



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

July 2023

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](#)

[Bays Mountain Park Raises Fees Effective July 1](#)

[A.T. Vista: August 4 - 7, 2023](#)

[TEHCC Welcomes New Members / Eastman Recreation Fair](#)

[For the Record](#)

[A.T. Maintenance Reports](#)



Roan Mountain in June
Photo by Carl Fritz

Letter from the Chair

Submitted by Josh Hayes (2023 Steering Committee Chair)

Hello friends,

Over the past few months, we have covered several of the **7 Principles of Leave No Trace**, including: **Respect Wildlife**, **Dispose of Waste**, **Leave What You Find**, and **Plan Ahead & Prepare**. This month we will take a break, as it is officially summer, to discuss waterfall safety.

The U.S. Forest Service released a checklist in 2010 for those who wish to venture out to enjoy waterfalls. This list recommends some seemingly commonsense items such as stay back from the edge, avoid slippery rocks, wear stable shoes, don't jump off of waterfalls, and stay out of restricted areas. However, despite what you might think, there has been a rise in waterfall deaths due to people looking for the picture-perfect Instagram post. It is recommended to stay away from the edge due to the obvious risk of falling; but further still, water is known to have eroding properties which can make the edge unstable despite how it might look. For the same reason, one should avoid slippery rocks and wear stable shoes, always test a safe section, and don't just trust your eyes. Staying out of restricted areas speaks for itself, but jumping off waterfalls is glorified in some media; this is dangerous especially if you don't know what's in the water. Water can be much shallower than it appears and if it's distorted or cloudy, you may not notice if there are rocks lying below the surface. My father used to tell a story about fracturing his tailbone because of shallow water while cliff jumping.

When talking about waterfall safety, it really does come down to using your brain and thinking about the risk. Waterfalls are some of the most beautiful spots in the world, so try to be present and not take them for granted. Watch your footing and not your phone, and enjoy what nature has to offer. I look forward to seeing some of you on one of the club's waterfall hikes and have a great start to your summer!

Thanks all,
Josh

[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
July 1	Mendota Rails-to-Trails, between Wolf Run Gorge and Holston River, 9 am	Vic Hasler	423-416-3166
July 8	Hiking with Tools! 9:30 am – 2 pm	Tim Stewart	
July 15	Bays Mountain Park Maintenance, 9 am – 2 pm	Tony Messina	423-677-6650
July 15	White House Cliffs Hike, 9:30 am – 11:30 am	Andy Steffan	919-928-4738
July 20	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1 pm	Josh Hayes	270-585-5929
July 20	Fun Fest Moonlight Hike, 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm	Rheagan Sizemore	937-779-2998
July 22	A.T., Chestoa Bridge to Nolichucky Ridge Cliff, 10:00 am – 12:30 pm	Josh Hayes	270-585-5929
Aug 4 - 7	A.T. Vista 2023 , Johnson City	Vic Hasler	423-416-3166
Aug 12	Hiking with Tools! 9:30 am – 2 pm	Tim Stewart	
Aug 17	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1 pm	Josh Hayes	270-585-5929
Aug 18 - 19	Meet the Mountains Festival, Winged Deer Park	mtmfest.org	

Details of Upcoming Events

Recurring Events

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

Contact: [Josh Hayes](#), 270-585-5929

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

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.

Hiking with Tools! Second Saturday of Each Month, March through November

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. Typical tasks might include lopping rhododendrons, cleaning water diversions, clearing trail obstructions, painting blazes, etc. 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 and to sign up.

Paddle to the Grill, Thursday Evenings During the Summer, 6:00 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.

[Back to Top](#)

Lower Watauga, Class I-II, Alternate Saturdays, 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 Teriyaki 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>

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

Contact: [Tony Messing](#), 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.

Scheduled Events

Mendota Rails-to-Trails, between Wolf Run Gorge and Holston River, Saturday, July 1, 2023

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

Rating: *Moderate, 5-7 miles, double in-out hike with <200' elevation gain*

Start: *8 am from Colonial Heights. Back: 2-2:30 pm*

This hike is a repeat of Bill Tindall's two-part outing on October 29, 2022. The first leg will explore the Wolf Run Gorge with its towering 600' cliff on one side of the trail and a stream that has sculpted its way through the rocks along the other. Roughly two miles in and then back, the trail crosses the five trestles restored in 2022. The second leg will head north for a mile, crossing three repaired trestles to reach the Sunny Side Bridge over the Holston River with views of Clinch Mountains – and seating for lunch. For those who want to try, there is a parallel 250' VDOT swinging bridge. After enjoying the meal, we'll walk back to the parking lot to head home.

Let's leave the Colonial Heights Ingles parking lot by 8 am or meet us at the trailhead parking area (4014 Little Wolf Run Road, Virginia) just before 9 am. We can leave lunch in vehicle coolers since we'll be coming back by the parking lot. I have club topo maps for those who like to trace the route. Please call/text/e-mail the hike leader to know headcount or if last-minute changes.

Hiking with Tools!, Saturday, July 8, 2023, 9:30 am – 2:00 pm

Contact: [Tim Stewart](#)

Location: *Shady Valley, TN*

This event is an introductory opportunity to help out with routine maintenance on the Appalachian Trail; such as clearing small fallen trees, cutting back overgrown vegetation, and repainting trail markers (aka blazes). All tools will be furnished, and no prior experience is required; hands-on training will be provided! Please be sure to wear long pants and sturdy boots. Bring plenty of water and snacks for the day, lunch, sunscreen, bug spray, a rain jacket and personal work gloves, as well as a mask and hand sanitizer!

White House Cliffs, Saturday, July 15, 2023, 9:30am – 11:30 am

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

Rating: *Moderate, 2 miles, 900' elevation gain*

Location: *Rocky Fork State Park, 1700 Rocky Ford Road, Flag Pond, TN 37657*

Hope you will join me for a steady uphill hike to White House Cliffs in Rocky Fork State Park. We'll plan to meet at the main Rocky Fork parking area at 9:30 am. We will get to see great views of the surrounding mountains at the summit. Please bring water and snacks, and hiking poles might be useful, especially on the way back down.

If interested, the hike could be extended to explore some of the other trails in Rocky Fork, such as along the creek or another potential overlook; but before extending the hike, we'll pass through the parking area again, so people have options.

Fun Fest Moonlight Hike, Thursday, July 20, 2023, 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm

Leader: [Rheaagan Sizemore](#), 937-779-2998

Rating: *Easy*

Location: *Bays Mountain Park, 853 Bays Mountain Park Road, Kingsport, TN 37660*

In search of 14 volunteers for this annual club-led hike on the Lakeside Trail at Bays Mountain Park. Volunteers will be expected to stand post at different spur trails to keep the attendees on the correct path. This is a great opportunity to help out the club and experience a beautiful, local trail at night!

A.T., Chestoa Bridge to Nolichucky Ridge Cliff, Saturday, July 22, 2023, 10:00 am – 12:30 pm

Contact: [Josh Hayes](#), 270-585-5929

Rating: Moderate, 4 miles, steep in some areas (switchbacks/stairs)

Weather Permitting

Meet at the A.T. trailhead at Chestoa, Erwin TN. We'll be hiking to beautiful views of the Nolichucky River. Dogs are welcome on leash. Please bring water and snacks, and hiking poles (if desired).

Meet the Mountains Festival, Friday and Saturday, August 18 - 19, 2023

This year's "Meet the Mountains" Festival will take place at a new location: Winged Deer Park Lakefront

Experience the Outdoors: Ever paddled a kayak or paddle board, cast a fly rod, or ridden a full-suspension mountain bike? If not, it's no problem! Come gain the confidence of an experienced outdoor enthusiast through the numerous activities found at "Meet the Mountains." Find the gear, people, and resources to help navigate through [Northeast Tennessee's](#) vast natural landscape.

For additional information, see website mtmfest.org or social media facebook.com/MeetTheMountainsFest/

Bays Mountain Park Raises Fees Effective July 1

Based on recent BMP announcement



The park will be making these increases in fees:

Car entrance	from \$5 to \$7
Planetarium	from \$5 to \$6
Barge Rides	from \$5 to \$6
Individual memberships	from \$30 to \$35/year
Family	from \$50 to \$60
Supporting	from \$100 to \$125
Lifetime	from \$1,000 to \$1,200

A.T. Vista: August 4 – 7, 2023



Contact: [Vic Hasler](#) or [Steve Perri](#)

In early August, at least 220 visitors, primarily from other A.T. clubs, are coming for the A.T. Vista program (atvista2023.org) based out of East Tennessee State University. It is a long weekend offering excursions, exhibits, hikes, workshops, and two dinners as the region celebrates the Appalachian Trail and other outdoor opportunities. An observation is that some groups are checking in a day or two early or staying around an extra day for an even longer experience. Regular admission is \$125 adults (for all workshops and hikes plus opening and closing dinners), \$50 Youth (ages 12 & under), and \$60 Day Pass (for all workshops and hikes on choice of Saturday or Sunday). Excursions (including biking, caving, guided fishing, hiking with llamas, kayaking, and rafting) are published on-line for registering directly with the

outfitters. Once a ticket is purchased, an email link is sent for selection from the 48 hikes, which are now 80% full. (Many thanks to the hike leaders from TEHCC and partner organizations!!) Please contact either Vic or Steve for more information, if interested in attending or volunteering.

TEHCC Welcomes New Members

Braden Lusk

Andrew Stanneck

Robin Thomas

Anna Whitfield

Eastman Recreation Clubs Fair

Submitted by Josh Hayes

Thanks to all who came out to see us during June's ERC fair! We greatly appreciated the volunteers who helped staff the table and display our club for others to see. We had approximately 27 signatures of people interested in the club! Again, thanks to all of our volunteers and visitors. We had a great time talking with everyone.

****Reminder:** Signing the paper we had present does not make you an official member. To become a TEHCC member you must sign up at the B-310 counter. The cutoff date to be eligible for the raffle entry is 7/20/23.

[Back to Top](#)

For the Record



Bays Mountain Lakeside Trail Hike, May 27, 2023

Erin Ekart reporting

Originally planned at a “multi-tower” hike, there was a last-minute switch to the Bays Mountain Lakeside Trail due to an unfortunate (minor) knee injury. We appreciated our leisurely hike around the lake, took in the beautiful foliage, and enjoyed the company of multiple deer and other wildlife. The easier hike allowed us to discuss in depth many topics, including home life, work life, favorite hikes, and Taylor Swift. After we finished, we decided to swing by the birds of prey exhibit to see the majestic birds.

If you are still interested in the multi-tower hike, please let me know and I will plan on leading it once I have made a full recovery.



Rich Mountain Fire Tower, June 17, 2023

Josh Hayes reporting

What started out as a cool 64 degrees turned to a balmy 78 by the end of this close to 6-mile hike. The first third of the trail and last third toward the top were the hardest parts with most of the incline approximately 1400 feet. The trail was well maintained aside from 5 blowdowns that we had to navigate around. Although there were signs posted about the bear issues, we did not run into any. We were however graced with some amazing 360-degree views atop the fire tower making the steep incline well worth it.

Attendees were Josh Hayes, David DeRegis, and Michelle DeRegis

If you go: The trail was well maintained with no noticeable litter. Be prepared for some steep climbs.



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 5/25/2023

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 2a and 2b, McQueen's Gap to Backbone Rock Trail and on to TN 133

People: Ed Speer, Estill Taylor

Summary: Ed hiked from McQueen's Gap north on the A.T. and down Backbone Rock Trail. He removed seven blowdowns on a one-mile stretch of the A.T. starting 4 miles north of McQueen's Gap. No blowdowns remain on this section. He cleaned the trailbed of Backbone Rock Trail and there were no blowdowns.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 5/30/2023

Purpose: Routine spring cleanup

[Back to Top](#)

Location: Section 14d, Stan Murray Shelter to Carver's Gap

People: Richard Carter, Carl Fritz, Bill Murdoch, Tim Stewart

Summary: We covered the section from Carver's Gap to Stan Murray Shelter and only experienced light rains. Blazes were painted from Carver's Gap to Jane Bald before it became too wet. The rest of the section needs blazes freshed. The shelter and graffiti board are in good shape. The water source at the shelter is good. We cut back encroaching vegetation, especially on the southern approach to Grassy Ridge, and all the briars and beech tree growth down to the shelter. We removed four blowdowns, two of which were inconvenient, with handsaws. There are some rehab opportunities, especially in the upper switchbacks south of the shelter.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 6/1/2023

Purpose: Rehab Trail

Location: Section 14b, Bradley Gap

People: Carl Fritz, Tim Stewart, Van Hovey, Tony Messina, Dean Baird, Renee Messina, Bill Murdoch, Kevin Sedgwick, Dick Martindale, Max Dallaba, Greg Kramer, Dan Firth

Summary: We did a large variety of trail maintenance today. We delivered a 10' bog bridge to the Horse Camp campground and added stones to either side to cover over this perennial wet spot. We added steps going down to the water source nearby. We will have to return and complete the job later. We rehabbed 100 feet of trail that was narrow and had wet track and a semi grassy track. The soil was broke down to make a standard width trail. Six logs were brought up and we found 2 that were left over from a previous time. All were installed as waterbars. It was a glorious day to be on the trail and fun was had by all.



Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 6/3/2023

Purpose: Hiking with Tools!

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

People: Tim Stewart, Renee Messina, Kevin Sedgwick, Tony Messina, Robert Patterson, Elliott Mills, Rebecka Powell, Leigh Rothermel, Meghan Carney, Maura Carney, Tracy Harris, Cheri Blevins, Ashleigh Widing

Summary: I switched from the 2nd Saturday to 1st Saturday in June and it turned out to be National Trails Day. We had plenty of volunteers for Hiking with Tools!, including some regular maintainers. Tony and Renee Messina and Kevin Sedgwick joined the fun. Some of the volunteers were local, but some traveled from other states, including GA, SC and NC.

We met at the Roan Mountain Community Park and divided into two groups to cover the entire section from Bitter End to Walnut Mountain Rd. The lopping of rhododendrons was the main task, but we also removed a few other trail obstructions. We also managed some weed-wacking and bog bridge repair in the form of replacing some worn out hardware cloth. Everyone met for lunch at the bench with a view. After lunch, each team regrouped and continued on, accomplishing what was missed by the other team. It is about 1.5 miles either way, so altogether we hiked about 3 miles. Once back at the park, I passed out 7 patches. We had a great turnout and it was a great day to volunteer. Most volunteers were new and were able to enjoy doing some maintenance on the Appalachian Trail, and with the help of our regular Maintainers, we didn't have to do an out and back hike. Thanks to everyone!



Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 6/3/2023

Purpose: Walk section

Location: Section 5, TN 91 to Iron Mountain Shelter

People: Greg Kramer

Summary: The purpose was to replace the logbook and cut grass from Iron Mountain North. The weed trimmer blade hit a stone early on and it destroyed the gearbox. I checked the water source south of the shelter and it was looking good. Though SAWS went through earlier this year, not all of the full waterbars were cleaned. I found a tarp abandoned at the shelter and took it and other materials that were left at the shelter. I only left the new logbook. The graffiti board needs cleaning. The shovel hasn't been burned yet, but the broom didn't have a handle. The water source near Uncle Nick's was not flowing much. The water source near Cross Mnt Rd was good.

Reporting: Ken Murray

Date: 6/5/2023

Purpose: Hang graffiti board at Clyde Smith Shelter

Location: Section 16a, Hughes Gap to Clyde Smith Shelter

People: Jim Foster, Ken Murray

Summary: Jim and Ken hiked in from Hughes Gap with the graffiti board for Clyde Smith Shelter. We cleared one small blowdown on the way in and met many hikers.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 6/6 and 6/7/2023

Purpose: Cut weeds

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

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed hiked the entire section. There were no blowdowns. He mowed sections of the trail between the 2.5 mile mark and Double Springs Shelter.

Reporting: Rebekah Morrisson

Date: 6/7 to 6/14/2023

Purpose: SAWS 6-person Trail Crew Maintenance

Location: Section 6, Iron Mountain Shelter to 2 miles north of Vandeventer Shelter

People: Michael Lowry, Lindsey Lytle, Michael Helton, Paul Jeffers, Alex Rucker, Barret Stanton

Summary: The SAWS crew hiked in from the northern access trailhead on 6/7. They spent 6 days out there and brushed and dug drains or debarmed until the evening of 6/13/23. They moved camp once to the next water source south of Turkey Pen Gap to be close to the work in the middle of the work hitch. They hiked out the morning of 6/14/23. In total they brushed 23,760 feet, created 7 feet of "new trail" fixing where the trail had crept down the hillside significantly, debarmed 588 feet of trail, dug 50 new drainage dips, dug 20 new drainage knicks, and removed 1 lb of trash.



Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 6/8/2023

Purpose: Rehab Bradley Gap

Location: Section 14a, Doll Flats to Bradley Gap, Water source and hillside

People: Carl Fritz, Jeff Hatling, Van Hovey, Dean Baird, Tony Messina, Renee Messina, Bill Murdoch, Greg Kramer, Dan Firth

Summary: We had a big crew today with three Forest Service people, Brandon, Taylor, and the newest member of the trail crew Jesse. We had two tasks to complete. The water source steps which were started last week were finished, 6 steps were added to the three we added last week. A Bill Murdoch water pipe was installed to make getting water easier. Twenty feet of crib wall was installed after all of the trail rehab was completed. The bog bridge had both ends worked on to improve drainage. The north end was a simple clearing of the present drainage. On the south end, we installed a long waterbar which took water draining down the trail to off trail, and we rearranged rocks to make a path to the bog bridge. Two more waterbars were installed, rebar that was put in logs last week was removed, and screwed-in stakes were installed. The waterbars had to be cleaned from last weeks work and some had not been cleaned previously. An amazing amount of work was done.

Reporting: J. Scott Huskey

Date: 6/8/2023

Purpose: Trail maintenance

Location: Section 12c, Sugar Hollow Creek to Campbell Hollow Road, Elk River section

People: J. Scott Huskey

Summary: This day I traveled to Elk River Falls to cut weeds along the portion of Section 12c that parallels the Elk River. I cut weeds along approximately 730 yards of the trail there and made one diversion cutoff. In addition to that work, I did maintenance on the access trail from the Elk River Falls parking lot. Tasks included cutting back vegetation and cutting weeds.

Notes: (1) There seems to be an abandoned camp on the section along the river. The location is 36 deg 12' 21" N, 81 deg 58' 40" W. It is a one-man tent. I cleaned up the garbage around the tent, but left the tent in place (see photo). (2) There is a very large pine tree across the access road leading from the Elk River Falls parking lot to Section 12c. It is located at 36 deg 12' 11" N, 81 deg 58' 14" W. If someone could remove that tree, we could drive another quarter mile closer to Section 12c.



Reporting: Bettye Boone

Date: 6/8/2023

Purpose: Check trail to and from Roan High Knob Shelter and check shelter

Location: Section 15a, Cloudland to Roan High Knob Shelter

People: Bettye Boone, Saylor Fox

Summary: We hiked to and from the shelter, hauled out trash, replaced the journal, opened/cleaned water diversions, and brushed in short cuts.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 6/9/2023

Purpose: Cut vegetation

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

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed mowed sections of the trail between McQueen's Gap and Abingdon Gap Shelter.

Reporting: Jake Mitchell

Date: 6/10/2023

Purpose: Weed, trim limbs, mow, and paint blazes

Location: Section 14b, Little Hump to Yellow Mountain Gap

People: Jake Mitchell, Bill Southern, Alex Johnston, Xander Johnston, Ender Johnston

Summary: Gorgeous, perfect day for trail maintenance. There were no blowdowns. We painted blazes from about halfway between Little Hump and Bradley Gap back to Overmountain Shelter, including blue blazes. We checked out the water improvements between Bradley Gap and Little Hump. Looking good. We cleared a wide swath of weeds from Little Hump back to Yellow Mountain Gap, including the blue blaze, cut back a lot of encroaching limbs and mowed at the barn. We also trimmed weeds around the FS gate.

Thursday group - If you go back to Bradley Gap soon, it would be most helpful if a couple folks trimmed weeds up to woods just before the summit of Little Hump. I did one side a couple weeks ago, but we didn't get that far with weed eaters on this trip.

Could really use the limbs cleared encroaching along the gravel road. Not bad on the top half, but the bottom half is getting tight. Maybe the FS has a vertical mower?



Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 6/12/2023

Purpose: TEHCC A.T. Committee Meeting

Location: Eastman Recreation Center

People: Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Vic Hasler, Greg Kramer, Renee Messina, Tony Messina, Bob Peoples, Steve Perri, Tim Stewart, Steve Wilson

Summary: The club's A.T. Committee discussed a range of topics, of which a few will be mentioned. Eight first-time volunteers joined the Hiking with Tools!/National Trails Day maintenance outing (thanks to Tim Stewart for leading). While bears are active in the region, none of the encounters have resulted in a camping closure during 2023. Regarding food storage options at shelters, we will monitor Carolina Mtn Club's experience with lockers before considering anything. TEHCC will host an introductory maintenance outing on Saturday 9/9 for A.T. Give-A-Day and an early National Public Lands Day.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 6/14/2023

Purpose: Spread gravel on Accessible Trail

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

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed helped Matthew Gilbert and Brandon Church spread gravel on 600 feet of the accessible trail. They also spread gravel on the north corner of the FS parking area.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 6/15/2023

Purpose: Cut vegetation

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

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed mowed sections of trail between McQueen's Gap and Abingdon Gap Shelter. He had two conversations with two hikers from Asia. "One was a young man from Japan who hopefully understood most of my hillbilly English." "Another knowledgeable young man from India had recently completed a PhD in engineering at Virginia Tech." Could this happen only on the Appalachian Trail?

Reporting: Dick Martindale

Date: 6/15/2023

Purpose: Clear trail with hand tools

Location: Section 11a, From the Dennis Cove TH, 2.5 miles south (about 1/2 mile past Coon Den Falls junction)

People: Dick Martindale

Summary: Using hand tools, I cleared encroaching vegetation and small blowdowns. I spoke with one NOBO who stated that the water source at Canute Place was accessible and flowing.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 6/15/2023

Purpose: Cut grass in Bishop Hollow and Survey Doll Flats to 19E

Location: Sections 12d and 13, Campbell Hollow Road to Doll Flats

People: Greg Kramer, Bob Peoples, Rio Berry, Tim Stewart, Dan Firth, Bill Murdoch, Richard Carter, Carl Fritz, Van Hovey

Summary: We had a large turnout for weed trimming in Bishop Hollow. All of Bishop Hollow was completed with some members staying late to finish. Besides TEHCC members, we had Jesse and Tara Wu from the Forest Service. Tony and Tara took care of the blowdown at Elk Park Falls (see below). Greg and Richard walked from Doll Flats to 19E noting work to be done when Wright State comes later in the summer; there was a blowdown that was a stepover.

Reporting: Tony Messina

Date: 6/15/2023

Purpose: Clear blowdown

Location: Section 12c, USFS Road Access to A.T. from Elk River Falls

People: Tony Messina, Tara Wu

Summary: Tara and I cleared a 16-inch blowdown across FS190, the access road from Elk River Falls to the A.T. The blowdown had been reported by Scott Huskey during his recent section maintenance. We hiked to both Jones Falls and Splash Dam Falls afterwards and the trail is in excellent shape. Scott did a great job cutting weeds recently, even clearing the access trail.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 6/16/2023

Purpose: Cut vegetation

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

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed cut vegetation from McQueen's Gap to McQueen's Knob at the firetower site. Patches of stinging nettles were five feet high! He inspected the old wooden shelter.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 6/16/2023

Purpose: Cut back weeds and grass

Location: Section 16b, Iron Mountain Gap to Apple Orchard

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I removed almost every stinging nettles within reach of the trail with a grass whip from Iron Mountain Gap to Apple Orchard, including the trail down to the water source (which was flowing pretty well). I also removed poison ivy crawling into the trail on the ground and cut a one-inch vine of poison ivy climbing a tree and beginning to hang down over the trail about 3/4 mile up from the trail head, as well as in two other places. I cut grasses growing over the trail going up the ridge as well as through the orchard. I had planned on using the grass whip on the trail up to the pinnacle of rocks, but the grass whip whipped me after 1.1

miles from the trailhead. I got back to my car after dark where I had a nice treat of some fireflies lighting the woods on the opposite side of the road from the parking area. With no moon, it was a real treat. There were 4 people tenting at Apple Orchard.

Reporting: Bill Fuller

Date: 6/16/2023

Purpose: General maintenance and scouting

Location: Section 9a, US 321 to Pond Flats

People: Bill Fuller

Summary: I had a wonderful afternoon on Pond Mountain. It was a little windy but beautiful. I hiked the entire section to Pond Flats while cutting back a lot of encroaching vegetation (mostly rhododendron) along the way. That one problem, hung-up, duck-under, leaning tree around the two-mile mark has finally fallen, and is now just a 12" easy stepover. I'll return to clear it. The entire rest of the trail is clear of blowdowns. The spring at Pond Flats is still flowing well. I passed two thru-hikers; both had on headphones and didn't stop to talk. After coming down the mountain, I assessed the blaze situation along the forest gate and down the gravel road. It looked like someone had uprooted the short, blazed post and thrown it up on the steep bank above the road. I'm going back next week to try to retrieve and re-plant it. I will probably take a string trimmer too and cut weeds along the power line cut.

Reporting: Elzear J Lemieux

Date: 6/16/2023

Purpose: A.T. Maintenance

Location: Section 8, Wilbur Dam Road to US 321

People: Elzear Lemieux, Emily Lemieux

Summary: We removed several blowdowns and cut back vegetation. We used a swing blade to remove high vegetation north of Watagua Dam.

Reporting: Lotta Murray

Date: 6/17/2023

Purpose:

Location: Home

People: Lotta Murray

Summary: I painted and prepared 6 metal graffiti boards.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 6/17/2023

Purpose: Check section

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

People: Tim Stewart

Summary: I went in from the new access point to Moreland Gap Shelter. The forest service road is still in bad condition. At the shelter, I painted the graffiti board and picked up some trash. The water source was flowing well, but someone had installed a pvc pipe at the wet area. This caused hikers to stop short of the actual source and leave a note at the shelter that water was not flowing. I removed the pvc pipe and left it under the shelter platform for now, and removed note. Hopefully there will be no future confusion. Hiking back toward access point, I continued to lop rhodos and removed 2 small blowdowns. I also checked all the new steps and bridges, which looked good. During routine lopping, I noticed a snake skin entangled within rhodo branches. That was a first. I will need to pay closer attention in the future!

Reporting: Scotty Bowman

Date: 6/17/2023

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

Location: Section 7, Vandeventer Shelter to one mile north of Wilbur Dam Rd

People: Scotty Bowman

Summary: It was a great day to spend time in the wilderness. I cleared 3 trees in the first mile. The last one was a 26" oak that was hanging over a switchback causing folks to cut the switchback. After clearing the tree, I rehabbed the cut and stabilized the critical edge. There were 2 other spots on switchbacks above this that I rehabbed also.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 6/18/2023

Purpose: Clear weeds from trail

Location: Section 16b, From Apple Orchard to the top of Iron Mountain at rock pinnacle and somewhat beyond

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: Starting point from Iron Mountain Gap, I cleared stinging nettles and other weeds and grasses encroaching the trail. I took out stinging nettles that I had missed previously (6/16) from the trailhead to Apple Orchard. Some grass was standing back up in the orchard, so I hit it again with my grass whip. Then the real ordeal began from the orchard up to the top of Iron Mountain and over, until the trail starts down, which is approximately 1.5 miles from the orchard with 760 feet of elevation gain. It was slow going up, chopping weeds to the top. I saw a few hikers, none of which had a grass whip. :-D

There are Turk's Cap Lilies beginning to bud, so they should start blooming in a few weeks. I'm adding a photo so hopefully no one will cut them down. I pushed to the top of the first tallest knob so I wouldn't have to go over it when I continue clearing from Greasy Creek Gap; hopefully soon if it will quit raining. That is my next section. Then it will be pretty clear, but I'm sure it will keep growing faster than I can cut it. I got back to my car at midnight, but very few fireflies were out, apparently due to the wind blowing too hard. It was a hard day. I should be finished with the section in one more outing.



Soon-To-Be Turk's Cap Lily Blooms

Reporting: Rick Lott

Date: 6/19/2023

Purpose: Cut weeds

Location: Section 13, From US 19E, south 0.8 miles

People: Rick Lott, Mike Watts

Summary: Mike and I managed to find a brief window between rain showers after lunch to cut weeds and trim a few low hanging branches. The section was cleared from the US 19E trailhead south for about 0.8 miles. Rain and travel schedules will probably prevent another outing until after July 4th week.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 6/22/2023

Purpose: Remove hazard trees

Location: Section 5, Iron Mountain Shelter

People: Greg Kramer, Carl Fritz

Summary: Brandon Church came with us to remove two hazard trees overhanging Iron Mountain Shelter. One was 30 inches in diameter and the other was 8 inches. We came via Lynn Norris's property to reduce the hiking distance. Brandon expertly dropped the trees, which could have fallen on the shelter, and we had to remove some trees that would have directed the falling tree into the shelter. A good and safe tree felling.

Reporting: Ken and Lotta Murray

Date: 6/25/2023

Purpose: Check trail

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

People: Ken Murray, Lotta Murray

Summary: We did a real thorough job cutting weeds and clipping brush. We removed 2 small blowdowns, picked up a small amount of trash at the shelter, and checked the spring. The logbook is still good; graffiti board is getting full. Unfortunately someone has already graffitied on the new picnic table.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 6/26/2023

Purpose: Cut back weeds, grass, and vegetation

Location: Section 16b, From Greasy Creek Gap to top of first tall knob of Iron Mountain.

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I used a grass whip to remove stinging nettles and other encroaching vegetation from Greasy Creek Gap to the top of the first tall knob up from Greasy Creek Gap. I took out most nettles within reach of my grass whip to prevent them from hanging into the trail space when they get tall. I left jewell weed to help keep the nettles choked out when the jewel weed gets taller than the nettles. The weeds are getting thick and the path is getting narrow, so it takes longer. The turkey gnats are terrible. Every inch of skin must be covered. I was able to weed only about 3/4ths mile before sunset; and will go back hopefully Wednesday to get the mile left between the two tall knobs. I saw 3 hikers and warned 2 of them of the bear problem at Clyde Smith Shelter; so they changed their plans to stay there. The first had headphones in and didn't stop.

Reporting: Bill Fuller

Date: 6/28/2023

Purpose: Cut Vegetation

Location: Section 9a, US 321 to Pond Flats, Powerline cut

People: Bill Fuller

Summary: I took a swing blade and cut back vegetation from the forest gate to the end of the powerline cut. The powerline area was a hayfield, but luckily not many stinging nettles. I cut a 2-3 foot wide swath on both sides of the trail until I reached the forest. Unfortunately, on the way down I must've hit a yellow jackets nest with the swing blade and got stung four times. I took off running, so I didn't identify exactly where the nest was located, but it was about 30 yards above the forest gate, on the left side of the trail, I think (going uphill/southbound). I'll try to go back late tomorrow evening to see if I can locate the nest and take care of it.

