



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

February 2024

tehcc.org

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

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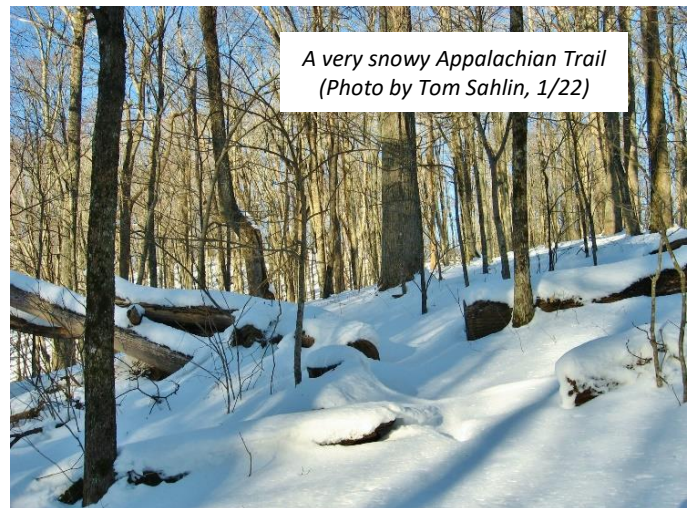
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A very snowy Appalachian Trail
(Photo by Tom Sahlin, 1/22)

Letter from the Chair

Submitted by [Eric Dobbs](#) (2024 Steering Committee Chair)

Happy 2024 everyone! I hope that everyone's January has treated them well. I am excited to be the 2024 TEHCC Steering Committee Chair. I joined the Steering Committee in 2023 and thoroughly enjoyed it; and thanks to Josh Hayes for handing the mantle to me for this year. I would also like to give a warm welcome to our new 2024 Steering Committee members: Gabriella Brueggeman and Jillian Shivery!

2023 was a good year for the club. We had some good hikes during the summer months, many successful paddling trips, and some great club dinners. We hope to begin the hiking program later this spring, but I would like to remind everyone that you can register your own hikes any time of year via the website. Additionally, if you have an idea for a hike, but don't want to lead, please email suggestions and we can see if there's a willing hike leader for that destination. The notification system that was started in 2022 will be ongoing due to positive feedback from our members. Lastly, due to the great interest of members, the club is happy to announce that we are planning more paddling/kayaking excursions for this year.

As we get started with this new year, please feel free to reach out with any ideas, questions or concerns!

Thank you all again,

Eric Dobbs

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TEHCC Spring Dinner Meeting, Friday, March 15, 2024

Make your reservation today! The club would like to invite you to the 2024 TEHCC Spring Dinner.

The Steering Committee decided on Olive Garden catering, which will be **\$10/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, March 11**, 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

The club leadership will update attendees on past and upcoming activities; then present recognitions for hiking/maintaining our A.T. section (pint glasses) and Hiker/Paddler/Maintainer of the Year. Also, being shared are ATC's Silver (25-yr) and Gold (50-yr) service plaques. The USFS will hand out service hour strips for 2023.

The program will first review the trail on Holston Mountain where the A.T. used to travel along the ridgeline until the great relocation over to Roan Mountain. The program will then shift to the fate of Southeast Airlines Flight 308, a DC-3 aircraft that crashed into Holston Mountain on the night of January 8, 1959 (65 years ago), while trying to land at Tri City Airport. For a taste of the latter topic, see the [January 2024 Kingsport Times-News story](#).

Event	Time	Details
Spring Dinner Meeting, March 15, 2024	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 – 5-cheese ziti, chicken alfredo, salad, breadsticks, plus tea/water, coffee, and desserts	6:30 pm - 7:10 pm	Olive Garden Beverages and dessert by the Steering Committee
Club Business	7:10 pm - 7:30 pm	- Update of club activities - Awards and recognition
<i>Program: Trails on Holston Mtn and the Search for Flight 308</i>	7:30 pm - 9:00 pm	Dean Walker (local blogger)

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/events>.

Date	Description	Contact	Telephone
February 15	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1 pm	Eric Dobbs	303-915-9208
February 16	TEHCC Maintainers Kickoff Dinner, 5:30 pm	Renee Messina	423-384-6650
March 9	Hiking with Tools! Introduction to Trail Maintenance, 9:30 am – 2 pm	Tim Stewart	
March 9	APEs Lower Watauga River Cleanup	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
March 15	TEHCC Spring Dinner Meeting, 5:30 pm	Joseph Sengeh	
March 16	Hike the TEHCC A.T. – Location TBD	Tim Schaefer	423-302-0846
March 21	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1 pm	Eric Dobbs	303-915-9208

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Details of Upcoming Events

Recurring Events

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

Contact: [Eric Dobbs](#), 303-915-9208

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.

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

Contact: [Tim Stewart](#)

Hiking with Tools! is an opportunity to enjoy a day hike on our beautiful section of the A.T. while helping out with some routine maintenance. Typical tasks might include lopping rhododendrons, cleaning water diversions, clearing trail obstructions, painting blazes, etc. All tools will be furnished and no prior experience is required! All are welcome; so come on out, meet some new hikers and join the fun...and maybe get your hands a little dirty! Email Tim for details and to sign up.

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 of 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

TEHCC Maintainers Kickoff Dinner, Friday, February 16, 2024

Contact: [Renee Messina](#), 423-384-6650

Please notify Volunteer Coordinator Renee Messina by **Monday, February 12**, if you plan to attend. See details [below](#).

Hiking with Tools! - Introduction to Trail Maintenance, Saturday, March 9, 2024, 9:30 am – 2:00 pm

Contact: [Tim Stewart](#)

The first outing for the season will be an 'Introduction to Trail Maintenance'. Inclement weather is frequent in March, so this outing will be at a lower elevation. Plan to meet at Shook Branch Recreation Area on US321 in Hampton, TN at 9:30 am. We'll hike to the former Watauga Lake Shelter site and back while discussing routine maintenance tasks. Regardless of the weather this is an easy hike. Maybe there will be some light snow! Email Tim for details and to sign up.

TEHCC Spring Dinner Meeting, Friday, March 15, 2024

Contact: [Joseph Sengeh](#)

Please let Joseph Sengeh know by **Monday, March 11**, if you plan to attend. [See meeting details above](#).

Hike the TEHCC A.T., Saturday, March 16, 2024

Contact: [Tim Schaefer](#)

The date is a placeholder. I am thinking of repeating my section hikes of the TEHCC maintained portion of the A.T. The plan is to have enough people and cars so we can "thru hike" each section. If you would like to participate, please contact Tim Schaefer, tim@tehcc.org, so we can begin discussing specific weekends, sections, and plans. For reference you can review [the previous \(non-completed\) 2016 plans](#).

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TEHCC Welcomes New Members

Marcus McCoy
Steve Statham

Alexander Niccum
Sofia Moreno

Benjamin Sanders
John Austin

TEHCC Maintainers Kickoff Dinner, Friday, February 16, 2024

The annual dinner to kick off our 2024 maintenance season will be held at the Eastman Lodge banquet room. The event will start at 5:30 pm with a social time, followed by dinner at 6 pm. After the meal, we will present awards and discuss various issues related to maintaining TEHCC's section of the Appalachian Trail. All maintainers or individuals interested in maintaining are invited to attend. (Last year a record turnout of 66.) NETTA (NorthEast Tennessee Tourism Association) is covering part of the dinner cost as a thank-you for TEHCC's contribution to the AT Vista last August (with well-maintained trails and hike leadership). The TEHCC A.T. Committee has agreed to cover the balance. Menu will again be Phil's Dream Pit barbecue. Please notify Volunteer Coordinator Renee Messina (atmaint@tehcc.org) by **Monday, February 12**, if you plan to attend, so we can get an accurate head count for the meal.



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Reporting: Joe Morris and Greg Kramer

Date: 12/7/2023

Purpose: Rehab trail and construct steps

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

People: Greg Kramer, Dick Martindale, Dan Firth, Tim Stewart, Bill Murdoch, Van Hovey, Jacob Moss, Elzear Lemieux, Tony Messina, Renee Messina, Joe Morris

Summary: We finished the rehab between Walnut Mtn Rd and Bitter End. The crew installed 6 locust steps, created a 10-foot locust boardwalk, and cleaned a culvert and large water diversion. With help from the Appalachian and Cherokee FS Ranger Districts, part of the crew added 9 additional steps, installed a log bog bridge, cleaned out a culvert, and rehabbed over 100 feet of trail. (See picture of new steps by Greg Kramer.)

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 12/7/2023

Purpose: Check trail conditions, remove blowdowns

Location: Section 16a, From Greasy Creek Gap to Clyde Smith Shelter

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I started from Greasy Creek Friendly to Greasy Creek Gap. From the Gap to Clyde Smith Shelter, I cleared the trail of limbs of all sizes from anything big enough to trip someone to whatever I was able to drag off the trail. A lot of branches have come down from the wind and snow. There are two trees down that are easy 4" to 6" stepovers that I didn't touch. On up the trail about a half-mile from the shelter, I found a large blowdown that was dead and went into peices when it fell across the trail. Smaller stuff that I could move, I pushed off the trail, but the trunk, about 14" and 6 feet long, I was only able to roll over. It seems to be solid; it's amazing the tree broke into pieces. Two people could probably roll it off the trail. I continued to Clyde Smith Shelter where I found a north-bound hiker who was running out of food. He wanted any food I could give him, so I gave him a cup of peanuts and chocolate chips as well as about a half-cup of sunflower seeds. He also wanted money, but I didn't have it to give. He asked me several times for money. He could not speak good English and had a middle-eastern accent. He also had cotton clothes and a sleeping



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bag that appeared to be a summer weight bag with a foam pad. I tried to encourage him to come off the trail because he is headed for Roan Mountain. He said he will be okay. He is wearing brown cordoroy jeans, combat boots, a mask, and a checkered-type scarf like they wear in the middle east. He would not let me take his picture. Good candidate for hypothermia in my opinion.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 12/13/2023

Purpose: Transport locusts and scout trail

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

People: Joe Morris

Summary: I transported locusts from Watauga Work Center to Chestoa. I also walked to the overlook to identify work areas for 12/14.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 12/14/2023

Purpose: General Rehab

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

People: Rick Mulholland, Elzear Lemieux, Dan Firth, David Allen, Ben Allen, Jacob Moss, Greg Kramer, Van Hovey, Bill Murdoch, Joe Morris, Carl Fritz, Tim Stewart, Craig Haire

Summary: The regular Thursday Crew had a very productive day at Chestoa. We rehaabbed 192 linear feet, including 80 feet of locust crib and three new locust steps. Ben Allen received his TEHCC first-outing patch.



Reporting: Jeff Hatling

Date: 12/14/2023

Purpose: Clean out water diversions and build steps

Location: Section 14b, Bradley Gap to Yellow Mountain Gap Blue Trail from Yellow Mountain Gap to the old Barn Shelter.

People: Jeff Hatling

Summary: I pulled a blowdown off of Forest Service Road going up to Yellow Mountain Gap. I also cleaned out 8 water diversions and built 2 sets of steps (see photos). I need to replace the old Barn Shelter sign on the A.T. (see photos).



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Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 12/14/2023

Purpose: Check trail for blowdowns

Location: Section 16a, From Greasy Creek Gap to Little Rock Knob

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I started at Greasy Creek Friendly up to Greasy Creek Gap headed for Little Rock Knob on the third attempt. The first two attempts ended at Clyde Smith Shelter at sundown, with the trip up taking so much time to clear the trail of sticks and branches from the high winds and snow. This time, I reached the summit of Little Rock Knob where I heard from a hiker weeks back that a tree was down. The tree required walking around the top that had landed on the trail. I previously checked from Hughes Gap up to Little Rock Knob, but 60 mph winds had occurred since then; so that stretch had to be inspected again. I removed a lot of limbs off the trail, but did not remove two small trees that are an easy stepover. One large piece, about 17-inch and 10-foot long, is over the trail about a half-mile from the shelter. I attempted to roll it off the trail, but could only roll it over. I removed some trash from the shelter and swept it out. I made it to Little Rock Knob for the sunset and it was beautiful. I saw no hikers.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 12/20/2023

Purpose: Survey trail for blowdowns and check spring

Location: Section 16b, From Iron Mountain Gap up to the top of the tallest knob 2.66 miles from trail head

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: From Iron Mountain Gap, I removed sticks and branches, sizes big enough to trip someone up to 4-inches in diameter. I checked the spring in the orchard; it was flowing, but not as much as I thought it would be. The pipe may need to be relocated since some water is flowing around the pipe. I was determined to get to the top of the pinnacle of rocks to search for blowdowns. I found 3 large blowdowns. The first one, I would need help to remove. I might have walked around it on the way in, but I don't think it was there then. I discovered it on the way back down in the dark. It had pieces of the shattered trunk around it, and appeared to have broken from a stump just above the trail and jammed into the trail with the top stuck in the top of another tree. This one is dangerous to cut. Maybe a rope could be attached to pull it down from a distance. It is located just past where the trail turns left after the first ridge, about 0.3 miles from the trail head. I can take care of the other two.



Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 12/21/2023

Purpose: Clean waterbars, rehab trail and build steps

Location: Section 13, US 19E to Doll Flats, Northern half

People: Greg Kramer, Richard Carter, Carl Fritz, Van Hovey, Elzear Lemieux, Bill Murdoch, Jacob Moss, Ben Allen, Dave Allen

Summary: We are getting close to finishing the upgrade of the trail from 19E to Doll Flats. We documented 6 more sites that need to be worked on. This day, 6 people went to where we built the 9 steps previously and started working. Ben, Dave and I worked our way up the trail and cleaned out 47 waterbars. After lunch we continued south and found more rehab to do and did the reconnoitering mentioned above. About 215 feet of trail was rehabbed and another step was installed for a total of 10 steps. It was an extremely productive day; the weather was very balmy for December.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 12/22/2023

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 16b, From Iron Mountain Gap to the base of the first tall knob of the pinnacle of rocks

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I returned from two days prior to where I had found 3 blowdowns (see 12/20 report above). I removed the second one which was close to the base of the first tall knob where the pinnacle of rocks are located. The log was 1.85 miles from the trail head and about 0.1 mile from the pinnacle rocks knob gap. It was about 13 inches in diameter. Cutting and removing the log took almost an hour because it was fairly solid. I was too tired to remove the third one,

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0.25 mile up the trail and over 300 more feet of elevation; so I will return soon to remove it. It is 14 inches in diameter and split off from a nearby tree. It is not rotten yet, but very dead and solid. It is almost 2.75 miles from the trail head.

Reporting: Joel Zabel

Date: 12/23/2023

Purpose: Winter Maintenance

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to Low Gap

People: Jeff Miller, Todd Markwalter, Amy Markwalter, Denny Samuel, Yong Li, Joel Zabel

Summary: We hand-sawed 4 large blowdowns (9" to 12"), several with two cuts. The hardest saw job was a 6" locust that needed two cuts - Katanaboy's teeth are a bit duller for it. We wrestled three 10" to 14" blowdowns off the trail, without sawing, using straps and back muscles, tossing aside many smaller blowdown branches. Cherry Gap Shelter looked good with the new graffiti board. It had been used and there was no new graffiti elsewhere on the recent paint job. We cleared fall leaves from water diversions.

Reporting: Scott Huskey

Date: 12/23/2023

Purpose: Trail Section Maintenance

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

People: Scott Huskey and Jon Shields

Summary: Merry Christmas and God's blessing to you in the new year. Today, my son-in-law and I hiked section 12c to inspect the trail and complete any needed maintenance. The trail is in remarkably good shape except for blowdowns, several that were beyond our capability to remove. And interestingly, there is a hunting blind about 60-70 yards off the trail and definitely on forest service land. Location details as follows. Tree-1: At 36deg12'12" N, 81deg58'32" W; Tree-2: At 36deg12'22" N, 81deg59'21" W; Tree-3: At 36deg12'22" N, 81deg59'44" W. The hunting blind is located at 36deg12'26" N, 81deg 59'39" W.



Tree-1



Tree- 2



Tree-3



Hunting Blind

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 12/24/2023

Purpose: Remove blowdowns and branches from trail

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

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I returned with the Katanaboy saw to remove a 14-inch hard, solid, maple log from the trail. After a two-hour hike to get to the maple blowdown, I spent an hour cutting through the dry and very solid tree. Then I wrestled with it for some time, but found it was still attached at the stump, since it was part of or growing next to another larger tree (see pic). I pried with other limbs to separate the stump from the tree with little success. The wind picked up as the sun was going down and with other dead trees close by, I decided to give up and return another day. To see all pics of this hike, send me a Facebook friend request.



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Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 12/28/2023

Purpose: Remove blowdowns and check spring

Location: Section 16b, From Iron Mountain Gap to the top of the knob of the pinnacle of rocks

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I return to just short of the top at the pinnacle of rocks to finish removing the large poplar that I started on 12/24/23. The second cut seemed harder than the first due to being a larger part of the log, as well as being closer to the stump. After over an hour of cutting, I finally got through it and rolled the piece about 4-feet long off the trail. Now



it is a nice place to rest before the final climb to the top of the rocks. The wind picked up and the temperature dropped as the sun sank to the horizon. The leaves and grass were beautiful, covered in sparkles of frost. I didn't stay long at the top with the wind beginning to howl in the trees, so I headed out to the trail head checking the spring in the orchard, which was flowing about a gallon a minute. On the way up, I got pics of the tree hung in a tree and butt end on the trail (see photo). I saw no hikers. The only life on the trail was a few crows. Also on the way down, I put my trekking poles together and dug a furrow through many piles of foot-deep leaves that make it hard to walk and hid obstructions. It was a chilly but productive day.

Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 12/31/2023

Purpose: Remove blowdowns, check shelter

Location: Section 19a, Martins Creek to Curley Maple Gap Shelter

People: Van Hovey, Peggy Cantrell, Mike Barosso

Summary: Our objective was to remove two reported blowdowns just south of Curley Maple Gap Shelter. We walked in via Martins Creek and cleared one blowdown between the old foundation and the shelter. We picked up trash at the shelter and found the shelter to be in good condition. We then proceeded to the next blowdown, 22 inches, but very rotten wood. We removed the tangle, cleared the trail, and walked out. We encountered no hikers. It was a nice afternoon to be out and a nice way to end 2023 .

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 1/3/2024

Purpose: Check trail for blowdowns

Location: Section 19b, From Nolichucky River toward Curly Maple Gap, stopping at third bridge

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I wanted to get out to a section I haven't been to in a while. The trail from Nolichucky River to Nolichucky Gorge had no problems, so I turned left into the gorge following Jones Branch. Everything was fine until I got past the first bridge. Getting close to the second bridge, I found a blowdown of about 14 inches, and on the other side of the second bridge, I found another of about one foot in diameter. I found one more small blowdown of about 6 inches. They are all within about a quarter mile of each other. I turned around at the third bridge. I saw no other hikers.

Reporting: Bettye Boone

Date: 1/3/2024

Purpose: Collect 'Counter Data' from 3 trail counters on Roan and upload data to TRAFx database

Location: Section 14d, Carvers Gap to Ascent to Jane Bald

People: Bettye Boone, Saylor Fox

Summary: We hiked from Carvers Gap to ascent of Jane Bald to check the counter data at 3 points. We also uploaded the data to TRAFx. We met several hikers with the Blue Ridge Hiking Club who were leaving as we were arriving. They were using the boot brushes as we waited to use them. We had a great conversation; they loved the boot brushes, the walkways to and from the mountain range signage on Round Bald, and Roan in general. Of course, we told them about TEHCC, SAHC, ATC, the Forestry Service, and the VUM (Visitor Use Management) Committee. It was nice to hear positive feedback on our work!

BTW: I want to send a HUGE "Thank You" to everyone who participated in moving logs to Roan High Knob Shelter and evaluated how to put them in place. The logs are close to 800 lbs each....INCREDIBLE! As this is our section, we wish

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we'd been there to help. Again, a heartfelt thanks to all of you! Carl Fritz, 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, Bill Murdoch . Whoever I missed, please accept my apologies. Thanks again!

Reporting: Bettye Boone

Date: 1/4, 1/5, 1/8, and 1/9/2024

Purpose: Review trail counter data, run reports, and prepare for VUM meeting on 1/10/2024

Location: Home

People: Bettye Boone

Summary: After uploading the Trail Counter data to the TRAFx data base, I ran reports to review with Monica M. for the VUM Meeting. I analyzed the data and emailed Monica to arrange a time to talk prior to the VUM meeting on 1/10/24. On 1/8, I had a phone conversation with Monica regarding interpretation of the trail counter data and how to present the data to the VUM Committee. The next day, I reviewed the VUM meeting agenda, the action items from the previous meeting, and made final preparations for the meeting.

Reporting: Richard Ritter

Date: 1/4/2024

Purpose: Hike and remove blowdowns

Location: Section 19a, Indian Grave Gap north, not quite to Beauty Spot

People: Jeff Marek Sr, Tim Richardson, Rich Ritter

Summary: All blowdowns were removed with handsaws.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 1/4/2024

Purpose: Rehab trail, construct waterbars, check Mountaineer Falls Shelter

Location: Section 13 and 12b, US 19E to Doll Flats, Also Sugar Hollow to Walnut Mtn Road

People: Joe Morris, Michael Watts, Van Hovey, Greg Kramer, Bob Peoples, Rio Berry, Carl Fritz, Dan Firth, Bill Murdoch, Tony Messina, Jeff Hatling, Elzear Lemieux

Summary: The Thursday crew created 8 locust waterbars 16 feet to 24 feet in length, adding one substantial rolling-grade dip, and cleaned 12 additional waterbars. Tony and Elzear went to Sugar Hollow - Elk River and hiked to Mountaineer Falls and cleared a blowdown near Splash Dam Falls. They also cleaned several waterbars and removed trash from Mountaineer Falls Shelter. They then drove to Walnut Mtn Rd, hiked over a half-mile, and found no additional obstructions in the section.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 1/5/2024

Purpose: To survey the trail, as well as hike

Location: Section 10, From Dennis Cove Road to Laurel Fork Falls, then to Laurel Fork Shelter

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I was out for exercise at a lower elevation with less wind chill. When I arrived at Dennis Cove, I found someone had started a fire in the parking lot without clearing the leaves. It appeared that they had left it burning, as the ashes were undisturbed. Fortunately, it did not spread. I checked on the shelter and found some trash, which I packed out. I also discovered some graffiti in the shelter, a large red flower and the word "heal" done with spray paint (see pic). There are two or three sections close to the shelter on the high-water trail where the trail is creeping downhill on a steep bank. There were no blowdowns on the trail where I hiked. I saw no other hikers on the trail.



Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 1/8/2024

Purpose: Photograph rock shelf on Chestoa overlook, Clear blowdowns in Jones Branch

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

People: Van Hovey, Carrie Hovey, Peggy Cantrell

Summary: We walked in from the Chestoa trailhead to the overlook, took a few photos of the rock shelf, and sent them off to Carl. We then entered the trail at the USA Raft trailhead, walked in the Jones Branch section, and located and dispatched the reported blowdown with the Katanaboy saw. There were no other issues except a little trash which we carried out. Thanks for the report, Tom. It was a beautiful afternoon to be out.....Cheers.

Reporting: Bettye Boone

Date: 1/10/2024

Purpose: Attend VUM Meeting, in person

Location: Mitchell County Offices in Bakersville, NC

People: Bettye Boone

Summary: I attended the Roan VUM Committee meeting. Community representatives were invited by the Forestry Service to attend in person and stay for lunch to get to know each other better. Allen Cook and I attended from NC; no representatives attended from TN. Three Forestry Service reps attended. We had a very worthwhile discussion regarding various suggestions, needs, and concerns.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 1/11/2024

Purpose: Rehab trail

Location: Section 13, US 19E to Doll Flats

People: Tim Stewart, Bob Peoples, Rio Berry, Michael Watts, Van Hovey, Rick Mulholland, Joe Morris, Mike Hicks, Noel Mollica, Elzear Lemieux, Greg Kramer, Dan Firth, Bill Murdoch, Carl Fritz

Summary: The Thursday crew continued to rehab between 19E and Doll Flats. We installed 110 feet of locust crib with two platform steps and backfill, created 7 new water diversions with rock and locust logs, and continued to clean out waterbars along the way. Mike and Noel joined the crew for the first time and received their TEHCC patches.

Reporting: Richard Ritter for the JC Old Timers Hiking Club

Date: 1/15/2024

Purpose: Clear reported blowdowns and brush overhanging trail

Location: Section 19a, Indian Grave Gap to Beauty Spot

People: Tim Richardson, Jeff Marek, Pat Kenney, Pam Ritter, Richard Ritter

Summary: With the past two weekends of windstorms, there were reports of many blowdowns across this section. Nineteen blowdowns were cut and cleared. As soon as we can, we need to check for blowdowns from Beauty Spot to the Unaka switchbacks.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 1/19/2024

Purpose: Roan Stewardship Committee

Location: Teleconference

People: Vic Hasler, Steve Perri

Summary: Steve and Vic virtually joined the Roan Stewardship Committee meeting held in the USFS Supervisor's Office in Asheville. The meeting was roughly half teleconferencing and half in-person with the latter for the first time in several years. There was a large USFS presence. Presentations were given on several research topics and updates were given by the various partner organizations. When monitoring lichens and spruce-fir moss spiders, don't let the observation damage the habitat. Blackberry control at Craggy Flats (NC) was largely influenced by the frequency of the mowing. Roan Highlands focuses on cutting patches with greater than 50% coverage as a possible tipping point. SAHC is ready to transfer the 7,498-acre South Yellow Mountain Preserve to USFS in 2024. The preserve will have its own ranger and maybe law enforcement. Several announcements for position placements are forthcoming, including Cherokee National Forest, Watauga District Ranger.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 1/22/2024

Purpose: TEHCC A.T. Committee Meeting

Location: Eastman Recreation Center

People: Carl Fritz, Dan Firth, Steve Falling, Vic Hasler, Greg Kramer, Joe Morris, Steve Perri, Renee Messina, Tony Messina, Tim Stewart, Steve Wilson

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Summary: Looking into 2024, eleven members of the club's A.T. Committee discussed potential and planned projects to address our delegated responsibility for the Appalachian Trail. A few topics are highlighted in this report. At our Maintenance Kickoff on Friday, February 16, cumulative service patches will be distributed (with Carl exceeding 20,000 hours) and expectations will be shared with section maintainers, along with some training videos. The dinner cost from Phil's Dream Pit BBQ will again be covered. A.T. tag grants are being applied to continue mowing along the accessible trail section on Osborne Farm, repair rotten logs on Roan High Knob Shelter, install handrail for steps cut into rock above the Nolichucky River, and trail improvements and tests at Carvers Gap. The work plan also includes refreshing the list of trail issues, Konnarock Crew rehab at Temple Hill Gap in late July, steps improvement north of Yellow Mtn Gap, side slope north of Curley Maple Gap shelter, high steps and wet areas south of Stan Murray shelter, and trimming along the Backbone Rock access trail. A day of service returns for Wright State University freshmen trip to the Roans in mid-August. Finally, the committee agreed to provide supporting letters for the National Scenic Trail designation for the Benton MacKaye Trail.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

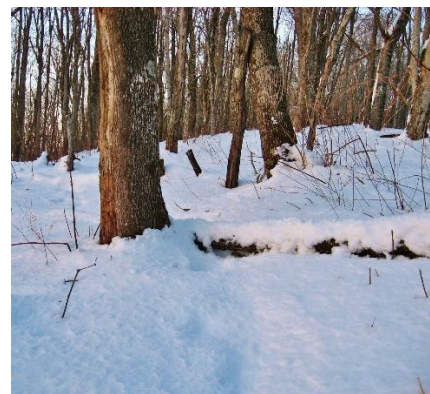
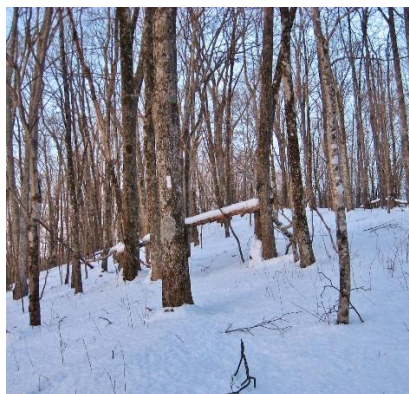
Date: 1/22/2024

Purpose: Check trail conditions and look for blowdowns

Location: Section 16b, From Iron Mountain Gap to top of ridge one mile from trail head

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: From Iron Mountain Gap, I went up to the top of the first tall ridge, but turned around before descending to the Apple Orchard. There are several downfalls on this ridge (see pics). I removed several small ones and cut the branches off a larger one that was covering the trail. The snow was beautiful, but much deeper than I thought it would be. Overall, it's about 9 inches deep with many drifts over the trail that are close to 16 inches deep. It makes for very hard going. I left a downfall of about 8 inches close to the top of the ridge that is over the trail and requires crouching to go under. There is a pretty large tree leaning over the trail that is caught in the top of another tree. It looks very dangerous. It was a beautiful day to be in the woods. I saw tracks ahead of me to the end of the first ridge, a quarter-mile up. Then more tracks from the same place coming down. I was glad they turned around. This hike wore me out because of the deep snow. Snow shoes would be very beneficial. I'll go back after the rain clears the snow.



Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 1/24/2024

Purpose: Inspect trail

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

People: Peggy Cantrell

Summary: On this section, Peggy encountered numerous small blowdowns and several large ones. She cleared 9+ small blowdowns and a bunch of canopy trash. She did what she could with a Silky Bigboy saw, but was thwarted by a blowdown tangle blocking the trail. This was reported to the Section Maintainer.

Reporting: Craig Haire

Date: 1/24/2024

Purpose: Inspect trail and clear blowdowns

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

People: Craig Haire

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Summary: I tossed small debris off the trail after the wind storms earlier this month. There were only 3 minor blowdowns, which could be cut with my 500 mm folding Katanaboy saw. One of these was a messy tangle in the rhododendron tunnel between Temple Ridge and Temple Hill Gap. The weather was pleasant enough that I was in a T-shirt most of the time, but it was pretty windy on the ridge. Amazingly, I saw no one else on the trail.

Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 1/26/2024

Purpose: Clear reported blowdowns

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

People: Van Hovey, John Beaudet

Summary: Our objective was to clear blowdowns that were reported on 1/24 by Peggy Cantrell. We removed 8+ blowdowns of various sizes, and cleared a big tangle and 3 blowdowns along a 100-foot section of trail north of bridge 3. We met 2 hikers coming from Indian Grave Gap who mentioned what we were going after. After we walked out, we met Tennessee Slim who was about five minutes behind us. He mentioned a couple more blowdowns a bit beyond where we stopped, and one on the Indian Grave Gap section north of Curley Maple Gap Shelter. The trail from Indian Grave Gap to Chestoa is "passable," however we will address the additional items next week. Thank you to Peggy, John and Tom for all the help!

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 1/26/2024

Purpose: Evaluate section for Konnarock crew

Location: Section 20b, Temple Hill Gap to No Business Knob Shelter, Temple Hill

People: Joe Morris

Summary: Jerry Kyle from ATC wanted to evaluate the section and surroundings for the Konnarock outing to be held in late July. We cleared several small blowdowns and tangles along the way. There are several large blowdowns 0.3 mile north of No Business Knob Shelter. It is possible that the Hot Shot Crew will remove them next week.