



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

June 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](#)

[2021 Paddler of the Year](#)

[ATC Food Storage Policy, To Avoid Bear Encounters](#)

[Call for Volunteers for FunFest Moonlight Hike](#)

[Paddling Equipment Available to Rent](#)

[TEHCC Welcomes New Members](#)

[For the Record](#)

[Trail Wiki Hike Summary](#)

[A.T. Maintenance Reports](#)



Paddling Enthusiasts practicing swift water rescue skills

Letter from the Chair

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

Thank you to all those who came out to our Spring Dinner! It was wonderful to be able to host one of these again; it's been too long! More will be reported on the dinner meeting in next month's newsletter, but we did have an exciting announcement that was made. WE NOW HAVE [PADDLING EQUIPMENT FOR RENT](#)! This officially puts the first 'C' back into the club's name. We have the privilege of a large variety of different classes of water nearby, fulfilling everyone's needs from lake paddling to intense whitewater; so I hope you will find that these kayaks provide a lower bar for entry to enjoy the calmer-water boating activities our area has to offer. Please read below in the newsletter for the details on the rental equipment. The club also hopes to be able to lead a few paddling trips this year as well, so keep an eye out for those details. If you have questions on good places to take the kayaks, feel free to reach out to Andy Steffan, andrewsteffan@eastman.com. For rental specific questions, please reach out to Jonathan Shumaker as mentioned in the article below.

The more you know: Since we are on the subject of boating, I recently read an interesting article from the Copper Oar. Have you ever noticed that many rivers and lakes have foam build-up in certain places? While you may assume this is pollution related, it may not be! Water is full of decomposing material (sticks, bark, insects, leaves, etc.) that creates a fatty/oily lipid substance that floats on the water's surface and is invisible until it is agitated by wind or churning, creating the foam. An easy way to test the material is to scoop some foam into a bottle and give it a shake. If it breaks up and dissipates, it's natural and harmless. If the foam builds/grows after shaking, it is likely pollution from detergent/soaps.

[Back to Top](#)

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
June 4	Hiking with Tools! 9:30 am	Tim Stewart	
June 4	APEs Beginner Whitewater Kayaking, 1 pm – 8 pm	Brad Eldridge	423-737-2704
June 11 – 12	APEs Swift Water Rescue	Steven Adams	423-650-1293
June 16	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1:00	Andy Steffan	423-229-6492
June 18	Bays Mountain Park Maintenance, 9 am – 2 pm	Tony Messina	423-677-6650
June 18	Devil's Backbone Hike, Warriors' Path State Park, 9 am - 11 am	Sal Arena	914-819-3323
June 18 – 19	Roan Mountain Rhododendron Festival, 8 am – 4 pm	Vic Hasler	423-416-3166
June 25	A.T.: Spivey Gap to High Rocks, 9 am - Noon	Andy Steffan	919-928-4738
July 8	Woody Ridge Trail, 2:30 pm – 6:30 pm	Kyle Hass	812-746-7119
July 9	Hiking with Tools!	Tim Stewart	
July 14	FunFest Moonlight Hike, Meet at 7:30 pm	Andy Steffan	919-928-4738
July 16	Bays Mountain Park Maintenance, 9 am – 2 pm	Tony Messina	423-677-6650
July 21	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1:00	Andy Steffan	423-229-6492
July 23	Laurel Run Trail, 10 am - Noon	Josh Hayes	

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 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.

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! The First Saturday of June, Instead of the Usual Second Saturday of Each Month

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 is 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: [Tony Messina](#), 423-677-6650

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.

Paddle to the Grill, Thursday Evenings During the Summer, Beginning June 2, 2022, 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm

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

Each week we paddle from Winged Deer Park to Sonny's Marina & Restaurant. Bring your touring kayak/canoe/SUP to meet with The Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts (www.riverapes.org) and TEHCC (www.tehcc.org). We will launch within 30 minutes of the meeting time to paddle 2 miles to the restaurant. After we eat, we'll paddle back under the stars! As we may be paddling back during low or no light, please have a stern light for your boat and a head light for when we land. PFD's and stern lights are TWRA Regulation. If you aren't on the contact list, contact Deb each week for details. COVID-19 Considerations: Given recent CDC guidance, you are no longer required to wear a mask, but it is suggested that UN-vaccinated individuals have a mask handy when unable to socially distance from others.

Lower Watauga, Class I-II, Alternate Saturdays, Beginning June 4, 2022, 3 pm

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

We will launch from Riverside Park in Elizabethton behind the Ballpark at 3 pm. Call Deb first to check and see if it's on! Please be prepared for very cold water and wear appropriate gear. PFD's and helmets are required, as well as spray skirts for decked boats. We stop for a break about halfway down the river, so don't forget your snacks. We are usually off the water by 7:00 pm or so, and have transferred boats back to our vehicles by 7:30.

Directions: From W Elk Ave in Elizabethton turn at the MISO Teriyake House onto West Mill Street, take the first street on left onto Ash Street, follow that street to the end and you will see the river. Turn left and pull into the small paved parking area near a covered picnic area. Look for boats! Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/YXgdd1Npwx3N2FCk8>

Scheduled Events

Hiking with Tools! (aka "Trail Care on National Trails Day"), Saturday, June 4, 2022, 9:30 am

Contact: [Tim Stewart](#)

National Trails Day takes place the first Saturday of June each year. National Trails Day celebrates national scenic and historic trails as well as all trails on public lands! For June, "Hiking with Tools!" will be on Saturday the 4th instead of the second Saturday of the month. We will hike from Bitter End for a few miles to Hard Core Cascades (approximately). The terrain is not too difficult, but there are a lot of rhododendrons to contend with. Lots of lopping! Bitter End is not an easily found trailhead, so we will meet at the Roan Mountain Community Park located behind the Post Office. Look for the "Welcome to Roan Mountain" sign.

As a reminder, some items to bring: work gloves, plenty of drinking water (especially if it is hot), lunch, and appropriate cold weather/rain gear. If the weather looks real bad, we may have to cancel. Please let me know if you will attend so I can bring enough tools. I hope to meet some new volunteers. Map for meeting location: <https://goo.gl/maps/xFSsoMJqi1NeQPq88>.

APESs Beginner Whitewater Kayaking, June 4, 2022, 1:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Contact: [Brad Eldridge](#), 423-737-2704

Start your summer off right.... Learn to Kayak! If you've never been in a kayak but would love to join the fun, or if you've been down the river a few times, but would like to get solid fundamentals for a summer of skills progression and safety, this class is for you!

Cost: \$75 for current APES members.

\$95.00 for non-members (includes APES membership fee)

Essential Items: Whitewater kayak, skirt, paddle, helmet, and pfd. Also bring a packed lunch in a waterproof container, quick-dry clothing (no cotton), close-toed shoes, two liters of water (one in a bottle that can be secured in your kayak, like a Nalgene bottle).

We will cover trip planning, how to "read" the river, kayak technique fundamentals, how to quickly and safely exit, and how to maneuver your kayak in moving water. First, there will be land-based instruction, but most of the day will be on the river, doing the kayak thing! Our focus is on high quality information, safety, and most importantly, having fun! Space is limited. Sign up today at <http://www.riverapes.org/registration.html>

APES Swift Water Rescue Class, June 11 and 12, 2022

Contact: [Steven Adams](#), 423-650-1293

Location: 2000 Jonesborough Rd, Erwin, TN

APES is offering a 2 day Swift Water Rescue (SWR) course. This course is for anyone who might find themselves in moving water, regardless of your current skill level; first time and repeat participants welcome. Are you prepared to rescue yourself or paddling friends? Are they prepared to rescue you? Bring your crew to the clinic and have fun, too! There are only a few spots left! Contact Steven Adams, 423.650.1293, or visit <http://www.riverapes.org/swift-water-rescue.html> for more info and registration.

Devil's Backbone and Fall Creek Trail, June 18, 2022, 9:00am – 11:00am

Leader: [Sal Arena](#), 914-819-3323

Location: *Warrior's Path State Park*

The trail starts off skirting around the golf course and then consists of a not long, but challenging uphill climb. This is then followed by a steep downhill trek. The trail then levels out and takes us alongside the river. Devil's Backbone ties into the Fall Creek trail, a portion of which will be included in our hike prior to switching back. Elevated views of the lake make for a nice view, and occasionally deer can be spotted along the trail. The full hike in-and-out will be approximately 3.3 miles. Dogs are welcome, but must remain on a leash at all times. The group will meet at the parking area on Fall Creek Rd near the golf course. We will be finished before lunch, but I would recommend plenty of water for the hike and a light snack. Carpooling can be coordinated if there is enough interest and notice ahead of time, so please let me know you're available and interested or have any questions!

Roan Mountain Rhododendron Festival, Saturday, June 18, 2022 8:00 am – 4:00 pm

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

Location: [Roan Mountain State Park](#), 527 TN-143, Roan Mountain, TN 37687

75th Anniversary for the festival now held in Roan Mountain State Park. Entertainment, crafts, and vendors will be in the park. USFS law enforcement will be assisting with traffic control at Carvers Gap.

AT: Spivey Gap to High Rocks, Saturday, June 25, 2022, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Contact: [Andy Steffan](#), 919-928-4738

Rating: *Moderate, 4 miles round-trip, 1080' gain*

Location: [Sprivey Gap](#), US 19W, Burnsville, NC 28714

I hope you will join me for a hike on the AT to an overlook. We will start from the Spivey Gap parking area near Erwin and begin our mostly uphill journey to an enormous rock outcropping. The hike grows steeper towards the summit, but it is well worth it. Bring plenty of water and snacks to enjoy on the outcropping. We will head back the same route. Since it will be starting to get warmer, we will take ample breaks as needed. Open to carpooling since that parking lot most likely holds 7 – 8 cars. I'm also happy to provide directions as well.

Woody Ridge Trail, Friday, July 8, 2022, 2:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Contact: [Kyle Hass](#), 812-746-7119

Rating: *Hard, 4.5 miles, 2913' out and back*

Location: [Woody Ridge Trailhead](#), 546 Shuford Creed Road, Burnsville, NC 28714

Join us for this hike, rated as one of the most difficult hikes in the entire NC, TN, VA area. This is a great challenge and a ton of fun to accomplish. I've met Ultrarunners on this hike before, talking about how it is used for their training. We will meet at the "Woody Ridge Trailhead" found on Google Maps. Be sure and bring plenty of water and snacks.

Laurel Run Trail, Saturday, July 23, 2022, 10:00 am - Noon

Contact: [Josh Hayes](#)

Rating: *Easy/Moderate, 2 miles round trip to falls*

Location: [Laurel Run Park](#), 364 Laurel Run Park Rd, Church Hill TN 3764

Weather permitting! There is a creek crossing that can get rained out, so be willing to wade ankle deep, if the creek is low enough. Plan to meet at the parking area and we will hike to the two falls and back. The falls are about 12ft and 25ft high. Be sure to bring water. Dogs are allowed on leash.

2021 Paddler of the Year

by Andy Steffan

Congratulations to Bill Schooley on being recognized for the 2021 Paddler of the Year award!! TEHCC and APEs (Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts) are honoring Bill for his dedication and effort on leading the Surf Betsy Task Force. On top of his leadership with Surf Betsy, Bill has done a wonderful job bringing attention to the paddling community and being a huge advocate. The Paddler of the Year award has signified a lot of different things/contributions throughout the years, but to me, the major point of the recognition all comes down to the advancement of paddling in our area. I'm very excited to see how much the paddling community in our area will grow in the coming years due to Bill's efforts. For those of you unfamiliar with the Surf Betsy project, the intent is to bring a whitewater park to local river(s) in Elizabethton. Definitely come back to the newsletter next month to read more about the Surf Betsy project from the best source of information on the subject, Bill himself.



[Back to Top](#)

ATC Food Storage Policy, To Avoid Bear Encounters

Article created by Vic Hasler

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) is formally publishing a policy that strongly recommends backpackers and others who camp overnight on the A.T. use an approved food storage method. The first acceptable option is provided by land managers, which includes cable systems, metal poles with arms, and bear-proof metal boxes. While the policy cites that 40% of the A.T. designated overnight sites have these options, none exist on the TEHCC section. The metal pole at the former Watauga Lake Shelter was ineffective, likely being too short, thus was removed from the field. The second acceptable option is a personal bear-resistant container carried by the backpacker. TEHCC has two [BearVault bear-resistant food storage containers](#) available in the rental program. These are 440 cubic inches, suitable for weekend trips.

The ATC policy strongly discourages hanging food as a method of protecting food and other consumables from bears and other wildlife. The [ATC Register blog](#) cites that 67% of reported bear encounters involve food hangs and storage that the bear “defeated”. Bears have successfully adapted to this approach, while an increasing number of overnight visitors incorrectly execute the food hang; thus the policy recommends eliminating this ineffective method of protecting food on the Appalachian Trail.

The policy advocates that land managers along the A.T. should develop policies either strongly recommending or requiring that an acceptable food storage method (as described above) be used across the entire A.T. North Carolina Forest Service already requires bear canisters in several areas, including Shining Rock Wilderness and Panthertown (latter signed May 3, 2022).

ATC continues to request that all encounters with bears along the A.T. be reported using [this form](#).

Call for Volunteers for FunFest Moonlight Hike, July 14, 2022

by Andy Steffan

Since before 1993, TEHCC has been co-sponsoring the Kingsport FunFest Moonlight Hike at Bays Mountain Park. The hike kicks off at the dam near the visitors’ center. Bring your own flashlight/headlamp (and spare batteries), water, insect repellent, and charged cell phone. We’ll start at the front of the walkers, and then be assigned specific intersections to direct the traffic along the right path. Overall, TEHCC needs to cover roughly a dozen places with one or two people each. The hike will start at 8:00 pm, so we will want to show up 30 minutes to an hour before that. The hike will be on Thursday night, July 14th. If you are interested in volunteering or getting more information, please contact Andy at andrewsteffan@eastman.com or 423-229-6492.

Paddling Equipment Available to Rent

Submitted by Jonathan Shumaker, Rental Coordinator

The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club provides various rental equipment for club members to be able to try out something before having to commit to purchasing. Through an effort with Eastman Global HSES, the steering committee has been able to expand our rental equipment selection to provide paddling equipment as well. The equipment purchase was possible through a donation from Eastman Global HSES. To start the club paddling rental fleet, 6 kayaks, 1 canoe, and 1 trailer were purchased. Paddles and life jackets were also purchased to be provided with all kayak and canoe rentals.

Sit-on-top kayaks and sit-in kayaks were purchased. These kayaks are made for flat water use such as lakes and slow-moving streams. They are not recommended for fast-moving, technical rivers. Many of them have storage compartments for securing equipment for a lazy day out on the water or to take angling equipment if you are interested in fishing. Equipment codes HC-1 through HC-6 are used for the kayaks.

We are finally getting a canoe to rent, to get back to our name as the “Hiking and Canoeing Club.” The canoe that was purchased is a small 2/3 person canoe. If it is rented, two canoeing paddles and multiple life jackets will be provided for use. The canoe is HC-7.

A trailer has also been purchased to transport kayaks/canoes. The trailer can be rented in case your vehicle cannot transport multiple kayaks. The trailer will also allow multiple kayaks to be taken to a location for organized events. To simplify rentals, individual kayaks or the canoe can be rented, or the trailer can be rented. If the trailer is rented, then it comes with 4 kayaks or 2 kayaks and the canoe. The cost for rentals is shown in the table below.

Rate	Per Day Rate
Full Trailer	\$80.00
Single Kayak	\$30.00
Single Canoe	\$40.00

[Back to Top](#)

You must reserve equipment at least 3 days in advance since coordination of pick-up/drop-off is necessary. All of this paddling equipment is stored at the Eastman Bays Mountain Recreation Area located at 404 Bays Mountain Park Road, Kingsport, TN. It is necessary to contact rental@tehcc.org to reserve all paddling equipment stored at the Bays Mountain Recreation area. The rental coordinator for TEHCC, Jonathan Shumaker (417-389-6987), will get the email and will coordinate a pick-up and drop-off time for the equipment.

Check out the new page on the TEHCC website for more information about the paddling equipment and details on how to put in a rental request: <https://tehcc.org/rentals/paddling-equipment/>. The next step for the steering committee will be to get an online reservation system to make it easier to schedule rentals. The steering committee is also interested in creating group outings, to put this equipment to good use. If you are interested in leading or being part of the planning for paddling events, reach out to Andy Steffan at chair@tehcc.org.



TEHCC Welcomes New Members

Christopher Ward
Michael McCarroll
Samantha M Hubbs

Travis Green
Dawn Russo
Michael L Snodgrass

Carlos Alvarado
Yingjie Mai
Bill Schlooey

Josh Sparkman
Marci Spencer
Wesley Kowalczuk

For the Record

Still Branch and Pine Ridge Falls Hike, April 30, 2022

Andy Steffan Reporting

The weather was perfect for hiking. The trails were in great condition. The group started with Sill Branch Falls which was flowing remarkably well considering recent dry weather. The group hung out there awhile before moving on to Pine Ridge Falls; the trailhead was only a couple tenths of a mile up the gravel road from the Sill Branch Trailhead. Although smaller in height, it was quite enjoyable as well. We took another break there and enjoyed some snacks. Both hikes had tons of beautiful wildflowers. We saw some of the largest trillium I've ever seen near Pine Ridge Falls. We also saw plenty of dwarf iris, azaleas, bloodroot, just to name a few. We had a great group; attendees were Andy Steffan, Jackie Steffan, Keith and Debbie Bennett, Jeff Hoskins, Byron McCaughey, Hanieh Niroomand, Bahar Sadeghalvad, and Hamid Ebrahimi. (See photos next page.)

[Back to Top](#)



Hike to Margarette Falls, May 21, 2022

Andy Steffan Reporting

We had a rather large group join us for the hike; 15 in total! There were quite a few bugs at the trailhead parking lot and in some places on the trail, but not overwhelming. Maybe I'll remember to bring a little bug repellent with me next time. We could definitely feel the temperature getting warmer as we ascended to the falls, since most of the way there was uphill. We ended up making it to the falls in just about an hour, where we got to enjoy great water flows from the 60' falls (best I think I've ever seen in several attempts), good conversation, and a well-deserved rest. The hike back was much easier, and although it was hotter since it was later in the day, it somehow felt cooler than on the way to the falls. I also learned at the dinner meeting that the forest service has done a lot of recent improvements to the trail, so big thanks to them! Attendees were Andy Steffan, Jackie Steffan, Hanieh Niroomand, Jeff and Medora Hoskins, Jeff and



Rhonda Smith, Chanelle Vessey, Kennedy and Daniel Peacock, Anne Morris, Joseph Sengeh, Razvan Marinescu, Rachel Stammen, and Jess Cugley.



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. Following is a hike posted last month.

Date	Trail(s)	Hike Distance	# of Hikers	Tags	Reported By
08-May-2022	Cascade Trail , Fork Ridge Trail , White Rock Trail Buffalo Mountain Park	4.5 mi	2		Andysteffan
	Comment: Lovely hike and perfect weather. Brought the dog. Went clockwise for the Grand Circuit loop. Views were great from White Rock. There were plenty of wildflowers, including wild geranium, dwarf iris, an... more				

[Back to Top](#)



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Reporting: Tony Messina

Date: 4/27/2022

Purpose: Section Maintenance

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

People: Tony Messina

Summary: I made a patrol in/out on our maintenance section from Bitter End to Walnut Mtn Road. Despite assurances from several NoBos that there were no problems along the trail, I ended up clearing three significant blowdowns along the route using my Silky saw. I also lopped quite a bit of rhodo. I took along my grinder and cut off the threaded rods left on the recent bog bridge installation at mile 407.1. I also cut rebar protruding from the bog bridge at about mile 407.8. All together, I saw about 25 NoBo hikers.

Reporting: Phyllis Cairnes

Date: 4/28/2022

Purpose: Shelter Maintenance

Location: Section 2b, Abingdon Gap Shelter to McQueen's Gap, Abingdon Gap Shelter

People: Phyllis Cairnes, Rolla Wade

Summary: Walking from Low Gap, we carried in a new broom and carried out a broken shovel, which we left by Bob People's truck at McQueen's Gap (thank you). We performed the usual shelter maintenance: repainted graffiti board, shoveled fire ring, picked up trash, cleaned out rain gutter. The shelter was so populated when we arrived, we had to wait to do our work. We met a family of four thru-hikers with young daughters, about 9 and 11. A very busy day on this section!

Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 5/2/2022

Purpose: Photograph bridges

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

People: Van Hovey, Carrie Hovey

Summary: Primary task was to photograph, for inventory purposes, the four bridges in the Jones Branch area of this section. Secondary objectives were to deliver a new log book and pens to the Curley Maple Gap Shelter, inspect trail, and trim back encroaching vegetation. As we were out, we decided to cut the walk to the shelter short and asked a thru-hiker if he would deliver the log book to the shelter. We shall see if this was a good idea. On the return from photographing all the bridges, we cut some rhodies and vegetation. The trail is clear and in relatively good shape. Beautiful day; we encountered about a dozen thru-hikers and a couple of day hikers.

Reporting: Dan Firth

Date: 5/3/2022

Purpose: Garlic Mustard Pull

Location: Section 4a, US 421 (Low Gap)

People: Dan Firth

Summary: I pulled 30 pounds of garlic mustard, an invasive species, from around Low Gap and along the road. This year's amount was down significantly from last year's. But because garlic mustard is a biennial, there may be more next year. There was trail magic at the gap.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 5/4/2022

Purpose: Roan Highlands Visitor Use Management

People: Carl Fritz, Tim Stewart

Summary: This was the first meeting of Visitor Use Management (VUM) team for the Roans. This will be the fifth such effort on the A.T. Two or three representatives of Appalachian Ranger District, Cherokee Ranger District, Southern Appalachians Highlands Conservancy, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, and Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club participated. Additional participants from those groups and other groups will be sought as the scope is defined. Probably, we will be called Roan Highlands VUM and include the area from Hughes Gap to Doll Flats. Initially, there will be monthly meetings and a number of subcommittees will be established.

Reporting: Joel Zabel

Date: 5/7/2022

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to FS230

People: Yong Li, Todd Markwalter, Joel Zabel, Jim Foster, Craig Haire

Summary: Having been recently chainsaw certified, Yong Li brought his small electric chainsaw for our spring check. He sawed 8 to 10 blowdowns, 10" or smaller.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 5/7/2022

Purpose: Hiking with Tools!

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

People: Tim Stewart, Bud Schulte, John Cruz, Rebecca Powell

Summary: Well, it snowed the previous 2 scheduled Hiking with Tools! outings which subsequently were cancelled. Although rain was forecast, I thought it would still be possible to get something done. It did rain but we endured. Hiking in from Low Gap we made it to the Berry Fields. En route we cleared water diversions and one small blowdown. Of course, we passed many long distance hikers about to descend upon Damascus. At the Berry Fields, we took a short break before returning to the trail head. No view was available. The weather was pretty miserable, but overall we had a good time. Everything was nice and green. We saw lots of mayapples.



Reporting: Steve Wilson

Date: 5/8/2022

Purpose: Remove blowdowns and check for A.T. highway signs

Location: Section 3a and 3b, McQueen's Gap to Low Gap

People: Steve Perri, Steve Wilson

Summary: We removed three blowdowns using a chainsaw, plus cleared waterbars and lopped briars starting at McQueens Gap and finishing at Low Gap. We were looking for a 14-inch diameter blowdown which was said to be near McQueen's Gap, so we started there; but finally found it near the rock wall which is roughly one mile north of Low Gap/Hwy 421. This section is now clear of blowdowns and in good shape. We also checked for A.T. road signs at Low Gap and at the trail head at Cross Mountain. We saw no signs at Low Gap/Hwy 421 and only one road sign at Cross Mountain. Steve Perri will contact the Tennessee highway department to ask for signs at these road crossings.

Reporting: Ken Murray

Date: 5/11/2022

Purpose: Shelter Maintenance

Location: Section 20b, No Business Knob Shelter

People: Ken Murray, Robert Christianson

Summary: We replaced the graffiti board, repaired a bench on the picnic table, and developed a plan to repair the wire mesh under the sleeping platform.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 5/12/2022

Purpose: Rehab and Crib Construction

Location: Section 2a, North of Abingdon Gap Shelter

People: Tim Stewart, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Joe Morris, David Cook, Dick Martindale, Kevin Sedgwick

Summary: The crew continued the rehab north of Abingdon Gap Shelter. The areas farthest from the shelter are now complete. The total rehab for the day was as follows: 258 feet of bench-cut and 84 feet of cribbed trail backfilled with soil from highline. Fifty-one northbound hikers sailed past throughout the day heading to Trail Days, and we saw an additional 15 at the Shelter. Class of '21 thru-hiker David Cook joined us for his first post thru maintenance day.



Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 5/13/2022

Purpose: Cut steps for Konnarock Crew

Location: Section 16b, Greasy Creek Gap to Iron Mountain Gap, Weedy Gap

People: Joe Morris

Summary: I cut steps and stakes for the Konnarock Crew assisted by Terry Shipley of Konnarock Volunteer Crew. Special thanks to Chad Ingle and Matthew Gilbert for providing UTV shuttle support for the crew and their gear.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 5/16/2022

Purpose: Rehab and Step Construction

Location: Section 16b, Greasy Creek Gap to Iron Mountain Gap, Weedy Gap

People: Amy "Bookworm" Sternheim, Travis Daniel, Iris Schafer, Joe Morris

Summary: Amy "Bookworm" Sternheim brought two thru-hikers out with Konnarock on Monday. Travis from Northern Kentucky and Iris from Switzerland came out to do a day of giving back to the trail after Trail Days. The day was the last of the Konnarock rehab for 2022. Highlights from the work included the installation of 24 new steps and 10 waterbars just north of Weedy Gap. Crew members included participants from Illinois, Indiana, California, Massachusetts, Virginia, and Pennsylvania.



Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 5/17/2022

Purpose: Check trail for blowdowns

Location: Section 16b, 3.6 miles north from Iron Mountain Gap

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: When I set out, I intended to simply check the trail for obstructions. I ran into several hikers who said there was a big blowdown that was difficult to get through, forcing hikers off the trail to get around it. The hikers reported it was about 1½ mile from Greasy Creek Gap; but it was actually ½ mile, making it 3.5 miles from the Iron Mountain Gap trail head. I decided to see how bad it was, even though I got there late because of a flat tire and helping a stranded motorist about ½ mile below Iron Mountain Gap on a curve. People fly on that road, putting him in great danger. A guy in a truck came along and got him back on the road and he went on to Buladean, NC. I also stopped for water from the pipe spring since I already knew I would be walking out in the dark. The tree was a large maple tree that apparently had heart rot, but was alive. It broke at the stump and fell across the trail with lots of branches. I cut a hole so hikers could get through. I left the tree at sunset and was back at my car by 11:15. Hard day.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 5/19/2022

Purpose: Repair Grindstaff Monument

Location: Section 5, TN 91 to Iron Mountain Shelter, Grindstaff Monument

People: Kevin Sedgwick, Ed Speer, Joe Morris, David Cook, Jeff Hatling, Tim Stewart, Carl Fritz, Tony Messina, Dan Firth

Summary: The Thursday crew assisted USFS in moving very heavy materials 3+ miles and repairing the Grindstaff Monument.





Mixing Mortar



Before



...and After

Photos of hauling materials and Grindstaff Monument repair by Tim Stewart

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 5/21/2022

Purpose: Check section

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

People: Tim Stewart

Summary: FS293 has gotten pretty bad. One area in particular has some deep trenches, making it difficult to navigate. I wanted to try to find another access to Moreland Gap Shelter. Per the maps, there are two gates with old forest service roads that might be possible. I chose to follow the one closest to the shelter. With the help of the club's GPS unit, I bushwacked in. I also used ribbons around trees as a 'bread crumb' trail. Although the map shows a gate, there wasn't one; instead there was a berm. Initially the road was easy to follow, but rhodos began to obscure it. Fortunately, I was able to recognize the bank as having been dug before. I continued to follow the now barely visible road. When the road appeared to end, I began to head towards the A.T. The GPS was very helpful at this point. I started heading uphill but unfortunately, I appeared to be getting farther from the trail, even almost making a circle. Following the ribbons back I went downhill to a point where I could continue on the sidehill gradually going up. I slowly figured it out and made it to the trail.

I was about 3/4 mile from the shelter. So I continued to the shelter, lopping along the way. I removed some trash from the fire pit. Bushwacking took alot of time, so I had to start back. Now the ribbons were helpful. Hiking in the rain, I was able to follow them back to FS293.

Although I was able to find the A.T., I don't think this access point will work. It was about 2 miles of bushwacking. I think it would be easier to park below the trench area, and then follow the road to the normal access point. The other gated area had an open gate, so I might try that one next time.

Reporting: Richard Ramsey

Date: 5/22/2022

Purpose: Cut weeds at Doll Flats

Location: Section 14a, Doll Flats to Bradley Gap, Doll Flats

People: Richard Ramsey, Cheryl Ramsey

Summary: We cleaned out fire pits; also cut weeds in the field, along the path, and at the campsite under the tree.

Reporting: Dean Baird

Date: 5/24/2022

Purpose: Inspect and maintain trail

Location: Section 9b, Pond Flats to Hampton trailhead, Hampton Blue-Blaze Trail

People: Adam Baird, Jennifer Baird

Summary: Adam and Jennifer trimmed grass and weeds under the powerline, in addition to other places, especially where the trail is immediately adjacent to Laurel Fork at the rocky area. They removed a large bag of trash and cleared a small blowdown. It was noted that a large amount of vegetation under the powerlines is dead, presumably from utility company spraying, and that the Forest Service have placed several new signs on the section, including a new Pond Mountain Wilderness sign. There are some "blowdown wannabees" and the first switchback in from Hampton trailhead needs to be rehabbed.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 5/24/2022

Purpose: Remove blowdown and mow

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

People: Joe Morris

Summary: Starting at Greasy Creek Friendly hostel, I walked up to the south side of Greasy Creek Gap and removed the balance of the maple tree Tom Sahlin had started on last week. Afterward, I drove back to Iron Mountain Gap and weedwhacked to the orchard. I saw 10 Hikers today and had reports that a bubble just left the Smokies.

Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 5/25/2022

Purpose: Clear reported blowdown

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

People: Van Hovey, Carrie Hovey, Ken Murray

Summary: We started from USA Raft at 10 am and located the reported blowdown at 11 am. Its location was 100 ft past the second switchback, a little over 2 miles in from the trailhead. Several trees were involved, as well as a couple of dead trees in various stages of questionable balance. We cut out enough to make the trail passable. However, due to the precarious nature of the remaining standing tree, we decided to leave it alone and return with the appropriate equipment to finish the job. We returned to the trailhead by 2 pm. It was a beautiful day. We encountered about a dozen NoBo thru-hikers and section hikers.

Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 5/28/2022

Purpose: Finish clearing blowdown

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

People: Van Hovey, Carl Fritz

Summary: Our purpose was to finish the cutting started on Wednesday (see report above). Carl and I walked to the blowdown and assessed the remaining issues. We were able to cut the standing trees and clear the remaining obstruction across the trail; then we walked out. The trail is in relatively good condition. There are a few water issues, but considering recent rains, it is surprisingly dry. We encountered 9 thru-hikers and two day hikers .

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 5/28/2022

Purpose: Brushing

Location: Section 12c, Buck Mountain Road to Jones Falls

People: Vic Hasler

Summary: I started at sunrise from Buck Mtn Road thinking that was the southern end of this trail section. With the heavy rains over the past few days, the tread was slick in spots, and Jones Falls was really flowing. Overall, this stretch allowed open passage, and the campsites were clean. I brushed rhododendron and dead hemlock limbs in several places, roughly a mile north of Campbell Hollow Road where the path was being pushed towards the lower edge. I recommend a few follow-ups. Slope on the south side of Campbell Hollow Road needs gravel or a couple of steps as there's a deep, slippery rut. The blaze on this side is not visible from the north side down the road. One could be put on the large tree which is not right on the trail, but can be seen. Also, briars need to be trimmed in the burnout area south of Campbell Hollow Road.

Reporting: Lotta Murray

Date: 5/28/2022

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 20b, Temple Hill Gap to Spivey Gap

People: Lotta Murray, Carrie Hovey

Summary: We went looking for a reported large blowdown somewhere halfway between Spivey Gap and the shelter. We found it almost at the shelter, about 2.5 miles from Devils Creek Gap. There are two very large hemlocks, one at least 3 feet in diameter and the other slightly smaller. It is very difficult to get over the large one; hikers have been climbing up above it. We cleared around it to make it easier to climb around, but a chainsaw is needed to clear it. I have pictures. We cleared several other blowdowns with the silkie and loppers, and trimmed a lot low branches and rhodos. A hiker reported a new, large, difficult blowdown on the south side of Spivey. Can we get word to CMC about it? Also another blowdown was reported between Spivey and the logging road on our section. We will go back out another day for it.

