



# The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

May 2019

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

Editor – [Terry Oldfield](#)

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*The April 17<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Crew having lunch on Hump Mtn*

## Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy Recognizes Maintainers

*Article created by Vic Hasler*

At this year's Appalachian Spring Conservation Celebration on Thursday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, SAHC will recognize the Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club with their 2019 Stanley A. Murray Award for Volunteer Service. This honor was created for outstanding volunteer contributions to the work of SAHC emulating the lifelong dedication of their founder, Stanley A. Murray... who also was an excellent leader for the ATC and TEHCC.

"This year, we honor the Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club for its extraordinary volunteer help in 2018, managing Golden-winged Warbler habitat," said Marquette Crockett, SAHC's Roan Stewardship Director. "TEHCC members made numerous trips to open up 2.5 acres of new habitat for Golden-winged Warblers. They donated fuel, equipment, and more than 383 hours cutting locusts, then spent another 403 hours de-barking and transporting the locust to be used in repairing sections of the Appalachian Trail across the Roan Highlands. In addition, several members of the club participated in trail planning and building on SAHC's Elk Hollow preserve. We appreciate their commitment and dedication to the Roan."

Appalachian Spring Conservation Celebration will be held on May 16<sup>th</sup> with pre-activities starting at 3 p.m., then the main evening event from 5 to 8 p.m. at USA Raft in Erwin, Tennessee. SAHC is offering discounted tickets for all TEHCC members who come out and enjoy the day. Discounted tickets are \$25 each and cover the early free USA water sports activities, BBQ dinner (with veg options), drinks, and music by ETSU Old-Time Ramblers. Purchase these tickets online ([link](#)) by selecting Americorps/Student and entering TEHCC member in the notes. Spouses and families will need to pay full price. Buying in advance is much cheaper than at the door. **The cutoff for online reservations is May 13<sup>th</sup>** to provide an accurate meal count to the caterers.



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## 2018/19 Paddler of the Year: Shelly Richard

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*Submitted by Andy Steffan*

Shelly Richard was born and raised in Michigan. After graduating from Eastern Michigan University, Shelly and her husband moved to TN. For years, Shelly enjoyed lake kayaking during her free time. Soon after her children left for college, Shelly wanted something more challenging. So, 3 years ago, Shelly enrolled in a beginner white water kayaking course with the Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts (APEs). She was immediately hooked! Shelly learned to roll in the safety of a swimming pool. Wanting to share the excitement of kayaking, Shelly got involved organizing pool sessions at Kingsport Aquatic Center (KAC) for fellow kayakers. Shelly enjoys helping others during weekly roll practice. "It's awesome to see the look on a kayaker's face when they roll their boat for the first time." Shelly continues to help others in the pool and on the river.



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## Call for Volunteers for FunFest Moonlight Hike

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*Submitted by: Jonathan Shumaker*

Since before 1993, TEHCC has been co-sponsoring the Kingsport FunFest Moonlight Hike at Bays Mountain Park. The hike itself kicks off at the dam near the visitors' center. Bring your own flashlight/headlamp (and spare batteries), water, insect repellent, and a charged cell phone. We'll start at the front of the walkers, and then be assigned specific intersections to direct the traffic along the right path. Overall, TEHCC needs to cover roughly a dozen places with one or two people each. If you are interested in volunteering or getting more information let Jonathan know! He can be contacted at [jonathanshumaker@eastman.com](mailto:jonathanshumaker@eastman.com) or 423-229-1996.

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## TEHCC Welcomes New Members

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William Harris  
Colby Sundgren

Thomas Harris  
Todd Scarborough

J Ketron

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## Event Schedule – Next Two Months

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For the latest, up-to-date information, see [tehcc.org/schedule](http://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
May 9	Steering Committee Meeting, 11:30 am	<a href="#">William Werner</a>	423-229-2253
May 11	Doe River Cleanup	<a href="#">Andy Steffan</a>	
May 16	Appalachian Spring Conservation Celebration	(see article, p 1)	<a href="#">(link to register)</a>
May 18	3 <sup>rd</sup> Saturday, Hiking with Tools!	<a href="#">Kim Peters</a>	423-336-0128
May 18 – 19	APEs Summer Kickoff, Featuring Paddle School	<a href="#">Steven Adams</a>	
June 7 - 9	Hootennany Hang & Paddle Weekend	<a href="#">Debbie Briscoe</a>	423-534-3636
June 13	Steering Committee Meeting, 11:30 am	<a href="#">William Werner</a>	423-229-2253
June 15	Lower Watauga River (Class I-II)	<a href="#">Debbie Briscoe</a>	423-534-3636
June 22	Nolichucky River Cleanup	<a href="#">Andy Steffan</a>	

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## Details of Upcoming Events

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### Recurring Events

#### **TEHCC Steering Committee Meeting - On the Second Thursday of the Month, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm**

Contact: [William Werner, 423-229-2253](mailto:William.Werner@tehcc.org)

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](mailto:Wesley.R.Bradley@tehcc.org)

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. 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@tehcc.org). 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. 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.

#### **Most Thursdays: Weekly A.T. Trail Maintenance**

Contact: [Carl Fritz, 423-477-4669, atvolunteer@tehcc.org](mailto:Carl.Fritz@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](mailto:Ryan.Shealy@tehcc.org)

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](mailto:Kim.Peters@tehcc.org)

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](mailto:atmaint@tehcc.org)) for hike details, including meeting time and place.

#### **Biweekly on Saturdays, Lower Watauga, Class I-II, 3 pm, Beginning June 15, 2019**

Leader: [Debbie Briscoe, 423-534-3636](mailto:Debbie.Briscoe@tehcc.org)

We will launch from Riverside Park in Elizabethton behind the Ballpark at 3 pm unless there is water elsewhere. Call first to check and see if it's on! We stop for a break about halfway down the river, so don't forget your snacks. We are usually off the water by 7:00 pm or so. After we get back to the park and transfer boats back to our vehicles, we can go to dinner in town. Please be prepared for cold water and wear appropriate gear.

Directions: From W Elk Ave in Elizabethton Turn at the Rite-Aid onto West Mill Street, take the first street on Left onto Ash Street, follow that street to the end and you will see the river, turn left and pull into the small paved parking area near a covered picnic area. Look for boats! Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/HVXN7MAaDBw>

### Scheduled Events

#### **Doe River Cleanup, Saturday, May 11, 2019, 9:00 am**

With summer right around the corner, and everyone starting to get out and play, we are having a massive Doe River Cleanup. Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts (APEs), Overmountain Chapter Trout Unlimited, and NeTREP's AmeriCorps member, Erica, have partnered to bring you a fun cleanup day along the Doe on Saturday, May 11th from 9-12 pm. The cleanup will focus on two

different areas of the River, the Upper Doe and the Lower Doe, to give everyone a chance to join in on the event. Overmountain Trout Unlimited will lead volunteers along the Doe River Fishing Trail (DRiFT) section of the Upper Doe (Happy Trails Parking area to Bear Cage Rd). Volunteers should meet at **Roan Mountain Community Park** at 9 am to determine placement. APEs will lead volunteers along the Lower Doe section (Green Bridge Landing to the Covered Bridge). Volunteers should meet at **Green Bridge Landing** at 9 am to determine placement. Both locations will have trash bags and gloves on site for volunteers, but feel free to bring your own gloves if you would like. Also, be sure to bring plenty of water and wear appropriate clothing (long pants, sturdy shoes). At 12 pm after the cleanup, we invite our volunteers to meet us back at Roan Mountain Community Park for a wood-fired pizza lunch to thank you for your hard work! We welcome all to join us, so please come out to help us keep the Doe River beautiful!

### **3rd Saturday Hiking with Tools, May 18, 2019**

*Contact: Kim Peters, [atmaint@tehcc.org](mailto:atmaint@tehcc.org), 423-366-0128*

They say that the third time's a charm. We have had two aborted attempts at painting Curly Maple Gap shelter, once due to a hurricane and once due to the government shutdown. So this month it is time for the third try. Curly Maple Gap shelter was rebuilt in 2010 and as such is one of our newer shelters. However, over the years, it has collected an abundance of graffiti which is quite unsightly. So the goal for this month's trip will be to paint the interior of the shelter and cover up all the graffiti.

For those folks who may not wish to climb around inside a shelter and get paint on themselves, there will also be an opportunity to do actual trail work. There are a few places between Indian Grave Gap and the shelter that need some rehabbing and we hope to address that also.

All materials and tools will be provided. Volunteers need to bring food and water sufficient for the day and wear weather appropriate clothing (if you are painting, you might consider paint friendly clothing). Work gloves are also recommended as well as long pants and sturdy walking shoes.

We will meet in front of the Parkway Discount Wine and Liquor Store on South Roan Street in Johnson City at 8:30 am to carpool to the trailhead. Other meeting places can be arranged with prior notice. Please let me know by Wednesday May 15 if you plan to participate and where you want to meet.

### **Summer Kickoff, Featuring Paddle School, May 18 - 19, 2019**

*Contact: [Steven Adams](#)*

This is a two day event May 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> at USA Raft in Erwin, TN. We are offering Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced white-water classes to help you learn or refine your skills under certified instructors in a safe environment. We also offer a chance for experienced paddlers to gather for river trips, support class trips, and compete in friendly races and skills challenges. Pre-registration cost is \$40 before May 13 for all TEHCC members and includes access to all classes, Saturday night dinner, ACA insurance for class participants, and river shuttles for the Nolichucky. Please visit <http://www.riverapes.org/summer-kickoff.html> for more information or contact [Stevenadams@eastman.com](mailto:Stevenadams@eastman.com) for applications/information.

### **Hootennany Hang and Paddle Weekend, June 7 – 9, 2019**

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

The Hootennany Hang Weekend will be at Blackberry Blossom Farm and Campground, 250 Blackberry Blossom Ln in Unicoi, Roan Mountain area, 20 minutes from the Nolichucky River and Watauga Lake. Now a Hootennany means "Music Happening!" So there will be picking on the porch by the Mitten Family Pickers and anyone with an instrument can join in! On Saturday night we'll have a pot luck dinner and a raffle of hammock camping gear to help pay for the use of the campground. Any money left over will go toward a deposit for next year or be donated to the farm for any needed projects. There are 98 acres of wooded property at Blackberry Blossom Farm with walk-in-only camp sites. Backpackers will be right at home; but if you have heavy gear, they will gladly haul it to your site with their tractor and small trailer. The sites have fire pits, picnic tables and potable water. There are two bathrooms with showers and a large outside sink for clean-up near the camp store.

**Activities:** We're planning paddle trips and hikes for Saturday morning. You can choose between two kinds of kayaking, whitewater (Nolichucky Gorge Class III-IV or Lower Nolichucky River Class I-II) or lake (Watauga Lake with a picnic on the Island). There will be led hiking trips too. Hike Roan Mountain to the balds from Carvers Gap or drive up to the Rhododendron Gardens. The pot luck will be Saturday Night after the activities at the Camp Store. There is a communal fire-pit where dutch oven cooking will be done. Tickets to the gear raffle will be sold and paid for Saturday night at the event. Bring cash to buy your tickets: \$5 per ticket or 5 for \$20. I am gathering raffle donations from hammock camping vendors, but your donations are accepted too. Any spare gear you have will help; it doesn't have to be a lot, just something camping related someone can use.

**Camping Cost:** We have come to a flat-rate agreement for the cost of the campground. I am asking each person who attends to please give a donation or buy raffle tickets. Your donations and the raffle should cover the cost of the venue and any other expenditures like firewood, deposit for next year etc.

**Website:** <http://www.blackberry-blossom-campground.com/Home/home.php>

**Map:** <https://www.google.com/maps/dir//36.202754,-82.257857/@36.203074,-82.257572,10z?hl=en>



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## For the Record

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No hike or padding reports submitted this month. See Maintenance Reports below.



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### A.T. Maintenance Reports

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**Reporting:** Lynn DiFiore

**Date:** 3/23/2019

**Purpose:** Routine Maintenance

**Location:** Section 14b, Stan Murray Shelter to Overmountain Shelter

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

**Summary:** I spent a good day clearing out winter blowdowns and picking up a minor amount of trash from both shelters. Eilidh with her trusty pack hauled out all the trash from Stan Murray! I used a handsaw to clear a large number of blowdowns, mostly limbs. One larger tree is down that will need a chainsaw, but it is easily stepped over and the hikers are not bypassing it. The trail was very muddy and slick from recent snows. That was the only complaint I heard from most hikers. The barn was completely full with many tents in the field. One group was building a blazing bonfire in the field. I attempted to pass along some LNT guidance, but they were too worried about being cold to pay much attention. Otherwise, a good day to be out!

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 3/28/2019

**Purpose:** Remove blowdowns and rehab

**Location:** Section 13, US 19E to Hump Mountain

**People:** Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart, Bob Killian

**Summary:** Bob Killian, a hiker, made an extra effort to come out on a maintenance trip. His conclusion is that the maintenance day will be his toughest day on the trail.

We removed a dozen chainsaw blowdowns plus some smaller ones, cleared all water diversions and added some more, and stabilized some steps. The trail is in good shape. Much additional work is needed on the approach to Hump Mountain with its rich organic soil and heavy rainfall. The water trail at Doll Flats needs to be blue blazed and a couple of water signs. We saw a dozen hikers today.

**Reporting:** Lynn DiFiore

**Date:** 3/30/2019

**Purpose:** Routine Maintenance

**Location:** Section 14b, Overmountain Shelter to Bradley Gap

**People:** Lynn DiFiore, Robert Lamb

**Summary:** We cleared numerous blowdowns from the barn to Bradley Gap and picked up a moderate amount of trash at the Bradley Gap campsites. The ever recurring firering at the rocks on Little Hump has become huge; the hikers are expending a lot of effort to haul up very large boulders. The campsite seems to be very well established at this point. There is evidence of a vehicle traveling up towards Yellow Mtn on the road from Roaring Creek, but it did not access the balds. I removed a firering that was constructed inside the barn and picked up a minor amount of trash at the barn. The shelter was full, again with numerous tents in the field. The majority seemed to be thru hikers. Spring beauties and ramps are starting to show, which seems early to me!

**Reporting:** Vic Hasler

**Date:** 3/30/2019

**Purpose:** Clear reported blowdowns and assess extent of garlic mustard infestation

**Location:** Section 19b, Nolichucky River Outfitter to switchback, Chestoa parking lot to recreation area

**People:** Vic Hasler

**Summary:** Mary Ellen and Rick Virost sent an email on 3/17 with photos of six small blowdowns in the Jones Branch area. Someone else had already opened five (thanks to whoever you are), so my morning effort was clearing an 8" hurdle, tossing blowdown pieces further into the forest, and some lopping. After lunch, I investigated the invasive species report for garlic mustard made by John Odell (former ATC) in May 2014 citing an infestation beside the A.T. near the CSX railroad. Just six plants were found at the coordinates, so instead, I picked up trash along Jones Branch Road... and discovered more garlic mustard on both sides. I continued to remove trash, mostly large glass bottles scattered around the former homeless campsite. This extensive effort created a pile at

the Chestoa recreation restrooms of garbage and grocery bags, along with a tent, tarp, and sleeping bag. Three grocery bags of aluminum cans were taken to the scouts for recycle. The final count was around 75 garlic mustard plants pulled from across the few acres.

**Reporting:** Saylor Fox

**Date:** 4/1/2019

**Purpose:** Cut and remove winter blowdowns

**Location:** Section 15a, Cloudland Hotel to Carvers Gap

**People:** Saylor Fox, Bettye Boone

**Summary:** We hiked up the road from Carver's Gap to the Cloudland Hotel site, then came down the A.T. to Carver's Gap. We removed five blowdowns that could be removed with a handsaw. We checked the shelter and removed only one plastic water bottle! Fifty-five people have stayed in the shelter since we were there in February. Progress was very slow due to ice on the trail.

**Reporting:** Greg Kramer

**Date:** 4/2/2019

**Purpose:** Remove blowdown

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

**People:** Greg Kramer

**Summary:** I removed the reported blowdown about 2 miles NOBO from Cross Mtn Rd. It was larger than reported, but it's taken care of.

**Reporting:** Vic Hasler

**Date:** 4/3/2019

**Purpose:** Spring 2019 A.T. Partnership Meeting

**Location:** Watauga Ranger Station, Unicoi, TN

**People:** ATC: Drury, Eren, Sommerville; SAWS: Currier; TEHCC: Benfield, Fritz, Hasler, Middlemas, Mowery, Peters; TVA: Short; USFS: Kelley, Morgan, Summers, Thornburg, Trentham

**Summary:** The partners engaged in very active conversation. This summary has a few topics to share with the general club.

- Initial A.T. relocation from Shook Branch Road to Pond Mtn Wilderness using existing forest roads can proceed after gates are installed to block the lower end of the TVA powerline access road and from Shook Branch Road. TVA and USFS will see what existing gates are available. The local power company will be contacted about removing the line to the former trailer site. "No Camping" signs will be posted at the cemetery.
- Decision was made to move ahead with asbestos abatement for buildings on the Atwood property.
- Approval granted to take Watauga Lake Shelter to the ground.
- Sections of the expansive camping area around Roan High Knob Shelter will be roped off with signage to begin rehab.
- Next partnership meeting to be in October at the Watauga Ranger Station (Unicoi, TN).

**Reporting:** Kevin Sedgwick

**Date:** 4/3/2019

**Purpose:** Make and place new poles with trail blaze

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

**People:** Kevin Sedgwick

**Summary:** Since taking over this section, the poles with blazes in the open grassy areas have been slowly disappearing for one reason or another. Using weather-resistant material, I made a half-dozen poles. I carried them in and placed a few on the northern end of the section. As always, I continued to cut back rose. I hope to get ahead of it before it starts growing. I met 10 thru-hikers, 3 slack packers, and a group from Old Timers Hiking Club from Johnson City. It looks like ATV activity on the trail has started back up.

**Reporting:** Scotty Bowman

**Date:** 4/3/2019

**Purpose:** General trail and shelter maintenance

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

**People:** Scotty Bowman (SAWS)

**Summary:** I hiked in for an overnight trip to do maintenance between the shelters. During my hike in, I cut out a 24" dead oak, an 18" birch, 2 tree tops and a couple smaller blowdowns. I spent the night at Vandeventer Shelter where there were 4 NOBOs and 2 section hikers staying the night with another group of 4 section hikers staying at the site on the spring trail. The shelter was clean and there was no graffiti even with the graffiti board missing. Both springs on the section are flowing really well; lots of water.

**Reporting:** Scotty Bowman

**Date:** 4/4/2019

**Purpose:** General maintenance

**Location:** Section 6, One mile trail North of Vandeventer Shelter

**People:** Scotty Bowman (SAWS)

**Summary:** On day two of my trip, I cut out a 26" white oak and a 10" locust. I also cut back rhododendron, green briar, and black berry within one mile north of Vandenventer shelter. On the way out, I found a food bag that someone had left at the shelter, which I carried out. On this day, I encountered 18 NOBOs.

**Reporting:** Richard Carter

**Date:** 4/4/2019

**Purpose:** Check section

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

**People:** Richard Carter

**Summary:** I walked the section, checked the shelter, left a new shelter register, picked up an armload of trash including 4 discarded tarpaulins, checked the spring (which is running well), scattered a firering, lifted 5 or 6 blowdowns of 3-5 inch diameter, and cut 5 blowdowns of 5-6 inch diameter. There is a blowdown of about 26 inches located just south of Stan Murray Shelter that will need chainsaw removal. I met about 15 NOBO thru-hikers and several day hikers.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 4/4/2019

**Purpose:** Scout Trail

**Location:** Section 20a, Nolichucky River to Temple Hill Gap, first 3 miles from river

**People:** John Beaudet, Carl Fritz, Tony Messina, Kim Peters

**Summary:** Hikers are coming. We encountered at least 15 in this short time. Craig is doing a great job of cutting growth, digging sloughing trail, installing water diversions, and blazing. We inspected four short, steep bumps between 2 and 3 miles from the river since they were mentioned as possible relocations in the Optimal Location Review in the early 90's. None of these steep sections are eroding. Two of them were up to 35% grades. We thought three of the grades could use a few rock steps to improve hiker traction. We should probably dig some larger water diversions to ensure no erosion in the south-most grade. We could see little value in doing relocations.

**Reporting:** Steve Perri

**Date:** 4/6/2019

**Purpose:** A.T. Spring Maintenance

**Location:** Section 3b, Spring to US 421

**People:** Kelmara Kelly, Steve Perri

**Summary:** We hiked from TN 421 to the Spring. We removed a few small trees crossing the trail, cut back a lot of briers and rhodos, and painted the blazes in both directions. We left two step-over blowdowns. The first has been there awhile and has no bark left on it about 0.5 mile south of the rock wall. The other we dropped to a safer position as a step over which is visible from the rock wall walking north. We saw 6 thru-hikers and one section hiker. Otherwise section is in good shape.

**Reporting:** Phyllis Cairnes

**Date:** 4/9/2019

**Purpose:** Maintain shelter

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

**People:** Deb Helmer, Phyllis Cairnes

**Summary:** Today's main purpose was to get the graffiti board repainted and touch-up places on the walls. A persistent mouse and 3 thru-hikers kept us company while we were working. On the way back, we met countless thru-hikers, including a family from CA with 4 young daughters, the youngest age 5. The prescribed burn between McQueen's Gap and the shelter had been accomplished, and the trail was in good shape.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 4/10/2019

**Purpose:** Control camping area at shelter

**Location:** Section 15a, Roan High Knob Shelter

**People:** Carl Fritz, Elzear Lemieux, Kim Peters, Morgan Sommerville, Chris Stoehrel, Keith Kelley, Chad Ingle, Dennis Trentham, and his two helpers

**Summary:** The Forest Service removed several broken tree leaners along the trail and near the shelter. Our primary objective, with Chris's leadership, was to restrict the ever expanding camping area beyond the shelter. We strung yellow string with orange flagging and signs to mark much of the area as closed for revegetation because of the imperiled ecosystem. Therefore, no camping, cutting, or gathering firewood. An additional explanatory sign will be posted at the shelter. We will probably have approval to rehab the water trail this summer.



**Reporting:** Jim Foster

**Date:** 4/11/2019

**Purpose:** Check bridges for rotten timbers

**Location:** Section 10, Hampton trailhead to Dennis Cove Road, About 2 miles from Hampton trailhead

**People:** Bruce Darby, Jim Foster

**Summary:** We found only three rotten timbers, two on the lower bridge and one on the upper; one long deck piece and two side supports.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 4/11/2019

**Purpose:** Harvest locust logs

**Location:** Grassy Ridge

**People:** John Beaudet, Paul Benfield, Richard Carter, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Elzear Lemieux, Tony Messina, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart, Jeri Lynn Owen, Ryan Owen, Anthony Stephen "Ira", Sara Spittel "Cushy," Bob Curran

**Summary:** We cut, debarked, and transported many locust logs. We prepared about 22 steps and stakes for Hump Mountain. We also prepared and stored about 20 steps and 20 side logs plus stakes for other projects. Relatively new residents Jeri Lynn and Ryan not only came out for their first trail maintenance but brought three current thru-hikers with them. All were amazed at the work that goes into maintenance and thanked us profusely. We also thanked them for a hard days work with first timer patches.



**Reporting:** Greg Kramer

**Date:** 4/15/2019

**Purpose:** Check for invasive species

**Location:** Section 19b, North of Nolichucky River

**People:** Greg Kramer, Matt Druary

**Summary:** We reviewed where tree of heaven was cut and stumps were treated in 2015. No tree of heaven was found between the Nolichucky and the second creek crossing. There is a large blowdown about 1/2 mile north; it is fully on the ground and may not need removal.

**Reporting:** Kim Peters

**Date:** 4/16/2019

**Purpose:** Paint graffiti board

**Location:** Section 5, Iron Mountain Shelter

**People:** Phyllis Cairnes, Kim Peters

**Summary:** The task for the day was to hike out to Iron Mountain Shelter to paint the graffiti board and give a clean slate for the thru-hikers. What a great day to be out in the woods! I lost count of the number of thru-hikers as there were so many. All were happy to have a warm sunny day to hike.

At the shelter we picked up trash and repainted the graffiti board. In between coats of Kiltz we got to talk to hikers. They all thanked us profusely for our work as maintainers and said that they were much appreciative of all maintainers.

**Reporting:** Tony Messina

**Date:** 4/17/2019

**Purpose:** Inspect Accessible Trail

**Location:** Section 4b, Accessible Trail from TN 91, Osborne Farm

**People:** Tony Messina, Renee Messina



**Summary:** We inspected the condition of the footpath for the Accessible Trail. We noted that the entry gate path seems to be the least accessible portion of trail, and noted underlayment cloth poking through in several locations.

**Reporting:** Paul Benfield

**Date:** 4/17/2019

**Purpose:** Mow

**Location:** Section 4b, Osborne Farm

**People:** Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery

**Summary:** We mowed the Accessible and Appalachian Trail across the Osborne Farm. Ten to fifteen buckets of crush-and-run are needed to fill erosion on the trail before it gets worse.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 4/17/2019

**Purpose:** Stock locust logs

**Location:** Section 14a, Doll Flats to Bradley Gap, North side of Hump Mtn

**People:** Richard Carter, Carl Fritz, Elzear Lemieux, Joe Morris, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** We stored some locust logs on the north side of Hump Mountain for future trail rehab. It was a beautiful day with many hiker encounters.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 4/17/2019

**Purpose:** Prepare locust logs

**Location:** Section 15a, Near Carver's Gap

**People:** Daryel Anderson, Paul Benfield, Greg Kramer, Renee Messina, Tony Messina, Ted Mowery, Ryan Owen

**Summary:** The crew completed debarking assorted locust logs in storage, inventoried them, and enjoyed the scenery.

**Reporting:** Greg Kramer

**Date:** 4/18/2019

**Purpose:** Invasive Species

**Location:** Section 8, Wilbur Dam Road to US 321, Ramp south of dam

**People:** Greg Kramer, Matt Druary, Randy Short

**Summary:** In the morning, we walked from Shook Branch towards Wilbur Dam, locating invasive species and making treatment plans. Between Shook Branch and the forest service gate, about a mile or so, there was nothing but invasive species. At the gate, it was like a light switch was turned on and few invasive species were found except at the end of coves where the wind blows into the cove. Matt is going to make some plans for invasive species treatment; I'll keep club members informed. In the afternoon, we went to Wilbur Dam to also look for invasives. We found two blowdowns after the dam where we had fixed the steps and ramps last fall. Randy (TVA) had a chainsaw and we took care of these blowdowns.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 4/20/2019

**Purpose:** Reroute A.T. around Watauga Lake

**Location:** Section 8, Shook Branch to Oliver Hollow Road

**People:** "Pooch," "Kung Fu"

**Summary:** The Watauga Lake water level rose rapidly from the Friday rains. These hikers posted the new signs to close the trail and reroute temporarily by US 321 and Oliver Hollow Road. We expect to be able to open the A.T. again by about 4/27. It is unusual to have closed this section twice in the same year.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 4/20/2019

**Purpose:** Inspect Trail

**Location:** Section 10, Hampton trailhead to the 2nd Bridge

**People:** Carl Fritz

**Summary:** Primarily on this wet day I was checking trail condition and need for rehab. There were a couple of blowdowns that I could remove with a handsaw. And the handsaw did well in cutting back some wet rhododendron and multiflora rose that drooped into the trail. There are some minor rehab opportunities.

**Reporting:** Vic Hasler

**Date:** 4/21/2019

**Purpose:** Measure partial relocation distance and pull garlic mustard

**Location:** Section 9a, US 321 to Pond Mtn Wilderness boundary

**People:** Vic Hasler

**Summary:** I ran the rolling wheel to compare the present A.T. distance and the proposed trail relocation along existing forest roads



*Hump Mountain Lunch*

between US 321 centerline and the Pond Mtn Wilderness sign. Per the A.T. guidebook, the current trek on switchbacks is 0.5 mile, which was verified at 2,655 feet. The new path on gravel, then dirt USFS roads, measured as 2,835 feet; so just 180 feet more. No change will be needed to A.T. data or guide books when this partial relocation is implemented. That is, unless the club wants to drop reference to the temporary campsite to see where the thru-hikers will tent, as two more open spots are available.

My second impromptu task was to pull garlic mustard (invasive species) from roughly 300' along Shook Branch Road. Just over 500 plants were removed weighing 17 pounds total.

**Reporting:** Vic Hasler

**Date:** 4/21/2019

**Purpose:** Find side trail to Potato Top

**Location:** Section 10, Dennis Cove Road to railroad cut above Laurel Falls

**People:** Vic Hasler

**Summary:** The purpose of this trip segment was to locate the unmarked 0.2-mile sidetrail to Potato Top to check its condition. It is listed on the club maintenance assignments and in the A.T. guidebook. I went in from the Dennis Cove Road trailhead with a 0.9-mile hike just past Koonford Bridge. The steep uphill scramble appears to begin right at the old railroad cut. No "trail" was found and there were with few signs of anyone proceeding more than a hundred feet. After bushwhacking up and along the ridge for a quarter mile, the views into Laurel Gorge were mostly obstructed by trees – both evergreen and hardwood. My recommendation is that the club drop references to this side trail as it represents an undesired risk for public users of the wilderness area. No action is required in the field, as there is no sign or blazes to indicate such a route exists.

My last action was to pick up remnants of plastic Easter eggs from the Dennis Cove parking lot, likely holiday trail magic which became litter. It was a cloudy, cool Easter afternoon; however, the weekend rain stopped, so I was able to get outside as did many other families.

**Reporting:** Scotty Bowman (SAWS)

**Date:** 4/22/2019

**Purpose:** Earth Day Volunteer Event with Starbucks

**Location:** Section 10, Hampton trailhead to Dennis Cove Road

**People:** Scotty Bowman, Denise Wendell, Madelyne Reith, CJ Roark, Makisa Holt, Hannah Whitley, Linda Baeza

**Summary:** I spent the morning with crewmembers from a couple of local Starbucks stores picking up trash and dismantling firerings on the Laurel Falls blue-blaze trail and A.T. And it just so happened to be Earth Day to boot. We hiked to Laurel Falls and back. It was an absolutely gorgeous day to be out in the woods. Everyone had a great experience. By the end of the day, we had dismantled one firering and carried out 15 lbs of trash.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 4/24/2019

**Purpose:** Inspect and clear trail

**Location:** Section 10, Dennis Cove to below Falls

**People:** Bob Peoples

**Summary:** The water level had decreased enough that the A.T. is open and Bob removed the signs to use the high-water trail. Most of the water on the other parts of the trail has disappeared, although there is still mud. No rehab work is needed other than smoothing the tracks before the trail hardens again. The trail around the cliff has survived this latest washing. Bob also cleared the trail to Potato Top. It was full of green briar and rhododendron.



**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 4/25/2019

**Purpose:** Rehab trail and bridges

**Location:** Section 10, Hampton trailhead to 2nd Bridge

**People:** Daryl Anderson, Paul Benfield, Aaron Brown, Richard Carter, Mark Collins, Bruce Ellmaker, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Tony Messina, Dean Baird, Ted Mowery, Ryan Owen, Bob Peoples, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** With warm

weather and trees bursting

with leaves, it was a fantastic day to be on the trail. Paul, Ted, and Daryl replaced several landscape timbers on the two lower bridges. The rest of us worked on several projects replacing some rock steps near the second bridge, building a breakwater to discourage the river from washing the trail, improving the rock cribbing along the river, and replacing steps under the power line. We were happy to have two local first timers, Bruce Ellmaker and Mark Collins, joining us.

