



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

March 2017

tehcc.org

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Annual Maintainer's Dinner, February 24, 2017

Kim Peters reporting

The kickoff meeting for the 2017 A.T. maintenance season was held on Friday, February 24 at the Eastman Lodge. It was well attended by more than 45 maintainers and individuals interested in helping to maintain the Appalachian Trail. The dinner was once again graciously prepared by Ed Oliver with help from Ted Mowrey, Daryl Anderson and Juana Quinones. We enjoyed barbecue from Phil's Dream Pit, coleslaw, pasta salad, and baked beans with banana pudding for dessert, along with tea and lemonade. What a bargain for only \$5! Thanks Ed and team. After the meal, we reviewed our 2016 accomplishments, our 2017 major project plans, discussed issues related to our club's trail maintaining responsibilities and handed out awards.

Summary of 2016 Major TEHCC Maintenance Accomplishments

- Maintained 134 miles of A.T. and 2 miles of Blue-Blaze Trail
- Cut annual and perennial growth
- Cut blowdowns (hundreds after 8th)
- Painted Blazes
- Cleaned waterbars and steps
- Removed trash and unauthorized campsites
- Built 0.5 miles of new trail
- Rehabbed 1.4 miles of trail
- Built 1800 foot cattle fence
- Painted four of our 15 shelters

All of this was done without any serious injuries! There were 366 individuals who contributed 13,320 hours towards maintaining the TEHCC section of the Appalachian Trail. It takes a lot of work to maintain 134 miles of the A.T. Many thanks to all the volunteers who

signed up to maintain a section of our trail in 2017. These are the people who clear the blowdowns, cut the weeds, paint the blazes, maintain the shelters and do all the other tasks required to keep our trail section open: Jim Chambers, Steve Wilson, Phyllis Cairnes, Greg Kramer, Ken Buchanan, Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery, Terry Oldfield, Kat Johnson, Kim Peters, Scotty Bowman, Bill and Laura Hodge, Brian Paley, Joe Morris, Dean Baird, Bob Peoples, Bill Fuller, Pat and Karen Loven, Tim Stewart, Scott Vandam, Gerrald Scott, Harold Wexler, Kayla Carter, Kevin Sedgewick, Gayle Riddervold, Becky Kinder, Lynn DiFiore, Richard Carter, Joe DeLoach, Jim Foster, Howard and Faye Guinn, Eric Middlemas, Mike Hupko, John Beaudet, Vic Hasler, Craig Haire, Ken and Lotta Murray.

Cumulative Hour Award Recipients 2016

13,000 Career Hours - Carl Fritz			
9000 Career Hours – Bob Peoples			
6000 Career Hours – Paul Benfield			
4000 Career Hours			
Ted Mowery	Kim Peters		Tim Stewart
3000 Career Hours - Mike Hupko			
2000 Career Hours - George Thorpe			
1500 Career Hours - Joe Morris			
1000 Career Hours			
Greg Kramer	Pat Loven		Brian Paley
500 Career Hours			
Phyllis Cairnes	Mike Price (Lumpy)	Lynn DiFiore	Gayle Riddervold
Becky Kinder		Kevin Sedgewick	
250 Career Hours			
Dean Baird	Dan Firth		Ken Murray
100 Career Hours			
Wes Ford	Lotta Murray	Danny Harper	Brian Schloff
50 Career Hours			
Matthew Baker	Karen Loven	David Cohen	Ryan Mariano
Mason Boring	Dory Lustig	Katie Currier	Collin Massman
Lauren D'Amato	Vanessa Medford	Jeannine Edwards	Chris Robey
Emily Dishongh	Lori Mirrer	Ben Firth	Tim Shipley
Shane Hackler	Sina Varshaneh	Mason Hicks	Adrienne Wang

Save The Date – Spring Dinner Meeting, April 7, 2017

William Werner

The annual Spring Dinner is coming up on the evening of Friday, April 7th at the Eastman Lodge. The speaker will be local author and outdoorsman Johnny Molloy, presenting “An Overview of Hiking, Paddling, and Camping in the Tri-Cities.” For the past 25 years, Molloy has spent over 150 nights per year in the outdoors, and he is the author of over 60 books. Details on food and drink are to be announced.

Protecting ash trees from the emerald ash borer in Tennessee

Dan Firth reporting

The Appalachian Trail corridor is under threat from a number of invasive species, both plant and insect. Few are as thoroughly devastating as the exotic emerald ash borer (EAB). EAB was accidentally introduced in the 1990s, likely coming from Asia in packing material, but was not discovered until 2002 in southeastern Michigan. In the twenty plus years, the EAB has spread from there throughout the east and has been found in most every state east of the Mississippi River. The EAB is lethal to all species of ash trees with a mortality rate of more than 99%. Loss of the ash trees impacts the AT in a number of ways. Most directly, dead trees result in

increased numbers of hazard trees increasing the danger to users and trail maintenance. Ash trees are an important component of ecosystems throughout the Appalachians. At least 282 arthropods (insects and spiders) rely on North American ash trees as a source of food and shelter. Loss of these trees will have a devastating impact on the structure of the forest and increase its susceptibility to other invasive species, among other impacts on the forest, many of which may never be understood.

It is not too late to protect some of the ash from the EAB. Individual trees may be protected with systemic pesticides, which can provide protection for 1-3 years depending on the chemical used. While it is not feasible to protect every tree, it is important to treat what can reasonably be protected in order to maintain a seed bank and localized genetics until more long term solutions like biocontrol or selective breeding methods are developed. In conjunction with the ATC, we are hoping to identify stands of ash in the Tennessee AT corridor in 2017 that may be treated in 2018 in an effort to protect them from the EAB. At this point, volunteers are needed to help survey ash stands. If you are interested in helping with this effort, contact Dan Firth, TEHCC at dwfirth@gmail.com, if you have further questions about EAB and ash trees contact Matt Drury, ATC at mdrury@appalachiantrail.org.

Roan Highlands Campsite Inventory Refresh

Dan Firth reporting

The Roan Highlands are a popular destination for backpackers--thru and section hikers--seeking to enjoy the spectacular surroundings. In addition, the area is ecologically important, supporting many populations of threatened and endangered species. To help ensure the compatible coexistence of campers and at risk species, it is important to understand the impact of campers using the area. In particular, it is critical to understand the trend of this impact. Are the sites better or worse? The survey will assess parameters such as impacted area, soil exposure, damage to trees, fire sites and human waste sites. Campsite inventories in the highlands were conducted in 2002 and 2012. This year the campsite inventory will refresh the data to be compared with that from the previous surveys. If you are interested in participating in this inventory, protocol training is scheduled for April 25 and the actual surveys will occur in May and June. Contact [Dan Firth](#) or [Matt Drury](#) for more information.

“Leave No Trace” Includes Not Leaving Food Unattended

Terry Oldfield reporting

Packages of food and other items have been found at A.T. shelters, left there by “Trail Angels.” Although well-meaning, this is an undesirable practice for several reasons. First, the food attracts wildlife, including mice and bears. According to shelter log books, hikers often have their sleep disturbed by scurrying mice, and, of course, food-attracted bears threaten hikers’ safety. Second, food left in shelters or elsewhere along the trail can harm wildlife, and can result in wrappers and food strewn about, making an unsightly mess and additional work for trail maintainers. A third reason is that although the food is left for hikers, most hikers would not eat it, not knowing how old it is or whether it may have become contaminated. And if they do eat contaminated or old food, they may become ill. Lastly, food left for hikers can detract from the hiking experience which can provide a feeling of pride in self-reliance. Most TEHCC members are well-aware that leaving food unattended along the trail is not a good practice. But when the opportunity presents itself, please pass the word to others. Alternatives, for people wishing to help hikers, would be to contribute food to a trail hostel, or to contribute to the overall hiking experience by participating in trail maintenance.

TEHCC Welcomes New Member

No new members this cycle

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
March 18	Hiking with tools	Kim Peters	423-366-0128
March 25	A.T.: Hike Along Iron Mountain	Tim Schaefer	423-302-0846
March 31 – Apr 2	NoliFest 2017	http://www.nolifest.com	
April 7	Spring Dinner Meeting, Eastman Lodge	Kay Parker	423-963-8461
April 14-16	Suwannee River Paddle/Camp	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
April 15	Hiking with tools	Kim Peters	423-366-0128

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 second Tuesday of the month, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Contact: Kay Parker, chair@tehcc.org, 423-963-8461

Location: Eastman Chemical Company, Kingsport, TN; Bldg 75 PCRA

The Steering Committee guides the general program for the club. The Committee normally meets at lunchtime on the second Tuesday of each month. Meetings are open to all TEHCC members. Bring your lunch or grab a bite at the B-75 cafeteria. After going through the turnstiles at the main B-75 entrance, continue straight. The room is immediately to the right. Members who are not current Eastman employees need to contact a member of the Steering Committee at least three days 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.

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 cleaning out waterbars and steps, lopping rhododendron, breaking up fire rings, 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. The more people show up, the less work each individual has to do and the trip becomes a nice hike - with tools! Contact Kim Peters (atmaint@tehcc.org) for hike details, including meeting time and place.

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](#).

Scheduled Events

A.T.: Hike Along Iron Mountain, Saturday, March 25, 2017

Leader: *Tim Schaefer, 423-302-0846*

We're winding up our pursuit to hike the TEHCC maintained section of the A.T. with three more sections to go. We will be hiking from Wilbur Dam Rd (if accessible) to TN91. It will be a longer hike at 16.1 miles (18.1 miles if the Wilbur Dam Rd gate is closed). It will also include a 2,000' climb up to the mountain from Watauga Lake. For all of these reasons we may defer this section and complete it in a later month as a backpacking overnigher. The alternate trip would be the next section north, TN91 to McQueens Gap. 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.

Suwannee River Paddle/Camp, April 14-16

Leader: *Debbie Briscoe, 423-534-3636*

One of the most beautiful rivers in Florida. A 3 day 2 night trip paddling and camping in Boat in only Rive Camps.

Friday, April 14: Launch at Lafayette Blue Springs State Park (north of Mayo Florida) on Friday afternoon.

We will paddle a little more than ten miles to our river camp. In those ten miles will will visit a spring or two for a bit of swimming. Friday night we will stay at Peacock Slough, a beautiful river camp high on the bank. Dinner and beverages will be served. Screened sleeping platforms are available for sleeping. If you would rather sleep in hammock or tent, there is room for them as well. A nice relaxing setting with a bon fire for story telling and music. Peacock Slough river camp has full facilities for your comfort. Hot showers, flush toilets and electricity!

Saturday, April 15: Breakfast will be served from 8:00 to 9:30. Coffee will be ready shortly after sunrise! Lunches will be packed for a day on the river. Please be sure that you fill your water bottle or prepare your beverage for lunch. We will launch no later than 10:15. Saturday will offer ten miles of paddling. There are plenty of springs for us to visit and play in along the way. About half way through our ten mile paddle, we will stop at Convict Spring. At this location is the Suwannee River Rendezvous. This is a nice local place that serves short order lunches. I usually get ice cream when I stop here. This section of the river is one of my favorites. You will see why as we paddle through here. There are some very pretty springs and some wonderful historical sites. We will stop at the Adams Tract river camp for the night on Saturday. Once again this location has full facilities. This river camp has some pretty wonderful memories for me. A great place for wild berries! I'm not sure what will be available during our stay here. As usual our meals will be prepared and served here. A bon fire will complete the night for us. Adams Tract River Camp has full facilities for your comfort. Hot showers, flush toilets and electricity!

Sunday, April 16: Breakfast will be served from 8:00 to 9:30. Coffee will be ready again at sunrise. We will launch no later than 10:15. This section of the river has more springs (imagine that!) and historical sites. We will visit as many of them as we can. Our planned take out will be in the town of Branford. Once we get a head count, arrangements for boats, screened platforms and the shuttle will be made. Trip Coordinator: Debbie Briscoe/ Andy Lundberg

For the Record

No hike or paddling reports this month.



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Reporting: Craig Haire

Date: 1/25/2017

Purpose: Clear trail

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

People: Craig Haire

Summary: I checked the trail condition on the first five switchbacks. I cut and removed rhododendron branches hanging down into the trail using a hand saw.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/1/2017

Purpose: Clear blowdowns and repair shelter

Location: Section 10, Laurel Falls and Laurel Falls Shelter

People: Richard Carter, Jim Chambers, Grant Dienes, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Waylon Jenkins, Greg Kramer, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart

Summary: Thanks to Tim Schaefer for alerting us about a tangle of three trees and some root balls on the trail near Laurel Falls. It took us over three hours to remove the trees, especially the 18-inch oak pushing straight down hill. The root balls of the smaller trees buried the rock steps in up to three feet of soil. All the rock steps underneath were still in good shape. Dan, Tim and Ted also repaired the back side roof and roof rafters on Laurel Fork Shelter. This was damage caused by the July storm that put trees on the roof. The shelter and trail are in good shape.



Before and...



After blowdown removal near Laurel Falls

Reporting: Steve Wilson

Date: 2/2/2017

Purpose: Cut blowdowns and briars

Location: Section 3b, US Hwy 421/Low Gap to the Spring

People: Carl Belcher, Steve Wilson

Summary: Carl Belcher and I hiked trail-north on the A.T. from Low Gap to the spring to remove blowdowns and cut briars. Most blowdowns were easy step-overs. We did find one significant entanglement about a half-mile from the gap which may require further work; it is hung up in a tree. The trail is clear in this section, but the waterbars need to be cleaned.

Reporting: Craig Haire

Date: 2/4/2017

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Sections 9a and 9b, US 321 to Hampton trailhead

People: Craig Haire, James Price, Scott Thomsen, Helga Mitchell

Summary: Using hand saws, we cut a few small trees that had fallen into the trail. Some we were able to pull off the trail without cutting. The day started off very cold, but it finally warmed up. We continued on, doing the same work as we hiked all of the Pond Mountain Wilderness section. However, starting down from Pond Flats, we came to a good-sized tree too big for hand saws. We managed to clear it with a 47" crosscut saw.

Reporting: Jim Chambers

Date: 2/5/2017

Purpose: Trail Maintenance

Location: Section 14a, Doll Flats To Bradley Gap

People: Connie Squires, Jim Chambers

Summary: We performed a thorough assessment of newly assigned section of trail from Doll Flats to Bradley Gap. We removed blowdowns and tried to straighten cattle fence on Hump Mountain. We will return ASAP with a chainsaw to remove a tangle of blowdowns that are completely obstructing the trail.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/6/2017

Purpose: Layout Trail relocations

Location: Section 16b, Greasy Creek Gap to 0.3 mi north of Weedy Gap

People: Jim Foster, Carl Fritz, Tim Stewart

Summary: We checked on the proposed relocations between Weedy Gap and Greasy Creek Gap. Another day in the field will be required to finalize the probable four relocations.

Reporting: Jim Chambers

Date: 2/8/2017

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

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

People: Bob Peoples, Jim Chambers

Summary: We removed all recently reported blowdowns, plus all other blowdowns between Iron Mountain Gap and Greasy Creek Gap. At the Applie Orchard, we also removed all blowdowns, and erected the fallen blaze post going to the water source. The piped spring was running fine.

Reporting: Dan Firth

Date: 2/10/2017

Purpose: Routine maintenance

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

People: Dan Firth

Summary: Although the day started out cold, it warmed up nicely allowing for the cleaning of water diversions, clearing the smaller blowdowns and branches from the trail, and picking up a small amount of trash, including a coffee pot.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/10/2017

Purpose: Clear blowdown and waterbars

Location: Section 3b, US 421 to 0.8 miles north

People: Carl Belcher, Jim Chambers, Carl Fritz, Bob Peoples, Steve Wilson

Summary: We removed a complex overhead blowdown. We also cleaned the water diversions and studied an old cabin structure within sight of the trail.

Reporting: Scotty Bowman

Date: 2/10/2017

Purpose: Routine maintenance

Location: Section 7, Vandeventer Shelter to Spring Trail South, 1.6 miles from shelter

People: Scotty Bowman

Summary: It was a very brisk day for my hike in. The high temperature was going to be around 50° in town, and it was much chillier in Big Laurel Branch. I removed two blowdowns of tree tops with multiple branches that were causing hikers to leave the trail to get through. I picked up trash at Vandeventer; not much, but someone left a big sheet of plastic. There is no new graffiti; the graffiti board seems to be working. The water is flowing nicely at the water source at Vandeventer and at the spring 1.6 miles trail south toward Wilbur Dam Road.

Reporting: Richard Carter

Date: 2/11/2017

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

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

People: Richard Carter

Summary: I walked the section and picked up/removed several dozen downed limbs, plus sawed and removed three 4"-6" blowdowns. I also cut a hazardous hanging blowdown; I sawed through a narrow hinge, allowing the hanging trunk to drop to the ground in a much less tenuous position. It is still a little iffy and will probably need chain sawing fairly soon. I checked Stan Murray Shelter, picked up a bag of trash, and then realized I'd forgotten to bring the new shelter register. I checked and cleaned out the spring, which is running pretty well.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 2/12/2017

Purpose: Create handbook for Roan Naturalist role

People: Vic Hasler

Summary: After four years of having a naturalist/ridge runner stationed in the Roan Highlands, agreement was reached with the partners to assemble a handbook of background information and best practices which would help in basic training of future personnel. From October 2016 thru February 2017, I took the lead role in gathering information from SAHC and other sources to create an extensive draft during my end-of-year holiday vacation. A couple of editing rounds by the partners now has a 39-page Roan Naturalist Handbook ready for use during the 2017 deployment.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 2/13/2017

Purpose: TEHCC A.T. Committee Meeting

Location: Eastman Recreation Center

People: Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Vic Hasler, Mike Hupko, Greg Kramer, Eric Middlemas, Ted Mowery, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart, Steve Perri (in person!), Steve Wilson and visitor Carl Belcher

Summary: The committee agenda had one full page of announcements that were read by the participants, but not formally discussed. The second page contained several topics which invoked serious conversation. A few points are being shared with the general club via the newsletter.

* Chainsaw recertifications will likely be conducted in March or April as USFS Reuben Potter's schedule allows. Reuben is the only Class C Certifier in our area.

* Committee agreed to apply for ATC/LL Bean grant for a few more Silky-brand pruning saws including maybe a Katanaboy design – plus extra blades to the extent that funding is available.

* Bob People outlined how Elizabethton H.S. obtained a sizeable grant for their alternative education proposal. Cherry Gap Shelter renovation was suggested as a design project. Students will research and propose a design based on our basic requirements (number of people, must use existing footprint). A short review at Fall partnership in October in Unicoi would be appropriate.

* In case the temporary closure of Watauga Lake Shelter because of bears becomes permanent, the club discussed possible campsite locations south of US 321 and north of Wilbur Dam Road.

* Roan Mtn A.T. Community – Dedication set for 4/24 and celebration on 5/6. The club has been requested to have a booth at the latter event in the city park.

* The proposed A.T. rerouting across US 321/Atwood property was discussed extensively. The primary decision was to remove the 2019 Konnarock Crew from TEHCC plan and wait on the written report by TDOT on how US 321 can be safely crossed. A better approach will be to delay rerouting the A.T. until the TDOT control features are installed for the highway.

* Carl Belcher (who moved to the area from Colorado) shared how he met Steve Wilson, then became involved with some trail maintenance activities. Say hi when you see him next!

* Mount Rogers A.T. Club will again be hosting Hard Core in 2017. They need to borrow TEHCC tools and helmets for the event volunteers.

Reporting: Bill Fuller

Date: 2/14/2017

Purpose: Assess shelter

Location: Section 10, Hampton trailhead to Laurel Fork Shelter

People: Bill Fuller

Summary: I hiked down the High Water Trail and made an assessment of the shelter while also cleaning up some trash in the fire ring. I will return soon with a shovel, broom, and log-book. The water source is good.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/14/2017

Purpose: Bridge Preparation

Location: Shook Branch

People: John Beaudet, Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Richard Carter, Jim Chambers, Grant Dienes, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, John Grills, Mike Hupko, Pat Loven, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart, George Thorpe

Summary: Grant, John B., Jim, Tim and Bob disassembled and removed Shook Branch Bridge. They also did a great job preparing the landings for the bridge pier and sill. Everyone else worked at Work Center to cut and drill the wood for both the Shook Branch and Wildermine Bridges. Our day consisted of tape measures, saws of various types, and drills. Some holes were almost three feet deep! Everyone made the day successful.

Reporting: Jim Chambers

Date: 2/16/2017

Purpose: Assess Trail

Location: Section 13, US 19E to Doll Flats, South of Wilder Mine Campsite

People: Bob Peoples, Jim Chambers

Summary: We assessed a section of side-hill trail that has sloughed off, thus creating an ill-defined treadway.

Reporting: Dean Baird

Date: 2/16/2017

Purpose: Routine trail maintenance

Location: Section 10, Hampton Blue-Blaze Trail

People: Dean Baird

Summary: I removed some tree branches from the trail; no major problems.

Reporting: Craig Haire

Date: 2/17/2017

Purpose: General Maintenance

Location: Section 20a, Nolichucky River to Temple Hill Gap

People: Craig Haire

Summary: No chainsaw work was required. A trail obstruction was cleared with a lopper and hand-saw. The trail is in very good shape. I met several day-hikers on a pleasant day.

Reporting: Dan Firth

Date: 2/17/2017

Purpose: Prepare and submit 2017 LL Bean grant

People: Dan Firth

Summary: I prepared and submitted the 2017 LL Bean grant, requesting funding to purchase additional hand-saws for use by trail maintainers.

Reporting: Craig Haire

Date: 2/18/2017

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

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

People: Craig Haire, Dennis Samuel, Joel Zabel

Summary: All trees on the trail were cleared; some moved by hand, some with a hand-saw, some with an electric chainsaw. It was a cool, pleasant day.

Reporting: Craig Haire

Date: 2/18/2017

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 11b, Canute Place to Moreland Gap Shelter

People: Craig Haire, Roy Holcomb

Summary: This is a continuation of the previous report. There were two thru-hikers at the shelter, headed north. There was a fairly big tree about a mile north of the shelter, a Y-shaped portion across the trail. I was able to finish three cuts, separating it from the rest of the tree; but it was too massive to push off the trail. It will take a peavey or three strong guys to move it.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 2/18/2017

Purpose: Scout out invasive species

Location: Section 20a, Both directions at Temple Hill Gap

People: Greg Kramer

Summary: I scouted the area for Tree of Heaven and prepared for treatment of trees on Tuesday, February 21st.

Reporting: Ken Buchanan

Date: 2/18/2017

Purpose: Routine maintenance and clear reported blowdown

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

People: Ken Buchanan, Pat Buchanan, Diane Brewer, Anita Long, Linda Coulson

Summary: I enlisted several family members as willing workers. Three of us headed in from Low Gap to check the trail and clear a reported blowdown. The others came in from Cross Mountain. Expecting a 6-8 inch blowdown, I only took my axe. We cleared the blowdown, but on in about 1/4 mile north of the shelter, found a 30-inch oak blocking the trail. Not having a week to spend with the axe, I left it for another day. We didn't see any hikers on the trail; only one runner.

Reporting: Bob Peoples

Date: 2/18/2017

Purpose: Remove rocks from Trail

Location: Section 10, Hampton trailhead to Dennis Cove Road, north of Koonford Bridge

People: Bob Peoples

Summary: Five large rocks had fallen early in the week from the railroad cut north of Koonford Bridge. They did not completely block the trail, but they impeded travel. Bob with a sledge and pick was able to make a 30" path. Additional rocks will fall from railroad cuts some day since there is a lot of fractured rock above.

Reporting: Dean Baird

Date: 2/18/2017

Purpose: Inspect trail

Location: Section 9b, Hampton blue-blaze trail and blue-blaze to Pond Flats

People: Jennifer Baird, Emily Pons

Summary: Jennifer and Emily inspected both trails and picked up trash. They noted two areas with trees in the trail on the A.T. section, but in neither case were the trees impeding trail traffic.

Reporting: Jim Chambers

Date: 2/19/2017

Purpose: Prepare for Trail rehab

Location: Section 13, US 19E to Doll Flats, South of Wilder Mine Campsite

People: Connie Squires, Jim Chambers

Summary: We felled locust and cut stakes in preparation for trail rehab scheduled for this coming Thursday.

Reporting: Kayla Carter

Date: 2/20/2017

Purpose: Scout for blowdowns

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

People: Kayla Carter

Summary: Thorns are out! I will return soon for more intense clearing to get ahead of the impending encroachment of rhododendron and thorns. The annual weed cutting along Elk River will also happen on the return trip. There's a nice size blowdown just before the second double-blaze coming from Campbell Hollow. There's another log hop about a quarter mile from there. It's quite large as it's the trunk from the top of the tree that has fallen across the trail. I have sent photos to some fellow maintainers to seek assistance. I cleared out three small blowdowns with a hand saw.

Reporting: Steve Wilson

Date: 2/20/2017

Purpose: Cut blowdowns, clean waterbars, and cut briars

Location: Section 3a, McQueens Gap to Spring

People: Carl Belcher, Steve Wilson

Summary: Carl Belcher and I took advantage of a warm and sunny day to clear the section of trail from McQueens gap hiking south to the spring. We cut six blowdowns, cleared several waterbars and cut the briars. This section looks good for the thru-hikers.

Reporting: Dan Firth

Date: 2/20/2017

Purpose: Section Maintenance

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

People: Dan Firth

Summary: I surveyed the status of the waterbars and steps, as well as location for rare plant monitoring later in the year. Six waterbars and one step need replacing.

Reporting: Richard Carter

Date: 2/23/2017

Purpose: Cut hazard trees

Location: Section 14c, Near Stan Murray Shelter

People: Richard Carter

Summary: Using a hand saw, I cut a hanging blowdown about a half mile south of the shelter to reduce its future hazard potential, leaving it hanging away from the trail. At the shelter I cut one tree which had decay on one side and constituted a future hazard to the shelter. I also cut one side of a splitting and decayed tree which will need more work, as I couldn't safely cut the remaining part with assurance of not felling it onto the shelter. I removed one four-inch blowdown and left a new shelter register.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/23/2017

Purpose: Prepare bridge materials

Location: Section 8, USFS Watauga Work Center

People: Paul Benfield, Bob Peoples

Summary: Paul and Bob treated the cuts and drillings of the bridge lumber with three coats of preservative.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/23/2017

Purpose: Rehab Trail

Location: Section 13, About 0.8 miles south of US 19E

People: Dean Baird, Jennifer Baird, John Beaudet, Jim Chambers, Grant Dienes, Carl Fritz, Becky Kinder, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Gayle Riddervold, Tim Stewart, George Thorpe

Summary: The trail prior to the power lines was sloughing off because of roots. We redug over 200 feet of trail, installed locust side logs, and back filled with soil. We did clean most, but not all, of the waterbars from 19E to the power line. We did not encounter any hikers today.

Reporting: Ken Buchanan

Date: 02/24/2017

Purpose: Remove blowdown

Location: Section 4a, ¼ mile north of Double Springs Shelter

People: Ken Buchanan, Pat Buchanan, Pat Loven, Kim Peters

Summary: A large blowdown was obstructing the trail just North of the shelter. We walked in from Low Gap, cleared the large blowdown and three small blowdowns as we walked out. We encountered several hikers; three different hikers commented on the "step" log they had crossed over. They liked it.