



# The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

December 2021 | January 2022

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

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

## ***Celebrating 75 Years!***

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***Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!***

## Letter from the Chair

Submitted by [Kyle Haas](#) (2021 Steering Committee Chair)

It's been a great 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year for the TEHCC hiking club, particularly as we were still dealing with varying restrictions throughout the year.

This year, in celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we planned a special incentive program for hiking/maintaining the A.T., sold TEHCC apparel, and placed several historical articles in the newsletters (thanks Vic Hasler!). With our incentive program, there will be many people that have completed or are on course to complete this incentive. Great work!

I, again, wanted to personally thank you all for a great year of hiking. About 20 hikes were led this year, including two new hire/introductory hikes to several trails right here in the Tri-Cities area. Keep an eye on our website and newsletters in the coming months for more information on when we'll pick this back up.

As the new year comes around, Andy Steffan will be taking over as the 2022 Steering Committee Chair. I look forward to the coming year and thank everyone for a great year!

Thanks,

Kyle Haas

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## 2022 Steering Committee Update

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Submitted by [Kyle Haas](#) (2021 Steering Committee Chair)

### 2022 Steering Committee Members

Per the TEHCC constitution, the Steering Committee for 2022 will be made up of eight members. Returning second year members are: Andy Steffan (2022 Steering Committee Chair), Alex Lyttle, Josh Hayes, and Jacob Lustik. Kyle Haas will stay on the committee and serve as the past chair. There are three new members to the committee for 2022: Alison Page, Sal Arena, and Razvan Marinescu. The three new members 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 Forms survey, [2022 Steering Committee Slate](#). Those not on the Eastman network can email Kyle Haas with their approval/rejection of the proposed slate.

### New Steering Committee Members



**Sal Arena:** I work at Eastman in the Projects and Plant Design Group, and I've lived in the Tri Cities for a little over 3 years now. I've been getting back into the habit of finding new trails and exploring the area again, and I'm looking forward to doing so with TEHCC. I'm hoping to pick up a kayak for next season and get out on the water some when the weather is a bit nicer. Warriors' Path State Park is my favorite spot locally, and I look forward to leading a hike on the Devil's Backbone Trail.



**Alison Page:** Born and raised in East Tennessee, I love the outdoors and know what a treasure we have here. When my kids were small, I would take them hiking and camping. When they got older, we would go to the lakes with our kayaks and paddleboard. Now that our kids are grown, my husband and I are planning on filling our time with hikes and day trips that we never took the time to explore earlier. This past summer, I enjoyed a "Paddle to the Grill" kayak trip with the Eastman Canoeing group and found new friends and a new way to "go to dinner." I am an Innovation Representative in Worldwide Engineering and Construction and have been with the company for 20+ years. I look forward to the adventures, learnings, and friendships that this opportunity will bring.



**Razvan Marinescu:** I recently moved to this area as a new hire Mechanical Engineer at Eastman. Amongst my other outdoor hobbies, I enjoy different levels of difficulty hikes. I started liking hiking during college in mid Tennessee, and I am excited to explore this new area. I am looking forward to learning more about the area and trying other activities such as kayaking and camping.

### Advisors and Past Committee Members

The steering committee is also supported by Tim Schaefer and Vic Hasler to make sure everything continues to run smoothly. Their constant support and help is much appreciated and includes maintenance of the TEHCC website/trail wiki and the role of liaison between the Steering Committee and the A.T. Committee, to name a few.

I also would like to thank Jonathan Shumaker and Chantel Roberts for their great contributions to the Steering Committee over the past years as their terms will be coming to an end. Jonathan has been on the Steering Committee for three years, including the 2020 Steering Committee Chair, and currently serves as our Rental Equipment Coordinator as well as helping to rework our hiking program. He hopes to retain the Rental Equipment Coordinator role and continue participating in Steering Committee meetings. Chantel has been a committee member for two years serving as Treasurer and has also helped facilitate t-shirt sales and hiking incentives, just to name a few. Thanks again!

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## Appreciation Lunch for Thursday Maintainers Crew

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*Submitted by Vic Hasler*



The Steering Committee decided to provide an appreciation lunch for the regular Thursday Crew because of their significant maintenance activity completed on the Appalachian Trail during the pandemic. While some local deli shops were considered, the menu ended up being a variety of 6" Subway sandwiches, chips, and cookies.

On September 30<sup>th</sup>, the crew worked at a switchback roughly a mile south of the Iron Mtn Gap roadside parking, rehabbing the trail. Subway on South Roan Street in Johnson City provided a good deal for the sandwiches, while chips and cookies were from the nearby Food City. Everything was a hit, as I had right at the correct number of sandwiches for 13 maintainers plus myself.

Overall, the crew improved around 500 feet of trail, including adding several log and rock steps. Great work!!

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## Volunteer Recognitions 2019-2021

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*Compiled by Vic Hasler, A.T. Committee Chair*

As the Tennessee Eastman Hiking & Canoeing Club has not been able to host dinner meetings during the past two years, even to celebrate our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, our members have still been engaged with the Appalachian Trail. The Steering Committee has agreed to mail the items which have not yet been distributed (except for the pint glasses). Hopefully the Spring 2022 dinner meeting will return to being a normal event. We appreciate everyone who has gotten outside to safely enjoy or maintain the A.T. during the pandemic.

### 2019 Club Recognitions

Hiker of the Year	Jonathan Shumaker
Paddler of the Year	Steven Adams
Frank Oglesby Maintainer of the Year	Tony Messina

### 2020 Club Recognition

Frank Oglesby Maintainer of the Year	Kevin Sedgwick
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### 2019 USFS Annual Rockers

- ❖ For 2019, 237 volunteers contributed 9066 hours. 28 maintainers had 50+ hours each for a total of 6800 hours.
- ❖ *Note that this recognition is for hours in a single calendar year.*

50 Hours:	Aaron Brown, Bruce Darby, Saylor Fox, Pat Loven, Renee Messina, Mike Watts
100 Hours:	Scotty Bowman, Phyllis Cairnes, Steve Perri, Jim Foster, Dean Baird, John Beaudet
150 Hours:	Elzear Lemieux, Vic Hasler, Bill Murdoch
200 Hours:	Kim Peters, Kevin Sedgwick, Richard Carter, Jim Chambers
300 Hours:	Tim Stewart, Tony Messina, Dan Firth
400 Hours:	Joe Morris, Greg Kramer
	Seniors: ages 76 to 85 - Ted Mowery, Bob Peoples, Paul Benfield
1000 Hours:	Carl Fritz

### 2020 USFS Annual Rockers

- ❖ For 2020, 131 volunteers contributed 6,406 hours once allowed in the field again.
- ❖ Routine maintenance was 94% of the prior year's hours. Time spent on special projects was down 40% due to the pandemic.

50 Hours:	John Beaudet, Michael Stapleton
100 Hours:	Dean Baird, Scotty Bowman, Richard Carter
150 Hours:	Grayson Bullock, Van Hovey, Renee Messina, Gabe Nelson, Bob Peoples, Kevin Sedgwick
200 Hours:	Dan Firth, Vic Hasler, Greg Kramer, Elzear Lemieux, Bill Murdoch
300 Hours:	Joe Morris, Tim Stewart
500 Hours:	Tony Messina
1000 hours:	Carl Fritz

## 2020 ATC Cumulative Recognition

*Note that these awards are for total cumulative hours invested on the Appalachian Trail*

100 Hr patch: Carl Belcher, Aaron Brown, Grayson Bullock, Renee Messina, Gabe Nelson, Rich Ritter  
500 Hr ballcap: Dean Baird, Tony Messina, Ken Murray

## 2021 ATC Cumulative Recognition

100 Hr patch: Bettye Boone, Van Hovey, Ed Speer, Joel Zabel, Joy Zabel  
500 Hr ballcap: Elzear Lemieux, Mike Watts  
1000 Hr vest: Tony Messina

250 Hr NPS pass: Dean Baird\*, John Beaudet, Scotty Bowman\*, Richard Carter#, Dan Firth\*, Carl Fritz\*, Vic Hasler, Van Hovey\*, Greg Kramer\*, Renee Messina#, Tony Messina#, Joe Morris, Bill Murdoch\*, Kevin Sedgwick\*, Tim Stewart  
# holders of Senior passes, but had appropriate hours  
\* chose to receive NPS pass

## 2020 TEHCC Cumulative Maintenance Patches

*Per Carl Fritz, these patches have already been distributed in person or by mail.*

50 Hours: Alan Liggett, Janice Miller, David Polon, Teri Rutherford, Denny Samuel, Michael Stapleton, Joy Zabel  
100 Hours: Carl Belcher, Bettye Boone, Aaron Brown, Grayson Bullock, Van Hovey, Renee Messina, Gabe Nelson, Rich Ritter, Joel Zabel  
500 Hours: Ken Murray  
2000 Hours: Greg Kramer, Bill Murdoch  
3000 Hours: Joe Morris  
13000 Hours: Ed Oliver  
17000 hours: Carl Fritz

## 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Incentive – Pint Glass

- ❖ For 40 miles hiking or 40 hours field maintenance on TEHCC's A.T. Section during 2021
- ❖ As of November 9<sup>th</sup>, with just short of two months remaining
- ❖ Intention is to distribute at Spring 2022 Dinner

Dean Baird, John Beaudet, Carl Belcher, Paul Benfield, Scotty Bowman, Aaron Brown, Teni Butler, Richard Carter, Dan Firth, Jim Foster, America Freeman, Carl Fritz, Kyle Haas, Vic Hasler, Mike Head, Michaela Hofbauer, Carrie Hovey, Van Hovey, Greg Kramer, Elzear Lemieux, Yong Li, Ted Malone, Drew Mayberry, Matt McWilliams, Renee Messina, Tony Messina, Lori Mirrer, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Bill Murdoch, Bob Peoples, Kevin Sedgwick, Jonathan Shumaker, Ed Speer, Tim Stewart, Mike Watts, Steve Wilson, Joel Zabel

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## Event Schedule – Next Two Months

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For the latest, up-to-date information, see [tehcc.org/schedule](http://tehcc.org/schedule).

For additional information on APEs/TEHCC paddling events, see <http://www.riverapes.org/calendar.html>.

Date	Description	Contact	Telephone
December 6	Steering Committee Meeting – earlier in the month	<a href="#">Kyle Haas</a>	423-229-5869
January 20	Steering Committee Meeting	Andy Steffan	423-229-6492

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## Details of Upcoming Events

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### Recurring Events

#### TEHCC Steering Committee Meeting, Third Thursday of Each Month, Noon to 1:00 pm

Contact: [Kyle Haas](#)

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.



## **Tuesdays: Johnson City Roll Practice, 7:35 – 9:00 pm**

Contact: [Wesley R. Bradley](#), 423-647-1321

Come join the Jackson Action Wagon, [Mahoney's Outfitters](#), [APEs](#), and other paddlers from our region at Freedom Hall Pool for tips about basic kayaking skills. Have you already mastered the basics and have a bomb proof roll? There is still a lot of fun to be had at our pool session by practicing your flat-water freestyle moves and fellowshiping with other paddlers. Admission to the pool is \$2; rolling advice is free! Contact the pool office (423- 461-4872) for session confirmation or questions regarding the facility. Feel free to contact Wesley for any other questions.

## **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.

## **Second Saturday of Each Month: Hiking with Tools! (To Resume Spring 2022)**

Contact: [Tim Stewart](#)

Hiking with Tools! is an opportunity to enjoy a day hike on our beautiful section of the A.T. while helping out with some routine maintenance. Some minor tasks might include: cleaning waterbars and steps, lopping rhododendron, dismantling fire rings, or painting blazes or shelters. All tools will be furnished and no prior experience required! All are welcome, so come on out, meet some new hikers and join the Fun...and maybe get your hands a little dirty! Email Tim for details.

## **Scheduled Events**

There are no scheduled events for December.

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## **TEHCC Welcomes New Member**

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Rachel Stammen

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## **Trail Wiki Hike Summary**

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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 viewable at [http://tehcc.org/wiki/Recent\\_Hikes](http://tehcc.org/wiki/Recent_Hikes). Hikes with green background were club-led hikes.

No hikes were logged in November.



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

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**Reporting:** Tom Sahlin

**Date:** 10/16/2021

**Purpose:** Make trail passable from tree fall

**Location:** Section 15b, About 1.5 miles from Hughes Gap toward Beartown Mtn

**People:** Tom Sahlin

**Summary:** I used a bow saw to remove the top of a 7-inch tree and notch a 1.5-foot log to allow easier step-over. It was causing hikers to have to climb over the big log and go under the small one. I also dug out foot holes to help keep hikers from slipping. The small tree was alive when the rotten log fell from above the trail and brought it down. The small tree was driven into the ground and looked like it had become a stake, keeping the big log from sliding down the hill. If the roots of the small tree fail, the whole thing may slide down hill. Hopefully that won't happen when a hiker is crossing or it could be dangerous. This situation has apparently scared some hikers so much that they climbed up the steep bank above the trail to go around.



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**Reporting:** Tim Stewart

**Date:** 10/30/2021

**Purpose:** Check section

**Location:** Section 11b, Canute Place to Bitter End, Hard Core Cascades

**People:** Tim Stewart

**Summary:** I hiked in from Bitter End to about one mile beyond Hard Core Cascades. It rained off and on, so lopping rhodos became a very wet task. I got wet but otherwise it was a good outing.

**Reporting:** Joe Morris

**Date:** 11/1/2021

**Purpose:** Remove blowdowns

**Location:** Section 9a, Pond Flats

**People:** Joe Morris

**Summary:** After walking up North Pond, I found the hiker-reported blowdown about 1/2 mile beyond the summit. It was pretty easy to remove. On the return trip to US 321, I removed a fairly large nuisance step-over. North side is in pretty good shape.

**Reporting:** Joe Morris

**Date:** 11/3/2021

**Purpose:** Privy construction and rehab

**Location:** Section 14b, Bradley Gap to Stan Murray Shelter, Overmountain Shelter Area

**People:** Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart, Van Hovey, Bill Murdoch, Joe Morris, Greg Kramer, Richard Carter, Carl Fritz

**Summary:** Five of the crew finished the privy relocation and ramp to the privy. The old privy was covered with logs and fill. The sliding door on the upper loft of the barn was secured. Three members of the crew walked to Bradley Gap to assess the availability of rock for a future outing with the Forest Service to install bog bridges in a long wet area of the trail. Five steps were installed and 70 feet of trail was rehabbed.

**Reporting:** Kevin Sedgwick

**Date:** 11/5/2021

**Purpose:** Look for missing blaze; Routine maintenance

**Location:** Section 12d, Campbell Hollow Road to US19E

**People:** Kevin Sedgwick, Gloria Sedgwick

**Summary:** It was a cool day to start but awesome afternoon. Gloria shuttled me around the ends of the section. At the north end of my section, I hiked a short way into the next section to look at flagging that hikers told me about. Flagging is around the power line that cuts across the trail. Possible future clearing of brush from around power lines?? It's very overgrown. I installed two waterbars at the approach to the second bog bridge and added a drainage dip. I removed one fire ring, cut and removed some small blowdowns, and cut some vegetation. My major purpose was to look for missing blazes; it was warm enough to repaint some. At a major turn, they were gone. Why?? Where did they go? I reset a post and painted it. The post was found at the top of Bishop Hollow with The Refuge hostel written on it; might be left over from this summer. I repainted the blazes. I met 3 hikers that reported a large tree down, and found the very large rotten oak across the trail. Luckily it didn't take out the trail. I cut out and removed the brush it took down with it and tried to clear the bank so hikers might have an easier way around it until I get back to clear it.

**Reporting:** Vic Hasler

**Date:** 11/5/2021

**Purpose:** Trail-wide A.T. Community Summit

**Location:** Zoom meeting

**People:** Vic Hasler

**Summary:** I participated in an online teleconference involving A.T. Communities trail-wide. From the SORO breakout session, I learned that AT VISTA 2023 is scheduled for August 4-7 with home base in Johnson City. Alicia Phelps (Northeast Tennessee Tourism Association) is coordinating the event. The other breakout that I attended was for hiker and community support. The keynote speaker was Amy Camp who spoke about trail towns, based on her recent book "Deciding on Trails."

**Reporting:** Steve Perri

**Date:** 11/5/2021

**Purpose:** Southern Regional Partnership Meeting

**Location:** Kingsport, TN

**People:** Vic Hasler, Steve Perri

**Summary:** Vic Hasler and Steve Perri participated in the Fall Virtual RPC meeting which convenes the A.T. partners including the 5 SORO trail clubs, ATC, APPA, USFS, and NPS. Highlights of this year's meeting are described below.

New ATC staff roles and intros for the Asheville office include:

- Drew Ball, SORO Regional Director (replacing Morgan Sommerville)
- Sarah Adams, Georgia/Nantahala Regional Manager (Amicalola Falls S.P. - Fontana Dam)
- Stephen Eren, Smokies/Carolina Regional Manager (Fontana Dam – Spivey Gap)
- Jerry Kyle, Highcounty Regional Manager (Spivey Gap – I-77 in VA)

ATC Strategic Plan: ATC is updating their 3-to-5 year strategic plan. It is a 10-page document that describes the focus areas of:

- Landscape Protection, Natural Beauty and Climate Resiliency
- Visitor Use Management: Protect the A.T. Experience
- Cooperative Management: Strengthen Shared Stewardship
- Engage New People and New Partners

A copy of this document can be shared upon request.

The SORO office reported on their actions for the year, including management of invasive species, visitor use management plans (an overview of areas needing action and protection from over use), trail crews overview, Ridgerunners Program, and A.T. Communities and open areas. Matt Drury reported that Yellow Mountain Gap was cleared just prior to the meeting; it had been a long time since it had much maintenance.

ATC announced they have a new A.T. Communities Coordinator, Ashley Adkins Irons. ATC has hired a consultant for support of a Visitors Use Data Manager, Monica Mogilewsky, who began on 9/27/21. Monika is working on an inventory of current ATC data, beginning to explore those data sets to judge their condition and to develop a Data Team to oversee the building of ATC's new VUM data program. The RPC voted on and accepted a new A.T. Community in GA, Clayton Community. ATC shared a framework for clubs to offer a grievance policy. One approach is a code of ethics. Clubs should discuss and decide whether to develop their own policy or adopt the ATC policy.

The clubs provided updates including successes and challenges. All clubs seem to have issues around recruiting new members, and training and staffing for management roles. ATC provided presentations on volunteer recruitment and visitor use management. Several breakout groups were set up to address recruitment and leadership development. Some clubs recruit event participants using social media, their website, local outdoor magazines, and/or ATC's portal. I shared our pilot of Meetup as a resource. Vic attended the leadership breakout session. Suggestions included accommodating volunteers based on their personal life or profession, changing expectations and work load, and considering whether some roles could be paid. Retirees are often well suited for these roles, as they frequently have more time, interest, and experience.

With the increase in bear encounters, ATC is moving towards a food container policy. Hard containers appear to be the most bear resistant. Clubs shared experiences and mitigation of shelter graffiti, an ongoing problem. We shared our experience with graffiti boards.

The Spring SORO meeting will likely be the 2nd weekend in March of 2022. The Fall meeting will be 11/5/2022, possibly in Erwin.

**Reporting:** Gayle Riddervold

**Date:** 11/5/2021

**Purpose:** Investigate a blowdown

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

**People:** Gayle Riddervold and Becky Kinder

**Summary:** There are two huge blowdowns north of the iron gate where the trail goes down and sits close to the water. Both trees are laying diagonally across the trail. The first tree is sitting 3 feet off the ground forcing us to go under it. Both trees will require a chainsaw. There's a dead tree down closer to the iron gate. We will come back and remove it when we return with the appropriate tools.

**Reporting:** Craig Haire

**Date:** 11/6/2021

**Purpose:** Clear debris and small blowdowns

**Location:** Section 2a, Backbone Rock Trail to Abingdon Gap Shelter, and Backbone Rock trail

**People:** Craig Haire

**Summary:** I cleared small obstructions with a Katanaboy while on a hiking club hike. Between McQueen Gap and the side trail to Backbone Rock, there were at least four blowdowns too big for a hand saw; they will require a chainsaw. Another blowdown requiring a chainsaw is about 15 minutes up from Backbone Rock. The route from the A.T. to Backbone Rock was more of a debris field than a trail. I cleared around 90% of it. I encountered about a half-dozen A.T. thru-hikers on a pleasant day that started out quite cold.

**Reporting:** Tim Stewart

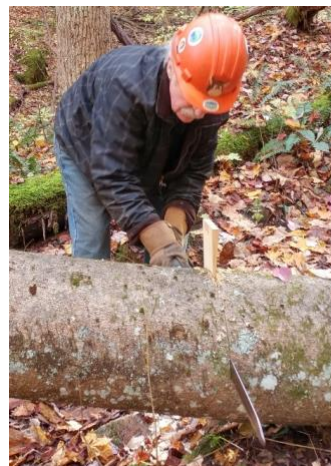
**Date:** 11/6/2021

**Purpose:** Remove blowdown

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

**People:** Tim Stewart, Bob Peoples

**Summary:** Bob had a report of a couple of blowdowns south of Dennis Cove Rd before the cliffs. The first was too large to remove with a hand saw, but is a step-over. We cleared some vegetation to make it easier to navigate. The next one was a leaner that barely obstructed the trail. However, if a hiker were to hang on it, it could fall. We carefully made a cut and encouraged the tree to fall without incident. A few more cuts were required to get it off the trail.



**Reporting:** Gayle Riddervold

**Date:** 11/6/2021

**Purpose:** Clear blowdown

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

**People:** Gayle Riddervold and Becky Kinder

**Summary:** We cut the blowdown beyond the iron gate with a small battery-operated saw and a manual saw. The tree was then removed from the trail with a rope. We went south of the gate and everything looked fine.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 11/9/2021

**Purpose:** Remove blowdowns

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

**People:** Carl Fritz, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** Gayle and Becky reported a double blowdown that had fallen diagonally across trail. One trunk was about 18" and the other 16". This particular area near the lake shore is littered with other blowdowns, so we had to work to get the chunks off the trail. We saw only two day-hikers; they were from NC and one was blind. He said it was a beautiful day to be out. When we returned to our vehicles, I left a fuel bag on the ground behind my truck. Tim returned later in the afternoon, but the bag had probably been picked up by someone driving by on Oliver Hollow Rd.

**Reporting:** Kevin Sedgwick

**Date:** 11/9/2021

**Purpose:** Remove blowdowns

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

**People:** Kevin Sedgwick, Gloria Sedgwick

**Summary:** With Gloria's help, I returned to get the big oak blowdown I found last week. Lucky it was hollow on the inside. After many cuts, I removed it and cleaned up the trail. We then cleared 3 smaller blowdowns. Awesome day for this time of year.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 11/10/2021

**Purpose:** Inspect trail

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

**People:** Ed Speer

**Summary:** This section is in good shape. There is one 16" dead and rotten tree that is a step-over about 1.3 miles north of TN 91.

**Reporting:** Terry Oldfield

**Date:** 11/10/2021

**Purpose:** Check shelter

**Location:** Section 4b, Double Springs Shelter

**People:** John Frey, Terry Oldfield

**Summary:** We hiked to the shelter from TN 91. The trail is in great shape, with only one step-over (see photo) about one mile (1.3 mile per Ed Speer report) from TN 91. There was very little trash at the shelter. We repainted the graffiti board and cleared leaves from the gutter. Water is flowing well at both springs. On the way back, we noticed controlled burns in the distance from Osborne Farm. It was a beautiful day; perfect for hiking. We saw only one SOBO hiker. (See photos next page.)





**Reporting:** Joe Morris

**Date:** 11/11/2021

**Purpose:** Cribbing and rehab trail

**Location:** Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to FS230, switchback Iron Mtn Gap

**People:** Van Hovey, Joe Morris, Richard Carter, Mike Head, Dan Firth, Kevin Sedgwick, Dean Baird, Toni Polenz, Greg Kramer, Bill Murdoch, Tony Messina, Carl Fritz

**Summary:** Our major rehab south of Iron Mountain Gap is almost complete to Cherry Gap. We rehabbed 244 feet of trail with cribbing and high line dirt cache.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 11/12/2021

**Purpose:** Inspect trail; clear debris

**Location:** Section 3b, US 421, Low Gap, to emergency shelter on McQueen's Knob

**People:** Ed Speer

**Summary:** Ed hiked from Low Gap to the "Holiday Inn" on north side of McQueen's Knob. He cleared minor debris. This section is currently in good shape.

**Reporting:** Tim Stewart

**Date:** 11/13/2021

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

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

**People:** Tim Stewart, Jonathan Brown, Judith Ratcliff, Lori Mirrer

**Summary:** It was expected to be cold, but not snowy! Beauty Spot hasn't realized it is not winter yet!

We met at Indian Grave Gap and then carpoled to Beauty Spot after missing the trail crossing of the forest service road. As the surprise of the conditions wore off, we began hiking down while trying to keep warm. When finally in the woods, the conditions began to improve. No sun yet, but the wind had eased some. We lopped encroaching vegetation and cleared the waterbars of a new layer of leaves. Several minor blowdowns were cleared. At the forest service road, Judith and I returned to Beauty Spot, while Lori and Jon continued down. They encountered a few more minor blowdowns and continued lopping. We beat Lori and Jon to the trailhead, so we began heading up until we met them and then we all returned. Albeit cold, it was a great end to the "Hiking with Tools!" season. I gave out two patches.



**Reporting:** Vic Hasler

**Date:** 11/16/2021

**Purpose:** Fall A.T. Partnership meeting

**Location:** Zoom

**People:** Carl Fritz, Vic Hasler, Greg Kramer, Joe Morris

**Summary:** Fall 2021 A.T. Partnership discussion was held again via Zoom due to ongoing USFS meeting restrictions for the pandemic. A total of 18 participants covered a range of issues related to the Trail, including:

- The plan is to lift the camping closure (due to bear activity) from Double Springs Shelter to Backbone Rock Trail at the end of the year.
- A brief report was obtained from a contracted structural engineer about problems with the Overmountain Shelter. Next step is to create video to show the safety concerns for a virtual public meeting.
- USFS is still inspecting major bridges with CNF having a virtual training course for staff in December. However, identification of Hazard Trees is a separate certification, thus not necessarily possible during a single visit.
- A proposal to test a rope-intervention to guide visitors to stay on the A.T. path over Round Bald is being considered. Further consultation with USFS and SAHC will occur in preparation for 2022.
- Great American Outdoors Act funding was requested by USFS for more gravel at Carvers Gap in preparation for paving later, and toilet replacement.
- Spring 2022 Partnership gathering will be on Tuesday, March 22, with the hope to meet at the ARD office if pandemic restrictions are lifted.

**Reporting:** Kevin Sedgwick

**Date:** 11/16/2021

**Purpose:** fix steps/ routine maintenance

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

**People:** Kevin Sedgwick

**Summary:** I cleaned out waterbars and added a new waterbar. I was lucky to find lots of locust that I cut with a hand saw. A step before 19E got kicked out; I reset it. I also cut back some vegetation and rehabbed 65 feet of trail.

**Reporting:** Tony Messina

**Date:** 11/16/2021

**Purpose:** Maintain Section

**Location:** Section 12a, Bitter End to Walnut Mountain Road

**People:** Tony and Renee Messina

**Summary:** Renee and I made one last pass of our section for the year. We found and cleared several small blowdowns and did a little bit of rhodo lopping. Lath on a couple of bridges was beginning to roll up on the ends and we did some cobbling to cut off excess and nail down edges. There are bare sections on many of the bridge ends from one to four feet long. The worst is the Laurel Fork bridge, which needs about six total feet of new lath. Signage at Laurel Fork is aging and could stand replacement. We encountered one pure SOBO thru-hiker and one section hiker.

**Reporting:** Joe Morris

**Date:** 11/17/2021

**Purpose:** Rehab trail and construct steps

**Location:** Section 14b, Bradley Gap to Stan Murray Shelter, Bradley Gap

**People:** Tim Stewart, John Beaudet, Van Hovey, Bob Peoples, Tom Sahlin, Joe Morris, Greg Kramer, Bill Murdoch, Carl Fritz

**Summary:** We split into two crews after the walk-in from the Barn. One team built steps and created water outlets on the ridge above the tent area. The other crew continued the rehab with large rock near the springs at Bradley Gap. We rehabbed a total of 145 feet.

**Reporting:** Ken Murray

**Date:** 11/17/2021

**Purpose:** Check for blowdowns and graffiti

**Location:** Section 20b, Devils Creek Gap to No Business Knob Shelter

**People:** Ken Murray, Lotta Murray

**Summary:** We removed numerous small blowdowns. There are two large, but step-over, blowdowns remaining that await a sawyer. We cut back rhodos and other encroaching vegetation. The hardware cloth (wire mesh) under the shelter sleeping platform has been damaged. Fortunately there is no trash under the platform, yet. We will have to schedule a trip to fix it soon. One of the boards on the picnic table seat has disappeared (burned?). Hikers can still sit at the picnic table but it will need to be replaced. We replaced the logbook and graffiti board.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 11/18/2021

**Purpose:** Remove blowdown

**Location:** Section 2a, 2.5 miles north of Abingdon Gap Shelter to 0.5 miles south

**People:** Ed Speer

**Summary:** Ed found one of blowdowns that has been reported by several recently. It was a 12" tree that had fallen across the large

blowdown removed by Tony and Renee some months ago. And it was about 2.5 miles north of Abingdon Gap. Ed was able to remove it with a hand saw and a rope. Ed also inspected from McQueen's Gap to McQueen's Knob and that section was clear.

**Reporting:** Tony Messina

**Date:** 11/20/2021

**Purpose:** Chainsaw Training

**Location:** USFS Watauga Workcenter

**People:** Tony Messina, Chuck Ramsey, Carl Fritz, Joe Morris, Dean Baird, Ken Murray, Todd Grey, Wes Miller

**Summary:** A chainsaw certification class was held for new TEHCC sawyers and taught by volunteer instructor Chuck Ramsey from the Pisgah District. Joe, Ken, Dean, Todd, and Wes are now certified as Class B (bucking) sawyers and can begin to work on the trails as soon as their cards are signed by the district ranger. The Watauga Workcenter was provided by Chad Ingles and proved to be a great venue for both the in-class and hands-on outdoor work.

Tony and Chuck spent about 2 hours organizing the class over the past several months. Carl helped with setup and audited a portion of the class. Everyone thought the class was very well organized and presented. The emphasis of the class was SAFETY, SAFETY, SAFETY, but many very useful specific techniques were also covered.

**Reporting:** Van Hovey

**Date:** 11/21/2021

**Purpose:** Clear blowdown

**Location:** Section 15b, From Hughes Gap to one mile north

**People:** Van Hovey, Carrie Hovey

**Summary:** We hiked north from Hughes Gap a little less than one mile and found the reported blowdowns: one 6-inch and one 18-inch down slope across the trail. The bigger blowdown was very rotten, so not a problem to cut it and roll it off the trail. It was a pleasant day for a walk, overcast yet no rain and likely in the high 40's to low 50's. We met no hikers, neither NOBO nor SOBO.

**Reporting:** Van Hovey

**Date:** 11/22/2021

**Purpose:** Scout trail

**Location:** Section 19b, Curley Maple Gap Shelter - Nolichucky River, Jones Branch

**People:** Van Hovey, Carrie Hovey

**Summary:** We walked the lower sections to establish and flag sections for potential rehab. We also flagged several areas as possible worksites. Along the way, we encountered a 10-inch blowdown on the Jones Branch section. We walked out to retrieve a chainsaw to cut the blowdown. We met a few walkers and three SOBO thru-hikers. We asked if they had encountered any other blowdowns from Culry Maple Gap Shelter down to Jones Branch. "Nope." The Trail is in decent shape. Another nice day for a walk in the woods....cheers!

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 11/24/2021

**Purpose:** Inspect trail

**Location:** Section 1, Damascus to Backbone Rock

**People:** Ed Speer

**Summary:** Ed hiked the A.T. from Damascus to Backbone Rock Trail, and the Backbone Rock Trail, and did minor clearing. The A.T. is clear of blowdowns. There is a six-prong oak blowdown 1/3 mile from the Backbone Rock parking area. No limbs are over 6 inches. Then there is a step-over one mile from the parking lot. Ed saw six SOBO hikers; some were in shorts and t-shirts.

**Reporting:** Dan Firth

**Date:** 11/27/2021

**Purpose:** Maintain section

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

**People:** Dan Firth and Michaela Hofbauer

**Summary:** We removed a number of small blowdowns and one large one. We also cleaned the water diversions, removed trash from the shelter, and cleaned the shelter gutter.