



# The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

November 2023

[tehcc.org](http://tehcc.org)

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

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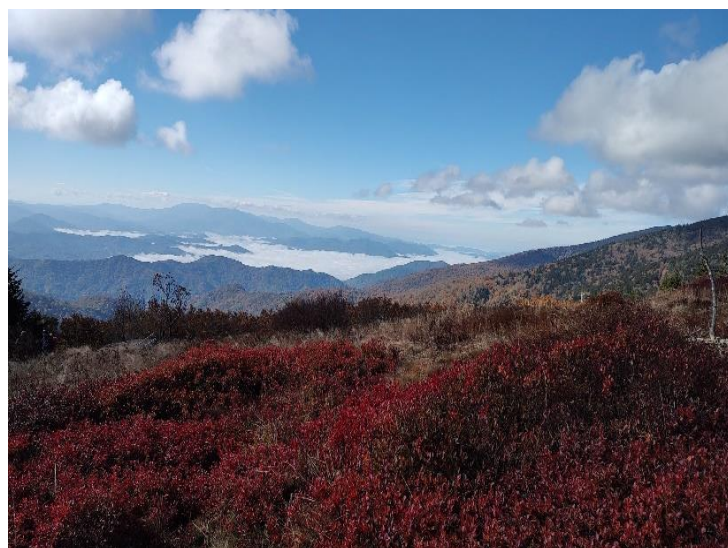
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*View from Round Bald  
Submitted by Greg Kramer*

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## Letter from the Chair

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*Submitted by Josh Hayes (2023 Steering Committee Chair)*

Hello Friends,

This month I would like to talk about the benefits of “green and blue spaces.” Green spaces being the great outdoors, specifically forests and fields, are especially beneficial the more biodiverse. This observation doesn’t mean you should shy away from urban green spaces such as a nice tree and picnic table for lunch at work, because in the end, any connection to the outdoors is going to give a boost to your cognitive function, mood, and overall health. A long hike is not required, as the benefit can be realized by finding a diverse ecosystem that you can drive to and spend time in, such as Cades Cove.

Blue spaces are aquatic environments, and in a study presented in [International Journal of Hygiene and Environmental Health](#), Vol. 220, No. 8, 2017. Gascon, M., et al. postulated that blue spaces may be more restorative. As the year comes to an end, with work evaluations and holidays raising stress levels and anxieties, try not to neglect the power of the outdoors. Stay connected and realize that we are all a part of something bigger regardless of personal beliefs, and in doing so, we will all be better stewards of our world.

Whether you choose a green or blue space, it is recommended that you spend at least 120 minutes a week for maximum impact. Better health and cognitive function could be realized with a mere 20 minutes a day.

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# TEHCC Fall Dinner Meeting Report

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*Submitted by Josh Hayes and Andy Steffan*

It is our pleasure to report that the club had close to 50 people in attendance for the 2023 TEHCC Fall dinner! Dinner was catered by Barberitos with desserts and coffee provided by our own Alison Page and Erin Ekart. Recognitions given out included our pint-glass incentive for 40 miles hiking or 40 hours maintenance on TEHCC's A.T. section (see pic 1); and ATC awards for cumulative hours of service at 100 hours (patches), 250 hours (NPS passes), and 1000 hours (vests – see pic 2). The USFS gave recognitions to four members (see pic 3) for their dedication with multiple partner groups including TEHCC!



Andy Steffan, Josh Hayes,  
Jennifer Baird, and Bill Fuller



Vests for Elzear Lemieux and Van Hovey



Van Hovey, John Beaudet,  
Greg Kramer, and Tony Messina



A presentation by Megan Krager of Bays Mountain Park was the highlight of the night. Megan gave the history of the park and a glimpse of its future. There is much to look forward to, including a totally revamped nature center & planetarium, redesigned animal habitats with the return of several species and some new additions, and even a new playground right in the middle of the habitats! The park is currently pursuing zoo accreditation and changing the layout to better accommodate the diverse and wonderful amalgamation of animals, current and for the future. If you were able to make it for the dinner, we thank you for coming... and if not, we hope to see you in the future!

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## Club Membership Benefits

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Are you a TEHCC Club Member, but don't remember exactly what the benefits of club membership are? Benefits of Club Membership include:

**Publications:** Library of books and maps

**Discounts:** 10% discount on non-sale items at sporting goods stores to members who present their membership cards

**Organized events:** Hiking, paddling (joint with [APEs](#)), camping, maintenance, and seasonal programs

**Training:** Organized courses to enhance trail skills, paddling skills, orienteering, safety, first aid and CPR, Leave No Trace

**Resources:** Access to a variety of information—hiking, paddling, equipment, and suggested hikes

**Awards:** Hiker of the Year, Paddler of the Year, Frank Oglesby Maintainer of the Year, Stan Murray Award, and other special recognitions

**Networking/Socializing:** Meet others with your interests

**Rental Equipment:** Backpacks, tents, sleeping pads, bear canisters, kayaks, and a canoe

**Club Mission Statement:** The mission of the Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club is to provide a program of hiking, paddling, and similar outdoor recreational activities. The Club also seeks to establish and expand area hiking trails and provide education in outdoor skills and safety.

### Membership Discounts:

- [Mahoney's](#) (830 Sunset Dr, Johnson City, TN) – 10% discount on hiking gear and footwear
- [Mountain Sports, Ltd.](#) (1061 Commonwealth Ave, Bristol, VA) – 10% discount
- [Mount Rogers Outfitters](#) (110 Laurel Ave, Damascus, VA) - 10% discount
- [Nolichucky Outdoor Learning Institute](#) (2 Jones Branch Rd, Erwin, TN) – 10% discount on training classes

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## Seeking 2024-2025 Steering Committee Nominees

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A famous quote by George Eastman is, "What we do during our working hours determines what we have; what we do in our leisure hours determines what we are." Since the Tennessee Eastman Hiking & Canoeing Club draws members from all across the company and region, it is a great way to develop connections beyond normal work activity. TEHCC is guided by a Steering Committee (SC), that manages TEHCC during informal lunchtime discussions, and the Appalachian Trail Committee, which coordinates trail maintenance and improvement projects. Examples of SC efforts are the new club shirts, Spring/Fall dinner events, the hiking program, and equipment rentals, including kayaks and canoes. They also approve and manage the budget. The Steering Committee is now seeking folks to help provide direction for the Club over the next two years. This opportunity is a chance to expand your network while enjoying leisure activities. Contact a [current Steering Committee member](#) to answer further questions.

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## News You Can Use

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### USFS Road Closure to Beauty Spot

The road to Beauty Spot Scenic Overlook, sometimes referred to as Indian Grave Gap or Beauty Spot (NFSR 87A) is closed for construction and will reopen in the spring 2024. Construction will help the habitat rebound in the winter and prevent the public from getting stuck in potholes.

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## Event Schedule – Next Two Months

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For the latest, up-to-date information, see [tehcc.org/schedule](http://tehcc.org/schedule).

For additional information on APEs/TEHCC paddling events, see <http://www.riverapes.org/calendar.html>.

Date	Description	Contact	Telephone
Nov 11	Hiking with Tools! 9:30 am – 2 pm	<a href="#">Tim Stewart</a>	
Nov 16	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1 pm	<a href="#">Josh Hayes</a>	270-585-5929
Dec 21	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1 pm	<a href="#">Josh Hayes</a>	270-585-5929

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## Details of Upcoming Events

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### 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](mailto: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.

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## 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 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.

## 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

At the time of publication, there were no scheduled events. For up-to-date information, see the [online schedule](#).

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## TEHCC Welcomes New Member

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John Rolstead

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## For the Record

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### Roaring Fork Creek Falls, October 7, 2023

*Vic Hasler reporting*

This hike and others in the South Toe River region are a bit far away to be regular club outings, but would be great walks if your family is staying overnight on the eastern side of Mt. Mitchell. As advertised, Roaring Creek Falls is reached on a short forest service road with a final leg over a wooden bridge and rooty path. Hiking solo to be the first to arrive, I was able to enjoy the quietness of the morning at the cascade, before a half-dozen carloads began to appear. My bonus for the outing was finding the oldest traditional geocache in North Carolina hidden back in January 2001, which was further up the forest road.

The second trail to Setrock Creek Falls was not pursued as the parking area shared with a USFS campground was overflowing. My choice was then to enjoy some views on the crisp fall day from the Blue Ridge Parkway on the route to the very busy café at Little Switzerland. An ice cream stop on the way back to Kingsport wrapped up the longer driving tour than hiking outing on a beautiful Saturday before much fall color.

### Devil's Bathtub, October 21, 2023

*Josh Hayes reporting*

This hike was a repeat from last year, as I had gone alone. This year however, there were two others. Instead of taking the four-mile round trip, we took the seven-mile Devils Fork loop, which had quite the incline to it. We had originally planned to finish by 12 pm, but instead finished at 1:30 pm. There was some litter at the pool of water, but unfortunately, I had not brought a sack to collect it in this time. Attendees were Josh Hayes, Andy Steffan, Joseph Sengeh

If you go: Plan to get parking closer to the trailhead, and if you have a low-sitting vehicle, you may want to park away from the trailhead to avoid bottoming out.

(See additional pictures, next page.)



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## Devil's Bathtub Hike (cont'd)



## Watauga Lake Club Paddling Trip, October 28, 2023

*Andy Steffan reporting*

The first club-led paddling trip in MANY years was a huge success! The weather could not have turned out any better for a late October paddle. The air temperature was low- to mid-seventies, with a slight variable breeze. I anticipated the water being really cold, but it was actually very pleasant. Our trip started from the Watauga Dam Boat Ramp after some quick paddling tips and an overview. Once getting out onto the water, we began admiring the beautiful fall colors and landscape. The lake was very peaceful and serene. Our group paddled roughly two miles to reach an island in the middle of the lake; it looked significantly farther than 2 miles, so we all felt very accomplished when we reached it. We enjoyed a rest and snack break on the island, while continuing to take in the fall leaf colors and increased activity of boats, including many sail boats. After the rest, we returned 2 miles back to the boat ramp, with the breeze pushing against us at times. Attendees: Andy Steffan, Jackie Steffan (group photos cred), Josh Hayes (thanks for boat transportation help), Sharon Burnette, and Gabriela Brueggeman.



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## A.T. Maintenance Reports

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**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 8/24/2023

**Purpose:** Cut weeds

**Location:** Section 4a, US 421 to Double Springs Shelter, Southern part of section

**People:** Ed Speer

**Summary:** After an unavoidable three-week hiatus, Ed continued mowing, pruning, and clearing trail south of US 421. There were no blowdowns.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 9/1/2023

**Purpose:** Cut weeds; inspect trail and shelter

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

**People:** Ed Speer

**Summary:** Ed hiked from TN 91 to Double Springs Shelter. He mowed, pruned, and cleared the section. The shelter and water source were good.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 9/8/2023

**Purpose:** Cut weeds

**Location:** Section 4a, US 421 to Double Springs Shelter, Southern part of section

**People:** Ed Speer

**Summary:** Ed mowed, pruned and cleared the section of trail north of Double Springs Shelter.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 9/13/2023

**Purpose:** Remove blowdown

**Location:** Section 4b, Double Springs Shelter to TN 91, Just north of Osborne Farm

**People:** Ed Speer

**Summary:** Ed removed a 13-inch dead oak blowdown just north of Osborne Farm. A former Marine who was hiking helped. Thanks, Mike!

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 9/14/2023

**Purpose:** Cut weeds

**Location:** Section 4a, About a half mile north of Double Springs Shelter

**People:** Ed Speer

**Summary:** Ed mowed, pruned and cleared the trail.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 9/20/2023

**Purpose:** Cut weeds

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

**People:** Ed Speer

**Summary:** Ed mowed, pruned, and cleared another section of trail. He removed vegetation obscuring trail blazes and cleared the trailbed as he hiked. A NOBO hiker from New Jersey inquired about Bob Peoples.

**Reporting:** Craig Haire

**Date:** 9/27/2023

**Purpose:** Inspect and clear trail

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

**People:** Craig Haire

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**Summary:** It was a cool, pleasant September day. The trail was in good condition except for rhododendron branches hanging down into the trail corridor between Temple Ridge and Temple Hill Gap that I cut back. I saw only one day-hiker at the overlook.



**Reporting:** Richard Ramsey

**Date:** 9/30/2023

**Purpose:** Cut back brush and remove down fall

**Location:** Section 14a, Doll Flats to the start of the Bald

**People:** Richard Ramsey, Nancy Mick

**Summary:** We cut back overhanging brush and blowdowns.

**Reporting:** Jake Mitchell

**Date:** 9/30/2023

**Purpose:** Weed and mow

**Location:** Section 14b, Bradley Gap to Yellow Mountain Gap and Overmountain Shelter

**People:** Jake Mitchell, Alex Johnston, Xander Johnston, Ender Johnston

**Summary:** We weeded the entire section. It is in excellent shape for the winter. We also mowed the field at the barn. We should see only negligible growth from here on out. There were several campers, as usual, and tons of day hikers. There was no material trash, though the desire by campers to create as many fire rings as possible continues. \*rolls eyes\* The pipe on the blue-blaze is dry, but water is running slowly below the road. We saw one bow hunter not wearing any orange, but encourage everyone to wear the orange this time of year. We need USFS to trim the vegetation on the access road. It's getting tight in a few spots. The remnants of a major blowdown from last winter just above the access gate will probably come down at some point soon. We cleared it somewhat this spring.

**Reporting:** Tom Sahlin

**Date:** 10/1/2023

**Purpose:** Inspect and cut back vegetation encroaching trail

**Location:** Section 16b, Iron Mountain Gap to pinnacle of rocks halfway to Greasy Creek Gap

**People:** Tom Sahlin

**Summary:** I started at Iron Mountain Gap removing sticks and limbs from the trail as I went to the first tallest knob at the pinnacle of rocks and beyond to the second low knob. All the stinging nettles that were 6 inches when I was there last were at least 3 feet tall now and covered in a fuzz of stinging hairs. I got stung several times eliminating them. I had only planned on going to the first tall knob, but since I had not been to the backside of that first tall knob, I went beyond about 1/4th mile. Everything is in good shape except for the nettles which were taken care of with some Jewelweed juice. The spring was flowing faster than I thought it would be at probably 2 gallons per minute. It was a beautiful day that cooled off as the sun went down.

**Reporting:** Joe Morris

**Date:** 10/3/2023

**Purpose:** Scout and flag rehab

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

**People:** Joe Morris, Tony Messina

**Summary:** Tony and I walked Section 12a and pin-flagged 20 areas for rehabilitation. Using "Far Out" as a mileage guide, rehab opportunities and materials were identified throughout the section.

**Reporting:** Jim Foster

**Date:** 10/4/2023

**Purpose:** Check trail and do routine maintenance

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

**People:** Jim Foster

**Summary:** I hadn't been out in a while and wanted to check the trail. I clipped and cleaned and removed one blowdown. I met 3 southbound thru-hikers.

**Reporting:** Scotty Bowman

**Date:** 10/5/2023

**Purpose:** Maxim Healthcare Services Volunteer Day: Campsite Cleanup

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**Location:** Section 10, Hampton Blueline #501 and 1 mile of the A.T.

**People:** Scotty Bowman, Melony Broyles, Jaynelin Davis, Tyler Jones, Chae Fellars, Caleb Sheets

**Summary:** It was a beautiful day to hold a volunteer service day for Maxim Healthcare Services. There were 5 participants who signed up to come out and give back. We hiked in at the Hampton trailhead with the goal of cleaning campsites and fire rings along the Hampton Blueline trail and a mile of the A.T. In total we cleaned 7 campsites. We removed 3 fire rings, reduced the size of 2, cleaned out fire rings, and picked up 73 lbs of trash which included a hamster cage, small charcoal grill, and a shredded tent.



**Reporting:** Scott Huskey

**Date:** 10/5/2023

**Purpose:** Trail Maintenance

**Location:** Section 12c, Campbell Hollow Road to the previous week's quitting location

**People:** Scott Huskey

**Summary:** This day, I completed what I started last week. I worked just over two miles of Section 12c starting from Campbell Hollow Road; this brought me to the point where I stopped last week. The trail is in decent shape. I used a swing blade to cut vegetation, especially in the first half mile. Along the way, I trimmed back branches as well and painted blazes. I removed two dead-falls. There is one more, but it doesn't present an obstacle. It lies across the trail, but it is almost six feet off the ground (see pic).

**Reporting:** Greg Kramer

**Date:** 10/5/2023

**Purpose:** Rehab trail

**Location:** Section 12a: Bitter End to Walnut Mountain Road whole trail

**People:** Greg Kramer, Richard Carter, Carl Fritz, Elzear Lemieux, Tim Stewart, Bob Peoples, Joe Morris, Van Hovey, Bill Murdoch, Dick Martindale, Tony Messina, Renee Messina

**Summary:** We broke up into three groups; two went in at Bitter End and one at Walnut Mountain. At Walnut Mtn we rehabbed 70 feet of trail, putting in a sidelog and two waterbars; one at the top of the rehab to get the water flowing in from the east to go across the trail and drain out at the bottom. We also scouted out locust trees for further rehabbing and rocks near a bridge about a mile and a half in. Three steps were put in by Richard Carter and his crew and three more by Carl Fritz's group. It was a successful and safe day!



**Reporting:** Joe Morris

**Date:** 10/7/2023

**Purpose:** Hiking with Tools!

**Location:** Section 19a, South of Indian Grave Gap

**People:** Rich Bowerman, Carl Fritz, Joe Morris, Rebecka Powell, Doc Wilson, Lynsey Wilson

**Summary:** Hiking with Tools! took place on a chilly October morning as the group aggressively cut back encroaching rhododendron south of Indian Grave Gap. One blowdown was removed and we scouted the area for future rehab opportunities. Many thanks to new volunteers Rich, Doc, and Lynsey as they received their TEHCC patches.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 10/7/2023

**Purpose:** Cut weeds

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

**People:** Ed Speer

**Summary:** Ed mowed, pruned, and cleared the final part of Section 4a. After 12 days of mowing, the section is complete. He met three SOBO hikers, the first he had met this fall.

**Reporting:** Tom Sahlin

**Date:** 10/8/2023

**Purpose:** Inspect trail for encroaching vegetation and downfalls

**Location:** Section 5, From TN 91 toward Iron Mountain Shelter

**People:** Tom Sahlin

**Summary:** I started from the Cross Mountain trailhead at TN 91 and headed toward Iron Mountain Shelter. I removed sticks and branches from the trail and one small dead 5" tree about 10" above the trail. I cleared more stinging nettles, blackberry plants, and greenbriar leaning into the trail that I had missed on the last trip. I still had about a mile to go before I got to the shelter, but a cold wind of 25 to 30 mph was blowing with temperatures going into the upper 30s. I wasn't quite dressed for that, so I turned around. I saw one day-hiker and a family of 6. I found no trash. It was a good day!

**Reporting:** Van Hovey

**Date:** 10/8/2023

**Purpose:** Chasing down bees

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

**People:** Van Hovey, Carrie Hovey

**Summary:** From a report of bees (ugh) annoying hikers on the Chestoa Section, Van and Carrie went on a search-and-destroy mission. We eventually found the nest with the happenstance aid of a couple of day hikers. We emptied three cans of spray (overkill? I think not) into the nest. We will return in a couple days to check on the results.

**Reporting:** Joe Morris

**Date:** 10/11/2023

**Purpose:** Scout Section, Deliver steps, and and scout Konnarock route

**Location:** Section 8, Wilbur Dam Road and Temple Hill Gap

**People:** Joe Morris

**Summary:** I began the day scouting in the Wilbur Dam Road area for future Thursday-crew opportunities. I picked up 4 locust steps and stakes at Watauga Work Center and delivered them to Dr. Haire for use on the trail, south of Chestoa. After the step delivery, I went to the Unicoi Ranger Station; then Gilbert and I went to Chestoa and drove into Mine Flats. After some discussion, Mine Flats is inappropriate for Konnarock access. USFS will look into grading the road to Temple Hill Gap (off Granny Lewis Road) for Konnarock to use in 2024.

**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 10/11/2023

**Purpose:** Inspect shelter and access to shelter

**Location:** Section 15a, Roan High Knob Shelter

**People:** Carl Fritz, Bill Murdoch

**Summary:** Our primary task was to determine how we might transport four large locust logs to the shelter. We think we have identified a way to do that safely. We also studied the shelter as to how we might replace some of the lower logs. The water source was barely running.

**Reporting:** Van Hovey

**Date:** 10/11/2023

**Purpose:** Clear blowdowns

**Location:** Section 19b, Curley Maple Gap Shelter to Nolichucky Gorge

**People:** Van Hovey, Carrie Hovey, Peggy Cantrell

**Summary:** We walked in from the Martins Creek access to Curly Maple Gap Shelter. We cleaned the shelter, checked the log book, and picked up trash. Minimal effort needed ...all was in good shape. We proceeded south to Nolichucky Gorge to clear reported blowdowns. We found a total of 5 blowdowns, one leaner, several overhead rhodies, and a few small logs protruding into the trail. The blowdowns ranged in size from 8" to 14" in diameter. We lopped as needed along the way. The trail is clear and in decent shape. We encountered 4 section hikers and 4 day hikers. Nice colors are developing in the forest with the cooler temps.

**Reporting:** Greg Kramer

**Date:** 10/12/2023

**Purpose:** rehab

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

**People:** Greg Kramer, Bill Murdoch, Carl Fritz, Elzear Lemieux, Dick Martindale, Joe Morris, Bob Peoples, Rio Berry, Richard Carter, Tony Messina, Renee Messina, Rick Mulholland, Van Hovey

**Summary:** Not big numbers for such a BIG day, 60 feet of rehab and 8 steps. We had three crews out today with the help of two

Forest Service people, Brandon and Jesse. We had massive stones moved to dry up a muddy trail. We had steps put in by each crew. A lots of time was spent acquiring materials and moving them.

**Reporting:** Vic Hasler

**Date:** 10/17/2023

**Purpose:** Fall 2023 A.T. Partnership Discussion

**Location:** Appalachian Ranger District Office

**People:** Greg Kramer, Vic Hasler

**Summary:** Greg and Vic represented the TEHCC A.T. Committee at this gathering of 19 folks from ATC, CMC, SAWS, and USFS to review project concepts and issues related to the trail and its management. Contact either of us for details. Tuesday 3/19/2024 was agreed as the date of the next Partnership Meeting at the ARD office.

**Reporting:** Dick Martindale

**Date:** 10/19/2023

**Purpose:** Brush in shortcuts, improve blaze marks, cut back encroaching vegetation

**Location:** Section 11a, Dennis Cove Road to Canute Place, Per "Far Out," mile 420.1 to 417.5

**People:** Dick Martindale

**Summary:** Per a hiker's accurate observation, a shortcut at mile 417.5 needed to be brushed in and the associated blazes needed to be improved. One blaze was scraped off and two new ones were painted. [Thanks to Renee and Tony for the blaze-paint kit] I used hedge shears to cut back encroaching vegetation, including green briar and rhododendron. A new trail was recently created by an unknown entity, leaving the A.T. at mile 418.0 and re-joining at 418.2. It appears that a string trimmer, loppers, and saw were used. The new trail is basically a straight line along an adjacent ridge. This may be confusing to hikers, though the existing blazes should be adequate. I lightly brushed in the junction at mile 418.0, which was the most confusing. Also, a complex and potentially hazardous blowdown is over the trail (about 6-ft clearance) at mile 418.7. I will contact the coordinators to see if we can schedule removal. Three happy and thankful SOBOs complimented TEHCC for the excellent condition of the trail.

**Reporting:** Greg Kramer

**Date:** 10/19/2023

**Purpose:** Build waterbars and rehab trail

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

**People:** Greg Kramer, Carl Fritz, Van Hovey, Elzear Lemieux, Joe Morris, Tony Messina, Renee Messina

**Summary:** On our way to Grassy Ridge, we removed some steps that were on the trail but absolutely useless. They were not holding back any gravel and were simply in the way. We moved them from the approach to Round Bald toward Engine Gap. Near where we dropped off the logs, we found an abandoned tent and a wood stack for a large bonfire (pic 1). The logs were scattered and rocks were returned to block a shortcut. On our way back from Grassy Ridge, we picked up purchased firewood and some red spruce branches cut from trees at the camping spot in the red spruces on the approach (pics 2 and 3). We went to Grassy Ridge to cut encroaching vegetation, built 3 waterbars and 2 steps, and rehabbed 30 feet of trail. The day was gorgeous! (See pic on page 1).



**Reporting:** Elzear J Lemieux

**Date:** 10/22/2023

**Purpose:** A.T. Maintenance

**Location:** Section 8, Wilbur Dam Road to US 321, North of Shook Branch Rec Area

**People:** ELzear Lemieux, Emily Lemieux

**Summary:** We weed whacked 0.5 mile from the Shook Branch parking area to the USFS gate. We identified 2 blowdowns in the weed-whack zone. We also removed a large vine encroaching on the trail.

**Reporting:** Tom Sahlin

**Date:** 10/22/2023

**Purpose:** Inspect my section for blowdowns and encroaching vegetation, and inspect spring



**Location:** Section 16b, From Iron Mountain Gap to top of first tall knob at pinnacle of rocks

**People:** Tom Sahlin

**Summary:** From Iron Mountain Gap, I cleared sticks and branches blown down by the recent winds. I checked the spring as I passed through the orchard and it is flowing, but only about a half gallon per minute. I proceeded on to the top of the first tall knob to the pinnacle of rocks and found no large blowdowns. I cleared lots of branches from the trail and cut back branches from a large branch fallen next to the trail. Vegetation is dying back, so I only removed stinging nettles close to trail that were spreading seeds. The wind was blowing at a constant 15 mph and was cold. It turned me around on my attempt 4 days prior. I was planning on going farther, but I wasn't prepared enough for the cold wind. I met 4 hikers on the trail.

**Reporting:** Ken Murray

**Date:** 10/22/2023

**Purpose:** Recon to determine blowdown location

**Location:** Sections 20a to 20c, Spivey Gap to Chestoa

**People:** Ken Murray

**Summary:** We have gotten several reports of a large blowdown. I decided to hike from Spivey to Chestoa to try to locate it. There are no blowdowns on Section 20a, a couple of minor blowdowns on Section 20b, and one fairly serious one on 20c. It is my understanding that work is planned in the near future on 20b (there are multiple sites with orange flagging indicating locations needing rehab). I think the crew will have a chainsaw with them to harvest locusts and they can easily remove the minor blowdowns. Van Hovey and I plan to remove the blowdown on 20c on Wednesday.

**Reporting:** Greg Kramer

**Date:** 10/23/2023

**Purpose:** Cut blowdowns

**Location:** Sections 8 and 11a, Shook Branch, Wilbur Dam, and Dennis Cove

**People:** Dick Martindale, Greg Kramer

**Summary:** Jesse Laramée from the Forest Service joined us in removing blowdowns. We first removed blowdowns on Dick's section, 11a, in Dennis Cove South, two 18" trees hung up over the trail. We also checked out a new side trail. The trail led up to a clearing on a hill top. A lot of wood was cut down near the clearing. Jesse took a GPS track to report it. Jesse and I went to Shook Branch (Section 8), to remove two large blowdowns. One was 25" and the other was 20". Then off to Wilbur Dam where Elzear had reported a tree butt sticking into the trail. It was 14" diameter and easy to remove back to the trail edge.

**Reporting:** Ken Murray

**Date:** 10/23/2023

**Purpose:** Improve installation of graffiti board at Cherry Gap Shelter

**Location:** Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to FS 230, Switchback Cherry Gap Shelter

**People:** Ken Murray

**Summary:** I hiked into Cherry Gap Shelter with a 2x4 which I attached to the shelter. The purpose of the 2x4 is to partially cover the overhang of the previously installed graffiti board. Hopefully this will reduce the chances of a hiker getting snagged on the board and possibly getting injured or damaging the board. In addition, I applied 3 coats of "Zinsser Bulls Eye 123 Primer for all surfaces" to the graffiti board.

**Reporting:** Ken Murray

**Date:** 10/25/2023

**Purpose:** Remove blowdowns

**Location:** Section 20c, No Business Knob Shelter to Spivey Gap, 1 mile north of Devils Creek Gap

**People:** Ken Murray, Van Havey

**Summary:** We removed 2 blowdowns, including one that was causing hikers to leave the trail and break down the edge. We were unable to get the third blowdown as the Forest Service has changed the lock of FS278.

**Reporting:** Greg Kramer

**Date:** 10/26/2023

**Purpose:** Rehab

**Location:** Section 14d, Stan Murray Shelter to Carvers Gap, and Grassy Ridge

**People:** Greg Kramer, Van Hovey, Carl Fritz, Rick Mulholland, Dick Martindale, Elzear Lemieux, Joe Morris, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** We checked the fire ring we removed at the first red spruce trees (10/19) and found another fire ring. We went to the next stand of red spruces and found 4 fire rings and the grass killed by a large tent that was placed there for over a month. We rehabbed 12 waterbars and 3 steps. We removed more useless steps. Carl and Elzear installed 3 rebar handholds going out to Grassy Ridge (see pic). Dick cutback vegetation out by Jane Bald. We all cut back the rhodos near the kiosk and trashed several social trails.



**Reporting:** Carl Fritz

**Date:** 10/27/2023

**Purpose:** Fell locust trees

**Location:** Section 4b, Osborne Farm

**People:** Carl Fritz, Tim Stewart

**Summary:** We scouted Osborne Farm for locust trees that would be suitable for Roan High Knob Shelter and possible box steps at Carver's Gap. We felled two trees into the pasture after cutting the fence. The cattle are still on the property, so we repaired the fence. There are still some nice logs to harvest.

**Reporting:** Tom Sahlin

**Date:** 10/27/2023

**Purpose:** Inspect trail for blowdowns, check water sources, and inspect shelter

**Location:** Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to Cherry Gap Shelter

**People:** Tom Sahlin

**Summary:** From Iron Mountain Gap to Cherry Gap Shelter, I removed fallen sticks and small branches and a couple of 3-to-4-inch branches protruding into the trail. The largest was broken into two pieces and did not require cutting, just moving off the trail. The trail is in great shape otherwise. I went to Cherry Gap shelter which looked great with new paint and graffiti board. Great job! The water source at the shelter is flowing at about a half gallon per minute. The water at other places on the trail is dry or only dripping. The first set of log steps close to the trailhead has a step with a loose stake, so the step is moving downhill. I would have pounded it back in, but didn't have tools to do it. The colors were awesome. Cherry Gap is gorgeous.