



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

March 2019

tehcc.org

Editor – [Terry Oldfield](#)

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Machu Picchu

*Photo Credit:
Anna Stowe
Travel*



TEHCC Spring Dinner Meeting – Friday, March 15, 2019

Why is the TEHCC newsletter featuring a photo of Machu Picchu? The Inca Trail in Peru is consistently ranked as one of the top treks in the world. TEHCC's own Mike Watts will be speaking at the TEHCC Spring Dinner meeting about his recent experience on the Inca Trail. The trek concluded at Machu Picchu, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. He'll also share his excursion to a remote lowland rain forest of the westernmost Amazon Basin in Manu National Park, considered one of the earth's most biodiverse places.

The Steering Committee seems to favor BBQ and Mexican, so we're back to Barberitos again for the main meal. Cost will be \$10/person with the Steering Committee acquiring beverages and dessert. Attending just the program is free, however we'll need a paid headcount to properly size the food order, so please let Hal Yungmeyer know who is coming by **Monday, March 11**. Checks payable to Hal can be mailed to his attention at PO Box 511, Building 280, Kingsport, TN 37662-5280.

Event	Time	Details
Spring Dinner Meeting	5:30pm	Location: Eastman Lodge, Main Banquet Hall 404 Bays Mountain Road, Kingsport, TN
Happy "Trails" Hour	5:30pm-6:30pm	Donations accepted for beer and wine, or BYOB
Dinner – Barberitos taco and fajita bars plus tea/water, coffee and desserts	6:30pm-7:15pm	Barberitos fajita / taco bar. Beverages and dessert by the Steering Committee. (\$10.00 per person)
Club Business	7:15pm-7:30pm	- Update of club activities - Awards
Program: Inca Trail in Peru	7:30pm-9:00pm	Mike Watts (TEHCC club member)

Mount LeConte Lodge (Smoky Mountains), Sat-Sun, July 13-14, 2019

For several decades, TEHCC has organized a summer weekend trip to Mount LeConte Lodge in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park on the second Saturday in July. This lodge (elevation 6593 ft) can only be reached by hiking trails. Even supplies are brought in by llama train once a week. The hiking distance to the lodge is 5.5 to 7.8 miles one-way depending on the route. ***This year will be the last year that TEHCC will have priority for this reservation.*** The club has paid a total of \$666.09 for four reservations in a five-person cabin (double bunk beds and a single) which include supper on Saturday, overnight lodging, and breakfast on Sunday. The fifth spot can also be obtained. You can find out more about the Mount LeConte Lodge at www.lecontelodge.com.

For TEHCC members interested in this reservation, please contact Vic Hasler (atchair@tehcc.org) by the March 15th dinner meeting. Preference will be given to the first group of four with payment, followed by the Steering Committee arranging a group of four or five to share the cabin, using a lottery if necessary. Payment to the club will then be promptly required to secure the slot(s) to provide you with the appropriate lodge paperwork. This is a rare opportunity, as these reservations – and the entire wait list – are full for ALL Saturdays in 2019.

Stephen Eren, SORO Trail Facilities Manager

Submitted by Vic Hasler

ATC Trail Facilities Manager interacts with the maintaining clubs and agency partners to ensure a safe and enjoyable visitor experience on the Appalachian Trail. Stephen Eren has a very solid background for this role. Hailing from Durham, NC, he is BSA Eagle Scout. 2011 graduate of Virginia Tech with a Conservation and Recreation Management degree and minor in Forestry. USFS Wilderness Ranger intern in Sierra National Forest during college summers. After graduation, Stephen served as a Backcountry Ranger in TN and NC with Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS). 2014 NoBo thru-hike with a self-proclaimed prodigious homemade pack. Engaged with ATC's NextGen Advisory Council from its start. For past three years, back with SAWS as Lead Wilderness Ranger/Information Cabin Manager in Linville Gorge Wilderness. Stephen, in his words, is looking forward to providing value to as many heroic volunteers as he can.

On a personal note, Alex and Stephen were married at a farm venue in October 2018, bought a home in Arden, NC, and enjoy their two retired sled dogs Max and Panda.



New TEHCC Rental Equipment

Submitted by [Chris Chambers](#) – Rental Equipment Coordinator

Black Diamond Trail Pro Shock, HA-7

A new set of aluminum trekking poles has been added to the rental fleet. These were purchased new in December 2018 from Amazon. The Black Diamond Trail Pro Shock lightweight trekking poles were designed for four-season on-trail versatility. The unique feature of these poles is that shock absorbers are built into the grips, providing progressive four-stage shock absorption with smooth rebound control on even the most rugged trails. The dual-density grip and padded wrist strap provide secure and comfortable handling on any trail or terrain. Rental rate "D" (\$4 weekend, \$6 week-long) will be set for this item.



Foxelli Carbon Fiber Trekking Poles, HA-8

A unique piece of gear new for 2019 is a set of Foxelli Carbon Fiber trekking poles. These poles were purchased new from Amazon for \$60, which is a great deal for light-weight, cork-handled carbon fiber poles. The poles are 4-season and came with various tips and baskets that can be installed to make them suitable for any terrain. A handy carrying case was also included. Note: Please use these with care because carbon fiber is much more fragile than aluminum.

Rental rate "D" (\$4 weekend, \$6 week-long) will be set for this item.

Gregory Jade 53 Women's Backpack, HB-27

A new backpack has been added to the TEHCC rental fleet – the Gregory Jade 53 Women's Backpack. It was purchased new in December 2018 from Amazon. Weighing-in at 3lbs-9oz, this 53 liter (3,234 c.i.), internal frame backpack is ergonomically designed specifically for the female build. It is a Gregory women's size small, so it fits 16" to 18" torsos, with a hip belt that can be adjusted to fit 27" to 45" waists. The manufacturer recommends a maximum load of 40 lbs. An integral rain cover is included in case the weather turns bad, and the hydration pouch can be detached for use as a summit pack. This is a highly rated backpack that is rich in features. I'm excited that we can offer this piece of gear! Rental rate "A" (\$8 weekend, \$10 week-long) will be set for this pack.



TEHCC Welcomes New Members

Dave Volrath

Rick Harkins

Josiah Enns

Jay Dement

Renee Messina

Trevor Goodman

Noah Russ

Amanda Barnette

Anne Morris

Tirzah Lane

Event Schedule – Next Two Months

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

For additional information on APEs/TEHCC paddling events, see <http://regions.worldkayak.com/tri-cities/category/regional-events/> or <http://www.riverapes.org/calendar.html>

Date	Description	Contact	Telephone
March 14	Steering Committee Meeting, 11:30 am	William Werner	423-229-2253
March 15	TEHCC Spring Dinner Meeting, 5:30 pm	Hal Yungmeyer	Reservation to B280
March 16	3 rd Saturday, Hiking with Tools!	Kim Peters	423-336-0128
March 20	Creek Geeking Clinic, 6 pm – 8 pm	Wesley Bradley	
March 23	5th Annual Bill Beazell Watauga River Cleanup	Bill Watkins	
April 11	Steering Committee Meeting, 11:30 am	William Werner	423-229-2253
April 17 - 21	Suwannee River Paddle Trip	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
April 20	3 rd Saturday, Hiking with Tools!	Kim Peters	423-336-0128
April 27	Invasive Plants Removal, Devils Creek Gap, 8:30 am	Greg Kramer	423-349-6125

Details of Upcoming Events

Recurring Events

TEHCC Steering Committee Meeting - Now on the Second Thursday of the Month, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

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

Location: Eastman Chemical Company, Kingsport, TN; Bldg 75 Room 402

The Steering Committee guides the general program for the club. The Committee normally meets at lunchtime on the second Thursday of each month. Meetings are open to all TEHCC members. Bring your lunch or grab a bite at the B-75 cafeteria. 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

Creek Geeking Clinic, March 20, 2019, 6 pm – 8 pm

Contact: [Wesley Bradley](#)

This classroom based clinic, held in the ACFCU Community Room in Gray, TN, will serve as an introduction into the exciting world of creeking. Contact Wesley for additional information. Or check <http://www.riverapes.org/registration.html> to register.

5th Annual Bill Beazell Watauga River Cleanup, Saturday, March 23, 2019, 7:30 am – 2:00 pm

Contact: [Bill Watkins](#)

We will meet in the Ingles parking lot at 768 W Elk Ave, Elizabethton, TN 37643. Groups will be formed. Breakfast will be provided and work groups will disperse after breakfast. A cleanup celebration will be held from 3:30 - 7:30 pm. Contact Bill Watkins for additional information.

Suwannee River Multi-Day Paddle Trip, April 17 – 21, 2019

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

We will paddle the most beautiful and fun section of the river. There are many springs along the way and historic sites to explore, including a sunken ship. There are also swimming holes and places to snorkel, so bring your dive mask!

April 17 is a travel day. For the first night, we will camp at [Spirit of the Suwannee Music Park](#), 3076 95th Dr, Live Oak, FL.

April 18: The next morning at 9 am we will meet at Dowling Park Boat Ramp to load boats, set shuttle, then launch. We'll paddle 9.7 miles to Lafayette Blue Springs State Park (river mile 103.3) and spend the night there. Somewhat primitive camping is available here with plenty of trees and walk-in sites, but there are hand carts to get our gear to the sites. There are bathrooms but no showers.

April 19 we'll paddle 8.3 miles to [Peacock Slough River Camp](#) (river mile 95.8). We will be stopping at the Suwannee River Rendezvous along the river to eat lunch at a short order grill. They have ice cream!

April 20 we'll paddle 9.7 miles to Adams Tract River Camp (river mile 85.5), which has the same amenities as Peacock Slough.

April 21 we'll paddle 9.3 miles to the take-out in Branford at Ivey Memorial Park, 614 Ivey Memorial Park Dr, Branford, FL (river mile 76.0).

It's sunny Florida; bring sunscreen. Also a large brimmed hat is helpful. There are poisonous snakes, so watch where you step when you're close to shore and use your light at night when walking around. Cockpit covers are suggested to keep critters out of your boat overnight and bring bug spray. Have at least one bow or stern line on your boat. For more information, including meal plans and camp fees and amenities, see the trip description at <http://www.riverapes.org/calendar.html> or contact Debbie.

Invasive Plants Removal, Devils Creek Gap, Saturday, April 27, 2019, 8:30 am – 2:00 pm

Contact: Greg Kramer, 423-349-6125

TEHCC has been working in this location for the past four years to eradicate invasive plants which were imported to the U.S. but can out-compete native species. The first focus was on Garlic Mustard, imported to be a salad green, that readily spreads as the seeds attach to clothes and animal fur, and thus are dropped in new locations. The plants are easily pulled; however, the seed bed requires multiple annual treatments to exhaust. We'll remove any new plants that have emerged or were overlooked. The second objective, started last year, is chemical treatment of Autumn or Russian Olive, which is a large shrub imported to provide food and cover for birds. However, it crowds out native foliage. We will be cutting Autumn Olive and painting their stems with herbicide to keep the plants from growing back from their roots. Let's leave from Colonial Heights at 8:30 am to arrive at Devils Creek Gap by 9:30 am. Current plans are to work until 1 pm. Matt Drury is scouting out other nearby sites if we are quickly successful in knocking out both of these tasks in Devils Creek Gap. In case of inclement weather, a back-up date of Tuesday, April 30th has been selected.

For the Record

Nothing to report this month. See Maintenance Reports below.



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Reporting: Gayle Riddervold

Date: 1/27/2019

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 8, Wilbur Dam Road to US 321

People: Gayle Riddervold, Becky Kinder

Summary: There were two small blowdowns between the iron gate and the shelter that were cut and removed from the trail. A few other small trees that were hanging over the trail were cut back as well. We didn't see any trash on this section.

Reporting: Kayla Carter

Date: 1/27/2019

Purpose: Trail Maintenance

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

People: Kayla Carter, Ariel Seehorn

Summary: I enlisted the help of my friend Ariel Seehorn, who works for ETSU's Outdoor Adventure program. We started at Campbell Hollow Road and hiked the entire length of the section, out and back. We removed as many blowdowns by hand as we could. There are still three areas that are blocked by the blowdowns. These blowdowns are more easily accessed from Campbell Hollow and are before you get to Jones Falls. These blowdowns vary in size but none are more than 5 inches in diameter, so I can handle getting them down with a handsaw. I did not pack a hand saw this trip because it broke during the last outing, so I was unable to clear the smaller ones that day. This was mainly a reconnaissance mission to check on the condition and get a plan together for next time. I am making plans to buy a hand saw and go back out soon to dislodge the remaining blowdowns. However, if someone is really wanting to get after it with a chainsaw, just let me know.

Reporting: Steve Spinks

Date: 1/27/2019

Purpose: Walk through section

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

People: Steve Spinks, Craig Haire

Summary: We walked through Section 20a after heavy winds and cut back encroaching vegetation.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 2/1/2019

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

Location: Section 9a, US 321 to Pond Flats

People: Aaron Brown, Joe Morris

Summary: We removed blowdowns and tangles from both the north and south sides of Pond Mountain. The steps at the railroad grade on the south side need to be reworked and a few step-over blowdowns remain on the south side. Otherwise, the trail is in reasonable condition. It snowed a bit, which was better than a cold rain.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 2/2/2019

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Sections 1 and 2, McQueen's Gap to State Line

People: Greg Kramer, Dan Firth

Summary: McQueens Gap to VA/TN line had an incredible amount of blowdowns. We must have cut 50+ blowdowns from 4" to 16". We cleared all blowdowns that blocked the pathway. We left two blowdowns that are large but can be stepped over, because we were running out of daylight and fuel. One is north 1/2 mile from Backbone Rock and A.T. and the other south about a mile.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 2/2/2019

Purpose: Check ice flows

Location: Section 15a, Roan Mountain

People: Tim Stewart

Summary: After the shutdown, I wanted to check my section. Unfortunately I was denied access because of a locked gate at Bitter End. Instead I went to Carvers Gap and hiked South to Cloudland intending to scout out the ice flows. Several inches of snow covered most of the ice. The dangerous ice flow between the shelter and Cloudland was there but passable due to thin layer of snow. I did remove several blowdowns and some other debris from the trail.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 2/2/2019

Purpose: Clear blowdowns from December snowstorm

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

People: Aaron Brown, Carl Fritz, Vic Hasler, Alan Liggett, Joe Morris, Bob Peoples

Summary: With the federal government open and the weather predicted to be dry, the crew removed two blowdowns and a snag of a tree crown across the trail as reported by a Johnson City hiking group after the December heavy snow. The crew initially split into three pairs to more efficiently cover the full section. Some rhododendron growth was lopped while Bob cleared drainage features and filled in holes. Overall a nice hike with tools on a sunny February which reached 60°F by afternoon.

Notes: Curley Maple Gap Shelter was found to be in good condition. All blazes painted as two sets during 2016 and 2018 are in excellent shape. The five usual campsites along this section were observed in good condition. The only trash seen was where the trail passes near the end of the neighborhood road.

Reporting: Lotta Murray

Date: 2/2/2019

Purpose: Scout the seven miles of our section

Location: Section 20b, Temple Hill Gap to Spivey Gap

People: Lotta Murray, Peggy Cantrell

Summary: Our main purpose was to scout the entire seven miles for issues. We found several blowdowns, (approximately 20-25), encroaching rhododendron, and several broken and partial dead trees. Most can be cleared with a handsaw and clippers and lots of labor. Five trees will require a chainsaw. Only one large rhododendron required a side trail around it. The main problem is four very large trees down on a very steep slope with no safe way around them. The trees are about 20-30 inches in diameter and require a belly crawl to get around them. The shelter in good condition with minimal trash. We will need to bring a new logbook next trip out.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/3/2019

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 10, Hampton trailhead to Dennis Cove Road

People: Bob Peoples

Summary: Bob checked the entire A.T. and high water trail. He encountered 33 hikers and interacted with many. The high water trail needs a couple of side logs and some repairs at two streams. There were a number of broken rhododendron. But there were no large blowdowns. There are about three stable leaning trees that may need attention in the future. The water has been very high. Concreted trail just below the falls has been damaged and will be addressed soon. At the shelter, the hardware cloth beneath the sleeping platform has been cut significantly.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/4/2019

Purpose: Check potential trail rehab

Location: Section 5, TN 91 to Iron Mountain Shelter

People: Carl Fritz, Tim Stewart

Summary: It was a great day to be on trail; sunshine, no breeze and warming to 60. There was just a little snow on the trail at higher elevation. The December snow broke many limbs off the trees. We were able to pull them off using loppers or a small handsaw. Many limbs were four or five inches in diameter with many branches. The largest tree we had to cut was 6 inches. The shelter was in good shape with plenty of firewood available around it. A new shovel is needed since the handle is gone. There was no register nor rake. The graffiti board could stand another coat of paint to cover old graffiti. The Trail was in good shape. Our primary goal was to inspect the A.T. from the shelter down to the water source. It is becoming more eroded and there is little way to divert water. We were investigating it as a possible future Konnarock project. Maybe new trail can be built ten feet away and the existing A.T. can be the ditch.

Reporting: David Ramsey

Date: 2/5/2019

Purpose: Blowdowns, lopping, brushing

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

People: David Ramsey, Mark Ramsey

Summary: The main purpose of this trip was to remove blowdowns; we removed 7 of 10. The 3 remaining are single trunk step-overs, approximately 10-12 inches in diameter, which would be easier to manage with a chainsaw. All are within the first 2 miles from the Indian Grave Gap trailhead. We also lopped rhodos that had bent down over the trailway from the recent snow load and removed loose brush that had fallen onto the trail. Other issues that need to be addressed are:

—The washout near the first step-over log at roughly 1 mile in. This needs work at the top where it originates and at the intersection with the trail.

—The furniture lying 100 yards downhill from the previously-mentioned washout.

Reporting: Steve Wilson

Date: 2/7/2019

Purpose: Clean waterbars and cut briars

Location: Section 2b, Abingdon Gap Shelter to McQueen's Gap

People: Ted Malone, Steve Wilson

Summary: We cleared the waterbars and cut briars on this warm winter day. No blowdowns were found from McQueen's Gap to the Abingdon Gap Shelter. The blazes are in good shape. At Abingdon Gap Shelter we found that a bench on the picnic table needs repair; it has fallen due to a nail rusting away. One highlight of the trip was when we saw a bald eagle fly over while we were at the shelter.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

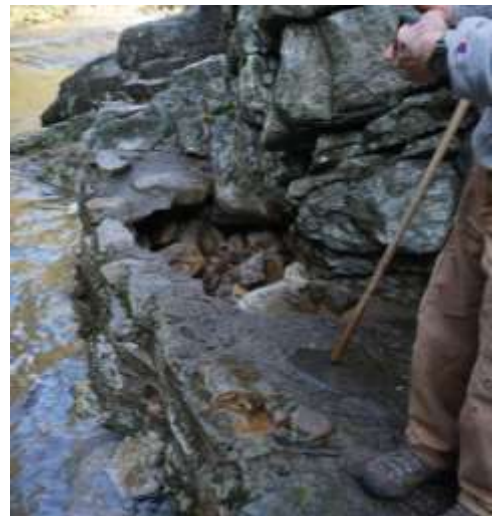
Date: 2/7/2019

Purpose: Rehab trail

Location: Section 10, Laurel Fork Falls and High Water Trail

People: Dean Baird, Paul Benfield, Jim Chambers, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart

Summary: It was in the 70s and sunny even in the Gorge. We installed a wood sign indicating Laurel Falls about 8 foot high on a tree. We may need a sign indicating the High Water Trail. Bob, Paul and Ted cut up a down locust to install three steps and a sidelog at one of the stream crossings on the High Water Trail. They also channeled the water. The rest of us hauled in 120 pounds of mortar mix, gathered 240 pounds of sand, plus a whole lot of rock, large and small. High water had gouged a large hole in the mortared trail around the cliff below the falls. The entire trail, except the outside wall, was gone for about three feet. The hole was about 16" deep after removing some loose rubble. We successfully rebuilt and resealed the trail.



Reporting: Ken Murray

Date: 2/7/2019

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 20b, Temple Hill Gap to Spivey Gap

People: Ken Murray, John Beaudet

Summary: We cleared approximately 3 miles of multiple minor blowdowns. A tangle of five large trees was found to be very difficult. We were able to clear only three at this time. We determined that the remaining two are too dangerous for us to remove. The root wads are too unstable and on a steep slope. They are difficult for hikers to get around.

Reporting: Ken Buchanan

Date: 2/8/2019

Purpose: Inspect and clear trail

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

People: Wayne Buchanan, Luke Floyd

Summary: Wayne enticed his own willing worker and I stayed home for this outing. He reported the fence at the edge of the woods has been cut at the stile. Water is running across and on the trail at places, but there is no serious damage. There is very little vegetation damage from recent heavy snow. A fair amount of trash is at the shelter, including the spiral binder from the burned log book. There is some washing under the shelter, but it's not serious. They did not meet any hikers.

Reporting: Dan Firth

Date: 2/9/2019

Purpose: Revise access point information

People: Dan Firth

Summary: As part of a project to document and map access points, knowledge currently stored in key peoples minds, access points used for maintenance purposes were updated for inclusion in the Local Management Plan.

Reporting: Phyllis Cairnes

Date: 2/9/2019

Purpose: Maintain shelter

Location: Sections 2b and 3, Low Gap to Abingdon Gap Shelter

People: Rolla Wade, Phyllis Cairnes

Summary: It was a good day to check on the shelter. En-route from Low Gap, we tossed recently fallen limbs from the trail, rolled or drug others, and lopped a few to make easier step-overs. At the shelter we first noticed the picnic table seating bench on one side was partially collapsed. The carriage bolts attaching the leg to the frame had corroded and broken. All the other bolts appear corroded and need to be replaced as well. The log book was missing; I need to take a new one. I also need to touch-up paint the walls and graffiti board when the temperature is warmer. I cleared a lot of piled kindling and limbs, some partially burned, which were too close to the shelter as well as doing other usual maintenance.

Reporting: Scotty Bowman

Date: 2/9/2019

Purpose: Check shelter and remove blowdowns

Location: Section 7, Vandeventer Shelter to Wilbur Dam Rd

People: Scotty Bowman

Summary: It was a very brisk Saturday to be out in Big Laurel Branch to check Vandeventer Shelter. The shelter is in good shape and clean, but I am sad to say that the graffiti board is gone. I searched around the area and did not find any sign of it. I also replaced the shelter journal, picked up a little bit of trash and moved several large logs off the trail in front of the shelter that someone had moved to burn. The spring trail was clear and the spring is flowing pretty good as is the spring at 3.3 miles from the road.

Along the way, I cleared four small blowdowns 10" and under with a pruning saw. I also cleared one large treetop located 0.5 miles north of the spring and cleared a multitude of smaller limbs and debris in the 5-mile stretch. I cut back about 100 ft of rhodo that had been pushed down over the trail by heavy snow. And here is the kicker - I hauled out a 35 lb trash bag that was strung up in a tree about 1.4 miles from Wilbur Dam Rd. It looked to be someone's bug-out stash. It had been there for some time and was filled with a wet, moldy sleeping bag, 4 foraging books, some clothes, and whole bunch of other stuff.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 2/9/2019

Purpose: Check section

Location: Section 11b, Bitter End to Hardcore Cascades

People: Tim Stewart

Summary: I was denied access last week because of the lack of a key; so this time I had the key. From Bitter End to Hardcore Cascades, I lopped back the unyielding rhodos. It took 3 hours to get to the Cascades where I noticed the sign was missing. A few of

the rocks used to cross the stream are also loose and will need some attention. It was slow going, but I cut back the rhodos pretty well. I also removed several blowdowns. Two step-overs remain.

Reporting: Joel Zabel and Jim Foster

Date: 2/9/2019

Purpose: Routine trail maintenance

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to FS230 switchback

People: Marianne Huff, Denny Samuel, Jeff Miller, Dana Miller, Ed Brading, Joel Zabel, Joy Zabel, Jim Foster

Summary: This was the first trip for the JC Hikers on our newly adopted section and it went very well. We had 8 hardy souls turn out on a cold but otherwise beautiful day. With handsaws and strong backs, we were able to clear the trail of about 15 small blowdowns and many branches. We picked up trash and checked the shelter and water source. All in all it was a very successful first trip.

Reporting: Dan Firth

Date: 2/10/2019

Purpose: Manufacture wood bucking wedges

People: Dan Firth

Summary: I cut 38 wood wedges from locust log blanks for use with narrow blade saws, such as the Silky Big Boy and Katanaboy saws.

Reporting: Dan Firth

Date: 2/10/2019

Purpose: Maintain Section

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

People: Dan Firth

Summary: I cleared the section of numerous blowdowns.

Reporting: Jim Chambers (SAWC)

Date: 2/10/2019

Purpose: Remove blowdowns, 2019 Trail Prep

Location: Section 13, Apple House to Doll Flats

People: Jim Chambers, Connie Squires

Summary: We removed all blowdowns and obstructions south of the Apple House Shelter site to just south of Doll Flats. We will return in the coming days to finish to the top of Hump Mountain.

Reporting: Steve Wilson

Date: 2/13/2019

Purpose: Fix picnic table and cut briars

Location: Section 2b, Abingdon Gap Shelter

People: Ted Malone, Steve Wilson

Summary: We hiked into the shelter with various tools (cordless drill, hammer, etc.) to repair the picnic table. Twelve 5/16" x 3-1/2" carriage bolts were installed in the supports to replace the previous carriage bolts and nails that were failing due to rust. The table is now solid and should last a few more years. One blowdown was found and removed. The highlight of the trip was the ice icicles hanging from the trees due to the freezing weather.

Reporting: Kevin Sedgwick

Date: 2/13/2019

Purpose: Check condition of trail

Location: Section 12d, Campbell Hollow Road to US 19E

People: Kevin Sedgwick, Gloria Sedgwick

Summary: We finally got out to check the trail after the government shutdown. Gloria shuttled me and assisted for awhile. We found lots of dead fall; limbs here, limbs there, limbs everywhere. I cut back lots of low hanging rhododendron, broke up one campsite, and hand-sawed so many small trees and limbs that I lost count. In a few spots, the tops of dead trees fell on rhododendron closing off the trail. I'm not sure how hikers got by. I took advantage of dormant roses and briars to cut them back even farther from the trail before spring. I took note of a number of trees that will require a chainsaw. I also checked on the report of unapproved signage that was put up, and checked on the report of trash near the roadway. It looks like household trash that has ended up in the creek.

Reporting: Lotta Murray

Date: 2/14/2019

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 20b, Temple Hill Gap to Spivey Gap

People: Lotta Murray, Peggy Cantrell

Summary: We removed multiple smaller blowdowns using the Silky saw and loppers. We cleared one large rhododendron that was diverting hikers off the trail. We also removed lots of dead pine branches from the trail, some quite large; and cut back lots of rhododendron that were being pushed into the trail.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/14/2019

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 20b, Temple Hill Gap to Spivey Gap, About 3/4 mile South of No Business Knob Shelter

People: John Beaudet, Richard Carter, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Elzear Lemieux, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Ken Murray, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart

Summary: We spent the day controlling two large blowdowns that were obstacles. They were in the same area and a third tree was right at the upper edge of the trail. All three had huge root balls that threatened to come down. We rigged the root balls while cutting. We had to leave one tree trunk in the center of the trail to hold the root ball. But we were able to make an opening that hikers can easily pass through. Some trail rehab was done in the area.



Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 2/16/2019

Purpose: Check section

Location: Section 11b, Moreland Gap Shelter to Hardcore Cascades

People: Tim Stewart

Summary: I went in via Moreland Gap Shelter access trail. The water source looked good, as did the shelter. After applying the first coat of paint on the graffiti board, I hiked out to Hardcore Cascades, lopping rhodos and removing several blowdowns along the way. I finally made it to the cascades where I found the missing sign on the wrong side of the stream. I will need to resecure to a tree. I also noticed the loose rocks were looser than previously noted. I wrapped some pink ribbon around one to hopefully inform hikers to be careful as they cross. Upon return to the shelter, I applied a second coat of paint to graffiti board. I also picked up some trash and cleaned the fire pit of extra ash.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/18/2019

Purpose: Explore Trail possibilities

Location: Section 9a, US 321 to Atwood property

People: Paul Benfield, Carl Fritz, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart

Summary: We explored some possible trail options on the Atwood property. We may have found a better road on the property to access Shook Branch Road. This road is not as steep as the TVA road and has not seen traffic for years.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/19/2019

Purpose: Explore possible A.T. reroute on Atwood Property

Location: Section 9a, US 321 to Atwood Property

People: Carl Fritz

Summary: I inspected the Atwood property and documented some of the features, including some of the existing roads. It appears that we can get trail down to the cemeteries fairly easily. There are also a number of nice dry campsites.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 2/19/2019

Purpose: Check trail and clean water bars

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

People: Jim Foster

Summary: The trail was about as bad as I've seen it with blowdowns and limbs everywhere; just too much work to get further than the shelter. There are 7 blowdowns that will require a chainsaw. Fortunately, none are totally blocking the trail. I plan on checking and cleaning the remainder hopefully in the next couple weeks.

Reporting: Ken Murray

Date: 2/19/2019

Purpose: Remove blowdown

Location: Section 20b, Temple Hill Gap to Spivey Gap, Trail south of FS 278

People: Ken Murray, John Beaudet

Summary: We had to cut our way in on FS Rd 278, then removed a 15-inch blowdown from the trail.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/24/2019

Purpose: Close trail around lake

Location: Section 8, Shook Branch to Oliver Hollow Road

People: Bob Peoples

Summary: Watauga Lake is above the bridge at Butler Road. Right now the level is just beneath the stringers on the Shook Branch Bridge. But the water level still seems to be rising. Bob closed the A.T. and rerouted on the blue-blaze trail using US 321 and Oliver Hollow Road.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/24/2019

Purpose: Close trail at falls

Location: Section 10, Hampton trailhead to Dennis Cove Road, Laurel Fork Falls

People: Bob Peoples

Summary: Laurel Fork is whitewater and has covered the trail around the cliff just below the falls. Bob has posted closure notices and rerouted on the High Water blue-blaze trail. He also posted a warning at Hampton.