



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

December 2019

tehcc.org

Editor – [Terry Oldfield](#)

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View near Overmountain Shelter (See Nov 1 Maintenance Report)

Membership Renewal

By [Tim Schaefer](#)

It's renewal time again for TEHCC. Your course of action depends on which category you fall under.

- Eastman Employees – You have no action to take, dues are automatically removed by ERC in your first paycheck of the year
- Eastman Retirees – I request a [courtesy reply](#) that you're still interested in receiving the newsletter along with any updates
- Member Affiliates – Complete the [Membership Application](#) and return to the address listed with the appropriate dues amount

Still on the fence on renewal? Remember that membership benefits include: 10% discounts at area outfitters, employees and retirees may rent club gear, and most importantly, the overwhelming majority of dues goes directly to paying for materials and tools for maintaining our 134 miles of the Appalachian Trail.

Trail Wiki Update

By [Tim Schaefer](#)

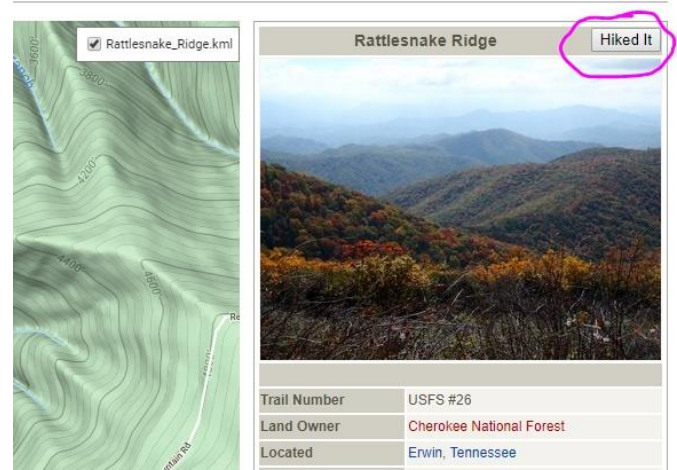
It's the end of the year and I seem to focus on upgrading the wiki at this time of year. If you've been following along, I've been (slowly) working on a format upgrade. I have rearranged the park and trail page layouts to highlight a map first. Park and trail uses, activities, and features are largely icon based, making it easy to see what various parks and trails have to offer. One day, a form offering the ability to easily search based on those attributes will be added. See [Sinking Waters](#) or [Warriors' Path State Park](#) as examples of the upgraded format.

(Continued next page.)

For the trails that have been converted to the new format, a “Hiked It” button appears to the right of the trail name in the InfoBox on the right. The intent is that once you visit a trail, you can log various aspects about the hike. Using the system, these logged hikes could be queried however desired. Templates will eventually be made for easy inclusion on personal pages. Lists of trails hiked and distances hiked by month and year are all likely end points. I log my hike most weekends from my phone before I startup the car to return home.

Editing for those wonderful people that help populate the information should be easier than ever. The forms take a lot of the question out of how to make changes, as well as highlight the templates available (map adders, trail lists for parks, etc.). But as I always say, just hit edit and type. All changes are incrementally saved and can be **easily** fixed and reverted. I would gladly fix a contribution over having no contribution any day.

If you would like a particular trail converted to the new format in order to make your contributions easier, please let me know and I will get it done.



Kingsport Parks and Recreation Master Plan Meeting, December 9

Courtesy Kingsport Parks and Recreation

The City of Kingsport Parks and Recreation Department is in the process of developing a Master Plan that will create a short and long range vision for the facilities, programs and recreational experiences available to its residents and visitors. There will be an open house on Monday, December 9th (drop by the Civic Auditorium, 4:00 – 6:30 pm) to facilitate community engagement for input regarding existing and future opportunities and challenges. The open house will be a come and go format. Come by and give us your ideas on how to continue to make Kingsport a great place for lifelong play, recreation, health and learning.

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
December 9	Kingsport Parks and Recreation Meeting, 4:00 pm		
December 12	Steering Committee Meeting, 11:30 am	William Werner	423-229-2253
December 13	Paddle-n-Plant Workday	Jonathan Shumaker	417-389-6987
January 9, 2020	Steering Committee Meeting, 11:30 am	William Werner	423-229-2253

Details of Upcoming Events

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 \$3; 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

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, 6:45 – 7:45 pm

Contact: [Shelly Richards](#), 423-534-1188

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](#)! During the winter months (October-April), the indoor pool is sectioned off specifically for kayakers to practice basic paddling techniques. Admission is \$2; 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 Shelly.

Scheduled Events

Paddle-n-Plant Workday, Friday, December 13, 2019, 10:00 am

Contact: [Jonathan Shumaker](#), 417-389-6987

Where: *Valle Crucis Community Park, 2892 Broadstone Rd, Banner Elk, NC*

The Watauga Riverkeeper and MountainTrue are combating sediment erosion in our local waterways. The workday will be to plant small trees (stakes) along the Watauga River banks. Contact Jonathan Shumaker for more information or if you are interested in attending.

For the Record

Whitehouse Cliffs Trail, Saturday, November 16, 2019

Vic Hasler reporting

Rocky Fork State Park is steadily making basic improvements. The larger parking lot supported at least three groups and several dog-walking couples on a crisp sunny morning. The main park ranger gave me a brief tour of the lower portion of the new Whitehouse Cliffs Trail, which is officially closed due to safety concerns until the construction is finished. A truss pedestrian bridge, just needing ramps on both ends before opening, is in place over Flint Creek. I made the easy hike over to the battlefield noting that the trails now have color-coded markers. Since the morning's objective was to summit Whitehouse Cliffs, I followed two groups up the old trail route. The final steep climb was more challenging as the pin oaks had dropped a layer of crunchy, but slippery leaves. The clear view of the Rocky Fork valley was enjoyable in the sunshine. The quick return to the parking lot allowed time for lunch in Erwin.



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Over the past five years, club dues and donations to TEHCC have provided nearly \$8,000 for supplies purchased to maintain the Appalachian Trail and replace signs.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 11/1/2019

Purpose: Rehab Trail

Location: Section 14b, Bradley Gap to Stan Murray Shelter, North of Yellow Mountain Gap

People: Paul Benfield, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Renee Messina, Tony Messina, Joe Morris, Bob Peoples, Kevin Sedgwick

Summary: We arrived at Overmountain Shelter with clouds breaking. The sun shone the rest of the day. But there was a quarter inch of snow and a 25° temperature. Fortunately, it warmed to 45° in the afternoon. We harvested many locust logs that had already been cut for the golden winged warbler habitat near the shelter. And it took several hours to debark these logs. By afternoon we started carrying the logs up above Yellow Mountain Gap. All need to be installed and a few more carried.



Reporting: Tony Messina

Date: 11/2/2019

Purpose: Red Cross First Aid and CPR Training for Chainsaw Certification

Location: Knoxville

People: Tony Messina

Summary: I completed 4 hours of First Aid/CPR Training, including online segments.

Reporting: Steve Perri

Date: 11/2/2019

Purpose: Fall SORO RPC Meeting

Location: Young Harris, GA

People: Steve Perri

Summary: The Fall 2019 SORO meeting was held in Young Harris, GA. Many topics were covered in detail and meeting notes from ATC will be forthcoming. I shared many of our activities from 2019 in the Roan Highlands, being successful in leveraging the agency partnership to make decisions and do work in the same season. Our visitor-use management activities stem from the high use of trails from Cloudland to Doll Flats. Other clubs are significantly active managing high-use impacts as well.

Matt Robinson presented an overview of the "APPA FMS" which is a detailed data base of the A.T. Forest Management System. It can now be viewed on ATC's website. ATC plans to do updates in the winter months to make data available prior to the Spring RPC.

Updates from clubs can be made on edit-able pdf files on ATC's Project Planning webpage. The intended use is to develop projects based on content in the system. It is also used to help APPA assign a value to inventory assets so the NPS can rank requests for annual budgets. Also, it will ultimately be suitable for monitoring features (ie. open areas, campsites, shelters, etc). Another benefit is to rank the value of the A.T. relative to other park units for funding. Prior to the inventory archiving process, the value of the A.T. was second to last with a value of ~\$7/linear ft and now it is closer to \$28/linear ft. The average in the national park system is ~\$49/linear ft. The database has been helpful in doubling the funding level from the NP system to APPA. APPA asked for club feedback on the FMS system prior to Nov 8th.

Other topics included USFS procedures, ATC projects, food storage on the A.T., and Konnarock. A club volunteer check-in procedure for volunteers doing trail work alone was discussed extensively. USFS has a 25-item list of "to do's" to ensure accountability in case of injury or other situations that may arise if one is out alone. Clubs should review the list, discuss their procedures and develop a system for their club. Morgan Sommerville of ATC has been asked to develop a trail-wide recommendation for overnight food storage systems. Food containers will be recommended over food bags hung on trees or poles. The USFS is also likely to require food storage containers. The Nantahala/Pisgah Forest revision plan is reaching its final stages. We may want to coordinate a reply with ATC regarding recommendations for this last draft. The campsite inventory is being added to the Google Earth map system. Kim Peters has just finished the work started by Dan Firth. ATC was complimentary of our efforts to generate the data that will be loaded into the map system. This work helps ID the campsites that are more sustainable, providing resource protection and good access from the trail and near water. Red dots on the map identify campsites that are out of compliance. Clubs were asked to think about how to identify future Konnarock projects, how to increase club volunteers working with Konnarock, and how to minimize Konnarock schedule changes.

Lastly, ATC has begun to recognize RPC reps by providing plaques to past and current members. Another plaque is being prepared listing past RPC chairs; new plates will be added for future RPC chairs.

Meetings in 2020: Southern RPC, March 11-13 at Hungry Mother SP; Fall RPC meeting, first Saturday in Nov in Erwin.

Reporting: Kim Peters

Date: 11/2/2019

Purpose: Campsite assessment

Location: Section 1, TN/VA state line to Backbone Rock Trail

People: Phyllis Cairnes, Kim Peters

Summary: Hiking in and out using the Backbone Rock trail, Phyllis and I conducted campsite inventory between the TN/VA State line and the intersection with the Backbone Rock Trail. This last section completes the campsite inventory of TEHCC's section of the A.T.

Reporting: Gayle Riddervold

Date: 11/4/2019

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

Location: Section 8, US 321 to Wilbur Road

People: Gayle Riddervold, Becky Kinder

Summary: We sawed a medium blowdown, a half mile from the iron gate and removed it from the trail. We also cut back a few thorny weeds along the path to the dam.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 11/4/2019

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 16b, Iron Mountain Gap to section midpoint

People: Joe Morris

Summary: Jim Foster supplied a very accurate report on blowdowns and step-overs in the section which was very much appreciated. I dug new trail around a root ball two miles north of Iron Mountain Gap, removed step-overs, and cleaned waterbars.

Reporting: Steve Perri

Date: 11/5/2019

Purpose: Attend NE TN Outdoor Recreation Workshop

Location: Kingsport, TN

People: Steve Perri

Summary: I attended the NE TN Outdoor Recreation Workshop held at the Kingsport RCAM center. The consulting firm, Green Play, has been charged with helping develop an outdoor recreation assessment for NE Tennessee to make recommendations on what changes could be made to support and promote outdoor recreation. This meeting focused on identifying themes as part of a SWOT analysis and large maps from the USFS were printed out to highlight recreation trails and facilities in the region. We made updates to these with changes to reflect some trails not on the map and to remove or add structures incorrectly represented on the map. For the next step, Green Play will survey local groups and individuals to identify possibilities for strategic choices in 2020. The survey is expected to go out in early December or after the holidays.

Reporting: Kevin Sedgwick

Date: 11/5/2019

Purpose: Install mesh on bog bridges and walk-through

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

People: Kevin Sedgwick, Gloria Sedgwick

Summary: Gloria shuttled me and helped with the bog bridges before leaving. We finally installed non-slip mesh on two bog bridges. Lots of mud had washed down over the ends. I dug them out and created a way for water to pass by, raising one end. I broke apart fire ring/campsite. Winds have already brought down trees. I'm going to have to come back and cut a few out. I hand-sawed one 8" blowdown and cleared lots of limbs off the trail. I cleaned 12 waterbars and cut back roses, rodos, etc.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 11/7/2019

Purpose: Install steps and waterbars

Location: Section 14b, Bradley Gap to Stan Murray Shelter, Overmountain Trail A.T. Intersection

People: Bill Murdoch, Teri Rutherford, Ted Mowery, Paul Benfield, Joe Morris, Kevin Sedgwick, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart, Dean Baird, Tony Messina, Renee Messina

Summary: Racing the rain we installed 5 steps and 6 waterbars in various locations north of Overmountain Shelter. We projected the need for the installation of 2 additional waterbars and 3 additional steps in this area. We painted blazes and transported the unused locust logs to Kincora. The rains came as forecast around 1:00 and, sadly, cut short the time for fun in the woods.

Reporting: Dan Firth

Date: 11/9/2019

Purpose: Record GPS track of Turkey Pen Gap relo

Location: Section 5, TN 91 to Iron Mountain Shelter

People: Dan Firth

Summary: The southern portion of the Turkey Pen Gap relocation was not yet included in the official A.T. center line; so I recorded a GPS track. In addition, the recorded tracks to water sources were not included in the A.T. asset inventory. These tracks will be provided to update official trail inventory data.

Reporting: Tony Messina

Date: 11/9/2019

Purpose: Chainsaw Certification

Location: Pisgah Forest, NC

People: Tony Messina

Summary: I took 8 hours of training for B Sawyer Certification (Bucking) at Pisgah Ranger Station in Pisgah Forest, NC. Instructor: Chuck Ramsey.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 11/9/2019

Purpose: Late fall check

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

People: Vic Hasler

Summary: This trail section is fully passible. The graffiti board has plenty of space per two SOBO section hikers. Because of this insight, I skipped the hike to Curley Maple Gap Shelter, thus allowing time to work on two blowdowns. First was a very fresh knot (still flowing sap) of softwood caused by a large branch breaking from another tree. The smaller limbs were cleared to open a path leaving one step-over. The second was a trunk break held over the trail. A few cuts allow better passage until the suspended crown is removed by a sawyer. Travel to the south end of the section found one dead pine trunk to saw off the trail. Next, Ella's lost cellphone was discovered on the trail (fortunately an unlocked screen) and returned to her at USA Raft. Hikers confirmed that the southern portion was in good shape, so I was able to call it a day as the evening shadows grew.

Reporting: Gayle Riddervold

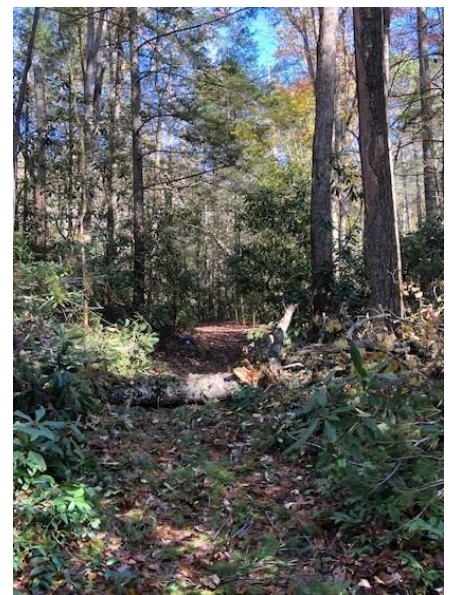
Date: 11/11/2019

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

Location: Section 8, US 321 to Wilbur Road

People: Gayle Riddervold, Becky Kinder

Summary: We sawed a medium-size blowdown and moved it off the trail, close to the dam. A few thorny vines were cut back as well.





Removing the stuffed chair

to access the trail from a road via a steep hill. The crew also removed a large stuffed chair that had been rolled a hundred feet or so below the trail.

Reporting: Gerald Scott

Date: 11/15/2019

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

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

People: Harold Wexler, Eric Scott, Gerald Scott

Summary: We cleared waterbars and steps, dug out the fire ring at the shelter, lopped rhododendrons, and removed several small blowdowns. We were able to clear an 18" blowdown just north of Sugar Hollow Creek using the Silky Katanaboy saw.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 11/15/2019

Purpose: Remove blowdown

Location: Section 16b, Just north of Iron Mountain Gap

People: Carl Fritz, Tony Messina

Summary: We removed a 30" blowdown that was blocking the trail.

Reporting: Dean Baird

Date: 11/16/2019

Purpose: Trail Maintenance

Location: Section 9b, Pond Flats to Hampton trailhead

People: Dean Baird, Jennifer Baird, Joe Morris

Summary: We re-worked the bottom steps at the first switchback starting up Pond Mountain from the railroad grade. Erosion was threatening loss of the bottom 2 rock steps; so we placed a log step, 2 rock steps and a side log and rocks for cribbing. We then walked to within approximately one mile of the top of Pond cutting vegetation and several blowdowns. We also removed one very large bag of trash from one campsite (on Hampton blue-blaze trail) where someone had left a huge mess in the fire ring.

Reporting: Tony Messina

Date: 11/18/2019

Purpose: Evaluate possible Accessible Trail improvements

Location: Section 4b, Osborne Farm

People: Tony Messina, Carl Fritz, Ed Cwirko, Ted Mowery, Paul Benfield

Summary: We reviewed proposed improvements for the Accessible Trail with Ed Cwirko, a civil engineer. He provided valuable feedback on options for paving and for water management along the trail.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 11/19/2019

Purpose: Prepare materials for Round Bald

Location: Section 14c: Stan Murray Shelter to Carvers Gap Watauga Work Center

People: Carl Fritz, Ted Mowery

Summary: We retrieved some locust logs from Watauga Work Center to go up on Round Bald tomorrow. I also got some other materials and supplies ready for tomorrow.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 11/14/2019

Purpose: Rehab Trail

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

People: Dean Baird, Paul Benfield, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Tony Messina, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Bill Murdoch, Tim Stewart

Summary: With a couple of inches of snow still remaining, we only saw tracks from one north-bound hiker and one south-bound hiker. One south-bound hiker in the afternoon passed through. Four of us hiked down to Curley Maple Gap to retrieve tools we had cached in the summer. We all then worked about a mile south of Indian Grave Gap digging trail sections and installing a number of locust steps.

This is the first time I can remember that we used 100 feet of rope



Harold Wexler using the Silky Katanaboy saw

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 11/20/2019

Purpose: Rehab Trail

Location: Section 14c, Round Bald

People: Paul Benfield, Richard Carter, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples, Teri Rutherford, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart; six Appalachian Ranger District personnel

Summary: We intended to start installing at least seventeen additional steps on Round Bald. The last several hundred feet getting to Carver's Gap, the temperature dropped to 30° with about an inch of snow, wind was increasing significantly for the afternoon, and the roads were slick. We scrambled to haul 25 logs up Round Bald with UTVs. Rather than risk falls or frozen hands and feet, we started for home. Thanks to the Forest Service help, logs are available now when the weather clears.



Reporting: Dan Firth

Date: 11/25/2019

Purpose: Scout for locust

Location: Section 9b, Pond Flats to Hampton trailhead, South side

People: Dan Firth

Summary: I scouted for available locust for use in future maintenance on the south side. Several were found near the ridge top.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 11/27/2019

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

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

People: Ed Spear

Summary: Ed hiked from TN 91 to Double Springs Shelter. There was a minor blowdown at both ends. He successfully removed them with a hand saw. There is a 20" oak blowdown about two mile in and near the camp site. It is parallel to the trail. Only the top is somewhat in the trail. He cut many of the limbs so that hikers can get around it. Eventually, it needs to be removed. He encountered nine hikers; five were locals and four were distance hiking mostly as south bounders.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 11/29/2019

Purpose: Install sign and minor rehab

Location: Section 12b, Mountaineer Falls to Walnut Mountain Road

People: Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Bob Peoples, Steve Perri

Summary: We installed a "CAMPING" sign made by Steve Perri at the tenting area just south of Mountaineer Falls. The previous sign had disappeared. We did some minor trail rehab. The trail is in very good shape thanks to Gerald and Harold.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 11/29/2019

Purpose: Brush access trail

Location: Section 12c, Elk River

People: Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Bob Peoples

Summary: The access trail along Elk River had become a tangle of rhododendron. This was pushing hikers and our maintainers almost into the river and required clamoring up and down the four-foot river bank. We cut back the rhododendron. Also, we found a new blowdown at Jones Branch. We cut off the top of the tree and its protruding branches, but left the main tree beside the trail. Its root ball is 25 feet in the air, if you can envision that.