



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

March 2018

tehcc.org

Co-Editors – [Summer Brickey](#) and [Terry Oldfield](#)

In This Issue

[TEHCC Spring Dinner, March 2, 2018](#)

[Bill Murdoch, TEHCC Maintainer of the Year 2017](#)

[Trevor Lee, TEHCC Paddler of the Year 2017](#)

[TEHCC Rental Equipment: HB-35, Granite Gear Escape AC60](#)

[Rails-to-Trails Trail](#)

[Event Schedule – Next Two Months](#)

[Details of Upcoming Events](#)

[For the Record](#)

[A.T. Maintenance Reports](#)



TEHCC Spring Dinner, March 2, 2018

Hal Yungmeyer reporting

About 40 members and guests gathered at the Eastman Lodge for the Annual Spring Dinner on Friday, March 2. After some fellowship and “Happy Trails Hour”, a catered dinner from Barberitos was served, followed by pie and coffee. GSA Troop 263 provided the table centerpieces and had cookies available for sale.

Announcements

- The new TEHCC Steering Committee members are Andy Steffan, Chris Chambers, and Hal Yungmeyer.
- Rental equipment inspection will be held Friday, March 16, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm in Bldg. 310 lobby.

Dennis Trentham (USFS Watauga District) presented volunteer awards.

TEHCC Club Awards (see articles below) included Maintainer of the Year: Bill Murdoch, and Paddler of the Year: Trevor Lee (see articles below).

In a presentation titled “A Ridgerunner’s Perspective,” ATC Trail Education Specialist Chloë de Camara from Asheville, NC spoke about her experiences over the years with the Appalachian Trail. Many thanks to Chloë for an entertaining and informative presentation.

Raffle prize winners (Bays Mountain Park annual passes) were Betty Kramer, Keith Kelley, and Chris Chambers.

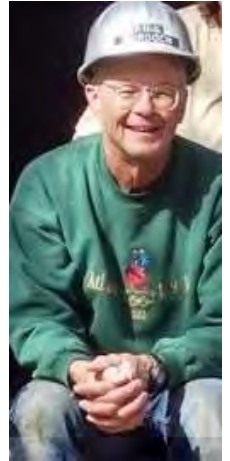


Bill Murdoch, TEHCC Maintainer of the Year 2017

Story by Carl Fritz

Bill started trail maintenance by being a member of a maintenance team for Deep Gap to Iron Mountain Gap in 1980 and became team leader in 1984. He diligently section hiked the entire A.T., summing Katahdin in September 2016. Thus, Bill developed a personal perspective on trail needs. Among the maintainers, he is known as “MacGyver” because of his resourcefulness and rigging capabilities, whether it is a tree, rock, or bridge beam we desire to move. When a rope puller is not functioning sufficiently, he takes it home, rigs up a dynamometer, tests different rope designs, and donates the proper rope. Or Bill finds scrapped grating, that he purchases, to make our bridges slip resistant. Or he recommends a fiddle block (pulley) and rope system that we use regularly to move rocks and logs. TEHCC is proud that Bill is our 2017 Maintainer of the Year.

Note: Bill was not at the Spring Dinner to receive his plaque. He is also a passionate sailor. Bill and his wife, Adair, are currently on their eleventh consecutive five-month sail in the Bahamas.



Trevor Lee, TEHCC Paddler of the Year 2017

Story by Andy Steffan



Trevor had been rafting and kayaking for several years, but started to slowly drift away from the sport. In 2017, he made new connections within the Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts (APEs) club, which rejuvenated his passion for the sport. Longing to increase his skills and enhance the strength of his paddling team, Trevor attended paddling clinics: Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency (TWRA) and ACA Swift Water Rescue - basic and advanced courses. Early in 2017, Trevor began leveraging his skills and passion for whitewater, helping to provide instruction to up and coming paddlers. He was often found at the pool one or two times a week providing ROLL instruction in addition to frequently inviting and leading paddlers down beginner whitewater runs. Trevor also helps mentor his wife (Leshand) and daughter (Treasure). Recognizing that river cleanups play an important role in the preservation of our water streams, Trevor participated in and led multiple cleanups this year and is now serving as the APEs Conservation Officer.

TEHCC/APEs congratulate Trevor as our 2017 Paddler of the Year.

TEHCC Rental Equipment – HB-35, Granite Gear Escape AC60

Submitted by Chris Chambers – Rental Equipment Coordinator

Back at the Fall 2015 dinner meeting, Kim Peters brought a new backpack which had been donated to the club. While the Escape model appears to have been discontinued by Granite Gear (closeout price of \$162), this women's medium size pack is a great addition to the rental pool. The vendor described it as *an ultralight top loader with a floating lid, bottle holsters and a mammoth stretch woven pocket. New Air Current Frame (A.C.) features adjustable torso length and allows air-flow through engineering channels.*

Specifications are 3 lbs, 2 oz weight with 60L/3660 cubic inch capacity carrying up to 35 pounds.

The medium hip belt and shoulder straps fit an 18-22” torso. The adjustment for torso length is made by unhooking the shoulder strap from one slot and hooking it into another slot. Reportedly easier said than done without instructions.



Rails-to-Trails Trail

Submitted by Bill Tindall



Progress is being made on the Rails-to-Trails hike/bike trail from Bristol to Mendota. The first section is now open on the Mendota end and the 5-mile section on the Bristol end will open soon. This trail will equal the Creeper Trail in scenic attraction. An all-volunteer group is accomplishing the work and rounding up financial support.

There are two possibilities for crossing the Holston River on the Mendota end: The rail trestle and a state maintained suspension bridge. Upgrading the rail trestle is going to take a lot of money; so for now, the crossing will be on the suspension bridge. To be able to use the suspension bridge, a short section of connector trail needs to be built from the rail bed to the south end of the suspension bridge. On February 8, Carl Fritz joined Bob Muller, Judy Tindall, and Bill Tindall to lay out the trail route and dig a demonstration section as an example for future trail volunteers of how the trail should be dug.

At a future date, volunteers will be solicited to dig the rest of the trail. If you would like to help develop the Mendota Rails to Trails Project either through labor or financial donation, contact Bill Tindall at 423-357-4850 or bjtindall@mindpspring.com.

TEHCC Welcomes New Members

No new members

Event Schedule – Next Two Months

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

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

Date	Description	Contact	Telephone
March 13	Steering Committee Meeting, 11:30 am	William Werner	423-229-2253
March 16	Rental Equipment Inspection, 11 am – 2 pm	Chris Chambers	423-707-5359
March 17	3 rd Saturday, Hiking with Tools!	Kim Peters	423-336-0128
March 17	4 th Annual Watauga River Cleanup	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
April 26-30	5-Day Florida Paddle/Camp, Location: TBD	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
April 10	Steering Committee Meeting, 11:30 am	William Werner	423-229-2253
April 21	3 rd Saturday, Hiking with Tools!	Kim Peters	423-336-0128
April 28	Invasive Species Removal	Greg Kramer	

Details of Upcoming Events

Recurring Events

TEHCC Steering Committee Meeting - Usually every second Tuesday of the month, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Contact: [William Werner](#), 423-229-2253

Location: Eastman Chemical Company, Kingsport, TN; Bldg 280 Cafeteria

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-280 cafeteria. After going through the turnstiles at the main B-280 entrance, continue straight then right. Continue straight and turn left and through the hall by the vending machines. The cafeteria is directly ahead. 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](#), 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 133.8-mile section each week, usually on Thursdays.

Thursday Evenings: Kayak Session, Kingsport Aquatic Center, 7 – 9 pm

Contact: [Ryan Shealy](#), 423-963-6066

Interested in kayaking but don't know where to start? Basic kayak training and practice is available in Kingsport on Thursdays at the [Kingsport Aquatic Center](#)! Admission is \$3 for two full hours of fun; Aquatic Center members may attend free! If you have equipment, you may drop it off at the door closest to the indoor pool; then enter the main door to pay at the front desk. The pool does not provide paddling equipment, but if you are just starting out and do not have your own gear, please contact Ryan Shealy (423-963-6066). For additional event details, click [here](#).

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 or shelters. All tools will be furnished and no prior experience required! We typically have four to five people on each trip. The more folks who show up, the less work each individual has to do... so the trip becomes a nice hike - with tools! Contact Kim Peters (atmaint@tehcc.org) for hike details, including meeting time and place.

Scheduled Events

Rental Equipment Inspection, Friday, March 16, 2018, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm

Contact: [Chris Chambers](#), 423-707-5359

Location: Eastman Employee Center, Rm. 214 and Lobby. It's time to ensure the Club's rental gear is ready for another year. We will evaluate all the equipment and propose necessary repairs or replacements. 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. A light lunch will be provided. Contact: Chris Chambers, 423-707-5359 or rental@tehcc.org.

3rd Saturday, Hiking with Tools!, Saturday, March 17, 2018, 8:30 am

Contact: [Kim Peters](#), 423-336-0128

It won't officially be spring yet for this first 3rd Saturday trip of 2018, but the weather is warming and it certainly feels springlike, so we will plan on going out. For this trip, we will work on the 3.2-mile section of trail between Bitter End and Walnut Mountain Road. The primary task will be lopping back encroaching vegetation, mostly rhododendron. If the weather continues to stay warm, we may even get the blazes painted.

All necessary tools will be provided by the club; participants need only to bring work gloves and food and water for the day. We will meet in the parking lot in front of the Parkway Discount Wine and Liquor Store on South Roan Street in Johnson City at 8:30 am and carpool to the trail-head. Other meeting places can be arranged given prior notice.

Please let Kim know if you plan to attend and where you would like to meet by Wednesday, March 14, so Kim can have enough tools available for everyone.

4th Annual Watauga River Cleanup, Saturday, March 17, 2018, 8:30 am – 3:00 pm

Contact: [Debbie Briscoe](#), 423-534-3636, ldcakes@hotmail.com

Those participating in the river cleanup will meet in the Ingles parking lot, 768 W Elk Ave, Elizabethton. Participants may float, wade or walk. Gloves and trash bags will be provided. A post-event celebration at 3:00 pm will include free food and a participation raffle held at the Watauga River Lodge.

We need canoes! Please call Debbie Briscoe if you are coming and bringing a canoe. Tandem canoes are best so two paddlers can be in a boat and have room for what they pick up. Kayaks should be very large or sit-on-tops.

Invasive Species Removal, Saturday, April 28, 2018

Contact: [Greg Kramer](#)

Many plants imported to the US can outcompete native species and these plants are called invasive species. One invasive plant that is still being propagated in the US is the Autumn or Russian Olive. On April 28, TEHCC will be removing Autumn Olive as well as picking Garlic Mustard. Invasive species spread by a variety of methods. Garlic Mustard seeds attach themselves to clothes and animal fur, which are picked up in one place and dropped in another. Russian Olive was imported as a large shrub which can provide food and cover for birds. As birds travel the Atlantic flyway, they deposit seeds from Autumn Olive plants along the flyway corridor, which includes the Appalachian Trail.



We will be cutting Autumn Olive plants and painting their stems with herbicide to keep the plant from growing back from its roots.

There are only three Garlic Mustard Challenge days this year because two of the five sites have too little Garlic Mustard to pick. If you can come this year, maybe we won't have to pick next year.

For the Record

Annual Maintainer's Dinner, February 23, 2018

Kim Peters reporting

The kickoff meeting for the 2018 A.T. maintenance season was held on Friday, February 23 at the Eastman Lodge. It was well attended by 42 past, present and future Appalachian Trail maintainers.

The dinner, once again graciously prepared by Ed Oliver with help from Ted Mowrey, featured barbecue from Phil's Dream Pit, coleslaw, pasta salad and baked beans with banana pudding and brownies for desert along with tea and lemonade. What a bargain for only \$5! Many thanks to Ed and his helpers.

After the meal, we reviewed our 2017 major accomplishments, our 2018 major project plans, discussed issues related to our club's trail maintaining responsibilities, and handed out awards.

Summary of our 2017 Major Maintenance Accomplishments

- Maintained 134 miles of the A.T. and 2 miles of side-trails
- Built 0.5 miles of new trail completing two multi-year relocations of the Backbone Rock trail and on Old Ridge Road
- Rehabbed 1.5 miles of trail on 13 trail sections
- Built bridges at Shook Branch and Wilder Mine just south of 19E
- Restored and painted four of our shelters

347 volunteers contributed 11,586 hours to achieve these accomplishments, all without any serious injuries!

Cumulative Hour Award Recipients

- 14000 Career Hours: Carl Fritz
- 2000 Career Hours: Richard Carter and Jim ("Just Jim") Chambers
- 1500 Career Hours: John ("Bodacious") Beaudet and Bill Murdoch
- 1000 Career Hours: Vic Hasler and Kevin Sedgwick
- 500 Career Hours: Dan Firth and Kat Johnson
- 250 Career Hours: Bruce Darby and Eric Middlemas
- 100 Career Hours: David Douthat, Lori Mirrer, and Connie Squires
- 50 Career Hours: Adam Baird, Jennifer Baird, Carl Belcher, Patience Perry, and Gloria Sedgwick

It takes an incredible amount of work to maintain 134 miles of the A.T.; and it could not be done without our many incredible volunteers. Many thanks to all the volunteers who signed up to maintain a section of our trail in 2018. These are the people who clear the blowdowns, clean water diversions, cut the weeds, paint the blazes, maintain the shelters and do all the other tasks required to keep our trail section open:

Mike Price, Steve Wilson, Phyllis Cairnes, Mike Watts, Ken Buchanan, Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery, Terry Oldfield, Kat Johnson, Kim Peters, Scotty Bowman, Joe Morris, Dean Baird, Bob Peoples, Pat and Karen Loven, Tim Stewart, Gerald Scott, Kayla Carter, Kevin Sedgwick, Gayle Riddervold, Becky Kinder, Lynn DiFiore, Richard Carter, Joe DeLoach, Jim Foster, John Beaudet, Vic Hasler, Craig Haire, Ken and Lotta Murray, Steve Perri, Eric Middlemas and members of The Old Timers Hiking Club, and the Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards.



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Reporting: Bill Hodge with SAWS (Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards)

Date: 2017

Purpose: Trail Maintenance

Location: Sections 6 and 7, Iron Mountain Shelter to Wilbur Dam Road

People: Scotty Bowman, Gergo Gyorgyi-Ambro, Bill Hodge

Summary: Scotty and Gergo spent multiple trips working on the sections between Iron Mountain Shelter and Wilbur Dam Road. They also led a crew of SCA (Student Conservation Association) students doing work.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 1/26/2018

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Sections 4a and 4b, TN 91 to US 421

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed hiked from TN 91 to US 421 removing branches and minor blowdowns with his handsaw. He encountered Kim Peters and Terry Oldfield on their trip to clean Double Springs Shelter. The only blowdown left is 2/3 mile south of US 421. It is a maple with two prongs and largest is 10".

Reporting: Jim Chambers

Date: 1/30/2018

Purpose: TEHCC Outreach

Location: Southern Ruck, Wesser, NC and Northern Ruck, Bluemont, VA

People: Jim Chambers

Summary: I built a TEHCC Outreach Information Booth and deployed information materials at the Southern Ruck in North Carolina, and the Northern Ruck in Northern Virginia. TEHCC was heavily promoted at these two 2-day events; many contacts were made in terms of recruitment for TEHCC. The next event will be in Georgia beginning March 2nd.

Reporting: Jim Chambers

Date: 1/31/2018

Purpose:

Location: Roan Mountain, TN

People: Jim Chambers

Summary: I conducted monthly maintenance on TEHCC chainsaws. I also updated and prepared TEHCC chainsaw training and operations reports.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/1/2018

Purpose: Rehab trail and remove blowdowns

Location: Section 19b, Curley Maple Gap Shelter to Nolichucky River

People: John Beaudet, Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Jim Foster, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Tim Stewart, George Thorpe, Alan Liggett, David Callison "Giggles"

Summary: The Thursday Crew was very glad to get out for the first time this year. We removed all problem blowdowns. Most were dead trees between the outfitter and Chestoa. We discovered that a couple of blowdowns north of the shelter had already been removed. We rock cribbed and filled the hole north of the railroad. Also, we built a fine set of steps at Chestoa trailhead. We rock cribbed a section of trail on the switchbacks south of the shelter.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 2/3/2018

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 3a and 3b, McQueen's Gap to US 421

People: Greg Kramer, Alan Liggett

Summary: We cleared three major blowdowns and five smaller downed trees between Low Gap and McQueen's Gap. The first



blowdown was at Low Gap and we removed newly fallen trees and limbs intermittently. The largest blowdown was past the spring. We cut a 2 1/2 foot gap in the tree trunk so the trunk and root ball can be walked around on the trail. All other blowdowns were easily cleared from the trail. Saturday was a wonderful day for a hike.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/6/2018

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 12c, Sugar Hollow Creek to Campbell Hollow Road + 0.3 mile North of Sugar Hollow

People: Jim Foster, Carl Fritz

Summary: We hiked Campbell Hollow Rd to 0.3 mile north of Sugar Hollow Creek. We primarily prepared to repair the section of trail north of Jones Falls that was ripped out by a large tree rootball. We cut some needed locust logs and trimmed back rhododendron. We also cut out a dozen blowdowns and tangles. Most were in the 6 to 8 inch category, but one was 24 inches. Roads and trail both looked like they would not have been safe to be on a day earlier.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/7/2018

Purpose: Roan Mountain Hard Core Planning

Location: Elizabethton

People: Jim Chambers, Carl Fritz, Bob Peoples

Summary: Jim, Bob and Carl discussed the potential plans and difficulties for Roan Mountain Hard Core on May 5th. The next major step is to develop detailed plans in the field. Also, the ALDHA (Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association) is building the capability to assist many of the A.T. clubs with major projects. More information will be coming.

Reporting: Gayle Riddervold

Date: 2/9/2018

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

Location: Section 8, US 321 to Wilbur Dam Road

People: Gayle Riddervold, Becky Kinder

Summary: This was our first trip to access our newly adopted trail. We picked up all the trash at the Shook Branch Parking Lot as well as on the embankment along the trail. A small blowdown was cut and removed and a few thorny briars were also cut down. We did not quite make it up to the shelter on this trip. Our clean up produced 8 small plastic grocery bags of trash. The day hikers and joggers we met along the trail today were thankful to see the garbage gone and expressed their appreciation.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/9/2018

Purpose: Rehab trail

Location: Section 19b, From Outfitter to half mile south of Curly Maple Gap Shelter

People: John Beaudet, Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Jimmy Mills, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart

Summary: On one of the best weather days this winter, we rehabbed more trail. About a third of a mile south of the outfitter, we reset a locust side log and placed a new huge rock as a step over for drainage. In the top area of switchbacks to the shelter, we built some rock cribbing and steps, filled over roots with crush and fill, and added soil.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 2/9/2018

Purpose: Trim back dog hobble along trail

Location: Section 19b, Curley Maple Gap Shelter to Nolichucky River, Between 1st and 3rd bridges

People: Vic Hasler

Summary: The regular maintenance crew commented that the dog hobble and rhododendron needed to be trimmed at the switchback. After a morning of back-to-back meetings, I got away for the sunny, dry afternoon – to see that the crew was also working on this section. Many thanks for the excellent tread improvements!

Starting at the first bridge north of the outfitter, I focused on clearing back the dog hobble with a swing blade and hand clippers to provide a couple feet of buffer on each side of the trail. Deadfall branches were tossed deeper into the forest. Steady progress was made until 5 pm, to a place somewhere between the second and third bridges. Current plans are to be back on Saturday 2/17 with more folks to head straight to the switchback.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/15/2018

Purpose: Install bog bridge

Location: Section 12a, Near Bitter End

People: Dean Baird, Paul Benfield, Carl Fritz, Bob Peoples, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart

Summary: We installed a 15-foot bog bridge among the other bog bridges in a low muddy spot where hikers had thrown some

rotten logs to walk on. We cut out some 6-inch dead roots to make the trail approach much better. It was great to enjoy some 70 degree temperatures in mid February. North bounders, Peanut Butter and Jelly, were the first to christen the bridge.



Unloading the bog bridge



Lunchtime



Ready for hikers

Reporting: Kim Peters

Date: 2/18/2018

Purpose: Install sign on shelter

Location: Section 12b, Mountaineer Falls Shelter

People: Kat Johnson, Kim Peters, John Beaudet

Summary: Mountaineer Falls Shelter was cleaned and painted last October. At that time the shelter sign was removed as it had been defaced. John Beaudet refurbished the sign and Kat and Kim hiked out to install it on the shelter. We picked up some trash at the shelter, which was still fairly clean (no graffiti except on the graffiti board!). We also finished clearing a problematic complex blowdown that even the dogs had trouble negotiating. There are a lot of downed limbs on the trail and we spent some time dragging them off. It was a great day to be out in the woods!



Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 2/18/2018

Purpose: Trim back dog hobble and rhododendron

Location: Section 19b, Curley Maple Gap Shelter to Nolichucky River, South of 3rd bridge to just north of 4rd bridge

People: Vic Hasler, Hal Yungmeyer

Summary: This work event was delayed by a day to avoid heavy rain showers. It started with Vic replacing the two yellow warning signs on both sides of the railroad crossing. Meanwhile, Hal watched the tools in the truck bed and used a trash picker to clean the Chestoa trailhead parking lot. In the afternoon, we continued to trim the dog hobble and rhododendron growth along the trail. We started heading north from the second runoff crossing north of the 2nd bridge. Hal became an expert on the dog hobble using a metal blade weed trimmer, while Vic lopped away at the rhododendron and other fallen branches. This teamwork continued until

dusk began to spread into the valley, and we had gotten just north of the 4th bridge. Yet another day will be needed to proceed directly to the switchback to address the reported heavy growth there.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 2/20/2018

Purpose: Install support on 2nd bridge and trim back dog hobble

Location: Section 19b, Curley Maple Gap Shelter to Nolichucky River, North of 4rd bridge to start of switchback

People: Vic Hasler

Summary: On a nice and warm (in upper 70s) afternoon, a third work session this year was spent on this trail section. The first task was to attached a railing support created by Carl Fritz to reinforce the north end of the 2nd bridge. The second mission was to start at the switchback and head south cutting back the growth. The regular maintenance crew had previously removed a blowdown tangle from the lower part of the first switchback on February 1st. (Many thanks!) I started there with the metal blade weed trimmer, but disappointedly observed it was less effective than desired on the dog hobble. I then cleared the hillside above the first 100' of trail along the switchback with a pair of hand clippers. I made another attempt to employ the trimmer on patches of dog hobble while returning south back towards the 4th bridge. My conclusion was a preference for the much lighter swing blade used on February 9th which slices through both dog hobble and small rhododendron growth – paired with loppers for the larger branches. While this combination can require a serious workout of shoulder muscles, faster progress can be made. Three small passable blowdowns remain in this bottomland section, including another small walk-under which fell since the prior Sunday-evening work session.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/20/2018

Purpose: Prepare locust logs for trail

Location: Birdhouse Cabin, for Section 15a, Carvers Gap to Cloudland Hotel

People: Carl Fritz, Alan Liggett, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Tim Stewart, George Thorpe Steve Wilson SAHC: Michelle Durr, Bettye Boone, Saylor Fox

Summary: We felled locust trees and debarked many for future structures. We saw a honey bee at 4700' on February 20th.

Reporting: Kim Peters

Date: 2/20/2018

Purpose: Check trail and shelter

Location: Section 5, TN 91 to Iron Mountain Shelter

People: Phyllis Cairnes, Kim Peters

Summary: We hiked out to the shelter to check it and the trail after the winter storms. What a great day to be outside! The trail was in relatively good shape. There were lots of small downed limbs and a half-dozen step-over blowdowns which were all locust! I cut a 6-inch knee-high with a Silky saw and decided that cutting locust was best left to chainsaws. Luckily most of the others were on the ground and easy to step over; except for one about knee high and 10 inches in the first section that should be taken out with a chainsaw. We dismantled three fire pits, one right on the trail, and picked up the trash left in them. At the shelter we picked up some more trash, cleaned out the fire pit, and checked out the water source. All is in good shape. We met two day hikers and one backpacker out enjoying this fine weather.

Reporting: John Beaudet

Date: 2/22/2018

Purpose: Brush trail

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

People: John Beaudet

Summary: We lopped rhododendrons for 4 hours straight; it almost killed me.

Reporting: Dan Firth

Date: 2/27/2018

Purpose: Clear blowdowns and water diversions

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

People: Dan Firth

Summary: I cleared two blowdowns and cleaned water diversions. The trail is clear. I also picked up trash, including two dead helium balloons, and picked up trash at the parking area.

Reporting: Bill Hodge

Date: 2/27/2018

Purpose: Routine Trail Maintenance

Location: Section 7, Wilbur Dam Road to North 2.5 miles

People: Bill Hodge. Gergo Gyorgyi-Ambro

Summary: We brushed the trail from Wilbur Dam Road to a point 2.5 north (just short of the spring). We refreshed all north and south-bound blazes, and removed one blowdown from the trail. We checked the signage inventory as well. Trail is in good shape.



Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/27/2018

Purpose: Prepare locust logs for trail

Location: Section 15a, Grassy Ridge

People: Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, George Thorpe; SAHC: Marquette Crockett, Michelle Durr, Saylor Fox

Summary: We completed getting most of the locusts on the ground. We continued the preparation of logs by cutting to length, debarking and moving to a pickup site.

What a crew!!

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 2/27/2018

Purpose: Cut blowdowns and check the trail

Location: Section 16a, Greasy Creek Gap to Little Rock Knob

People: Jim Foster

Summary: Besides cutting blowdowns, I delivered the new registers to the shelter and repaired the water source at Greasy Creek Gap.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 2/27/2018

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

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

People: Joe Morris, John Beaudet

Summary: We removed 7 blowdowns and cut 5 steps and stakes. The steps will be installed later in the spring near the Apple Orchard. We also cleaned waterbars around Weedy Gap.