



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

August 2023

tehcc.org

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

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*Roan Mountain:
A path leading to a grassy hill
Photo by Rick Currie*

Letter from the Chair

Submitted by Josh Hayes (2023 Steering Committee Chair)

Hello friends,

This month I will continue the series on the seven principles by discussing “**Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces.**” In nature it may be difficult to identify a durable surface, but the ability to judge this will serve you well and save you from avoidable injuries. One of the simplest ways to accomplish this principle when hiking is to stick to the trail and, while camping, abide by the Leave No Trace adage, “Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.”

In popular areas you can take steps to ensure the ground surfaces stay durable for everyone. These include walking in single file in the middle of developed trails when hiking, and if camping, ensure you pick sites with little vegetation and keep the campsite small. In low-use undisturbed areas that aren’t meant to be trails, it is important to limit your impact. When traveling off trail, it is harder to spot durable surfaces, but they can include rock/gravel, sand, etc. While snow and ice can certainly be durable and recover quickly from impact, caution should be taken. The ability of vegetation to be durable will depend on the type. For instance, grass would be considered durable, but wet meadows may have fragile vegetation and would require the group to spread out to avoid making new trails.

Essentially, it boils down to keeping trails where they are supposed to be and maintaining good off-trail practices that help to conserve the beauty we all want to enjoy.

Thanks all,

Josh

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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
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	
Aug 19	Bays Mountain Park Trail Maintenance	Tony Messina	
Aug 25 - 27	Hiwassee Paddle Weekend, Class I-II	Jo Pasqua	
Aug 26	A.T. Hike: Hughes Gap to Little Rock Knob	Josh Hayes	270-585-5929
Sept 1 - 4	Hiwassee/Ocoee Paddle Weekend, Class I-II	Joe Pehlmann	
Sept 9	Hiking with Tools! 9:30 am – 2 pm (TEHCC 's event for A.T. Give-A-Day and National Public Lands Day)	Tim Stewart	
Sept 9	APE's Nolichucky 1 st Timers River Trip, 3 pm – 11 pm	Wesley Bradley	423-647-1321
Sept 16	Bays Mountain Park Trail Maintenance	Tony Messina	
Sept 21	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1 pm	Josh Hayes	270-585-5929

Details of Upcoming Events

Recurring Events

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

Contact: [Josh Hayes](#)

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.

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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. PFDs and stern lights are TWRA Regulation. If you aren't on the contact list, contact Deb each week for details.

Lower Watauga, Class I-II, Alternate Saturdays During the Summer, 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 to see if it's on! Please be prepared for very cold water and wear appropriate gear. PFDs 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 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.

Scheduled Events

Meet the Mountains Festival, Friday, 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 is 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 <https://www.mtmfest.org/> or social media facebook.com/MeetTheMountainsFest/

A.T. Hike: Hughes Gap to Little Rock Knob, Saturday, August 26, 2023, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

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

Rating: Moderate, Hike has ~900' elevation gain and is expected to take 2.5 hours to complete

Location: 469-335 Hughes Gap Rd, Roan Mountain, TN 37687 (Meet at the [trailhead](#))

Weather permitting This hike is along the Appalachian Trail through hardwood forest to great views at Little Rock Knob (elevation 4918'). The round-trip distance is 4.6 to 5 miles with 900' rise (similar climb to Bays Mountain Firetower trail but over 3-4 times the distance). Meet at the trail head (weather permitting). It is recommended to bring water and snacks.

Save the Date: TEHCC Fall Dinner Meeting, Friday, October 13, 2023

Dinner plans are being developed so sharing what is known.

- Date is Friday, October 13th at 5:30 pm for Happy "Trails" Hour
- Speaker is Megan Krager (Park Manager, Bays Mtn Park)
- Cumulative service recognition (patches, caps, vest with new logo) from ATC plus NPS passes

2023 SORO Agency Partner of the Year – Chad Ingle

Submitted by Vic Hasler (A.T. Committee Chair)

At the Spring 2023 meeting, TEHCC's nomination of Chad Ingle (Cherokee National Forest/Watauga Ranger District) for 2023 Agency Partner of the Year was selected by the five Southern Region A.T. clubs. TEHCC first met Chad (Natural Resource Specialist) in 2017. Over the years, he has helped the club by installing two road gates on the Atwood property to prevent unauthorized vehicle traffic, arranged sawyer training, plus transported gear and volunteers for trail rehab and bog bridges using UTVs. Chad and the Watauga Ranger District took leadership roles in repairing the Grindstaff memorial (epitaph: "He lived alone, suffered alone, and died alone") atop Iron Mountain. Thanks for your service to the A.T.



TEHCC.org Newsletter Archive – 1980s

Article by Vic Hasler

A window into the club history during 1982-1986 has been uploaded to the website as scanned newsletters collected by Collins Chew. Starting May 1983, a monthly newsletter format was established versus the series of mimeographed copies sent to Kodak employees. The older six-month trip plans and years are scanned in bundles from the files of Richard Ardell and Paulette Eads/Byrd.

The history has the construction of the former Don Nelan and Watauga Lake shelters. A.T. relocations, lots of canoeing trips, names of significant leaders for our A.T. section, and volunteers who are still active (such as Mike Watts, Ted Malone, and Greg Kramer).

If you happen to have any newsletters from 1987 thru 1991, then please let the club know as these fill gap years.

Be Aware of Thunderstorms!

Safety Moment by Vic Hasler

It has already happened in the region.... A group of hikers were indirectly hit by lightning! In a thunderstorm, the bolt struck the trail, then traveled through the accumulated water to reach the people. Fortunately, the victims were just shaken by the jolt of electricity when another group discovered them and led the individuals to the trailhead parking.

A summertime hazard is the strong thundershowers which can quickly travel. Lightning is one issue already cited, especially on open balds and in fields. Flooding can make the easy unbridged stream crossing into a flowing torrent – especially in the mountain hollows. The dirt tread can become slippery mud leading to falls and wrenched legs.

Appropriate precautions can be taken. Before leaving, check and monitor the weather. Make the upfront choice to reschedule a hike if the forecast and/or radar look iffy. Stay home, do something else or go to a different place out of the storm's path. Hike early in the day as thunderstorms occur more often late in the afternoon or evening during summer months. You're less likely to be exposed to thunderstorms if you return from the field by early or mid-afternoon. Watch the sky for threatening clouds and track their progress. Know how to turn around. Understand the triggers for when to turn back to a safe haven. The storm is close enough for lightning to reach you if there is less than 6 miles or less than 30 seconds between the moment you see a flash of lightning and when you hear the related thunder.

While you enjoy our wonderful outdoors in the region, please don't take unnecessary risks!

TEHCC Welcomes New Members

William Barbano
Gregory Gammon

Phuong Bui
Michael Seaver

Frank Canova
April Schubert

For the Record

Mendota Rails-to-Trails, July 1, 2023

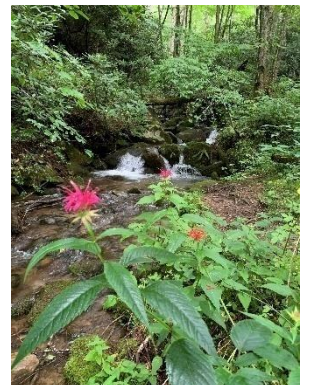
Vic Hasler reporting

The Mendota Trail hike was cancelled due to the forecast of thundershowers which were moving through the area in the morning, with another set due to arrive mid-day.

White House Cliffs, July 15, 2023

Andy Steffan reporting

The hike began with a good temperature, but a little humid. We had this trail all to ourselves, not meeting anyone on the way up or down. The trail was in great shape, except for one recently fallen small tree to step over from the storm the previous evening. We climbed the one mile of approx. 900' gain in around 30 minutes and were greeted with lovely views. We hung out for a little while admiring the views before heading back down, deciding to extend our hike along the creek for a little while since the main hike was short. At the place we turned around, I found some lovely bee balm with a small waterfall backdrop. Hike attendees: Andy Steffan and Brannon Zaner, and her dog. Total of 3 miles hiked.



Fun Fest Moonlight Hike, July 20, 2023

Rheagan Sizemore reporting

Despite rainy weather, this year's FunFest Moonlight Hike at Bays Mountain had a great turn out from the community. Park staff decided to change the route from the traditional Lakeside Trail due to recent bear sightings. The hike went up the Chestnut Trail, down the Big Oak Trail, and behind the animal habitats back to the Nature Center creating a little over a 3 mile loop for participants. TEHCC had 11 volunteers that split into 4 groups to keep traffic on the correct trail, which was very helpful given there was not much moonlight. Thank you to these volunteers and to park staff for another successful Moonlight Hike!

Attendees: Rheagan Sizemore, Vic Hasler, Josh Hayes, Sharon Burnette, Tim Schaefer, Joseph Sengeh, Kevin Wang, Drew Thomas, Claire Hammontree, Lauren McLoughlin

A.T. Chestoa Bridge to Nolichucky Ridge Cliff, July 22, 2023

Josh Hayes reporting

Only two of us headed out at fifteen past ten to enjoy a very well-maintained section of the Appalachian Trail. We had a wonderful view of the river where we watched several kayakers and a very long train pass through. The two of us were feeling energized, so we finished out the switchbacks on the A.T. and saw a few more overlooks and some very busy snails before we turned back around. The out and back hike turned into almost a 5-mile trip and ended right as the heat of the day was kicking into full gear.

Attendees: Josh Hayes, Andy Steffan.



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Reporting: J.C. Old Timers Hiking Club---Rich Ritter

Date: 4/8/2023

Purpose: Early clearing of blowdowns and encroaching branches

Location: Section 18, FS230 switchback to Indian Grave Gap

People: David Polon, Alan Liggett

Summary: David and Alan cleared 3 blowdowns, all 8" or smaller, picked up fallen branches, and cut back the worst encroaching branches.

Reporting: J. C. Old Timers Hiking Club.....Rich Ritter

Date: 5/28/2023

Purpose: Recon for OTHC clean up day, Clear small blowdowns

Location: Section 18, Indian Grave Gap to Low Gap, before Unaka Switchbacks

People: Pat Kenney, Marsha Pruner

Summary: These two club members surveyed the trail preparing for OTHCs main clean up day, but cleared small blowdowns as they hiked.

Reporting: J.C. Old Timers Hiking Club....Rich Ritter

Date: 5/30/2023

Purpose: Annual Trail Maintenance on AT

Location: Section 18, Indian Grave Gap to 5 miles north to Unaka Mountain Rd "hairpin"

People: Lanny Treece, Sharon Begley, Jeannine Edwards, Roy Siegel, Pat Kenney, Dave Polon, Joe Gervais, Rick Culbertson, Mark Manahan, JoAnne Manahan, Jolene Yetter, Marsha Pruner, Jeff Marek, Alan Liggett, Mary Major, Ruthie Edwards, Jim Agold, Maureen McCarty, Kurt Saxsma, Rich Ritter

Summary: We had a very good club turn out for our annual work day. We did everything from blaze painting to waterbar restoration. Cutting weeds was the biggest job, plus lopping to cut encroaching big limbs. A few small blowdowns were handled by handsaws. When I got back, it was reported that one 2-man team on string trimmers had issues and quit before finishing. Hence the next report....

Reporting: J.C. Old Timers Hiking Club....Rich Ritter

Date: 6/20/2023

Purpose: Finish clearing weeds, clean/rebuild waterbars

Location: Section 18, The 2-mile section from Beauty Spot to Indian Grave Gap

People: Rich Ritter

Sharon Begley, Pat Kenney, Tim Richardson, Wayne Jones, Lisa Millburn, Dave Polon, Jack Lawson, Ruthie Edwards

Summary: Part of the upper, one mile was not completed on May 30, plus no waterbars were touched. This day we completed the clearing weeds and all of the waterbars from Beauty Spot to Indian Grave Gap. The granddaddy of waterbars for us, Wayne Jones at 82 teaching younger sprites how to clean and build waterbars! Picture attached.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 6/28/2023

Purpose: Remove vegetation from trail

Location: Section 16b, Between the two tallest knobs between Greasy Creek Gap and Iron Mountain Gap

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I removed vegetation with a grass whip from the top of the first tall knob above Greasy Creek Gap to the tallest knob from Iron Mountain Gap. This included stinging nettles as well as anything thorny such as green briar or blackberry vines growing into the trail between the knobs. From the first knob above Greasy Creek Gap, the nettles were getting thick, so I removed them leaving most of the jewel weed. There were some areas that were in good shape, but that didn't make up for the amount of thick weeds growing on the last part going up to the knob where the pinnacle of rocks are located. The sun was going down and the turkey gnats were terrible, so I sacrificed all plants except Turk's cap lilies on the last hill. There is some milkweed growing on that part that I left for monarch butterflies, in case they have eggs on them. Hikers will have to go around them. I just flailed the last to open it up. I returned to Greasy Creek Friendly at 10:00 pm, but this time I was disappointed; no fireflies were there.

Reporting: Craig Haire

Date: 6/28/2023

Purpose: Inspect and clear trail

Location: Section 20a, Nolichucky River to Temple Hill Gap

People: Craig Haire

Summary: The trail is in fairly good shape. I trimmed back some encroaching rhododendron at the south end as well as a greenbriar hell near Temple Hill Gap. The weather was nice. I saw 8 day hikers and one long-distance hiker ("Oatmeal," Springer to Damascus).

Reporting: Michael M Watts

Date: 6/29/2023

Purpose: Cut weeds

Location: Section 13, US 19E to Doll Flats

People: Michael Watts

Summary: I finished cutting the summer weeds, including along the trail to the spring at Doll Flats. I will need to return to remove a blowdown 1.4 miles south of 19E. It is a tree 2 feet in diameter with a hollow base, mostly blocking the trail; although there is a narrow pathway around the root ball. I also need to trash a couple short cuts.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 6/29/2023

Purpose: Rehab Trail

Location: Section 14d, Stan Murray Shelter to Carvers Gap, Near shelter

People: Greg Kramer, Carl Fritz, Elzear Lemieux, Dan Firth, Bill Murdoch, Kevin Sedgwick, Dick Martindale, Van Hovey, Jeff Hatling,

Tim Stewart, Tony Messina

Summary: With two Forest Service people helping, we had a large crew to work on the trail south of the Stan Murray Shelter. We put in 9 steps between two groups. Rocks were very difficult to find, were large, and were hauled over long distances. It was a very sunny day, so we were happy to work in the woods. Tony and Jeff cut weeds from Carvers Gap to just past the Grassy Ridge cutoff. We will return next week to continue cutting weeds, continue with some more steps, but mostly to clean waterbars from Carvers to Stan Murray Shelter.

Reporting: Bill Fuller

Date: 6/29/2023

Purpose: Look for yellow jackets, build blaze posts

Location: Section 9a, US 321 to Pond Flats, Near cemetery

People: Bill Fuller



Summary: I went back to my section this evening in search of a yellow jacket nest near the forest gate, but I didn't find it. However, I did see a dead timber rattler on Shook Branch Road, and a black bear hanging out in the cemetery. I also spent some time today in the garage building three blaze posts that I plan on installing on the gravel road heading up toward the cemetery. I tried to make them pretty sturdy since someone uprooted the old posts and tossed them into the woods. I'm hoping to get those in the ground sometime next week.



Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 6/30/2023

Purpose: Remove reported blowdowns, survey trail for removal of vegetation

Location: Section 16b, Up from Iron Mountain Gap trailhead about 1.5 miles

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I surveyed 1½ miles from Iron Mountain Gap to a short distance beyond Weedy Gap for reported double blowdowns, but only found a single blowdown about ¾ mile from the trailhead. I returned to the blowdown and removed it. I took down some stinging nettles that had fallen into the trail but will go back soon to remove more vegetation which has doubled in size (3 feet tall!) in less than 2 weeks. I also took pictures of an area of trail slumping down the hill for potential curbing training. I searched for locust trees to use for the repair, but found nothing close by. I will continue the search.

Reporting: Ken Murray

Date: 6/30/2023

Purpose: Control summer vegetation

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

People: Ken Murray, Lotta Murray

Summary: We cut back rhodos and cleared nettles that were encroaching on the trail. We also found 5 blowdowns requiring a chainsaw. We'll have to make another trip.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 6/30/2023

Purpose: Roan VUM (Visitor Use Management) - Round Bald site visit

Location: Section 14d, Carvers Gap to Round Bald

People: Tim Stewart, Greg Kramer, Joe Morris

Summary: Greg, Joe, and I met Andrew Downs, Chad Ingle, and Natalia Muglia at Carvers Gap. We were joined by Adam Kluge, also. We hiked up to Round Bald (and continued to Jane Bald) while discussing current trail conditions and possible solutions.

Some highlights:

- National Park Service may be able to fund into the millions of dollars
- Box steps with gravel might be possible
- Large pavers on Round Bald and near the Peakfinder signs were considered
- A test site was also considered from the edge of the woods to Hamburger Rock
- 1000 large locust logs are available from somewhere in the Smokies (Oconaluftee)
- Two examples to consider are Bear Mountain, NY and Craggy Gardens on Blue Ridge Parkway, NC
- A loop trail on NC side is favorable while not so much on the TN side
- Good hike and good discussions.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 7/1/2023

Purpose: Roan VUM - Data collection at Carvers Gap

Location: Section 14d, Carvers Gap

People: Tim Stewart

Summary: Data collection seems to be important for the Roan Highlands VUM. I decided to hang out at Carvers Gap to observe how many hikers, including backpackers and dayhikers, chose this as their hiking destination during the 4th of July holiday weekend. It was busy, but not as busy as I thought it would be.

Some observations:

- 318 dayhikers (305 hiked North)
- 73 backpackers
- 43 dogs
- at 11:30 the parking lots were full with 60 cars
- Mountain Harbour made 5 trips and dropped off at least 15



At the end of the day, I hiked up to Cloudland and spent the night. In the morning, back at the Gap, there were 27 cars.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 7/1/2023

Purpose: Yearly trimming

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

People: Adam Bean, Jeff Miller, Ed Brading, Yong Li, Jim Foster

Summary: We trimmed my entire section and removed several blowdowns, including one which was quite large. We used handsaws on the blowdowns, so yes, it was a workout. It was a beautiful day and my section is looking good.

Reporting: Jim McGuire

Date: 7/2/2023

Purpose: General Trail Maintenance

Location: Section 15c, Hughes Gap to Ash Gap

People: Jim McGuire

Summary: I picked up a string trimmer from Carl's house and departed for Hughes Gap. I started cutting weeds about 10:00 (it was already hot). I cut down weeds on the uphill side of the trail. I made it to Ash Gap, but not down to the water source. I was too tired to do it safely. There were 3 small-to-medium sized blowdowns which I did not clear. They are easy to step over. I'll go back in a couple weeks to clear those blowdowns. Shew-doggies... cutting weeds with the string trimmer up the side of Roan Mountain is hard work! But everyone I encountered expressed their appreciation, which made it worthwhile. There were a lot of people on trail; I estimate around 30.

Reporting: Ken Murray

Date: 7/2/2023

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

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

People: Ken Murray, Van Hovey

Summary: We removed 5 blowdowns and dismantled one new fire ring.

Reporting: Jennifer Baird

Date: 7/3/2023

Purpose: Inspect and maintain trail

Location: Section 9b, Hampton trailhead to Pond Flats

People: Jennifer Baird

Summary: I started early, cutting back vegetation with hand tools as the rain set in. There were only two vehicles in the parking lot. As the morning went along, the rain stopped and by the time I left, 60 people (of which most thanked me for the trail work) had started their trek to the waterfall. I still have some weed eating to do. The 5th USFS post (where the trail gets close to the creek) is out of the ground. I will return with enough concrete to secure the post in the ground. I removed a bag of trash and also saw one NOBO through hiker from Maine.

Reporting: Richard L Ramsey

Date: 7/4/2023

Purpose: Trim weeds at Doll Flats

Location: Section 14a, Doll Flats

People: Richard Ramsey, Nancy Mick

Summary: I might not be able to access Doll Flats from Little Elk Road anymore. The landowner has re-cut the road to access their home just past the gate. I was planning on carrying in the string trimmer and whacking the trail through the field this morning. However with access closed off, we ended up hiking in from US 19E. I elected to carry in only the electric hedge trimmers and my Silky saw. I was able to hedge trim the field at Doll Flats and the campsite fairly well. Luckily, there was no trash at Doll Flats.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 7/6/2023

Purpose: Rehab trail and repair bridge

Location: Section 12d, US 19E to bottom of Bishop Hollow

People: Brandon Birchfield, Caden Birchfield, Connor Birchfield, Carl Fritz, Jeff Hatling, Joe Morris, Bill Murdoch, Kevin Sedgwick

Summary: Brandon, Connor, and Caden were first-time trail maintainers and received patches. They joined Kevin and Jeff in digging 400 feet of trail to rehab above Bear Branch Bridge. They also installed four rock steps and five new water diversions. Bill, Joe, and Carl spent the day replacing two 5-foot bottom 6x6 on deadman at each end of Bear Branch Bridge. These were deteriorating but probably could have lasted several years. We chose to replace so we would not have to keep track in ensuing years.



Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 7/6/2023

Purpose: Variety of tasks

Location: Section 10, Hampton trailhead to Dennis Cove Road, Bridges in the Gorge

People: Greg Kramer, Van Hovey, Dan Firth, Tim Stewart, Dick Martindale

Summary: We worked on the bridges in Laurel Fork Gorge. This is the result of a bridge inspection earlier this year. Coming in from Hampton, the first bridge needed hardware replacement for any component that didn't have a washer; washers were added. The other observation was that organic debris had built up between the lawn timbers used as bridge decking. We used a special tool developed by Carl on this bridge. We moved all leftover lawn timbers stored under the bridge and moved them north. Van and Dick went to Koonford Bridge and removed a log lodged between the piers and picked up trash. The next bridge needed two angle braces replaced and one needed a new timber. We had timbers and were able to replace one easily. The broken timber had to be removed by sliding the timber out. We used this as a model for making the replacement, but had to loosen timbers to slide it back into place. Dean Baird came to help us after he finished maintenance on his section. We got the bridge secured and we went to remove the debris from the timbers. This turned out to be more difficult than the first and a larger variety of tools were used. We went back to the cars. Tim and I went to Shook Branch to install a post.

Reporting: Dean Baird

Date: 7/6/2023

Purpose: Cut encroaching vegetation

Location: Section 9b, Pond Flats to Hampton Blue-Blaze, Old Laurel Fork railroad grade

People: Dean Baird

Summary: I trimmed doghobble, poison ivy, grapevine, and multiple other flora non grata from the railroad grade on South Pond.

Reporting: Dean Baird

Date: 7/6/2023

Purpose: Work on bridge

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

People: Dean Baird

Summary: After working on the Hampton Blue Blaze and South Pond, I joined a portion of the Thursday crew to help replace damaged wood and clean between wooden treads on the bridge closer to the falls.

Reporting: Tony Messina

Date: 7/6/2023

Purpose: Blowdowns

Location: Section 12c, 1.4 miles north of Campbell Hollow Rd

People: Tony Messina, Renee Messina, Elzear Lemieux

Summary: We had an interesting day clearing a blowdown near Campbell Hollow Road. The blowdown was a double trunk with other debris, and the trunks turned out to be much larger than anticipated. One was about 24" in diameter and the other about 20". We carried in the 16" DeWalt saw and it was a bit overmatched. We removed the smaller trunk, but were unable to remove the larger one before all three batteries were expended. All the cuts were made, but the resulting log was too large to move due to the rootball geometry. We hiked back out. Renee then got an O26 Still chainsaw in Johnson City, where we met her about lunchtime. We returned to the trail and removed the second larger log. Afterwards we traveled to remove another blowdown on Elzear's section near Watauga Lake (see next report.) The trail section north of Campbell Hollow is a bit overgrown. We lopped quite a bit of the worst brush overhanging the trail, but another pass with a string trimmer or at least a swingblade is recommended. Some rehab of rooty sections would also be worthwhile for the Thursday crew sometime, though not critical. We only saw one local hiker walking his dog on the trail.

Reporting: Tony Messina

Date: 7/6/2023

Purpose: Remove blowdown

Location: Section 8, Wilbur Dam Road to US 321, 1.4 miles north of Oliver Hollow Rd

People: Tony Messina, Elzear Lemieux

Summary: After our earlier work near Campbell Hollow Rd, we drove over to Watuaga Lake and hiked north from Oliver Hollow Road to remove a small blowdown. It was only about 10" in diameter and about shin high. EZPZ. There is a long term camp set up about 0.4 miles from Oliver Hollow Road. Elzear reports it has been there at least three weeks. It may be a homeless encampment or perhaps some long term lake people. It consists of about five tents connected by overhead tarps. We saw several local hikers, but only one true A.T. hiker, a SOBO section hiker.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 7/7/2023

Purpose: Roan VUM - Round Bald site visit

Location: Section 14d, Carvers Gap to Round Bald

People: Tim Stewart, Carl Fritz

Summary: Carl and I were joined by Jerry Kyle, Brandon Church, and Luke Mason for another site visit to Round Bald. More great discussions. Within the several different zones on Round Bald, different techniques may work including gravel box steps, turnpikes, side logs, and pavers with split rail fencing in appropriate areas. Revegetation of rhodos, blueberries, blackberries, etc might also be considered in lieu of fencing. A test area near Hamburger Rock has been agreed upon. Additional site visits with knowledgeable TEHCC members and USFS personnel (when available) will be necessary to determine logistics and to prepare a plan. A temporary, short term solution was also discussed using rope barriers to keep hikers on the trail.

Reporting: Dean Baird

Date: 7/7/2023

Purpose: Inspect and maintain trail, Re-set trail marking post

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

People: Dean Baird

Summary: I reset the USFS sign post that is located where the unofficial "upper trail" rejoins the HBB trail beside the creek. I used concrete and "dry-set" the post with extensive tamping after re-digging the hole. I then placed multiple rocks around the base of the post.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 7/8/2023

Purpose: 2nd Saturday Hiking with Tools!

Location: Section 5, TN 91 to Iron Mountain Shelter, Cross Mountain Rd

People: Tim Stewart, Rebecca Powell, Tracy Harris

Summary: Another successful Hiking with Tools! outing, although not as many volunteers as the last couple. We met at Cross Mountain Road and hiked south on the A.T. Lopping rhododendrons was the task for the day. We made it to the short, steep section before returning to the vehicles where I issued one patch to Tracy. Greg Kramer also participated, but said he will report separately. He did some weed whacking.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 7/8/2023

Purpose: Cut weeds

Location: Section 5, TN 91 to Iron Mountain Shelter, Midway in section

People: Greg Kramer

Summary: I hiked in via the old A.T. and whacked weeds south, almost to Uncle Nick's.

Reporting: Lori Mirrer

Date: 7/8/2023

Purpose: Repaint blazes; general maintenance

Location: Section 15b, Cloudland to Ash Gap

People: Lori Mirrer

Summary: The main work this trip was repainting the white blazes in both directions. I used a swing blade on sections of trail where ferns and other plant life were encroaching. There are a few branches to trim back. There was one tree down, mile 377.3 (about a quarter-mile north of Ash Gap). Hikers can get over it ok (see pic). Though it probably wouldn't hurt to use a chainsaw and get it off the trail. The water diversions looked fine; I'm not sure how much rain the section has gotten of late. The only muddy spot of note was down toward the southern end of Ash Gap (mile 377.0). It's a totally level spot, so I don't know how to divert water from it. I didn't see a speck of trash; even the fire rings looked decent. I saw a handful of section hikers and day hikers. I was halfway back to Cloudland, painting the



northbound blazes, when an unleashed dog came running up and was barking at me. I jumped up on the bank, wondering what the hell I was going to do if the dog actually wanted to cause me harm; I was 'armed' with a paintbrush, a scraper, and a small jar of white paint. The dog owner must have heard me scream, because she eventually got the dog back to her and on a leash. Once she caught up to where I was, I begged her to keep her dog on the leash. She announced she would not. It was "The Appalachian Trail," she said several times, as if that was an excuse for her not keeping her pet under control. I wish I could've gotten a picture of the woman and the dog and collected information but, honestly, I was freaked out. She and the dog continued north (I'm sure she removed the leash as soon as they were out of sight). Once I had sufficiently calmed down, I resumed painting blazes up to Cloudland.

Reporting: Jake Mitchell

Date: 7/8/2023

Purpose: Weed and mow

Location: Section 14b, Overmountain Shelter, Blue Blaze, and A.T. towards Stan Murray Shelter

People: Jake Mitchell

Summary: I trimmed along the blue-blaze trail and several hundred yards up the A.T. towards Stan Murray. I wanted to stay close to the barn because of approaching storms. I mowed the field at the barn. There were several weekend warriors out, but no trash at barn. The privy is in good shape and water is flowing significantly at the pipe. The gravel road a few hundred yards above the FS gate has considerable rutting from runoff. It was no problem for the 'yota but needs attention.

Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 7/8/2023

Purpose: Remove bkwdown

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

People: Van Hovey, Carrie Hovey

Summary: Van cut a small blowdown about a mile in, and Carrie did some lopping on the way in and out.

Reporting: Joel Zabel

Date: 7/8/2023

Purpose: Summer Maintenance

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to FS 230 switchback

People: Yong Li, James Foster, Ed Brading, Adam Bean, Denny Samuel, Marianne Huff, Jeff Miller, Josh Banks, Joy Zabel, Joel Zabel

Summary: We weed whacked the entire section. We also cut back rhodos and other bushes with loppers and the Dewalt lithium hedge trimmer. We cleared water bars and removed six blowdowns with handsaws (largest 9"). At Cherry Gap Shelter, we checked the water source (great flow), and collected and carried out trash.

Reporting: Jeffrey A. Hatling

Date: 7/9/2023

Purpose: Inspect trail

Location: Section 14c, Yellow Mountain Gap to Stan Murray Shelter

People: Jeff Hatling, Eric Whitsel

Summary: We walked the section and cut back small beech tree branches and other vegetation. We also inspected the shelter and spring. We picked up some trash around the shelter, and packed in a plastic box for the log book, plus new pens. The new graffiti board looked great.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 7/10/2023

Purpose: Cut back encroaching vegetation on trail

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

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: Starting from Iron Mountain Gap I took out some stinging nettles on the way to Apple Orchard, which was my destination knowing it would be grown up the most. I arrived at the orchard and started from the top and worked my way about 2/3 of the way down the orchard removing a lot of vine that loves to try to take over the trail. I also removed much plantain, tall grass, and other weeds leaning in on the trail. I worked in the orchard until the sun started going down, then returned to try to cut back the worst of the vegetation encroaching the trail on the return trip to Iron Mountain Gap trailhead. I will return the next day to finish the job and continue on toward the pinnacle of rocks on top. Another surprising observation: When I got back to the trailhead, I heard a large tree come down on the west side of the highway. That makes two times in a row that a large tree has fallen when I got back to the trail head. I will try to remember to inspect the area around the trailhead for trees capable of falling on cars.

Reporting: Phyllis Cairnes

Date: 7/10/2023

Purpose: Maintain shelter

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

People: Rolla Wade, Phyllis Cairnes

Summary: Not wanting to hike 10 miles on a July day, we drove up the rugged McQueen's Gap Rd and parked at the gap. Arriving at Abingdon Gap shelter, I first noticed several lighted votive candles (battery-powered) on top of the cinder block walls, creating shelter ambiance? Curious. I put the first coat of Kilz on the graffiti board, then we did the usual tasks while it dried. We cleaned the gutter, shoveled the fire ring, dismantled a nearby fire ring, picked up trash, and placed a new shelter log. After the 2nd coat of Kilz, we walked north for a mile while it dried. A third coat left the board looking quite clean. We noticed numerous plops of bear scat on the trail. They definitely like that area.

Reporting: Bettye Boone

Date: 7/11/2023

Purpose: Remove summer vegetation

Location: Section 14d, Grassy Ridge Spur Trail (Jane Bald to Grassy Ridge)

People: Bettye Boone, Saylor Fox

Summary: We cut back encroaching vegetation on the Grassy Ridge Spur Trail prior to the SAHC Grassy Ridge Mow-Off.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 7/11/2023

Purpose: Cut hazard tree

Location: Section 16a, Hughes Gap parking lot

People: Carl Fritz, Tim Stewart

Summary: Marlene had reported a hazard tree in Hughes Gap parking lot recently. Several had inspected it. Brandon and his crew of three, plus Tim and I tackled it this afternoon. A new vehicle was parked right at the tree, but fortunately the hiker came back to move it. The tree was a 46" dbh living oak. One 18" vertical limb had split the tree to the ground on one side. We were able to get a tow strap 30 feet up that limb and hooked a two-ton griphoist to it. With limited cutting we were able to pull that piece over. It was within weeks of falling across the lot. The main part of tree was then visibly bad. All its limbs were heavily across the road. So that was where it fell after being notched and back cut some. It probably only had months or a heavy snow before it would have come down. We had three 25-inch saws running, trying to get the road opened. The entire road is open. Brandon will bring a tractor to move some of the bigger stuff further into woods. There is a lot of firewood available.

Reporting: Kevin Sedgwick

Date: 7/11/2023

Purpose: Paint blazes

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

People: Kevin Sedgwick, Gloria Sedgwick

Summary: We painted blazes and cut back vegetation. Gloria helped shuttle and helped for a bit before leaving. It looked like an ATV went through Bishop Hollow. It knocked rocks holding up a blazed locust post. I reset the post. It was a nice day to be out.



Reporting: Scotty Bowman

Date: 7/12/2023

Purpose: Maxim Healthcare Services Volunteer Day

Location: Section 7, Vandeventer Shelter to Wilbur Dam Rd, Switchbacks in the first mile

People: Scotty Bowman, Sarah Diaz, Cheyenne Campbell, Lainey James, Tonya Cantrell, Zack Caserta

Summary: I had 5 volunteers from Maxim Healthcare Services come out to spend time in the wilderness. We were able to cut back encroaching vegetation, brushed in shortcuts on a couple of switchbacks, and removed 5 small blowdowns along the switchbacks in the first mile. The participants had a great time and we are planning another volunteer day in August.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 7/12/2023

Purpose: Cut back encroaching vegetation

Location: Section 16b, Iron Mountain Gap toward the Apple Orchard

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: From Iron Mountain Gap, I proceeded up the trail toward my intended destination of the Apple Orchard to finish what I started two days before. However the weeds were just leaning in on the trail. I was hoping to leave as much jewel weed as possible to choke out stinging nettles, but now the jewel weed was getting out of hand, so it had to come down. I chopped weeds all the way to the top of the ridge before the trail descends to Apple Orchard. It is now in good shape. Beyond that, the trail will need more attention very soon, so I will return as soon as I can. There are a lot of clematis vines growing beside the trail. They grow fast and make chopping difficult. I don't remember as many as there are now last summer. It causes contact dermatitis, so one must try not to touch it.

Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 7/12/2023

Purpose: Replace graffiti board and clean Curley Maple Gap Shelter

Location: Section 19b, Curley Maple Gap Shelter to USA Raft

People: Van Hovey, Carrie Hovey

Summary: Our primary purpose was to replace the graffiti board and clean in and around Curley Maple Shelter. We ended up doing that and also lopping back rhodies and vegetation, cutting out small blowdowns, and refreshing the blazes back to USA Raft. It was a long day .

Reporting: Rick Lott

Date: 7/12/2023

Purpose: Clear blowdown and root ball

Location: Section 13, Approximately 1.4 miles trail south from US 19E trailhead

People: Rick Lott, Mike Watts, Kevin Sedgewick

Summary: We headed in with the main task being to clear the blowdown/root ball 1.4 miles trail south of the Hwy 19E trail head. We carried the new Massdam rope puller, thinking we might need it to pull the root ball off the trail. After cutting the trunk loose and one root off the downhill side of the root ball, we were able to use the titanium pry bar and some manpower to roll the root ball off the trail. On the way back, we cut another 8" blowdown that was about 2/3 the way across the trail and shin high. We also cut one or two rhodo leaners about head high. The rest of trail looked good. We ran across one trail runner and a few short distance hikers.

We got out early, so Kevin and I decided to check out the forest service gate situation going to Doll Flats up Little Elk Rd. The old path that goes past the white house on the right going to the gate was blocked. We back tracked and went up the new road that now goes to the gate. There is enough room there across from the gate to park one car or turn around and another spot for a car to park on the left side of the road past the gate. We saw a guy at the last house working an excavator and went down to chat with him. He is the new owner of the house, Ben Beam of Beam Construction in Roan Mtn. He is fixing the house up as a rental. He said if we could open the forest service gate for him in the future, he would grade the new road better into the Forest Service road to Doll Flats. Perhaps if we go to get the blowdown above Doll Flats or Richard goes back in the near future, we could give him a call a day or two before.

Reporting: Scotty Bowman

Date: 7/13/2023

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

Location: Section 7, Vandeventer Shelter to Wilbur Dam Rd, 1 mile north of Wilbur Dam Rd

People: Scotty Bowman

Summary: I hiked back in the day after the Maxim Healthcare Services volunteer day and removed a large blowdown at the top of the switchbacks. After that, I continued to repaint blazes and brush on the next 1/2 mile.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 7/13/2023

Purpose: Variety of tasks

Location: Section 14d, Stan Murray Shelter to Carvers Gap

People: Greg Kramer, Dick Martindale, Carl Fritz, Kevin Sedgwick, Van Hovey, Tim Stewart, Elzear Lemieux, Dan Firth, Tony Messina, Joe Morris

Summary: With help from the Forest Service, 12 steps were made on the trail down toward Stan Murray. Dan, Kevin, and Tony trimmed weeds along the trail down from Grassy Ridge. A FS intern stapled down the lathe on the Tennessee side of the bog bridges. The other side needs to be done. Dick, Van, Joe, and Greg cleaned 61 waterbars. A small amount of trail (60 ft) was rehabbed while cleaning the waterbars. It was a very wet day.

Reporting: Steve Perri

Date: 7/13/2023

Purpose: Attend Appalachian National Scenic Trail (ANST) Workshop

Location: Kingsport

People: Steve Perri

Summary: I participated in 2 half-day and an upfront survey of the ANST workshop as a maintaining club and RPC representative. The purpose of the workshop was to review the A.T. Comprehensive Management Plan with ATC, NPS, USFS, and club representatives. The last time this document was reviewed was 1981. Changes were identified, removing outdated content and adding new content. Surprisingly, the Plan has stood the test of time since it wasn't too specific in some ways and is still relevant. This update will help partners in the conservancy access policy information and important background, as well as serve as a document to provide Congress with information that aids in understanding our mission and funding needs.

Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 7/16/2023

Purpose: Maintenance and construction

Location: Section 19b, Chestoa to USA Raft

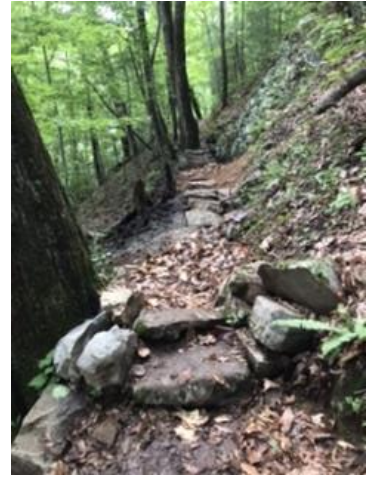
People: Van Hovey, Carrie Hovey, Peggy Cantrell, Mike Barroso

Summary: We set out with two primary objectives:

1) Cut back encroaching vegetation

2) Place stepping stones in a problematic wet area

Carrie and Peggy hiked in from Chestoa; Mike and Van hiked in from USA Raft and cut back what turned out to be minimal growth until reaching the aforementioned wet spot (about 1/3 of a mile). We succeeded in installing eight stepping stones of various sizes to cross the wet area. After whacking weeds and lopping about a mile of trail, Carrie and Peggy met up with us and helped with some of the final touches. They also found a couple of step-over blowdowns; so Van and Carrie went back with a chainsaw to take care of them. We walked the 1/4 mile from Chestoa to get the farthest one and, as luck would have it, the chainsaw would/could not start. Arrrrgh We walked back to car, retrieved the Katanaboy saw, and cut them out. Several hikers passed through; two of them were trail maintainers from South Carolina who helped us move one on the larger stones. Interesting day....



Reporting: Jake Mitchell

Date: 7/16/2023

Purpose: Report maintenance needs

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

Summary: I hiked Beauty Spot to Unaka summit and back in prep for the ATC hike in a couple weeks. The trail under canopy is generally in very good shape, save a couple small wet spots. Beauty Spot itself and the other open area about a half-mile trail north by the road is very overgrown. It could easily be cleared with a trimmer in a short period of time. It would be great if this could be done prior to the ATC hike on August 5.

Reporting: Scott Huskey

Date: 7/17/2023

Purpose: Trail Maintenance – Cut weeds

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

People: Scott Huskey

Summary: I cut weeds along the section of the A.T. that parallels the Elk River, roughly 650 yards of trail. Also, I dismantled the campsite, which I described in my last report -- a one-man tent, tarp and fire ring. Additionally, I cut weeds and pruned on the access trail from where I parked to the A.T. Note: There is a large yellowjacket nest inside the metal tubing of the Forest Service access gate at Elk River Falls. I found out the hard way.

Reporting: Rick Lott

Date: 7/18/2023

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 15c, Ash Gap to Hughes Gap

People: Rick Lott, Kevin Sedgewick

Summary: One car was spotted at Hughes Gap, then we drove to the Cloudland parking area. The access trail from Cloudland to the A.T. definitely needs weed trimming. It's very grassy and grown over. Kevin and I might try to take string trimmers up there next week. We cut one 10" blowdown just to the north of Ash Gap (mile 377.3). The trail was in pretty good shape. There are just 1 or 2 short sections that could use weed trimming in a few weeks. We encountered two hazard leaning trees that we thought might need rigging and more time to tackle. One was at mile 378.1 and the second was at 377.9. I will send pictures to the maintenance coordinators. We found another 12" dead hazard tree at mile 375.9 south of Beartown Mtn that was leaning towards a campsite, and dropped it. We found another 16" dead hung-up leaning tree at mile 375.7. The tree was leaning away from the trail, but if it falls with the root ball, it will pull up a big chunk of the trail. We also deemed this one too time consuming and complicated to tackle without rigging. We found another 14" blowdown at mile 375.5 and dispatched with it. And found another 6" blowdown at mile 375.0. At mile 374.8, we found a 6" hung-up leaner that went from the right side of the trail and hung above the switchback on trail below. We block cut it at chest height; it dislodged and fell to the ground. We cut another 5" blowdown at mile 374.7, and another 8" blowdown at mile 374.4. A fair amount of nettle growth is starting to encroach the trail from Ash Gap to Hughes Gap. The trail was still passable, but probably could use one more weed trimming in a few weeks. We ran across 4 northbound section hikers from Michigan who were out for a week. And we ran across another section hiker at Hughes Gap from Weaverville, also section hiking a few days across the balds.

Reporting: Steve Perri

Date: 7/22/2023

Purpose: Cut Weeds and overgrowth

Location: Section 3, McQueen's Gap to US421

People: Steve Perri, Steve Wilson

Summary: Steve and I hiked in from US 421 to the Spring and back. We picked up trash at the parking area, then cut weeds in and out. We asked one hiker to scout blowdowns and he sent a photo, for a 14-16 inch blowdown about 1.25 mile north of Abingdon Gap Shelter. We found a trail has been cut intersecting with the A.T. about one mile in, painted with orange dots on the trees downhill towards Shady Valley (see pic). It might be USFS access for a future prescribed burn. The spring was running slow, but water was available. Steve cut a lot of tree limbs; weeds were cut back with psytches. We saw 6 trail runners, one overnight hiker and 4 other day hikers. There was plenty sign of bear scat. One hiker noted seeing 3 bears the day before south of US 421. We heard many hikers were hiking from TN 91 to the Grindstaff monument, as it was the 100th anniversary of Nick Grindstaff's death. I'm glad we were able to fix the monument within the last year.

Reporting: J.C. Old Timers Hiking Club

Date: 7/24/2023

Purpose: Cut weeds, again

Location: Section 18, Beauty Spot Gap (Sugar Maple Tree), Meadow only

People: Pat Kenney, Willie Tyree, Kurt Saxsma, Tim Richarson, Dave Polon, Rich Ritter

Summary: It was reported to me that Beauty Spot Gap (Sugar Maple tree) was overgrown. Mountain rains have caused amazing growth, especially in the meadows. Weeds were cut to the ground on May 30 and were waist-to-shoulder high by July 24! We cut weeds in the meadow, treeline-to- treeline and 100 yards in the open area at Beauty Spot. Now our 5-mile section is hike worthy.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 7/24/2023

Purpose: Remove encroaching vegetation

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

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I started from Iron Mountain Gap and repeated vegetation removal from the same area as 2 weeks prior, plus finished clearing the orchard. The area from Iron Mountain Gap to the top of the ridge had grown about 2 feet in the 2 weeks since I was there last on July 10 and 12. Vines and poison ivy had grown as well. Clematis vines growing in the mass of weeds are really making the job hard due to getting tougher to chop with my weed whip. There are now almost no stinging nettles close to the trail, but I'm sure they will be back. I cleared from the top of the ridge to the apple orchard, which wasn't too bad but the orchard made up for it. The top half wasn't too bad since it was new growth, but the bottom half was tougher and taller. It made for a nice thick mulch on the trail. I ran out of steam before I cleared the path to the water source below the orchard. I'm hoping to get back soon to go beyond the orchard to the top of the first tall knob.



Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 7/24/2023

Purpose: Cut weeds and lop

Location: Section 19b, Curley Maple Gap Shelter

People: Van Hovey, Carrie Hovey

Summary: Primary purpose was to get a string trimmer to Curley Maple Shelter and cut the grass and other growth around the shelter. While there, we lopped back some more rhodies and picked up trash in and around the shelter (minimal). All in good shape!

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 7/24/2023

Purpose: Clean waterbars and do routine maintenance

Location: Section 16a, Hughes Gap to Little Rock Knob

People: Jim Foster

Summary: I finished cleaning the waterbars on the north end of the section. I had 3 blowdowns, two of which I was able to get with my little saw and rolled one into the trail. I couldn't move it, so I built trail around it. If I ever go out without a big saw again, I'll have my head examined.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 7/27/2023

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 16a, 2 miles south of Hughes Gap

People: Jim Foster

Summary: I went back with a larger saw and removed the blowdown that I couldn't get the last time out. I also cut back encroaching vegetation.



Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 7/27/2023

Purpose: Clean water bars

Location: Section 16b, Iron Mtn Gap to Weedy Gap

People: Jim Foster

Summary: I cleaned all the water diversions to just north of Weedy Gap.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 7/27/2023

Purpose: Variety of tasks

Location: Section 14d, Stan Murray Shelter to Carvers Gap

People: Van Hovey, Rick Mulholland, Bill Murdoch, Jim Foster, Greg Kramer, Tim Stewart

Summary: Van Hovey and a FS Trial Crew removed one blowdown, an elevated tangle, and eleven hazard trees south of Curley Maple Shelter. They also trimmed weeds at Jones Branch. Bill Murdoch completed stapling the wire mesh on the bog bridges at Round Bald. Rick Mulholland painted blazes from Stan Murray Shelter to Jane Bald and will return later to complete blazes to Carvers Gap. Greg and Tim went to find the new access to Doll Flats from Shell Creek. We found the gate posts that Matt Gilbert and David (owner of the land we cross) had made and walked up the trail. The trail was cleared by EMS recently because of an ATV accident near Doll Flats. We took pictures and noted places for Wright State. I'll load all of the GPS locations to make a map for when they come. Within a half mile of US 19E we encountered 5 blowdowns, up to 20" in diameter.



Shell Creek Gate Posts to Doll Flats



Blowdowns

Reporting: Dean Baird

Date: 7/27/2023

Purpose: Cut vegetation; inspect and maintain trail

Location: Section 9b, Hampton Blue-Blaze Trail (HBB)

People: Dean Baird, Jennifer Baird

Summary: The majority of this day involved working on vegetation. We trimmed grass, weeds, and other plant growth using string trimmers (non-Wilderness only), double swing blade, and hedge trimmers. We removed two bags of trash and a box of trash that had been strategically placed at the kiosk sign in the parking area. Someone had removed the USFS sign that identifies HBB as #501 and placed it beside the trail approximately 200 yards away. I placed the sign back in the hole. This should provide the opportunity for someone else (with nothing better to do) to also remove the sign and place it somewhere else. Otherwise, the trail condition is good. We saw several day hikers and two section hikers.