



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

February 2022

tehcc.org

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

In This Issue

[Letter from the Chair](#)

[Event Schedule – Next Two Months](#)

[Details of Upcoming Events](#)

[Bill Murdoch, January 2022 ATC Maintainer of the
“Trail Gorillas” at Bays Mountain Park](#)

[Dolan Branch Trail Relocation at Bays Mountain Park](#)

[TEHCC Welcomes New Members](#)

[Trail Wiki Hike Summary](#)

[A.T. Maintenance Reports](#)



*Laurel Fork Falls, as seen by the Thursday work crew
(See December 16th maintenance report)*

Letter from the Chair

Submitted by [Andy Steffan](#) (2022 Steering Committee Chair)

Welcome to another new year! Hope it's gotten off to a great and refreshing start for you! I am excited to serve as the TEHCC Steering Committee Chair for 2022 after watching many other take on the role before me. At this point, I still plan on maintaining the TEHCC - APEs Liaison role as well, so feel free to continue to direct paddling questions to me too.

We had pretty good participation in our 75th Anniversary initiatives given the continued Covid struggles; so that is certainly something to celebrate. We hope to continue building upon that this year with more hiking programs and maintenance events, and hopefully have banquets again. We do have a few EXCITING things already in the works this year, so stay tuned to the newsletter for those details as Spring approaches.

As we plan for the new year, please feel free to reach out with any ideas, questions, or concerns.

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://www.riverapes.org/calendar.html>.

Date	Description	Contact	Telephone
February 17	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1:00	Andy Steffan	423-229-6492
February 19	Bays Mountain Park Maintenance, 9:00 – 2:00	Greg Kramer	
March 12	Hiking with Tools!	Tim Stewart	
March 17	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1:00	Andy Steffan	423-229-6492
March 19	Bays Mountain Park Maintenance, 9:00 – 2:00	Greg Kramer	

[Back to Top](#)

Details of Upcoming Events

Recurring Events

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

Contact: [Andy Steffan](#)

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.

Johnson City Roll Practice, Tuesdays, 7:35 – 9:00 pm, and Now a New Time, Sundays, 1:00 – 3:00 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.

Weekly A.T. Trail Maintenance, Most Thursdays

Contact: Joe Morris, 423-571-5201, atvolunteer@tehcc.org

Join a group of maintainers who work somewhere on our 134-mile section each week, usually on Thursdays. On-the-job training, tools, and protective gear are provided to allow everyone to quickly engage with the trail. Carpooling is available from several places.

Hiking with Tools! Second Saturday of Each Month (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.

Bays Mountain Park Trail Maintenance, Third Saturday of Each Month, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

Contact: [Greg Kramer](#)

This event is family friendly across all of the park trails. We will meet in the mountain bike parking area by the maintenance shed. Please bring gloves and safety glasses. If the task requires, hardhats and other safety equipment will be provided as necessary.

Scheduled Events

There are no "Scheduled Events" for February. Be sure to note the "Recurring Events" above.

Bill Murdoch, January 2022 ATC Maintainer of the Month

Submitted by Vic Hasler and Carl Fritz

Bill first hiked on the Appalachian Trail during a weekend in 1970 with Adair, his future wife, while he was studying at North Carolina State University and she at University of North Carolina, Greensboro. Upon graduating with a Chemical Engineering degree in 1973, he joined Eastman Kodak at their Tennessee Eastman site in Kingsport, and also its Recreation Hiking Club and the ATC. Bill continued his education in parallel with employment earning a MS in Engineering Administration from the University of Tennessee.

Bill started participating with a trail maintenance crew in 1980 for the section between Deep Gap and Iron Mountain Gap, then became its team leader in 1984. Unfortunately, the club didn't start keeping accurate records of volunteer hours until 2000, but Bill, since then, has contributed 2,247 hours to the Appalachian Trail. Over the years, Bill has especially enjoyed working with college age and younger students.

In 1999 Bill started continuously section hiking the A.T. with the intent of completing the entire trail. He diligently hiked large sections once or twice a year every year except when there were family illnesses. The quest was completed when Bill Murdoch summited Katahdin in September 2016. This experience endowed him with a personal perspective on trail needs.





Bill has regularly participated with the Special Projects crew, contributing his time, funds, and unique talents. Among the maintainers, he is known as “MacGyver” because of his resourcefulness and rigging capabilities whether it be a tree, log, rock, or bridge beam that needs to be moved. When a rope puller is not functioning sufficiently, Bill has taken the device home to rig up a dynamometer, test different rope designs, and then donate the proper rope. He had found and purchased scrapped grating to make bridges slip resistant. He recommended a fiddle block and rope system, used regularly by the club, to move rocks and logs. His contributions to methods for accomplishing tasks as mundane as removal of graffiti have been invaluable. In 2017, TEHCC recognized Bill Murdoch as its Maintainer of the Year.

A side note: Bill is a very active sailor. After retiring from Eastman Chemical in 2004, he and Adair purchased a large 34-foot sailboat, “Irish Eyes.” Since 2008, they have sailed most years for five months to the Bahamas and back.

Bill's comments: Thank you all. I am much flattered by the write up. It makes so much of so little. Like all of us, I stand in a path made by the many I have worked with in the past (Collins, Ray, Julian, Stan, Gordon, Bob, Bill, Frank, John, Darrel...) or those I work with now. It is not a one person gig. I'm just one of many.

“Trail Gorillas” at Bays Mountain Park

Submitted by Vic Hasler with permission to use content from “The Interpreter,” Winter 2021-2022

When the very big projects along the club’s Appalachian Trail section wrapped up in 2017, as executed by Hard Core and ASU Watauga College partnership, the vision was to use honed trail-building skills to benefit smaller projects on the A.T. and in regional parks. The East Tennessee Trail Association has been working on the Coon Den Trail in Cherokee National Forest to make big improvements in a steep “rock scramble” section. As shared in [November 2020 club newsletter](#), Tony and Renee Messina plus several other volunteers revitalized the Forest Walk Trail in Eastman Park.



This article is to introduce you to another trail-maintaining group that has been formed – “The Gorillas” of Bays Mountain Park. While BMP and TEHCC have worked together over the years on several trail projects in the Kingsport city park, this crew has been established with experienced club maintainers who patiently train new volunteers in the needed skills. Megan Krager, BMP Senior Naturalist, shared that the traits of power, strength, might.... describe the “Trail Gorillas” when working together. Members enjoy the challenge of getting down and dirty to build a path to be appreciated for generations to come. There are also a wide variety of easier tasks that can be learned quickly. The group started this past summer by making improvements along Lakeside Trail above the dam and by putting steps on sections of the Fire Tower Trail. The most recent project has been a reroute along Dolan Branch Trail at the base of the mountain near the Forest Walk Loop Trail.

The Gorillas typically work the third Saturday of each month from 9am until 2pm, with other dates as can be planned. An advantage is being very close to Kingsport. So if you would like to help with trail maintenance at Bays Mountain Park, contact Krystal Haney, BMP volunteer coordinator, at krystalhaney@kingsporttn.gov or call the Nature Center at (423)229-9447. Alternatively, contact TEHCC members Tony or Renee Messina or any Thursday regular maintainer.



Dolan Branch Trail Relocation at Bays Mountain Park

Submitted by Tony Messina (photos by Renée Messina and Greg Kramer)

If a tree falls in the forest, does it make any sound if nobody is there? More impressively, what if a landslide wipes out a trail? It would have been interesting to see and hear what occurred last spring near the boundary of Bays Mountain Park and the Eastman Recreation Area along the Dolan Branch Trail. During heavy rains, approximately twenty yards of trail sloughed off into the gorge, as part of the mountainside sheared away. The resulting path was unsafe and difficult to navigate for the many hikers and runners who frequent the trail. Last summer Megan Krager, Bays Mountain senior naturalist, consulted the Trail Gorillas (*see related article above*) to determine how to best remediate the trail.

Initial thoughts were to install bridges either around or over the affected areas. Fearing future landslides, the group decided that bridging was impractical. The “knuckle draggers” therefore decided to go with a low tech, brute force solution and simply reroute the trail farther up the hill and around the unstable area. Various routes were investigated and a short switchback with rock steps was decided upon -- LARGE rock steps. Rocks were available for harvest nearby, requiring gorilla power to relocate and stack them into a hopefully long-lasting staircase.

About six full workdays were required to complete the relocation, which involved about 0.1 mile of sidehill trail construction in addition to the rock steps. Locust logs were used as side logs on the steepest section of the trail. Locust is nature’s own treated lumber and will last decades in contact with soil. These are the techniques known and used by TEHCC maintainers for the Appalachian Trail, many of which are also BMP Trail Gorillas.

Dolan Branch Trail follows the historic water supply line from Bays Mountain Dam down through Eastman Recreation Park. The cast iron line supplied all of Kingsport’s water from about 1915 until about 1946 and utilized the head of water trapped in the lake to



supply pressure for distribution. Old-timers have said the joke was that if everyone in the city flushed at the same time, the reservoir would go dry. The trail is very scenic through old growth forest, covering 0.7 miles from the dam to the Forest Loop trailhead. Some of the largest trees in the park overlook the trail.

As shared in the related “Trail Gorillas” article, the crew typically works on the third Saturday each month at Bays Mountain Park. Other workdays occur as well, depending upon the project, weather, and availability of gorillas. Volunteers are welcomed to come learn trail building techniques, while helping to improve the paths within this beautiful park.

TEHCC Welcomes New Members

Charles Redd

Yong Li

John Harris

Edward Jimenez

Luther Wiest

Yanfei Li

Amelia Hawkins

Melanie Gross

Robert Fuller

Katherine Donaldson

Mark Wagner

Nathan Susong

Warren Wells

Paul Stafford

Ryan Martin

Justin Lanning

[Back to Top](#)

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 viewable at http://tehcc.org/wiki/Recent_Hikes. Hikes with green background were club-led hikes. Following are hikes logged since November 1.

Date	Trail(s)	Hike Distance	# of Hikers	Tags	Reported By
09-Nov-2021	Charles Bunion Great Smoky Mountains National Park	8.1 mi	2		Andysteffan
	Comment: 8 miles on the AT. Weather was perfect! Leaf color change was still happening and was beautiful. We met some great people at the overlook, even a lady from Kingsport! Small world!				
24-Nov-2021	White House Cliffs Trail Rocky Fork State Park	1.9 mi	2	Dogs	Vhasler
	Comment: Blue sky afternoon hike for father/son hikers with dog on leash. Cool lower elevation likely due to cascading stream became sun-warmed breeze higher up. A good workout day before Thanksgiving - as a ...more				



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Reporting: Richard Ramsey

Date: 9/30, 10/10, and 10/30/2021

Purpose: Trail Maintenance

Location: Section 14a, Doll Flats to Bradley Gap

People: Cheryl and Richard Ramsey

Summary: On these dates, we cut back weeds along the trail, removed minor blowdowns, and removed trash from Doll Flats.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 12/2/2021

Purpose: Inspect and clear trail

Location: Section 1, Backbone Rock Trail and A.T. to state line

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed removed minor blowdowns and found none impeding the hikers.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 12/2/2021

Purpose: Open Atwood relocation

Location: Section 9a, US 321 to Pond Flats, Atwood Relocation

People: Greg Kramer, Carl Fritz, John Beaudet, Elzear Lemieux, Van Hovey, Bob Peoples, Joe Morris, Tim Steward

Summary: This crew opened the Atwood relocation. We had to replace blaze posts removed by a disgruntled neighbor and added two more posts. We removed 12 buckets of used oil dumped on the property and took them to the Watagua Work Center. We closed the old A.T. section, and removed human excrement at the gate post. See photo of the new treadway adjacent to the wilderness boundary.



[Back to Top](#)

Reporting: Gayle Riddervold

Date: 12/4/2021

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

Location: Section 8, Wilbur Dam Road to US 321

People: Gayle Riddervold and Becky Kinder

Summary: The blazes were repainted from Wilbur Dam Road up to the small road. Several blowdowns were cut and removed and rhododendron were cut back.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 12/5/2021

Purpose: Clear tree from trail

Location: Section 11a, One mile south on A.T. from Dennis Cove Road

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I removed a 6-inch dead hemlock tree that had fallen over the trail. I cut the trunk, then dragged the upper part beside the trail.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 12/9/2021

Purpose: Finish up Iron Mountain Gap

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to FS230 switchback

People: Greg Kramer, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Bill Murdoch, Van Hovey, Tim Stewart, Bob Peoples, and Kevin Sedgwick

Summary: We built 408 feet of trail, completing rehab from Unaka Mtn Low Gap to Iron Mtn Gap Road. Carl, Greg, and Dan went to Low Gap and performed maintenance on 170 feet of trail. All others went in by the usual parking place near the gap and upgraded 238 feet of trail. They also made a nice observation platform near an overlook.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 12/9/2021

Purpose: Inspect and clear trail

Location: Section 2a and 2b, McQueen's Gap to Backbone Rock Trail and exit on Backbone Rock

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed hiked McQueen's Gap to Backbone Rock. He removed minor blowdowns. The trails are in good shape. There are only three blowdowns, two are 12" and one 6". They are mostly on the ground so hikers can get over them. He encountered two south bounders, a father and son, who definitely plan to complete their hike.

Reporting: Richard Ramsey

Date: 12/12/2021

Purpose: Clear blowdowns and remove trash

Location: Section 14a, Doll Flats to Bradley Gap

People: Cheryl and Richard Ramsey

Summary: We removed blowdowns and trash.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 12/12/2021

Purpose: Survey trail for downfall and make trail passable

Location: Section 20a, About 0.1 mile to third switchback up from Nolichucky River going south.

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I made the trail passable through a fallen 11"-diameter hemlock tree that had made hikers climb over the trunk and then under limbs to pass through. This is a temporary fix to allow the trail to be passable.



Reporting: Tony Messina

Date: 12/14/2021

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 10 and 11a, Coon Den Falls to ½ mile north of Dennis Cove

People: Renee Messina and Tony Messina

Summary: Renee hiked out from Coon Den Falls to scout the A.T. back to Dennis Cove. She cleared several small blowdowns along the way and found one large and one small blowdown for sawyers to go back and address. When I met her at Dennis Cove, we met a trail runner who described several blowdowns in the Laurel Fork Gorge. We then cut out one small blowdown about 1/2 mile north of Dennis Cove. The gorge blowdowns were reported to Carl, Joe, and Greg. The Thursday crew is modifying plans for this week to address them right away.

Reporting: Kevin Sedgwick

Date: 12/14/2021

Purpose: Rehab trail

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

People: Kevin Sedgwick

Summary: I went back to my section to continue rehab on the trail working south to north. I rehabbed 130 feet. I fixed a few log steps and reset one step to turn it into a waterbar with lots of rocks. I found a nice log and installed a waterbar, and found another nice log and installed it as check step with easy back fill. I also took apart a campsite.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 12/16/2021

Purpose: Rehab trail

Location: Section 4b, Double Springs Shelter to TN91 Osborne Farm

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Over two days Ed replaced 3 rotting blaze posts along accessible trail. At the first step over the stile he added a water diversion, and redid the steps on one side. He encountered both a south bounder destined to finish at Roan Mountain and a north bounder planning to finish in Virginia.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 12/16/2021

Purpose: Remove blowdowns and construct steps

Location: Section 10, Hampton trailhead to Dennis Cove Road, Laurel Fork Falls

People: Greg Kramer, Bill Murdoch, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, John Beaudet, Van Hovey, Tony Messina, Kevin Sedgwick, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart, Joe Morris, Tom Sahlin

Summary: Two large blowdowns were removed near Laurel Fork Falls. We rehabbed 120 feet of trail and set 18 steps.



Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 12/22/2021

Purpose: Remove blowdown

Location: Section 4b, TN 91 to 1.3 miles north

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed was able to remove the oak blowdown about 1.3 miles north of TN 91 with a handsaw, a rope, and a lot of sweat. The second gate on the accessible trail has a broken hinge. Ed has removed the gate and we will check with the forest service for some help.

Reporting: James Foster

Date: 12/23/2021

Purpose: Winter check

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

People: James Foster, Joel Zabel, Joy Zabel, Andy Deshkulkarni

Summary: We cut out about 6 blowdowns from 4-10 inches in diameter. We also cleaned out waterbars.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 12/24/2021

Purpose: Remove tree from trail

Location: Section 18, About 3.25 miles north from Indian Grave

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I used a bowsaw to remove a live maple tree that had fallen across the trail. The largest diameter cut was 7 inches, but I also cut many 2 to 6 inch limbs and part of the main trunk and removed them from trail. Trail is now clear.

Reporting: Kevin Sedgwick

Date: 12/24/2021

Purpose: Rehab trail

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

People: Kevin Sedgwick

Summary: Christmas Eve trail work. What could be better? The rehab fun moves on north in my section. I rehabbed a total of 65 feet. I reset rock steps at one area, installed a new step, lifted a cribbing log higher, and back filled. Another spot in the trail was too narrow and falling off. I reset some cribbing rock and found more. I also found a locus log and set it, pulling down a lot of dirt. Could not of asked for better weather in December.

Reporting: Joel Zabel

Date: 12/31/2021

Purpose: Winter check; clear blowdowns

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to Unaka Mtn

People: Yong Li, Jim Foster, Joy Zabel, Joel Zabel

Summary: We used a Katanaboy to cut about 5 blowdowns, 6" in diameter and smaller. We also checked the shelter. We saw all the great work the Eastman crew has been doing with cribbing, trail rehab, etc. Thanks all; it looks fantastic!

Reporting: Tony Messina

Date: 12/31/2021

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 15b, Cloudland to Hughes Gap

People: Tony Messina, Carl Fritz

Summary: Carl and I shuttled cars and hiked one way from Cloudland to Hughs Gap. We cleared several minor blowdowns and felled a couple of hazard trees. It was kind of a blustery day, but fairly warm. Not a bad way to spend the last day of the year. The trail and the Ash Gap water trail are in reasonably good shape. We saw only four hikers along the trail, but Carvers Gap was slammed with cars when we returned for the car in the afternoon.

Reporting: Steve Wilson

Date: 12/31/2021

Purpose: Replace handles on broken trail tools

Location: Home

People: Steve Wilson

Summary: This report is a compilation of the hours spent to replace the handles on various sledges and pulaskis tools that were broken during this year's trail work. Each replaced handle requires some time to remove the broken handle and to shape the new handle for mating into the tool head. It's gratifying to see an old tool rejuvenated for continued use.

Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 1/1/2022

Purpose: Clear blowdown

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

People: Van Hovey, Carrie Hovey

Summary: From USA Raft, we hiked little over a mile to find a reported blowdown. Report suggested small tree, maybe 6 - 8 inches in diameter. We brought the Katanaboy rather than a chainsaw. We found three blowdowns; cut two out and muscled the third aside. It was a balmy day, no hikers.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 1/4/2022

Purpose: Clear trail of fallen branches and trees

Location: Section 19b, About 3/4 mile from Nolichucky River toward Nolichucky Gorge Campground

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I checked the trail for downed branches and blowdowns from the recent snow and wind. I had a bowsaw with me, so when I found a large tree over the trail that would be difficult for hikers to get through with a full pack, I decided to remove it. It was a live tree before it fell, so it was full of sticky sap. I had a very hard time getting through it; so I returned to the car for more tools. I used the bowsaw together with a sharp mattock to chop out pieces, and sawed until sap brought the bowsaw to a halt. I got through the first cut, but the tree was too heavy to move much. So I kept cutting until the trail was cleared. Only one hiker came through while I was working. I cut two other small broken trees that were across the trail, removing many branches of various sizes, from very small to 3 inches. Some were from live trees, but most were dead branches. It was a blustery day with more cold wind just before dark and after. I didn't make it past Nolichucky Gorge Campground.



Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 1/5/2022

Purpose: Inspect and clear trail

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

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed hiked through some snow to Double Springs Shelter. He removed wrist-size blowdowns and many branches. There is a 15" dead oak blowdown that is suspended 3 inches above trail. It is 1.3 miles from TN 91. It is not a major obstruction, so can wait until a sawyer is coming through.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 1/6/2022

Purpose: Build blue-blaze trail

Location: Section 10, Hampton trailhead to Dennis Cove Road, Between the bridges

People: Greg Kramer, Carl Fritz, Dan Firth, Bob Peoples, Dean Baird, Scotty Bowman, Tim Stewart, Elzar Lemieux, Bill Murdoch, and Tony Messina

Summary: We built 210 feet of trail parallel with the existing trail, at a higher elevation. See photo. ->



Reporting: Joel Zabel

Date: 1/8/2022

Purpose: Hike, but became maintenance

Location: Section 19b, Noli Campground to Curley Maple Shelter

People: Yong Li, Joel Zabel, Denny Samuel, Ed Brading, Jim Foster

Summary: This was just going to be a hike with friends, but the trail was blocked just after after passing Noli Campground, heading to Curley Maple. Some of us carry handsaws on our hikes, so we had at it. The largest blowdown was 10 inches in diameter, but most were 4 inches or less. We sawed 20+ blowdowns or trees and rhodos that fell from the weight of snow and ice.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 1/8/2022

Purpose: Clear blowdowns from the trail

Location: Section 20a, Three, four, and five switchbacks up from Nolichucky River

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I talked with a couple from Michigan who hiked into the gorge above Nolichucky Gorge Campground; they said that 4 miles from Nolichucky Gorge had been cleared of trees recently. Therefore, I changed direction and went back to the trailhead at Nolichucky River and hiked toward Temple Hill. The first half mile was a mess, apparently due to snow weight with high winds. Many trees looked like they were twisted off like a small tornado had hit them. I only made it up the hill 5 switchbacks before it got dark and the wind began to blow much harder, as well as much colder. So I abandoned going up higher in the dark. The biggest laurel I

cut were 3 or 4 large laurel trees that were difficult to cut due to being in a twisted break that bound up my saw. I cut in 4 different places and moved the sections.

Reporting: Lotta Murray

Date: 1/10/2022

Purpose: Clear reported blowdowns

Location: Section 20b, Spivey Gap to Devils Creek Gap

People: Lotta Murray, Ken Murray

Summary: A hiker reported that there were multiple blowdowns, mostly small, between Spivey and Nolichucky River. We cleared from Devils Gap to Spivey and removed multiple smaller trees and rhododendron that had come down during the recent wind and snow. We are planning to go out to clear the rest of our section on Wednesday.

Reporting: Dan Firth

Date: 1/11/2022

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

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

People: Dan Firth, Greg Kramer

Summary: We removed two large blowdowns and several smaller ones.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 1/12/2022

Purpose: Clear collapsed laurel from across the trail



Location: Section 20a, From Nolichucky River to top of Temple Hill.

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I was going to check the trail up Jones Branch from Nolichucky River toward Curly Maple Gap Shelter, but ran into a couple from Wisconsin who had hiked 4 miles up from the Nolichucky before turning around. They reported the trail had been cleared, so I turned around and headed back to the trailhead at the Nolichucky River and headed toward Temple Hill. I found 3 places where the snow and wind collapsed laurel across the trail. I cleared those and came back the next day to go to the top of Temple Hill. I found 4 more places, so I cleared them all. Some laurel are weakened from being split from the weight. I cleared what was needed to make the trail passable. Since the weight is lessened, the laurel may survive. I cleared the trail to the top of Temple Hill, but the hikers reported some laurel were down in Temple Hill Gap. I only went part of the way into the gap and turned around since the sun was setting.

Reporting: Elzear Lemieux

Date: 1/12/2022

Purpose: Remove blowdown

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

People: Elzear Lemieux, Emily Lemieux

Summary: We removed a 15" blowdown from the trail.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 1/12/2022

Purpose: Inspect and clear trail

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

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed hiked Low Gap to the emergency shelter. He cleared a live tree top and other debris. There was a dead oak extending over the trail about 1.5 miles north of Low Gap. He cleared the worst of the debris at the dead oak on Wednesday and came back Friday to finish clearing. This trail section is currently cleared.

Reporting: Lotta Murray

Date: 1/12/2022

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 20b, Devils Gap to No Buisness Knob Shelter

People: Lotta Murray, Ken Murray, Van Hovey, Peggy Cantrell

Summary: Van and Ken hiked in from Spivey to clear a large blowdown in the creek blocking water that might wash out the bridge in the next downpour. Then, they drove to Can lot and hiked towards the shelter. Lotta and Peggy hiked in from Can lot. We cleared about 12-15 blowdowns, hemlock, pine and rhododendrons that could be cut with a hand saw and clippers. Some were difficult to

get around and required leaving the trail. In addition, we left about 6 larger trees for the chainsaw guys coming behind. The shelter was clean with no trash. A fresh pine was down over the roof. We were able to push it off. It does not appear to have caused any roof damage, except bending the tin a little. It was the messiest we have seen the trail since we took over as maintainers.

Reporting: Gayle Riddervold

Date: 1/12/2022

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 8, US 321 to Wilbur Road

People: Gayle Riddervold and Becky Kinder

Summary: We went back to clear two blowdowns that we discovered while hiking yesterday. The trees were north of the iron gate. We cut and removed the blowdowns and then checked the trail from the iron gate to US 321.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 1/13/2022

Purpose: Remove hazard trees

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

People: Carl Fritz, Van Hovey, Tony Messina

Summary: We felled 10 dead hemlock hazard trees at bridges along Jones Branch. Half of them were 30". Some we had to fell across the trail, so then we had large downed trees to remove. Hopefully, it will be safer for both hikers and bridges.

Reporting: Joel Zabel

Date: 1/15/2022

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 18, Indian Grave Gap - past Unaka Mtn

People: Yong Li, Ed Brading, Denny Samuel, Jim Foster, Andy Deshkulkarni, Marianne Huff, Joel Zabel

Summary: The Johnson City Hiking Club goal was to do a winter check on the top 2 miles of our section from FS 230 over the top of Unaka. To do so, we hiked up from Indian Grave Gap. In the first 4 miles we cleared sporadic blowdowns with the Katanaboy, handsaws, and lopper; the two largest were 7" and 9" diameter. In the next 1/2 mile north from Beauty Spot Gap to FS 230, we cleared multiple blowdowns: the 3 largest were 6" to 9". Only minor clearing was needed from FS230 over Unaka.

Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 1/19/2022

Purpose: Inspect Trail

Location: Section 19b, Chestoa to Curley Maple Shelter

People: Van Hovey, Carrie Hovey

Summary: Our primary purpose was to inspect the trail after Sunday-Monday storm. We inspected the whole section from Chestoa to Curley Maple Shelter, as well as the additional 1/10 mile up to Martins Creek access. With the exception of already identified issues and a few additional areas where some trail sloughing has occurred, the trail is in passable and good condition. It was a pleasantly warm day. Along the lower sections, there was little residual snow; however up towards and around the shelter there was still 1"-2" remaining. It appeared as though only one person was out on the JB section; on the way from USA Raft to Chestoa, we met Tom Sahlin at the end of the day.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 1/22/2022

Purpose: Check for trees and limbs across trail

Location: Section 16b, Greasy Creek Gap to Iron Mountain Gap, about 1.5 miles from Iron Mountain Gap

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I removed 2 blowdowns; first one about 3/4 mile from Iron mountain Gap and the second about 1/4 mile from that. The snow was about 8 inches deep going up the ridge before I went down to Apple Orchard. I went to Weedy Gap and turned around because of slow going in the snow. The top was firm, but soft underneath, which collapsed when I stepped on it causing me to slide down hill. Only one downed tree is left, which might be a locust, so I didn't cut it to save it for trail work. It's an easy step-over, so should not cause any problems. I saw no other hikers; I could tell from the footprints that only 2 people had been on the trail in the days before. It was beautiful in the snow with hoar frost on the trees from clouds going over the mountain the night before. The temperature went down to 24° by dark, but no wind thankfully. The pic is of the small tree removed.



Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 1/24/2022

Purpose: TEHCC A.T. Committee Meeting

Location: Online

People: Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Vic Hasler, Greg Kramer, Tony Messina, Joe Morris, Tim Stewart, Steve Perri

Summary: The club's A.T. Committee gathered online to discuss issues related to ongoing trail management. Sawyer training classes are being pursued for March and Summer/Fall to keep skills current and to add to the active roster. Bog bridges have been built for Bradley Gap; the timing of installation to be coordinated with USFS. Konnarock Crew returns in 2022 to continue trail rehab in Weedy Gap area. Section maintainers for 2022 are now being arranged. Recognition for 2021 volunteers will be handed out directly as possible, then remaining patches will be mailed. Agreement was reached on submitting Osborne Farm Accessible Trail improvements for 2024 Great American Outdoor Act funding; although some near-term repairs to the gravel tread are needed. Alternative sites for replacing Cherry Gap Shelter will be explored during the year to hopefully find a better location to address drainage issues. Next committee meeting will be scheduled for July.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 1/25/2022

Purpose: Remove blowdowns and transport materials

Location: Section 8, Oliver Hollow to Watauga Shelter location

People: Greg Kramer, Joe Morris

Summary: Greg and I walked from the blue-blaze on Oliver Hollow Road at Watauga Lake to remove the blowdowns reported by Gayle and Becky. We removed three blowdowns. Once the sawing was complete, we transported locust logs and stakes from USFS Watauga Work Center to Chestoa. This material will be used by this week's Thursday Crew to build turnpikes.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 1/27/2022

Purpose: General Maintenance

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

People: Carl Fritz, Van Hovey, John Beaudet, Greg Kramer, Joe Morris, Dan Firth, Tony Messina, Bob Peoples, Dick Martindale, Tim Stewart

Summary: Part of the crew used a grip hoist to remove a large blowdown from Jones Branch to protect the future integrity of the second bridge. The remainder of the crew created water diversions and steps between bridge 2 and bridge 3. In all, 7 steps were created, including 2 new steps at bridge 1 in the section.

