



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

October 2020

tehcc.org

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

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What to do about this!? (See A.T. Maintenance Report, 9/7)

TEHCC Fall Lunch Meeting – Sunday, October 25, 2020

This year has not gone along as expected, but we hope that you all have had some time to get outside and enjoy the trails in the area. To continue with the 2020 tradition, the Fall “dinner” is going to look a little different this year. We are trading the indoor setting of the lodge for a couple outdoor shelters in the Eastman Recreation Area. We are also going to meet in the afternoon, hoping for some good weather and sunlight.

The program is going to be different for this event. We will have a ribbon-cutting for the revitalization project led by Tony Messina, the Forest Walk Trail in the Eastman Recreation Area with connection to Bays Mountain Park. If the afternoon weather is nice, the ribbon cutting will be followed by a short hike on the less than one-mile loop trail.

Lunch will be a \$5/person box sandwich with the Steering Committee subsidizing and providing beverages. Attending only the ribbon cutting and hike is free; however, the club needs a paid headcount for the Panera food order; so please let Chantel Roberts (Chantel.Roberts@eastman.com) know who is coming by Tuesday October 20th. We are asking everyone to sign up for the lunch by using the online form on the TEHCC event page, <http://tehcc.org/events/2020-fall-lunch-meeting/>. This action will allow us to get your food order and know how you plan on paying. If you have any difficulties with the online form, you can contact Jonathan Shumaker (417-389-6987 or jonathanshumaker@eastman.com). Checks payable to Chantel can be mailed to her via plant mail to Building 167, Floor 3, Room 308 or externally to 869 Indian Trail Dr, Kingsport, TN 37660. The Steering Committee is also going to try Venmo payments for the first time – made to “@Chantel-Roberts”. Please include “TEHCC” in your payment title on Venmo.

Additional COVID-19 guidelines required by Eastman Recreation for the event:

- You are expected to provide your own masks.
- You are encouraged to practice social distancing and wear a mask when interacting with anyone that is not a member of your household.
- We agree to follow State Guidelines on maximum group size of 50.
- When using park restrooms, you are required to wear a mask, practice social distancing, and wash your hands.
- Agree to the statement: To the best of my knowledge, no member of my party is sick, has tested positive for COVID-19, or has been recently exposed to COVID-19.

Event	Time	Details
Fall Lunch Meeting	Start arriving at 12:00pm	Location: Eastman Recreation Area Shelters 28 and 32 (near ball fields; see map here) 404 Bays Mountain Road, Kingsport, TN
Lunch – Panera (box lunch)	12:30pm - 1:00pm	Panera Bread (box lunch) Online registration with options for box plus bottled water and soft drinks (\$5 per person)
Club Business	1:00pm - 1:15pm	- Update of club activities - Resharing 2019 club awards - After club business, clean up and walk/drive to the trailhead
Program: <i>Ribbon Cutting and talk at trailhead</i>	2:00pm - 2:15pm	Tony Messina – Ribbon Cutting Ceremony followed by a short hike for those who are interested

2019/2020 Paddler of the Year, Steven Adams

Submitted by Andy Steffan



Although the normal Spring dinner was cancelled this year, we still have the wonderful opportunity to recognize deserving individuals based on their achievements throughout the year. Steven Adams had been voted Paddler of the Year by the Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts (APEs) group during their Winter meeting. Since the TEHCC Spring dinner was cancelled, I decided to surprise Steven with a quick presentation in front of his fellow paddlers on the banks of the scenic Nolichucky River before he and the group of paddlers took off on the Noli First Timers Trip. This award was well deserved due to his continual commitment to finding new/creative ways to give back to the local paddling community. He has even offered to teach a Swift Water Rescue class to TEHCC members, which we hope we can pull off once things return closer to normal. Stay tuned for more information on that potential future class led by our 2019/20 Paddler of the Year. Congrats again, Steven!

Thoughts from Curley Maple Gap Shelter Logbook

Assembled by Vic Hasler

Notebooks left at shelters have been used for communication by the Appalachian Trail hikers, passing information on what has recently occurred from both directions and on upcoming plans. While not every hiker chooses to write in these logbooks, some entries are simple notes to let other know that they have passed by, while others leave (strong) opinions, poems, doodles, etc. for acquaintances that they expect to pass by soon. Hikers sometimes thank the volunteers who support the trail. For the maintaining clubs, these journal entries can provide insights on what is happening in the field – trail conditions/blowdowns, state of water sources, and warnings about bears, snakes, mice, spiders, and other pests.

Curley Maple Gap Shelter is located 4.3 miles north of Chestoa/Erwin, TN. It typically is just a break or lunch stopping point (Goat: “heading north. Ramen time.”) for those striving to reach Beauty Spot or even Cherry Gap Shelter by nightfall. For those who stay overnight, they may have had a late start, are recovering from revelry at the hostel and in town, or just decided to get out of the rain.

Looking at the 2020 entries... January was cold for likely short segment or slack hikers. Blood Feathers: “checking off sections on the trail. The trails make the rest of life easier to manage.” February referenced getting on the A.T. for the first time this year. Another observation from being on the section several times this year and a few notes in the logbook are the many trail runners doing Chestoa to Indian Grave Gap – and back. March is when the northbound bubble arrives of those who started at Springer Mountain hoping to thru-hike in a single trek. Snow can still be encountered as March starts like a lion. Philosophically, Thumper (NOBO): “When you finally learn that a person’s behavior has more to do with their internal struggle than it ever did with you... you learn grace.” The logbook, which began with January 2019, was replaced during my Spring walkthrough to the shelter to refresh the

graffiti board. The next spiral-bound logbook did not survive as well with cover torn off, first pages missing (likely used to start a fire) and bottom two inches eaten by mice. The gap pages from late March might have mentioned the Covid-19 pandemic, as this topic only occurs once in the rest of the journal. Sparkles & Irv: "Just got back on the trail. Left on 3/29 because of Covid-19. Thankful to be back!" All thru-hikers had not gotten off the A.T. as a couple dozen entries were made in April. Comments about the "happy little golden shelter!" (Garlic) and "love the yellow shelter" (Soulshine). Rain poured during the spring and into the summer. Appalachian "Exile" 2020: "Stealth camped last night – waited out the rain until 12:30 when it stopped so I went." In June, a group of Troop 489 Boy Scouts from Southern Middle TN stayed around the shelter, probably a late start. Section hiking appears to have remained popular through the summer as the pandemic likely shortened the window of opportunity for many. August 14th entry mentions, "Saw some bears a couple miles back (came from Erwin). They did not bother me, but still, if you're reading this, watch out." Last and only entry so far for September by Serpent: "Finishing what I started!" A new logbook was placed in mid-September to capture more thoughts....

Training Opportunities for A.T. Volunteers with VLA

Submitted by Alivia Acosta, ATC National Stewardship Coordinator

The entirely virtual Volunteer Leadership Academy is currently underway, but it's not too late to register!

Volunteer Leadership Academy (VLA) is a flagship training for A.T. volunteers that convenes volunteer leaders and aspiring leaders, to deepen their understanding of A.T. management. These online trainings are designed to focus on operational best-practices for volunteer management, safe field operations, fundamentals in A.T. Cooperative Management, and engaging new people as trail stewards. There is also the possibility to participate in an "Organizational Leadership" cohort that seeks to find solutions to challenges centered around operational management.

For more information on these opportunities please visit the Volunteer Leadership Academy webpage at appalachiantrail.org/VLA.

TEHCC Welcomes New Member

Christopher D Estep

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. Highlighted green means it was a club planned hike.

Date	Trail(s)	Hike Distance	# of Hikers	Tags	Reported By
22-Aug-2020	Cabin Creek Trail Grayson Highlands State Park	3.38 mi	13	Troop 48	Tim
	Comment: Hike while on a camp out with Troop 48. Went up to scramble on the rocks, collected plentiful blueberries, saw plenty of ponies, then finished with a loop on Cabin Creek Trail.				
05-Sep-2020	Ridge Crest Trail Panther Creek State Park	1.6 mi	1	GPS Logged	Vhasler
	Comment: Early morning hike to begin checking out the trails in Panther Creek State Park. Picked this one first as reported to have the most elevation change thus tackle while fresh – and a good geocache along... more				
05-Sep-2020	Point Lookout Trail Panther Creek State Park	3 mi	1	GPS Logged	Vhasler
	Comment: Second hike of the morning exploring trails in Panther Creek State Park. This path was the longest for the day, nearest to the first route, and had a good geocache along the way. Walked back down to... more				

Date	Trail(s)	Hike Distance	# of Hikers	Tags	Reported By
05-Sep-2020	Norris Blackburn Trail Panther Creek State Park	0.9 mi	1	GPS Logged	Vhasler
	Comment: Fourth trail explored this morning, which ended up being one of my favorites due to the path being in the best condition. Disappointed no information at wildlife viewing platform.				
05-Sep-2020	Seven Sinkholes Trail Panther Creek State Park	0.6 mi	1	GPS Logged	Vhasler
	Comment: Last trail on first day exploring the hiking paths in Panther Creek SP. By midday this route was very busy as the nearby campers and locals were hitting the trails on a pleasant day.				
06-Sep-2020	Old Wagon Trail Panther Creek State Park	2 mi	1	GPS Logged	Vhasler
	Comment: Third trek of the morning to pursue traditional geocaches while learning the park hiking trails.				
06-Sep-2020	Maple Arch Trail Panther Creek State Park	5 mi	1	GPS Logged	Vhasler
	Comment: Sunday morning's goal was to tackle the long hiker/horse trail along the Cherokee Lake shore, with a stop planned to listen to morning worship and study which is not included in the hike duration. (On... more				
07-Sep-2020	Road to Recycling Trail Panther Creek State Park	1.6 mi	1	GPS Logged	Vhasler
	Comment: Last hiking trail taken during three sunny days spent in Panther Creek State Park. Disappointed in that no self-guided information was available at the trailhead kiosk but could represent a future op... more				
07-Sep-2020	Ore Mine Trail Panther Creek State Park	1.7 mi	1	GPS Logged	Vhasler
	Comment: Last day of Labor Day weekend to explore hiking trails in Panther Creek State Park. Started at sunrise to surprise multiple herds of white-tail deer along the loop trail. Path along the top ridge wa... more				
07-Sep-2020	Lost Road Trail Panther Creek State Park	1.26 mi	1	GPS Logged	Vhasler
	Comment: Attempting to cover all purely hiking trails (white blaze/silver marker) in the park. Was unsuccessful in navigating this loop trail as ended up too quickly back at the Lost Road Trail sign off Maple... more				
19-Sep-2020	Azalea, Bays Mountain Road, Lake Road (Bays Mountain Park) Bays Mountain Park	3.8 mi	11		Jshumaker
	Comment: We had a wonderful morning hiking in Bays Mountain Park with a good group of people from the club.				
20-Sep-2020	Old Shawnee Trail, Raider's Run Trail Hungry Mother State Park	1.9 mi	1	GPS Logged, Wiki Detailing	Tim
	Comment: Second half of the day of Hungry Mother Hiking.				
22-Sep-2020	CCC Trail, Molly's Knob Trail, Vista Trail, Lake Trail Loop Hungry Mother State Park	8.4 mi	1	GPS Logged, Wiki Detailing	Tim
	Comment: Morning portion of hike around Hungry Mother. Started with Molly's Knob to the Vista, then continued around taking CCC trail to the Lake Trail Loop and around the lake back to the Jeep. Bagged many ge... more				

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
October 3	A.T.: Spivey Gap to Big Bald	Jonathan Shumaker	417-389-6987
October 10	<u>Second</u> Saturday, Hiking with Tools!	Vic Hasler	423-416-3166
October 15	Steering Committee Meeting, 11:30 am	Jonathan Shumaker	417-389-6987
October 24	Channels Trail	Vic Hasler	423-416-3166
October 25	TEHCC Fall Lunch Meeting, 12:00 pm	Jonathan Shumaker	417-389-6987
November 19	Steering Committee Meeting, 11:30 am	Jonathan Shumaker	417-389-6987

Details of Upcoming Events

Note: Due to COVID-19, the following regularly scheduled paddling activities are not being held in October. Be sure to check the November newsletter for updates.

- Tuesday Evenings: Johnson City Roll Practice, 7:30 – 9:00 pm
- 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.

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.

Scheduled Events

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.

Second Saturday, Hiking with Tools! Saturday, October 10, 2020, 9 am

Contact: Vic Hasler, 423-416-3166

Hiking with Tools! is an introductory opportunity for giving back to the Appalachian Trail by helping out with routine maintenance. All tools will be furnished, and no prior experience required; we'll provide hands-on training! **Please note that this Saturday is the second one in October instead of the traditional third** to arrange for club leadership. The plan is to gather at Indian Grave Gap trailhead at 9 am (since 7:34 am sunrise) to work south primarily by using a battery-powered hedge trimmer, swing blades, and loppers to cut the uphill growth of rhododendrons from pushing hikers to the lower side of the path. This section is not terribly bad close to the highway, but the assigned maintainer is taking care of an ill spouse, so the club is covering. We'll work as far and long as the group chooses, likely just after lunch, and then return to the parking area. Please text/call me by Thursday 10/8 evening so sufficient tools can be obtained – and 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.

For the Record

Hike Report: Bays Mountain Hike to the Antennas, September 19, 2020

Submitted by *Jonathan Shumaker*

We had a wonderful morning hiking in Bays Mountain Park. The temperature was in the low 60s and there was cloud cover all morning. A group of 11 met in the parking lot to trek up to the antennas. We started along the Lake Road section to avoid the animal exhibits on our way up. We then took a right onto the Azealia trail. This trail is uphill all the way to the antennas. When we got up to the top, we went around one of the buildings to look down the power lines to get a view of downtown Kingsport. The clouds were just clearing, but it was still cool outside. The return trip was on the Bays Mountain road trail. We stopped at the overlook tower to drink some water and get a view out to the southeast. Once we got back to the cars, a few of us in the group enjoyed lunch. Those attending the hike: Jonathan Shumaker, Teni Butler, Josh Hayes, Ayla Hayes, Xin Yi See, Dexter Lim, Tori Knollmeyer, Nicholas Schallan, Kelsey Niehoff, Peyton Whitehead, and Sherri Ramseyer.



A.T. Maintenance Reports

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 \(appalachiantrail.org/get-involved/volunteer/safety/covid-19\)](#) 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: Carl Fritz

Date: 8/13/2020

Purpose: Define Access Trail

Location: Section 6, Access Trail to Turkeypen Gap

People: Dan Firth

Summary: Carl asked Dan to define the elevation profile of an access trail to Turkeypen Gap. And he was able to do so. The trail is 3.5 miles and averages 10% grade.

Reporting: Saylor Fox

Date: 8/16/2020

Purpose: Walk section to determine trail maintenance needs

Location: Section 15a, Carvers Gap to Cloudland Hotel

People: Saylor Fox, Bettye Boone

Summary: We hiked our section of the trail and opened up a water diversion at the old chimney near Cloudland Hotel. We also moved two small blowdowns. The Roan High Knob Shelter was clean and water sources were running well. We need a new shelter logbook as someone took the plastic bag and the mice have eaten many of the pages.

Reporting: Michael Watts

Date: 9/2/2020

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Sections 12d and 13: Both sides for US 19E

People: Rick Lott, Kevin Sedgewick, Mike Watts

Summary: We removed a reported blowdown south of the former Apple House Shelter and cleared a smaller tangle south of the highway. We also removed two blowdowns a short distance north of US 19E.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 9/3/2020

Purpose: Rehab trail

Location: Section 17, Just north of FS230 switchback

People: John Beaudet, Van Hovey, Greg Kramer, Bob Peoples

Summary: This crew installed 4 locust steps in the first switchback above the FS230 switchback. Some then came down and helped the second crew working farther south. This completes most of the major planned rehab on this section.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

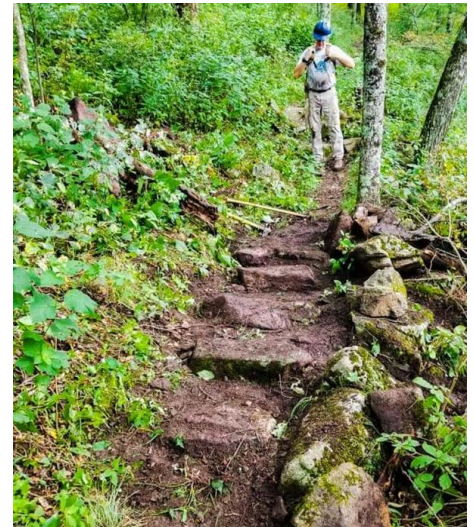
Date: 9/3/2020

Purpose: Rehab trail

Location: Section 18, Indian Grave Gap to Unaka Mountain, Beauty Spot Gap

People: Carl Fritz, Tony Messina, Joe Morris, Bill Murdoch, Kevin Sedgwick

Summary: Bob and Carl retrieved two truck loads of locust logs from our stash at the Watauga Work Center. It took longer than expected and we took a detour, so we were 45 minutes late getting to rendezvous. They liked the paid time without having to work. But everyone jumped in to start stashing logs at various places from Indian Grave Gap to Unaka Mtn. Actually, this crew was able to do our work with just rock. We added three water diversions, some rock pavers, and about nine rock steps with a lot of rubble.



Reporting: Saylor Fox

Date: 9/4/2020

Purpose: Clear water diversions

Location: Section 15a, Carvers Gap to Cloudland Hotel

People: Saylor Fox

Summary: I cleaned water diversions.

Reporting: Pat Loven

Date: 9/7/2020

Purpose: Remove blowdown

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

People: Pat Loven, Carl Fritz

Summary: Carl and I went back to Canute Field today to remove a large blowdown blocking the trail on the northern edge of the field. With Carl's expertise and after many, many cuts, we were able to clear the trail. (See "Before" and "After" pics next page.)



Reporting: Gayle Riddervold

Date: 9/8/2020

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

Location: Section 8, Wilbur Dam Road to US 321

People: Gayle Riddervold, Becky Kinder

Summary: Starting at Wilbur Dam Road, we cleaned off the steps and cut back rhododendron. We only made it to the top of the rocky crest because there were many thorny weeds and rhododendron bushes to cut back.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 9/10/2020

Purpose: Rehab trail

Location: Section 18, FS230 switchback to Indian Grave Gap, Southern end of Section

People: John Beaudet, Michael Casper, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Van Hovey, Greg Kramer, Elzear Lemieux, Tony Messina, Bill Murdoch, Bob Peoples, Kevin Sedgwick

Summary: We installed a post with blazes just south of Indian Grave Gap. We did a lot of rehab adding rock and locust steps, locust side logs with back fill, locust water diversions, and rock water diversions. Also, we removed a lot of old stumps that were in the trail. It was a warm day and, needless to say, everyone was soaked from perspiration. But we will return again.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 9/12/2020

Purpose: Lop uphill side of trail

Location: Section 19a, Roughly 2.5 mile south of Indian Grave Gap

People: Vic Hasler

Summary: It was an early drive to Indian Grave Gap to arrive before sunrise. I picked up trash around the parking area to allow morning twilight to appear. Then I took a swing blade to the growth around the steps up the SB trail, and returned the tool to the truck. Wanting to inspect the path for next weekend's Third Saturday outing and work farther down the trail, I set a one-hour alarm on my phone. I'm a slow hiker, as I only traveled around 2.5 miles, but decided uphill growth was sufficiently thick to begin lopping. I removed rhododendron and briers to just short of the bend of the spring around the corner when my hard stop-time was reached. During the beautiful morning with a nice breeze, two NB thru-hikers passed by. One (Stumpy) shared that there was trash at Curley Maple Gap Shelter. A SB day hiker with dog on leash came along and so I gave him a grocery bag with request to pick up what he could. Everything was removed; it was discarded clothing. My return trip was even slower as I had to lop the briers and pines I discovered. I will need to arrange yet another visit, maybe from the other direction, to perform trail maintenance closer to the shelter.

Reporting: Gayle Riddervold

Date: 9/14/2020

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

Location: Section 8, US 321 to Wilbur Road

People: Gayle Riddervold Becky Kinder

Summary: We cut and removed a very hard locust tree that fell across the trail. Also, we cut back more rhododendron and thorny weeds.



Reporting: Kevin Sedgwick

Date: 9/15/2020

Purpose: clear trail

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

People: Kevin Sedgwick

Summary: I weed whacked the trail for the last time this year. I believe it grew another foot plus since I was there just a few weeks ago. I ended up cutting some of what I did last time. I found a few minor blowdowns and cleared them and cut back rhododendron. I met 6 section hikers.

Reporting: Craig Haire

Date: 9/16/2020

Purpose: Measure section length

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

People: Craig Haire

Summary: Measuring with a measuring wheel, the distance from the middle of Temple Hill Gap to the edge of the pavement at Unaka Springs Rd is 20,358 ft (3.856 mi). The distance to the middle of Nolichucky Bridge is 20,776 ft (3.935 mi). The distance from the middle of Nolichucky Bridge to the north edge of the pavement in Chestoa is 361 ft. I saw 3 day hikers and 3 section hikers breaking camp at the south end of Temple Ridge. It was a beautiful early fall day.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 9/18/2020

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 10, Laurel Fork gorge

People: Joe Morris

Summary: I removed two blowdowns about one and a half miles south of the Hampton blue-blaze trail and one other on the blue-blaze approach.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 9/19/2020

Purpose: Third Saturday Trail Maintenance – Cut rhododendron growth

Location: Section 19a, 1.2 miles NB from Curly Maple Gap Shelter

People: Mike Casper, Carl Fritz, Vic Hasler

Summary: Carl prepared for this work outing by repairing loppers, retrieving loppers from another maintainer, and getting paint from Lowe's. Vic arrived early to break up the fire ring too close to the trail path at the second campsite south of Indian Grave Gap. The rocks and log seats were dispersed into the forest. Trash was removed from the ash mound which was then raked to spread it out. A few broken trees were lopped from along the A.T. A small amount of trash was picked up from the Indian Grave Gap parking area.

For Mike, this work trip was his second with the club. For his prior effort on Sept 10, Carl presented him with our recognition patch for first time maintainers. Due to multiple reasons (illness, vehicle problems, other schedule conflicts), the original eight volunteers became a crew of three which shifted focus to access the A.T. by a shortcut to drop 1.5 miles at both ends of the trip. It was the first chilly morning of the Fall season, but clothing layers were shed at the spring, as the sidehill path was sheltered from the cool breeze. The crew continued to Curley Maple Gap shelter to start at the far end of the maintenance section. The graffiti board was given two coats of an oil-based white paint. The mouse-eaten shelter log was replaced. Broom and shovel were observed to be present. The previously reported tree limb had already been removed from the shelter roof and the broken rafter straightened. Rough measurements were taken to return with a supporting brace to attach.

The club's battery-powered hedge trimmer was tested on rhododendrons for the first time. It quickly sliced through up to 0.5" branches with Carl as the fastest operator moving along the A.T. Mike and Vic lopped the larger growth to open the uphill side. The trimmer battery life was not specifically measured, but two rechargeable batteries lasted roughly 3.5-4 hours total in this service. A good application for the trimmer, which we did not quite reach, is a section of thick azaleas; thus I recommend returning sometime soon to work more on this maintenance section, including the less than 0.5-mile section south of the spring.

Reporting: Joel Zabel

Date: 9/19/2020

Purpose: Cut blowdowns, retrieve trash

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to Unaka Mountain

People: Ed Brading, Denny Samuel, Marianne Huff, Joy Zabel, Joel Zabel

Summary: We cut 3 blowdowns with hand saws; the largest was 12"+ dia. We carried out 2 dirty, soggy, cheap sleeping bags that were abandoned on the top of Unaka Mtn, and also checked the shelter.

Reporting: Elzear Lemieux

Date: 9/21/2020

Purpose: A.T. Maintenance

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

People: Elzear Lemieux, Emily Lemieux, Eric Fritz

Summary: We hiked the trail and inspected. We cut weeds and vegetation along several sections of the trail. The water sources were flowing well.

Reporting: Tony Messina

Date: 9/21/2020

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 15b, Cloudland to Hughes Gap

People: Tony and Renee Messina

Summary: We shuttled cars and cleared blowdowns from Cloudland to Hughes Gap in response to reports from Mike Watts via Carl. A couple of the blowdowns were complex 'rats' nests' of relatively small diameter treetops. All in all, we cleared about a dozen logs from the trail. There remain several tall and large 'leaners' that may fall one of these days, but are not worth addressing at this time. It was an absolutely gorgeous day to be on the mountain....a little nippy, in the 40's at Carver's Gap this morning....but very refreshing.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 9/23/2020

Purpose: Remove blowdowns and clean water bars

Location: Section 16b, Iron Mountain Gap to Greasey Creek

People: Joe Morris

Summary: I cleaned waterbars and removed two nuisance blowdowns near Greasey Creek Gap.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 9/26/2020

Purpose: Hang RR crossing sign and cut back dog-hobble/rhododendron

Location: Section 19b, Curley Maple Gap Shelter to Nolichucky River, Second bridge to bottom of long switchback

People: Vic Hasler

Summary: The Chestoa parking lot was free of litter with just one overnight vehicle. The first task at sunrise was to hang the replacement northbound, metal, railroad-crossing warning sign that Steve Perri had created. Then I relocated to the outfitter parking lot to start by brushing in a shortcut parallel to the blue-blaze trail. While hearing the Nolichucky River churn due to the recent rainfall, I quickly walked to observe that the trail repair of a gouged hole back in June was successful, plus there were three stepover blowdowns between the first and second bridges. The humidity this morning was nearly 100% as everything, including this maintainer, was damp. I started lopping rhododendron and used a swing blade on the dog-hobble and stinging nettle as I steadily worked NOBO. (Last time this part of the section was heavily cut was June 2018.) I did see the reported 30" hemlock just under a mile from the outfitter. I opened a temporary bypass over the upper end as the blowdown was difficult to get around. I continue removing growth until I reached the bottom of the switchback, which was the planned stopping point for this day. I saw just one SOBO backpacker and a mother/daughter pair walking a dog on the trail. Driving out, I noticed ten vehicles parked at the Chestoa trailhead, plus another ten along the road across from the hostel.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 9/28/2020

Purpose: Obtain bog bridge materials

Location: Kingsport

People: Bill Murdock

Summary: Bill found a couple of 4x8 sheets of surplus heavy metal lath which can be used as traction on bog bridges. He purchased these and cut 12" wide pieces with an angle grinder. He donated these to the club for future use.