



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

December 2022 | January 2023

tehcc.org

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

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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Letter from the Chair

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

Since the club-led hikes have come to an end this year, I would like to give a special thank-you to those who led hikes for the club this year, as well as all those who joined us! We ended up having 6 different hike leaders and 58 different people attend hikes, with many repeat guests this year. We expanded our hikes to several new locations and still completed some local favorites. At the very end of the year, we trialed a new notification system via Outlook for current Eastman employees that received overwhelming positive feedback, so be on the lookout for a similar system next year.

Not to be forgotten though, I'd like to say a big thank you to our maintainers as well, since they've toiled away all year to keep our trails looking great! I appreciate the many hard hours you all put in!

Please take a moment to review our new Steering Committee member candidate slate below and **VOTE!**

I hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season and can find time to relax and spend time with family/friends!



Erin Ekart

I spent my childhood thinking I hated hiking, because the much taller members of my family were able to out-stride me, and thus, hike much faster than I. As an adult who has grown (a bit) taller, I have found hiking buddies who are willing to go my speed. I have made up for lost time by hiking all over the East Tennessee area and look forward to hiking more with TEHCC. My favorite trails are at Bays Mountain, though I am always up for a new adventure. In my free time, I work at Eastman as a Process Improvement Engineer.



Rheagan Sizemore

I am a new hire in the Process Safety Design group that recently moved from Lexington, KY. Hiking is my favorite way to explore a new area, and I am excited to get to enjoy the outdoors with TEHCC. My favorite hike I've done locally so far is Laurel Falls. I'm hoping to expand my involvement with the group and start leading hikes and doing trail maintenance.

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Joseph Sengeh

I am a research chemist at Eastman, and have been working with the company for 9 months. I am 'new' to the area, and continue to look for opportunities to discover the best this area has to offer. One of the first groups I joined and was excited to be part of was the hiking and canoeing club. I have not been a regular at hiking, however I have enjoyed the few hikes I have completed. I have volunteered more with the trail maintenance team and enjoyed my time outdoors in general. Growing up hiking and canoeing was not quite an option. As a result, I would like to catch up on all the fun I missed. I've not canoed since high school, but I have good memories from those experiences. As a member of the TEHCC Steering Committee, I am looking forward to learning more about these activities and potentially leading hikes, kayaking, and camping activities.



Eric Dobbs

I am originally from the Denver metro-area of Colorado and grew up going hiking and camping in the mountains with my family. I moved to the Black Hills of South Dakota for college and enjoyed many a weekend and break out exploring the hills and canyons of South Dakota with friends. After getting my degree and accepting a job with Eastman, I moved out to the Tri-cities; an area I had never been to before but was highly intrigued by, with its lush forests, numerous mountains, and seemingly endless trails. I have gotten into plant identification during my last 2-3 years here in East TN and enjoy going out during the Spring thru Fall and seeing all the wonderful wildflowers and plants this part of the world has to offer! I love hitting the trails here on the weekend with my girlfriend, with the Roan Mountain area being one of my favorite spots and always look forward to seeing what new trails await.

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
Dec 15	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1:00	Andy Steffan	423-229-6492
Dec 17	Bays Mountain Park Maintenance, 9 am – 2 pm	Tony Messina	423-677-6650
Jan 19	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1:00	Andy Steffan	423-229-6492

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. Teams teleconferencing is used as the committee is spread across the Eastman plant site or working from home. 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, gtvolunteer@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.

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 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.

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Scheduled Events

There are no scheduled hikes for December or January.

2023 TEHCC Maintainers Kickoff Dinner – February 24, 2023

Submitted by Vic Hasler

The annual dinner to kick off our 2023 maintenance season will be held at the Eastman Lodge banquet room. The event will start at 5:30 pm with a social time, followed by dinner at 6 pm. After the meal, we will present awards and discuss various issues related to maintaining TEHCC's section of the Appalachian Trail. All maintainers or individuals interested in maintaining are invited to attend. The TEHCC A.T. Committee has agreed to cover the dinner cost, which will likely be barbecue.

Please reply to Volunteer Coordinator Renee Messina by **Monday, February 20**, if you plan to attend, so we can get an accurate head count for the meal.

Bays Mountain Park/Lakeside Trail Improvements

Article submitted by Tony Messina

Have you seen the Gorillas at Bays Mountain Park? The “Trail Gorillas” are a group of volunteers working to improve the park trail system. The Gorillas consist mostly of Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club (TEHCC) trail maintainers who have been working on Bays Mountain Park trails for about three years. The most recent accomplishment of the group is the renovation of the long footbridge on Lakeside Trail near the Sweet Gum Trail intersection. The bridge spans approximately 150 feet slightly above the water on a backside cove of the lake and is strongly affected by beaver activity.

The bridge had been damaged several years ago by a fallen tree and had been patched up but not completely repaired. Megan Krager, Bays Mountain Park Manager, recently obtained a grant and an anonymous donation for renovating the bridge and asked the Gorillas if they could provide the labor. Several Gorillas participated and the project was completed on three Mondays in late October and early November. Megan says the bridge “looks fantastic” and that thousands of people will enjoy the Trail Gorillas’ work for many years.



The fallen tree had driven the support pilings for one segment of the bridge into the mud beneath the water level. A concrete spacer was fabricated to raise the deepest support and a standard paver was used to raise the other support affected. The entire bridge was also raised about 6 inches using new 4x6 stringers in order to provide a buffer to account for a future rise in the water level due to a beaver dam.

Several other improvements have been made in the recent months along Lakeside Trail, including the addition of log steps in the steep, slippery section near the Holly Trail junction.

Typically, the Trail Gorillas work at Bays Mountain Park on the third Saturday of each month, although special workdays are held to accommodate volunteer groups or address special projects such as the bridge repair. If you would like to learn about or help with trail work at Bays Mountain Park, contact Krystal Haney, Park Ranger/Volunteer Coordinator at krystal.haney@kingsporttn.gov or the TEHCC coordinator for Bays Mountain, Tony Messina, at tmess@chartertn.net.

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New Interpretive Signage and Boot Brush Station at Carvers Gap

Picture and article reprinted from SAHC's E-View newsletter



The Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy (SAHC) was a recipient of Appalachian Trail Conservancy's License Plate Grant Program, which made this installation possible. Visitors can now wipe their boots clean at the kiosk BEFORE heading out on the Appalachian Trail, because boots can inadvertently carry invasive seed heads. Limiting the spread of invasive species is a critical component of protecting this fragile ecosystem. A special thanks goes out to the Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club and all the volunteers that lent a hand in this project!

TEHCC Welcomes New Members

John P. Casey

Sherry Good

Brandon Ellis

Leah Johnson

Megan Williams

For the Record

South Holston Spillway Trail, November 5, 2022

Andy Steffan reporting

Fortunately, the weather was almost perfect; can't expect much better from a November hike! Most of the leaves had fallen, which gave us a lot of views of the South Holston Lake on the way to the spillway. The trail is a wide gravel road, making it easy to have conversations. We ended up spending quite a while at the spillway area taking in the views and peering over the spillway. The lake was a lot lower than I'd seen in the past, giving us even more room to explore. We had a few spritzes of rain on the way back, but only just enough to excite our youngest hiker. After arriving back at the trailhead parking area, a few of us ended up also completing the Osceola Island loop since it was on our way back. The weirs are always neat to see and provided a very cool, refreshing breeze downstream. We also saw several ducks, including mallards, a wood duck, and what we think was a Bufflehead. The Spillway hike was 3.55 miles with attendees Andy and Jackie Steffan, David and Brianna Scanlan (and baby Rose), Sharon and Doug Burnette, Mackenzie Simpson and husband Josh (and their dog), Sidney Simpson (and her dog), Josh Hayes, and Kevin Navarro. The following group did the 1.2-mile loop on Osceola Island: Andy and Jackie Steffan, Sharon and Doug Burnette, Josh Hayes, and Kevin Navarro.



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Laura Run Trail Hike, November 13, 2022

Sal Arenareporting



Thankfully the rain didn't leave the trail too rough, although the drop in temperature was a rude awakening. Once the group started trekking, the hike felt more comfortable. There was some minor flooding and navigating over a few rocks/logs for the people, though the dogs may have had a little more fun with this part than we did. Ultimately the trail took us across two areas of waterfalls. Water flow was a bit lower than expected given the rain, but still provided a nice view. The group extended the hike somewhat to the boundary of the park. Fun fact: you can connect from Laurel Run Park to Bays Mountain if you proceed far enough. Thankfully, we were aware of this and didn't proceed down the trail that would have taken us there. We had a great turnout including: Sal Arena, Kevin Navarro Rosario, Nicole Perez Gonzalez, Austin Fink, David Miller, Michelle Miller, and two happy dogs.



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.



A.T. Maintenance Reports

A note from Jeff Sirola, TEHC A.T. Records Keeper: A few months ago (on June 23), TEHC A.T. Maintenance efforts passed the Quarter-Million total hours milestone since the start of the A.T. Records database (January 1, 2000).

Reporting: Jeffrey A Hatling

Date: 10/9/2022

Purpose: Inspect trail condition after hurricane Ian

Location: Section 14b, Overmountain Trail to Stan Murray Shelter

People: Jeff Hatling

Summary: I identified four step-overs/blowdowns that need to be cleared at a later date.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 10/12/2022

Purpose: Rehab Trail

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

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed hiked to Double Springs Shelter to retrieve his wheelbarrow. He hauled 4 loads of stone to the 2.4-mile mark where he built more stone cribbing. He has now built 120 feet of cribbing. He also hauled stone to a wet area where he will use it this winter. He hauled a mile-stone to the 2.0-mile mark and erected it there.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 10/19/2022

Purpose: Rehab Trail

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

People: Ed Speer

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Summary: Ed hiked to the shelter to retrieve a pick, cleaned the trailbed, and inspected the shelter and spring. He hauled two wheelbarrow loads of rock about a quarter mile to where the A.T. leaves the crest of Cross Mountain. He will use that rock in the future. He hauled a mile stone to the 1.0-mile mark where he erected it. He used the wheelbarrow to transport tools out of woods and across Osborne Farm.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 10/20 and 10/21/2022

Purpose: Rehab Trail

Location: Section 4b, Osborne Farm

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed spread four wheelbarrow loads of gravel on the trailbed on the East side of the first stile on Osborne Farm. He created an alternate route at the farm gate about 40 feet left of the first stile. The next day, Ed spread another load of gravel on the alternate route. He used a wheel barrow to haul rock north 0.1 mile and dragged a previously cut locust log about 200 feet. He used the log and stone to build a short section of cribbing and cut additional cribbing stakes. He removed a stump from the edge of the trailbed, and dragged three more previously cut locust logs out of the woods to use for future cribbing.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 10/26 and 10/27/2022

Purpose: Attach new lath to bog bridges

Location: Section 5, TN 91 to Iron Mountain Shelter, bog bridges south of Cross Mountain

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed attached new lath to some of bog bridges south of Cross Mountain Road.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 10/27/2022

Purpose: Rehab trail and construct steps

Location: Section 20b, Temple Hill Gap to Spivey Gap, No Business Knob

People: Ken Murray, Van Hovey, Elzear Lemieux, Tony Messina, Greg Kramer, Carl Fritz, Joe Morris, Dean Baird, Tim Stewart

Summary: The regular Thursday crew tackled the first rehab between Temple Hill Gap and the Can Lot. After a significant walk in, we rehabbed 112 feet of trail utilizing locust crib, rock crib and rock steps. It was a long but productive day on a perfect autumn day.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 10/28/2022

Purpose: Visit Roan Highlands VUM (Visitor Use Management) trail site

Location: Section 14c, Carver's Gap to Jane Bald

People: Travis Bordley (SAHC), Marquette Crockett (SAHC), Jen Barnhart (Appalachian RD), Kylie Wilkinson (Appalachian RD), Chad Ingle (Watauga RD), Brandon Church (Cherokee NF), Morgan Sommerville (ATC), Jerry Kyle (ATC); TEHCC: Carl Fritz, Joe Morris, Bob Peoples, Steve Perri, Tim Stewart

Summary: Many members of the Roan Highlands VUM made their first site visit as a team. We reviewed the condition of the trail from Carver's Gap to Jane Bald. We will continue to look at some new trails. A couple of things we considered were adding bog bridges at PeakFinders to temporarily deal with mud when wet or the ground thaws, and installing some trail counters. It was a good time to share ideas while enjoying a beautiful day in Roan Highlands.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 11/1/2022

Purpose: Roan VUM - Round Bald site visit

Location: Section 14c, Stan Murray Shelter to Carvers Gap, Round Bald

People: Tim Stewart, Carl Fritz

Summary: Carl and I flagged out a possible relocation around Round Bald on the TN side. There are some minor obstacles to contend with, but nothing visible that can't be managed. There is very little elevation change between the switchback in the woods and Engine Gap. Further site visits will be required to get the opinions and ideas of others. The spur trail to Round Bald stills needs to be flagged, as well.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 11/2 and 11/3/2022

Purpose: Miscellaneous trail rehab

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

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed hiked TN 91 to Double Springs Shelter. He inspected the shelter and lower spring. He removed a 5-inch blowdown about 60 feet north of the shelter. He carried two bundles of stakes to the 1.3-mile mark for future cribbing. He also counted locust trees standing around the north field of the Osborne Farm and mailed a report to Carl Fritz. The next day, Ed cut and sharpened more cribbing stakes. He installed 27 feet of cribbing at the 1.1-mile mark; and he dragged two locust logs about 240 feet to their trail cribbing place.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 11/3/2022

Purpose: Rehabilitate Trail

Location: Section 11b, Canute Place to Bitter End, Mid-section

People: Greg Kramer, Carl Fritz, Elezear Lemieux, Tony Messina, Joe Morris, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart, Brandon Church (Cherokee NF)

Summary: Tim Stewart found a way for us to get to the worksite with a short hike. We went to rehab three wet sections of the trail. Tony and Brandon cut black locusts. We built seven steps and a box step at the middle wet spot; two treadways will be built next time. Two 15-foot logs were placed at the far and near wet sections to make bridges over the wet spots. These are very short bridges. Wood was also cut to make steps southbound toward the first wet spot. There is at least one more workday planned for this section. (See maintenance report for 11/10/2022)

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 11/4/2022

Purpose: Replace lath on bog bridges

Location: Section 5, TN 91 to Iron Mountain Shelter, Bog bridges south of Cross Mountain

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed continued to attach some new lath to the bog bridges south of Cross Mountain Road.

Reporting: Kevin Sedgwick

Date: 11/4/2022

Purpose: Cut blowdowns

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

People: Gloria Sedgwick, Kevin Sedgwick

Summary: It was a nice day to be out. We cut three major blowdowns, size ranging from 8" to 22" in diameter. The top of one oak punched into the side of the trail when it fell. It took a few cuts to clear. Gloria and I filled and repaired the trail. We also found and cleared a few small trees that had come down, and cleaned a few water diversions. We checked the southern half of the section; it's clear. We met one SoBo thru-hiker and had a great talk. He even asked if we needed help.

Reporting: Steven T Perri

Date: 11/5/2022

Purpose: Attend ATC Fall RPC (Regional Partnership Committee) Meeting

Location: Erwin, TN

People: Vic Hasler, Steve Perri, Steve Wilson

Summary: The ATC Fall Southern Partnership Meeting was held at USA Raft in Erwin, TN. The Southern Regional Office (SORO) is now fully staffed after several changes in personnel in 2022. The USFS is also now hiring throughout the region and will be training a lot of new employees. The USFS reported that subdividing the regions into subregions is a future possibility.

APPA continues to update the asset inventory and will require projects be submitted using the online project form. They also are encouraging clubs to submit updates to the asset system at least once per year. In addition to the submission form, APPA has developed a facilities web app with the web address Appa_facilities@nps.gov. Other APPA news is that Wendy Jansen, the Appalachian Trail NP Superintendent will be retiring in 2023, so a successor will soon follow.

ATC is trialing a selection tool for shelters. Feedback was that it isn't good at scoring important features and could be set up differently using a color code system. They intend to make changes, but believe all possible considerations have been captured. Several policies have come from the Trail Stewardship Council. We voted against a new policy on the intent to inventory viewpoints (vistas); it doesn't describe who will do it or how the inventory will be managed. This policy however did pass by votes from the other clubs. A Trail Ambassador and Ridgerunner Southern Region Network is being supported to capture ways clubs can use resources in selected areas. We will see how this is structured to determine if it is beneficial to TEHCC. Open areas are being managed in the future with a new flexible agreement that will hopefully make funds more readily available. Matt Drury has applied for several grants, one for \$500,000 to manage invasive species. He plans to hire a field person for a 3-year rotation.



Matt Drury speaking on management of A.T. natural resources. (Photo by Steve Wilson)

Alicia Phelps from the NE TN Regional Tourism office introduced herself and shared a video promoting VISTA 2023. Her office is coordinating this event scheduled for August 4-7 at ETSU in Johnson City. She is looking for help and guidance to plan events, including hikes, workshops, and entertainment. We will work with her to assess the timeline and scale of the event given her minimum attendance of 100.

Several clubs described increased bear activity. The SMNP is continuing to use bear cables in backcountry locations to store food. Some clubs are assessing the use of bear boxes which should be located 100 yds from shelters or tents. But the boxes are heavy and difficult to transport. The search is on for boxes that come in pieces, so they can be assembled on site.

A loop trail is being proposed called the Appalachian Trail High Route. It would tie into our trail section north of Spivey Gap, loop south of Asheville, and tie into the trail again near the Smokeys. No vote was proposed, as it is currently just a concept on a map. It is unclear what hurdles and approvals would be needed to put a trail on the ground.

The next meeting will be at Lake Junaluska in NC on March 11-13th, 2023.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 11/6/2022

Purpose: Rehab trail

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

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed cleared the trailbed as he hiked the section. He used a wheelbarrow to haul seven loads of stones to the 2.4-mile mark. He continued building stone cribbing there.

Reporting: Tony Messina

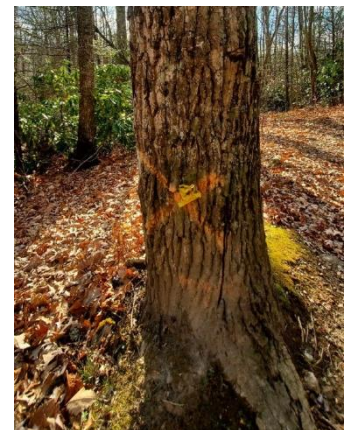
Date: 11/6/2022

Purpose: Maintain Section

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

People: Tony and Renee Messina

Summary: We did our final pass through our section this year on a beautiful day, 65 degrees in early November! We cleared six minor blowdowns, did some rhodo lopping, and cleaned several water diversions. We will need to go back sometime to de-face some defaced blazes (see 1st pic below). There is a pickup load of trash in the back end of the Walnut Mtn Road parking area, consisting of a mattress, bedding, and car fender parts (see 2nd pic below). This probably needs to be report to USFS. There are strange marks on trees near the Walnut Mtn Road trailhead....It appears there has been caution tape nailed between trees and red Xs are painted on the trees on both sides of the trailhead (see pics below). We hope this does not have anything to do with clear cutting!



Reporting: Scotty Bowman

Date: 11/8/2022

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

Location: Section 7, Wilbur Dam Road to 2.5-mile mark

People: Scotty Bowman

Summary: It was a beautiful day to be out on the trail, so I hiked in to clean waterbars that are located 2.5 miles in on the section. Along the way, I cleared a couple of small blowdowns, 10" or less, and cut back rhododendron in several sections.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 11/9/2022

Purpose: Roan VUM - Round Bald site visit

Location: Section 14c, Stan Murray Shelter to Carvers Gap, Round Bald



People: Tim Stewart, Carl Fritz

Summary: Carl and I went back to Round Bald to explore a potential spur trail from the possible A.T. relocation to the PeakFinder signs on Round. A couple of different options are viable, but further visits are required. We also walked a possible loop on the NC side from Engine Gap. We followed the contour lines and eventually ended up back at the kiosk. There are not many obstacles and it maintains a fairly easy grade. There are occasional nice views of NC, but with a steep sidehill. This might be an easier relocation for the A.T.

Reporting: Michael Watts

Date: 11/9/2022

Purpose: Fall maintenance

Location: Section 13, US 19E to Doll Flats

People: Rick Lott, Kevin Sedgewick, Mike Watts

Summary: It was a beautiful fall day to get the trail in shape before the cold weather moves in. We cleared three blowdowns, removed eight dead hazard trees (one leaning over a campsite, the rest along the trail), cleaned 14 water bars, trimmed brush, cut firewood for several campsites, and removed trash.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 11/10/2022

Purpose: Rehabilitate Trail

Location: Section 11b, Canute Place to Bitter End, Mid section

People: Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart, Greg Kramer, Van Hovey, Joe Morris, Carl Fritz, Tony Messina, Scott Huskey, Brandon Church

Summary: Rehab of the trail in the wet spots continues. The second wet spot was completed; treadway with ag cloth was filled with sand. Bog bridge had new sills installed and more expanded metal added, and finally 5 steps were installed. The third wet spot had a 16-foot, two log bridge installed. The bridge is a short bridge and didn't need a handrail. Plans for the first wet spot were changed because of conditions and will be worked on the next visit. Steps were cut to put on the trail southbound to the first wet spot.



*Greg presents patches to
Scott and Brandon*

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 11/12/2022

Purpose: 2nd Saturday, Hiking with Tools!

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

People: Tim Stewart, Elissa Shealy

Summary: The final "Hiking with Tools!" adventure of the year was to Beauty Spot. We had some last minute cancellations, so it was just me and Elissa. We hiked up from Indian Grave Gap removing some minor blowdowns and encroaching vegetation. We anticipated colder and wetter weather, but fortunately the rain held off until we finished. Of course the views were great from Beauty Spot!

Reporting: Richard Ramsey

Date: 11/13/2022

Purpose: Clear blowdown

Location: Section 14a, Doll Flats to Bradley Gap

People: Richard Ramsey

Summary: I cleaned up after the storm, removing blowdowns.

Reporting: Aaron Brown

Date: 11/13/2022

Purpose: General Maintenance

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

People: Aaron Brown

Summary: I walked the entire section to check conditions and perform fall clean up. Three blowdowns were removed using a hand saw. One large blowdown remains that will require chainsaw work. This is located near the small footbridge approximately one mile from Indian Grave Gap. Encroaching vegetation was cut back using loppers and a saw. Two short sections, each approximately 100 feet in length, are experiencing significant sloughing and the treadway is compromised. These are located at miles 349.6 and 349.5. Cribbing and re-digging will be required to remediate. The shelter was observed to be in good order. Overall, the trail is in good condition.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 11/15/2022

Purpose: Fall 2022 A.T. Partnership

Location: Appalachian District office, Mars Hill, NC

People: Tim Stewart, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Joe Morris, John Beaudet, and Vic Hasler

Summary: An A.T. Partnership discussion was held in the naturally lit Appalachian District conference room, which was the first such in-person gathering since Fall 2019. The 26 in attendance, representing ATC, USFS, SAWS, SAHC, TEHCC, and CMC, covered many topics to hopefully move projects forward and resolve issues.

Camping closures for Abingdon Gap and No Business Knob Shelters expect to be lifted by end of 2022. A public comment teleconference for the Overmountain Shelter NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) is planned for a mid-December evening. NEPA progress also impacts the Cherry Gap Shelter replacement and Osborne Farm Accessible Trail improvement. The partners were favorable about providing ground protection using bog bridges to the installed PeakFinders on Round Bald.

Feral hogs have been observed at Stan Murray Shelter, potentially contaminating the water supply; so warning signs will be posted. Atwood building removal on US 231 should be completed by end of 2022, including trash dump. TEHCC's five-year joint Volunteer Service Agreement with the USFS Cherokee and Pisgah National Forests is due for renewal by June 2023.

The Spring 2023 A.T. Partnership has been scheduled for Tuesday, March 21st morning. Location to be confirmed.

Reporting: Jim McGuire

Date: 11/19/2022

Purpose: General Trail Maintenance

Location: Section 15b, Cloudland Hotel to Hughes Gap

People: Jim McGuire, Tim Stewart

Summary: Tim and I performed general trail maintenance from Huges Gap to Ash Gap. I've volunteered to adopt this section. Tim was kind and generous with his time to show me the section. We encountered a group of high schoolers (~10 plus 2 guides) from Webb HS on a 3-day adventure from Hughes Gap to 19E. We cleared about 12 small to medium-sized blowdowns and checked the two water sources. There is one large blowdown partially on the trail, but not blocking passage. I assume we will take care of it when there are several other large blowdowns that we can get in one trip. As we were evaluating the large blowdown, the high school troop passed with four kids hitting their head on a large limb from the downed tree. We decided to remove the limb. I have a picture of the large blowdown. I plan to return in February to clean out water breaks and check for blowdowns.

Reporting: Joel Zabel

Date: 11/19/2022

Purpose: Fall maintenance

Location: Section 17, Beauty Spot to Iron Mountain Gap

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

Summary: We cleared about 30 blowdowns between Beauty Spot and Iron Mtn Gap. Roughly half were dragged or pushed off the trail, and the rest were sawed by hand with the Katanaboy and personal saws. The largest diameters sawed were (1) 15", (3) in the 10" to 12" range, (8) 5" to 8", and smaller. We cleared water diversions from FS230 switchback to Iron Mtn Gap, and picked up a bag of trash from Cherry Gap Shelter. Fortunately, none of it would have attracted bears.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 11/21/2022

Purpose: Autumn section check

Location: Section 20b, Temple Hill Gap to No Business Knob Shelter

People: Vic Hasler

Summary: The oak leaves have fallen, so an autumn end-to-end maintenance section check was completed per the request of our Volunteer Coordinator. In the morning twilight, the forest road needed some lopping of rhododendron pushing into the roadway, which provided a warm-up to ensure gear and clothing were properly arranged for the cold morning. A swing blade was used to cut the azaleas at 0.3 mile, then I lopped growth mostly above waist height all the way to the shelter. The number of water diversions

doubled in 2022 – and I cleared both of them. Last reported camping in the NBK Shelter logbook was 10/29 – and there was no trash to haul out. I quickly exited as I heard some rustling in the trees, which probably was the SOBO I passed shortly after leaving. Overall, this 2.4-mile section is open and I'm excited about the flagging tape for possible 2023 Konnarock Crew repair of the sidehill tread. On the way out, I removed a literary portal in the form of storm door found dumped by the forest roadside.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 11/22/2022

Purpose: Cut locusts for trail rehab and locate more locusts

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

People: Carl Fritz, Ed Speer

Summary: We cut some locusts for stile posts, many stakes from trees as well as old posts, and some cribbing logs. We also inspected around the boundary of the northern field; there is one area of concentrated dead locusts that could be harvested.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 11/22/2022

Purpose: Reinforce Emergency Shelter

Location: Section 3a, McQueen's Gap to McQueen's Knob

People: Carl Fritz, Ed Speer

Summary: Ed provided a treated post that we carried to the emergency shelter on McQueen's Knob. We dug it into ground and fastened it to many of the logs to further stiffen this shelter. This matches the treated post installed in the other front corner several years ago. We cleaned out the back gutter and cleaned water diversions back to the gap.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 11/23/2022

Purpose:

Location: Section 9b, Hampton Blue-Blaze Trail

People: Tony Messina, Elzear Lemieux, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart, Carl Fritz, Joe Morris

Summary: This crew built 15 locust steps in the area of the powerline on the blue-blaze trail near Hampton (Laurel Fork Access).



Reporting: Phyllis Cairnes

Date: 11/29/2022

Purpose: Maintain shelter

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

People: Rolla Wade, Phyllis Cairnes

Summary: We hiked out of Low Gap to Abingdon Gap Shelter for an end-year maintenance check. I took pictures of two blowdowns (step-overs) along the way and sent these to Renee. Both the picnic table and the graffiti board at the shelter were in reasonably good shape. I gave the graffiti board another coat of Kilz. We picked up trash (no food stuffs, but three books, empty cannister, etc.), cleaned the rain gutter, and shoveled out the fire ring. The fairly new logbook was missing, but I found it about 125 feet from the front of the shelter shredded into a thousand pieces and blown around. We picked up a full bag of pieces. Had a bear done this? Maybe, if there was a scent of food on the book. So right now, the shelter is missing a logbook, which I will take next visit.