



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

December 2023

tehcc.org

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

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*Saying Goodbye to Overmountain Shelter
(see article below)*

Letter from the Chair

Submitted by Josh Hayes (2023 Steering Committee Chair)

Hello Friends,

This past year it has been my honor to be the chair of such an active and engaged club! I would like to give special thanks to all the hiking/paddling leaders from this past year: Andy Steffan, Erin Ekart, Rheagan Sizemore, Eric Dobbs, and Vic Hassler. Without their volunteering the hiking/paddling program would have been impossible. We hosted 14 hikes with 30 active hikers totaling 248 miles hiked by club members, and one 4-mile paddling trip with five attendees that had some beautiful views.

The trail maintainer groups and individuals were able to take care of so many things, including a lot of the blowdowns from the windstorms earlier in the year. For that, I want to say a heartfelt thanks. The services they provide should never be taken for granted. So, if you are out on our section of the A.T. and the trail is easy to follow, thank a maintainer or better yet, join them in the upcoming year.

We have a few members rolling off the Steering Committee and I want to give a final thanks to them for their dedicated service. I also want to remind everyone that this is your club and if you are interested in joining the Steering Committee, feel free to reach out!

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2024 Steering Committee Update

Submitted by Josh Hayes

2024 Steering Committee Members

The Steering Committee for 2024 will be made up of eight members. Returning second-year members are Eric Dobbs, Erin Ekart, Rheagan Sizemore (half year), and Joseph Sengeh. Josh Hayes will serve as the Past Chair. The slate of incoming committee members for 2024 to be approved are Gabriela Brueggeman, Jillian Shivery, and Andy Steffan. Club members on the Eastman network can approve/reject the slate using this Forms Survey, [2024 Steering Committee Slate](#). Those not on the Eastman network can email [Josh Hayes](#) with their vote. The club will close the voting two weeks after the newsletter has been distributed.

New Steering Committee Members



Gabriela Brueggeman: I have been with Eastman for 10 years, and currently in the role of product manager in Chemical Intermediates. Hiking and swimming are two of my favorite sports, but I also do some kayaking and biking. My intention is to learn how to paddleboard and maybe sail next year. We are extremely fortunate to live in such a beautiful part of the country where outdoor activities are endless. Not enjoying this beauty on a regular basis would be unfortunate. I am currently a member of the Mid-Appalachian hiking club and would be happy to share some of their best practices, so that we can entice more of our Eastman colleagues to join us on trails, lakes, or bike paths.



Jillian Shivery: I have gotten into hiking and backpacking over the last few years. I just relocated from Raleigh, NC and am excited to be closer to more outdoor recreation. I am the most excited to be able to spend more time in the Smokies and hopefully complete the SB6K list. My favorite hike in the area is Roan Mountain to Grassy Ridge Bald.

Returning Steering Committee Member



Andy Steffan: I've now been part of the Steering Committee for almost 6 years, believe it or not, and would like to continue serving in the TEHCC/APEs Liaison role to continue strengthening the relationships and partnerships between the groups. I love to go on, and lead, hikes with the club and enjoy finding new trails to explore locally and abroad. I was one of the main drivers for bringing our boat fleet back to the club, so I'd like to lead a few more paddling trips for TEHCC this coming year, since we completed a successful trial run in late October with the club.

Advisors and Past Committee Members

The Steering Committee is also supported by Tim Schaefer and Vic Hasler to make sure everything continues to run smoothly. Their constant assistance and help are much appreciated. Among other contributions, Tim maintains the TEHCC website and trail wiki, while Vic serves in the role of liaison between the Steering Committee and the A.T. Committee.

I also would like to thank Alison Page, Sal Arena, and Razvan Marinescu for their service as they rotate off of the committee. Alison Page has helped plan our dinners and joined in on several events such as our rental equipment maintenance. Sal has supported the committee by being an active member, leading hikes, and continuing the T-shirt program. Razvan joined several hikes and always has a zest for life that is infectious making him a joy to be around.

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Save the Dates: A.T. Maintainer Kickoff and Spring Dinner

As you begin looking toward 2024, please put the following events on your calendar.

A.T. Maintainer Kickoff

- Friday, **February 16**, 5:30 pm social time followed by dinner (menu TBD, might not be BBQ)
- Awards, some training, and current issues for the Appalachian Trail
- All maintainers or individuals interested in working on the A.T. in 2024 are invited to attend

Spring Dinner

- Friday, **March 15**, starting at 5:30 pm for Happy “Trails” Hour
- Recognition by USFS for cumulative service, ATC for 25 years/Silver, and club for OTY
- Dean Walker (blogger) on “Trails on Holston Mtn and the Search for Flight 308.” The A.T. used to travel more along the Holston Mtn ridgeline until the great relocation over to Roan Mtn. Flight 308 was a DC-3 aircraft that crashed into Holston Mtn in the 1960s, but where?

Come have fellowship with other club members and volunteers. Both events will be held in the Eastman Lodge banquet room.

Event Schedule – Next Two Months

For the latest, up-to-date information, see tehcc.org/schedule.

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

Date	Description	Contact	Telephone
Dec 21	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1 pm	Josh Hayes	270-585-5929
Jan 18	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 Kayak Roll Practice, Tuesdays, 7:35 – 8:45 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.

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

Contact: [Tony Messing](#), 423-677-6650

This event is family friendly across all the park trails. We will meet in the mountain-bike parking area by the maintenance shed. Please bring gloves and safety glasses. If the task requires, hardhats and other safety equipment will be provided as necessary.

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Scheduled Events

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

Goodbye, Overmountain Shelter

Article by Vic Hasler (TEHCC A.T. Committee Chair)



“The Barn” was built in 1975 as part of a private farm on the North Carolina side of Yellow Mountain Gap; and in 1979, the property was acquired by the US Forest Service. In 1986, TEHCC converted the barn to be the largest shelter on the Appalachian Trail with a great view down into Roaring Creek Valley. Unfortunately, in 2016, the downhill side of the barn was observed to be almost two feet out of plumb. The cause was suspected to be frost heave of the support posts. In May 2019, a primary support beam for the upper floor failed. Stabilization of the building was explored, but deemed unworkable; so, a temporary closure notice was issued in September 2019 to allow for a NEPA review of various options. In November 2023, the decision was made by the U.S. Forest Service to dismantle Overmountain Shelter. That work has now been completed (see Maintenance Reports below for November 14, 15, 16, and 22). The Forest Service will later level the ground with their equipment.



With its good water source and pit privy, the Yellow Mountain Gap campsite remains available for enjoyment of the great view. Improvements in backpacking gear over the decades now allow those on long-distance treks to take greater personal responsibility for their overnight accommodations. Leave No Trace principles are best practices for minimizing impact on the land.

TEHCC Welcomes New Members

Jean Fletcher

Georgia Niccum



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 10/4/2023

Purpose: Blowdown removal

Location: Sections 4a and 4b, TN 91 to just north of Double Springs Shelter

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed intended to dig trail just north of shelter. He encountered a 12-inch green sourwood tree across the A.T. at chest high just south of the shelter. He cut a section and a hiker helped drag the log off trail. He did walk out to Locust Knob to be sure that area was free of blowdowns.

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Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 10/5/2023

Purpose: Rehab trail

Location: Section 4a, Just trail north of Double Springs Shelter

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed widened and leveled a section of hillside trail just north of the Double Springs Shelter. He said, "This was rough work for an old man."

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 10/11 and 10/12/2023

Purpose: Rehab Trail

Location: Section 4a, Just trail north of Double Springs Shelter

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed widened and leveled another section of trail north of Double Springs Shelter

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 10/24/2023

Purpose: Inspect and clear trail

Location: Section 16b, Iron Mountain Gap to the gap just below the first tall knob at the pinnacle of rocks

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: From Iron Mountain Gap, I went to the spring in the orchard where I found the spring was flowing well below the orchard. I chatted with a southbound hiker in the orchard. I proceeded on to the first tall knob, removing fallen limbs and sticks on the way and cutting back briars. I didn't find any blowdowns. I watched for dead locust trees on the way, but didn't find any close to where the work needs to be done. A mule is needed. I returned to the trailhead just after dark. I inspected a sign on the way and decided to return with tools to remove the sign for repainting.

Reporting: Bettye Boone

Date: 10/27/2023

Purpose: Discuss calibration of A.T. Trail Counters with Monika Mogilewsky, VUM Data Manager

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

People: Bettye Boone

Summary: We discussed issues regarding calibrating the 3 Trail Counters on Roan.

Reporting: Bettye Boone

Date: 10/27/2023

Purpose: Download data on 3 trail counters; Check Grassy Ridge Spur Trail

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

People: Bettye Boone, Saylor Fox

Summary: We downloaded data from the trail counters. We also walked up to check the Grassy Ridge spur trail. We found a large fire ring in the woods next to Grassy Ridge Trail. The hikers had chopped and torn 3 large limbs off live red spruce trees in an attempt to start a fire. We removed and hauled out the trash in the fire ring and dismantled the fire ring.

Reporting: Gerald Scott

Date: 10/28/2023

Purpose: Routine Fall Maintenance

Location: Section 12b, Sugar Hollow Creek to Mountaineer Falls

People: Gerald Scott, Eric Scott, Harold Wexler

Summary: We tried weed whacking the trail from Sugar Hollow Creek to Mountaineer Falls, but the sling blade was no match for the doghobble. We will try hedge shears next time. We cut back lots of encroaching rhododendron. One large blowdown located about 1.5 miles trail south of Mountaineer Falls was too large to clear with hand saws (see pic). The trail was surprisingly clear of any other blowdowns. Back in March there was severe ATV damage to the trail from the ATV side trail south to Splash Dam Falls side trail. This time, there was no visible ATV damage.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 10/29/2023

Purpose: Take down Iron Mountain sign as well as inspect trail for blowdown

Location: Section 16b, Iron Mountain Gap to Unaka Mountain Overlook

People: Tom Sahlin



Summary: The weather was to turn colder in the coming days. I have been wanting to rework and repaint the sign for Iron Mountain Gap. It was no longer readable after the alteration, compliments of a disgruntled person with a chainsaw. I removed the sign and carried it to my car. I made a note of the information on the sign and left it hanging on the posts for hikers who need the info. After putting the sign in my car, I still had time, so I went to the Unaka Mountain Overlook to check for blowdowns. None were found. When I returned to the car, I remembered a problem with the steps on the trail to Cherry Gap. The third step, of the steps just down the hill and around a bend, had moved slightly when I stepped on it the previous Friday. It appeared to be moving forward; so I dug out from behind it and moved it back a couple of inches and restaked it with a rock in front of the stake. After replacing the dirt and gravel, it seems to be solid and safe for now, but could probably use some more attention and maybe a longer stake.

Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 10/29/2023

Purpose: Inspect Trail

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

People: Van Hovey, Carrie Hovey

Summary: We cut back a few downed branches and moved one blowdown (12") off the trail. In general, the trail is in good condition. We met four day hikers. We found that late-fall downed foliage and new boots do not mix. Nice stroll cheers.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 11/1/2023

Purpose: Return sign to Iron Mountain Gap

Location: Section 16b, Iron Mountain Gap

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: After removing the Iron Mountain Gap sign, I took it to my back porch workshop where it was rerouted and wire brushed to clean it. Then I repainted the routed letters with sign paint, which should last for many years due to UV protection. Now it is much more readable, but the chain saw damage was hard to repair. I then returned the sign to its rightful place. I will try to paint the A.T. symbol and the TEHCC logo and replace it soon.



Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 11/2/2023

Purpose: General Rehab

Location: Section 8, Near Wilbur Dam Road

People: Scott Huskey, Dick Martindale, Joe Morris, Greg Kramer, Tony Messina, Renee Messina, Bob Peoples, Elzear Lemieux, Tim Stewart

Summary: After a cold start, the crew rehabbed 132 feet of trail with locust crib logs and installed 6 new locust stairs.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 11/4/2023

Purpose: Hike and inspect the trail

Location: Section 8, From Shook Branch to Watauga Dam

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I inspected the trail and picked up trash; also cut back greenbriar and blackberry vines. About one and a half mile in, I found 5 trees down (8 to 17 inches in diameter) that are pines or hemlock and mostly rotten. They can all be stepped over. The largest is a little difficult if you're a stiff old goat like me. It was a beautiful day for a hike. I saw only 2 hikers.

Reporting: Steve Perri

Date: 11/4/2023

Purpose: Attend ATC Southern Partnership Meeting

Location: Macon County Library in Franklin, NC

People: Vic Hasler, Steve Wilson, Steve Perri

Summary: There was an excellent turnout for the Southern Regional Partnership Meeting with a total of 34 from all five SORO clubs, including 8 newer staff from USFS. APPA is facilitating a review of the 1981 ANST (Appalachian Nation Scenic Trail) Comprehensive Plan which will run into 2024. CMC (Carolina Mountain Club) has been running a volunteer recruitment effort with a target of 30 new maintainers. The team developed follow-up procedures and a laminated poster for area stores. CMC also presents an orange safety bandana for returning a second time on a crew. A.T. Communities Program has updated the application packet and will conduct more outreach to connect with sleepy communities. Several clubs have been using bear boxes or modified job boxes which can be chained to a tree in case they need to be moved. ATC has developed training modules and videos called Learning Pathways. ATC is considering use of a phone app to gather info for trail conditions based on a system

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developed by the Colorado Mountain Club. The 2024 Konnarock schedule has two weeks for TEHCC's trail tread rehab near Temple Hill Gap. The spring RPC meeting will be at Hungry Mother State Park on March 8 - 10, 2024.

Reporting: Bettye Boone

Date: 11/8/2023

Purpose: Develop form and prepare materials for Counter Calibration

Location: Section 14d, NC/TN Border at Carvers Gap

People: Bettye Boone

Summary: I manually collected data to calibrate the 3 hiker counters on the A.T. at Roan/Carvers Gap for the Visitor Use Management (VUM) Committee. Monica Mogilewsky, ATC VUM Data Manager, felt we needed to measure the accuracy of each counter so we can be confident of the data being collected.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 11/8/2023

Purpose: Inspect Trail

Location: Section 18, From Indian Grave Gap to Beauty Spot

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I inspected the trail and found sawbriars and blackberry vines growing in the trail or leaning into it from 2 to 3 feet tall. I had my hand pruners with me, so I removed them. I also removed sticks and branches from the trail. I was surprised when I got to Beauty Spot that it had all been mowed. Now it looks like a park. There is a sign at the fire ring on top stating that no fires are allowed. I caught a nice sunset while on top and returned to my car. When I arrived at Indian Grave Gap, I ran into a guy named Tom doing trail magic. He was packing up to leave when another car stopped in driven by a naturalist for Watauga Ranger District. It was great chatting with him. It made my hike later than I planned, but he had some good information that was well worth it.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 11/9/2023

Purpose: Cut trees for several projects coming up

Location: Section 6, Iron Mountain Shelter to Vandeventer Shelter, Osbourne Farm

People: Greg Kramer, Joe Morris, Bill Murdoch, Dick Martindale, Bob Peoples, Van Hovey, Carl Fritz, Tim Stewart, Tony Messina, Renee Messina, J Scott Huskey

Summary: We cut down trees for three different projects. The main goal was cutting trees to replace logs in the Roan High Knob Shelter, four 12" diameter, 17' long. The second goal was logs for the Carvers Gap Box Steps, 18" diameter, 7' and 10' long. Third was to restock sidelogs and step logs for the Watagua Work Center. The cutting season for trees is mid October to the first of April.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 11/11/2023

Purpose: Hiking with Tools!

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

People: Tim Stewart, Lindsey Smith, Andrea Zelinski, Dean Baird, Rebecka Powell, Gwen Gerber, Brian Gerber, Bud Schulte

Summary: We taught the rhodos a lesson! For the final Hiking with Tools! adventure of the season, we hiked to Laurel Fork Falls from the Hampton Blue-Blazer. Primarily we lopped rhodos, but also attacked some overgrown vegetation. We did some cleaning and trash pickup at the shelter and then after lunch hiked to the top of the steps via the high water trail. Down at the Falls, we took a short break to observe the low volume of water. While hiking back to the trailhead we did some more lopping and refreshed blazes. The trail is in pretty good condition. The weather was great, so there were quite a few dayhikers out for the day. Overall, a great day with a great turnout and a great end to the season!



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Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 11/14/2023

Purpose: Dismantle Overmountain Shelter

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

People: Tim Stewart, Van Hovey, Jon Heidrick, Bob Peoples, Bill Murdoch, Carl Fritz, Tony Messina, Renee Messina, Dick Martindale

Summary: We prepared the Overmountain Shelter for removal. We first marked support members that were not to be removed and added Maasdam rope pullers to keep the barn from leaning further. We removed items from the barn that needed to be removed, like the sleeping platforms. We started off using hammers and sledges to remove siding on the upstairs long walls. We quickly went to using chainsaws and Sawzall reciprocating saws. Next we took up the second story floor. A hole was drilled at the peak of the rear roof beam, and a rope was tied so we could use a truck to pull from this point. Holes were made at the second floor level to add a pulling point from the front of the barn. We hauled off red siding to be stored at the FS Mars Hill office. Another trailer was filled with debris and taken to the landfill.

Reporting: Phyllis Cairnes

Date: 11/14/2023

Purpose: Maintain shelter

Location: Section 2b, Abingdon Gap shelter

People: Phyllis Cairnes, Rolla Wade

Summary: We did the usual shelter tidying tasks: cleaned leaves from the gutter, picked up trash, and repainted the graffiti board. We met Silver Linings, a SOBO from Utah. He told us that the water source was dry down the hill from the shelter. It was a nice day for a hike.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 11/15/2023

Purpose: Pull down Overmountain Shelter

Location: Section 14c, Overmountain Shelter

People: Greg Kramer, Bob Peoples, Van Hovey, Tim Stewart, Rebecka Powell, Bill Murdoch, Renee Messina, Carl Fritz, Joe Morris

Summary: We pulled the barn down today. Two trucks were used to pull the barn. We had to remove the siding on the first floor and the central beam for the second floor. Once the barn was down, we removed all of the metal roof and continued to recover the red-painted siding. The roof and remaining barn was left in a heap. We are returning Thursday (11/16) with several options to remove the remains.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 11/16/2023

Purpose: Demolish Overmountain Shelter

Location: Section 14b, Overmountain Shelter

People: Greg Kramer, Carl Fritz, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart, Bill Murdoch, Joe Morris

Summary: With the barn on the ground, we removed the roof to access interior boards to continue lowering the barn to the ground. Three loads of debris were taken to the dump by the FS. Previously, we had taken only two loads because we had to generate the boards and roofing. The previous day, we had taken apart a lot of materials, so we immediately loaded a trailer and they returned for a second load. Bill brought a circular saw with a carbide tipped blade, which sped up the process of cutting the roof into pieces that could be broken up easily. See Facebook Page "Trail Maintainers - Podcast and Discussion for Maintainers" for a video of the barn coming down.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 11/16 and 11/17/2023

Purpose: Rehab Trail

Location: Section 4a, North of Double Springs Shelter

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed returned to trail work after five weeks of lower back pain. He widened and leveled another short section of trail north of Double Springs Shelter. He also widened a somewhat longer section in the same area. Total length of rehabbed trail now is 470 feet.

Reporting: Dean Baird

Date: 11/17/2023

Purpose: Attend North Georgia Crosscut-Saw Course

Location: Lumpkin County Library and Lake Winfield Scott, Chattahoochee-Oconee NF, Georgia

People: Dean Baird

Summary: I completed, with B (bucking) level certification, the North Georgia Crosscut Saw Certification class that was held with

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involvement of USFS, SAWS, and ATC. The classroom portion was held at the Lumpkin County Library in Dahlonega, GA and the field portion was completed in the National Forest near Lake Winfield Scott north of Suches, GA.

Reporting: Jim McGuire

Date: 11/18/2023

Purpose: General Trail Maintenance

Location: Section 15c, Hughes Gap to Ash Gap

People: Jim McGuire

Summary: I cleaned out water diversions, cut back branches, and pulled aluminum foil out of fire pits. There were no blowdowns. There was not a drop of water at the water source. I encountered 2 day-hikers and a party of 8 weekend-hikers. This is probably my last trip to Hughes Gap until February.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 11/19/2023

Purpose: Inspect trail

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

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I removed sticks and limbs on the trail. I checked the spring in the orchard which was only dribbling from the pipe, but was still seeping enough to keep the pool full around the pipe. Hikers will have to scoop to get water. The trail is otherwise in good shape. I saw no hikers.

Reporting: Bettye Boone

Date: 11/19/2023

Purpose: Field Calibration of 3 Hiker Counters

Location: Section 14d, TN/NC Border, North and South of Carvers Gap

People: Bettye Boone, Saylor Fox, Tim Stewart

Summary: We manually counted hikers for four hours to determine the accuracy of the 3 counters we have placed on the A.T. (S Carvers, N Carvers, and Jane Bald). We counted hikers and dogs going north and south passing by the counters. The manual count will help determine how accurate the data is and also give an indication of those being counted twice. We counted dogs on and off leash, as many people continue to leave dogs off leash while on the trail.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 11/20/2023

Purpose: Check for blowdowns and check water sources

Location: Section 16a, From Hughes Gap to Little Rock Knob and beyond to overlooks just below

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I removed sticks and branches from the trail as well as a few pieces of trash. All water sources on the trail were dried up. I scraped leaves away in areas where there is usually water running, but only found damp soil and no water.

Reporting: Rick Lott

Date: 11/20/2023

Purpose: Remove hazard tree

Location: Section 13, 2.4 Miles Trail South of US 19E

People: Rick Lott, Mike Watts

Summary: Our main purpose was to remove a hazard tree overhanging the trail (see pic). We managed to get a tree strap choker around the lower end of the broken top section of the tree and used the Maasdam rope puller to dislodge the top section. The section fell off the trail, but the top was still hung up in a tree fork and still had potential to fall across the trail. We used the rope puller to pull the butt up the hill and a little closer to the trail and then blocked the hung tree section several times with the chainsaw. The tree was still hung in the other tree, but was now parallel to the trail and unlikely to fall on the trail. We did leave the main tree trunk standing, as it appeared quite stable and we were pushing daylight and a rain forecast. We did cut 4" and 6" blowdowns about 100 yds below the hazard tree. We also trimmed back a few encroaching branches on the way back. All the waterbars still looked good following our extensive trail surface work with the Thursday crew about 2 months ago. Four hikers that were at the trailhead had been up to Hump Mtn the previous day and stated there were only a few small blowdowns that were easily stepped over from 19E to Hump.



Reporting: Jennifer Baird

Date: 11/20/2023

Purpose: Inspect trail

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Location: Section 9b, Pond Flats to Hampton trailhead

People: Jennifer Baird

Summary: The trail was in good shape. I cleared leaves at the spring which is running low. I also cleared leaves where rainwater flows off the mountain through a gully onto the railroad grade. I saw two section hikers from Ohio and one SOBO thru-hiker trying to make it to Springer by December 8.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 11/22/2023

Purpose: Remove Overmountain Shelter

Location: Section 14c, Overmountain Shelter

People: Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart, Van Hovey, John Beaudet, Carl Fritz, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Paul Benfield

Summary: The crew dismantled the remains of Overmountain Shelter and stacked the pieces for removal by the Forest Service at a later date.

Reporting: Craig Haire

Date: 11/26/2023

Purpose: Inspect and clear trail

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

People: Craig Haire

Summary: It was pleasant weather, but cold in the morning. I cleaned out 50 water diversions and remodeled most of them. I encountered 2 thru-hikers headed for Springer Mtn. "Yeti" was doing a flip-flop, Harpers Ferry to Katahdin, then Harpers Ferry to Springer. "Free Speed" was about to complete a Triple Crown.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 11/29/2023

Purpose: Prepare Roan High Knob Shelter for Logs

Location: Section 15a, Roan High Knob Shelter

People: Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer

Summary: We met with Matthew Gilbert, Brandon Church, and several other FS personnel to prepare for moving logs to Roan High Knob Shelter.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 11/30/2023

Purpose: Move shelter replacement logs

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

People: David Allen, Joe Morris, Rock Mulholland, Van Hovey, Jeff Hatling, Tim Stewart, Dan Firth, Elzear Lemieux, Tony Messina, Renee Messina, Richard Carter, Dick Martindale, Greg Kramer, Carl Fritz, Bill Murdoch

Summary: The crew helped the USFS move 17-foot, 12-inch diameter locust logs, weighing in around 775 pounds each, from Cloudland Hotel to Roan High Knob Shelter. These logs will eventually replace the rotten logs at the base of the shelter. Rick Mulholland, the BLM (Bureau of Land Management) Fire Crew (New Mexico - Texas) and David Allen received TEHCC patches.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 11/30/2023

Purpose: Check for blowdowns

Location: From Iron Mountain to top of first ridge

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: From Iron Mountain Gap to the top of the first ridge, I inspected and cleared the trail of sticks and branches as well as large wads of leaves apparently blown and washed into large clumps. I found about a 6" blowdown hanging over the trail which was hanging in a sapling. I pulled the sapling over and it fell into the trail. I broke the top off and pushed until I got the trunk off the trail. I then continued to the top of the ridge, but found no more blowdowns.

Reporting: Joel Zabel

Date: 12/2/2023

Purpose: Clear blowdowns; pick up trash on club hike

Location: Section 7, Vandeventer Shelter to Wilbur Dam Rd

People: Josh Banks, Jeff Bennett, Jeff Miller, Ed Brading, Yong Li, Joel Zabel

Summary: Three miles in from Wilbur Dam Road, we used handsaws to clear a 12" blowdown with multiple cuts. We pulled a 10" blowdown off the trail with straps and grunts, further up the trail. We removed about 6 to 8 smaller (4" max) blowdowns scattered between 1.5 miles in and the shelter. We also picked up a surprising amount of trash, many Kroger grocery bags, along the way.

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Reporting: Jeff Hatling

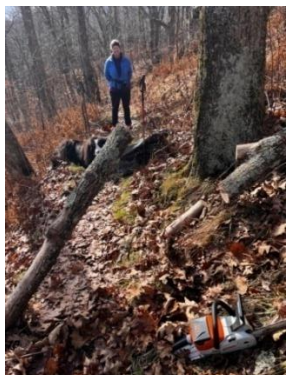
Date: 12/5/2023

Purpose: Inspect the trail, shelter, and spring

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

People: Jeff Hatling, Karen Berry

Summary: We hiked from the Over the Mountain camping/old Barn site to the Stan Murray Shelter. We cleared two new blowdowns and seven step-over logs. We picked up a very small amount of trash at the shelter and replaced the book. We also checked the spring, which is running great, and checked the Over the Mountain camping/old Barn site, where we picked up only a small amount of trash.



Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 12/7/2023

Purpose: Clear blowdown

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

People: Van Hovey, Joe Morris

Summary: Our objective was to clear a reported blowdown in the Jones Branch area of the section a little over a half mile in. We removed the blowdown with no issues.

Reporting: Renee Messina

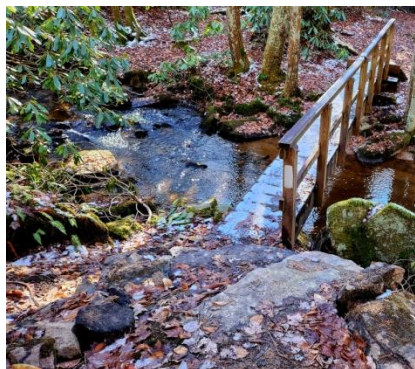
Date: 12/7/2023

Purpose: Final walk-through for the year

Location: Section 12a, Hump Mountain Overlook north to Bitter End

People: Renee Messina

Summary: I accompanied the Thursday crew who worked on our section this week. The crew went in from Walnut Mountain Road to almost the halfway point to Bitter End. Finding myself with about 1.5 miles to hike out in either direction, I decided to continue on to Bitter End to complete a final walk-through of the section for the year. Other than a few minor obstructions, which I was able to clear by hand, I found the trail in good shape and ready for its winter rest. After exiting with the rest of the crew at Walnut Mountain Road, Tony drove around to pick me up at Bitter End. I was also able to observe and appreciate the fine trail work done by the Thursday crew on a couple of outings earlier this autumn (see photos). Many thanks to all who were involved.



Rock Steps



Log Steps



Rock Work