



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

November 2016

tehcc.org

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July Storm Damage Cleared!

Vic Hasler reporting

The significant damage caused by the July 8th high wind storm has now been cleared on two fronts. First, the **Laurel Fork Shelter is now open**. Seven TEHCC members removed the two large trees from roof by cutting off the tops. (See 10/18/2016 maintenance report for more details.) Second, the Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS) removed the last of the storm damage from Wilbur Dam Road to three miles north of Vandeventer Shelter. Based on conversations with SB hikers, this crew of three staff members believe they have cut all the outstanding blowdowns being reported. They stated that much of what was cut could have been a challenge for the hikers.

Bill Murdoch Becomes a 2000-Miler

Carl Fritz reporting

Bill Murdoch, a long time TEHCC member and ATC member since 1973, summited Katahdin on September 22, 2016. This event finished his eighteen year quest to complete the Appalachian Trail. Bill first hiked the A.T. on a weekend in 1970 with Adair, his future wife, while he was attending North Carolina State University and she was at University of North Carolina at Greensboro. In 1973 he joined the ATC, came to work at Eastman Kodak, and started participating with TEHCC. He has been a key trail maintainer by contributing over 1300 volunteer hours. In 1999 he started continuously section hiking the A.T. with the intent of completing the trail. Bill hiked large sections once or twice a year every year except for two when there were family illnesses. Although Bill is not generally a paddler, he is a very active sailor. After retiring in 2004, Bill and Adair purchased their large 34-foot sail boat, Irish Eyes. Since 2008, Bill and Adair have sailed every year (nine times) for five months to the Bahamas.



TEHCC Electronic Maintenance Records Hit 200,000 Total Hours

Jeff Sirola reporting

Since the club starting keeping its A.T. maintenance records electronically (1 January 2000), we just exceeded the 200,000 total hours mark. This effort involved 4,979 recorded maintenance events, and a total of 5,688 individual maintainers.

TN AT License Plate Grant for First Time Maintainers

Carl Fritz reporting

TEHCC has been providing patches to any first time maintainer who is not a club member since 1999. In 1998 thru-hiker Marty Allen, "The Artist", designed for us a "Hiker-Trail Volunteer" patch depicting a crossed crosscut saw and mattock superimposed over Laurel Fork Falls. Our primary source of first time maintainers are college students, hikers, scouts and sometimes children or grandchildren. In the 17 years we have conducted this program, we have had almost 3600 first timers. A Tennessee A.T. license plate grant of \$537 allowed us to purchase 500 of these patches. During the first eight months of 2016, we have had 162 first time volunteers. They have contributed 1357 volunteer hours in their first day. 92% of the volunteers were college students, 6% were hikers and 2% represented others. Watauga Global Community from ASU and Wright State University represented 131 of the volunteers. Primary tasks done with these volunteers included trail relocation, trail rehab, and identifying blowdown locations. This simple patch is for many their first earned symbol of the A.T. And hopefully we are winning the hearts and minds of some future regular trail maintainers.



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

Elizabeth Johnson

Tina Davis

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
November 4	Fall Dinner Meeting	William Werner	423-408-4469
November 5	A.T.: Walnut Mountain Rd to Dennis Cove Rd	Tim Schaefer	423-302-0846
November 12	Old Homestead Trail	Vic Hasler	423-239-0388
November 15	Steering Committee monthly discussion	William Werner	423-408-4469
November 19	Hiking with Tools	Kim Peters	423-366-0128
November 23-26	Lake Jocassee Thanksgiving Weekend	TBD	
December ??	A.T.: Dennis Cove Rd to Wilbur Dam Rd	Tim Schaefer	423-302-0846
December 20	Steering Committee monthly discussion	William Werner	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-26 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](#), 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 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 now available in Kingsport on Thursdays at the Kingsport Aquatic Center! During the winter months (October-April), the indoor pool is sectioned off specifically for kayakers to practice basic paddling techniques. Admission is \$3 for 2 full hours of fun; 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 Ryan Shealy (423-963-6066). For additional event details, click [here](#).

3rd Saturday, Hiking with Tools!

Contact: [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

A.T.: Walnut Mountain Rd to Dennis Cove Rd, Saturday, November 5, 2016

Leader: Tim Schaefer, 423-302-0846

For November we will hike our way to Dennis Cove Rd with a possible diversion to see Coon Den Falls if we have the time. We are well past the halfway point of this "hike the TEHCC A.T." 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, 423-302-0846 or tim@tehcc.org.

Old Homestead Trail – Saturday, November 12, 2016

Leader: Vic Hasler (423-239-0388)

Rating: Moderate 2.6 mile loop hike with ~570 ft. elevation gain/loss

The newest addition to the TEHCC Trail Wiki was informed by a handout obtained from the ranger office. A short loop trail through old stone fences and home sites with some views of Watauga Lake. The path does have some steep portions as we summit the 2,550 ft. Curtis Mountain, and then come back down to the parking lot. Meet in Colonial Heights at 8:00AM to carpool for the hour drive to the trailhead at Sink Mountain boat launch. Bring snacks, water, layered clothing appropriate for the weather, camera, and trekking poles as desired. My intention is complete the hike in a couple of hours, then enjoy lunch at group's choice on the way back home. Please let the hike leader know of your interest in exploring this trail.

Lake Jocassee Thanksgiving Weekend, November 23 - 26

Leader: TBD

Details to be determined but we'll be camping and paddling the waterfalls of Lake Jocassee for Thanksgiving!

A.T.: Dennis Cove Rd to Wilbur Dam Rd, Saturday, December ??, 2016

Leader: Tim Schaefer, 423-302-0846

As long as we have enough for shuttling (i.e. at least one more than me) we'll keep with the monthly hikes until we are done. This hike will likely be in the early part of the month to avoid the busy Christmas season. Come see a strong contender for our best section of A.T.. It will likely not be cold enough to see Laurel Falls frozen over but regardless we will have a nice hike through the Laurel Fork Gorge. 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, 423-302-0846 or tim@tehcc.org.

For the Record

Pinnacle Mountain Fire Tower, Saturday, October 21, 2016

Vic Hasler reporting

Ended up hiking solo, but was definitely not alone on this trail as many mountain bikers and other hikers (including a few from Eastman) were also enjoying the day to see the Fall color. With the hot weather well into recent weeks, the foliage was still vibrant gold, orange, red, and yellow splashes within the green forest. I'm glad that I made the trip to see the region in its splendor. The hike also had multiple service components of trimming back uphill brush and briars, replacing a damaged geocache, and hauling out multiple grocery bags of cans, bottles, and trash. (Thanks to a gentleman from Chattanooga for taking the latter two items.) Left at 8am, back at 3pm which was roughly the original hike plan. It was a good day to be outside.



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

Leader: Tim Schaefer

Another fine addition to the series as an early fall color hike. Finding Walnut Mountain Road proved to be a little difficult, but thanks to Tony's GPS we found our way. With the hikes getting closer to Kingsport, we are getting to the trail nice and early, given the shorter days, this is definitely helpful. We enjoyed the sunrise as we were leaving the parking lot and I thought some choice daybreak hikes would be enjoyable. Be on the lookout for this in the upcoming months. Ideally we'll have a location with a nice view to the east and not too far to go since we would be hiking in the dark to get there. As for this hike, it was fairly uneventful and enjoyed by all. We managed to see a low flow Jones Falls, an opportunity I missed several years ago when I hiked through this part of the trail. Joining us on this trip were Charlie Outlaw, Tony Messina, and Kris and Kari Gory.



Tim using a unnecessary fence crossing



Jones Falls



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Reporting: Kim Peters

Date: 9/27/2016

Purpose: Paint Vandeventer Shelter

Location: Section 7, Vandventer Shelter

People: Joe Morris, Phyllis Cairnes, Tim Stewart, Scotty Bowman, Ken Murray, Kim Peters

Summary: This hardworking crew hiked in 4.7 miles to the shelter carrying gallons of paint, brushes and other materials to paint the shelter. Ken hiked in carrying a graffiti board to install on the newly painted shelter which will hopefully keep people from writing on the now graffiti-free walls. It was cool, misty and foggy when we set out and stayed that way most of the day. Several hikers stopped by while we were working, some heading north and some heading south. It was a fairly busy day at this shelter. The sun came out as we were hiking out which hopefully helped the shelter dry before the next round of hikers showed up to spend the night.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 9/29/2016

Purpose: Bridge Design

Location: Section 8, Shook Branch

People: Alice Cohen, Lynn DiFiore, Carl Fritz, Ed Oliver

Summary: Lynn has completed drawings for both the Shook Branch and Wildermine bridges. Environmental studies have also been completed. Once we prepare a bill of materials, we will be ready to start purchasing materials using a Tennessee A.T. License Plate grant.

Reporting: Jim Chambers

Date: 9/30/2016

Purpose: Maintain Trail and remove blowdowns

Location: Section 2a, McQueens Gap to TN/VA State Line

People: Jim Chambers, Connie Squires, Mike "Lumpy" Price

Summary: We removed all blowdowns between McQueens Gap and Damascus. We also lopped rhododendron and rehabbed a small section of trail north of the Backbone Rock trail. Lumpy shuttled us from Damascus to McQueens Gap.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 10/1/2016

Purpose: Clean graffiti off kiosk and trim dog hobble

Location: Section 19b, River Outfitter north to past third bridge

People: Vic Hasler

Summary: An open Saturday with cooler temperatures presented the opportunity to work on a couple of trail tasks. The still unused kiosk at Chestoa had some graffiti on the display's plastic sheet. AAA road club provided yet another benefit as its membership card

was effective in knocking off the thin paint, in combination with cleaning with a citrus-based product. The other job was to use a swing blade to trim back the ever-growing dog hobble along the Trail near Jones Branch. I was able to work from the outfitters to past the third bridge when time ran out for the morning. A NOBO pair and two SOBO individuals reported that this trail section is in good condition; but water sources outside the stream are dry from the drought.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 10/5/2016

Purpose: Fall 2016 A.T. Partnership Discussion

Location: Watauga Ranger District Office, Unicoi, TN

People: ATC SORO: Leanne Joyner, Matt Drury, Jason Zink; USFS Appalachian District were unable to attend because of fire fighting at Oak River Falls; USFS Unaka District: Leslie Morgan, Cheryl Summers; USFS Watauga District: Keith Kelly, Alice Cohen; TEHCC: Jim Chambers, Carl Fritz, Vic Hasler, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Tim Steward; SAWS: Bill Hodge

Summary: The Fall A.T. Partnership discussion covered many topics where our roles intersect. This trip report is to provide a few highlights. If you desire further details, please contact someone who attended.

Cherokee National Forest has closed on the Atwood property. "No Trespassing" signs have been installed and locks put on the building. The house is in very bad condition with mold, thus recommendation is to promptly pursue demolition. USFS will ensure NEPA paperwork is handled while funding is requested for a contractor to execute.

An incident in another NF district has caused a land management agreement to be rescinded. Projects approved before 9/9/2016 are okay to continue. Further definition received during the meeting instructed that normal trail repair is allowed, but "ground disturbing activity" not already approved is not permitted.

For Dennis Cove access point, multiple approaches are being taken to address the wilderness experience. Along the A.T., several kiosks are being installed or updated to provide messaging for wilderness. The orange box south of Cross Mountain Road has been removed and posts installed. Artwork for the Chestoa kiosk was shared. The kiosk will soon be installed after modifying the text regarding bears.

The closure orders for Watauga Lake area will continue through 2017 because of bear activity; but action was taken to decide on a long-term plan. The plan might involve permanent closure of the Watauga Lake Shelter and a camping ban, if other actions are unsuccessful.

SAWS were instrumental in removing over 120 blowdowns from the A.T. caused by the July storm. Agreement was reached to have TEHCC handle removing the two trees laying on the back of the Laurel Fork Shelter by Spring, while SAWS focuses on clearing further storm damage between Iron Mountain Shelter and Wilbur Dam Road.

Jason Zink was hired by ATC for the visitor-use position. His role is trail-wide, but will be based out of the Asheville office. The hiker registration system is being upgraded to provide even more information about campsite/shelter loads.

TVA was unable to attend, but sent in a short report to share. The 0.5-mile "Top of Dam" trail has been opened from the visitors' center to connect with the A.T. 1.0 mile south of Wilbur Dam Road. This side trail has already been documented for the APPA Trail Assessment.

Next partnership meeting is set for Wednesday, March 15th 1-4PM at USFS Mars Hill, NC office. CMC will host its equivalent event there on the following Tuesday.

Reporting: Ken Murray

Date: 10/5/2016

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

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

People: Ken Murray

Summary: I got reports of blowdowns south of FS Road and between NBK Shelter and Temple Hill Gap. I removed most with a Silky saw. A few need to be removed with a chainsaw, but they can easily be stepped over with no need for hikers to step off trail.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 10/6/2016

Purpose: Weed control

Location: Section 3b, Spring to US 421

People: Greg Kramer

Summary: I walked North 2 miles from Low Gap and returned cutting weeds with a string trimmer back to Low Gap. There were a lot of briars and stinging nettle to be cut.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 10/6/2016

Purpose: Cut weeds

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

People: Robin Dean, Carl Fritz, Joe Morris, Kim Peters, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart, Gorge Thorpe

Summary: We cut all the weeds, cleaned the water bars, repaired several water bars, repaired some sloughing trail near Berry Fields and cut one eighteen-inch stepover. This trail section is in good shape. The Berry Field has been mowed again this year and looks great.

Reporting: Kenneth Buchanan

Date: 10/6/2016

Purpose: Clear reported blowdown

Location: Section 4b, Double Springs Shelter to TN 91

People: Ken Buchanan, Pat Loven

Summary: Carl had a blowdown reported on this section. Turns out for the first time in my maintenance career, the blowdown was actually larger than what had been reported. The trunk crossed the trail about 35 feet from the stump and was 40 inches in diameter where it crossed the trail. Since Pat is only certified to buck 12-inch tree trunks (and for other reasons), we elected not to try to remove a section of the trunk. Instead, we cut steps into the trunk and built steps on either side (like a stile). A fun project. We also blocked each end of the two relocations started by ASU students that are not yet open for traffic. We saw about a dozen hikers and got a bee sting.



A huge blowdown – even bigger than reported!



It's now a step-up and over

Reporting: Eric Middlemas

Date: 10/9/2016

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to Cherry Gap

People: Eric Middlemas, Craig Haire, Jeannine Edwards, James Price

Summary: We removed 6 large blowdowns between Iron Mountain Gap and Cherry Gap and removed debris from the trail.

Reporting: Paul Benfield

Date: 10/11/2016

Purpose: Trail Maintenance

Location: Section 14b, Overmountain Shelter

People: Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery

Summary: We mowed and cut weeds at the camping area and along the trails as needed at the Overmountain Shelter. We also removed all trash.

Reporting: Paul Benfield

Date: 10/11/2016

Purpose: Trail Maintenance

Location: Section 4b, Osborne Farm

People: Ted Mowery, Paul Benfield

Summary: We mowed and cut weeds along the Appalachian Trail and the Accessible Trail across the Osborne Farm.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 10/13/2016

Purpose: Rehab trail

Location: Section 14c, Round Bald South and Grassy Ridge North

People: Daryl Anderson, John Beaudet, Paul Benfield, Richard Carter, Carl Fritz, Ted Mowery, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart, George Thorpe, Jeremiah Uber "Magic," Natriefial Miller

Summary: There were a lot of people in the Roans, and most of them thanked us for our volunteer efforts. Natrieifial (Ria) from ATC SORO joined us for much of the day, primarily to video for the Register Blog. Part of the crew repaired fences on the trail up to Round Bald. They also opened some of the water diversions. The rest of the crew repaired rock steps and added steps north of Grassy Ridge. We got into the switchbacks going towards Stan Murray Shelter. We probably have one or two more work days to get to the shelter.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 10/13/2016

Purpose: Scout possibility of accessing Stan Murray Shelter by ATV trail

Location: Section 14c, Carvers Gap to Roaring Creek Rd

People: Joy Zabel, Joel Zabel, Jim Foster

Summary: We looked for and found an ATV route from Stan Murray Shelter to Roaring Creek Rd. This route may be useful in transporting materials for Shelter rehab project.

Reporting: Eric Middlemas

Date: 10/13/2016

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 17, Approximately one mile south of Beauty Spot

People: Wayne Jones, Eric Middlemas, Bruce Darby

Summary: We removed a large blowdown about one mile south of Beauty Spot and about 0.25 mile north of FS 230.

Reporting: Eric Middlemas

Date: 10/13/2016

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 17, Low Gap to crest of Unaka Mountain

People: Wayne Jones, Bruce Darby, Eric Middlemas

Summary: We removed 3 large blowdowns between Cherry Gap Shelter and the summit of Unaka Mountain. We also removed a sizeable amount of fallen limbs and other debris from the trail.

Reporting: Steve Perri

Date: 10/15/2016

Purpose: ATC SORO Fall RPC Meeting

Location: Pittman Center, TN

People: Steve Perri

Summary: The Southern Regional Office (SORO) Regional Partnership Committee (RPC) met at the ATC Soak Ash Basecamp in Pittman Center outside of Gatlinburg, TN.

Formal Business

- Steve Perri was voted to be the next Vice Chair of the SORO RPC.
- The addition of language for the governance of the RPC chair and vice chair rotation, assignment, and replacement will be developed and brought before the committee in the Spring.
- The passing of Lenny Bernstein was acknowledged as a loss for CMC and for the RPC.

Club Successes and Challenges

Clubs have different outreach activities going on. TEHCC has most activities with college students. GATC and NHC have formalized officers to coordinate outreach activities. Clubs also feel a pinch with maintenance when a volunteer crew leader isn't able to make it in the field. Some clubs are working to have an alternate to cover when the team leader can't cover their assigned section. Getting additional approval for adding tent sites to certain locations is taking a long time for NEPA in response to increased hikers. Clubs are also challenged with getting younger leaders identified/recruited. Increased visitor use is a challenge for some clubs, especially for GA and GSMNP.

Effective Stewardship

New visitor-use policy is being drafted and will be finalized by the trail stewardship council. We have a week to provide more feedback, but RPC committee supported development of policy. Most of this was driven by heavy use at the trail ends in GA and MA. GA added 30 camp site pads before Hawk Mtn Shelter with success for moving quickly. They are using 3 bear-proof boxes spread out along a side trail where 30 sites are located. National Historic Register starting in the north and heading south. Trail assessment is 64% complete with costs to date of \$800K. Plan is to do updates as you can instead of every 5 yrs. APPA are working to develop an A.T. process for inventory assessment as opposed to the overall NPS system. Several initiatives due to the NPS Centennial added some new activities for APPA. Collateral impact from Trail of Tears problem with the USFS will affect work projects on TEHCC and CMC. GSMNP is reporting 19% increase in use of A.T. Park visitation for the park will surpass 11M in 2016.

Roan Mtn Community Presentation

Mike Hill presented the proposal for the Roan Mtn A.T. Community. An overview of support from different parties within the community was provided. The community is excited to become a member and support the A.T. users and ATC outreach programs in

affiliation with the Trail. Paul Acock gave an overview of what the Carter County Rescue Service has done supporting the A.T. and agency partners, and how they have supported activities along the A.T. Daniel Ward provided additional info for the desire to become an A.T. Community. The group certainly was enthusiastic about becoming a community partner. The RPC voted to approve the proposal to become the 41st A.T. Community. Kayla Carter is interested in volunteering as the A.T. Community Ambassador.

Trail and Club Issues

There are new targets for managing invasive species for 2017. Plant monitoring database is being updated and will focus on hot spot management and monitoring. Emerald Ashborer is now becoming active along TN/NC border. Matt will be looking to work with clubs to do assessments and possible treatment. NHC has actually inventoried their scenic viewpoints and an assessment of its size and characteristics.

- ATC is now encouraging trail users to consider using bear canisters trail-wide. GSMNP has 7 miles of cables in the park for hanging food to prevent bears from accessing food. ATC is attempting to transfer cost of facilities to users.
- GATC is experimenting a commercial source of microbial treatment for privies to reduce or remove the requirement for use of mulch.
- The committee recommended communicating NORO postings in Jan instead of March.
- Club MOU's with ATC will begin formalized communications after the stewardship council approves the final version (~ 2 wks) of the MOU template.
- Club Local Management Plan (LMP's) have been spotlighted due to the APPA updates. TEHCC's LMP will be ready for approval in the Spring.
- Clubs are being encouraged to update their volunteer service agreements.
- An A.T. Communities Summit will be held adjacent to the spring RPC.
- GATC has developed a history of the A.T. in GA from the GALP
- TN/NC license plate grants are due on Jan 6th.
- Training courses and schedules for LNT will be available in Feb for a trainer course (contact Leanna for more info)
- Wilderness Skills Institute will be offering training in 2017
- Wayfinding feedback has been to help advocate better hiker education and to upgrade kiosks. A suggestion was made that perhaps signage could be developed to orient visitors in A.T. Communities to where the A.T. access points are.
- Next Generation Advisory Council is now in place with 15 members. They are putting in place governance and priorities. Kayla Carter is a member and provided a summary of what they are doing. Mentorship opportunities is a possible mode of establishing earlier connections to younger audiences.
- Maintenance with minors requires use of form 301a for NPS. A guardian can sign for a minor for specific tasks. Tasks should be limited to those consistent for the age group and the tasks should be reviewed for consistency for PPE. Volunteer Service Agreements should cover guidance and releases for minors on USFS land.
- Roles for volunteers should be reviewed with USFS districts for JHA's as part of volunteer agreements. TEHCC's JHA's are specific to maintenance. CMC has info on their website for what they have. Other activities outside of JHA's for maintenance (ie. an attachment for roles and responsibilities or job descriptions can be included with future agreements). Ideally, these could be done at the Forest Supervisory level.
- Law enforcement response in US forests is a concern due to limited coverage. Ridgerunners are helping provide some official responsibility/presence, but they are not in place for enforcement.
- ATC has a ridgerunner handbook. A communication piece is part of the handbook. Site specific info is included. Specifically to Roan, SAHC's Marquette is working a plan for a naturalist description that we can use to tie together. Past season reports have been helpful for the orientation training for the ridgerunner specific tasks and learnings. Feedback from ATC is that more field time training may be helpful upfront for new ridgerunners.
- ATC biennials will be called A.T. Vista. Membership meetings will be held every year. In the off-cycle yrs, ATC will convene an online meeting.
- Saw policy is going to impact more of the new card to be issued and not major training. More emphasis will be placed on segregation of categories for skill level.

Spring RPC Meeting will be March 11, 2017 at Black Mountain, GA.

Reporting: Ken Murray

Date: 10/17/2016

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

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

People: Ken Murray, John Beaudet

Summary: We removed 4 stepover blowdowns that had previously been identified.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 10/18/2016

Purpose: Clear blowdowns from shelter

Location: Section 10, Laurel Fork Shelter

People: Jim Chambers, Carl Fritz, Bill Murdoch, Bob Peoples, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart, John McHillis

Summary: We cleared blowdowns on the high-water trail in Laurel Fork Gorge. We also successfully removed the two large trees from the roof of Laurel Fork Shelter. The back roof overhang sustained some damage but has not affected the functionality of the shelter. The trees were laying across the roof. We cut the tops off the trees; then were able to pull the 16-inch maple with a 20-foot stump on a root ball upright with a rope and come along. We felled the 20-foot stump with a crosscut saw. The shelter and high-water trail are now in good shape.



Blowdowns atop Laurel Falls Shelter



Removing the blowdowns – Not an easy job!

Reporting: Dean Baird

Date: 10/20/2016

Purpose: Routine trail maintenance

Location: Section 10, Hampton Blue-Blaze Trail

People: Dean Baird, Jennifer Baird, Emily Pons

Summary: We inspected the trail (no problems noted) and removed trash.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 10/20/2016

Purpose: Rehab trail

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

People: Daryel Anderson, Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Richard Carter, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Bill Murdoch, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart, George Thorpe

Summary: We completed a lot of tasks today. Some fixed the log fences on both sides of TN 143 where A.T. passes. The northern side needed the rail replaced that blocks ATVs. Southern side of the fence was upset and was made vertical. We repaired a wet area near Stan Murray Shelter by adding some rock pavers, cutting down one side of berm to drain water, and adding some small rock fill. We completed some additional rock steps in a number of locations where trail had compressed due to foot traffic. We tried to block a second path developing on south side of Grassy Ridge. This section is in pretty good condition.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 10/25/2016

Purpose: Shelter roof repair and paint

Location: Section 16a, Clyde Smith Shelter

People: Phyllis Cairnes, Carl Fritz, Pat Loven, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters

Summary: We painted the outside of Clyde Smith Shelter. We also did some significant sealing of the roof on both the inside and outside. Hopefully, this will eliminate a couple of long term leaks. The water source was running adequately.

Reporting: Brian Paley

Date: 10/25/2016

Purpose: Cut weeds

Location: Section 8, US 321 to USFS gate

People: Brian Paley

Summary: I lopped and cut back weeds and multi-flora rose bushes around the corner of Watauga Lake. I also cut a couple of small blowdowns across the access trail from Oliver Hollow Rd. I'm off to Florida and will see y'all next Spring.

Reporting: Kim Peters

Date: 10/26/2016

Purpose: Install graffiti board

Location: Section 11b, Moreland Gap Shelter

People: Lotta Murray, Ken Murray, Kim Peters

Summary: Lotta prepared another graffiti board and we traveled out to install it in Moreland Gap Shelter. There was only one person who wrote on the recently painted shelter wall and fortunately the graffiti board covered the markings.

Reporting: Paul Benfield

Date: 10/28/2016

Purpose: Saw Sharpening

People: Paul Benfield

Summary: I cleaned, sharpened and gauged Bob Peoples' trail crosscut saw.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 10/28/2016

Purpose: Clear relocation and rehab

Location: Section 1, Backbone Rock Trail

People: John Beaudet, Paul Benfield, Richard Carter, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart, George Thorpe

Summary: We removed down trees from remaining part of upper relocation for Konnarock in 2017. We also did finish work on trail built this summer. We did some significant rehab of older trail by doing some rock work, smoothing some sidehill and doing some sidelog cribbing where trail was gone.