



# The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

April 2017

[tehcc.org](http://tehcc.org)

Editor – [Koustubh Kulkarni](#)

Co-Editor – [Terry Oldfield](#)

## In this Issue

[TEHCC Spring Dinner with Johnny Molloy and Barberitos Catering](#)

[Club Library Addition – WhiteBlaze Pages](#)

[SORO meeting, March 2017](#)

[New Members](#)

[Event Schedule – Next Two Months](#)

[Details of Upcoming Events](#)

[For the Record](#)

[A.T. Maintenance Reports](#)



## TEHCC Spring Dinner with Johnny Molloy and Barberitos Catering

We're just two weeks away from our Spring Dinner. Local prolific author Johnny Molloy will be in attendance to give his overview of hiking, paddling, and camping in the Tri-Cities. If you're new to the area, or even if you have lived here your entire life, this should be a great discussion. Barberitos will be supplying the food at \$8/person. Reservations in advance are required for dinner. Attending just the program is of course free. Reservations for the meal are due by 3/31/17, next week! Form to [complete and mail is here](#). Details can be [found here](#).

More information about Johnny and his work can be found at [www.johnnymolloy.com](http://www.johnnymolloy.com).

Event	Time	Details
Spring Dinner Meeting	5:30pm	Location: Eastman Lodge, Main Banquet Hall <a href="#">404 Bays Mountain Road, Kingsport, TN</a>
Happy "Trails" Hour	5:30pm-6:30pm	Beer and wine for sale, or BYOB
Dinner – Barberitos taco and fajita bars plus tea, coffee and desserts	6:30pm-7:15pm	Barberitos will be providing a fajita and taco bar including hard and soft shells, chips, salsa, and more with other items purchased separately by the club. (\$8 per person)
Club Business	7:15pm-8:00pm	- Update of club activities - Awards
Special Program: An Overview of Hiking, Paddling, and Camping in the Tri-Cities	8:00pm-9:00pm	Johnny Molloy

---

## Club Library Addition – WhiteBlaze Pages

---

### *Vic Hasler reporting*

A brand-new guidebook for the Appalachian Trail has been added to TEHCC library for sharing. It is the introductory effort by Rick "Attroll" Towle to publish a 198-page listing of trail features and nearby services by mile marker. It would be good as a quick reference when planning a section hike. Can drop it into the plant mail to you upon request.

---

## SORO meeting, March 2017

---

### *Steve Perri reporting*

Black Mountain, NC, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Attendees: Kayla Carter, Jim Chambers, Steve Perri

**Visitor Use Management:** ATC is working to develop tools and indicators to help monitor and potentially manage high visitor use along the A.T. A new online system is available for Thruhikers to sign in where and when they will start hiking. It displays online to users the starting traffic distribution so hikers can decide whether they want to keep their start plans as is or consider another location or dates to avoid over-crowding. Registered starts are up to 3,300 hikers this year so far representing ~25% increase from last year. Users can also access group camping sites registration [www.atcamp.org](http://www.atcamp.org) which encourages group hikers to not stay at shelters. Increase use in GA and at McAfee Knob area were showcases of increased use and has resulted in the formation of task forces to help minimize impacts from heavy use.

ATC is halfway working to get started on its strategic plan. They also are working to bring on more activities and capabilities with a new budget of \$6.5 M representing a significant increase. Major initiatives of the strategic plan underway are the broader relevancy, effective stewardship, proactive protection, and strengthened capacity. Several key activities under these goals have resulted in new staff positions and major investment of resources to achieve the objectives under the plan. The SORO office now has 3 new staff members working in Asheville reporting into Harpers Ferry.

New language in the 2014 volunteer service agreement (VSA) has eliminated key components to the old 1983 Delegation Agreement. The new agreement was intended to have disclaimers covering work compensation and other legal issues, but needs to have specific coverages for SORO clubs reporting through the USFS districts as well as APPA. Some conflicting terms and requirements may affect TEHCC's role in that there is language required that volunteers must be "full members" of that organization. Since our company requires club volunteers that are not employees be classified as program affiliates, we may need to work with ATC to be sure we can have both full members and program affiliates included. With our recent VSA work with the Cherokee, we should work with Leanna to work from the GATC template for the NPS agreement. It should include tasks, service activities, facilities, management responsibilities and other attributes.

### **SORO RPC**

- Baxter extending long-distance permit system for persons hiking over 100 mi. There is also a cap on permits, 15% above total visitor numbers. So there is an accounting system for 4 types of hiker categories (NOBO's, SOBO's, section hikers and flip-floppers). ATC has respectfully informed them they disagreed with the restriction method and they did not use any type of systematic study to set that number.
- Next year is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Trails System and ATC will work with partners to ID opportunities to recognize that.
- Volunteer maintenance walk-ons to work with clubs should continue to sign daily roster with tailgate training. For youths (<17 years old), youth volunteers should sign form OF 301a which should allow for work for a given period – this period can be defined in the paperwork. Alternatively, if there is a process in the club's VSA describing their youth oversight role (with a parent or guardian permission), then clubs can use their daily roster and training form; form OF301a will not have to be used.
- New USFS Saw policy signed in 2016 with 4 sawyer skill levels. Overall the policy is more favorable for clubs with a 3 yr renewal period. PPE is covered by ATC while supplies last and costs for CPR/1<sup>st</sup> aid training can be reimbursed by an online process for up to \$65/person.
- Stewardship Council requests clubs have a hazard tree policy in their LMP. Clubs can continue to report hazard trees to USFS for issues beyond the skills of the certified club sawyers.
- Facilities Management Update: 816 treadway sections complete of 868, 94% complete with a June deadline for completion. Plans are to update as work is completed to minimize demand for comprehensive assessments since this process takes 2.5 yrs with \$800k of APPA funds. Going forward, forms have been created for Treadway updates similar to the original forms. Include items added or removed to existing data (no new GIS needed). Forms available on ATC's website can be scanned and be submitted via email: [APPA\\_facilities@nps.gov](mailto:APPA_facilities@nps.gov) or mailed to the office in Harpers Ferry.

- GRMNP has been experiencing a 12% increase in permits for backpacking in the park for the past 3 years. Heavy use is occurring at shelters.
- Some clubs posting hikes in newspaper and Meetup website – recruiting new members this way.
- Leanna has a hit list of priorities for assisting clubs: VSA, training, improved communications, easier system for tracking project accomplishments, and volunteer recognition.

### Konnarock

The committee reviewed 2017 Konnarock schedule. TEHCC has the first week at Backbone Rock 5/3-5/7. We reviewed 2018 schedule and originally there were not enough projects for 24 crew weeks. After a long discussion and consideration of going to 20 weeks, it was decided to load up MRHC with almost the whole summer. We didn't cover anything in 2019, 2020, or 2021. For 2022 we requested 2 weeks for Weedy Gap to Greasy Creek Gap to possibly fill out the schedule considering we have crew time in 2020 and 2021. We had several clubs missing signatures or copies were in a partner inbox for 2022 projects. We discussed ways to reduce the NEPA load or consider doing big project NEPA work and then assigning those projects to 2 years to knock them out if some of the remaining smaller projects were incomplete in their signatures. With APPO's 5 year ahead planning, there isn't much flexibility if clubs finish projects early or if not enough work is identified in a given year. The meeting was supposed to only go 45 min but it took over 2 hrs discussing procedures and options to flex the 5 yr planning requirement.

---

## TEHCC Welcomes New Member

---

David Jewell  
Jennifer Baird

Kenny Adams  
Pam Kelley

Yvonne Hawkins  
Richard Ramsey

Campbell Fuller  
Marla Merrick

Bill Hodge

---

## Event Schedule – Next Two Months

---

For the latest, up-to-date information, see [tehcc.org/schedule](http://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 31 – Apr 2	NoliFest 2017	<a href="http://www.nolifest.com">http://www.nolifest.com</a>	
April 7	Spring Dinner Meeting, Eastman Lodge	<a href="#">Kay Parker</a>	423-963-8461
April 14-16	Suwannee River Paddle/Camp	<a href="#">Debbie Briscoe</a>	423-534-3636
April 15	Hiking with tools	<a href="#">Kim Peters</a>	423-366-0128
April 22	Roan Garlic Mustard Pull	<a href="#">Greg Kramer</a>	828-253-0095 X 210
April 24	Rental Equipment Checkout	<a href="#">Terry Dougherty</a>	423-502-5177
May 4 - 6	Konnarock Crews on Backbone Rock	<a href="#">Carl Fritz</a>	423-477-4669
May 5 – 7	Jocassee Lake Paddle/Camp Weekend	<a href="#">Debbie Briscoe</a>	423-534-3636
May 20	Hiking with tools	<a href="#">Kim Peters</a>	423-366-0128
May 26-28	Bluestone River Trip 38th Year	<a href="#">Terry Dougherty</a>	423-502-5177

### 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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

#### **Suwannee River Paddle/Camp, April 14-16, 2017**

Leader: [Debbie Briscoe](mailto: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 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

### **Roan Garlic Mustard Pull, Roan Mountain State Park, Saturday, April 22, 2017– Starting 9:30 am**

Contact: [Greg Kramer](mailto:Greg.Kramer@usfs.gov), 828-253-0095 x 219

We are partnering with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, US Forest Service, and Roan Mountain State Park to remove invasive garlic mustard from the park and heavily trafficked roadsides around Carvers Gap and SAHC conservation properties in the Highlands of Roan. Plucking out the pesky invaders when they're young and tender isn't hard work, but it does take a lot of hands!

Sign up online to volunteer or contact [marquette@appalachian.org](mailto:marquette@appalachian.org) or 828.253.0095 ext 210.

### **Rental Equipment Checkout, Monday, April 24, 2017 - 11:00 am –1:00 pm**

Contact: [Terry Dougherty](mailto:Terry.Dougherty@usfs.gov), 423-502-5177

Location: Eastman Employee Center, Rm. 221 and Lobby. It's time to ensure the Club's rental gear is ready for another year. We will evaluate all of the equipment and propose necessary repairs or replacements. A light lunch of pizza, veggie tray, cookies, soft drinks and bottled water will be provided. This is a great opportunity to become familiar with available rental equipment. Come and go as your time permits. Many hands make light work. Please help if you can. Contact: Terry Dougherty, 502-5177

### **Jocassee Lake Paddle/Camp Weekend, May 5-7, 2017**

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

The most crystal clear water you will ever see this close to home with waterfalls, waterfalls waterfalls! We made 2 trips there last spring and are excited to offer this trip again this year! Friday, May 5: Meet at the State Park at 10:00AM to pack boats and paddle 1 mile across the lake to the secluded boat-in only camp sites. There are fire rings, lantern stands and pit toilets. Saturday we will be paddling to waterfalls and will have a picnic lunch on the way! We can stop for ice cream at the state park on the way back (if desired a shower is available there too)! Sunday after breakfast and packing up we will paddle to one more waterfall and then back to the car at the State Park. This is a self supported trip, all gear must be packed in your boat and you must bring all your food & water. A group meal can be planned if desired.

### **Bluestone River Trip 38th Year, May 26 – 28, 2017**

Contact: [Terry Dougherty](mailto:Terry.Dougherty@usfs.gov), 423-502-5177

Bluestone River Trip, May 26-28, 2017, 38th Year, Leader: Terry Dougherty, 423-502-5177. The annual Bluestone River Trip (38th Anniversary) is scheduled for May 26-28, 2017. We will stay at the beautiful Pipestem State Park (Mountain Creek Lodge). We have reserved a block of rooms, please call 800-CALL-WVA (ask for Pipestem State Park / Mountain Creek Lodge) and reserve your room for Friday and Saturday. To secure one of the clubs block rooms, reservations must be made by May 12. Room \$ 112/night + taxes. We plan to paddle the scenic Bluestone River both Sat. and Sun. This is a Class III trip the first day and Class I the second day. You can skip the second day, if you like. Other options include family camping at the state park campground and/or driving up on Saturday morning. This is a GREAT trip with a lot of family fun, scenic river and very nice lodging. In addition to the paddling, Ed Montgomery will once again be in charge of HAPPY HOUR and libation coordination on Saturday night and is going to make this one special. Please contact the trip leader (Terry Dougherty, 423-502-5177) if you are planning to attend.

---

## **For the Record**

---

No hike or paddling reports this month.



---

## A.T. Maintenance Reports

---

**Reporting:** Greg Kramer

**Date:** 2/19/2017

**Purpose:** Scout for Tree of Heaven

**Location:** Section 20b, Spivey Gap

**People:** Greg Kramer

**Summary:** I searched for the invasive plant, Tree of Heaven, for treatment.

**Reporting:** Craig Haire

**Date:** 2/24/2017

**Purpose:** Rehab trail

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

**People:** Craig Haire

**Summary:** About 1/4 mile from the road, northbounders must make a steep descent to start a sharp right turn into a switchback. The treadway is sloped outward too much there. I began digging out and lowering the trail to make it less steep and less hazardous. I made a little headway, but it will likely take another trip or two to complete the job. Two northbound thru-hikers came by, and just as I was walking out, a string of about a dozen overnigheters passed me on the way to No Business Knob Shelter.

**Reporting:** Craig Haire

**Date:** 2/26/2017

**Purpose:** Rehab trail

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

**People:** Craig Haire

**Summary:** I continued digging out and lowering the too-steep section I began digging last Friday. It's looking a lot better, but still isn't sloped down as much as I'd like. I may finish it on my next trip out. It was a pretty cold morning; I saw only one day-hiker.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 2/28/2017

**Purpose:** Prep for bridge replacements

**Location:** Sections 8 and 13

**People:** Carl Fritz, Ed Oliver

**Summary:** Ed and I completed many tasks in preparation for the upcoming bridge replacements at Shook Branch and Wilder Mine. Those tasks include making detailed drawings and plans, making jigs, obtaining materials including drivers and special bolts, wood treatment, etc.

**Reporting:** Craig Haire

**Date:** 3/1/2017

**Purpose:** Rehab trail

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

**People:** Craig Haire

**Summary:** I continued the work started on February 24. Contouring the sharp turn and steep descent is now more than 90% completed. It has been back-breaking work, cutting through all the roots on the surface and pulling up the rocks below the surface. I took a McLeod this time to move the dirt and duff off to the side, which really helped. It is much more walkable now. One more trip for fine-tuning and it will be done.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 3/2/2017

**Purpose:** Build bridge

**Location:** Section 8, Shook Branch

**People:** John Beaudet, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, John Grills, Greg Kramer, Ted Mowery, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart, George Thorpe

**Summary:** We successfully built the new bridge pier and filled it with rock. We also filled the equally as large hole behind it. We set the sill on the opposite bank, and are now ready to build the bridge.



**Reporting:** Lynn DiFiore

**Date:** 3/3/2017

**Purpose:** Check for blowdowns

**Location:** Section 14b, Stan Murray Shelter to Bradley Gap

**People:** Lynn DiFiore, Eilidh (canine)

**Summary:** I spent a snowy day clearing blowdowns from the trail - mostly limbs and small trees. Only one was too large to remove because it was frozen to the ground! I sawed off enough branches so it is easily stepped over, and will return later to fully clear it. Eilidh carried out a large amount of trash from the campsite at Bradley Gap. The haul included a wool sweater, knit cap and a frisbee, along with the usual assortment of glass and steel cans. I saw only 3 section hikers and a couple of random hounds.

**Reporting:** Gerald Scott

**Date:** 3/4/2017

**Purpose:** Spring Maintenance

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

**People:** Gerald Scott, Harold Wexler

**Summary:** We cleared approximately 10 blowdowns with the largest being 10-inches across. We were unable to install the new shelter sign. The aluminum nails weren't strong enough to hammer in without bending. We will take stainless screws on the next trip. The wire grating (16' x 20") on the hewn-log foot bridge on the lower section of the trail needs to be replaced within the next year.

**Reporting:** John Beaudet

**Date:** 3/5/2017

**Purpose:** Routine Maintenance

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

**People:** John Beaudet

**Summary:** I cut back rhododendrons and cut out a few small blowdowns. The trail is ready for thru-hikers. The picnic table at the shelter is broken, but is usable as is. It requires large nails or bolts to repair. Vic Hasler or I will take care of it if they don't burn it first.

**Reporting:** Terry Oldfield

**Date:** 3/5/2017

**Purpose:** Clean up shelter area

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

**People:** Sue Scott, Terry Oldfield

**Summary:** We hiked to the shelter from TN 91, cutting greenbriars along the way. We also cleared branches and one small log from the trail. No new blowdowns to report. At the shelter, we picked up trash, although there wasn't much. We also cleaned out the fire ring; shoveled out ashes and dirt, and re-placed the rocks. The logbook placed in November was still in good shape and had only a few pages of entries. The water source is running well. It was a beautiful day and we met several day-hikers.

**Reporting:** Jim Chambers

**Date:** 3/5/2017

**Purpose:** Remove blowdowns

**Location:** Section 14a, Doll Flats to Hump Mtn

**People:** Jim Chambers, Connie Squires

**Summary:** We removed all blowdowns between Doll Flats and the top of Hump, as well as the blowdowns on the access road to

Doll Flats.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 3/6/2017

**Purpose:** Flag trail relocations

**Location:** Section 16b, Greasy Creek Gap to Iron Mountain Gap, northern end of section

**People:** Jim Foster, Carl Fritz, Kim Peters, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** We were able to clear some smaller blowdowns and limbs. The trail is in good shape. We have most of the relocations flagged. One hill is still a problem and another trip will be required.

**Reporting:** Craig Haire

**Date:** 3/8/2017

**Purpose:** Rehab trail

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

**People:** Craig Haire

**Summary:** I completed the trail rehab started last month. Two turnouts were included in the remodeling. After smoothing out the treadway, I pulled down leaves and duff from above the trail with the McLeod to cover the raw mineral dirt and start a new layer of duff. Then I went north 100 yards to start leveling out another narrow, out-sloped section. I met one northbound section hiker.

**Reporting:** Dan Firth

**Date:** 3/8/2017

**Purpose:** Clear blowdowns and clean water diversions

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

**People:** Dan Firth

**Summary:** I cleaned out the water diversions and cleared two blowdowns, 14 inches and 9 inches.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 3/9/2017

**Purpose:** Build bridge

**Location:** Section 9a, Shook Branch

**People:** John Beaudet, Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Ben Firth, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Aaron Grills, John Grills, Greg Kramer, Pat Loven, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Tim Stewart, George Thorpe and hikers: Chesley Wilson, Nolan DuPree

**Summary:** As always, everyone pitched in to build the Shook Branch Bridge from pier up in one day. Both approach trails were also completed. The south side alone required probably 120 cubic feet of fill, mostly rock. The approach on the north side required many locust side logs and steps, plus more fill. There is some minor cleanup work yet, but it is hard to imagine this bridge moving from most natural causes. Thanks for everyone's "Can Do" spirit and idea contributions.



**Reporting:** Steve Wilson

**Date:** 3/9/2017

**Purpose:** Cut blowdowns, clean waterbars, and cut briars

**Location:** Section 2b, McQueens Gap to Abingdon Gap Shelter

**People:** Carl Belcher, Steve Wilson

**Summary:** Carl Belcher and I took advantage of this sunny spring day to clear old waterbars and build new ones, cut back briars, and cut blowdowns on my adopted section. We cut six blowdowns and the hazard tree that was reported at Abingdon Gap Shelter. This section is clear.

**Reporting:** Scotty Bowman

**Date:** 3/10/2017

**Purpose:** Check shelter; replace journal and broom



**Location:** Section 7, Wilbur Dam Rd to Vandeventer Shelter

**People:** Scotty Bowman, James Lautzenheiser

**Summary:** The original plan was to paint blazes, but the weather decided otherwise. It began to rain as we started our hike and it was also quite chilly. So we hiked in to check the shelter and to replace the journal and broom. Along the way we removed two small blowdowns and the crown of a tree that had fallen over the trail. There is no new graffiti on the walls of Vandeventer; so far the graffiti board is working. Hopefully it will continue to work as the NOBOS start passing through. James and I met only one thru-hiker (Boo-Boo) and her dog (Yogi).

**Reporting:** Steve Perri

**Date:** 3/10/2017

**Purpose:** SORO RPC Meeting

**Location:** Black Mountain, NC

**People:** Kayla Carter, Jim Chambers, Steve Perri

**Summary:**

Visitor Use Management: ATC is working to develop tools and indicators to help monitor and potentially manage high visitor use along the A.T. A new online system is available for thru-hikers to specify where and when they will start hiking. It displays the starting traffic distribution so hikers can adjust their plans to avoid over-crowding along the trail. 3300 hikers have registered so far this year, representing ~25% increase from last year. Users can also access group campsite registration at [www.atcamp.org](http://www.atcamp.org) which encourages group hikers not to stay at shelters. Increased use in GA and McAfee Knob areas resulted in the formation of task forces to help minimize impacts from heavy use.

ATC is getting started on their strategic plan. They are also working on additional activities and capabilities with a new budget of \$6.5M, which represents a significant increase. Major initiatives of the strategic plan are broader relevancy, effective stewardship, proactive protection, and strengthened capacity. These goals have resulted in new staff positions and a major investment of resources. The SORO office has three new staff members working in Asheville reporting into Harpers Ferry.

New language in the 2014 volunteer service agreement (VSA) has eliminated key components of the old 1983 Delegation Agreement. The new agreement was intended to have disclaimers covering work compensation and other legal issues, and needs to have specific coverage for SORO clubs reporting through the USFS districts and APPA. Some requirements may affect TEHCC's role in that volunteers must be "full members" of the clubs. Since our company requires club volunteers who are not employees to be classified as "program affiliates," we may need to work with ATC to be sure that "program affiliates" are included. With our recent VSA work with the Cherokee, we should work with Leanna from the GATC template for the NPS agreement. It should include tasks, service activities, facilities, management responsibilities and other attributes.

SORO RPC

- Baxter State Park, Maine, is extending the long-distance permit system for persons hiking over 100 miles. There is a cap on permits; 15% above total visitor numbers. There are 4 types of hiker categories: NOBOs, SOBOs, section hikers and flip-floppers. ATC has respectfully informed them they disagree with their restriction method.
- Next year is the 50th anniversary of the National Trails System. ATC will work with partners to ID opportunities to recognize this.
- Volunteer maintenance walk-ons who work with clubs should continue to sign the daily roster and receive tailgate training.

**Reporting:** Tim Stewart

**Date:** 3/11/2017

**Purpose:** Check section

**Location:** Section 11b, Bitter End to Moreland Gap Shelter

**People:** Tim Stewart

**Summary:** I went out to check the section. I cleared five blowdowns... Oh wait, that was on the forest service road. I gave up on the road after three miles and returned to Bitter End.

I headed to the shelter from Bitter End, clearing about 8 blowdowns, nothing major. The Katana Boy performed perfectly. I also cut back rhodos. The shelter was in good condition. No graffiti on walls, so graffiti board is working ... so far. It was cold, so I repainted only half of the board in case the paint didn't stick. I picked up some trash and placed a new shelter register. On the way back to the trailhead, I saw 5 thru-hikers.

**Reporting:** Bill Fuller

**Date:** 3/12/2017

**Purpose:** Check shelter, take logbook, etc.

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

**People:** Bill Fuller, Ashley Davies

**Summary:** We hiked down to the shelter from Dennis Cove, leaving a broom and a new logbook. We swept out the shelter and removed some trash from underneath the floor. We also cleaned out and removed trash from the fire ring. The water source was flowing great after all of the recent rain.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 3/16/2017

**Purpose:** Bridge finale

**Location:** Section 8, Shook Branch Recreation Area

**People:** Dean Baird, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart, George Thorpe

**Summary:** While enjoying the sun and stiff breeze with temperatures in the twenties, we removed the old bridge materials. We also installed a 4x4 post with blazes, and dug in five locust bollards. We installed four small splice boards at the end of the bridge and installed about three steps on the trail from US 321. We saw five north bounders in our short time here. Now everything is complete near the bridge.

**Reporting:** Vic Hasler

**Date:** 3/18/2017

**Purpose:** Lop rhododendron and repair picnic table at Curley Maple Gap Shelter

**Location:** Sections 19a and 19b, Indian Grave Gap to Nolichucky River

**People:** Vic Hasler, Troop 48: Finn and Kyla Hounshell, Easton Keeton, Aiden and Heather McNabb

**Summary:** Our original plan was to drop off a shuttle vehicle at the outfitters on the Nolichucky, but the still-drizzling storm had dumped rain and snow melt into the river so that the 0.8 KCFM flow earlier in the week was 7 KCFM and rising. (It later peaked at 12 KCFM as measured at the USGS gauge downstream.) The outfitters' recommendation was to stage the drop-off vehicle at the Chestoa Highway bridge, thus adding 1.3 miles to our planned maintenance trip. Not wanting to strand a family SUV, we followed the advice.

We employed four sets of loppers to trim some of the uphill rhododendron as we passed through the trail section to the north. The drizzle stopped after the first mile and the clouds began parting during the second mile to reveal sunshine, so we shed clothing layers as temperature rose toward the upper 50s. Our main challenge was that every normally-easy runoff crossing was a rapidly flowing cascade. One required the boots to come off to wade across the shin-high ice-cold water.

This trail section (19a) is in great condition. A suggestion is to repaint the blazes, primarily at the switchback ends which have faint side-trails wandering to overlooks.

The group reached Curley Maple Gap shelter at 1pm for a late lunch, then reattached the bench seats to the picnic table using a cordless drill and 3" screws. The table is now solid, but the screw points protrude slightly from the other side of the boards; so next trip we'll need to bring a metal file to remove the tips. The existing logbook was missing its cardboard covers, but had plenty of clean pages. Nevertheless, we left another logbook to cover the main thru-hiker wave.

Significant rain during the prior night melted snow from earlier in the week turning Jones Branch into a vigorous cascade.

Unfortunately, the trail path became a runoff stream, up to 6 inches deep in places. (Waterbars would be useful if could figure out where to direct the flow.) One normally easy side-stream rock hop again required removal of boots to wade the icy shin-deep water.

Since we were behind on our trip plan, the only other task accomplished was to employ a pair of swing blades to keep some dog-hobble from narrowing the trail north of the third bridge to the switchback. There is one telephone-pole-sized blowdown in the lowlands which is being walked around.

**Reporting:** Kim Peters

**Date:** 3/18/2017

**Purpose:** Spring walkthrough

**Location:** Section 15b, Hughes Gap to Ash Gap

**People:** Lowell Toof, Colton Duckworth, Terry Oldfield, Nicole Hardin, Kim Peters

**Summary:** What a great first "3rd Saturday - Hiking with Tools" trip for 2017! Despite the poor weather forecast, four hardy volunteers showed up to work on the trail between Hughes Gap and Ash Gap. We did have all kinds of weather on this trip. We started out in fog and misty rain, then had sun and then wind, then clouds and wind and finally hail and wind as we worked our way up and down the mountain. We cleared about 10 blowdowns of various sizes, some easy step-overs, some partially blocking the trail and a few completely blocking the trail. All the steps and water diversions were cleaned out and briars and other vegetation cut back. We left one blowdown about 1 mile north of Hughes Gap which is the stump end of a 40" tree, the end of which is about a foot into the trail. It can be walked around, but would be nice to be removed. Many thanks to the hardworking crew including first timer, Colton Duckworth for making this a very successful trip. This section of trail is now in good shape.

**Reporting:** Eric Middlemas

**Date:** 3/19/2017

**Purpose:** Remove blowdowns and debris

**Location:** Section 17, Iron Mtn Gap to 0.25 miles south of Cherry Gap Shelter

**People:** Eric Middlemas, Judy Middlemas



*Lowell looks on while Nicole saws*

**Summary:** We removed a total of 7 blowdowns from Iron Mtn Gap to a location about 1/4 mile south of Cherry Gap Shelter. Two of the blowdowns were large and caused hikers to sidetrack from the trail in order to avoid them. These blowdowns were difficult and time consuming to remove, even with a chainsaw. We also removed much debris from the trail, lopped brush, checked the shelter, and removed trash. We did not check the springs, but both were running with good flow several weeks before. We met about 10 thru-hikers along the way. There is extensive side-hill trail erosion along this section of trail, especially at about 1-1.5 miles south of Iron Mtn Gap and immediately south of the crest of Piney Ball. These areas are badly in need of rehabilitation. The trail was muddy from recent rain and was sometimes difficult to walk on, especially with a full backpack.

**Reporting:** Dan Firth

**Date:** 3/20/2017

**Purpose:** Routine Maintenance

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

**People:** Dan Firth

**Summary:** I cleared numerous small blowdowns from the trail and cleaned out fire rings at several campsites. I met two thru-hikers and three section hikers.

**Reporting:** Eric Middlemas

**Date:** 3/22/2017

**Purpose:** Assess Trail maintenance needs

**Location:** Sections 17 and 18, Iron Mountain Gap to Indian Grave Gap

**People:** Eric Middlemas

**Summary:** I walked through these two sections to assess and document maintenance needs. I made note of blowdowns and areas needing treadway rehabilitation. I also removed 5 small blowdowns with a handsaw and removed trash (broken beer bottles) from the side of the trail.

**Reporting:** Paul Benfield

**Date:** 3/23/2017

**Purpose:** Trail Maintenance

**Location:** Section 8, Trail bridge at US 321

**People:** Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples

**Summary:** We graveled the southern approach to the bridge and the north side up to the parking area. We also cribbed and installed some larger rock for fill along the outside of the trail.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 3/23/2017

**Purpose:** Rehab Trail

**Location:** Section 11b, Bitter End to Hard Core Cascade

**People:** John Beaudet, Jim Chambers, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Keri Purvis "Geo", Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart, George Thorpe

**Summary:** We repaired some areas with sloughing trail by redigging or adding a side log. We added some steps, cleaned steps, and built up a couple of wet areas with rocks as a walking surface. This part of the section is in good shape. We were privileged to have Keri join us today. She thru-hiked last year and looked us up on the web site.

**Reporting:** Kim Peters

**Date:** 3/23/2017

**Purpose:** Spring walk-thru

**Location:** Section 12a, Bitter End to Walnut Mountain Road

**People:** Ken Buchanan, Kim Peters

**Summary:** After getting a shuttle from Bitter End to Walnut Mtn Rd from the Thursday crew, Ken and I walked back north toward Bitter End. The first mile north of Walnut Mtn Rd is absolutely clean. It appears as if the Forest Service has been in with leaf blowers prepping the trail to serve as a firebreak. We lopped back laurel and removed a few stumps from the trail; little more was needed. In the last two miles, we did more of the same, but removed a few small blowdowns and cleaned out water diversions and steps as well. This section is in good shape except the blazes need to be repainted.

**Reporting:** Kim Peters

**Date:** 3/23/2017

**Purpose:** Clear blowdowns

**Location:** Section 12c, One-mile north of Campbell Hollow Road

**People:** Ken Buchanan, Kim Peters

**Summary:** After finishing up section 12a, Ken and I drove around to Campbell Hollow Rd to see if we could remove the reported blowdown that was about one-mile north without a chainsaw. It turned out that we could! Using the Katanaboy Silky saw and a sharp pulaski, we were able to remove the 14" blowdown as well as another 10" blowdown. We also cleaned out steps on the way back out.

**Reporting:** Pat Loven

**Date:** 3/23/2017

**Purpose:** Routine maintenance

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

**People:** Danny Harper, Dennis Dugan, Pat Loven

**Summary:** We planned to drive up the jeep road on the south side of White Rock Mountain and check the southern portion of this section. However, the USFS gate at the bottom of the mountain was locked. I'm not sure why as seasonal gates were scheduled to be opened on March 17.

We then drove to Dennis Cove and worked the northern end of this section. We removed some minor trail obstacles and one overhanging tree. The Trail is in good shape. We'll return when the gate is open to check the southern end. We met seven hikers heading north. Special thanks to Shadow and Country Mouse for some wonderful Trail Magic at the Dennis Cove parking area.

**Reporting:** Pat Loven

**Date:** 3/24/2017

**Purpose:** First aid/CPR recertification

**People:** Pat Loven

**Summary:** I completed online and classroom training for Red Cross First Aid/CPR recertification as required for chain saw operation.

**Reporting:** Phyllis Cairnes

**Date:** 3/24/2017

**Purpose:** Maintain shelter

**Location:** Section 2b, Abingdon Gap Shelter

**People:** Rolla Wade, Phyllis Cairnes

**Summary:** Today's mission was to paint over the shelter graffiti board with Kilz to give it a fresh surface for hikers' use. I found it takes three coats to cover black Sharpie marks with at least 10 minutes dry-time between coats. In addition to painting, we picked up trash and dismantled two fire rings, one which was under the eave of the shelter. Someone continues to leave and replace two paper-back-sized religious books which I carry out each time. We talked with a thru-hiker who stopped for lunch at the shelter and we chatted with a slew of others trekking toward Damascus. One, "Crazy Tree," (53, Gainesville, GA) said "hi" and then asked who maintains this section. He said it was in terrific shape! He even wanted me to tell a bit about our club on his YouTube video. So maintainers, your work is appreciated! The trail between Low Gap and Abingdon Gap Shelter was truly in excellent condition: blowdowns removed, waterbars created and cleaned, greenbriar cut back....ready for the spring crowd!

**Reporting:** Eric Middlemas

**Date:** 3/24/2017

**Purpose:** Blaze trail

**Location:** Section 17, Iron Mtn Gap to Cherry Gap Shelter

**People:** Eric Middlemas

**Summary:** I painted blazes in the north and south directions from Iron Mtn Gap to Cherry Gap Shelter. I also refreshed the blue blazes on the trail to the springs behind the shelter and replaced the shelter logbook. I removed one small blowdown from the trail near the crest of Piney Ball.