



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

May 2024

tehcc.org

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

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*Photo taken from the A.T. coming into Hot Springs, NC
submitted by Sharon Burnette*

Letter from the Chair

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

Happy May everyone! April showers have certainly been here, so hopefully that will bring plenty of May flowers. Many May flowers mean lots of fruit too, which means bears! Since a lot more of us will be out and about enjoying the outdoors (as well as the bears), it is probably a good time to reiterate some key points of Bear Safety:

- Identify yourself: Make noise and slowly wave your arms; this will let the bear know you're a person. Staying calm is important.
- Make yourself look as large as possible, such as widening your stance, keeping your arms out, and moving to higher ground.
- DON'T allow bear access to your food. Keep it safely stored while camping (like suspended from a tree or in a bearbox) and near your person when out hiking.
- Should a bear approach you, DON'T abandon your pack. This will reinforce to them people are a source of food and encourage the same behavior.
- DON'T RUN! They have a chase-instinct and are usually faster than you.
- DON'T CLIMB TREES! Black Bears are very good climbers and can certainly climb faster than you.
- If you see a bear and it doesn't move away, back away slowly, sideways while keeping an eye on it and either wait or take an alternative route (if possible).
- If it doesn't leave or you can't leave, make sure it has an escape route to get away from you.
- NEVER stand between a cub and its mother, NEVER approach a cub. As cute as they are, momma won't like you being near their baby.
- Carrying bear spray or a bear bell can be good deterrents for bears.
- Bells will make sure they know you're there, so you don't surprise them.
- Spray is a good last resort to drive off an attacking or persistent bear. Follow the arming instructions on your spray canister and aim it at their face and slightly downwards.
- Hike in groups if possible. More people usually deter bears and makes them aware of your presence farther away.

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I hope this has been a good reminder and will help you all stay more bear-aware while recreating this year!

Lastly, our hiking program is back in full swing! Keep an eye on the website and newsletter for our upcoming hikes! Remember, you too can lead hikes on your favorite trails or ones on your bucket list! All you have to do is register your hike on the website, follow the instructions on setting up the details, and you're on the road!

I and the TEHCC steering committee look forward to seeing you all out on the trails this month! Happy hiking!

Thank you,
Eric Dobbs

Event Schedule – Next Two Months

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

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

Date	Description	Contact	Telephone
May 11	Hike: Laurel Run Trail and Falls, 10 am - Noon	Josh Hayes	270-585-5929
May 11	Hiking with Tools! US19E to Campbell Hollow	Tim Stewart	
May 16	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1 pm	Eric Dobbs	303-915-9208
May 18 - 19	APEs French Broad Sections 9 and 11 Paddle Meetup, 10:30 am – 4 pm	Joe Poehlmann	
May 18	APEs Boater Safety Clinic, Davy Crockett Birthplace State Park, 2 pm – 8 pm	See APEs events	
June 1	Hike: Bays Mountain Fire Tower, 9 am	Erin Ekart	423-429-3813
June 1	Hiking with Tools! Bitter End to Hardcore Cascades	Tim Stewart	
June 1	APEs Reedy Creek Cleanup, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm	See APEs events	
June 6	Paddle to the Grill Dinner Meetup, First of the Season! 6:30 pm – 10 pm	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
June 8	TEHCC Lake Paddling Trip – SAVE THE DATE	Andy Steffan	919-928-4738
June 8	Paddle the Lower Watauga, Class I-II, First of the Season! 3 pm	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
June 15	APEs Nolichucky River Cleanup, 10 am – 3 pm	See APEs events	
June 20	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1 pm	Eric Dobbs	303-915-9208

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 – 9 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.

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Weekly A.T. Trail Maintenance, Most Thursdays

Contact: [Joe Morris](mailto:Joe.Morris@tehcc.org), 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! Often the Second Saturday of Each Month, March through November

Contact: [Tim Stewart](mailto:Tim.Stewart@tehcc.org)

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.

Paddle to the Grill Dinner Meetup, Thursday Evenings, Beginning June 6, 2024, 6:30 pm – 10:00 pm

Contact: [Debbie Briscoe](mailto:Debbie.Briscoe@tehcc.org), 423-534-3636

Bring your kayak, canoe or SUP to meet with Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts (APEs) and TEHCC for dinner and a paddle! We meet weekly during the summer at various locations on local area lakes in the Tri-Cities, TN area. As we may be paddling during low or no light, please have a stern light for your boat and a headlamp for when we land. Use of PFDs and stern lights are Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency regulations. Meetup locations will be posted as events on the [APEs Facebook](#) page a few days ahead. For more information, text or call Debbie Briscoe at 423.534.3636 or email her at ldcakes@hotmail.com.

Lower Watauga, Class I-II, Alternate Saturdays, Beginning June 8, 2024, 3 pm

Contact: [Debbie Briscoe](mailto:Debbie.Briscoe@tehcc.org), 423-534-3636

We will launch from Riverside Park in Elizabethton behind the Ballpark at 3 pm. Call Deb first to check and see if it's on! Please be prepared for very cold water and wear appropriate gear. PFDs and helmets are required, as well as spray skirts for decked boats. We stop for a break about halfway down the river, so don't forget your snacks. We are usually off the water by 7:00 pm or so, and have transferred boats back to our vehicles by 7:30.

Directions: From W Elk Ave in Elizabethton turn at the MISO Teriyaki House onto West Mill Street, take the first street on left onto Ash Street, follow that street to the end and you will see the river. Turn left and pull into the small, paved parking area near a covered picnic area. Look for boats! Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/YXgdd1Npwx3N2FCk8>

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

Contact: [Tony Messing](mailto:Tony.Messing@tehcc.org), 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

Hike: Laurel Run Trail and Falls, Saturday, May 11, 2024, 10 am – Noon

Contact: [Josh Hayes](mailto:Josh.Hayes@tehcc.org), 270-585-5929

Location: *Laurel Run Park, 364 Laurel Run Park Rd, Church Hill, TN, 37642*

Experience this 4.3-mile out-and-back trail near Church Hill, Tennessee. Generally considered a moderately challenging route, it takes an average of 1 hr 52 min to complete. This is a popular trail for hiking, but you can still enjoy some solitude during quieter times of the day. The trail is open year-round and is beautiful to visit anytime. Dogs are welcome, but must be on a leash.

-AllTrails

This may be a joint hike with the EPDC (Eastman Professional Development Committee) for their "Move It May" campaign. Snacks and water are recommended. Also, be prepared for a creek crossing.

Hike: Bays Mountain Park Fire Tower, Saturday, June 1, 2024, 9 am – 11 am

Contact: [Erin Ekart](mailto:Erin.Ekart@tehcc.org), 423-429-3813

Location: *853 Bays Mountain Park Road, Kingsport, TN 37660*

This summer, TEHCC will be doing a series of hikes to introduce new hires and interns to the beauty of Northeast Tennessee. Of course, this is open to all hikers who want to attend. The first in this series will be hiking around the lake at Bays Mountain and to the fire tower, which is just over 4 miles. The fire-tower climb makes for a moderate ~2 miles, but the lakeside trail balances things out with its gentle climb. Experience the beauty of Bays Mountain with this picturesque trail and gorgeous mountain-top view. We will also take time to visit the animal habitats and say hello to wolves, bobcats, and birds of prey! A great hike even if you have done it many times before. Meet in front of the Nature Center.

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TEHCC Lake Paddling Trip – SAVE THE DATE, June 8, 2024, 10 am – 2 pm

Contact: [Andy Steffan](#), 919-928-4738

Time to start the paddling season! I hope you'll plan to join me on June 8th for an easy paddling trip, relatively local, likely on either Ft. Patrick Henry Lake or Boone Lake. Exact locations/times/distances will be announced later. Beginners or first-time paddlers welcome! The club will transport our boats (4 sit-in, 3 sit-on, 1 canoe), PFDs, and paddles to location, so all you need to bring is water, snacks, and any other supplies you might want (sunscreen, etc.). You are also welcome to bring your own boat to join us, if desired.

Tennessee Night Sky Trail

Compiled from information found on northeasttennessee.org/nightsky/

Last year, Northeast Tennessee Tourism Association (NETTA) devised a marketing tactic of promoting our favorite spots to view the stars. The Night Sky in Northeast Tennessee is a mesmerizing journey that allows you to explore the area's celestial wonders. With nine unique viewing areas, you'll find an unforgettable experience for stargazing enthusiasts and nature lovers. From panoramic vistas atop majestic mountains, serene lakesides, observation decks, and historic downtowns, these locations offer optimal conditions. Whether you're a seasoned astronomer or simply seeking a moment of awe-inspiring beauty, the Night Sky in Northeast Tennessee promises an unforgettable adventure.



Vic Hasler and Steve Perri contributed location ideas which the agency selected to highlight. The following spots, spread across our region, offer other amenities as well.

Viking Mountain	Crockett Springs Park & Arboretum	Bays Mountain Park & Planetarium
Roan Mountain	South Holston Dam Spillway Trail	Osborne Farm on the Appalachian Trail
Chestoa Recreation Area	Tri-Cities Airport Observation Deck	Winged Deer Park

A flyer says: *Embark on an extraordinary adventure through Northeast Tennessee's night skies, where the universe comes alive!*

New Sit-on-Top Kayak for Rent

Submitted by *Andy Steffan*

The club recently acquired a new sit-on-top kayak for our rental fleet. This one is a Lifetime Tahoma 10ft kayak, weighing 50 lbs, and has a capacity of 275 lbs. This boat has a comfortable backrest, as well as a convenient small center storage hatch located right in front of the seat for easy access to items while in the water. It also has a paddle keeper and handles on the sides in addition to the usual front and back handles. This rounds out our rental fleet to 3 sit-on kayaks, 4 sit-in kayaks, and 1 canoe. Full details on boats and rental prices can be found on our website: [Paddling Equipment – Tennessee Eastman Hiking & Canoeing Club \(tehcc.org\)](#). We hope you'll try out this new boat or any of our boats as the weather and water begin to warm! Simply send rental requests to rental@tehcc.org to reserve yours today!



2024 Appalachian Trail Hall of Fame – Ray Hunt

From the April 2, 2024 news release by the Appalachian Trail Museum

Dave Startzell, long time Executive Director of ATC, said this of Raymond F. Hunt: "Ray was not a large man, but he was a giant within the A.T. management community." Ray was the first editor, in 1977, of the annual Appalachian Trail Data Book, a role he continued to perform until his election as ATC Chair. A highly active Trail volunteer with the Tennessee Eastman Hiking Club, he served a long term on the ATC Board of Managers beginning in 1979 and was especially involved in the publications and land-acquisition programs. His three terms as ATC Chair from 1983 to 1989 were significant ones for building support within congressional appropriations subcommittees for funding to secure a buffer of land around the footpath against development.



ATC's partnership with the National Park Service was also formalized during this time, including the 1984 delegation by that agency to ATC of day-to-day responsibility for managing the Trail lands. This meant that ATC was given most of the same conservation responsibilities that park staff have at other National Park units. Mr. Hunt completed a section-hike of the whole Trail in 1988. He passed away in 2005.

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For the Record

Whitetail Trail at Warrior's Path Hike Report, April 13, 2024

Josh Hayes reporting

We met at the trail head at 10 am and left at 10:15 to give others a chance to join. The weather was a beautiful 76 degrees with clear skies and trails were well-maintained! Slight modifications from the listed trail on 'AllTrails' added a little milage, but we still made the same time as planned due to experience levels. We were graced by seeing a family of four white tailed deer. However, we unfortunately couldn't get the picture quick enough.

Attendees were Josh Hayes, Marcus McCoy, Long Nguyen, Lindsey Nguyen, Joseph Sengeh

If you go: The GPS will tell you that you have arrived, but you will need to drive forward a few hundred feet to the parking area.

TEHCC Welcomes New Members

Kenneth Costello
Barbara Carico

William McAllister
Alex Mason

Kevin Smith



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Reporting: Dave Allen

Date: 3/22/2024

Purpose: Clear water bars; trim growth

Location: Section 1, Backbone Rock Trail to TN/VA State Line

People: Dave Allen, Steve Perri

Summary: We parked at Backbone Rock and hiked up Backbone Rock trail, clearing a couple of small blowdowns and trimming back vegetation. We had lunch at the A.T./blueblaze junction, and met a couple of hikers, one NOBO and the other SOBO. Both reported a clear trail over their last several miles. Heading north on Section 1, we cleared a number of waterbars and dug several new water control trenches (coweetas) on steep sections of the trail. A small blowdown was cleared, and vegetation was trimmed back to the state line. The section needs a couple of new waterbars and a bit of sidehill trail rehab at some point.

Reporting: Karen Berry / Annette Vinding

Date: 3/28/2024

Purpose: Maintenance

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

People: Karen Berry, Annette Vinding

Summary: We cut back encroaching vegetation, removed blowdowns, picked up trash, and checked the shelter and water source. The shelter had tarps, old tent flies, plastic tied over the entrance, an inflatable mattress bed inside, trash blown throughout the woods, and human feces on the ground.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 3/30/2024

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Purpose: Paint blazes and clear waterbars

Location: Section 16b, Iron Mountain Gap, starting below the pinnacle of rocks for ½ mile up to the rocks

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: For the last 1/2 mile before the pinnacle of rocks on Iron Mountain, I located and painted blazes to the top of the knob. Some were barely there and hard to find. Some were only a flat rectangle on a tree and the old paint was totally gone. I also used my trekking poles to rake leaves out of a few waterbars in critical places. I will go back soon with my mattock to do more, since the rainy season will be coming soon, if not already here. I met some thru-hikers and section hikers.

Reporting: Jeff Hatling

Date: 3/30/2024

Purpose: Clean and create new water diversions

Location: Section 14b, Little Hump to Bradley Gap

People: Jeff Hatling

Summary: I found the spring pipe for the spring just south of Bradley Gap at the tent site (mile 388.3) while picking up trash. I re-installed it at the pipe spring site, mile 388.5. I cleaned out about 20 water diversions. I also brushed in four sections of trail where hikers were getting off to the side of trail; thus potentially moving the trail and causing adverse impact to bald areas. I reshaped the trail to encourage use of the existing trail, and deposited cut material in the new path that hikers were creating. I will continue to monitor to see if hikers have moved back to the existing established trail. The water diversions and new bog bridge at Bradley Gap are working well. Only one small section remains wet. In that section, I reshaped the trail to allow hiking around the water and mud. I plan to go back to place stepping stones in the wet area and move the trail back.

Reporting: Scotty Bowman

Date: 3/30 & 3/31/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 7, Vandeventer Shelter to Wilbur Dam Rd

People: Scotty Bowman, Tyler Cairnes

Summary: It was a great weekend to be out. We spent the weekend in Big Laurel Branch Wilderness clearing blowdowns, 25 in total on this section. We hiked in Saturday morning and hiked out Sunday, clearing blowdowns as we went. We counted 30 NOBOS and 16 section and day hikers. The weather was perfect for spending Easter weekend in the woods. Saturday: 18 blowdowns were removed, and 2 waterbars were cleaned out in the first 3.75 miles. Sunday: 6 more blowdowns were removed, and at Vandeventer Shelter, gutters were cleaned and journal replaced. On the hike out, we cut back new rhododendron growth in several sections and removed a treetop (widow maker) from over the trail. The springs are flowing and the shelter was clean with no trash.

Reporting: Phyllis Cairnes

Date: 3/31/2024

Purpose: Maintain shelter

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

People: Phyllis Cairnes

Summary: My purpose was to post laminated norovirus signs and check the shelter. I posted one sign at the shelter and another at the stile that crosses from the pasture into the woods northbound. I was a traveling health educator today! I talked with Bear Taco, Slinky, Radar, and Simmer. They had heard of norovirus but knew nothing about its symptoms, how it was transmitted, or how to prevent it. Later, I talked with Lady Madonna. She had had norovirus and felt it was from conditions at a hostel. She asked me to report two hostels for her since she had no phone coverage. I will contact ATC. I took a photo of a blowdown at mile 452.1 and will send it to Renee. At the shelter, I picked up trash, re-painted the graffiti board, talked with more hikers about noro, left a new broom, and carried out two old ones. Trail



Before



After

magic people with a camper were set up at the Cross Mtn parking area. They were cooking pizzas for hikers, and handing out soft drinks and snacks.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 4/1/2024

Purpose: Clear Blowdowns

Location: Section 12b, Walnut Mountain Road to Sugar Hollow Creek, South of Mountaineer Falls

People: Joe Morris

Summary: I removed a blowdown reported by Gerald Scott about a mile south of Mountaineer Falls Shelter and another stepover adjacent to Elk River. It was a busy day in the woods: 10 thru-hikers, 3-day hikers, and one hiker enjoying a spring-break hike.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 4/1/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap

People: Joe Morris

Summary: Marlene "Emoji" Simpson sent a report of a tree down south of IMG, relatively close to the road. After removing the tree on 12b, I headed over to IMG and removed this moderately inconvenient stepover. I appreciate the accurate reports with photos that "Emoji" sends.



Reporting: Bettye Boone

Date: 4/1/2024

Purpose: Remove leaners and install new boot brushes

Location: Section 15a, North and south of Carvers Gap

People: Bettye Boone, Saylor Fox, Carl Fritz

Summary: Carl cut 8 leaners and one blowdown with a chainsaw. He also cut back encroaching tree limbs and cut T-posts off at ground level at the beginning of the A.T. south of Carvers Gap for safety reasons. We installed new boot brushes at Carvers Gap headed north on the A.T. Carl Fritz had prepared boot brushes prior to his arrival. Saylor and I helped with install.

Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 4/1/2024

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Sections 20a and 20c, South of Temple Hill Gap, and south of Devils Creek Gap

People: Van Hovey, Ken Murray

Summary: We received a report from Peggy Cantrell of two blowdowns: one approximately 1.5 miles south from Temple Hill Gap and the other approximately one mile south from Devils Creek Gap. We decided to get the Temple Hill Gap one first. We accessed the trail via Granny Lewis Road and found a multi-stemmed oak, 10" and 16", across the trail with collateral rhodie damage. We dispatched the blowdown and cleaned up the debris. After returning to our vehicle, we drove back to the Kan lot and walked in to Devils Creek Gap. We tracked down the second blowdown, an 8" lying across the trail. One cut later a good push and done. We met about 18 thru-hikers; likely more than that out today.

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 4/6/2024

Purpose: Do spring chores

Location: Section 20b, Temple Hill Gap heading 1½ mile south

People: Vic Hasler

Summary: The access forest road still could benefit from a boom mower. I removed several leaners and some growth encroaching into the path. My primary concern is where the downhill shoulder is narrow; thus maybe a summer crew could cut back the rhododendron on the other side. A hedge trimmer was used on the short bend of azaleas. I lopped uphill growth as time allowed. I spoke with two of seven NOBOs who had seen no problem blowdowns; but the previously reported wetness at mile 339.1 was really slippery. The wetness is water seeping across a shady trail section

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through a mass of decaying leaves. This short section could benefit from rehab to allow more drainage, a turnpike, or even a bog bridge with steps to get above where the water begins to seep. I carried some rocks, not on the trail, from storm drainage in the next hollow over, but their effectiveness will be limited. On the way out for the day, I discovered a large pile of cans and glass bottles in the forest along Temple Hill Gap trail. Thus, I hauled out the cans and moved the glass bottles to the trail since it was more than I could carry. While Konnarock Crew is here in July, I recommend including improvements for mile 339.1.

Reporting: Steve Perri

Date: 4/7/2024

Purpose: Clean waterbars

Location: Section 3, US 421 North to Double Springs

People: Steve Perri

Summary: I used the buddy system to check in and out with Steve Wilson before going out solo to clean waterbars and cut briars. With the rains coming this week, I thought this would be a good time to use the pulaski to clean the waterbars near US 421. I went in about 1.5 miles to the last incline past the rock wall next to the trail. No blowdowns in the trail were found. I added about 5 trenched diversions to allow water to drain off the trail on that last incline. I also cut back briars to the degree that I could before they encroach the trail. I decided to bushwhack over to the cabin on Locust Pole Knob since it was easily visible with no leaves on the trees. Someone had added a black tarp over the roof line some time ago, as the roof has decayed quite a bit. There was a trace of snow in the shadow of the building. I saw only two NOBOs on the trail. On the way back on 421, there was a motorcycle that had crashed in one of the curves. I observed several emergency vehicles and an ambulance coming from the local fire department.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 4/10/2024

Purpose: Clear blowdowns and evaluate section

Location: Section 19a, Indian Grave Gap to Martins Creek

People: Joe Morris

Summary: Lotta Murray reported a couple of blowdowns last week and I took advantage of a break in the rain to walk in from Indian Grave Gap to Martins Creek at mile 349.6. I didn't have enough saw to remove the tree (Katana) but I removed the branches and built a small crib and filled it with rock. That worked well, as I needed to gain height there anyway. There are several rehab opportunities in this area. Most notably: 350.1, 350.4, and 350.6 accessible from the guardrail intersection at 351.1. This will be a good fall or cooler weather work area.

Reporting: Dick Martindale

Date: 4/10/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdowns and assess trail

Location: Section 11a, Dennis Cove Road to junction with Coon Den Falls trail

People: Dick Martindale

Summary: I removed several small blowdowns with a handsaw and used loppers to cut back encroaching vegetation on approximately a two-mile stretch. This section of trail is in good condition with no major maintenance needs observed. One step-over blowdown will need a chainsaw for removal, though it is not an impediment to hikers. I plan to do the same tasks on the stretch from the Coon Den Falls junction to Canute Place next week. I had brief conversations with four NOBOs.

Reporting: Scott Huskey

Date: 4/10/2024

Purpose: Remove reported blowdown

Location: Section 4b, Double Springs Shelter to TN 91, Mile 452.1

People: Scott Huskey

Summary: I removed a blowdown, which was reported to me on 4/2/2024.

Reporting: Dean Baird

Date: 4/11/2024

Purpose: Place norvirus posters

Location: Section 10, From Dennis Cove to Laurel Fork Shelter, Potato Top Trail

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People: Dean Baird

Summary: Norovirus posters were placed: (1) on the back wall of the Laurel Fork shelter, (2) on the USFS kiosk at the Dennis Cove trailhead, and (3) at the USFS kiosk at the Hampton Blue-Blaze trailhead. One large rhododendron branch that was encroaching the trail close to Koonford Bridge was removed. The Potato Top Trail was walked to check its condition. We will do some minor vegetation cut-back later. I saw 10 thru-hikers.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 4/13/2024

Purpose: Hiking with Tools!

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

People: Tim Stewart, Steve Perri, Tracy Harris, Rebecka Powell

Summary: It was a very windy Hiking-with-Tools! adventure this month. We met at Low Gap (US 421) and hiked south on the A.T. Cleaning water diversions was the main task. There wasn't much lopping involved, but the aggressive green briars were snipped back. We also removed a few minor blowdowns. We had lunch at the Berry Fields where we observed some white stuff on Whitetop. After lunch, we continued hiking south for about another 30 minutes. We made it almost to the top of Locust Knob where we encountered a blowdown obstructing the trail. It is easy to get around, but the path to get around is under the dangling portion of the tree. It will need some attention soon. There were also 2 step-overs that we left. Although the wind was relentless, the sun was shining. We saw a bunch of NOBOs heading to Damascus. Back at the trailhead, Steve installed a 'Footpath Only' sign. It was a good day!



Reporting: Michael Watts

Date: 4/13/2024

Purpose: Spring maintenance

Location: Section 13, South of US 19E

People: Rick Lott, Mike Watts

Summary: It was a clear but windy day. Through hikers said that while ascending and crossing Hump, the wind blew them sideways. Trail rehab on this section looks great. We lopped encroaching vegetation, cleaned water diversions, and cleared a few smaller blowdowns. To Do List: 1) Blowdown across trail to spring will require chainsaw. Upper portion crossing trail about a foot in diameter. Curves upward to provide around 4 feet of clearance underneath. 2) Upper pipe from spring could use a 1.5-foot extension for easier access. 3) Need to tighten handrail bolts on bridge past Apple House.

Reporting: Richard L Ramsey

Date: 4/14/2024

Purpose: Clear trail of larger trees

Location: Section 14a, Doll Flats to Bradley Gap, Trail above Doll Flats

People: Nancy Mick, Richard Ramsey

Summary: We had to hike in from 19E. We cleared 5 larger trees from the trail that we left a few weeks ago. Currently, no obstacles are in the trail. The trail 1.75 mile above Doll Flats is very muddy and in need of a larger project. Of course, access will make a group project much more difficult. It would be almost a 10-mile round-trip for a group to get to the place needing work.

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Reporting: Dean Baird

Date: 4/14/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 9b, Hampton trailhead to the top of Pond Mountain

People: Dean Baird

Summary: I hiked to South Pond to remove an approximately 8" reported blowdown located near the top. I removed two other small blowdowns in addition to this one. At this point, the A.T. on South Pond is clear and in good condition.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 4/14/2024

Purpose: Inspect trail for blowdowns and clear waterbars

Location: Section 16b, Iron Mountain Gap to about 1/4 mile past Weedy Gap

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: I went to check for blowdowns since we had big winds. I found only one so far, but only made it around 1.5 miles. I trimmed back the limbs of a live tree that fell about a month ago and is coming down gradually. I also removed a dead red oak about 6 to 7 inches in diameter that was across the trail. The wind picked up, so I turned around. On the return to the trailhead, I cleared 8 to 10 waterbars. I also inspected the spring, which was flowing at about a gallon-per-minute. I met 5 thru-hikers, with one camping in the Apple Orchard and 2 others who said they would join her. It was a nice day to hike with the air conditioning on medium-to-high by the end of the day.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 4/15/2024

Purpose: Evaluate Konnarock section and fill in rootball

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

People: Joe Morris

Summary: Jerry, Matt, Ruth, Miriam and Virginia evaluated the section, from THG to No Business Knob, for the two-week Konnarock stint in July. A large tree toppled over the weekend and the rootball completely blew out the trail about 100 yards south of Temple Hill Gap. I stayed after the ATC/Konnarock crew left and tried to make the four-foot-deep hole passible. I had no digging tools, so I did the best I could under the circumstances. We're returning Wednesday to fix this properly. Hikers are plentiful, with more on the way.

Reporting: Elzear Lemieux

Date: 4/16/2024

Purpose: Survey trail for maintenance needs

Location: Sections 13 - 18, US 19E to Indian Grave Gap

People: Elzear Lemieux

Summary: I backpacked from 19E to Indian Grave Gap. I surveyed the sections and recorded trail rehab opportunities and blowdowns. I removed some blowdowns and checked water sources. I sent separate reports to the leaders with pictures and locations.

Reporting: Dick Martindale

Date: 4/17/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdowns and cut brush

Location: Section 11a, Dennis Cove Road to Canute Place, Mile 420.1 to 417.8

People: Dick Martindale

Summary: My original plan was to perform basic maintenance tasks all the way to Canute Place; but several new blowdowns and unauthorized trails were encountered. All but one blowdown (a 14-inch step-over) was able to be removed with a handsaw, and more vegetation was cut back. From mile 418.3 to 418.0 there are now three new trails leading off to the right while heading southward. We brushed two of those in last fall, but the brush has been removed and a third trail is so prominent that two NOBOs told me they were confused as to which trail to take. I brushed those in as best I could, though there is clearly an individual or group who is purposefully keeping them open and functional by clearing vegetation, extensive flagging (which I removed) and sawing blowdowns. I hiked the unauthorized trail at mile 418.0 which re-entered the A.T. at mile 418.2. I did not hike the one at at 418.3. At a minimum, I need to add at least one more blaze and repaint some of the existing ones. I saw at least 30 NOBOs, and spoke to several of them

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regarding the condition of the trail. They were all complimentary and enjoying the experience. None of them identified any issues from mile 418.0 to Canute Place and several said the water source/pipe at Canute Place was in good condition. I will find a local volunteer to assist with the remaining blowdown, and have already asked other people in this area to inform me if they know anything about the unauthorized trails.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 4/17/2024

Purpose: Routine maintenance

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

People: Jim Foster

Summary: Everything looks good after removing a couple of small blowdowns. There is one large one about 3.2 miles Trail south from Hughes Gap that will require a chainsaw. I've contacted my sawyer and we hope to get it on Sunday.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 4/17/2024

Purpose: Rebuild trail due to root-ball damage

Location: Section 20b, Temple Hill Gap, south

People: Joe Morris, Van Hovey

Summary: Van, Alex Auton from FS, and I rebuilt the trail 100 yards south of Temple Hill Gap with two 11-foot locust logs and a significant amount of backfill.



Reporting: Lotta Murray

Date: 4/17/2024

Purpose: Check for blowdowns and paint blazes

Location: Section 20c, No Business Knob Shelter to Spivey Gap, Can lot to Spivey

People: Ken Murray, Lotta murray

Summary: We checked for blowdowns and painted blazes. We cut back a lot of rhododendrons and found no blowdowns on this part of our section.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 4/18/2024

Purpose: Improve Trail

Location: Section 12d, Campbell Hollow Road to US 19E, Open Field

People: Greg Kramer, Steve Perri, Carl Fritz, Tony Messina, J Scott Huskey, Bob Peoples, Scott Ourth, Tim Stewart, Van Hovey, Rio Berry, Joe Morris

Summary: We were improving the trail from the road down. The open field is also used as a trail for ATV's. We decided to move the trail near the first water seep to the left side of the trail, to allow the ATVs to go between the trail and the tree. We directed the water to cross the trail and go into the Multi Flora Rose (MFR) patch which would drain down by the second seep. We created 30 feet of trail and a 20-foot water diversion that we hardened so the ATVs could go over.

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At the second seep, we moved the trail to the right side so we could keep the trail above the water. We built 105 feet of trail by the second seep, 30 feet of stepping rocks through the muddy area, and 75 feet of new trail in the MFR below. We will continue to repair next week.

Reporting: Dave Allen

Date: 4/19/2024

Purpose: Water flow control on Backbone Rock Trail

Location: Section 1, Backbone Rock Blue-Blaze Trail

People: Dave Allen, Ben Allen

Summary: It was a bit of a rainy morning, so it was a good chance to observe water drainage on the steep sections of the Backbone Rock blue-blaze trail. The steep sections are showing signs of erosion running down the trail. A total of 27 drainage diversions (coweetas) and waterbars were dug or cleaned out, along with a few small blowdowns removed, and some encroaching green briar trimmed back. There was one large blowdown hanging over the trail which was too large to remove by handsaw, but it is stable and can be passed under. Discussion with Tony Messina concluded to not remove immediately, but wait until there is chainsaw work needed on the A.T. sections at the top end of the blue-blaze.

Reporting: Jeff Hatling

Date: 4/19/2024

Purpose: Inspect trail condition

Location: Section 14b, Bradley Gap to Yellow Mountain Gap, Little Hump area

People: Jeff Hatling

Summary: I cleaned out water diversion from the southern base of Little Hump up to the Peak. I created three additional water diversion from the rocks to the peak, along with reshaping about 60 feet of trail to encourage hikers to stay on the trail (see photo for example of reshaping).

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 4/19/2024

Purpose: Inspect for blowdowns, continue to clean waterbars

Location: Section 16b, Iron Mountain Gap to top of first ridge, 0.9 mile

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: From Iron Mountain Gap to top of what I think is called Old Road Ridge, I cleaned out 40 waterbars. Some were short and almost non-existent and others were long and full of silt and leaves. I saw several thru-hikers and met one section hiker at the trailhead. He was a senior hiker who went from the trailhead south to 1½ miles past the shelter past Low Gap. He reported that there were 10 to 12 blowdowns, the largest of which was close to where he turned around near Low Gap. He was tracking his hike on his phone, so I feel certain his mileage was correct.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 4/20/2024

Purpose: Check section

Location: Section 11b, Canute Place to Bitter End, Moreland Gap Shelter

People: Tim Stewart

Summary: I went in from a new access point and began lopping rhodos. At the shelter, I picked up trash and removed ashes from the firepit. Hiking back, I removed one small blowdown and encountered numerous NOBOs. Once back at the car on FS293, I decided to count the 'potholes'. There were 66 of various sizes from the access point to the gate, approximately 3 miles. The road is in bad condition.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 4/22/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdowns and do minor repairs to shelter

Location: Sections 4a and 4b, TN 91 to US 421, Double Springs Shelter

People: Carl Fritz, Scott Huskey, Ed Speer





Summary: Ed walked from Osborne Farm to Low Gap. Scott and I covered significant chunks. Some of the blowdowns that were seen last week had been cleared. Scott cut the large double blowdown about 3/4 mile north of the shelter. We all installed a gutter on the back of Double Springs Shelter. Last year, Ed had identified that during rains the water was running through the shelter. This gutter is probably the last vestige of Overmountain Shelter. We also repaired the front gutter. Ed hand-sawed a 9" waist high blowdown. There still remains a 12" stepover probably 1.25 mile south of Low Gap. We removed a decades-old blowdown with a big step entirely.

Reporting: Jim McGuire

Date: 4/23/2024

Purpose: Replace wire mesh on bridge

Location: Section: 2c, Campbell Hollow Road

People: Jim McGuire

Summary: I replaced the wire mesh on bridge near mile 399.8. I saw 14 thru-hikers. They all expressed appreciation for our work. The section looked good.

Reporting: Dick Martindale

Date: 4/23/2024

Purpose: Paint/repaint blazes and brush in areas near three unauthorized trails

Location: Section 11a, Dennis Cove Road to mile 417.9

People: Dick Martindale

Summary: All three unauthorized trails intersect the A.T. on the right while hiking south.

Mile 418.3 – I added one new blaze and repainted one existing blaze. I explored this trail, which after about 150 yards turned into what appears to be a recently excavated road. The attached photo was taken about 200 yards off the A.T. It is possible that it is related to a 2023 logging operation in this immediate area. I added more brush/debris at the intersection and noted that the brush I left from last week had not been disturbed.



Mile 418.1 – I repainted one blaze and added brush at the intersection. The brush added last week had not been disturbed.

Mile 417.9 – I repainted one blaze and added brush at the intersection. Again, the brush added last week had not been disturbed.

For fun I hiked out via the Coon Den Falls trail, which has a few blowdowns uphill from the falls; one of which is a 16-inch oak.

Reporting: Bill Fuller

Date: 4/25/2024

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 9a, US 321 to Pond Flats

People: Bill Fuller

Summary: I cleared two reported blowdowns and found a third... ranging from 8-12". One was near the wilderness boundary, one was about a mile in, and the third was at the two-mile mark. I cleared some encroaching underbrush on my way up the mountain and picked up some trash near the forest gate/cemetery. I didn't make it to the top of the mountain, but south Pond is in good shape, at least for the first couple miles. I got compliments and "thank you" from 11 thru-hikers and one section hiker. They said they were just a few days ahead of the big bubble of hikers. It was a beautiful day to be on the mountain!

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 4/25/2024

Purpose: Build trail around muddy spots

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Location: Section 12d, Campbell Hollow Road to US 19E, Bishop Hollow

People: Greg Kramer, Jim McGuire, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart, Scott Huskey, Dan Eggart, Carl Fritz, Van Hovey, Dan Firth, Dave Allen

Summary: With 4 Forest Service members we had a tremendous Crew. One group went down to the bog bridges and moved the 20ft bridge to span the stream. The other 12ft bridge was carried UP the hill to be used at the wet spot. I had mentioned all of the rock work we did in my last report. The gap in the middle was closed. The SOBO end we added the bog bridge and added 5 steps for an additional rehab of 35 feet. 3 waterbars were added. The trail now is out of the water all of the way to the woods.