



# The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

September 2020

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

Co-Editors – [Terry Oldfield](#) and [Sharon Burnette](#)

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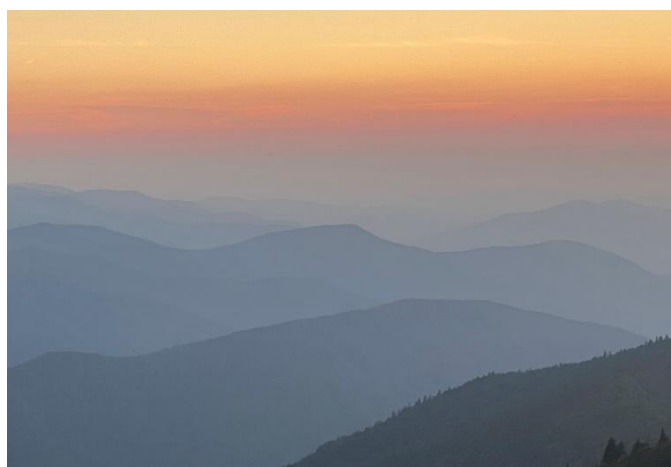
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*The Sunset from Mt. LeConte (see page 2)*

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## Tony Messina, 2019 TEHCC Maintainer of the Year

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*Submitted by Vic Hasler (A.T. Committee Chair) and Carl Fritz (A.T. Projects Coordinator)*



Tony was surprised during a regular crew outing in late August to be presented with our Maintainer of the Year plaque. He retired from Eastman Chemical early in 2019 and immediately became very active with the Appalachian Trail – logging 351 hours of service in 2019 (while his wife Renee contributed a sizable 73 hours). Tony constantly wants to learn new trail maintenance techniques. He made extra effort to become chainsaw certified, and also tuned all club chainsaws, replacing spark plugs and filters plus obtaining proper parts and spares for our wide variety of saws – thus all club chainsaws are currently ready to go into the field! With Renee, the couple have become TEHCC's rapid response crew for blowdowns. Tony developed a titanium rod that Renee can use as a walking stick, but also can serve as a pry bar to move logs. Tony analyzed the accessible trail on the Osborne Farm and wrote a detailed engineering proposal to upgrade the path. (Funding source is now being sought.) Elsewhere, he is a very active trail maintainer with the new East Tennessee Trail Association (ETTA) working on area USFS trails, Bays Mountain Park, and also trail repair at Eastman Recreation Park (more in a future newsletter). Finally, Tony is known to referee soccer games in TN and VA in the evening - even after a full day of trail maintenance. The club greatly appreciates the contributions of Tony Messina through this recognition.

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## Tri-Cities 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb Donation

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*Submitted by Jonathan Shumaker*

Alex Lyttle, a member of TEHCC and the Eastman Fire Department, made the Steering Committee aware of the 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb. Alex provided information on how to join the climb virtually or donate if you are interested. See the [event](#) information in this newsletter for more details on the climb. TEHCC has a high balance of funds due to cancellation of the Spring Dinner and other project cancellations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, the Steering Committee decided to provide a donation on behalf of TEHCC to the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation through the stair climb event. This decision was made to sponsor the activity of the stair climb as a physical challenge and to support families of local fallen firefighters.

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## LeConte Lodge: A Pandemic Getaway

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*Submitted by Jonathan Shumaker*

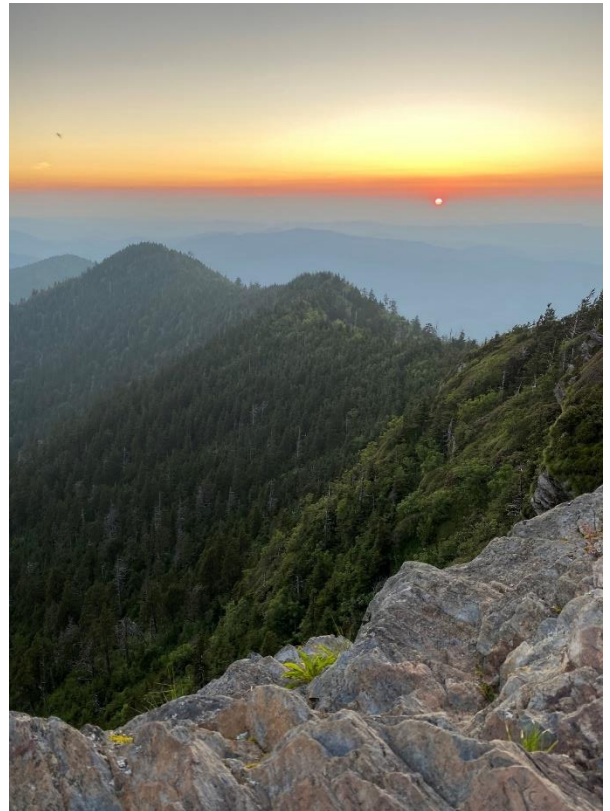
During this time when it is much safer to be at home than out and about, it can be hard to find a place where it is possible to really get away. My fiancée and I booked the trip to LeConte before there were any COVID-19 cases in the U.S. Our stay was planned for early July, but when things started shutting down in March and April, we started to wonder if it was going to be possible to go up to the lodge at all. The lodge and the rest of the facilities in Great Smokey Mountain National Park were shut down until early May. The park began a phased reopening and the lodge was opened back up to guests on May 18.

So we began planning our trip up to the lodge. Originally the goal was to stay somewhere around Gatlinburg for a day or two after the hike, but due to concerns with eating at restaurants, we decided to make it a short trip and just stay at the lodge. We decided to do the Alum Cave trail which is the most traveled up to the lodge. It is shorter than the other options, but has just as much elevation gain. We found a couple of friends, Kelsey Niehoff and Tori Knollmeyer, who were interested in joining us. Neither of them had been to the lodge before, so we were excited to take them with us; Teni and I went for the first time last year. The week of the trip, the weather was looking like it might be a problem. Cool temperatures and a lot of rain were in the forecast for the entire week surrounding our stay. We got our packs ready and loaded up the car for the early morning departure to make sure we could get to the trailhead in time to make it to the lodge for dinner.

As expected, the park was buzzing with people. As we have seen with popular A.T. parking areas in our region, a lot of people are interested in getting outside and doing some hiking. We were able to find a picnic table to eat lunch at the Chimneys Picnic Area before driving to the Alum Cave trailhead. Cars were parked all along the side of the road for a significant distance due to the popularity of the trail. A few spots were open near the trailhead, so luckily, we didn't have a trek just to get on the trail. The weather was great down in the valley when we started hiking: humid, 80°F and significant sun. It looked like there was a chance that the rain was going to stay away for the first time that week. It was a great hike up the trail even though some areas were muddy from the rain the previous days. We stopped at Inspiration Point and at the cave to soak in the great views.

We made it up to the lodge around 3:30 in the afternoon. The weather was perfect: mid-60s, slight breeze, and a little cloud cover. We got checked into the cabin and decided to do some hiking on top of the mountain before dinner. We hiked up to the actual high point of Mt. LeConte and onto Myrtle Point where there is a view over to Clingmans Dome. Then we got back to the lodge and set up our porch for dinner.

Due to social distancing, the lodge has been serving dinner at each cabin. Because the weather was so nice, we were able to sit out on our porch and enjoy our dinner and have some conversation with neighbors in other cabins. After dinner, we hiked up to the Clifftop viewing area to catch the sunset. One of the best parts about staying at LeConte is getting to see the sunset across the surrounding mountains. The first time that Teni and I went, there was too much cloud cover to see the sunset. This time we had a perfect evening for watching the sunset. Words can't describe the wonderful view that we had to watch the sun go down.



Myrtle Point is a great spot to watch the sunrise, but sadly when we got up in the morning and hiked out to the point, there was too much cloud cover to be able to see the sun come up. We went back to the cabin and got our morning coffee from the dining hall and waited for breakfast. As always, the food was exceptional. It is so nice to be able to get a warm, freshly prepared meal when you are up in the mountains. After breakfast, we packed up and hit the trail back down to the car. We went the whole trip with no rain - something we weren't expecting.

In these times, when it is hard to find a place where you can feel comfortable going, the hike up and stay at the lodge were an awesome option for us. We were able to socially distance from the staff and other guests at the lodge our entire time. They closed off the main room, which means you can't play the games or play the guitars that they typically have at the lodge, but it was still a great stay. The areas for checking in and around the dining hall had spaces marked off for social distancing and the staff all wore masks and gloves when delivering food. The fact that we were able to hop in the car and take a picnic lunch and not have to stop at a restaurant also made it a great option. We are in a prime area to take advantage of this wonderful attraction, and I would recommend a stay at LeConte Lodge to anyone who can make it up the trail!

## TEHCC Welcomes New Members

Daniel Byrge  
Shan Ali Lalani  
Nicole Perez

Dylan Hennings  
Christina Woshner  
Noah Daugherty

Victoria Johnson  
Paula Bulcao  
Steven Haynes

Samuel Timlick  
Keith Snow  
Anthony Murray

Brianna Borders  
Matthew Rivera  
Nicole Blase

## Trail Wiki Hike Summary

*Submitted by Tim Schaefer*

For those who [log their hikes](#) at the [Trail Wiki](#) and have the checkbox marked to share their logs in the newsletter, we will report on the monthly hikes. The purpose of this feature is to see where others are going and get ideas for your own hikes. If you have any questions about this section or the [Trail Wiki](#) in general, please contact [tim@tehcc.org](mailto:tim@tehcc.org).

Date	Trail(s)	Hike Distance	# of Hikers	Hike Comments	Tags	Reported By
<a href="#">11-Jul-2020</a>	<a href="#">Holston Bluffs</a> <a href="#">Warriors' Path</a> <a href="#">State Park</a>	1 mi	1	Easy daybreak hike for the old dogs	Daybreak Dog Hike	<a href="#">Tim</a>
<a href="#">18-Jul-2020</a>	<a href="#">Holston Bluffs</a> <a href="#">Warriors' Path</a> <a href="#">State Park</a>	1 mi	1	Easy daybreak hikes for the old dogs	Daybreak Dog Hike	<a href="#">Tim</a>
<a href="#">19-Jul-2020</a>	<a href="#">Fire Tower Trail</a> <a href="#">Bays Mountain Park</a>	4.2 mi	1	Hiked Lakeside Trail clockwise to Hemlock Trail cutting across Lake Road to Fire Tower Trail. Return was down River Mountain Rd. to Feagins Gap, then left on Lake Road all the way back to Nature Center. Hot day but nice hike.		<a href="#">Andysteffan</a>
<a href="#">25-Jul-2020</a>	<a href="#">Overlook</a> <a href="#">Warriors' Path</a> <a href="#">State Park</a>	1.46 mi	1	Easy daybreak hike for the old dogs	Daybreak Dog Hike	<a href="#">Tim</a>
<a href="#">26-Jul-2020</a>	<a href="#">Daniel Boone Trail</a>	6.6 mi	1	The hike started at daybreak to beat summertime heat and afternoon thundershowers (both successfully). Although the region has had some heavy rain, the dirt path was not muddy nor any runoff streams were seen flowing... <a href="#">[more]</a>	GPS Logged	<a href="#">Vhasler</a>
<a href="#">01-Aug-2020</a>	<a href="#">Sinking Waters</a> <a href="#">Warriors' Path</a> <a href="#">State Park</a>	1.25 mi	1	Just the wetlands loop this morning	Daybreak Dog Hike	<a href="#">Tim</a>
<a href="#">01-Aug-2020</a>	<a href="#">Channels Trail</a> <a href="#">The Channels</a> <a href="#">Natural Area</a> <a href="#">Preserve</a>	6.4 mi	1	Purpose of today's hike was exploring a new trail in the region while collecting data to create a TEHCC Trail Wiki page to inform others considering this route. Virginia Department of Forestry had confirmed the seasonal gates... <a href="#">[more]</a>		<a href="#">Vhasler</a>
<a href="#">15-Aug-2020</a>	<a href="#">Holston Bluffs</a> <a href="#">Warriors' Path</a> <a href="#">State Park</a>	1 mi	1	Taking the old ladies down to the beach and back	Daybreak Dog Hike	<a href="#">Tim</a>

Date	Trail(s)	Hike Distance	# of Hikers	Hike Comments	Tags	Reported By
<a href="#">15-Aug-2020</a>	<a href="#">Sill Branch</a> <a href="#">Clarks Creek</a>	1.2 mi	1	Exploring the Clarks Creek area to expand the Trail Wiki. This route appears to be the main reason folks are visiting the former recreation area (now classified as general forest). A cloudy day with rain clouds moving north, thus only one other couple seen on the trail.		<a href="#">Vhasler</a>
<a href="#">15-Aug-2020</a>	<a href="#">Longarm Branch</a> <a href="#">Clarks Creek</a>	0.9 mi	1	Exploring the Clarks Creek area to expand the Trail Wiki while being out of house (since working from home). AllTrails lists a misnamed Pine Ridge Falls Trail that is a spur off Longarm Trail left right after the first creek crossing... <a href="#">[more]</a>		<a href="#">Vhasler</a>
<a href="#">22-Aug-2020</a>	<a href="#">River Mountain Road</a> <a href="#">Bays Mountain Park</a>	7.5 mi	2	Was a great day for a hike. We were mostly on the road so we had plenty of space to avoid some of the weeds that were starting to grow up around the edges of the path.		<a href="#">Jshumaker</a>
<a href="#">23-Aug-2020</a>	<a href="#">Fall Creek Loop</a> <a href="#">Warriors' Path</a>	1 mi	2	Took the cats out for a Sunday hike around the loop.		<a href="#">Jshumaker</a>

## Event Schedule – Next Two Months

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
September 5	Paddle the Lower Watauga, Class I-II, 3 pm	<a href="#">Debbie Briscoe</a>	423-534-3636
September 12	Tri-Cities 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb	Alex Lyttle	423-360-6534
September 17	Steering Committee Meeting, 11:30 am	<a href="#">Jonathan Shumaker</a>	417-389-6987
September 19	Third Saturday, Hiking with Tools!	<a href="#">Vic Hasler</a>	423-416-3166
September 19	Bays Mountain – Hike to the Antennas	<a href="#">Jonathan Shumaker</a>	417-389-6987
September 26	F/B: <a href="#">Cloudland Trail</a>	<a href="#">Vic Hasler</a>	423-416-3166
October 3	A.T.: Spivey Gap to Big Bald	<a href="#">Jonathan Shumaker</a>	417-389-6987
October 15	Steering Committee Meeting, 11:30 am	<a href="#">Jonathan Shumaker</a>	417-389-6987
October 24	<a href="#">Channels Trail</a>	<a href="#">Vic Hasler</a>	423-416-3166

## Details of Upcoming Events

**Note:** Due to COVID – 19, the following regularly scheduled maintenance and paddling activities are not being held in September. Be sure to check the October newsletter for updates.

- Tuesday Evenings: Johnson City Roll Practice, 7:30 – 9:00 pm
- Most Thursdays: Weekly A.T. Trail Maintenance
- Thursday Evenings: Kayak Session, Kingsport Aquatic Center, 6:45 – 7:45 pm

## Recurring Events

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

Contact: [Jonathan Shumaker](#) 423-389-6987

Location: Teleconference

The Steering Committee guides the general program for the club. The Committee normally meets at lunchtime on the third Thursday of each month. Meetings are open to all TEHCC members. We are using teleconferencing due to Eastman's directions to current employees. If you want to listen/join in, please contact me.

### **Lower Watauga, Class I-II, Biweekly on Saturdays (September 5, last of the season), 3 pm**

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

We will launch from Riverside Park in Elizabethton behind the ballpark at 3 pm. Call Deb first to check and see if it's on! Because of COVID-19, please wear a mask during the shuttle with the windows down and be prepared to limit the number of people in each car. Or you can choose to run your own shuttle with the help of a friend or family member.

Please be prepared for cold water and wear appropriate gear. Helmets and spray skirts are required. 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. We'll get back to the ballpark and transfer boats back to our vehicles by about 7:30.

**Directions:** From W Elk Ave in Elizabethton turn at the MISO Teriyaki House 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

### **Tri-Cities 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb, Saturday, September 12, 2020, 8 am – 1 pm**

Leader: Alex Lyttle (text 423-360-6534)

The annual Tri-Cities 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb is an event I have participated in for the last few years. It is a truly amazing and humbling way to remember one of the most pivotal events of our nation's past. The occasion involves climbing 110 flights of stairs to represent the height of the World Trade Center towers (over 1300 ft). The actual event at Bristol Motor Speedway is now full at 343 participants.

The local event website is [http://events.firehero.org/site/TR?fr\\_id=2189&pg=entry](http://events.firehero.org/site/TR?fr_id=2189&pg=entry). You can support National Fallen Firefighters Foundation with a donation made by credit card through the website, but to get to the right team you need to "Donate to an Individual" and then search for "Eastman Hiking Club/FD." Alternatively, join the team as a Virtual Climber (password "eastmanchem"), which does not have to be completed on this Saturday. For \$40 entry, you'll receive a Stair Climb toolkit, and then a t-shirt after year's end. I hope that some of you will join this wonderful experience.

### **Third Saturday, Hiking with Tools! Saturday, September 19, 2020, 8 am**

Contact: Vic Hasler, 423-416-3166

Hiking with Tools! is an opportunity to enjoy a day hike on our beautiful section of the Appalachian Trail while helping out with routine maintenance (lopping rhododendron, breaking up fire rings, and painting blazes). All tools will be furnished and no prior experience is required; we'll provide hands-on training! The plan is to gather at Indian Grave Gap trailhead at 8 am to head south. We'll hike/work as far/long as the group chooses and then return back to the parking area. Please text/call me by Thursday 9/17 evening so that I can obtain sufficient tools. (Also note, me maties, that 9/19 is [Talk Like a Pirate Day](#), so be prepared with your best accent.)

### **Bays Mountain – Hike to the Antennas, Saturday, September 19, 2020, 9 am**

Leader: Jonathan Shumaker, 417-389-6987

Rating: Moderate, uphill climb to the antenna

Lots of trails lead to the antennas at Bays Mountain. We will meet in the parking area near the amphitheater and hike over through the animal exhibits to the Azalea Trail. Depending on who joins and how long the group wants to hike, we can come right back down to the cars, or go around the back side of the mountain to the firetower. The gate entry fee is \$5 unless you have a membership to the park already (I highly recommend getting one). Bring water for the hike and a lunch if you want to have a picnic at one of the many tables around the parking area. The last Saturday I was at the park there was a food truck, so you may be able to get lunch there if you don't bring one. Call or text Jonathan at 417-389-6987 to let him know if you are planning on joining or if you have any questions.



## **F/B: [Cloudland Trail](#), Saturday, September 26, 2020, 10 am**

**Leader:** [Vic Hasler](#), 423-416-3166

**Rating:** *Easy 2.4-mile in-out hike with little elevation change*

**Start:** 10 am at parking lot. **Finish:** 1 pm after lunch

Access to the Rhododendron Gardens parking area in the Roan Mountain area closes after this Saturday. An easy hike is rewarded with expansive vistas from the Roan High Bluff viewing platform. Due to the pandemic, let's meet at the parking lot by 10:15 am. There is a \$3 entry fee for day use, so have some cash to pay the USFS. Wear comfortable walking shoes and appropriate clothing (noting that the temperature is 10-15°F cooler than the cities). Bring water, snack, and camera. We'll meander along to visit the two overlooks, then return to the vehicles. If interested, we can have lunch in Roan Mountain. Return time is mid-afternoon. For further information, check the TEHCC Trail Wiki link in the title. Please call/text me to know headcount in case of last-minute changes.

## **A.T.: Spivey Gap to Big Bald, Saturday, October 3, 2020, 8 am**

**Leader:** Jonathan Shumaker, 417-389-6987

**Rating:** *Difficult, 6 mi uphill hike (12 mi round trip) with 3000 ft of elevation gain*

We will drive down and meet at the Spivey Gap trailhead (1 hr drive from Kingsport) at 8:00 am to get an early start. The hike is southbound on the Appalachian Trail to Big Bald which is 6 miles. We will eat a light lunch at the top and then hike back down to the cars at Spivey Gap. Bring plenty of water, snacks and a lunch for the hike. Consider the weather to bring clothing layers, because the elevation at Big Bald is 5,500 ft. We hope to be back at the cars around 2:30 pm. Call or text Jonathan at 417-389-6987 to let him know if you are planning on joining or if you have any questions.

## **[Channels Trail](#), Saturday, October 24, 2020, 8 am**

**Leader:** [Vic Hasler](#), 423-416-3166

**Rating:** *Medium Hard ~6.4-mile in-out hike with 1,260' of net elevation change*

**Start:** 8 am from Colonial Heights. **Back:** 4-5 pm

I explored this trail in early August as the alternative route to the popular Channels Natural Area Preserve, which allowed creation of the Trail Wiki page linked in the hike title. My intent is to return to allow others to experience this option versus the ridgetop path, potentially with some light trail maintenance. An early start from Colonial Heights is desired since it's a good one-hour drive to the bottom of the mountain and then up a couple of miles on the gravel forest road to reach the preferred trailhead. The group pace will be slower, pausing to paint some of the red blazes as agreed with the state forest ranger. The goal is to have a late lunch up at the Hayter Gap firetower area with its views. Once folks have finished enjoying the maze of channels, we'll head back at a faster pace. Estimated return time to Colonial Heights is between 4-5 pm. Please call/e-mail the hike leader so I will have a headcount for transportation or for last-minute changes.

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## **For the Record**

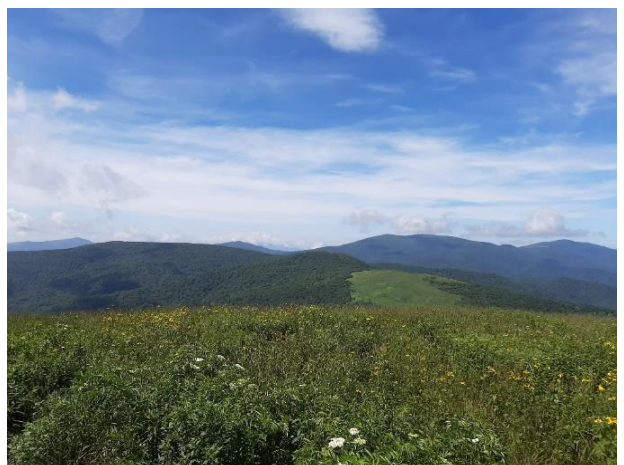
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### **Yellow Mountain Gap to Big Hump Mountain, Saturday, August 1, 2020**

*Kyle Haas reporting*

This was a great hike if you enjoy the Roan Mountain area and the amazing views on top of the mountain! However, if "blazing your own trail" is not for you, you may want to read further. A group of us, Jonathan Shumaker, Teni Butler, Trey Sanfrey, Mackenzie Manning, and I met at the Yellow Mountain Gap trailhead. At the base, we saw a sign for the Overmountain Victory Trail and decided to take that to meet up with the Appalachian Trail on Roan Mountain. The trail started off well with only a little overgrowth, but as this went farther, we came across a field with waist-high grass that was not maintained at all. Luckily, one of the members was wearing long pants and ran around trying to find where the trail picked back up. We eventually made it to the Appalachian Trail through a continued severely overgrown trail and then hiked all the way to Big Hump Mountain! On the way back, we decided to go via the Overmountain Shelter and found that the blocked off road was indeed the correct path straight to our vehicles. It was a memorable day, full of adventures, mistakes, and good weather!

**Future Advice:** Besides being more confident in the path you are taking, make sure to bring sunscreen for the top of the mountain!



## Phipps Bend Trail, Saturday, August 8, 2020

*Vic Hasler reporting*



*Holston River – photo by Tim Schaefer*

While planned as a TEHCC hike, an invitation was also extended to BSA Troop 48 as an alternative outing since parking at Hayter Gap/VA80 for their scheduled hike to The Channels is restricted due to the pandemic. Five scouts and three parents joined me for this chance to complete some basic skill learning while enjoying a six-mile hike along the Holston River.

It's been six years since the last club hike here, but the basic path is the same. Trees along the trail have grown and now provide some shade in places. The orange-blazed poles have been replaced with a few TVA hiker signposts. Horse riders are still common users of the trail. Geocaching was added as a feature on the trail wiki since several are hidden along the path. The group completed this hike on a warm morning which grew hotter, thus the shade trees became steadily more appreciated.

## Buffalo Mountain

### White Rock Loop, Saturday, August 15, 2020

*Kyle Haas reporting*

Meeting at the Hartsell Hollow Trailhead, Alex Lyttle, Matthew Rivera, and I began the hike around Buffalo Mountain. There was rain in the area, but we decided to begin the loop making our way to Huckleberry Knob first for the views over Johnson City. The trail was well maintained with abundant signs in the area. After a decent elevation gain, we wanted to take a detour to Tip Top which was about 15 minutes one-way off the main loop. At this point it didn't appear that rain was imminent and thought we had time for this section. This look-out gave really great views of the mountains and would be a wonderful place to stop for a lunch if hiking during this time. We finally made our way over to White Rock and the views over I-26. Finally, it was when we started our descent that the rain began to fall hard. We quickly and safely made our way to the bottom but not without getting soaked! I would highly recommend this park as I was extremely impressed with the trails and signs that were available.



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## A.T. Maintenance Reports

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**Maintainers, please note:** The Appalachian Trail Conservancy would like all maintainers to [please view the training video and job hazard analysis found on this webpage \(appalachiantrail.org/get-involved/volunteer/safety/covid-19\)](https://www.appalachiantrail.org/get-involved/volunteer/safety/covid-19) regarding "Volunteer Protocols During COVID-19". Once that awareness is gained, please complete the online Acknowledgement Form, if you haven't already done so.

**Reporting:** Katie Currier

**Date:** 6/17/2020

**Purpose:** SAWS Crew – Restore tread

**Location:** Section 6, From Vandeventer Shelter to 3 miles north

**People:** Gabe Nelson, Michael Stapleton, Grey Bullock

**Summary:** The crew re-treaded over 300 ft of tread in the 3 miles north of Vandeventer, reestablishing the backslope, hinge and de-berming. They also cleaned water diversions, cut back encroaching vegetation, and removed blowdowns.

**Reporting:** Lori Mirror

**Date:** 7/27 – 7/28/2020

**Purpose:** Cut weeds, cut and move log, and pick up trash

**Location:** Section 15b, Cloudland to Beartown Mountain

**People:** Lori Mirrer, Kim Peters

**Summary:** Kim and I combined trail work with a wonderful, quiet overnight hang at Ash Gap. On the way to the Gap from Cloudland, we cut weeds and over-hanging braches. There was also a log across the trail that Kim was able to saw and move out of the way. Several waterbars were clogged; we cleared what we could with what we had with us. The water source was in good shape, although the walk down to it can be nasty, particularly slippery right before you get to the water.

After a lovely night at Ash Gap, I took over the sling blade from Kim and cleared the path up to Beartown Mountain. Both days, I collected trash along the trail and in Ash Gap. Fortunately, the few fire rings were relatively clean. There's a larger log across the trail that could be a project for someone wanting some chainsaw time (I'll send a photo and location). And I plan to be back (in a few weeks, probably) to fully clean the waterbars, touch up some blazes and add two where I think they'd help hikers. I'm hoping to make it another overnight.

**Reporting:** Jim Foster

**Date:** 7/29/2020

**Purpose:** Cut back annual growth and trim weeds

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

**People:** Joel Zabel, Joy Zabel, Jim Foster

**Summary:** We trimmed both the trail and the growth along the sides. We also cut an 18" blowdown (mostly Joel) with the Silky. We saw 3 hikers and the trail is in good shape.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 7/29/2020

**Purpose:** Rehab trail

**Location:** Section 19b, Chestoa to Outfitters

**People:** Carl Fritz, Tony Messina

**Summary:** We removed four minor blowdowns, some being step-overs. We added more stepping stones to a wet area closer to the Outfitters. We improved the cut rock steps near the top, by cutting a rock and placing an additional step. We also used rocks to block hikers from walking to the outside of top of steps.

**Reporting:** Scotty Bowman

**Date:** 7/30 – 8/1/2020

**Purpose:** Brush out the trail corridor

**Location:** Section 6, Iron Mountain Shelter to Vandeventer Shelter

**People:** Scotty Bowman, Grey Bullock, Gabe Nelson

**Summary:** The SAWS crew hiked in Thursday, July 30 and I hiked in the next day Friday, July 31. Over the next 3 days, we brushed out 4 miles starting at Iron Mountain Shelter working our way south to Vandeventer Shelter. Although it rained most of the time, it did not impede the work. During our time, I removed 5 blowdowns with a silky saw. All springs are flowing really well, plenty of water to go around. We were going to repaint blazes, but I will attempt that at another time when the weather is better.

**Reporting:** Katie Currier

**Date:** 8/2/2020

**Purpose:** Brush and blaze SAWS section

**Location:** Section 7, Wilbur Dam Rd to a few miles north of Vandeventer Shelter

**People:** Gabe Nelson, Grey Bullock

**Summary:** This crew brushed back annual vegetation and reblazed sections that needed it.

**Reporting:** Ken Murray

**Date:** 8/2/2020

**Purpose:** Vegetation Control

**Location:** Section 20b, Temple Hill Gap to NBK Shelter

**People:** Ken Murray, Lotta Murray

**Summary:** We spent a long, hot day cutting back encroaching vegetation with a string trimmer from Temple Hill Gap south 1.5 miles towards the No Business Knob Shelter. Since access to this part of the section is so difficult, we did a very thorough job cutting back the vegetation (mostly rhodos). There is approximately one more mile remaining before the shelter.

**Reporting:** Gayle Riddervold

**Date:** 8/4/2020

**Purpose:** Routine Maintenance

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

**People:** Gayle Riddervold and Becky Kinder

**Summary:** We removed two blowdowns, cut back weeds, and dismantled a fire ring.

**Reporting:** Tony Messina

**Date:** 8/5/2020



**Purpose:** Clear blowdowns

**Location:** Section 19b, 0.6 mile each way from USA Raft

**People:** Tony and Renee Messina

**Summary:** We hiked about a half mile north of USA Raft to clear a pair of blowdowns which had been reported to Carl this week. One was a tangle of smallish trees and the other was a single 12 inch tree across the trail. Both required a chainsaw. We also cleared three other recent small blowdowns that did not require a saw.

Afterwards we hiked about 0.7 miles south of USA Raft to clear a couple of leaners that Carl and I had observed last week. Both showed impending danger of falling and taking out sections of the trail with their rootballs. One was a single 12-inch tree near rock steps and the other was a triple-trunk of 12 inchers. When the largest of the triple-headed one broke off, Renee was standing where she could even feel the ground raise a bit under the rootball. We also cleared a couple more small recent blowdowns that did not require the saw. Afterwards, Renee hiked on out to the Nolichucky Bridge and I hiked back to the car and picked her up on the way home. We ALMOST made it out before the rain hit, but didn't get too wet.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 8/6/2020

**Purpose:** Cut vegetation and rehab trail

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

**People:** John Beaudet, Carl Fritz, Van Hovey, Greg Kramer, Tony Messina, Joe Morris, Bill Murdoch, Ken Murray, Lotta Murray, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** On a hot, humid day with thunderstorms predicted by mid afternoon, we covered from Devils Creek Gap to Temple Hill Gap. Lotta, Ken, Bill, Tony and Greg finished cutting all the encroaching vegetation on this stretch. Using loppers, battery hedge trimmer, battery chainsaw, and bladed trimmers, it should definitely remain open for a year. We also removed most step-overs. The rest of us did some trail rehab south of Temple Hill Gap, mostly by redigging trail and removing roots. Several rehab opportunities remain between NBK Shelter and the gap, but they are not urgent. Everyone got out safely before thunderstorms hit about 5 pm.

**Reporting:** Kayla Carter

**Date:** 8/7/2020

**Purpose:** Share Stewardship

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

**People:** Allie Bynum, Kayla Carter

**Summary:** I was quite excited to share the experience of giving back to the trail with Allie! Painting blazes is one of the more memorable and exciting things we can do to bring folks into the fold. I think she is interested in learning more about how to adopt a section of the trail! We took turns painting blue blazes from the rock outcropping junction on the A.T. to the water source and no further. I'm glad we could do so, as there were a few folks who doubled checked with us for directions. I think this will help folks feel more confident about their hike while day hiking and help thru-hikers stay on the right path at this sometimes confusing intersection. We cut back encroaching vegetation on the blue-blaze trail and the A.T. to Jones Falls. I'm planning another trip soon to finally get after the blowdowns and do one long sweep of the whole section as the season changes. Thanks to the Club for supporting improvements to this access point to the A.T. from Elk River Falls.

**Reporting:** Richard Ramsey

**Date:** 8/8/2020

**Purpose:** Cut back vegetation at Doll Flats

**Location:** Section 14a, Doll Flats

**People:** Cheryl and Richard Ramsey

**Summary:** We cut weeds along the trail with a string trimmer through the field. We also cleaned up the campsites and fire rings.

**Reporting:** Scotty Bowman

**Date:** 8/8/2020

**Purpose:** Rehab Trail

**Location:** Section 7: One mile south of Vandeventer Shelter

**People:** Scotty Bowman

**Summary:** It had been relayed to me that a tree had come down and the rootball pulled the trail away leaving a big hole. I hiked in to address the situation. It was a very balmy, hot hike to the spot. I had cut a locust that had fallen across the trail last fall and carried it to the spot where the tree had fallen. I filled the hole and reestablished the back-bench and tread. Along the way, I cleaned out a couple of waterbars and removed one small blowdown.

**Reporting:** Jake Mitchell

**Date:** 8/8/2020

**Purpose:** Weed and mow

**Location:** Section 14b, Overmountain Shelter to Little Hump

**People:** Jake Mitchell, Cody Mitchell

**Summary:** We walked out to Bradley Gap and back, shearing and lopping the major limbs and weeds overhanging the trail. Grasses

are growing, but can wait a few weeks before the next hard cutback with a string trimmer. Upon returning to the shelter, we dismantled all of the fire rings except the big one, mowed the open space and cut back weeds on the trail to the privy and around the barn. We mowed it very close to the ground so it can probably wait until mid September before the next mowing.

**Reporting:** Tim Stewart

**Date:** 8/8/2020

**Purpose:** Weed wack and remove blowdown

**Location:** Section 11b, Moreland Gap Shelter to Canute Place

**People:** Tim Stewart, Carl Fritz

**Summary:** Originally, I was only planning to cut back vegetation at the Canute Place and several other spots. Carl had a report of a blowdown so he decided to join me. We went in via Moreland Gap Shelter access point and then hiked to Canute Place noting several step over blowdowns. We also encountered the reported one which was obstructing the trail and would require several cuts. At the Canute Place it was evident that someone had already done some weed wacking (assuming Pat). I did a quick wack-thru to further lower the grass. I also opened up visibility and access to the spring blue-blaze trail. On the hike back, we removed approximately 12 blowdowns including the reported one. We also identified some locust logs for potential future water diversions.

**Reporting:** Gayle Riddervold

**Date:** 8/9/2020

**Purpose:** Routine Maintenance

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

**People:** Gayle Riddervold and Becky Kinder

**Summary:** We went North of the iron gate to cut down a small blowdown. Then we went South of the gate to cut a few weeds and remove a tree that was sitting halfway in the trail that we had tried to saw on two separate occasions. This time we successfully cut through it and pushed it off the trail.

**Reporting:** Greg Kramer

**Date:** 8/10/2020

**Purpose:** Weeding

**Location:** Section 5, TN 91 to Iron Mountain Shelter

**People:** Greg Kramer

**Summary:** I nearly completed the summer weeding. All of the trail is completed except a 2-mile section on one side.

**Reporting:** Scotty Bowman

**Date:** 8/11/2020

**Purpose:** Cut weeds

**Location:** Section 7, Vandeventer Shelter to 2.25 miles north of Wilbur Dam Rd

**People:** Scotty Bowman

**Summary:** The goal of the day was to cut back encroaching vegetation before the rain came. I made it to about 2.25 miles north of Wilbur Dam Rd. Also, I removed the berm on several sections of the upper half of the switchbacks.

**Reporting:** Kevin Sedgwick

**Date:** 8/13/2020

**Purpose:** Clear vegetation

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

**People:** Kevin Sedgwick

**Summary:** I cut, chopped, stomped and whacked weeds. I met 6 section hikers. All were super happy to be out.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 8/13/2020

**Purpose:** Inspect trail

**Location:** Section 17, FS230 switchback to north side of Unaka

**People:** Carl Fritz, Tony Messina, Bill Murdoch, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** We were checking for trail rehab opportunities based on previous reports. The trail was in good shape and freshly trimmed. We did find one problem blowdown that we removed with handsaws. We only found need for one or two steps, but there are opportunities for new and improved water diversions.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 8/13/2020

**Purpose:** Inspect trail

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

**People:** Carl Fritz, Tony Messina, Bill Murdoch, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** We were inspecting the trail, which is in good shape; the vegetation has recently been cut. Mostly, water diversions need to be added or improved. We may have to transport some locust logs to this area. Interestingly, a new flower for us was seen .

**Reporting:** Dan Firth

**Date:** 8/17/2020

**Purpose:** Routine Maintenance

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

**People:** Dan Firth

**Summary:** I cleared two blowdowns, cleaned water diversions, and cut back branches and briars.

**Reporting:** Richard Carter

**Date:** 8/18/2020

**Purpose:** Paint graffiti board

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

**People:** Richard Carter

**Summary:** I walked the section for routine check (no blowdowns), checked the shelter, swept it, and picked up a small bag of trash. I also Kilz-painted the graffiti board, checked the spring, which is running very well, and left a new shelter register.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 8/20/2020

**Purpose:** Rehab trail

**Location:** Section 17, Just south of Unaka Mtn peak

**People:** John Beaudet, Carl Fritz, Tony Messina, Joe Morris, Bill Murdoch, Bob Peoples, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** Just south of Unaka Mountain peak the trail is eroding. We installed 11 rock water diversions and some rock steps. We only saw one hiker.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 8/21/2020

**Purpose:** Inspect trail and shelter

**Location:** Section 14c, Overmountain Shelter to Buckeye Gap

**People:** Jen Barnhardt, Carl Fritz

**Summary:** Jen Barnhardt, the new Ranger for Appalachian Ranger District, and I visited the Overmountain Shelter on a rainy day. Recent rains have obviously washed the roads more. Jen requested this site visit. Afterwards I walked the A.T. to Buckeye Gap to check weed growth which was not much.

**Reporting:** Richard Ramsey

**Date:** 8/22/2020

**Purpose:** Assessment of condition

**Location:** Sections 13 and 14a, US 19E to Bradley Gap

**People:** Richard Ramsey

**Summary:** I was assessing the trail condition. There is a 14" blowdown at Apple House that needs to be removed. Grass on the balds is about knee high. I don't plan on cutting back the grass and encroaching vegetation. I feel that it only encourages people to walk out of the rut and widen the trail. If this is not consistent with trail maintenance practices, please let me know. I found a tent partly blown down just below the plaque on Hump Mountain with sleeping pads and a few other items. I took it down and gathered it up to keep it from killing vegetation. I will return with a large pack and carry it out next week, if it is still there.

**Reporting:** Elzear Lemieux

**Date:** 8/23/2020

**Purpose:** A.T. maintenance

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

**People:** Elzear Lemieux, Emily Lemieux

**Summary:** We hiked the section for inspection. We removed a 9" blowdown and cut back some vegetation.

**Reporting:** Pat Loven

**Date:** 8/25/2020

**Purpose:** Routine maintenance

**Location:** Section 11a, Dennis Cove Road to Canute Place

**People:** Pat Loven

**Summary:** I worked the top portion of this section today. I cut back vegetation, sawed a number of trees (mostly dead) that had fallen onto the trail. The vegetation was very heavy in a couple of areas opened up by forest fires a few years back. I also dismantled one campsite. I did find a large blowdown a few yards north of Canute's that was too big for me to tackle. I was able to cut a temporary bypass until the tree is removed. I also cut one tree that was blocking the Jeep road going up the mountain.

**Reporting:** Michael Watts

**Date:** 8/25/2020

**Purpose:** Cut weeds



*August 20th Work Trip*

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

**People:** Michael Watts

**Summary:** I cut weeds close to 19E.

**Reporting:** Scotty Bowman

**Date:** 8/26/2020

**Purpose:** Cut weeds

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

**People:** Scotty Bowman

**Summary:** It was a hot day for the continuation of cutting back vegetation from a previous trip. I was able to hit about a ¾-mile stretch before the swing blade broke.

**Reporting:** Kevin Sedgwick

**Date:** 8/26/2020

**Purpose:** Weed whack

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

**People:** Kevin Sedgwick, Gloria Sedgwick

**Summary:** Gloria shuttled me around today. I continued cutting weeds, rose, etc. I also cleaned out waterbars.

**Reporting:** James Foster

**Date:** 8/26/2020

**Purpose:** Routine maintenance

**Location:** Section 16a, Hughes Gap to Greasy Creek Gap

**People:** John Tomko, James Foster

**Summary:** It was a good day for cleaning waterbars and removing 6 small-to-medium blowdowns. The trail is in good shape with no obstructions.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 8/27/2020

**Purpose:** Rehab trail

**Location:** Section 17, Just south of Unaka Mtn peak

**People:** John Beaudet, Carl Fritz, Van Hovey, Greg Kramer, Elzear Lemieux, Tony Messina, Bill Murdoch, Bob Peoples

**Summary:** We continued to add rock water diversions, which is now generally completed in this area. One switchback could benefit from a half-dozen steps, but that will be a future trip. We only saw four day hikers. We also surprised Tony Messina by presenting him with the 2019 Maintainer of the Year Award.



*Tony Messina was presented the 2019 Maintainer of the Year Award*