



# The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

December 2020 | January 2021

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

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

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MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR!

## Letter from the Chair

*Submitted by Jonathan Shumaker*

As we finish out 2020, I am very happy with the current state of the Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club. We all have faced challenges this year that we did not expect. The TEHCC organization had to adjust along the way, but we have, in my opinion, done a fantastic job adapting to these challenges. Our trail maintaining has been excellent this year, as it is every year. We get lots of great feedback from hikers on the trail. We have also branched out to work in the Eastman recreation area and on other trails at Bays Mountain. The club has also been able to put safeguards in place to hold safe events for club members. We have continued to hike and were even able to hold an outdoor socially-distanced fall lunch. We will continue to face these challenges as we move forward into the next year. I'm very excited to work with Kyle Haas (2021 Steering Committee Chair) and the rest of the steering committee to put together a year of celebration for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the TEHCC organization. The club started in 1946, so 2021 will be the 75<sup>th</sup> year. The steering committee have already started discussing how to celebrate this occasion. The future is bright for the club!

## 2021 Steering Committee

*Submitted by [Jonathan Shumaker](#) (2020 Steering Committee Chair):*

Per the TEHCC constitution, the Steering Committee will be made up of seven members. Returning second year members are: Kyle Haas (2021 Steering Committee Chair) and Chantel Roberts (Treasurer). Jonathan Shumaker will stay on the committee and serve as the past chair. Two members of the current committee, Andy Steffan (APEs Liaison) and William Werner (2019 Steering Committee Chair), are going to join the committee again on new terms. Andy will be joining on a one-year term and will continue to serve as the Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts (APEs) Liaison for the club. William will be returning to the steering committee on a two-year term. There are two new members to the committee for 2021: Josh Hayes and Alex Lyttle. The two new members, as well as the two returning members on new terms, will require a vote of confidence from the club for their election to the committee.

Club members on the Eastman network can approve/reject the slate using the SharePoint Survey, [2021 Steering Committee Slate - Overview \(sharepoint.com\)](#). Those off of the network can email [Jonathan Shumaker](#) with their approval/rejection of the proposed slate.

The steering committee is also supported by Tim Schaefer and Vic Hasler to make sure everything continues to run smoothly. Any

input for club activities is welcome and can be directed to any of the committee members.

### **New Steering Committee Members:**



**Josh Hayes:** I am a recent new hire to Eastman and new to the Kingsport area. My wife and I are looking to get more involved with the community and TEHCC is a great way to start! We have attended one hike with members, enjoyed it, and look forward to more hikes in the future. I currently work in PLE area 1 as an electrical engineer and have many hobbies, including outdoor activities such as disc golf, hiking, etc. and indoor activities such as reading, card/board games, movie nights, etc. I have never had the opportunity to kayak, but am excited at the prospect and plan to give it a shot in the summer of 2021.



**Alex Lyttle:** I work for Eastman in the Fire Hall as a Fire Patroller. I used to get out on the trail a lot for hiking and backpacking, but the hours spent hiking have decreased as I have started my career. I am looking forward to meeting more people that are involved with the club and am excited about going on hikes in the coming years.

### **Returning Steering Committee Members:**

**William Werner:** I have served on the TEHCC steering committee for the past six years. I served multiple years as the Steering Committee Chair and was the past chair for 2020. I enjoy staying involved with the club and hiking as much as possible, but have been spending a lot more time recently at home with my daughter, who was born this year, and my wife.

**Andy Steffan:** I have been in the Tri-cities area for a little over 5 years now, and became a member of both TEHCC and APEs shortly after arriving to the area. I've served as the TEHCC/APEs liaison for several years and I have enjoyed keeping up with both clubs to help bridge the gap and further my interests of kayaking and hiking. I went to NC State and am a huge sports fan, so quite a bit of my free time is spent supporting my Wolfpack. My other hobbies include recreational day hikes, kayaking, rafting, and home renovations. As of recent, you'll find me hiking more than paddling, but I hope to get back on the water soon.

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## **Membership Renewal**

Submitted 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 go directly to paying for materials and tools for maintaining our 134 miles of the Appalachian Trail.

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## **TEHCC Welcomes New Members**

**No new members this month.**

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## **Trail Wiki Hike Summary**

Submitted by [Tim Schaefer](#)

Log your hikes on our Trail Wiki. Keep track of your SB6K and area hikes completed, also share with others the hikes you like to do. Recent hikes are now viewable at [http://tehcc.org/wiki/Recent\\_Hikes](http://tehcc.org/wiki/Recent_Hikes).

Date	Trail(s)	Hike Distance	# of Hikers	Tags	Reported By
<a href="#">17-Oct-2020</a>	<a href="#">Holston Bluffs</a> <a href="#">Warriors' Path State Park</a>	1.1 mi	2	Daybreak Dog Hike	<a href="#">Tim</a>
<b>Comment:</b> Had a hike buddy. Old ladies needed the weekend to recoup.					
<a href="#">24-Oct-2020</a>	<a href="#">Holston Bluffs</a> <a href="#">Warriors' Path State Park</a>	1.1 mi	1	Daybreak Dog Hike	<a href="#">Tim</a>
<b>Comment:</b> Taking the old ladies out!					

## 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
December 17	Steering Committee Meeting, 11:30 am	<a href="#">Jonathan Shumaker</a>	417-389-6987
January TBD	Steering Committee Meeting	<a href="#">Kyle Hass</a>	423-229-5869
February TBD	Steering Committee Meeting	<a href="#">Kyle Hass</a>	423-229-5869

## Details of Upcoming Events

**Note:** Due to COVID-19, the following regularly scheduled paddling activities are not being held in December. Be sure to check the February 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 December, 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. Please check with Kyle Hass for the January and February meeting schedules.

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

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

Join a group of maintainers who work somewhere on our 133.8-mile section each week, usually on Thursdays.

## Scheduled Events

There are no scheduled events at this time.

## For the Record

### A.T.: Grindstaff Plot Hike Report, Saturday, October 31, 2020

Submitted by Kyle Haas

For those of you that don't know the story of Uncle Nick Grindstaff, it's an interesting one. Uncle Nick Grindstaff was rumored to have lived up on Iron Mountain as a hermit, only going to the General Store in town once a year. After about 40 years of this lifestyle, Uncle Grindstaff passed away in 1923, but legend has it that his loyal dog "Panther" wouldn't let anyone move his body.



Eventually, a proper burial and tombstone followed his death, however, many people hiking/camping along the A.T. today claim to hear “mournful/haunting” howls of a dog at night.

As our Halloween day hike, we parked at the intersection of Highway 91 and Cross Mountain Rd (Osborne Farm Trailhead). With the weather being a little chilly and most of the leaves already fallen, this was a beautiful hike along the A.T. as there were many spots with great views through the trees from the top of the ridge. This was so much so that the group actually *missed* the Grindstaff Tombstone 3.2 miles inward. After eventually finding the tombstone, the group hiked back with a solid 7-8 mile hike completed for the day. In attendance was Jonathan Shumaker, Teni Butler, Trey Sanfrey, Jacob Elpers, Kyle Haas, Jon Hostetler, Robert Johnson, and Donna Johnson.

**If you go:** Google Maps showed the tombstone about 0.5 mile further along the trail than it really was. Several members of the group tried to change the location, but be aware that if you reach the Iron Mountain Shelter from the Osborne Farms direction, you have gone too far. In addition, there is some elevation change in this part of the trail, but there are some good views on the ridge between the trees this time of year.



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## A.T. Maintenance Reports

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**TEHCC received a comment from a frequent hiker:** *“I live in Mitchell County and have hiked the Appalachian trail many times in this area. Your group has maintained it very well.”* Kudos and thank you to all the maintainers.

**Reporting:** Richard Ramsey

**Date:** 10/18/2020

**Purpose:** Assess condition

**Location:** Section 14a, Doll Flats to Bradley Gap, Hump Mountain

**People:** Richard Ramsey

**Summary:** I removed a blowdown. Overall, the trail is in good condition on this section.

**Reporting:** Saylor Fox

**Date:** 10/22/2020

**Purpose:** Trail and shelter maintenance

**Location:** Section 15a, Carvers Gap to Cloudland Hotel, and Roan High Knob Shelter

**People:** Saylor Fox, Bettye Boone

**Summary:** We found no major blowdowns. Saylor cleaned 64 water diversions. Bettye painted all blazes, both white and blue, and repainted the graffiti board at the shelter. We both picked up trash, and hauled out an abandoned tent and blanket from the shelter. The water source at the shelter was fine, only running very slow.

**Reporting:** Greg Kramer

**Date:** 10/27/2020

**Purpose:** Assess Trail

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

**People:** Greg Kramer

**Summary:** There need to be more water diversions on my section. I was scouting out where water diversions are needed and where there are locust trees. I found enough trees near the water diversions to do 80% of the work. It will be about a dozen and a half waterbars. I will discuss with Carl.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 10/29/2020

**Purpose:** Obtain bridge lumber

**Location:** Section 8, Oliver Hollow Road

**People:** Carl Fritz, Ed Oliver

**Summary:** We purchased 16-foot treated lumber for replacing part of the Oliver Hollow Bridge that was broken by a blowdown. I tacked the five pieces together to prevent warping until we use them this winter.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 11/2/2020

**Purpose:** Dispose of materials removed from Overmountain Shelter

**Location:** Section 14b, Kingsport

**People:** Carl Fritz

**Summary:** I had a big bonfire to dispose of 12 sheets of plywood and sheathing. Sheathing burns significantly poorer than plywood and takes a long time to be consumed. But all sleeping platform pieces are gone.

**Reporting:** Elzear Lemieux

**Date:** 11/4/2020

**Purpose:** A.T. Maintenance

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

**People:** Elzear Lemieux, Eric Fritz

**Summary:** We hiked the entire section. We removed two small blowdowns and removed debris from the trail. We also checked signage.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 11/5/2020

**Purpose:** Rehab trail

**Location:** Section 9b, South side of Pond Mountain

**People:** Dean Baird, Richard Carter, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Van Hovey, Elzear Lemieux, Joe Morris, Bill Murdoch, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** Several switchbacks and several other minor sections have developed problems with disappearing steps, and undefined tread. We spent a good portion of the day harvesting locust logs and transporting them a half to three-quarters mile to desired work sites. We cut out three minor blowdowns and did some trail rehab. We especially fixed one switchback with three new locust steps. More rehab will take place in coming weeks.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 11/5/2020

**Purpose:** Repair stile

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

**People:** Ed Speer

**Summary:** Ed had previously identified that the third stile on Osborne Farm had rotting posts under the horizontal board. He provided pressure treated posts, installed them by digging them in and placing them on rocks.

**Reporting:** Dan Firth

**Date:** 11/7/2020

**Purpose:** Section Maintenance

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

**People:** Dan Firth

**Summary:** I cleaned the water diversions and repaired two. I also removed three blowdowns.

**Reporting:** Craig Haire

**Date:** 11/8/2020

**Purpose:** Inspect and clear trail

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

**People:** Craig Haire

**Summary:** I cut two dead obstructions with a handsaw. I met 3 southbound thru-hikers and 4 day hikers. The trail is in excellent condition. However, I learned of a fallen tree 2 days later near Temple Hill Gap. I hope to learn more about that.

**Reporting:** Terry Oldfield

**Date:** 11/9/2020

**Purpose:** Maintain Shelter

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

**People:** John Frey, Terry Oldfield

**Summary:** We hiked to the shelter from TN 91. The trail is clear and in great shape. Thank you Elzear and Eric. At the shelter, we painted the graffiti board with oil-based stain blocker as suggested by Carl. The coverage was superb compared to the water-based paint used previously. While the first coat was drying, we picked up trash, cleaned the gutter, shoveled out the fire pit, replaced the log book, checked the water source, and ate lunch. Before heading back, we applied a second and final coat to the graffiti board. It was a gorgeous day. We met one trail runner who was new to the area, and two other day hikers.

**Reporting:** Lori Mirrer

**Date:** 11/10/2020

**Purpose:** Clean and dig waterbars

**Location:** Section 15b, Cloudland to halfway down to Hughes Gap

**People:** Lori Mirrer

**Summary:** The wind was blowing the mist and drizzle horizontally as I parked at Cloudland. Guessing it would be less vicious on the trail itself, I headed out anyway. I intended to clean and dig waterbars as needed, as well as repaint blazes as needed, in the 1.5



miles from Cloudland to Ash Gap. The weather led me to focus on the waterbars. Ultimately, I covered half the distance, with waterbars that will make the trail a little less muddy, I hope. Didn't see any blowdowns or other obstructions. Nor were there any hikers - not surprising, given the weather.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 11/12/2020

**Purpose:** Rehab trail

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

**People:** Dean Baird, Richard Carter, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Van Hovey, Elzear Lemieux, Tony Messina, Joe Morris, Bill Murdoch, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** We cut 4 blowdowns near the top. Last week we cut 3 blowdowns that I failed to report. We worked hard today, primarily rehabbing switchbacks by adding locust log and rock steps. But we also redug several sections that had become unusual due to obstacles like roots or stumps. This area took very heavy rains last night. Water was running on the roads. The river was a foot over the blue-blaze trail in a couple of places. We saw eight south-bounders.



**Reporting:** Ken Murray

**Date:** 11/13/2020

**Purpose:** Scout for blowdowns

**Location:** Section 20b, FS RD 278 to No Business Knob Shelter

**People:** Ken Murray

**Summary:** We had a report of a blowdown south of NBK Shelter. I hiked from FS 278 to the shelter. There is a multi-stemmed oak down just north of FS 278. Other than that this, the trail is clear. We will go back for the blowdown soon. In the meantime hikers can get over it safely.

The shelter looks clean. It doesn't look like there has been a fire in the fire ring in months. As I was getting ready to leave, I noticed two shopping bags on the roof of the shelter. The bags contained 5 packages of tortillas and 10 (big) packages of sunflower kernels. Someone decided they had bought more than they could carry. My chickens are going to have an early Thanksgiving.

**Reporting:** Tim Stewart

**Date:** 11/14/2020

**Purpose:** 2nd-Saturday Hiking with Tools!

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

**People:** Tim Stewart, Carl Fritz, Michaela Hofbauer

**Summary:** 3rd Saturday Hiking with Tools! is now 2nd Saturday Hiking with Tools! and this was probably the last one for the year. Fortunately the weather was perfect for this outing.

We met at 0900 at Indian Grave Gap with the intent to finish what was started 2 months ago. Michaela Hofbauer met Carl and me at the trailhead. This was Michaela's first time out with the Club. The plan was for Michaela and me to hike and work south from Indian Grave Gap, while Carl would hike in via the draw and then hike to where they left off previously, toward Curley Maple Gap Shelter.

We met up with Carl after lopping rhodos to the campsite at the top of the draw. We all returned together while continuing to lop and to use the battery-operated trimmers. Trimmers worked well for low, small rhodos, but I don't think I would use them for more aggressive rhodos. Carl went back down the draw, retrieved his truck and then met us back at Indian Grave Gap. It was a good day

and hopefully we didn't overwork Michaela (I don't think we did).

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 11/14/2020

**Purpose:** Make rock baskets and straps

**Location:** Kingsport

**People:** Bill Murdoch

**Summary:** Ted Mowery has donated to our club a couple of large rolls of seat belt strap. Bill Murdoch, with his sailor skills, cut and sewed some into useful items for the trail, including three large rock carriers (pic also shows our existing worn rock carrier), four 8-foot slings, four 2-1/2 ft looped slings and four 2-1/2 ft loops.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 11/14/2020

**Purpose:** Make wedges

**Location:** Kingsport

**People:** Dan Firth

**Summary:** Dan cut a whole bag of thin wedges from a cured locust. These are desired by maintainers for use with handsaws and work great with the thinner kerfs by these saws when bucking. Thicker plastic wedges are used for all chainsaw work for safety because they do not compress and you can tell when the saw is cutting a wedge.

**Reporting:** Richard Ramsey

**Date:** 11/15/2020

**Purpose:** Clear blowdowns

**Location:** Section 14a, Doll Flats and Hump Mountain

**People:** Cheryl Ramsey and Richard Ramsey

**Summary:** We removed a blowdown and cleaned out campfire rings at Doll Flats.

**Reporting:** Ken Murray

**Date:** 11/15/2020

**Purpose:** Recon trail for blowdowns

**Location:** Section 20b, FS RD 278 to Spivey Gap

**People:** Ken Murray, Lotta Murray

**Summary:** We removed blowdowns and cleared leaves from small stream crossings. The trail is clear from Spivey Gap to No Business Knob Shelter.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 11/19/2020

**Purpose:** Rehab trail

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

**People:** Dean Baird, Richard Carter, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Van Hovey, Greg Kramer, Elzear Lemieux, Tony Messina, Joe Morris, Bill Murdoch, Teri Rutherford, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** We continued to work on the south side of Pond Mountain. We rebuilt two major switchbacks with locust and rock steps. Also, we built about six rock steps into another area of trail. We prepared locust logs and additional rocks for future rehab. It was a beautiful day, but we saw only three section hikers.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 11/19/2020

**Purpose:** Inspect trail and minor clearing

**Location:** Sections 1 and 2, McQueen's Gap to VA/TN state line

**People:** Ed Speer

**Summary:** Ed hiked McQueens Gap to state line, then back and down Backbone Rock Trail. The A.T. had about 20 blowdowns and stepovers. He cleared all brush and rocks from the tread. Backbone Rock trail had about 3 blowdowns. Only one that needs to be seriously addressed is a three-foot diameter oak that fell across the A.T. from the uphill side. It is close to the state line.

**Reporting:** Jake Mitchell

**Date:** 11/20/2020

**Purpose:** General Maintenance

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

**People:** Jake Mitchell

**Summary:** It was a PERFECT day to make a trip to the trail. I may have done more maintenance on the access road and approach





trail than the A.T. itself. I cleared several limbs and fallen branches and trees off the access road between the gate and the barn. I picked up an entire bag of trash and an old tent at the barn. The tent was unsalvageable. I cut back a lot of brambles at the top of the approach trail. The A.T. itself is in near perfect condition. I made a few cuts here and there, but nothing significant. It's In great shape for winter. There were several people on the trail as usual.

**Reporting:** Vic Hasler

**Date:** 11/20/2020

**Purpose:** Review NC-TN National Register of Historic Places draft application

**People:** Vic Hasler, Ed Oliver

**Summary:** The National Park Service is filing registrations to the National Register of Historic Places by state, with TN and NC combined due to extensive trail length along the shared border. The 170-page draft was reviewed for statements relevant to TEHCC, with over two dozen comments and edits submitted. Ed Oliver assisted by reviewing several pages of relocations to ensure accuracy. The overall objective is to provide another layer of protection for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

**Reporting:** Vic Hasler

**Date:** 11/21/2020

**Purpose:** Brushing uphill side of trail

**Location:** Section 12c, Elk River to just short of side path to Jones Falls

**People:** Vic Hasler

**Summary:** I arrived at sunrise at the Elk River Falls parking lot. I picked up a bag of trash (including multiple used diapers) and another bag of aluminum cans to recycle before passing through the USFS gate. Down at the river, I brushed the rhododendron at the last turn as a warm-up to ensure I was taking the right amount of gear. I then proceeded along the fisherman's trail to access the A.T. I gave the uphill side of the trail a heavy brushing down to Elk River at the former stile, which required much lopping of rhododendron and some use of the hedge trimmers on doghobble growth. I then backtracked to work towards Jones Falls until my turn-around time was reached and my personal battery ran low before the trimmer.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 11/24/2020

**Purpose:** Rehab trail

**Location:** Section 9b, South side Pond Mountain

**People:** Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Tony Messina, Joe Morris, Bill Murdoch, Teri Rutherford, Tim Stewart and hiker "Mud Crack"

**Summary:** Joe, Dan and I picked up some locust logs at the Watauga Work Center for future installation on the blue-blaze trail under the power line. We then tackled rehab on the south side of Pond Mountain for the fourth and last week, because we have now finished major rehab needs. Today we worked on two more switchbacks, with one being a complete redo. We also worked on rock cribbing a sloughing area. And we redid some large rocks to make them into nice steps. A south-bounder, "Mud Crack," asked many rehab questions of the upper crew. When he arrived at the lower crew, we were ready to struggle with moving a large rock up to the trail. Mud Crack spent 20 to 30 minutes on the other end of a rope. Tim, Teri, and I could not have moved that rock without him. This section of the A.T. is in very good condition now.



Mud crack a SOBO thru hiker from Colorado was our first satisfied customer.