



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

September 2023

tehcc.org

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

In This Issue

[Letter from the Chair](#)

[TEHCC Fall Dinner Meeting, October 13, 2023](#)

[Event Schedule – Next Two Months](#)

[Details of Upcoming Events](#)

[TEHCC Welcomes New Members](#)

[For the Record](#)

[A.T. Maintenance Reports](#)



*Roaring Fork Creek Falls in October
See October 7th Hike Notice*

Letter from the Chair

Submitted by Josh Hayes (2023 Steering Committee Chair)

Hello friends,

As we enter September, the weather may start to turn cooler, so it is fitting that we talk about the sixth principle of **Leave No Trace: Minimize Campfire Impacts**. Campfires have been the cause of many horrific events and have also helped to advance civilization. Now that we are modern humans and no longer must rely solely on fire for food, heat, light, and safety, there may be better alternatives; however, if a fire is your method of choice, then please follow safe practices and minimize the impact.

Since fires can cause lasting impacts on an area, some alternatives may be carrying a portable camp stove and using a lantern or candle for light. Still yet, being capable of starting a fire is a sign of pride for an avid camper or survivalist, so here are a few ways to minimize your impact on the surroundings. Use established fire rings or pans if available and keep the fires small using wood that you have brought or sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand. If you do bring in your own wood, it is recommended that the wood be sourced within a 50-mile radius to reduce the risk of spreading an invasive species, and if you are gathering it, be sure to take it from a source that has a surplus so that its removal will not be noticeable. Never leave your fire unattended and ensure that you burn it to ash, then scatter the cooled ashes in a manner that will reduce the impact. Throwing dirt or water on a fire may not be enough to thoroughly extinguish it, so it should be observed for several minutes to ensure it does not reignite.

As the weather cools and fires are desired, first take stock of the situation and ask yourself about the restrictions of the area you are entering and ensure there are no active bans. Think about alternatives or where/how you will source your fuel. And finally ensure that you know the proper fire safety and are equipped to handle whatever issue may arise from it. In doing this, we will ensure that we are good stewards of the land we all share.

Thanks all,
Josh

[Back to Top](#)

TEHCC Fall Dinner Meeting, Friday, October 13, 2023

The speaker and largest city park in Tennessee are well known to the club. Thus Megan will share about the improvements in the city park regarding the Nature Center, animal habitats, and the third Saturday “Gorillas” trail crew.

The club also has some of the recently ordered TEHCC logo t-shirts! \$10 for short-sleeve EcoSmart 50/50 pre-shrunk poly/cotton blend and \$15 for the long-sleeve lightweight 100% moisture-wicking polyester. Maybe we have your size and favorite color.

Dinner is **\$12/person**, which includes the meal, beverages, dessert, and tip. Attending only the program is free. We need a paid headcount to properly size the food order. Please let Steering Committee Treasurer [Joseph Sengeh](#) know by **Monday, October 9**, if you plan to attend. Make checks payable to Joseph and mail to:

Eastman Chemical Company
200 South Wilcox Dr.
Building 162, Rm. 132, Attn. Joseph Sengeh
Kingsport, TN 37660

Event	Time	Details
Fall Dinner Meeting October 13, 2023	5:30 pm	Location: Eastman Lodge, Main Banquet Hall 404 Bays Mountain Road, Kingsport, TN
Happy “Trails” Hour	5:30 pm – 6:30 pm	Donations accepted for beer and wine, or BYOB
Dinner – Fajita bar, plus tea/lemonade/water, coffee, and dessert	6:30 pm – 7:15pm	Barberitos Beverages and dessert by the Steering Committee (\$12 per person)
Club Business	7:15 pm – 7:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Update of club activitiesATC Volunteer Awards
Program: Bays Mountain Park	7:30 pm – 9:00 pm	Megan Krager (Park Manager, Bays Mtn Park)

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
Sept 1 - 4	Hiwassee/Ocoee Paddle Weekend, Class I-II	Joe Phehlmann	
Sept 2	Hike: Warriors Path Overlook Trail and Duck Island, 9 am – 10:30 am	Erin Ekart	
Sept 9	Hiking with Tools! 9:30 am – 2 pm (also our club’s event for A.T. Give-A-Day and National Public Lands Day)	Tim Stewart	
Sept 9	Paddle: Lower Watauga, Class I-II (last of the season)	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
Sept 9	APE’s Nolichucky 1 st Timers River Trip, 3 pm – 11 pm	Wesley Bradley	423-647-1321
Sept 16	Hike: Laurel Fork Falls Trail, 10 am – 12:30 pm	Josh Hayes	270-585-5929
Sept 16	Bays Mountain Park Trail Maintenance, 9 am – 2 pm	Tony Messina	
Sept 21	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1 pm	Josh Hayes	270-585-5929
Oct 6 – 9	41 st Annual ALDHA Gathering (Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Assoc)	www.aldha.org	
Oct 7	Hiking with Tools! 9:30 am – 2 pm	Joe Morris	423-571-5201
Oct 7	Hike: Roaring Fork Creek Falls/Setrock Creek Falls, 8 am – 3 pm	Vic Hasler	423-416-3166
Oct 13	TEHCC Fall Dinner, 5:30 – 9 pm	Joseph Sengeh	
Oct 19	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1 pm	Josh Hayes	270-585-5929
Oct 21	Bays Mountain Park Trail Maintenance, 9 am – 2 pm	Tony Messina	
Oct 28	TEHCC Paddling Trip, TBD	Andy Steffan	919-928-4738

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! Usually the 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.

***Note change for October. In October, Hiking with Tools! will be led by Joe Morris on the first Saturday, October 7.**

Lower Watauga, Class I-II, Alternate Saturdays, During the Summer, 3 pm

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

***Note: The last session of the season is September 9, 2023.**

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 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

Warriors Path Overlook Trail and Duck Island, Saturday, September 2, 2023, 9:00 am – 10:30 am

Contact: [Erin Ekart](#)

Rating: *Easy*

Location: *Warriors Path, 1425 Freeman Road, Blountville, TN 37617*

This will be a leisurely walk of the Warriors Path Overlook Trail, then to Duck Island as desired. We will meet at the parking area by the soccer fields. This is a great hike for families and those who just want to take things slower and easier.

Laurel Fork Falls Trail, Saturday, September 16, 2023, 10:00 am – 12:30 pm

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

Rating: Moderate difficulty at ~4.6 miles, 650' elevation gain

Location: [Laurel Falls Trailhead](#)

This hike is of moderate difficulty at ~4.6 miles and only 650' elevation gain. It's expected to take 2.5 hours for this out-and-back hike allowing for time to view the falls.

This is a popular location, so we may encounter other hikers and dogs. Dogs are welcome on a leash. There is an unbridged creek crossing. Feel free to bring some food for when we stop at the falls. Water and snacks are recommended.

Roaring Fork Creek Falls/Setrock Creek Falls, Saturday, October 7, 2023, 8:00 am – 3:00 pm

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

Rating: Pair of easy 1.0 – 1.5 mile in-out hikes, each with less than 120' elevation change

Start: 8:00 am from Ingles in Colonial Heights. Back: 3:00 pm

Let's explore two waterfalls near each other in North Carolina east of Mt. Mitchell. Fall color should be at its peak, but the water flow might be less if we've had a dry spell.

Roaring Creek Falls is a long cascade dropping about 50'. It is reached on USFS Trail #195, a short 2/3 mile hike on an old Forest Service road. My ulterior motive is to find GC15F, the oldest traditional geocache in North Carolina hidden in January 2001.

Then roughly a ten-minute drive away, **Setrock Creek Falls** is a 75' tiered cascade reached on USFS Trail #197, which is a 0.5-mile gravel path. We'll have lunch at the falls.

Let's leave the Colonial Heights Ingles parking lot by 8:00 am (sunrise is 7:30 am) for just under a two-hour drive. Expected return time is mid-afternoon around 3:00 pm. Please call/text/e-mail the hike leader to know headcount or if last minute changes.

TEHCC-Led Paddling Trip, Saturday, October 28, 2023

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

Location: TDB

TEHCC will transport our six kayaks and canoe to the put-in location. All you need to do is sign up on at [tehcc.org](#), bring water, and get ready for a fun day on the water. Lake/river location and times are TBD; and will be updated by the October newsletter but will be flat or very mild moving water. If you have a boat and would like to bring it, the more the merrier; just let me know in the sign-up form and please be sure to bring appropriate gear, including PFD! Inexperienced or first-time paddlers welcome!

TEHCC Welcomes New Members

Carla Cardona
Jennifer Mize
Noha Zayan

Makayla Cody
Kishan Patel

Stella Haley
Andrew Thomas

For the Record

2023 A.T. Vista/Wild & Free, August 4 – 7, 2023



Vic Hasler and Steve Perri reporting

The August 4-7 event was the first such gathering after the 2017 Biennial in Maine, when the change was announced in the model for annual ATC meetings to shorter long-weekend festivals. Unfortunately, the COVID pandemic overran the plans of the NY/NJ Trail Conference to host the first A.T. Vista. So, the transition fell to Johnson City, led by Northeast Tennessee Tourism Association (NETTA), Visit JC, ETSU, and TEHCC. Other organizations supporting the event included hikes led by members of MRATC, CMC, and Old Timers Hiking Club, to name a few. Overall, the first A.T. Vista was one-quarter the size of the last A.T. Biennial in terms of the number of registrants, volunteers, and hikes, and just over half the number

of days. Some photos can be found on [Facebook/A.T.VistaConference](#) page.

The location for the 2025 A.T. Vista has not yet been selected, so stay tuned.

[Back to Top](#)

A.T. Hughes Gap to Little Rock Knob, August 26, 2023



Josh Hayes reporting

We started the hike at 10:15 to give the other attendees time to make it. When they didn't show, we made the decision to press onward. The weather was a balmy 76° with a nice breeze. The hike overall was a mild incline up to the overlook at roughly 2.4 miles. We decided to push on another 1.5 miles to go to the Clyde Smith shelter and water pipe. Unfortunately, the 3.9-mile trek back was slow and problematic due to me eating a bad Subway sandwich before the hike and getting sick at the shelter. I had allotted 3 hours to complete the hike but due to the additional mileage and sickness it took close to 5 hours. An unfortunate turn of events as this was Will Barbano's first hike with the club, but he took everything in stride!

Attendees were Josh Hayes and first-time hiker, Will Barbano.



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 6/29, 7/6, and 7/13/2023

Purpose: Cut vegetation and remove small limbs

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

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed mowed sections of the trailside south of Low Gap. He removed sticks and limbs. He also removed small trees and vegetation obscuring trail blazes.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 7/5/2023

Purpose: Spread gravel on accessible trail

Location: Section 4b, USFS parking lot and accessible trail at TN 91

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed trimmed trees around the USFS parking lot. He helped Brandon Church and two others spread gravel on more than 700 feet of the accessible trail.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 7/12/2023

Purpose: Repair gate hinge

Location: Section 4b, TN 91 Accessible Trail

People: Ed Speer, Terry Estep

Summary: Ed and Terry replaced the top hinge pin of the second gate on the accessible trail. This enabled the gate to be adjusted both horizontally and vertically. After adjustment, the gate now latches easily and securely. Thanks to Terry Estep for his advice and assistance.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 7/20 and 7/21/2023

[Back to Top](#)

Purpose: Cut weeds

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

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed continued to cut vegetation. He removed two small blowdowns on July 20th. On the 21st he removed an 8-inch dead oak blowdown one mile south of Low Gap.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 7/26/2023

Purpose: Cut weeds

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

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed continued cutting vegetation along the trail.

Reporting: Steve Perri

Date: 7/29/2023

Purpose: Cut weeds and overgrowth

Location: Section 3, McQueen's Gap to halfway to US 421

People: Steve Perri

Summary: I drove in to McQueen's Gap to finish off cutting weeds between McQueen's Gap and the spring halfway to US 421. I encountered a 10-inch white oak blowdown on McQueen's Gap Rd about one mile in. A local guy following me up the road helped me cut it out and roll the log off the road. I cleaned out the waterbars with my boots and cut the weeds with the scythe. The shelter condition was fine. It looks like someone may have cut a wide swath of the weeds, maybe in June, to the top of McQueen's Knob, so that part was easy. The rest was pretty overgrown. I recommend cutting them in June instead of July. I saw only 2 thru-hikers all day. The one SOBO mentioned there was a timber rattler about an hour north of Abingdon Gap Shelter. The NOBO mentioned seeing 4 bears south of Double Springs Shelter. On the way home, I stopped at Cross Mountain and installed 2 mileage signs at TN 91. I got caught in a traffic jam on the way to Elizabethton due to a motorcycle accident. No one was hurt, but 2 bikes were damaged. Fortunately, no one appeared to be injured, but the Harley's were taken out on flatbeds.

Reporting: Jake Mitchell

Date: 7/29/2023

Purpose: Weed and mow

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

People: Jake Mitchell

Summary: I trimmed weeds on the eastern side of the trail from Yellow Mountain Gap almost to Little Hump summit. I turned around and made it most of the way back before I ran out of gas (four tanks); both literally and figuratively. I mowed the field at the barn. There were no blowdowns all the way to 19E as reported by a trail runner. There are two decent-sized wet spots on the thin ridge beyond the climb out of Yellow Mountain Gap; need to consider some sort of water diversion. The gravel road has been somewhat improved by the county, smoothing out rough sections just after the paved road and the roughest section in the middle. It is good timing; before hikes for the A.T. conference.

Reporting: Jeff Hatling

Date: 8/1/2023

Purpose: Trim weeds

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

People: Jeff Hatling

Summary: I used a string trimmer to cut back encroaching vegetation. When the trail was on a steep hillside, I only cut on the upper side to encourage hikers to keep to the upper side, thus helping to prevent the trail from sloping off the downhill side. The tall wildflowers were at their peak. I cut around most of the wildflowers. I put a blade on my trimmer to cut back Canadian Blackberries on a 100-yard trail section that traverses an old bald.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 8/1/2023

Purpose: Check trail for blowdowns and encroaching vegetation

Location: Section 16b, Iron Mountain Gap to 2.5 miles north

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: From Iron Mountain Gap, I checked for encroaching vegetation, especially stinging nettles. My destination was the first tall knob, elevation 4300 feet, and just beyond due to a hiker report that encroaching vegetation was on the trail. I touched up the trail to the reported dense area. The hiker was mistaken, as the trail was acceptable except for added growth of the last three weeks. He apparently meant the west side of the knob toward Iron Mountain Gap, which had grown up quite a bit, but now is clear due to my trusty grass whip. On the way to inspect the far side of the mountain, I ran into a



very recent blowdown that I felt was dangerous for hikers due to it being a hanging tree top. I had just talked with a hiker who didn't mention it when I asked how the trail was. So I cut branches away allowing it to fall toward the trunk and away from the trail. I'm glad I had my big 8-inch folding saw with me. The trail should now be acceptable from Greasy Creek Gap to Iron Mountain Gap.

Reporting: Rick Lott

Date: 8/2/2023

Purpose: Cut recent blowdowns from last Saturday-night storm

Location: Section 13, US 19E to Doll Flats, Approximately 1/4 mile south from US 19E trailhead

People: Rick Lott, Kevin Sedgewick

Summary: Greg Kramer had discovered 5 new blowdowns about 1/2 mile south of the US 19E trailhead. These most likely came down with the Saturday night storm, as this section had been clear a few weeks ago. The original plan was to take care of these when the trail rehab crew went in on August 3. With the weather forecast not looking very good for that day and with an A.T. Vista hike scheduled on this section on Saturday, we thought it better to use the good weather on this day to tackle the blowdowns. Since Sedgewick's move to Florida had been delayed a week, he graciously consented to one more maintenance trip at literally the last minute. We drove down from Beech Mtn and were pleasantly surprised to find the blowdowns just a few minutes hike from the trailhead; probably 1/4 mile. An 18" double trunk tree had uprooted and taken another similar-sized tree with it, and had clipped a 16" limb off another tree on the way down. Two other 6" limbs had fallen across the trail as well. It took about 4 cuts for each of the big trees to cut manageably-sized logs that could be rolled. We had to dig out under a few logs to get a clean chainsaw cut above the dirt. Other than encountering some unexpected side bind on two of the trees, all the cutting was pretty routine. We also trimmed back weeds about 100 yards in from the trailhead to give a good first impression for the A.T. Vista hike folks.

Reporting: Kevin Sedgewick

Date: 8/4/2023

Purpose: Final walk thru

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

People: Kevin Sedgewick, Gloria Sedgewick

Summary: Final Patrol! Its been a honor and special privilege to have been involved with TEHCC. The men and women are very special and dedicated to the well-being of the trail. It's been so awesome to be a part of this group. The "can do" and "get it done" is awe inspiring. Thank you. Way back when I thru-hiked, I wanted to be involved in maintaining the A.T. It's been a dream come true. We will visit from time to time. You never know when I might pop up. Now back to the story.

It turned out to be a great day to be out after the 15+ hours of rain yesterday. I can tell it's been warmer and it's rained a lot. Vegetation has exploded in the few weeks since I last came through; looks like a jungle in a few spots. We did a lot of lopping. We found only a few small blowdowns and I could cut them with a handsaw. I can say the section is blowdown free. This guarantee is only good until we stepped off trail. We also cleaned a few waterbars. Gloria and I say "till we meet again." Kevin

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 8/5/2023

Purpose: Outing with Greg Ritson and A.T. Vista group

Location: Section 16b, Starting at Iron Mountain Gap for 1/4 mile to end of first ridge at left turn

People: Tom Sahlin, Greg Ritson, and 9 other participants from A.T. Vista program

Summary: We followed the group and participated in creating a rolling grade dip where the trail was creeping downhill. We removed roots and some vegetation, then leveled out the trail where cribbing was not allowing water to drain. This was per instructions from Greg Ritson who worked on the installation to show the group how it should be done to control water. Greg also introduced us to the rolling orange test, a way to determine where the water will flow (see 3rd pic). Other members of the group worked on an area above our work area to allow water to exit the trail. We ended our work at the stealth campsite where we dismantled a fire ring. I learned a lot. Greg is a very good instructor and jumped right in for hands-on instruction. A more detailed description is on the Facebook "Trail Maintainers" page.



Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 8/5/2023

Purpose: Remove blowdown

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

People: Van Hovey, Carrie Hovey

Summary: I received a report of a blowdown a short distance in from the Chestoa Trailhead. Carrie and I walked in, cut it up, and moved it off the trail. While we were there, we got after an overhead leaner and disposed of that as well. It was very short work.

Reporting: Yong Li

Date: 8/5/2023

Purpose: Remove blowdown

Location: Section 12c, Sugar Hollow Creek to Campbell Hollow Road, 0.3 mile north of Jones Falls

People: Yong Li, Jeff Bennett

Summary: Our club was hiking on this day. There was a blowdown (about 8 inches) on the trail that Jeff and I removed. It took much less than an hour, but that is the minimum I could enter.

Reporting: Richard L Ramsey

Date: 8/6/2023

Purpose: Cut weeds at Doll Flats

Location: Section 14a, Doll Flats

People: Richard Ramsey, Nancy Nick

Summary: We cut out a few blowdowns above Doll Flats and cut weeds at the Doll Flats field.

Reporting: Rick Lott

Date: 8/7/2023

Purpose: Exterminate ground hornet nest

Location: Section 13, US 19E Trailhead

People: Rick Lott

Summary: During the A.T. Vista hike to Hump Mtn, a hiker informed us of a hornet nest under a rock at the trailhead just where the trail starts. I sprayed hornet/wasp spray and then burned the nest with charcoal lighter fluid. I will check it the next time I'm down that way.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 8/7/2023

Purpose: 2023 A.T. Vista based out of ETSU

Location: Many different hikes along the A.T. from Damascus to Hot Springs, plus other trails

People: Vic Hasler

Summary: See the separate report about the overall 2023 A.T. Vista/Wild & Free in this newsletter. This maintenance summary is about my contribution in planning and executing the hike program, starting in earnest back in November 2021. Overall, roughly 180 out of the 265 registered participants took at least one of the 48 planned hikes (31 on the A.T. or some portion) over the four-day event, which filled 82% of the capacity. Sixty-one hike leaders were recruited, including those from MRATC and CMC plus other partner organizations. Many thanks to the club members who led hikes: Rheagan Sizemore, Mike Watts, Rick Lott, Tom Sahlin, Jake Mitchell, Scotty Bowman, Andy and Jackie Steffan, Steve Perri, John Beaudet, Jim Foster, Carl Fritz, and Tony and Renee Messina. Also, sincere appreciation for the praiseworthy maintenance, including last minute removal of blowdowns from the July storms and cutting fast-growing weeds. The compliments were not just that the path was clear, but also on the quality of the A.T. with desirable features to manage water and climbs. Insights were provided for the 2025 A.T. Vista; location to-be-determined.

Reporting: Steve Perri

Date: 8/8/2023

Purpose: A.T. VISTA planning and execution

Location: Johnson City

People: Steve Perri

Summary: Vic Hasler, Tim Stewart, and I worked in different capacities for the planning and operation of the A.T. VISTA 2023 held in Johnson City August 4-7. Thanks to Vic, we were able to offer a great portfolio of hikes with a range of options from easy to difficult. NHC, CMC, and MRHC made great contributions, leading hikes and with other on site volunteering. It was fun. We worked closely with "Visit Johnson City" and "Northeast Tennessee Tourism" to plan and operate the event. I did a locally televised community event interview the week before with Allie Bynum and got to meet the TV host Kelly Grosfield at WJHL. This was the first A.T. VISTA since COVID and was the first A.T. VISTA hosted by a community group. This definitely took us out of our comfort zone, as this has usually been coordinated by A.T. clubs who know the ins-and-outs of these activities. I think the scale of the event was more manageable than the former biennial conferences which had about 800 attendees. Those events ran 9 days and this one 4, so didn't require as many volunteers and planning hours. The 9-day conferences had many participants who were working on bagging thru-

hiker miles, and so the attendee objectives have changed over time. The other notable change is that the biennials attracted many non-ATC members, whereas the A.T. VISTA probably had more ATC members attending. Overall, I think it set some good precedent and is a good base case for future meetings.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 8/8/2023

Purpose: Roan VUM (Visitory Use Management), Round Bald site visit

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

People: Tim Stewart, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer

Summary: The trail counters have arrived and Monica Mogilewsky (part of Roan VUM) was visiting the area for A.T. Vista and meetings with other clubs. This was a good time to investigate possible locations for the trail counters near Carvers Gap and Jane Bald. We were also joined by Morgan Sommerville, Jennifer Barnhart, and Tara Wu. It was a bit rainy (and chilly), but not enough to dampen our hike. We discovered good locations for the trail counters: one south of Carvers, one north of Carvers, and one on Jane Bald. We also discovered that the blueberries were finally ripe; not all were ripe, but enough to enjoy! After lunch on Jane Bald (and more blueberries) we headed back to Carvers. More good discussions were had. It was a good day.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 8/9/2023

Purpose: Planning for making test sections on Round Bald for new trail building techniques

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

People: Greg Kramer, Bill Murdoch, Carl Fritz, Van Hovey, Tim Stewart, Bob Peoples

Summary: This was a meeting of the Implementation Team for the Roan Highlands Visitor Use Management group. Natalia Muglia for the Forest Service joined us to discuss how to fix the trail going over Round Bald. We discussed the pros and cons of different trail designs and planned where we would be putting in test sections. One topic we discussed was soil depth. We dug two test pits on the trail to see what was really there; one by the spruce tree before Hamburger Rock and the other under a high step heading east on the uphill grade before turning right where the trail is less steep. The top foot is pure humus. The second foot starts to show mineral soil toward the bottom. The second foot also has a lot of fragmented rocks and then bedrock. We mostly worked on where to put box steps. Natalia is an expert in their design. She suggested that the step-rise be no more than 6" but the box logs to be 3X and overlap joint. We sampled gravel that had survived well on the trail to see where we can purchase it locally. It was a fruitful day.



Round Bald soil pit

Reporting: Jeffrey A Hatling

Date: 8/9/2023

Purpose: Inspect conditions of waterbars

Location: Section 14b, Little Hump to Bradley Gap

People: Jeff Hatling

Summary: I cleaned out several waterbars/diversions south and north of Little Hump. I also cleaned out the spring located just south of Bradley Gap. South of Bradley Gap to the spring, the waterbars looked great.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 8/9/2023

Purpose: Check trail for encroaching vegetation and blowdowns

Location: Section 16b, Iron Mountain Gap to top of first ridge

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: This was a short outing to check the trail for blowdowns and to cut back encroaching vegetation. In just one week, the weeds found the sunshine on the trail and leaned in to soak it in, so I removed them. I also wanted to see how the work done 4 days earlier by the A.T. Vista group survived the rains. Most of it did well, but should do better as it is packed down by hiker traffic. Some was soft and I noticed hikers had slipped in a few soft areas. I intended to weed to the pipe spring in Apple Orchard, but rain came in sooner than I expected, so I returned to the trail head.

Reporting: Jim McGuire

Date: 8/12/2023

Purpose: General Trail Maintenance

Location: Section 15c, Hughes Gap to 2 miles north

People: Jim McGuire

Summary: I traveled to Hughes Gap to trim weeds. I arrived about 8:00 and trimmed 4 hours covering about 2 miles north from Hughes Gap. I saw no hikers. I plan to go back in two weeks to get the remaining section up to Ash Gap.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 8/12/2023

Purpose: Hiking with Tools!

Location: Section 11b, Canute Place to Bitter End, Hard Core Cascades

People: Tim Stewart, Jennifer Haverty, Rebecka Powell, Greg Wilson, Nicole Perez

Summary: Beware the wasps! This was another good "Hiking with Tools!" outing. We managed to lop rhodos and other encroaching vegetation. It was all going well until we disturbed a wasps nest which produced a few moments of excitement! A few stings were received. After giving the wasps a wide berth, we continued towards Hard Core Cascades where we had lunch. Despite the wasps the trail was in good condition. Once back at the trailhead, I passed out 2 patches.

Reporting: Lotta Murray

Date: 8/12/2023

Purpose: Check section for storm damage

Location: Section 20c, Spivey Gap to Chestoa

People: Ken Murray, Lotta Murray

Summary: We decided to check the entire section, Spivey Gap to Chestoa, since there have been some incredible storms and wind the last week or two. We removed several smaller blowdowns but left four blowdowns requiring chainsaws.

1. Basically where FS road 278 crosses the A.T., maple, 8-inch diameter, easy to get to and easy to get around.

The next three are on Vic's section.

2. A very large 3-foot diameter or more, maple, chest high, difficult to get around, have to crawl on hands and knees, essentially no rootball so might slide, 0.3 miles north of NBK Shelter. Possibly will need grip hoist and ropes and a crew to deal with.

3. Smallish locust 0.4 miles north of NBK Shelter.

4. Approximately one mile south from Temple Hill gap, 12-inch diameter.

Reporting: Ken Murray

Date: 8/14/2023

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 20b, 0.2 miles trail north of No Business Knob Shelter

People: Ken Murray, Brandon Church (USFS), Taylor Neigh (USFS)

Summary: We love to complain about how inefficient and bureaucratic our government is. Today the USFS responded to a report of a massive blowdown on the A.T. north of No Business Shelter within 36 hours of the report (see above). It was a very large, very difficult to access, and a very bound up blowdown. The USFS handled it safely and professionally. It was an honor to work with them.



Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 8/14/2023

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

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

People: Van Hovey, Mike Barroso

Summary: Two blowdowns were reported on the Jones Branch section between bridges 1 and 2; a 6" small stepover and a 14" about waist high. We walked in from the USA Raft trailhead approximately 0.6 mile, very short work, and walked out.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 8/16/2023

Purpose: Clear encroaching vegetation, remove sticks and branches

Location: Section 16b, From Iron Mountain Gap almost to the top of the first tallest knob on Iron Mountain

People: Tom Sahlin, Marlene Simpson

Summary: I started by myself from Iron Mountain Gap north toward Apple Orchard. In the first quarter of a mile, I cut weeds and new growth hanging over the trail blown over from the storm two days prior. I also checked new trail drainage work from prior week done by A.T. Vista crew and all of it was doing well with no wash outs. Then Marlene joined me and we proceeded to the Apple Orchard, moving sticks and branches off the trail as well as cutting weeds. At the orchard, we removed new growth from the path to the water source, which I had not been able to get to since May. It was almost grown over, but traffic to the spring had kept it barely open. I was getting tired, so Marlene took over with the grass whip and we traded places back and forth as we chopped tall weeds and night shade all the way to the spring, which was flowing the most I have ever seen it. After that we proceeded weeding north on the trail toward the first tall knob on Iron Mountain. We also removed branches to the last level spot below the tall knob. After pausing for a snack break, we turned around and made our way back to the trailhead arriving at 9:00 pm. We saw one hiker who was going to camp in the orchard, but no others. Great weather and wonderful companionship made for a great day.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 8/16/2023

Purpose: Remove blowdowns and whack weeds

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

People: Tim Stewart

Summary: I received a call from Brandon Church (USFS) inquiring about the access trail to Moreland Gap Shelter. Recent storms had produced numerous blowdowns in the Dennis Cove area and he wanted to scout out the section. Since I was planning on weed whacking the Canute Place soon, this was an opportune time to show him and Taylor the bushwhack route and to weedwhack.

After meeting at the Dennis Cove Trailhead, we carpooled to Bitter End and then the access point. Since I hadn't used the access in a few years it was a little overgrown, but we made it to the shelter. I noticed the graffiti board was broken at the bottom. Some overnight hikers informed us that there were approximately 30 blowdowns. We encountered and removed a few enroute to the Canute Place, including 3 on the long switchback. I did the weed whacking while Brandon and Taylor continued on, searching for more blowdowns. After finishing the Canute Place, I caught up to them and we continued to find blowdowns. Several were pretty bad entanglements. One was probably about a 150-foot mess, which included some deep rootball holes on the trail. Many more blowdowns were found, but after 3:00 it was decided to head down and formulate a plan for the next day with the Thursday regulars. From the trailhead, I drove home while Brandon and Taylor had to retrieve the other USFS truck. The plan was to return on Thursday and remove the remaining blowdowns.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 8/17/2023

Purpose: Clear blowdowns between Dennis Cove and Moreland Gap

Location: Section 11a, Dennis Cove Road to Canute Place

People: Greg Kramer, Bill Murdoch, Carl Fritz, Elzear Lemieux, Tim Stewart, Van Hovey, Tony Messina, Bob Peoples

Summary: A heavy windstorm came through the area on Monday the 14th. We went with three Forest Service people to clear blowdowns from Dennis Cove toward Moreland Shelter. Carl, Tim, Bill and the FS people went to a bad tangle near the top of the trail. Elzear, Van, Tony, and I cut trees on the way up. First pic below shows the tangle and second is the tangle cleared. Considering the size of the mess, it cleared easily and safely. The third picture shows the TEHCC crew with our 5 chainsaws. I had a small tangle that I cleared, but it left a rootball mess on the trail. We left 5 rootballs filled with logs to level the ground. There is a lot of followup work to do.



Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 8/18/2023

Purpose: Remove blowdown

Location: Sections 2a and 2b, McQueen's Gap to Backbone Rock, North of Abingdon Gap Shelter

People: Tim Stewart, Ed Speer

Summary: Looooong Day! Ed Speer and I went in after a reported blowdown somewhere north of Abingdon Gap Shelter. We positioned cars at both ends and then hiked from McQueen's Gap to Backbone Rock. We found a blowdown just north of Abingdon Gap Shelter, but it didn't quite fit the description as told to Ed. Continuing on, we finally found the reported blowdown and removed it. It wasn't too bad, but it did cover the trail and hikers had to divert around it. We thought we might find some more blowdowns, because of the recent storm, but fortunately we did not. Overall the trail wasn't too bad. Several areas were overgrown and in need of weed wacking, though. We finally made it to Backbone Rock around 6:30. After retrieving my car at the Gap, it was just after 8 when I got home. It was a very long day!

We saw 3 bears; two on McQueen's Gap Road and one before the shelter. Evidence of bears and bear activity was everywhere; abundant scat, numerous over-turned rocks, and torn apart downed rotting logs. This must be a favorite habitat. **We also saw a remarkable fungus (see photos next page).**



Reporting: Steve Wilson

Date: 8/19/2023

Purpose: Lop briars and remove blowdowns

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

People: Carl Belcher, Steve Perri, Steve Wilson

Summary: We lopped briars on this section, and carried a chainsaw in with plans to cut a 12" blowdown which was reported just north of Abingdon Gap Shelter. We were surprised to find the blowdown had been removed recently. A review of the club's maintenance trip reports when we returned home showed that a crew had cleared this section just the day before. These events show the need for better communication among the maintainers. It was beautiful day to be the woods.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 8/19/2023

Purpose: Check for blowdowns and remove encroaching vegetation

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

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I parked at Greasy Creek Friendly and took the forest service road up to Greasy Creek Gap where I cleaned trash out of the fireplace. Then I used my grass whip to proceed to the second tall knob toward Iron Mountain Gap. There were numerous branches on the trail that I removed as I went. I chopped stinging nettles and other vegetation from the gap to the second tall knob headed north on the trail. Since I had not been on that part of the section since June, everything had grown 2 feet or more. I chopped weeds until my arm fell off. I screwed them back on and continued until I got to the top at the pinnacle of rocks. I went just beyond the pinnacle to look down the hill to see if there were blowdowns, but I didn't see any in the low light, as it was getting dark. I continued chopping things I missed on the way up back to the gap, so that side is clean. It was five miles of chopping and a very long day. I saw no hikers.

Reporting: Elzear and Emily Lemieux

Date: 8/20/2023

Purpose: A.T. Maintenance

Location: Section 8, Wilbur Dam Road to US 321

People: Elzear Lemieux, Emily Lemieux

Summary: We walked the entire section and removed several blowdowns.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 8/24/2023

Purpose: Rehab

Location: Section 13, US 19E to Doll Flats

People: Greg Kramer, Tim Stewart, Carl Fritz, Jeff Hatling, Bill Murdoch, Dick Martindale

Summary: The trail needed a LOT of improvements with water diversions. Seventy-eight feet of trail were rehabbed. The trail was debarmed and waterbars cleaned. We nearly got halfway down to 19E. We found much of the supplies left before, and will return next week to continue to rehab the trail. Jesse came with an UTV to haul gear up and down the trail.