap with a Weedeater and worked their way down the hill, while Phyllis and Ed wielded swing blades and worked their way up from Hughes Gap. We met in the middle around 3:30 pm and were very glad to see each other, as that meant the work was done, right about the time that we ran out of energy. The trail is now clear of weeds. We met several groups of hikers including a Boy Scout troop from Charlotte and several south bounders, all of whom thanked us for our work.

Reporting: Joe DeLoach

Date: 7/31/2016

Purpose: Maintain section

Location: Section 15a, Carvers Gap south to open areas cleared on previous trip

People: Joe DeLoach

Summary: After happening upon a car flipped most of the way over in the woods near The Laurels and calling 911, I drove on up to Carvers Gap where I bumped into Roan Ridgerunner Eric Rayfield. Eric has conducted surveys of bent avens between Grassy Ridge and Stan Murray Shelter and is finding most very close to the Trail, especially where the old Trail which went straight down the fall line crosses the current Trail. I cut blackberries and trimmed annual growth to the point I stopped on the last trip. I also cut two blowdowns; one was a rather large one that has been hanging over the Trail and had dropped to the point of requiring hikers less than 6-feet tall to stoop under. The cross-country skiers should be happy.

Reporting: Lynn DiFiore

Date: 7/31/2016

Purpose: Routine maintenance

Location: Section 14b, Overmountain Shelter to Hump Mountain

People: Lynn DiFiore, Brian Schloff

Summary: We used a swingblade to cut back the worst of the briars to Bradley Gap and the overgrown sections up to Hump Mountain. We removed a large amount of trash from the campsites and the barn, and dispersed the always re-appearing fire ring at Little Hump. It has been greatly expanded and apparently heavily used recently, as a thick layer of ash and partially burned trash

was evident. The impact area of tents up there has also doubled in the last two weeks. The piped spring at the Bradley Gap campsites was not running, but there was water on the trail closer to Little Hump. We looked at the blue-blaze trail for the spring at the barn and trimmed back some vegetation so the lower blazes are more evident. We also removed one of the "water" signs that may have been confusing to hikers.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 8/2/2016

Purpose: Build trail relocation

Location: Section 1, Backbone Rock Trail

People: Daryl Anderson, Jim Chambers, Carl Fritz, Bill Murdoch, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Tim Stewart

Summary: We were pleased to have Konnarock Crews for two work weeks, June 25-June 29 and July 30-August 3. We had club members out working with them for all six of their full work days. We started working on the upper relocation which eliminates the steepest section of Backbone Rock Trail. Over 1300 feet of trail was built. There were many rocks that obstructed the sidehill digging. Both Konnarock Crews had nine volunteers and two leaders. It will take at least two more weeks of Konnarock to complete this relocation.

Reporting: Dean Baird

Date: 8/5/2016

Purpose: Check trail and remove trash

Location: Section 10, Hampton Blue-Blaze Trail

People: Adam Baird, Jennifer Baird

Summary: We removed two bags of trash.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 8/5/2016

Purpose: Prepare trail relocation

Location: Section 4b, Old Ridge Road between TN 91 and Double Springs Shelter

People: Jim Chambers, Jim Foster, Carl Fritz, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters

Summary: We went to Old Ridge Road trail relocation over two miles south of TN 91, cleared it of blowdowns and weeds, set pin flags, measured it, and divided it into sections. We also cut some locust logs for cribbing. We had many adventures today including forgetting the pin flags and losing vehicle keys. We also endured three heavy showers in the afternoon, probably totaling at least an inch of rain. But we are now ready for ASU next week in the field.

Reporting: Pat Loven

Date: 8/5/2016

Purpose: Trail maintenance

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

People: Pat Loven, Danny Harper

Summary: We drove to the top of White Rock Mountain on the 4x4 road; then trimmed grass along the trail at Canute's and proceeded north. We cut lots of greenbrier and some rhododendron, and also cut needle in one area. We sawed a 16" tree out of the trail that had been a real problem to get around. We met two hikers during the day. The southern portion of this section is now in very good condition.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 8/12/2016

Purpose: Build trail relocation

Location: Section 4b, Old Ridge Road between TN 91 and Double Springs Shelter

People: TEHCC and friends: Ron Batcheler, John Beaudet, Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Pat Buchanan, Phyllis Cairnes, Jim Chambers, Andrew Codson, Carl Fritz, Pat Loven, Karen Loven, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Bill Murdoch, Ed Oliver, Brian Paley, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Kevin Sedgwick, George Thorpe

Summary: Thanks to the Appalachian State University Watauga Global Community students and professors who awoke early and worked hard. Many had not been on the Appalachian Trail previously, let alone build it. And many thanks to TEHCC members and friends who arose even earlier to prepare for and lead this outing. It is inspiring when three commercial buses arrive loaded with students. This was probably the largest group we have had in the field. In the 2015 Hard Core there were a couple more volunteers, but slightly fewer in the field. Since we had to leave seven trucks in the pasture, Phyllis successfully researched how to shoo cattle and did a fantastic job in protecting the trucks. Ed Oliver helped everyone start their day with banana, pumpkin, raisin, nut muffins. There were a few bee stings and some upset stomachs, but achievements happened with everyone working together. The freshman students made new friends with each other by the end of the day and the A.T. had over 1000 feet of new trail.

Reporting: Dean Baird

Date: 8/13/2016

Purpose: Routine trail maintenance

Location: Section 10, Hampton Blue-Blaze Trail

People: Curtis Baird, Dean Baird

Summary: We trimmed grass, shrubs, briars, etc., primarily under the powerlines. We inspected the trail and located one approximately 12"-diameter tree over the trail that is easily walked under. It will require a chainsaw to remove; we will clear it at a later date.

Reporting: Joe DeLoach

Date: 8/14/2016

Purpose: Blaze trail

Location: Section 15a, Cloudland to Roan High Knob Shelter

People: Joe DeLoach

Summary: I painted blazes from Cloudland to Roan High Knob Shelter, including on the post at the shelter side-trail junction. I sawed one limb out of the Trail.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 8/15/2016

Purpose: TEHCC A.T. Committee

Location: Eastman Recreation Center

People: Dan Firth, Kim Peters, Bob Peoples, Carl Fritz, Tim Stewart, Ted Mowery, Vic Hasler, Steve Perri

Summary: The agenda and lively conversation filled the two-hour period to cover many topics relevant to regular maintenance, future projects, and club policy. This report summarizes a few for general sharing through the newsletter. Successful efforts have continued to improve the Backbone Rock access trail (with Konnarock Crew) and the A.T. in the Old Ridge Road section (with 121 ASU students and staff!). Up on Unaka Mtn, Abingdon Gap shelter was painted. Ted Mowery was recognized as volunteer of the month in The Register and on the ATC website. The severe storm on July 9th caused many blowdowns across the A.T. Laurel Fork Shelter is closed because two oaks and a locust are resting on the roof, with a hazard tree hanging overhead. Being a technically challenging situation in a wilderness area, USFS will have to address this with their expertise using manual tools. SAWS dispatched two six-person crews to clear the trail in the Big Laurel Branch Wilderness, and will return in late August to continue working north. After complaints were received regarding briars, the club sent crews to address trouble spots, particularly between the split to Grassy Ridge and Stan Murray Shelter. The privy at Overmountain Shelter will need to be moved again in Spring 2017. The accessible section at Osborne farm has been repaired, but will need further work to sustain, such as better crusher rock and mechanical compaction. Virginia Creeper Trail might be able to provide some guidance. Jim Chambers agreed to be on the Roan Mtn A.T. Community panel, which is expected to submit their application soon. It was noted that Danny Harper, Wes Ford, Lori Mirrer, and Carl Belcher are new folks who have attended multiple maintenance events over the past year; thus we thank them for their participation. The secret for recruiting has been having a direct contact. The local management plan will be updated to reference SAWS and the Old Timers Hiking Club as partners with designated trail sections. Konnarock Crew leadership did not provide written inventory updates which could be filed for the ongoing trail valuation. ALDHA is hosting an event on Columbus Day in October 2017 partnering with Virginia Highlands Community College (no football conflicts!) and Damascus, which is an approach the ATC Vista (biennial) might want to consider. Inquiry about performing trail maintenance in Bays Mtn Park noted that our primary focus is on the Appalachian Trail. The Club is not interested in being the sole organizing force for events, but recommends that an assessment be done to determine top priorities within the park. Then specific projects could be developed to recruit volunteers from the Club membership.

Reporting: Paul Benfield

Date: 8/16/2016

Purpose: Trail Maintenance

Location: Section 14b, Shelter Overmountain Shelter

People: Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery

Summary: We mowed and cut weeds at the camping area of Overmountain Shelter and on the trail to the privy and water source. We also installed a post and water sign where some hikers were getting confused. We repainted all of the blue blazes and removed all trash. We feel the privy needs to be replaced prior to the thru-hikers coming through next spring.

Reporting: Paul Benfield

Date: 8/16/2016

Purpose: Trail Maintenance

Location: Section 4b, Osborne Farm

People: Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery

Summary: We mowed and cut weeds along the Appalachian and Accessible Trail across the Osborne Farm. The Forest Service got a good kill on the last spraying of the trail. There has been a good rain since we did the maintenance on the erosion at the stiles, and they seemed to have held up well. Someone filled most of the gullies in the lane at and near the accessible parking area; only one rut remains.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 8/16/2016

Purpose: Clean Hard Hats

Location: Carl's House

People: Carl Fritz, Ed Oliver, George Thorpe

Summary: We primarily cleaned hard hats from recent ASU outing.

Reporting: Brian Paley

Date: 8/17/2016

Purpose: Cut weeds

Location: Section 8, US 321 to Forest Service gate

People: Brian Paley

Summary: I cut back VERY overgrown weeds and multi-flora rose bushes between Shook Branch and the Forest Service gate. I also cleared four blowdowns near Watauga Lake.

Reporting: Joe DeLoach

Date: 8/18/2016

Purpose: Roan Naturalist year end review

Location: Appalachian Ranger District office, Mars Hill, NC

People: Joe DeLoach

Summary: I joined Keith Kelley and Alice Cohen from the Watauga Ranger District, Forest Service Biologist Gary Kauffmann, Matt Drury from ATC, Marquette Crockett from SAHC, and 2016 Roan Naturalist Eric Rayfield for his year-end review. The Appalachian RD hosted the meeting, but none of their personnel attended. In general over the last four years, the Pisgah NF has had less interaction concerning the Roan Naturalist than has the Cherokee NF. Eric's season went well and he was given good marks for his positive interaction with visitors. Eric focused on the high-use balds between Carvers Gap and Grassy Ridge, and though he frequently visited the shelters, he did not make it a practice to visit each of the three shelters in the Roan Highlands every week. I supported him in this focus, and agreed to provide suggestions for areas in which to concentrate throughout the season next year. Use spikes around Memorial Day, which has the highest number of backpackers for the season, and during the rhododendron bloom on the balds in mid to late June. Eric's season started a week earlier than that of past ridgerunners, the weekend before Memorial Day, to give him a week of experience prior to the the holiday weekend. All agreed that this was desirable, but the season did not need to start earlier than that. His survey of Bent Ravens found the highest concentrations where the old A.T. crosses the relocation between Grassy Ridge and Stan Murray Shelter, with few plants very far off the Trail. Eric said in general that thru-hikers were considerably less impactful to the Trail than some overnights and day hikers. For example, during his last week, two people were observed carving their name with a Dremel into the rock at the summit of Grassy Ridge, and when told that they were causing a permanent impact to a natural feature, they replied "don't worry, we're almost done." Earlier a church camp picked a full bouquet of Gray's Lilies because it was more important for them to have the rare flowers for one day than for the public to enjoy and for the plants to propagate. All agreed that the Round Bald relocation and the fee charged at the Roan Day Use Area had substantially increased visitor use and impact to the balds. Campfires, mainly from overnights on the balds, continue to be impacts, with rare plants near rock outcrops being damaged. Addressing such impacts primarily falls to the Appalachian RD, and their lack of participation in the meeting limited discussion and possibility for action.

Reporting: Richard Carter

Date: 8/18/2016

Purpose: Cut weeds

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

People: Kim Peters, Kevin Sedgwick, Carl Fritz, Richard Carter

Summary: We cut weeds and briars, mostly between the junction with Grassy Ridge Trail and about a quarter mile south of Stan Murray Shelter. We also did a little identification work on one of our rare and endangered plants, *Geum geniculatum*.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 8/18/2016

Purpose: Rehab trail

Location: Section 18, South of Unaka Mtn

People: John Beaudet, Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Jim Chambers, Pat Loven, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Bill Murdoch, Tim Stewart, George Thorpe

Summary: The crew continued some good rehab work, adding 17 steps and a lot of sidehill. They were alertly watching radar on cell phones and abandoned the work site about fifteen minutes before the rain started.

Reporting: Bill Hodge

Date: 8/19/2016

Purpose: Evaluate and address down trees at Laurel Fork Shelter

Location: Section 10, Laurel Fork Shelter

People: Bill Hodge, David Cohen

Summary: We removed four trees down around the Laurel Fork Shelter and across the trail near the shelter using a cross-cut saw.

We also used a grip-hoist to bring down a broken hazard tree in front of the shelter. We studied and planned for a return trip to remove a tree and large limb that are on top of the shelter. We were joined for the day by Watauga District Recreation Program Manager Alice Cohen.

Reporting: Pat Loven

Date: 8/19/2016

Purpose: Return borrowed USFS helmets

Location: USFS Work Center

People: Pat Loven

Summary: I returned helmets to the USFS Work Center that the Club borrowed for the ASU outing on the 12th.

Reporting: Gayle Riddervold

Date: 8/20/2016

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

Location: Section 10, Dennis Cove Road to Laurel Fork Shelter

People: Gayle Riddervold and Becky Kinder

Summary: We cut a small blowdown close to the Dennis Cove Parking Lot and physically removed another small tree that was hanging across the trail. As we got near the trail that goes down to Laurel Falls, a tiny baby cub crossed our path and ran up the hill. Luckily we didn't need to use the bear spray, because we did not encounter the mother bear. We continued onto the blue-blaze trail where we spotted two blowdowns that were too big for us to cut. Some thorny weeds and stinging nettle were trimmed back on the way to the shelter. When we got to the Laurel Falls Shelter, there was still a big tree that had fallen on the back of the Shelter. As far as we could see, it did not cause any structural damage to the Shelter. Before returning to the parking lot we cleaned up trash from two fire pits.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 8/20/2016

Purpose: Check section and clear rhododendrons

Location: Section 11b, Bitter End - North about 3 miles

People: Tim Stewart

Summary: Hiked from Bitter End for about 3 hours lopping rhododendrons. The trail looked good.

Reporting: Gerald Scott

Date: 8/20/2016

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

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

People: Kevin Sedgwick, Ken Murray, Harold Wexler, Gerald Scott

Summary: Because of the good turnout for the "3rd Saturday Hiking with Tools," we were fortunate to have the help of Kevin Sedgwick and Ken Murray. The Sugar Hollow Creek to Campbell Hollow Road group that we teamed up with (see Kim's report below for Section 12c) let us out at Walnut Mtn Road and took our vehicle around to the other end of the section at the Elk River. Thanks to Ted Malone and Steve Wilson we found the section to be free of blowdowns except for a few new 4-6" blowdowns that were easily removed using the Silky saw. We cut the vine growth with a string trimmer, aggressively clipped back lots of rhododendrons, and painted the blue blazes down to the top of Mountaineer Falls. We found the shelter to be in relatively good shape except for a toilet tissue nest left by a mouse and a plastic container of markers that we carried out. We cleared an attempt by campers to build a large fire at the upper tent camping area. When we got about a mile from the end of the section, the warm muggy day turned into heavy rain. We finished the trail in the rain and made it back to the car waiting at the river.

Reporting: Kim Peters

Date: 8/20/2016

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

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

People: Kayla Carter, Stacy LaBare, Phyllis Cairnes, Jordan Peters, Kim Peters

Summary: What a great turnout for this "3rd Saturday Hiking with Tools" trip. We were able to split into two groups and cover two sections (see Gerald's report above for section 12b). After a complicated scheme of getting the shuttles set up, this group started at the Elk River and worked towards Campbell Hollow Rd. We cut the weeds along the river using a string trimmer and removed a rather large blowdown at the stile. We clipped lots of rhododendron and dog hobble, cleaned steps and removed several smaller blowdowns along the way. We left two blowdowns that will require a larger saw. The first is a 10" diameter dead hemlock about 0.25 mile south of the stile that is sticking out into the trail just enough to cause hikers to walk on the outer edge of the trail causing damage to the treadway. It could probably be removed with a silky saw. The second is about one mile north of Campbell Hollow Rd. It is 12-14" in diameter and will require a chainsaw. It is passable, but again, causing treadway damage as hikers climb around it.

A big welcome to the two first-timers on this trip, Stacy LaBare who traveled from Greeneville and Jordan Peters who willingly carried and used the string trimmer the whole way. Thanks for your hard work!

Reporting: Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards

Date: 8/21/2016

Purpose: Logging out

Location: Section 7, 0.5 miles north of Vandeventer Shelter to 1.5 miles south of the Shelter

People: Lauren D'Amato, Chris Robey, Sina Varshaneh, Matthew Baker, Emily Dishongh, Kathleen Murphy

Summary: The crew spent August 22-26 on the A.T. in Big Laurel Branch Wilderness clearing blowdowns from the large storm in July 2016. The crew cleared trail from 1.5 miles south of Vandeventer Shelter to 0.5 miles north of Vandeventer. They removed 23 trees and 15 crowns with crosscuts and axes.

Reporting: Joe DeLoach

Date: 8/21/2016

Purpose: Section Maintenance

Location: Section 14a, Doll Flats to the north edge of the bald on Hump Mountain

People: Joe DeLoach

Summary: I spent a long, wet day whacking back stinging nettle and other annual growth between Doll Flats and the open area of Hump. The upper half towards Hump was particularly overgrown. Trail is now clear.

Reporting: Scotty Bowman

Date: 8/22/2016

Purpose: Clean up shelter and brushing

Location: Section 7, Vandeventer Shelter to Wilbur Dam Rd

People: Scotty Bowman

Summary: I hiked into Big Laurel Branch to do some brushing, clean up the shelter and replace shelter journal. The SAWS crews have done some great work on this section over the last month since the July storm. I brushed out around a mile and half of trail, removed two smaller blowdowns, cleaned out two water bars and brushed out around a couple of larger blowdowns so the crew could come in and saw them out. The shelter was pretty clean; I picked up minimal trash and cleaned out the fire ring. On the way out, I removed a campsite and fire ring that was located pretty much on the trail. I couldn't have picked a better day to do this: low humidity, no rain, temperature in the mid eighties and slight breeze. Not a bad day for a 10 miler.

Reporting: Garry Luttrell

Date: 8/22/2016

Purpose: Paint blazes

Location: Section 15b, Ash Gap to Hughes Gap, the Roan

People: Janice and Garry Luttrell

Summary: It was a great day to be on the Roan, after all the rain the previous week. We painted from top to bottom, and painted the blue-blaze trail to water at Ash Gap.

Reporting: Ken Murray

Date: 8/22/2016

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

Location: Section 20b, Spivy Gap to No Business Knob Shelter

People: Ken Murray, Lotta Murray

Summary: We did the routine summer vegetation maintenance.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 8/23/2016

Purpose: Rehab trail

Location: Section 18, South of Unaka Mtn

People: Club: Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Jim Chambers, Mark Dibble, Greg Kramer, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Brian Paley, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart, George Thorpe, "Seiko"; Students: Derek Manger, Charles Baran, Graham Weaver, Brooke Waterman, Jarod Landry, Jack McCabe, Patrick Graska, Bryn Harris, Lea Kelty, Alyssa Wallwey, James Bakos, Sebastian Terrill, Austin Baker, Evan Wilson, Hannah Thompson, Hiker Jim

Summary: Wright State University students continued their annual outing and joined the club for a day of vigorous trail rehab. Everyone did some real nice rock work to improve about 540 feet of trail. Jim Chambers and Seiko greeted, socialized and fed them supper at Kincora Hostel.



Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 8/26/2016

Purpose: Continue revision of TEHCC Local Management Plan

People: Vic Hasler

Summary: The ATC Comprehensive Plan calls for the trail-maintaining clubs to have Local Management Plans to capture the policies and procedures adopted for stewardship of their assigned section in cooperation with agency partners. TEHCC made an extensive update in late 2014 that was circulated for review by the partners during the following year. Based on the feedback and further collection of relevant supporting documents, another revision has been made.

Reporting: Craig Haire

Date: 8/27/2016

Purpose: Clear trailside overgrowth

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

People: Craig Haire

Summary: Starting at the south end of Temple Hill Ridge, I proceeded north, clearing the brushy trailside overgrowth with a string trimmer for about 1/2 mile or so. Small trees across the trail near the south end and north end of the section were cleared with a hand saw. There are two large trees near the road at the north end that I'll have to come back for with a chainsaw. I passed two south-bounders going from Damascus to Springer.

Reporting: Ken Murray

Date: 8/27/2016

Purpose: Shelter Cleanup

Location: Section 20b, No Business Knob Shelter

People: Ken Murray, Lotta Murray, Sammy Willard

Summary: We cleaned up trash in the fire pit and shelter. The trash in the fire pit and unburied toilet paper around were the worst we have seen. There must have been some very messy people recently.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 8/27/2016

Purpose: GPS section and remove pin flags

Location: Section 4b, TN91 to Double Springs Shelter

People: Tim Stewart

Summary: I hiked out to the relocation to make a GPS track and to remove excess pin flags. I didn't see any left-behind tools. I returned the Nature Conservancy key on Friday.

Reporting: Faye Guinn

Date: 8/27/2016

Purpose: Clean water bars, Check trail

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

People: Howard Guinn, Faye Guinn

Summary: We picked up trash at the trail-head parking; ...looks like someone had a beer with his happy meal and then left the trash by the road. We cleaned out the 30 or so water bars, which was long overdue!!! and cut one tree from the trail. We checked the spring, which was running a very small stream of water. Next time in, we will have to remove the pipe and check it. A family was camping at the top of the hill just before the orchard. Howard spoke to the 6-year-old boy who told us if we needed water, there was a blue-blazed trail on down the trail, that if we followed it, it would take us to water. We thanked him for the information.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 8/29/2016

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 16a, Two miles trail south of Hughes Gap

People: Mike Holingshead, Bruce Darby, Jim Foster

Summary: Mike, Bruce and I cleared two blowdowns between Hughes Gap and Clyde Smith Shelter. The largest one was left over from several weeks ago due to our Maine hike.