



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

March 2021

tehcc.org

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

Celebrating 75 Years!

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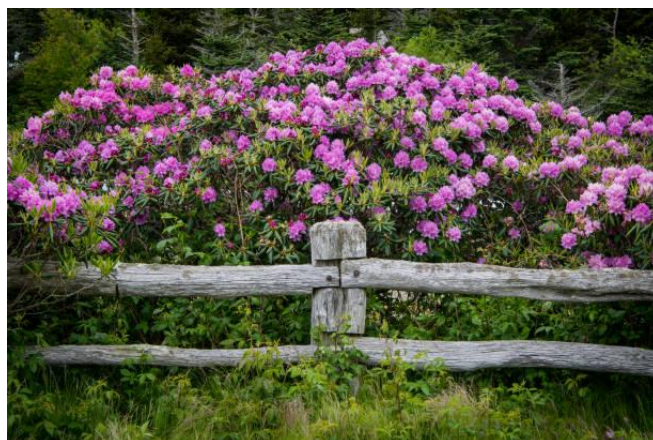
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Spring is Coming!

Hiking Program to Start in March

Submitted by Kyle Haas (Steering Committee Chair)

With the beginning of the new year, the club is looking to re-start the Hiking Program in March! Even with the slow start due to COVID-19, last year's program ended up with 12 different hikes being led around the area. Thanks to all of those who participated, and we look forward to seeing you all out on the trail again this year (safely distanced, of course).

This year we will continue to vary the length, difficulty, and scenery of the hikes and update the club website, tehcc.org, with the most up-to-date events. If you would like more information about the program or are interested in leading a hike of your own, please, let Kyle know! (kyle.haas@eastman.com)

Important Note: *With the start of this program, the club wants to make sure that we continue to do this safely and responsibly during the pandemic. We ask that you do not come to any hike or event if you are showing any signs of illness, have had contact with anyone with COVID, or have any concerns with your own risk factors. We will continue to NOT organize carpooling and will meet at the trailheads instead. We also ask that you bring your own sanitizing supplies, drinking water, and PPE for preventing virus transmission (masks are not required but encouraged to have available). Social distancing and at least 6-feet of separation will be encouraged as well.*

75th Anniversary - Incentive for A.T. Hiking/Maintenance

Submitted by Jonathan Shumaker

To celebrate our 75th anniversary, the Steering Committee would like to encourage club members and affiliates to get out and be involved with the club this year! We want to encourage hiking and maintaining the TEHCC section of the Appalachian Trail. To recognize this occasion, the Steering Committee is providing an incentive for hiking at least 40 miles on the A.T. or completing 40 hours of trail maintenance (non-meeting) during 2021. The reward is a pint glass sporting the club logo. If it is possible to have a Fall Dinner, then the recognition will be presented to those who have reached either achievement. However, the 40 miles/40 hours challenge will remain open until the end of 2021; so even if unable to complete the milestone by the Fall Dinner, you can still get the reward.



There is one stipulation to getting this recognition: hikes and maintenance must be recorded in the club newsletter. We want to be able to enjoy your experiences throughout the year. Maintainers already have a good "Reporting Form" system that is well used, thus the event reports are in the newsletter and can provide the desired tracking of hours. For hiking, there are two options for logging miles. The first option is to submit a hike report directly through tehcc.org. Select "Article/Hike Submission" from the "News" dropdown menu. The second path is to set up an account on the TEHCC Trail Wiki (tehcc.org/wiki) to log hikes. The hike summary will then appear in the newsletter. Either one of these options will allow the club to formally track the miles each member/affiliate has hiked on the Appalachian Trail in 2021. Personally, the Trail Wiki logging is my favorite tool because I can go in and look at a map view or calendar view of the hikes I have completed!

Here are links to each of the ways to log trail miles hiked or maintenance hours:

[Link to tehcc.org hike submission form](#)

[Link to page on logging hikes on TEHCC trail wiki \(must create account to log hike\)](#)

[Link to tehcc.org trail maintenance reporting form](#)

For any questions or concerns with logging hikes, please reach out to jonathanshumaker@eastman.com.

If you plan to pursue this 75th Anniversary 40 miles/40 hours incentive, please let the Steering Committee know. We're excited to see who is willing to take on this challenge!

Please note: This reward is only open to current club members and club affiliates in good standing. All hikes and maintenance events between 1/1/2021 and 12/31/2021 on the Appalachian Trail section maintained by TEHCC will count toward the incentive, and submissions/logging should be completed within 30 days of the hike/event to help with tracking.

Recollections for Club's 75th Anniversary – Koonford Bridge

Submitted by Vic Hasler and Carl Fritz



Stewart Koonford Bridge (1990)

Koonford Bridge is now a 66' long by 4' wide span crossing the Laurel Fork in a deep gorge near where a railroad trestle once traversed the stream between Hampton and Dennis Cove. No references were found for how the bridge was named. It has been replaced several times over the years. The 1960 A.T. Guide Book describes it as a simple log bridge, likely two-foot wide of locust tied together to form a deck. In 1985, the Konnarock Crew and TEHCC added handrails and decking to the existing logs on the rock pillar supports. When the area was designated as Pond Mountain Wilderness, the decision was made to replace the bridge to be compatible with the new designation. The Konnarock Crew and club in 1990 swapped the Koonford Bridge over three long weekends with a design that involved no hardware (dovetail joints). The two rock piers were raised by about 15 inches while a third (northern) span was added. This effort, resulting in a structure with an appearance keeping with the wilderness area, thus won a Primitive Skills award.

On January 7-8, 1998, torrential rains struck northeast Tennessee and western North Carolina. Carter County, Tennessee was hit especially hard with widespread flooding and seven deaths caused by ten inches of rain during a 24 hour period. The lower two bridges on the Appalachian Trail in Laurel Fork Gorge were completely destroyed. The center span of the upper Koonford Bridge was also destroyed. A temporary blue-blazed route for the A.T. to bypass the two destroyed bridges was completed in May 1998.

The Koonford Bridge's center span was quickly replaced during the January 17, 1998 "Third Saturday" special project. Twenty-six people showed up to carry in materials (primarily six 2"x12"x24' beams plus hardware) about 3/4 of a mile to replace the bridge section. The group had everything at the job site by noon and was able to complete the project in time to get home just before dark. This repair remained in place for 16 years.

Over time, the locust logs and supports on the bridge deteriorated. With high foot traffic from both day users and thru-hikers, there was concern about its long-term safety. A two-year project was initiated in early 2013 to design, obtain materials, and completely replace the Koonford Bridge. Ed Oliver and Carl Fritz worked with Lynn DiFiore (Cherokee National Forest Civil Engineer) and Matt Fusco (Cherokee National Forest Landscape Architect). USFS specified the wood requirements (rough sawn and pressure treated) suitable for the spans in the wilderness. The wood was obtained from a mill in Erwin and stored at the USFS Rat Branch Work Center to allow for further drying to reduce its weight.

In late August 2014 into early September, the club modified the two rock piers to align and widen them to fully support a 4-foot wide bridge. The effort required many day trips because the piers could only be raised about two feet at a time to allow the mortar and concrete to cure. During this time period, other volunteers improved and widened the trail access to the job site by cutting back rhododendron, filling in the rooty path, temporarily widening the two foot bridges near Dennis Cove, and removing or breaking up large rocks in the trail to provide a clear path for the 22 foot beams. Joe Morris and Bill Murdock spent a day at the Rat Branch Work Center cutting and drilling the deck boards, sills, and beams. It was critical to have the right alignment of the holes. Meanwhile the posts and handrails were cut and drilled at Carl's place over two days – each numbered for their location and direction.

A rented 20'x1' aluminum catwalk was hauled in as a temporary bridge for a day. The existing bridge was taken apart to use the northern span of locust logs with its handrail as a bypass bridge during the remaining construction. Some of the other locust logs were installed as trail side logs, but the treated-lumber center span and parts were carried out for disposal.

At the end of September, the Forest Service hauled all nine large (18-22') beams from their work center to the trailhead at Dennis Cove along winding Dennis Cove Road. This was no small task and the club was sincerely grateful. Their "Hot Shot" group (young, strong fire fighters who go all over the country) helped carry the nine beams, some estimated to be 420 pounds. The engineering challenge was raising the big, heavy beam across the rock piers. This was solved by using four 2" diameter wheels on a special bracket, plus several clothesline-pipe pieces as rollers across the old center span 2"x12's as an initial support. By the end of the day, a solid walking surface was in place when they were screwed to the sills.

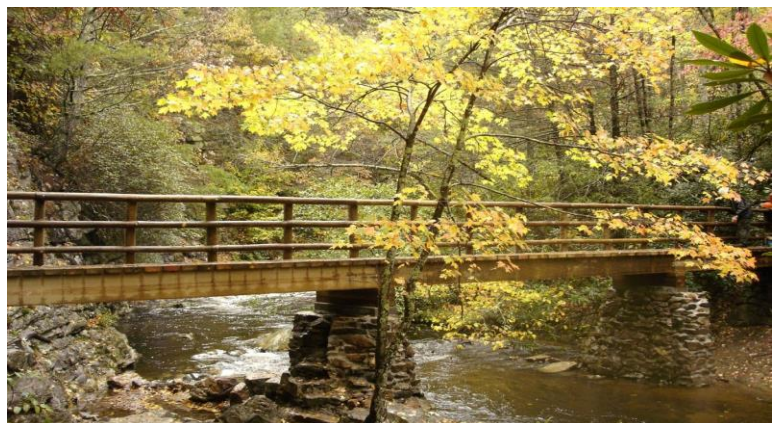
After ten days of rain, the crew returned in mid-October to find the bypass bridge washed downstream. (Just think of how much water had to be rushing through the gorge to lift and remove the center span in 1998!!) The beams were set upright, and 3" deck boards were fastened. The rail posts were installed. Unfortunately, all of the cross-bracing was discovered to be too long, thus had to be carried out and was cut to the correct length with a table saw at the Kincora Hostel. The bridge approaches on both ends were raised to match the 30-inch higher deck. The overall project was finished on a rainy day: October 16, 2014. Fifty-three individuals had contributed 2,631 hours over 37 outings.

Expenditures, shared by ATC (federal funds) and TEHCC (TN A.T. tag grant), were \$6,500, including \$3,000 for the deck, beams, and sills. All told, four tons of dry concrete and mortar, four tons for the nine beams and deck boards, one ton of hardware, and two tons of tools were moved 0.8 miles to the job site. In the reverse direction, one ton of old bridge was hauled out for disposal.

To finish this story, the two lower bridges were replaced in April 1999. Because Laurel Fork Gorge is in the Pond Mountain Wilderness Area, the replacements had to be rustic in appearance and constructed using non-mechanized means (no power tools or transportation). Due to the 40+ foot length of the stringers (the long poles that are the bridge's backbone) and wilderness area requirements, TEHCC informed the Cherokee National Forest that the club could not complete the project. USFS chose to use a private contractor to replace the bridges. To move the stringers, the firm employed a team of mules dragging the logs to the bridge sites. The bridges were built out of landscaping timbers, which the club has been steadily replacing over the years as they deteriorate.



Repair After 1998 Flood



New Koonford Bridge (October 16, 2014) – photo by Tim

75th Anniversary T-Shirt Order Form

Submitted by Kyle Haas (Steering Committee Chair)

TEHCC is excited to announce that we are selling short-sleeve and long-sleeve t-shirts as part of our 75th Anniversary celebration. Prices will be \$10 for short-sleeved and \$15 for long-sleeved. If you are interested in ordering, please fill out the form [here](#). We will continue to have the order form open until April 30th!



*Orders will be placed in the first week of May and shipping can take two weeks. You will be able to pick up your shirts in the employee center (B310 / Toy F Reid Building).

TEHCC Welcomes New Members

Tony Venson

Laurie Levknecht

Terry Shipley

Trail Wiki Hike Summary

Submitted by [Tim Schaefer](#)

Log your hikes on our Trail Wiki. Keep track of your SB6K and area hikes completed, also share with others the hikes you like to do. Recent hikes are now viewable at http://tehcc.org/wiki/Recent_Hikes. See the following table for hikes that were added to Trail Wiki in February.

Date	Trail(s)	Hike Distance	# of Hikers	Tags	Reported By
10-Jan-2021	Azalea, Bays Mountain Park	3.8 mi	2	Cats	Jshumaker
	Comment: Hiked from the bike lot on lake road trail then went up azalea all the way to the fire tower. There was snow on the edges of the trail.				
23-Jan-2021	Nolichucky River to Indian Grave Gap	9 mi	3	AT	Jshumaker
	Comment: This was a great hike up to Indian Grave Gap with Teni and Kyle. The views of the Nolichucky river and mountains were great. We took a spur trail up to some high rocks to get a view to the north and ... more				
30-Jan-2021	Spivey Gap to Nolichucky River	11.4 mi	3	AT	Jshumaker
	Comment: It was a great cool day for the hike. We started the morning hiking through snow at Spivey gap and then hiked down out of it. It was a little cold, but no precipitation so it was a good day for hiki... more				

05-Feb-2021	Sinking Waters, Warriors' Path State Park	1.75 mi	2	Cats	Jshumaker
	Comment: Was a great evening for a hike right before sunset.				
19-Feb-2021	Sinking Waters, Warriors' Path State Park	2.14 mi	2	Cats	Jshumaker
	Comment: Great cool evening hike. Waters weren't sinking because of how saturated the ground was.				
21-Feb-2021	US19E to Dennis Cove Rd	10.5 mi	2	AT	Jshumaker
	Comment: Was a wonderful day for a hike. The waterfalls were flowing and had ice on them!				

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://regions.worldkayak.com/tri-cities/category/regional-events/> or <http://www.riverapes.org/calendar.html>.

Date	Description	Contact	Telephone
March 13	Hike	Jacob	
March 13	Second Saturday, Hiking with Tools!	Tim Stewart	423-483-9329
March 18	Steering Committee Meeting	Kyle Haas	423-229-5869
March 20	A.T.: Carver's Gap to Yellow Mountain Gap	Kyle Haas	423-229-5869
April 10	Second Saturday, Hiking with Tools!	Tim Stewart	423-483-9329
April 15	Steering Committee Meeting	Kyle Haas	423-229-5869

Details of Upcoming Events

Note: Due to COVID-19, the following regularly scheduled paddling activity is not being held in March. Be sure to check the April newsletter for updates.

- Thursday Evenings: Kayak Session, Kingsport Aquatic Center, 6:45 – 7:45 pm

Freedom Hall Roll Sessions are Back!!

Perfect timing to sharpen those skills and get some tips from other boaters in a controlled setting before getting back out on the rivers when warmer weather arrives! New weekly schedule and time starting on 2/14/2021. **Roll practices will be on Sundays, 1pm to 3pm at Freedom Hall Pool.** Cost is \$2/session. All boats and gear must be out by 3pm. Current covid policy requires mask in/out, temperature check, and keep social distancing during practice.

Recurring Events

TEHCC Steering Committee Meeting - Third Thursday of Each Month, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Contact: [Kyle Haas](#)

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. We are using teleconferencing due to Eastman's directions to current employees. If you want to listen/join in, please contact me.

Sunday Afternoons: Johnson City Roll Practice, 1:00 – 3:00 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.

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 133.8-mile section each week, usually on Thursdays.

Second Saturday, Hiking with Tools!

Contact: [Tim Stewart](#), 423-483-9329

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 such as cleaning out waterbars and steps, lopping rhododendron, breaking up fire rings, and painting blazes or shelters. All tools will be furnished and no prior experience required! We typically have four to five people on each trip. The more folks who show up, the less work each individual has to do... so the trip becomes a nice hike - with tools!

Scheduled Events

Second Saturday, Hiking with Tools! March 13, 2021

Contact: [Tim Stewart](#)

It has been a long, cold winter. Recently there has been an increased interest to volunteer and 'give back to the trail'. And there is no time like the present. The first adventure of the year will be on Saturday, March 13th. No experience necessary so come join us for a short hike and some light trail maintenance! For more info, including time and location, contact Tim Stewart at saturdaymaint@tehcc.org.

A.T.: Carver's Gap to Yellow Mountain Gap, March 20, 2021, 8:30 am – 1:00 pm

Leader: [Kyle Haas](#), 812-746-7119

Rating: *Moderate 10.6 mile out and back, 2316 ft gain*

Join us for the first club hike of the year on the AT! This hike is fairly long so make sure to bring snacks. I will be packing a lunch, and look forward to seeing everybody out there. We'll park at the Carver's Gap Trailhead to begin the hike.



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Reporting: Scotty Bowman

Date: 1/30/2021

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

Location: Section 7, Vandeventer Shelter to Wilbur Dam Rd

People: Scotty Bowman

Summary: I hiked in this past Saturday to check for blowdowns and any other issues. I removed two new fire rings and cut one small blowdown. Along the way, I cut back a couple of rhodo sections between 2.5 miles and 4 miles north of Wilbur Dam Rd. I didn't make it to the shelter on this trip to repaint the graffiti board, but will do so on the next trip. The spring located at the gap is flowing.

Reporting: Joel Zabel

Date: 1/30/2021

Purpose: Winter Check, Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap south to Low Gap

People: Yong Li, Todd Markwalter, Ed Brading, Jim Foster, Marianne Huff, Joel Zabel

Summary: The snow was about 6" average depth, with drifts up to 18". We cut with a handsaw and/or dragged off the trail about

12 to 15 blowdowns, all less than 6" diameter, in the 4.4 miles between Iron Mtn Gap and Low Gap. We checked Cherry Gap Shelter. The log book was gone; we will replace it next time we're up there.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 2/6/2021

Purpose: Maintain shelter

Location: Section 7, Wilbur Dam Rd to Vandeventer Shelter

People: Heather Waldroup, Bill Murdoch, Scotty Bowman, Joe Morris

Summary: It was quite the stroll today to Vandeventer Shelter for installation of a new gutter section on the rear of the shelter. We cleaned the front gutter and patched a split in that front run. We also cleaned and painted the graffiti board and installed a new pipe at the water source.



Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 2/15/2021

Purpose: TEHCC A.T. Committee

Location: Zoom meeting

People: Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Vic Hasler, Joe Morris, Steve Perri, Tim Stewart

Summary: The TEHCC A.T. Committee met via Zoom videoconference to discuss upcoming trail rehab and repairs that hopefully can be completed during 2021. Second Saturday trips will focus on engaging new volunteers. TN tag grants have been approved for two bog bridges, tools, and contract mowing at Osborne Farm tract. Many leadership roles are being defined; thus if you would like to serve the A.T. in a unique way (small or large) then please reach out.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/17/2021

Purpose: Repair Bridge, Remove Blowdowns, Rehab Trail

Location: Section 19b, USA Raft to Curley Maple Gap Shelter



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

Summary: We worked in the Jones Branch area up to Curley Maple Gap Shelter. We repaired the recently broken handrail on the third bridge. We found about twice as many blowdowns as expected and cut a good dozen. The major one was a 25" diameter maple that was shoulder high on the sidehill. We also put in numerous stepping stones in a hundred-foot trail section that was running about an inch deep in water.

Reporting: Scotty Bowman

Date: 2/21/2021

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

Location: Section 6, Turkey Pen Gap to Iron Mountain Shelter

People: Scotty Bowman

Summary: I hiked in from TN 91 Cross Mountain to check the section between the shelters. I made it as far as Turkey Pen Gap; not much to report. I removed four small blowdowns with the biggest being 12 inches between the shelter and Turkey Pen. Also, nothing to report on the TN 91 to Iron Mountain Shelter as it was pretty clear.

Reporting: Ken Murray

Date: 2/21/2021

Purpose: Check for blowdowns and graffiti

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

People: Ken Murray, Lotta Murray, Van Hovey, Peggy Cantrell

Summary: We cut back rhodos and dog hobble, cleared several small blowdowns, and installed a new "Foot Travel Only" sign at Spivey Gap. We also removed a sleeping bag that had been left in the shelter and dismantled a fire ring that had been built under the shelter overhang. We saw two day hikers, one of whom had worked with Carl's group and had her picture in the newspaper. Van developed a plan to fix a spot where water frequently gets out of a creek and runs down the trail. It was a beautiful day.

Reporting: Gayle Riddervold

Date: 2/21/2021

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 8, US 321 to Wilbur Dam Road

People: Gayle Riddervold, Becky Kinder

Summary: We hiked in from Oliver Hollow Road for two miles to remove a tree lying across the trail. We sawed one end of the tree and pulled it off the trail with ropes. Thorny weeds were cut back using an 8-inch hedge trimmer.

Reporting: Tony Messina

Date: 2/25/2021

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 12b, Walnut Mountain Road to Mountaineer Falls

People: Tony Messina, Renee Messina, Sylvia Alvarad

Summary: Sylvia made her debut as a swamper and did a GREAT job. We cleared several blowdowns from Walnut Mtn Road down to Mountaineer Falls. Mostly these were small trees that were step-overs or duck-unders, but there were many limbs involved and a couple that completely blocked the trail with brushy limbs. There must have been a pretty good windstorm or snow damage this spring. We also cut and lopped quite a bit of rhododendron. It was a glorious day to be outside, blue skies and 50s temperatures! We saw only one section slackpacker north of the falls and one family south of the falls that had already hiked from Springer this spring with a FIVE YEAR OLD! Renee and Sylvia hiked on down to their staged car at Buck Mtn Church while Tony returned to Walnut Mtn Road. Renee and Sylvia said there are several more smallish stepovers in that five-mile stretch that ought to be cleared sometime. There is nothing completely obstructing the trail, though. Also they saw quite a bit of evidence of 4WD vehicles tearing up the trail near the river.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/25/2021

Purpose: Repair Bridge and Rehab Trail

Location: Section 12d, Campbell Hollow Road to US19E

People: Dean Baird, Richard Carter, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Van Hovey, Greg Kramer, Elzear Lemieux, Bill Murdoch, Kevin Sedgwick, Tim Stewart

Summary: Van, Richard and Elzear installed new locust log steps and a water diversion just south of Bear Branch Road. Bill, Dan, Greg and Carl repaired the Bear Branch Bridge by replacing about half the handrail, a number of deck boards and a decayed 6x6 that was supporting the bridge sill. Dean, Kevin and Tim with later help from Van, Richard and Elzear rehabbed the trail further north including adding some locust steps and redoing a switchback. They also cut back some of the rhododendron.

