



# The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

June 2019

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

Editor – [Terry Oldfield](#)

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**Goodbye to  
Watauga  
Lake Shelter**  
(See article,  
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Reports)

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## Summer Hiking Program

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*Submitted by: Jonathan Shumaker*

This summer we are hoping to get together and take advantage of the many great hiking opportunities in our area. We are hoping to have a hike on most weekends throughout the summer. The hikes will vary in length, difficulty, and scenery. The schedule on the website will be kept up to date with the latest information on hikes. We will also try to start using the events section of the website to allow people to add comments and questions or create their own event if they are interested in leading a hike. We hope to see you out on the trail this summer! If you want more information, or are interested in leading hikes this summer, let Jonathan know! He can be contacted at [jonathanshumaker@eastman.com](mailto:jonathanshumaker@eastman.com) or by phone at work: 423-229-1996 or cell: 417-389-6987.

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## Call for Volunteers for FunFest Moonlight Hike, July 18, 2019

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*Submitted by: Jonathan Shumaker, 423-229-1996*

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 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. The hike will start at 8:00 pm, so we will want to show up 30 minutes to an hour before that. The hike will be on Thursday night, July 18<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested in volunteering or getting more information, please contact Jonathan at [jonathanshumaker@eastman.com](mailto:jonathanshumaker@eastman.com) or 423-229-1996.

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## Goodbye, Watauga Lake Shelter

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*Article by Vic Hasler*

Built in 1980 by the US Forest Service, the basic three-sided shelter was designed for six people and located 50 yards off the Appalachian Trail south of the TVA Watauga Dam, not far from the lake. The original shingled roof was replaced with metal in 1997. The shelter was further maintained in 2007 by staining the outside and installing a gutter on the back. A BSA Eagle project in 2011 by Seth Douthat provided a bear pole for food protection.

In 2013, activity by multiple families of bears, and not just a couple of bears, at the TVA campgrounds (Watauga Dam and Little Wilbur) and along the A.T. around Watauga Lake, led to the US Forest Service issuing a facility closure notice for the Watauga Lake Shelter. To reduce any potential encounters, instructions were to not stop between US 321 and Wilbur Dam Road to eat, rest, or camp overnight. TVA successfully implemented strategies to reduce access to food and waste in the campgrounds by eliminating tent camping, banning (with fines) outside storage of food, improving trash containers, and posting education signs. Options for the shelter area were discussed extensively among the partner organizations.

The temporary closure notice for the shelter was lifted in Spring 2016, and unfortunately, bear encounters immediately resumed. A bear destroyed two tents at the shelter, was scared off, then returned to climb the food pole. A bear appeared the next night to destroy another tent that held equipment and supplies while hikers slept in the full shelter and another nearby tent. The bear then came back to successfully acquire food bags hanging from trees. The ranger district immediately imposed the bear closure again "Until Further Notice."

The situation with bears at Watauga Lake Shelter was further discussed during 2016-2018 with the conclusion that it was not going to improve with the available administrative and physical controls. The shelter itself was deemed not suitable for relocation; thus the decision was made by the partner organizations to take down the building. In March 2019, the bear pole, steps, and table were removed to discourage use. Finally, the shelter was disassembled in May. The metal parts and shingles were hauled back across the lake by TVA boats (many thanks for the assistance!) for disposal, and the wood components were burned in place. **The closure notice for camping between US 321 and Wilbur Dam Road remains in force.**

While Watauga Lake Shelter provided nearly forty years of service, it is a disappointment that recreational users on and along the lake could not sufficiently practice "Leave No Trace" principles to avoid creating an attractive enticement for the bears.



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## Bear Activity near McQueen Knob

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*Submitted by Vic Hasler*

ATC has received multiple reports in early to mid-May of bears taking food in the trail section around McQueen Knob, from south at the old farmstead to the emergency shelter. This same stretch of trail had bear activity in 2018.

Several campsites were visited by a bear that was circling around until it was able to grab insufficiently hung bags or broke the low branch to gain access to the food. Sometimes the hanging bags were just torn in place to drop the contents.

Please take the necessary precautions to limit risk of encountering a bear. Hikers, for their own safety, should camp 200 feet away from where their food and "smellables" are stored. For most adults, 200 feet is about 80 steps. Bear canisters should be sealed correctly and not stored in shelters ([list of certified bear-resistant products](#)). Proper use of Ursacks is to tie them securely to the trunk of a tree ([link to Ursacks "How-to-Use" page](#)). Hanging bear bags should employ a very high branch away from your campsite. ([Instructions to practice at home first!](#))

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## TEHCC Rental Equipment: HB-37, Gregory Stout 45 Backpack

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*Chris Chambers – Rental Equipment Coordinator*

The Gregory Stout 45 was purchased new in March 2019 from Overmountain Outdoors in Johnson City. Weighing in at 2lbs, 13oz, this 45 liter (2,746 c.i.), internal frame backpack can be adjusted to fit 16" to 22" torsos, and the hip belt can be adjusted to fit 25" to 53" waists. An integral rain cover is included in case the weather turns bad. This backpack is rich in features and is perfect for a lightweight weekend trip. Rental rate "A" (\$8 weekend, \$10 week-long) will be set for this pack.

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## TEHCC Welcomes New Members

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Annemarie Schaefer  
Bryce Curtsinger

Seth Willis  
John Ford

Ed Cwirko  
Dennis Rochette

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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
June 7 - 9	Hootennany Hang & Paddle Weekend	<a href="#">Debbie Briscoe</a>	423-534-3636
June 8	A.T.: Tanyard Gap to Rich Mountain Firetower	<a href="#">Vic Hasler</a>	423-239-0388
June 13	Steering Committee Meeting, 11:30 am	<a href="#">William Werner</a>	423-229-2253
June 15	3 <sup>rd</sup> Saturday, Hiking with Tools!	<a href="#">Kim Peters</a>	423-336-0128
June 15	The Channels Natural Area Preserve	<a href="#">Tim Schaefer</a>	423-302-0846
June 15	Lower Watauga River (Class I-II)	<a href="#">Debbie Briscoe</a>	423-534-3636
June 22	A.T.: Coon Den Falls Hike	<a href="#">Andy Steffan</a>	919-928-4738
June 22	Nolichucky River Cleanup	<a href="#">Andy Steffan</a>	
June 29	Squibb Creek Falls (Horse Creek Recreation Area)	<a href="#">William Werner</a>	423-408-4469
June 29	Lower Watauga River (Class I-II)	<a href="#">Debbie Briscoe</a>	423-534-3636
July 5-7	Nolichucky Camping and Paddle Weekend	<a href="#">Debbie Briscoe</a>	423-534-3636
July 11	Steering Committee Meeting, 11:30 am	<a href="#">William Werner</a>	423-229-2253
July 18	FunFest Moonlight Hike, 6:30 pm	<a href="#">Jonathan Shumaker</a>	423-229-1996
July 19-21	Hiwassee River Paddle Weekend	<a href="#">Debbie Briscoe</a>	423-534-3636

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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](#)

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. 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. 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, \[atvolunteer@tehcc.org\]\(mailto:atvolunteer@tehcc.org\)](#)

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](mailto:Ryan.Shealy@tehcc.org), 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](http://www.tehcc.org)! 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](mailto:Kim.Peters@tehcc.org), 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](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](mailto:Debbie.Briscoe@tehcc.org), 423-534-3636

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>

## Thursday Evenings, July 18 – August 22: Paddle to the Grill, 6:30 pm – 10:30 pm

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

Each week we will be alternating between Boone Lake Marina, 452 Sportsman Dock Rd, Piney Flats, TN and Davis Marina (Boonies Restaurant), 641 Buffalo Rd, Blountville, TN. Bring your touring kayak/canoe to meet with The Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts ([www.riverapes.org](http://www.riverapes.org)) and TEHCC ([www.tehcc.org](http://www.tehcc.org)). We will launch within 30 minutes of the meeting time to paddle 3 miles to the restaurant or to a place to have a picnic, which takes about an hour. We'll have dinner and social hour, then paddle back under the stars. As we may be paddling back during low or no light, please have a stern light for your boat and a head light for when we land. PFD's and Stern Lights are TWRA Regulation. If you aren't on the contact list, call for the location each week.

## Scheduled Events

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

Coordinator: [Debbie Briscoe](mailto:Debbie.Briscoe@tehcc.org), 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>

## **A.T.: Tanyard Gap to Rich Mountain Firetower, Saturday, June 8, 2019**

*Leader: [Vic Hasler](#), 423-239-0388*

*Rating: Medium 5-mile round-trip hike with 1400' climb*

The historic firetower was restored last year, with partial funding from the TN A.T. tag program, allowing continued enjoyment of the great views. This hike travels the Appalachian Trail up and back from Tanyard Gap with a fair amount of elevation gain.

Let's leave from Colonial Heights (now Ingles parking area) at 8 am for the roughly 1 ½ hour drive towards Hot Springs. Please let the hike leader know of your interest as stops in Greeneville or Johnson City to carpool can determine our route. Otherwise meet in the parking area at Tanyard Gap (US25/70 overpass) by 9:30 am. We'll hike north-bound on the Appalachian Trail at a steady pace until the firetower is reached. Sturdy footwear and hiking poles are recommended.

Pack a lunch/snack plus plenty of water to stay hydrated. Plan to be back at the vehicles before the afternoon heat arrives, thus back home by mid-to-late afternoon (possible an ice cream stop). For further information and to let us know of your interest, please call/e-mail the hike leader.



## **The Channels Natural Area Preserve, Saturday, June 15, 2019**

*Leader: [Tim Schaefer](#), 423-302-0846*

*Rating: Moderate 6-mile round-trip hike with 1,100' elevation gain*



The Great Channels are an unusual geological maze of large crevices in a sandstone bed. The formation is up on a ridgeline, thus also great views. The three mile path is part of the Brumley Mountain Trail - starting out as wide forest service road and then narrowing to a hiking trail. We'll enjoy exploring the channels and lunch before returning to the cars. Departure time is 8AM from Colonial Heights (to avoid parking congestion at the trail head as much as possible). The 56 mile drive to Hayters Gap will take 75-90 minutes north on I-81 and then winding up the mountain. Expected return time is late afternoon. For further information, check the [trail wiki](#) or call/e-mail the hike leader. Courtesy replies are appreciated so we know to look for you. We can meet at either Ingles in Colonial Heights or at the parking location. Note that parking is limited at the trail head. Most importantly, do not block the trail gate for car access.

## **A.T.: Coon Den Falls Hike, Saturday, June 22, 2019**

*Leader: [Andy Steffan](#), 919-928-4738*

*Rating: Moderate 3.6-mile loop hike, 1000' up and down elevation change*

Coon Den Falls is located near Hampton, TN. This 50' falls trail offers some vistas along the way as you reach the highest elevation in the middle of the hike. The falls are best after a good rainfall, so let's hope we get some solid rain beforehand, unlike what we've experienced recently. The trail follows the A.T. for about 1.7 miles, then a ~1 mile stint on Coon Den Falls Trail. To return, it's ~1 mile on the Coon Den Falls Trail and road-side back to the parking lot. Sturdy footwear is recommended.

Let's leave Colonial Heights (now Ingles parking area) at 10 am for a roughly hour drive towards Hampton. Please let the hike leader know of your interest in carpooling and potential pick-up points, if on the way. Otherwise, meet at the Dennis Cove Road, Falls/A.T. parking area, at 11 am. Pack a lunch/snack and plenty of water. Plan to hike until mid-afternoon. For further information or notification of interest, please call/text/email the lead hiker.



## **Squibb Creek Falls (Horse Creek Recreation Area), Saturday, June 29, 2019**

*Leader: [William Werner](#), 423-408-4469*

*Rating: Moderate 5.2-mile round-trip hike with 1,400' elevation gain*

This in-and-out hike to a waterfall is located in the Horse Creek Recreation Area near Tusculum, TN. The trail has 13 easy stream crossings, so be sure to wear suitable shoes. Meet at 9:30 am at the Eastman Credit Union located at 3811 E Andrew Johnson Hwy, Tusculum, TN 37745 to carpool to the trailhead. We should return to the meeting location by 1 pm.

## **Nolichucky Camping and Paddle Weekend, July 5-7, 2019**

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

NOLI is teaming up with the APEs to have a camping and paddling weekend on the Upper and Lower Nolichucky! The camp-out will be on Survival Island where NOLI teaches their survival and map/compass classes. Meet at USA Raft Nolichucky, 2 Jones Branch Rd, Erwin, TN. During the day, NOLI may be having a class, but unless you're taking a class, we'll be on the river.

For the camp-out and paddle trip, bring some food to share for dinner. Be prepared to wade across the creek to get to the island; so it is best to have your camping gear in a backpack or large carry bag. Also, bring a camp chair. Friday evening we'll meet to get set-up in camp and settle in. Saturday morning after breakfast we'll organize the shuttles and hit the river! Sunday morning you can do another run or go home, the choice is yours. Contact Debbie for the head count if you plan to camp and to make sure there is enough parking space.

### **Hiwassee River Paddle Weekend, July 19-21, 2019**

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

A weekend on the Hiwassee River! We're planning to drive down on Friday afternoon and camp at Gee Creek Campground (404 Spring Creek Rd, Delano, TN). It is a very nice facility with full amenities. Saturday, we'll meet at the put-in at 12:00 noon. We'll load up and convoy from the campground. We'll find a place to eat that evening after hot showers back at the campground. A campfire will be great afterwards and I'm bringing S'mores!! On Sunday, we'll either paddle another run or drive home, it's up to you! Campground: <http://www.stateparks.com/hiwassee.html>

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## **For the Record**

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



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## **A.T. Maintenance Reports**

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### **Memorial Thank-You Donation for Impressive Trail Maintenance!**

TEHCC received a \$250 gift in memory of Mary Ellen Abrecht and Sue King who were part of a group of 15 friends who have slackpacked sections of the Appalachian Trail every May over the past 13 years. The group is mostly from the DC area, with others coming in from California, Kentucky, and Minnesota. They stay at a motel in Johnson City, while sampling many local eateries at the end of the day. The crew jokingly call themselves the "2070 AT Hikers," noting the year they will finish the A.T. at their current pace.

The donation was made in honor of the two members sadly lost during the past year. The group was impressed by the five-star condition of the trail along the NC/TN border, so researched to identify the local trail club – TEHCC. Thank you to the many volunteers who put in the hours to create an enjoyable experience for those who wander through our section.

**Reporting:** Greg Kramer

**Date:** 4/27/2019

**Purpose:** Garlic Mustard Pull

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

**People:** Greg Kramer, Dan Firth, Vic Hasler, Matt Druary

**Summary:** We were surprised that we pulled 236 lb of garlic mustard, since we were hoping to see a continual decline from last year. The seeds are biannual, so this is what was missed from two years ago. We were successful treating Russian Olive last year and saw very little needing treatment. We did leave a lot of garlic mustard in the field where it was mixed in with devil's walking stick.

**Reporting:** Dean Baird

**Date:** 4/27/2019

**Purpose:** Trail Maintenance

**Location:** Section 10, Hampton Blue-Blaze Trail

**People:** Dean Baird, Jennifer Baird

**Summary:** We painted new blue blazes at the junction of the Hampton Blue-Blaze trail and the A.T. A tree with blue blaze had fallen, but we painted more blazes than just what was on that tree. This intersection apparently has a high rate of people taking the wrong trail. We also painted new double blazes near where the "high water bypass" of the blue-blaze trail splits (both ends) and refreshed blue blazes from the A.T. back to the trailhead. Some brush was cut to allow the blazes to be seen.

We also cleaned a clogged water diversion on the railroad grade portion starting up Pond Mtn where there is a relatively continuous water flow across the trail. We also measured for replacement logs for the first switchback going up Pond. We removed a small bag of trash. It was a really nice day; there were several people on the trail and the parking lot was overfull.

**Reporting:** Steve Perri

**Date:** 4/28/2019

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

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

**People:** Ted Malone, Steve Perri, Steve Wilson

**Summary:** We conducted spring maintenance from McQueens Gap to US 421. Most of the effort was cutting back briars, cleaning water bars, and painting blazes in both directions. We removed four blowdowns that were easily dragged off the trail. We left two step-over blowdowns between McQueens Knob and the Spring and another two just trail north of the rock wall along the trail about one mile north of US 421. The blazes were in reasonably good condition and no issues with erosion were noted anywhere. We removed a taped-up sign at the USFS gate near US 421 directing people to a grave down the FS road. There were many hikers heading north, probably 15-20.



**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 4/29/2019

**Purpose:** Define trail

**Location:** Section 13, US 19E to Doll Flats, northern section

**People:** Richard Carter, Carl Fritz, Tony Messina

**Summary:** Richard cut one blowdown that was protruding into the trail. We did some serious brushing of short-cuts. Wild flowers are in abundance.

**Reporting:** Richard Carter

**Date:** 4/29/2019

**Purpose:** Cut blowdown

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

**People:** Tony Messina, Richard Carter

**Summary:** We walked in from Overmountain Shelter and cut an approximately 26-inch blowdown located about 75 yards south of Stan Murray Shelter. We then checked the shelter and picked up all shelter trash.

**Reporting:** Paul Benfield

**Date:** 4/29/2019

**Purpose:** Mow

**Location:** Section 4b, TN 91 Osborne Farm

**People:** Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery

**Summary:** We mowed and cut weeds along the A.T. and Accessible Trail across the Osborne Farm.

**Reporting:** Paul Benfield

**Date:** 4/29/2019

**Purpose:** Mow

**Location:** Section 14b, Overmountain Shelter

**People:** Paulo Benfield, Ted Mowery

**Summary:** We mowed the camping area and cut weeds as needed, including to the privy. We thank Richard for picking up the trash in the shelter. The steps from the sleeping platforms downstairs to the hallway have been removed and need to be replaced.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 5/1/2019

**Purpose:** Dismantle shelter

**Location:** Section 8, Watauga Lake Shelter

**People:** Paul Benfield, Aaron Brown, Carl Fritz, Elzear Lemieux, Pat Loven, Tony Messina, Joe Morris, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart, "Xans A Bar"

**Summary:** It was a red-letter day for two reasons. First, Pat Loven was able to join us after his second hip replacement! And we completely dismantled the Watauga Lake Shelter! This shelter was built by the US Forest Service in 1980. With the ongoing bear problems around Watauga Lake, all camping and eating has been permanently banned. So we dismantled the shelter. We also successfully extracted the bear pole even though the scouts had done a tremendous job in securing it with concrete and rocks. All

the materials remain for us to transport out or to dispose. (See dismantling photos, next page.)



**Reporting:** Michael Watts

**Date:** 5/2/2019

**Purpose:** Annual Section Maintenance

**Location:** Section 15b, Cloudland Hotel to Hughes Gap

**People:** Rick Lott, Michael Watts

**Summary:** We primarily trimmed brush. We also picked up trash in Ash Gap and brushed-in both ends of the short-cut for the first switch back out of Hughes Gap.

**Reporting:** Gayle Riddervold

**Date:** 5/3/2019

**Purpose:** Routine Maintenance

**Location:** Section 8, US 321 to Wilbur Road

**People:** Gayle Riddervold, Becky Kinder

**Summary:** Starting at the US 321 parking lot, we picked up trash, cut back weeds, and painted blazes going northbound for about a mile and a half. Because we heard thunder, we returned to the car and were not able to paint any of the southbound blazes.

**Reporting:** Lotta Murray

**Date:** 5/6/2019

**Purpose:** Remove blowdowns

**Location:** Section 20b, Temple Hill Gap to Devils Creek Gap

**People:** Lotta Murray, Ken Murray, Peggy Cantrell

**Summary:** We cut and removed five blowdowns, including one that was a difficult tangle and difficult to get around. "Hiker Dan" a thru-hiker (who owns a tree service company) stopped and gave advice on how to best remove the tree and took a turn with the saw. We cut a lot of rhododendrons and removed dead branches and low overhanging trees. The shelter looked very good; had no trash and no graffiti. It was a beautiful day on the trail and there were a lot of thru-hikers out.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 5/6/2019

**Purpose:** Meet with Elizabethton High School students

**Location:** Elizabethton High School

**People:** Carl Fritz, Bob Peoples

**Summary:** Students are making progress with concepts for the new shelter design for Cherry Gap Shelter. They had questions and they shared some conceptual designs. Ernest Campbell, a building contractor, also attended to provide input. Hopefully, the work on the design can continue in the fall.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 5/8/2019

**Purpose:** Remove shelter parts

**Location:** Section 8, Watauga Lake Shelter

**People:** Paul Benfield, Aaron Brown, Carl Fritz, Renee Messina, Tony Messina, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart, "Pop Tart"

**Summary:** We cleaned up the Watauga Lake Shelter site. We hauled over 1200 pounds of treated lumber, shingles, metal roofing and plywood to the lake shore for future removal. We burned the loose lumber within the shelter's foundation walls. Many hikers were passing through. "Pop Tart" helped to transport a couple of heavy items to the lake.

**Reporting:** Paul Benfield

**Date:** 5/8/2019

**Purpose:** Mow

**Location:** Section 14b, Overmountain Shelter

**People:** Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery

**Summary:** We mowed the camping area at the Barn and reported all deficiencies to the Volunteer Coordinator.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 5/9/2019

**Purpose:** Repair Barn

**Location:** Section 14b, Overmountain Shelter

**People:** Richard Carter, Carl Fritz, Bob Peoples

**Summary:** Paul and Ted discovered the previous afternoon that a 2x12 support for loft floor joists had been ripped down, actually tearing a 2x12. Probably one end had become free when nails rusted and someone pulled real hard on the 12 foot lever. So the next morning Bob, Richard and Carl appeared with a 2x12x16' replacement and some other lumber. We successfully replaced the overhead support. We also reset the steps between the sleeping platforms and hallway. They had been pulled outside. The condition of the Barn continues to deteriorate.

**Reporting:** Paul Benfield

**Date:** 5/9/2019

**Purpose:** Mow

**Location:** Section 4b, TN 91 Osborne Farm

**People:** Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery

**Summary:** We mowed the A.T. and the Accessible Trail across the Osborne Farm. We also cut weeds as needed. Grass is growing in the trail in some places. Thirteen hikers went through while we were working. The cattle have been returned to the farm. The grass is growing exceedingly fast. We mowed one week ago and it needed mowing again.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 5/13/2019

**Purpose:** Chainsaw Certification

**Location:** Sugar Grove, VA

**People:** John Beaudet, Jim Chambers, Carl Fritz

**Summary:** We were certified for felling and bucking as B chainsaw sawyers.

**Reporting:** Steve Perri

**Date:** 5/15/2019

**Purpose:** Roan Naturalist Orientation

**Location:** Section 14c, Carvers Gap

**People:** Steve Perri

**Summary:** I met with representatives from ATC, SAHC, and the USFS for an initial introduction and orientation for Sarah Jones, the new Roan Highlands Naturalist who will be doing education and LNT awareness for visitors mainly between Cloudland and Grassy Ridge. We visited the Roan High Knob Shelter and discussed the corded areas that will hopefully mitigate sprawl and user impacts. We discussed efforts for conservation in the highlands and some of the discussions likely to occur with visitors regarding LNT and general understanding of minimizing the heavy use the area experiences. Sarah will be reporting to SAHC and partnering with ATC and TEHCC, providing us the opportunity to help protect the sensitive biodiversity and other resources in the area.

**Reporting:** Kevin Sedgwick

**Date:** 5/16/2019

**Purpose:** Paint blazes

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

**People:** Kevin Sedgwick, Gloria Sedgwick

**Summary:** What a fantastic day to be out on the trail! We painted blazes and cleared the trail. We passed a fair number of hikers today.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 5/17/2019

**Purpose:** Refresh flagging on relocations

**Location:** Section 18, FS230 switchback to Indian Grave Gap Near Beauty Spot Gap

**People:** Carl Fritz, Elzear Lemieux

**Summary:** We refreshed flagging of two proposed trail relocations near Beauty Spot Gap. Fortunately, Elzear could spot the remnants of the old flagging.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 5/17/2019

**Purpose:** Inspect trail and shelter

**Location:** Section 19a, Three miles north to Curley Maple Gap Shelter

**People:** Carl Fritz, Elzear Lemieux

**Summary:** We inspected the trail for some rehab opportunities. We cut some locust logs for future repairs and cut a large tree that was growing into the trail and pushing hikers off the trail. We took a few shelter measurements for painting the shelter tomorrow.

**Reporting:** Kim Peters

**Date:** 5/18/2019

**Purpose:** Paint shelter

**Location:** Section 19a, Curley Maple Gap Shelter

**People:** Vic Hasler, Aden Vermeersch, Ryan Olmsted, Ian Lott, Alyssa Cunningham, Carl Fritz, Aaron Brown, Kim Peters, Lotta Murray

**Summary:** The goal for this "3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday" trip was to finally paint Curley Maple Gap shelter. Two previous trips planned for this had to be canceled either due to hurricanes or government shutdowns. But they say the third time is a charm and it certainly all worked out on this trip.

We were fortunate to have Mary Cunningham's youngest granddaughter join us and bring three of her friends to do a trail project in memory of Mary around the time of her birthday.



*The newly painted shelter looks great!*

Besides painting over all the graffiti in the shelter and installing a graffiti board, Carl addressed the longstanding problem of drainage in front of the shelter by adding crush and fill. More work may be required later, but the treadway was definitely improved. Additionally, we discovered that one of the legs of the picnic table was broken and we were able to fix that. All in all a great 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday trip. Again, much thanks to Lotta Murray who has prepared all the graffiti boards for our shelters.

**Reporting:** Dean Baird

**Date:** 5/18/2019

**Purpose:** Trail Maintenance

**Location:** Section 9b, Pond Flats to Hampton trailhead

**People:** Dean Baird, Jennifer Baird

**Summary:** We cut vegetation on the section from the Hampton Blue-Blaze trail to where the A.T. starts up Pond Mountain (basically the railroad cut).

**Reporting:** Dean Baird

**Date:** 5/18/2019

**Purpose:** Trail Maintenance

**Location:** Section 10, Hampton Blue-Blaze Trail

**People:** Dean Baird, Jennifer Baird

**Summary:** We came to trim grass under the power line, etc. but found that it had already been done. Thank you to whoever did it. We also inspected the trail, trimmed back vegetation other than grass, and removed a bag of trash.

**Reporting:** Kevin Sedgwick

**Date:** 5/20/2019

**Purpose:** Weed whack and place posts

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

**People:** Kevin Sedgwick

**Summary:** I felt like a pack mule today and took care of two issues. I brought in metal posts with rot-resistance extension and blazes for the lower half of Bishop Hollow. With the hay and grass, it was hard to find the trail. I put the posts together on site; then started the great weed whack of 2019. The weeds are getting high already. I saw 30 plus hikers today and was surprised that many stopped to talk.

**Reporting:** Paul Benfield

**Date:** 5/21/2019

**Purpose:** Mow

**Location:** Section 4b, TN 91, Osborne Farm

**People:** Ted Mowery, Paul Benfield

**Summary:** We mowed and cut weeds as needed, spraying in some places. Eleven thru-hikers came through while we were mowing.

**Reporting:** Paul Benfield

**Date:** 5/21/2019

**Purpose:** Mow

**Location:** Section 14b, Overmountain Shelter

**People:** Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery

**Summary:** We mowed and cut weeds as needed. We also removed loose rocks from the camping area and installed six fire notices in the shelter. We removed the fire ring in front of the shelter; cleared the ashes and took them down the hill, and threw the rocks down the hill. All the wood from the fire ring was removed to the fire ring near the old home. Sixteen thru-hikers were at the shelter. The chain on the gate has been replaced and there is only one lock on it.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 5/22/2019

**Purpose:** Check trail and cut vegetation

**Location:** Section 10, Shelter to Dennis Cove by both trails

**People:** Amy Sternheim "Bookworm"

**Summary:** Amy came to Kincora Hostel from Damascus Hard Core to do some maintenance with TEHCC. To fill in today, she checked much of Bob's trail section including the high water trail and the A.T. from Dennis Cove to Laurel Fork Shelter and did some lopping.

**Reporting:** Richard Carter

**Date:** 5/23/2019

**Purpose:** General Maintenance

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

**People:** Tony Messina, Ted Mowery, Paul Benfield, Kim Peters, Tim Stewart, Joe Morris, Amy Sternheim, Brian Paley, Ryan Owen, Jeri Lynn Owen, Richard Carter

**Summary:** Most of our crew spent the day on Round Bald, replacing gravel onto the trail, cleaning water bars, doing some general trail rehab, blocking and brushing in shortcuts, and dismantling three fire rings. Kim Peters walked up to Roan High Knob Shelter and installed a graffiti board before rejoining the crew. Tony Messina and Richard Carter walked out to Jane Bald and, in an effort to direct trail traffic onto the original path from the multiple shortcuts and side paths, painted some new blazes and refreshed all the old blazes. They also blocked and brushed in all of the side paths. Then they rejoined the main crew to work on Round Bald.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 5/23/2019

**Purpose:** Remove shelter parts

**Location:** Section 8, Watauga Lake Shelter

**People:** Carl Fritz, Bob Peoples and TVA: Randy Short, Brian Stewart

**Summary:** Many thanks to Randy Short and Brian Stewart, TVA employees, who brought their john-boats to transport the remains of Watauga Lake Shelter. It was a great day to cruise across the lake. We are keeping the treated wood, long metal roofing, and bear pole for future use. We took about a thousand pounds of shingles, short metal roofing, and plywood to the landfill. A couple of young guys retrieved the metal roofing and plywood.

**Reporting:** Vic Hasler

**Date:** 5/24/2019

**Purpose:** Trim uphill growth while waiting for Tip Ray to perform campsite inventory

**Location:** Section 18, First 500 feet north of Indian Grave Gap

**People:** Vic Hasler

**Summary:** While waiting for Tip Ray to arrive so that we could begin the campsite inventory on the trail south to Erwin, I clipped uphill growth to allow hikers to stay in the center of the trail and see the blazes. I removed a few pieces of trash. Trail magic appeared at Indian Grave Gap. Tip had not progressed as far as he had hoped the day prior, so I had roughly 1½ hour to work on this section which is in great condition.

**Reporting:** Vic Hasler

**Date:** 5/24/2019

**Purpose:** ATC Campsite Inventory

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

**People:** Vic Hasler, Tip Ray

**Summary:** ATC has engaged Tip Ray to help TEHCC complete an official campsite inventory to further facilitate resource management. The timing of this trip during peak use allowed us to see what areas are actually being used and to what extent. Measurements included the number of active two-person tent sites plus expansion potential, the extent of ground disturbance, proximity to water source, and general forest condition. Three fire rings were dispersed at the less desirable sites. Five campsites

were recorded between Indian Grave Gap and Curly Maple Gap Shelter. One of these appeared to be used by folks driving in on the USFS road and clearing a path to the A.T. The day grew hot as we continued to assess campsites around the shelter, following the paths heading different directions in the forest. The recent inside paint job looks great and the graffiti board already has some use. A new broom was dropped off, and we observed that the picnic table has been leveled with rocks. Another six active campsites were recorded between the shelter and RR tracks. The campsite just north of the second bridge has relocated since the dropping of the hazard trees has cluttered the ground. We were surprised to find a satellite of the campsite just north of the first bridge on the other side of Jones Branch, avoiding the field of stinging nettles that grow as the trail season progresses. This information will allow the club to decide which campsites to have on published lists versus aggressively removing fire rings and scattering brush. Not on this section, but some places could benefit from basic signage or improvement in specific tent sites to minimize spread.

**Reporting:** Joe Morris

**Date:** 5/24/2019

**Purpose:** Mow

**Location:** Section 16b, Iron Mountain Gap to Weedy Gap

**People:** Joe Morris, Aaron Brown

**Summary:** Aaron and I mowed a significantly overgrown section to Weedy Gap. The orchard had been mowed, which saved us a ton of time. I don't know who we have to thank; however, I am grateful. We saw 26 hikers today. It was surprising that this many "thrus" are still migrating NOBO.

**Reporting:** Kim Peters

**Date:** 5/25/2019

**Purpose:** Campsite Inventory Training

**Location:** Section 12b, Walnut Mountain Road to tentsite just south of Mountaineer Falls

**People:** Phyllis Cairnes, Scotty Bowman, Kim Peters

**Summary:** We met up with Tip Ray from ATC to learn how to do campsite inventory on our section. We walked the section from Walnut Mtn Road to the tentsite just south of Mountaineer Falls looking for campsites. Tip explained how to measure the impact at each site and fill out the forms. The next step is to acquire the proper tools and come up with a plan to inventory the remaining parts of our section.

**Reporting:** Dan Firth

**Date:** 5/25/2019

**Purpose:** Section Maintenance

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

**People:** Dan Firth

**Summary:** I cleared two blowdowns and cut back encroaching branches and briars.

**Reporting:** Steve Perri

**Date:** 5/25/2019

**Purpose:** Roan Naturalist Orientation

**Location:** Section 14c, Roan Highlands

**People:** Steve Perri

**Summary:** I met Sarah Jones, the Roan Naturalist and Ridgerunner, to do more Roan orientation and to install blazes on t-posts at the junction of the A.T. and Grassy Ridge Trail. Sarah and I walked out to the Grassy Ridge trail junction talking with hikers and discussing A.T. issues, local services information, and area history. We installed a t-post with a white blaze marking the A.T. and another with a blue blaze on the Grassy Ridge Trail within sight of the wooden post. We had received information that people were sometimes unaware of which way to go on the A.T. The wooden post needs to have the letters repainted since the post and paint has faded. Unfortunately, we didn't have paint with us. Perhaps that can be done on a future trip, but the posts have wooden painted 2x5 inch blazes on them. Sarah shared with me that the graffiti board in Stan Murray Shelter might need to be repainted and a new shelter sign is needed. We checked campsites, removed fire rings, and picked up some minor trash. I gave Sarah an older trail guidebook which has additional info regarding resources. Sarah drove up Roaring Creek to hike in from there. Since it was her first time, she wasn't able to easily find the way to the A.T. from Yellow Mtn Barn. We might look at blue blazing or installing a post to direct people back to the A.T., since there are numerous social trails in the area.