



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

November 2017

tehcc.org

Co-Editors – [Koustubh Kulkarni](#) and [Terry Oldfield](#)

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Shelter Maintenance 2017 with TN AT License Plate Grant

Carl Fritz reporting

In 2017 we continued special maintenance on our shelters to paint them and perform other maintenance as needed. Since our shelters basically had not been painted recently, we started the effort in 2016. Also, graffiti has become a problem especially in recent years. The Appalachian Trail Conference provided us funding with a TN AT License Plate Grant to paint and do maintenance on Double Springs, Iron Mountain, Mountaineer Falls and Stan Murray Shelters in 2017.



Stan Murray Shelter Roof Condition

Kim Peters and the 3rd Saturday trail maintenance group did the painting of Double Springs, Iron Mountain and Mountaineer Falls Shelters. They used high quality and high sheen paint to minimize the adhesion of graffiti. Also, Ken and Lotta Murray made and installed graffiti boards in all shelters. The crew sealed a leaking metal roof on Double Springs Shelter. The Thursday Crew installed framing and hardware cloth under the front edge of the sleeping platforms in Double Springs and Iron Mountain Shelters. This is to reduce the collection of trash under the sleeping platforms.

The most difficult task was the extensive maintenance on Stan Murray Shelter. Its foundation concrete pillars in the rear had settled into the ground so the siding was in the soil about two inches and sleeping platform had a resulting nine degree slope. The shingle roof had deteriorated in the back and the rafters were rotted.

Some of the battens on the siding were deteriorated. And the sleeping platform was getting rough. The biggest challenge was transporting the 1100 pounds of materials and tools to the shelter. The US Forest Service Appalachian Ranger District helped us with moving the materials. So in two successive work days we were able to transport all the materials, do all the repairs and paint the shelter inside and outside. Twenty nine dedicated volunteers invested 622 hours and \$1687 from the TN AT License Plate Grant to greatly improve four of our shelters this year.

TN AT License Plate Grant for Maintaining Shelters and Building Bridges

Carl Fritz reporting

In late 2015 TEHCC received a Tennessee Appalachian Trail License Plate grant for maintaining some of our shelters and building two replacement bridges. These funds in combination with many volunteers significantly improved four of our shelters during 2016. And in 2017 we were able to install two needed replacement bridges because the old ones were deteriorating to an unsafe condition. Many of our shelters had not been painted in years and especially in recent years graffiti had become prolific. Kim Peters and the 3rd Saturday trail maintenance group laid hands on Abingdon Gap Shelter in June of 2016 to paint the inside and outside, install new guttering, and install a graffiti board compliments of Ken and Lotta Murray. They used high quality and high sheen paint to minimize the adhesion of graffiti.

Likewise, they tackled Moreland Gap, Vandeventer and Clyde Smith Shelters in the fall of 2016. Naturally, it took more energy getting supplies into Clyde Smith and Vandeventer Shelters because of their distance from trailheads. Also, they successfully sealed some long term leaks in Clyde Smith Shelter. In all, 16 volunteers contributed 318 hours over about 15 days to maintain these four shelters at a cost of \$745.

The Shook Branch Bridge (just north of US-321) and Wilder Mine Bridge (just south of US-19E) took some time to design. And the materials were hard to find. The stringers and sills were made to order by East Tennessee Forestry Products, the decking was purchased from surplus with a contractor and much of hardware was special order. Thanks to Ken Buchanan, Don Haas, Charlie Mattiole and Ted Mowery for providing equipment and time to move the larger wood pieces multiple times.

Many of bridge materials were stored at US Forest Service Watauga Work Center. We cut, drilled and added preservative there. In March 2017 we tackled installing the Shook Branch Bridge while Watauga Lake was down and it was dry at bridge site. It was a large undertaking since much ground, rock and timber framing had to be done to make the 18' bridge span at a high enough level to not be flooded by the lake. Fortunately, we completed it just a week or so before TVA started raising the water level.

Then in July 2017 we installed the 21' Wilder Mine Bridge. The volunteers did a lot of rock cribbing along the one vertical bank to prevent future erosion. We did encounter some problems like poison ivy. Note that much flooding in Roan Mountain on October 23, 2017 did not impact this new bridge at all. 28 volunteers worked 861 hours over 17 days to install these two bridges at only a cost of \$3280. Hard work by volunteers with some funding from the TN AT License Plate made a big difference in six of TEHCC maintained AT structures.

TN AT License Plate Grant for Chainsaw

Carl Fritz reporting

In mid-September we were fortunate to receive a Tennessee Appalachian Trail License Plate grant to purchase a new larger chainsaw and chainsaw accessories for some of our existing chainsaws. Jim Chambers was able to identify a low cost saw provider in the area. We purchased a Stihl MS 362R chainsaw with a 25" bar. Our existing chainsaws have 16 and 18" bars. This new saw provides us the capability to deal with larger blowdowns. We expect especially more large blowdowns as the dead hemlocks start coming down. The new saw is not broke in yet. Three tanks of gas must be run through it before full throttle is engaged. But we are better equipped to deal with blowdowns thanks to this grant.



Rental Equipment Stories

Article by Vic Hasler, Stories by club members

Having a selection of backpacking and camping gear available for low-cost rental is a unique benefit of TEHCC. We have acquired backpacks, tents, sleeping pads, trekking poles, and few other supporting items over the years. This equipment has enabled fun outdoor trips or allow evaluation of different features. The following are a few stories by club members. Try out this benefit sometime to write your own adventure.

Phil Kosinski

Earlier in the year, Josh Tullock and I started to plan an adventure on the Appalachian Trail to take in the sights - and achieve a bucket list item of viewing and also capturing a picture of the Milky Way. After doing some preliminary hiking and scouting, we chose to start at Carver's Gap and hike to Jane Bald to capture the moment.

We made a list of gear to take, then realized how much needed to be purchased – with a pretty significant cost. Also, many items we researched were not available locally, so we had no way of laying hands on them prior to actual purchase. I mentioned to Josh that we could rent items from the TEHCC and that's what we did! We went to B310 and looked over the backpacks after viewing them online, just to see if any could handle all our photography gear.



Photo was featured on MyEastman homepage

The folks in the Recreation Department were quite helpful and accommodating. We chose backpacks, sleeping mats,

rain covers and the first aid kit. All the gear was in great condition and fully met our needs. Without the TEHCC rental equipment, Josh and I wouldn't have been able to make the trip. The experience has us working on future plans. Next time we'll rent a backpacking tent as well, because it will save us at least five pound. Here is a video we made to document the adventure. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjeJfgrc4jA>

Greg Wellman

As a novice backpacker, I was very thankful to have the TEHCC equipment available for my first overnight trip. Along with three other dad/daughter pairs, my daughter and I trekked through Grayson Highlands State Park and slightly beyond, all on the Appalachian Trail. The four girls, all new high school freshmen, impressed us geezers with their resilience and attitude. We made great memories along the trail – from simple conversation to time with Grayson Highlands' famous ponies. The TEHCC rental equipment, plus knowledge from more expert backpacking friends, made for an enjoyable and economical outing.

Steve Miller

A friend hosts an annual Fourth of July party on his farm, inviting all who would like to extend their stay to pitch a tent for a night or two. Their farm is a lovely setting for camping, with hiking on the land and at a nearby park. This outdoors time with wonderful friends has become a cherished tradition for our family. I own two tents that are designed for backpacking, but do not have a tent that provides the comfort commonly desired for the entire family when lightweight equipment is not really necessary (e.g., "car camping"). Over the years, I have been very appreciative of TEHCC rental equipment. Typically, we have the need of larger tents two or three times per year. In addition to the annual July party, we have camped numerous times on my parent's farm and at locations ranging from Virginia State Parks (Grayson Highlands, Bear Tree) to National Forest Campgrounds (Paint Creek) to the Great Smoky Mountains. Some of my family's most special memories are from those outings, all facilitated by the ability to rent a multi-person tent from TEHCC.



Chris Chambers

I have rented backpacking gear from TEHCC on two different occasions. The first was for an overnight "guy's trip" with a few family

members, where we backpacked on the A.T. from Shady Valley to Watauga Dam. The second occasion was more special to me since it was with my teenage daughter. We backpacked on the A.T. from Carver's Gap to the Overmountain Shelter for an overnight stay. It was her first overnight experience in the wilderness and she had a blast! It was fantastic to be able to talk and laugh, free from the distractions of life as we trekked along the trail! Neither of these trips would have been possible without the availability of quality rental gear from TEHCC.

Also important, Chris has agreed to step into the TEHCC Rental Equipment Coordinator role for the club. We thank Terry Dougherty for his prior service, while understanding that retirement has many different projects to complete. Chris will inherit the rental@tehcc.org redirect address, so let him your ideas for new equipment – or repairs needed to the current fleet.

TEHCC Welcomes New Members

No new members

Event Schedule – Next Two Months

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

For information on APEs/TEHCC paddling events, see <http://regions.worldkayak.com/tri-cities/category/regional-events/>.

Date	Description	Contact	Telephone
November 18	Laurel River Trail	Vic Hasler	423-239-0388

Standard Hike Information

Hikes leaving from “Colonial Heights” gather at the parking lot below McDonalds, 4317 Fort Henry Drive, which is NW of I-81 Exit 59. The “Johnson City” meeting location is behind Parkway Discount Wine & Liquor just off I-26 Exit 24 at the intersection of University Parkway and South Roan Street. The “Gate City” spot is up on the hill above US 23 at Kane Street intersection (traffic light) by Food Lion. All hikes will leave promptly to stay on schedule. Carpooling is encouraged with passengers providing a few dollars each towards gas.

Bring adequate water, snack/lunch, clothing appropriate for the weather, comfortable footwear, headgear/sun protection, bug spray, camera, and trekking poles as desired. At the discretion of the hike leader, the family dog can come, if friendly, and kept on leash. Walking speed is typically 2 mph including rest breaks. For more information, check the trail wiki (click on hike title if underlined for the link) or call the hike leader. It is appropriate to contact the hike leader to let them know that you are interested in coming and provide a cell phone number in case plans change for either party. An activity release form is signed by everyone going on the hike – and it helps capture the names and spelling for the trip report. Good digital photos from the hike are appreciated for the newsletter and trail wiki.

Details of Upcoming Events

Recurring Events

TEHCC Steering Committee Meeting - Usually every second Tuesday of the month, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Contact: [Kay Parker](#), 423-963-8461

Location: Eastman Chemical Company, Kingsport, TN; Bldg 75 PCRA

The Steering Committee guides the general program for the club. The Committee normally meets at lunchtime on the second Tuesday of each month. Meetings are open to all TEHCC members. Bring your lunch or grab a bite at the B-75 cafeteria. After going through the turnstiles at the main B-75 entrance, continue straight. The room is immediately to the right. Members who are not current Eastman employees need to contact a member of the Steering Committee at least three days prior to arrange for a temporary visitor's pass.

Tuesday Evenings: Johnson City Roll Practice, 7:30 – 9:00 pm

Contact: [Wesley R. Bradley](#), 423-647-1321

Come join the [J.A.W.](#), [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.

Click [here](#) for more information.

Note: The J.A.W. provides the current fleet of boats for demo at the pool session, but neither the pool nor the J.A.W. provides

paddling equipment (paddle, spray skirt, etc.). If you are just starting out in the sport and do not have your own equipment, please post a message on the [APEs yahoo group site](#) or contact [Wesley R. Bradley](#). We will try our best to get you outfitted for the night! Also feel free to contact Wesley for any other questions or comments you may have.

Most Thursdays: Weekly A.T. Trail Maintenance

Contact: [Carl Fritz](#), 423-477-4669, atvolunteer@tehcc.org

Join a group of maintainers who work somewhere on our 133.6-mile section each week, usually on Thursdays.

Thursday Evenings: Kayak Session, Kingsport Aquatic Center, 7 – 9 pm

Contact: [Ryan Shealy](#), 423-963-6066

Interested in kayaking but don't know where to start? Basic kayak training and practice is available in Kingsport on Thursdays at the [Kingsport Aquatic Center](#)! Admission is \$3 for two full hours of fun; Aquatic Center members may attend free! If you have equipment, you may drop it off, at the door closest to the indoor pool; then enter the main door to pay at the front desk. The pool does not provide paddling equipment, but if you are just starting out and do not have your own gear, please contact Ryan Shealy (423-963-6066). For additional event details, click [here](#).

Third Thursday Socials, YEE-HAW Brewery/White Duck Taco, 6:30pm – 8:30 pm

Leader: [Steven Adams](#), 423-534-3636

Come join your fellow APEs the third Thursday of every month at YEE-HAW Brewery/ White Duck Taco Johnson City, TN (6:30-8:30). This is a social event for all APEs members and prospective members. This is to provide an opportunity for all paddlers novice to expert and flat-water to Class V to make friends while playing bocce ball, corn hole and enjoying tacos and beverages. We will casually discuss any topics of interest such as equipment, safety, swims, carnage, and weekend paddling plans. If possible please rsvp before going to get an area saved but walk ins are welcomed. Message Steven Adams (campingskeeter@gmail.com) with any questions.

Scheduled Events

Laurel River Trail, Saturday, November 18, 2017

Leader: [Vic Hasler](#), 423-239-0388

Rating: 7.2 mile round trip in-out mostly flat.

A moderately easy joint hike with the Mid-Appalachian Highlands Club (MAHC) near Hot Springs, NC. Our goal is to explore a rails-to-trail conversion along Big Laurel Creek on an old railroad bed previously used to carry logs to the sawmill in the former town of Runion on the French Broad River. The trail is flat, mostly tree-covered, and with views of the rivers.

Sunrise is 7:15am, so let's meet in Colonial Heights at 8am to carpool to Johnson City to meet MAHC by 8:30am for an hour drive to the trailhead. The hike itself is only 3-3.5 hours long. Afterwards, the plans are to have a late (1pm) lunch at Dave's 209 in Hot Springs, then return by 4pm. For further information and to let us know of your interest, please call/e-mail the hike leader.

For the Record

A.T.: TN 91 to Double Springs Shelter, Saturday, October 7, 2017

Rporting: [Vic Hasler](#)

Hal Yungmeyer and I hiked from TN 91 a short distance south and also north to Double Springs Shelter with a distance measuring wheel. Trail relocations along these routes were completed in August 2015 and August 2017, respectively. Measurements indicated that the distances are essentially the same as before the relos. Thus, no changes are needed for these distances in the 2018 A.T. Data Book. (See Maintenance Reports for additional information.)



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Reporting: Lynn DiFiore

Date: 9/24/2017

Purpose: Routine maintenance

Location: Section 14b, Overmountain Shelter to Bradley Gap

People: Lynn DiFiore, Robert Lamb, Eilidh (canine)

Summary: We removed several limbs and cut out one large blowdown near Bradley Gap campsites. We also cut back the few briars that were overhanging into the trail, dismantled the re-occurring fire rings on Little Hump, and packed out a moderate amount of trash from the Bradley Gap campsites. There was a large group camped in the barn when we arrived; they had hauled up coolers and supplies in a wagon from Roaring Creek. However, they cleaned up when they left and took all their trash out with them. The springs are running well. Numerous SOBOs were passing through.

Reporting: Paul Benfield

Date: 9/27/2017

Purpose: Mow grass

Location: Section 4b, Osborne Farm

People: Paul Benfield, Ted Mowery

Summary: We mowed and cut weeds across the Osborne Farm as needed.

Reporting: Eric Middlemas

Date: 9/28/2017

Purpose: Fall maintenance

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

People: Rich Ritter, Wayne Jones, Eric Middlemas, Judy Middlemas, Jeannine Edwards, Tim Shipley

Summary: The Old Timers Hiking Club performed their Fall maintenance trip on September 28, 2017. One group worked from the FS 230 switchback to Cherry Gap Shelter and a second group worked from the switchback to Indian Grave Gap. At least 5 large blowdowns remained in the section from FS 230 switchback to Cherry Gap Shelter. These will be removed at a later date. Smaller blowdowns and trail debris were removed and waterbars were cleaned. A new register and a repaired rake were placed at the shelter. The springs were running well.

Reporting: Eric Middlemas

Date: 9/28/2017

Purpose: Fall maintenance

Location: Section 18, FS 230 switchback to Indian Grave Gap

People: Howard Gunn, Bruce Darby, Jan Marie Ballas, Lana Scott, Caro Dellenbaugh, Mike Hupko, David Douthat

Summary: This work was part of the Old Timers Hiking Club Fall Maintenance trip on September 28, 2017. We cleaned waterbars, lopped vegetation, removed debris left by the recent windstorms, and removed blowdowns. This section of the trail is in excellent condition.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 9/28/2017

Purpose: Rehab trail

Location: Section 12a, Bitter End to Walnut Mountain Road, northern 1.2 mile

People: Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Joe Morris, Bill Murdoch, Kim Peters, Kevin Sedgwick; SCA: Erika Hoad, Amy Spinden, Ted Turner

Summary: We rehabbed primarily two areas. First was along Laurel Fork. This crew did a lot of rock work with cribbing and much crush to keep trail from getting wet. The rest worked on a steep hill south of the bridge that was very rooty. They installed 12 locust steps with backfill. There are additional rehab opportunities and a needed bog bridge.

Reporting: Dan Firth

Date: 9/30/2017

Purpose: Roan Highlands

Location: Hughes Gap to US 19E

People: Dan Firth and Ben Firth

Summary: Campsites along the A.T. in the Roan Highlands from Hughes Gap to US 19E were surveyed. We measured impact and experiential parameters such as impacted area, condition class, exposed soil, and visibility from the trail and other sites. The

collected data is intended to inform decisions by the myriad stakeholders for the highlands. The final report is being prepared.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 10/4/2017

Purpose: Remove graffiti from rock face

Location: Section 19b, 0.5 mile north of Chestoa Bridge parking

People: Vic Hasler

Summary: With the Fall Partnership discussion in the afternoon, I decided to swing by earlier to remove the fresh graffiti observed during the Labor Day maintenance trip. The graffiti, "M+L" spray painted in blue on a rock face, was located roughly a half-mile in from the Chestoa Bridge parking. The Goof Off hydrocarbon spray was able to lift some of the paint. I then used a newly-purchased plastic brush to scrub the rough surface to remove more paint. This method does require water to rinse, so I had carried in a 2.5-gallon sprayer – which failed to operate properly. I ended up dribbling the water onto the surface while brushing the lifted paint from the rock face. I judge that the treatment was two-thirds successful as the graffiti is faded, but the blue coloring is not completely removed from the rock outcropping. Another application may be required to have the graffiti damage not readily noticed.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 10/4/2017

Purpose: Fall A.T. Partnership Discussion

Location: Watauga Ranger District office in Unicoi, TN

People: ATC: Matt Drury, Leanna Joyner, Jason Zink; TEHCC: Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Vic Hasler, Mike Hupko, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Tim Stewart; TVA: Randy Short; USFS: Cleave Fox, Keith Kelley, Wes McCall, Leslie Morgan, Tim Slone

Summary: The Fall 2017 A.T. Partnership discussion covered a range of issues. This summary shares just a few topics to inform the general club.

- The A.T. Camp app sponsored by the ATC is up and running to allow backpackers to designate up to three nights of shelter/campsite plans. The goal is to lower the impact at the locations by spreading the visitor use. TEHCC has campsites listed at Doll Flats, Apple House, and Wilder Mine Group plus some shelters. A special communication for scouting organizations is being developed.

- USFS engineer has provided some information regarding the Overmountain Shelter structural stabilization; but the drawings are needed to really understand the scope of work to perform. The goal is to meet NEPA (National Environmental Program Act) requirements by February to allow execution in early 2018 before heavy use.

- Watauga RD is considering closing the vault toilets at Carvers Gap over the winter due to the seasonal hazards of sending limited staff up to maintain them. The partnership had no major concerns, so mostly talked about providing signage to state the closure time period and nearest alternative bathroom.

- Cherokee NF Regions 8/9 are considering a sawyer database. USFS has changed liability from hitting the individual district budgets to a pool fund; therefore, other training options are now being discussed – such as allowing specific organizations to train their own sawyers, after the USFS provides a train-the-trainer course.

- NEPA paperwork for the 6600' trail relocation south of Greasy Creek Gap (Konnarock 2020-2024) will be submitted to the Watauga RD.

- TVA reported success with interventions made at Watauga Dam Campground to reduce bear encounters. These included installing bear-proof trash cans, eliminating tent camping, providing education signs, and banning outside food storage.

- If Watauga RD pursues permanent closure of camping along Watauga Lake due to the bears, then the A.T. shelter in this section would need to be dismantled and removed.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 10/4/2017

Purpose: Blowdown assessment and re-route

Location: Section 9a, Spring on Pond Mountain

People: Joe Morris, Robin Dean

Summary: There is a very large blowdown at the water source on the summit of Pond Mountain. Rather than go straight through it, we opted to re-route to the back side of the root ball. There are two red oaks in this tangle. We were unable to remove either one because of the size and tension. We will return on Saturday hopefully, with an experienced sawyer and finish this job.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 10/5/2017

Purpose: Clear waterbars

Location: Sections 3a and 3b, McQueen's Gap to Low Gap

People: Greg Kramer

Summary: Cleaned water diversions since it is going to rain by Sunday.

Reporting: Kim Peters

Date: 10/5/2017

Purpose: Check trail and shelter

Location: Section 12b, Walnut Mountain Rd to 1 mile south of Mountaineer Falls Shelter

People: Kim Peters

Summary: I hiked out to Mountaineer Falls Shelter to assess what materials might be needed to paint it on the upcoming 3rd-Saturday trip. Along the way, I removed multiple small blowdowns and threw off countless branches from the trail. I found three blowdowns that will require a chainsaw to remove.

Just about every surface inside the shelter has graffiti on it so it will be a worthwhile effort to paint it and install a graffiti board later this month. While inspecting the shelter, I discovered a resident black snake. I wonder if this means there are lots of mice in the shelter or no mice in the shelter.

Reporting: Jim Chambers

Date: 10/7/2017

Purpose: ALDHA Gathering

Location: Abingdon, Virginia

People: Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart, Kim Peters, Paul Benfield, John Beaudet, Kayla Carter

Summary: Several club members staffed the TEHCC Outreach Table during the 36th ALDHA (Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association) Gathering in Abingdon, VA. TEHCC had a major presence at this year's Gathering....thanks to all involved.

Reporting: Dean Baird

Date: 10/7/2017

Purpose: Blowdown assessment and reroute, phase II

Location: Sections 9a and 9b, Spring on Pond Mountain to Hampton Blue-Blaze Trail

People: Dean Baird, Scotty Bowman

Summary: We removed a portion of the smaller of the two red oak trees involved in the complex blowdown. This tree was under tension and required both axe and crosscut saw work. Using the reroute established earlier by Joe and Robin, we moved a large number of rocks to fill in two low lying areas that will invariably become mudholes otherwise. One is located where the rootball of the largest blowdown tree used to be. The other is a low spot that will be filled with water once there is sufficient rain. We noted that there is currently no water coming from the spring at the level of the trail. Our approach was from US 321. We continued over Pond Mtn down the southside and removed 3 smaller blowdown trees on the way. We also picked up and removed a small amount of trash from the Hampton Blue-Blaze trail.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 10/7/2017

Purpose: Measure trail distance for A.T. Data Book

Location: Section 5, TN 91 to stream

People: Vic Hasler, Hal Yungmeyer

Summary: The relocation opened in this section on August 14, 2015 with the assistance of the ASU Watauga Global Community. It was uncertain whether official distance measurements were taken, as there were no records. However, I was able to confirm that there was no change in the distance from TN 91 to the stream under the bog bridges 0.8 mile south. Even with the couple weeks of drought, the stream was still trickling along.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 10/7/2017

Purpose: Measure trail distance for A.T. Data Book

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

People: Vic Hasler, Hal Yungmeyer

Summary: The relocations on this section officially opened on August 18, 2017 with assistance of the ASU Watauga Residential College. After the opening date, the Thursday crew went out to polish the trail and made a few small adjustments. The relo and rehab work addressed various issues including tread erosion, PUDS (pointless ups and downs), and a major blowdown. The trail distance from TN 91 highway to the Double Springs Shelter remains essentially 3.0 miles, thus keeping the previous official result. No changes for the 2018 Data Book, but one change for the guidebook as a sharp turn was removed. There is only one campsite between the shelter and TN 91.

Reporting: Joe DeLoach

Date: 10/8/2017

Purpose: Replace sign

Location: Section 15a, Carvers Gap

People: Joe DeLoach

Summary: The Cherokee NF had placed a sturdy, concreted 4 x 4 post at the Trail south side of Carvers Gap and put an "Appalachian Trail Foot Travel Only" sign on it. I attached a distance sign to it last year. Someone sawed the post off and took both signs. The post

is now too low to function as a signpost without splinting or splicing. I nailed an "A.T. Foot Travel Only" sign to a fencepost, so there would be some sign there in addition to the blazes. After receiving permission for a ground-disturbing activity from the Forest Service, I plan to install a new post, also with concrete, down the Trail at the blue-blazed trail junction. Hopefully getting it out of sight of the road will increase the longevity.

Reporting: Lynn DiFiore

Date: 10/9/2017

Purpose: Routine maintenance

Location: Section 14b, Stan Murray Shelter to Little Hump

People: Lynn DiFiore, Robert Lamb

Summary: I replaced the register in the barn and removed a LARGE amount of trash, which was mostly conveniently bagged up in two yard-waste bags. I cut out two small blowdowns, and dismantled fire rings that had been built in the middle of the trail near Stan Murray and at Little Hump. I removed a small amount of trash from Stan Murray and removed a memorial from the rocks at Little Hump. The trail was very muddy from recent storms. The springs are running very well.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 10/9/2017

Purpose: Rehab trail

Location: Section 14c, Carvers Gap to Jane Bald

People: Ken Buchanan, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Ted Mowery, Bill Murdoch, Kim Peters, Kevin Sedgwick; UNC Charlotte: Grace Gable, Pablo Coria, Coleman Murphy, Chloe Field, Cynthia Vera, Julia Nelson, James Tullett, Katie Steele, Haylee Pentek

Summary: We cleaned many of the water diversions from Carvers Gap to Engine Gap. We rehabbed the trail mostly on the north side of Round Bald by lowering steps, removing sod from the high side where it is invading the trail, and pulling more gravel back on the trail. Also three of the crew installed the new Round Bald and Jane Bald signs and posts. The UNC Charlotte students were brave to join us after taking high winds and probably five inches of rain the previous day while hiking and camping in the Roans. This Venture group were very hard workers and a pleasure to be with. And fortunately by about 2pm the clouds lifted so they had some great views after being totally in clouds for almost three days.



TEHCC with UNC Charlotte Students Rehabbed Trail on Round Bald

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 10/10/2017

Purpose: Redesign Cherry Gap Shelter (Section 17)

Location: Kincora Hostel

People: Carl Fritz, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples

Summary: We are working towards replacing Cherry Gap Shelter. Bob has helped link us to a special program at Elizabethton High School. Some students may be able to do the shelter design. We were planning our first meeting with students.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 10/12/2017

Purpose: Paint Moreland Gap Shelter graffiti board and check section

Location: Section 11b, Canute Place to Bitter End

People: Tim Stewart

Summary: I went in via Moreland Gap Shelter access trail to paint the graffiti board. After the first coat of paint, I hiked to Hard Core Cascades, lopping rhododendrons on the way. Just south of Hard Core Cascades, I installed a water drain at a wet area. Back at the shelter I applied a second coat of paint on the graffiti board.

Reporting: Jim Chambers

Date: 10/12/2017

Purpose: Trail Maintenance

Location: Sections 1 and 2, McQueens Gap to the TN/VA State Line

People: Mike "Lumpy" Price, Melissa Stahl

Summary: Lumpy did trail maintenance from McQueens Gap to Damascus, VA, with Melissa providing shuttle service. Lumpy removed two small blowdowns, continued to remove the ever present greenbriar, and cleaned all designated campsites and fire rings. He also removed an abandoned tent from the campsite south of the Backbone Rock intersection.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 10/13/2017

Purpose: Design Cherry Gap Shelter (Section 17)

Location: Elizabethton High School

People: Jim Chambers, Carl Fritz, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples; Teacher- David Campbell; Students- Caleb Skeen, William Turner

Summary: We had our first meeting with a special STEM program at Elizabethton High School. Two students, with guidance from an instructor, are going to design a new shelter for Cherry Gap. We provided background on the A.T., ATC, USFS and TEHCC. Also, we shared key documents related to shelter construction, key requirements plus web links. They will develop some concepts for our next meeting. And we will plan a field trip to inspect the site and the existing shelter. This looks like a promising partnership.

Reporting: Richard Lott

Date: 10/15/2017

Purpose: Clear reported blowdowns

Location: Section 12b, 0.4 miles north and 0.1 mile south of Mountaineer Falls Shelter

People: Richard Lott, Jim Brooks

Summary: We removed 7 blowdowns with a chainsaw between Walnut Mountain Rd and 0.1 mile trail south of Mountaineer Falls shelter; diameter ranged from 4" to 15". South bound thru-hikers that we encountered commented that trail was clear to the north to Dennis Cove.

Reporting: Jim Chambers

Date: 10/16/2017

Purpose: Set up Satellite Tool Storage

Location: Roan Mountain, TN

People: Jim Chambers

Summary: I set up a satellite site for TEHCC tool storage in Roan Mountain, TN; and inventoried all tools and TEHCC equipment.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 10/17 and 10/18/2017

Purpose: Renovate Stan Murray Shelter

Location: Section 14b, Stan Murray Shelter

People: Paul Benfield, Ken Buchanan, Pat Buchanan, Jim Chambers, Carl Fritz, Ted Mowery, Bill Murdoch, Hale Nicholson "Ember," Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Kim Peters, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart, George Thorpe; USFS: Robert Hensley, Brandon Jones, Brian Smith, Brian Thomas

Summary: The Stan Murray renovation was a multi-day project with many being in the field on October 17 and 18. We moved about 1100 lbs of materials and tools from Overmountain Shelter to Stan Murray Shelter on the 17th thanks to the help of Robert Hensley, Brandon Jones, Brian Smith, and Brian Thomas from the Appalachian Ranger District. There was heavy frost both mornings, but the weather warmed up as the days progressed. Bill and Kevin camped at Stan Murray Shelter while Tim and Carl camped at Overmountain Shelter.

Thanks to the diligent work of everyone, we were able to raise the back of the shelter to level the sleeping platform, made a new sleeping platform, sealed under the sleeping platform to reduce trash, repaired the rafters, installed a metal roof, replaced some

battens, painted both inside and outside of the shelter and stiffened the picnic table. We removed the wooden sign at the shelter, so the graffiti can be removed at home and it will be reinstalled.

Ted mowed at Overmountain Shelter and Ted, George and Ken redug the culvert pipes below the ground surface. They also added another culvert pipe.

There was a very rare event. "Stitch" and her mother passed Stan Murray Shelter on the 17th and camped at Overmountain Shelter. On the 18th, "Stitch" would finish her thru hike at 19E as a flip-flopper.

Reporting: Steven T. Perri

Date: 10/21/2017

Purpose: Regional Partnership Committee Meeting

Location: Asheville, NC

People: Jim Chambers, Dan Firth, Steve Perri, Steve Wilson

Summary: The Fall 2017 Regional Partnership Committee (RPC) met in Asheville, NC to discuss many issues regarding trail stewardship, ATC and agency partners' policy developments, club issues/activities, and preferred procedures. ATC has several initiatives, cited below, that are the major strategic thrusts for the organization.

Club Challenges: Hurricane Irma affected many parts of the trail in NC and work to respond to downed trees has been on-going in sections of the Nantahala Hiking Club and on trails maintained by the Carolina Mountain Club. The Smoky Mountains Hiking Club is experiencing some erosion in parts of the trail system, as the fires from last year affected the surface of trails and runoff from rain has increased surface drainage. The Georgia Appalachian Trail Club has experienced over 3,000 thru-hiker starts in 2017 and an increase in trash. TEHCC has enjoyed support from university students from the state and many more from outside the state, but the ability to provide coordination of these groups is stretching the club's volunteer capacity.

Policy Reviews: The Spring RPC meeting minutes were reviewed and approved for archiving. ATC has developed a new detailed policy for Side Trails to the A.T. These were briefly reviewed for issues to consider and the process for approval. The committee recommended minor changes for the draft policy. A new policy on campsite designations is underway. Many campsites on the A.T. are user defined and tend not to be ideally located for protection of water sources, protection of the A.T. experience and with designs that are sustainable within LNT principles. Club feedback will be requested as the policy gets better defined beyond where it is today. ATC is working with the USFS to further develop policies regarding prescribed burns for reducing fuel for potential wildfires. ATC has approved of prescribed burns in the A.T. corridor, but is adding language to minimize the potential long-term visible effects of fires along the trail as well as visibility of access roads. The committee reviewed the current draft and supported the recommended changes incorporated thus far.

Effective Stewardship: The A.T. has seen an increase in hiker starts in GA. Also, other popular parts of the trail are experiencing high visitation, stressing parking and overnight facilities. ATC is working to help mitigate these high-use issues by working with agency partners and clubs to help disperse users and groups. Dan Firth provided a report on the impact study of specific areas from Ash Gap to 19E. The general trend reveals more impact in most areas. The data will be used to help partners assess how to mitigate impacts in the Roan Highlands in the future. Increased visitation has also had an impact on privies. The increase in hikers is starting to require more resources to manage these facilities. No solution was provided, except to improve education on alternatives for disposing human waste. Additionally, food storage at campsites and shelters is becoming a challenge with increased visitation. Bears getting access to food from hikers is increasing. In the Smokies, the cost for maintaining cable systems isn't sustainable long-term. While bear canisters are not required, their use will continue to be recommended. A new system for registering thru-hikers has been launched this year, whereby they can voluntarily sign up for their trip at www.atcamp.org. It has a map interface and allows users to sign up for specific nights. For GA, it indicates when a shelter has reached capacity, so hikers can consider other options for overnight stays or adjust their timing.

Proactive Protection: ATC is working to develop a caucus to communicate funding needs for acquisitions through the LWCF (Land and Water Conservation Fund). ATC hopes this will improve visibility with Congressional staffers. The Nantahala/Pisgah National Forest Revision is reaching final stages for input. Comments are being incorporated in the new draft to be reviewed.

Engaged Partners: Volunteer Service Agreements are still being worked on among clubs and agency partners. It is expected to be an ongoing process for clubs to execute their agreements with their respective agency partners in the coming year. A new sawyer policy released by the USFS and NPS in July was reviewed. There are 7 levels of certification under the new policy. Clubs encouraged ATC to find a way to train for recertification before providing certification for first time sawyers. Current staffing is limiting the availability of certification in some areas. Some clubs have accessed certified trainers who are members of their own clubs. Clubs continue to be in favor of the 3 year certification requirement; but unfortunately, First Aid training, in most cases, is only good for 2 years. Next year the NPS will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the National Trail Systems Act and will look to clubs to host activities to commemorate the act. ATC encouraged clubs to file for ATLP grants which will be coming at the end of the year to be submitted in mid-January. ATC is encouraging clubs to submit nominations for SORO awards for volunteer, agency partner and partner of the year awards.

Strengthened Capacity & Operational Excellence: The SORO region has hired 3 new staff personnel this year due to turnover. ATC budget for 2017 is running slightly behind for the year and the budget for 2018 is expected to be flat. Increased membership is a

goal ATC has identified as a growth opportunity, but continues to be a challenge.

Next RPC Meeting: March 9-11, 2018. Location TBD.

Reporting: Terry Oldfield

Date: 10/21/2017

Purpose: Maintain shelter

Location: Section 4b, Double Springs Shelter

People: Sue Scott, Terry Oldfield

Summary: We hiked to Double Springs Shelter from TN 91 on this beautiful day. Along the way, we cut back and cleared a few small branches from the trail. We enjoyed hiking the new relo and found the trail to be in great shape. At the shelter, we picked up trash, cleaned out the gutter, checked the log book, and repainted the graffiti board. Checking the water source, we found a large pine tree with many large branches had fallen across the blue-blaze trail near the spring. Pictures were taken and the blowdown was reported. The spring was running well. We met three south-bound thru-hikers and many hikers out for the day.

Reporting: Kim Peters

Date: 10/21/2017

Purpose: Paint Mountaineer Falls Shelter

Location: Section 12b, Walnut Mountain Road to shelter

People: Ken Murray, Lori Mirrer, Hale Nicholson (Ember), Gerald Scott, Phyllis Cairnes, Rolla Wade, Kim Peters

Summary: What a beautiful fall day for possibly the last 3rd Saturday trip of the year. The task for the day was to paint the interior of Mountaineer Falls Shelter which had accumulated graffiti on just about every surface.

Six of us hiked to the shelter carrying painting supplies while Gerald worked on the trail, lopping, painting blazes, clearing blowdowns, etc. After spending some time cleaning out the spider webs and other accumulated dirt, we commenced painting. Unfortunately, I underestimated the amount of paint required to cover the rough wood interior, so we ran out before finishing. We were able to paint the walls on the lower sleeping platform and most of the front walls and beams, but another trip will be needed to finish. Ken carried in and installed a graffiti board prepared by Lotta Murray. Hopefully this will confine graffiti to the board and reduce or eliminate the amount on the walls.

Running out of paint did shorten our work day somewhat. This was fortunate for Lori who once again traveled 3 hrs from Charlotte to join us, as well as for Ember who traveled from Boone. Thanks again to the hardworking crew. This makes the sixth shelter that the 3rd-Saturday crew has painted.



Before, After, and ...In Progress ...Painting Mountaineer Falls Shelter

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 10/24/2017

Purpose: Check Trail

Location: Section 15a, Carvers Gap - Cloudland Hotel

People: Ben Barry, Carl Fritz

Summary: We checked how to protect some plants for a future project. Roan Mountain State Park and Community had much flooding the previous day. All the gravel on the 150 feet of A.T. north of TN 134 is in the road ditch.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 10/26/2017

Purpose: Rehab trail

Location: Section 4b, North of Osborne Farm

People: Daryl Anderson, John Beaudet, Paul Benfield, George Thorpe

Summary: Daryl, John, Paul and George continued removing some smaller roots that are a problem north of Osborne Farm. The sun was shining, but the temperature was only in the 40s.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 10/26/2017

Purpose: Install hardware cloth under sleeping platform

Location: Section 5, Iron Mountain Shelter

People: Richard Carter, Carl Fritz, Greg Kramer, Joe Morris, Bill Murdoch, Kim Peters, Mike Price, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart

Summary: We removed trash from Iron Mountain Shelter. We installed 2x4 and 4x4 framing under the sleeping platform, then covered with hardware cloth. All the hands made carrying the materials over four miles much more pleasant. The only annoyances on this beautiful day were the many yellow jackets around the shelter.



Iron Mountain Shelter Improvement Crew