



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

June 2024

tehcc.org

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

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*Wild Bleeding Heart (Dicentra eximia) along the AT by Wilbur Dam
Photo by: Eric Dobbs*

Letter from the Chair

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

Happy June, Everyone!

Summer will be here soon, and many of us will be outside enjoying the greenery, sun, and warmth. With that being said, I think a reminder on sun safety will do us all good! Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States with 1 in 5 Americans getting it in their lifetime (that's 9500 people a day)! So, taking precautions in the sun to avoid burns and cancer are critical to safely enjoying the outdoors.

Sun Safety

- Generously apply sunscreen of at least 15 SPF 15 minutes before going outside. Reapply every 2 hours. Make sure it protects against both UVA and UVB radiation.
- Wear protective clothing like wide-brim hats, sunglasses, long sleeved shirts, and long pants if going out in the sun.
- The sun's rays are strongest between 10AM and 4PM, so seek shade if possible. Sunburns are even possible on cloudy days, so be aware!
- Snow, water, and sand can reflect the sun's rays back, so use extra caution when around them.
- Check the UV index before going outside to help avoid overexposure.
- Overexertion in the sun can happen quickly on a hot day, so make sure to find somewhere to cool off and avoid heat illness.
 - Symptoms of heat illness: high body temperature (+103F), hot red-and-dry skin, rapid pulse, and dizziness/confusion/unconsciousness.
 - Someone with signs of heat illness should be taken somewhere cool and cooled down with available methods. If suspected heatstroke, call 911 or take the person to a hospital to get medical help.

I hope this refresher helps everyone recognize the dangers of too much sun, and helps remind you of steps you can take to enjoy your time outside.

Have a safe and fun June, everyone!

Thank you,
Eric Dobbs

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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
June 1	Hike: Bays Mountain Fire Tower, 9 am	Erin Ekart	423-429-3813
June 1	Hiking with Tools! Bitter End to Hardcore Cascades, 9:30 am	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, Boone Lake, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm	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
June 22	Hike: Indian Gap to Beauty Spot, 10 am – 1 pm	Josh Hayes	270-585-5929
June 22	APEs Tuckasegee Paddle Meetup, 10:30 am – 4 pm	See APEs events	
June 23	APEs Nantahala Paddle Meetup, 10:30 am – 4 pm	See APEs events	
July 11	APEs Steele Creek Park Nature Paddle and Picnic, 6 pm – 9 pm	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
July 13	Hiking with Tools! Hughes Gap to Little Rock Knob	Tim Stewart	
July 18	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1 pm	Eric Dobbs	303-915-9208
July 20	Save The Date - TEHCC Lower Noli Paddling Trip	Andy Steffan	919-928-4738
July 20	“Babes on the Waves” Pigeon River Run, 9 am – 3 pm	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
July 25	Fun Fest Moonlight Hike, 7:30 – 9:30 pm	Vic Hasler	423-416-3166

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.

Weekly A.T. Trail Maintenance, Most Thursdays

Contact: [Joe Morris](#), 423-571-5201, atvolunteer@tehcc.org

Join a group of maintainers who work somewhere on our 134-mile section each week, usually on Thursdays. On-the-job training, tools, and protective gear are provided to allow everyone to quickly engage with the trail. Carpooling is available.

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

Contact: [Tim Stewart](#)

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

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

Contact: [Debbie Briscoe](#), 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](#), 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 Messina](#), 423-677-6650

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

Scheduled Events

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

Contact: [Erin Ekart](#), 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.

Hiking with Tools! Saturday, June 1, 2024, 9:30 am

Contact: [Tim Stewart](#)

Location: [Meet at Roan Mountain Community Park](#)

I think cold weather is finally behind us! We're meeting a week early for this adventure. We'll hike from Bitter End to Hardcore Cascades while lopping rhodos. It will be about a 4-mile round trip with moderate hiking. The meeting place will be at Roan Mountain Community Park at 9:30 and then carpool to Bitter End. <https://maps.app.goo.gl/wn1dZkqspa5V7vvd7> (small parking area below the sign and near the stage, not the ballfield.)

As a reminder, some items to bring in a day pack:

- work gloves, hard hat if you have one (otherwise provided)
- plenty of drinking water (especially if it is hot)
- lunch
- appropriate work clothes and boots/shoes
- appropriate cold weather/rain gear

If the weather changes, we may have to cancel. Please let Tim know if you plan to attend.

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TEHCC Lake Paddling Trip, Boone Lake, June 8, 2024, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm

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

Location: [TVA Boat Ramp, Boone Lake](#)

It's time to start the paddling season! I hope you'll sign up to join me on June 8th for an easy paddling trip on Boone Lake. Meet at the TVA boat ramp off Minga Road, near the dam at 9:30 am. Plan to paddle 2ish-miles (subject to group's choice). We should be off the water around noon or a little after. 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.). If you have a boat and would like to bring it, the more the merrier. Just let me know on the sign-up form and please bring appropriate gear, including PFD!

Hike: Indian Gap to Beauty Spot, Saturday, June 22, 2024, 9 am – 11 am

Contact: [Josh Hayes](#), 270-585-5529

Location: [Appalachian, Beauty Spot Gap Road, Erwin, TN](#)

Weather Permitting

Enjoy this 4.8-mile out-and-back trail near Unicoi, Tennessee. Generally considered a moderately challenging route, it takes an average of 2 hours 35 minutes to complete. This is a popular trail for backpacking, birding, and hiking but you can still enjoy some solitude during quieter times of day. The best time to visit this trail are January through November. Dogs are welcome and may be off leash in some areas. Bring plenty of water and snacks.

SAVE THE DATE - TEHCC Lower Noli Paddling Trip, July 20, 2024

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

I hope you will join us for TEHCC's second club-led paddle of the season! Jerry Griffin with APEs will lead this paddling trip. Jerry is extremely experienced in teaching and guiding trips, so we will be in great hands! This trip will be on the Lower Nolichucky River, likely in the Greeneville or Erwin, TN area. Exact locations/times/distances will be announced later. Beginners welcome! The trip will feature flat moving water, with some splashy sections, but suitable for the boats we have in our fleet. The club will transport our boats (4 sit-in, 3 sit-on, 1 canoe), PFDs, and paddles to the location; so all you need to bring is water, snacks, and any other supplies you might want (sunscreen, etc.). If you have a boat and would like to bring it, we will just need to OK it before arrival; just let me know on the sign-up form and please bring appropriate gear, including PFD!

Hike: Fun Fest Moonlight Hike, Thursday, July 25, 2024, 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm

Contact: [Vic Hasler](#), 423-416-3166

Rating: *Easy hike around the lake*

Location: [Bays Mountain Park, 853 Bays Mountain Park Rd, Kingsport, TN 37620](#)

The hike begins at the dam near the visitors' center. Bring your own flashlight/headlamp (and spare batteries), water, insect repellent, and charged cell phone. The Moonlight Hike will officially start at 8:00 pm (with 77% of the moon waning gibbous). Club volunteers are needed to assist with the event (which means you don't have to have a Fun Fest ticket to participate). For the hike description and the role of volunteers, see article below, "Call for Volunteers,"

Bear Activity at Clyde Smith Shelter

Compiled by Vic Hasler from information provided across multiple emails from USFS and ATC

Bear (mom and cub) encounters have been reported starting late April through May at the Clyde Smith Shelter on the Appalachian Trail. Food hangs have been stolen, Ursacks damaged, and tents approached; but animal(s) were readily scared off. The USFS has posted warning signs at highway crossings north and south, plus at the shelter. A trail alert is posted on ATC's website.



Call for Volunteers for Fun Fest Moonlight Hike, July 25, 2024

Club Leader: [Vic Hasler](#), text 423-416-3166

Since before 1993, TEHCC has been co-sponsoring the Kingsport Fun Fest Moonlight Hike at Bays Mountain Park. The hike begins at the dam near the visitors' center. Bring your own flashlight/headlamp (and spare batteries), water, insect repellent, and charged cell phone. We will start at the front of the walkers, and then be assigned to specific intersections to direct the traffic along the right path. **Overall, TEHCC needs 14 volunteers.** The Moonlight Hike will officially start at 8:00 pm (with 77% of the moon waning gibbous); so we will want to show up by 7:30pm at the Nature Center. **If you are interested in volunteering or getting more information, please contact Vic who will be assembling the volunteer list.**

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For the Record

Sill Branch and Pine Ridge Falls Hike Report, April 27, 2024

Andy Steffan reporting



Sill Branch Falls

The weather was perfect, and the unexpected rain the day before created some great flows! So much flow, that a stream crossing to Pine Ridge was more treacherous than I've ever encountered. It's usually not much of a stream crossing, but this day it was, and required some extra caution and help to cross. The one mile out-and-back hike to Sill Branch went smoothly and the falls were lovely.

We saw plenty of wildflowers along the way. We just missed most of the trillium blooming, but we did manage to still catch a few! After returning to the trailhead, we walked the ¼ mile up the road to the Pine Ridge Falls trailhead and navigated that ~1 mile out-and-back trail. We enjoyed a snack and rest at the falls, before returning to the parking area. Total length was 2.5 miles. Attendees:



Pine Ridge Falls



Sill Branch Trillium

Andy Steffan (leader), Jackie Steffan, Gabriela Brueggeman, and Steve Statham.

Laura Run Trail and Falls Hike Report, May 11, 2024

Josh Hayes reporting

We started the hike at 10:15 to give others a chance to make it, but finally had to set out. It was a beautiful day for a hike with temperatures in the upper 60's. We took our time, as the rain had caused the path to be quite slippery and the creek crossing was a very wet one. This however made for a great waterfall view; probably the strongest I had ever seen! We had plenty of insects and even saw a black snake on the trail at the end. Attendees were Josh Hayes, Marcus McCoy and his +1 Ronnie.

If you go: The trail was well maintained with no noticeable litter.

TEHCC Welcomes New Members

Vibha Kanale
Amisha Agrawal

Steve Odum
Jessica Johnson

Donna Odum



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 4/22/2024

Purpose: Clean out waterbars, check for blowdowns, remove trash

Location: Section 16b, Iron Mountain Gap to Weedy Gap

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: From Iron Mountain Gap, I checked condition of the waterbars I had cleaned before a rain to see how they fared after a storm. Many had leaves blown back into them. So I pushed the leaves out with my boots and widened some with my mattock on the first ridge. Then I moved on to the orchard, cleaning waterbars as I went by pushing leaves out with my boots. At the orchard, I met two thru-hikers and built a fire for them (and me) because it was cold with temperatures in the 40's and 10 to 15 mph wind.

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After that, I went down to Weedy Gap and cleaned out waterbars with my mattock. As I returned to the trailhead, I kicked more leaves out of some and picked up trash. The waterbars seem to fill up quickly.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 4/25/2024

Purpose: Clear waterbars, check for blowdowns, check spring, and remove trash

Location: Section 16b, Iron Mountain Gap to top of 1st tall knob at the pinnacle of rocks

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: From Iron Mountain Gap to Weedy Gap, I cleaned leaves out of waterbars that had been blown in by storms and wind. I cut a few waterbars in the orchard, but may need more. I also kicked some waterbars open that I missed on the last trip. I continued on to the first tall knob where I met a north-bound thru-hiker who was suffering from blisters. I supplied her with gauze, povodone iodine swabs, Band-aids, and a small burn kit which I thought might help blisters. I also helped her find a campsite for the night that was semi-sheltered in the gap under the first tall pinnacle rock knob. Then I continued on up to the rocks using my mattock to clean out 8 or 9 waterbars. I checked the knob beyond the rocks for blowdowns and then returned to the trailhead.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 4/26/2024

Purpose: Garlic Mustard Pull

Location: Section 20c, No Business Knob Shelter to Spivey Gap, Devils Creek Gap

People: Vic Hasler, Dan Firth, Greg Kramer

Summary: Matt Drury and PJ met us at Devil's Creek Gap to pull garlic mustard. It was another successful garlic mustard pull. We pulled approximately 100 pounds of garlic mustard and we think we got it all. There were plenty of seedlings we probably didn't get, but we did our best. It was very satisfying to pick the garlic mustard in the bowl where the access road and A.T. meet. The other flowers were blooming well.

Reporting: Russell Fleming

Date: 4/27/2024

Purpose: Trail Maintenance

Location: Section 15c, Ash Gap to Hughes Gap

People: Russell Fleming

Summary: I traversed the trail. I dug out waterbars, cut back encroaching vegetation, and picked up trash. I cleared one blowdown (see pic). No other blowdowns or obstructions were encountered.



Reporting: Derek Haire

Date: 4/28/2024

Purpose: Inspect for blowdowns and overgrowth

Location: Section 20a, Nolichucky River to Temple Hill Gap, Northern half of section

People: Derek Haire, Craig Haire

Summary: We arrived early in the afternoon for trail inspection and minor clearing. We found evidence of shortcuts at several switchbacks on the northern half from the Nolichucky River, as well as the deliberate dismantling of constructed obstructions intended to prevent same. One switchback barrier had its capstone dislodged, likely by a bear looking for ground wasps, as it was a very large and heavy rock that required two people to replace. We noted a few areas where the berm is too high, a few others where the treadway needs attention, a couple of rainwater turnouts that need to be re-dug, and one six-foot section where there was evidence of a puddle forming; all to be addressed in the near future as the season progresses. We also removed overhanging vegetation inside the hiking corridor and other similar minor overgrowth. We encountered several northbound thru-hikers, as well as a few day hikers, also northbound; all in good spirits and without complaints. No more than a dozen persons total.

Reporting: Jon Heidrick

Date: 5/1/2024

Purpose: Remove deadfalls

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

People: Jon Heidrick

Summary: Six hemlock trunks had fallen across the first 1½ mile of the trail since my last visit. I cut and removed the trunks with a double bladed axe and silky saw.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 5/2/2024

Purpose: Cut blowdowns

Location: Section 16a, Hughes Gap to 3 miles south

People: Yong Li, Jim Foster

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Summary: Yong did a great job cutting a large blowdown. It required multiple cuts to get it out of the trail. Then he cut a smaller widow-maker on our way out.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 5/2/2024

Purpose: Rehab trail, remove blowdowns, assess shelter

Location: Section 15a, Carvers Gap - Cloudland Hotel, Roan Highlands

People: Greg Kramer, Jim McGuire, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Elzear Lemieux, Joe Morris, Bob Peoples, Tony Messina, Tim Stewart, Van Hovey

Summary: The Thursday crew split into three teams between Carvers Gap and Roan High Knob Shelter. The following tasks were accomplished. Carl removed a hanging blowdown first reported on Elzear's section hike. The bulk of the crew reset 2 steps, reset and cleared two water diversions, and set two new rock steps. In addition, a ten-foot wet area was cribbed and filled with crush.

Reporting: Jon Heidrick

Date: 5/2/2024

Purpose:

Location: Section 12d, Bishop Hollow to Campbell Hollow

People: Jon Heidrick

Summary: I cut one blowdown in the Campbell Hollow area. I also cut weeds the entire length of Bishop Hollow; also Issacs Cemetery to Walnut Mountain Rd.

Reporting: Renee Messina

Date: 5/3/2024

Purpose: Clear reported blowdowns and general section maintenance

Location: Section 12a, Bitter End to Walnut Mountain Road, Plus just south of Campbell Hollow Road

People: Renee Messina, Tony Messina

Summary: Our primary purpose was to clear a couple of blowdowns reported by Jim McGuire on a recent backpack trip. The first was a 15" hardwood roughly 0.2 miles south of Campbell Hollow Road. Earlier in the week, Jon Heidrick had cleared multiple others along this section with his Silky saw; however, he requested chainsaw assistance with this one. A roaming rain shower totally drenched us on the return trip to the car; but we found the road dry when we arrived at Walnut Mountain Road. We, therefore, continued on with the day's plan to clear the second reported blowdown, which was just north of "the bench with a view" --- or roughly halfway through our section. Knowing this, we had spotted one of our vehicles at Bitter End, allowing us to hike through and perform general maintenance along the way. In addition to the reported blowdown, there were 8 nuisance blowdowns of varying size/complexity that were removed. Despite numerous improvements completed by the Thursday crew last fall, we observed some persistent wet spots along the section. We encountered about 20 northbound through hikers.



Reporting: Dan Firth

Date: 5/3/2024

Purpose: Garlic Mustard Pull

Location: Section 4a, US 421 to Double Springs Shelter, Low Gap

People: Dan Firth

Summary: I removed 62 pounds of garlic mustard from Low Gap with the help of Emily Powell (ATC Intern). This is significantly less than past years. We removed to the second road bend to the west.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 5/6/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 5, TN 91 to Iron Mountain Shelter

People: Greg Kramer, Ken Costello

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Summary: We took care of the tree crossing the trail I reported during my last visit. It took nearly a half hour to totally clear the blowdown. Of the 17 step-overs I reported last time, we got 14. We walked out a little after noon and missed a deluge by 15 minutes.



Reporting: Jeffrey A Hatling

Date: 5/7/2024

Purpose: Mow the old Barn site

Location: Section 14b, Old Red Barn site and blue trail to Yellow Mountain Gap

People: Jeff Hatling and dog Merle

Summary: I mowed the old Red Barn site, checked the springs, and cleaned out water diversions on the blue-blaze trail leading up to Yellow Mountain Gap. The mower was provided by Woody Farmer, A.T. thru-hiker "Dancing Bear."

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 5/11/2024

Purpose: Hiking with Tools!

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

People: Tim Stewart, Jon Heidrick

Summary: It was just Jon and I for this Hiking with Tools! outing. We met at the US 19E trailhead and hiked north. Of course, there were rhodos to lop and other encroaching vegetation. Walking up Bishop Hollow, we observed the recent improvements in the wet areas. Everything seemed to be working well, but there were still wet areas that might need some stepping stones. We encountered a handful of NOBO hikers. It was a good day.

Reporting: Joel Zabel

Date: 5/11/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdowns, check shelter

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to Unaka summit

People: Jeff Bennett, Josh Banks, Adam Bean, Todd Markwalter, Yong Li, Joel Zabel

Summary: We cleared all recently reported blowdowns and some new ones with handsaws and brute force to wrestle some off the trail. Diameters were 12", 10", about (6) 6" to 8", and some smaller. Cherry Gap Shelter and its water source were in fine order. We met through hikers from Germany, England, Washington, Oregon, Montana, Maine, Vermont, Connecticut, Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, North Carolina, Florida, Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, and more.

Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 5/11/2024

Purpose: Clear reported blowdowns, inspect trail

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

People: Van Hovey, Carrie Hovey

Summary: Our primary purpose was to clear reported blowdowns along the trail; secondary purpose was to inspect trail for future maintenance. Three blowdowns were reported, however only one of significance was encountered, which took well over an hour to clear (see before and after pics). The shelter was a bit messy with trash and graffiti. We will have to return with a new graffiti board and paint to cover graffiti on the walls. The water source was active. While multiple areas of future repair exist, the trail is passable and in relatively good condition. Water is an issue, especially in the Jones Branch section after heavy rains. However, it tends to dry up in a couple days. Our total walk was about 5.5 miles, encountering 20+ hikers: thru, section, and day. It was a nice day to be outCheers



Reporting: Phyllis Cairnes

Date: 5/11/2024

Purpose: Maintain shelter

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

People: Rolla Wade, Phyllis Cairnes

Summary: It was a wonderfully cool, partly cloudy day to be on the trail. There were several hikers and one big dog at the shelter when we arrived. I was afraid my maintenance efforts might be hampered, but they politely moved their packs so I could repaint the graffiti board. Then Brian and Pilgrim pitched in helping us pick up trash, shoveling the fire ring, and tidying up. Badger was nursing a hurting knee replacement, so he provided moral support. Notable detritus--a used Depends (yuck) from behind the shelter, which we buried using the new shovel we carried in, and a half-full plastic honeybear inside the hollow of a concrete block. Those concrete blocks seem to be used for hiding all kinds of wrappers. The trail was quite busy today with thru-hikers. One man from Oslo, Norway was inspired by the movies, "Wild" and "A Walk in the Woods." He trained by cross-country skiing. Another was an Ironman triathlete, Turkish Delight, from Turkey, who said doing the A.T. was much harder than doing triathlons!

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 5/13/2024

Purpose: Trail Maintenance

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

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: From Iron Mountain Gap I went to the sign to measure for fit of materials to replace the logos. While there, I met a thru-hiker friend on facebook and decided to check trail conditions to the top of the first tall knob at rock pinnacle. I needed to check to see if mowing is needed, which I don't think is needed quite yet. I hiked to the top in record time and on the way back down, I kicked out waterbars which had filled up with leaves. I also pruned back green briars and blackberry vines. I checked the spring which was flowing the fastest I have seen in months. The last 10 feet to the spring could use more large stepping stones, which I haven't found yet. There were 2 thru-hikers camped in the orchard and I carried out their trash, as well as some from three other hikers. And there were no blowdowns due to recent winds.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 5/13/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdown and rehab

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

People: Van Hovey, Carl Fritz, Tony Messina, Joe Morris

Summary: We removed a reported tangle 0.1 mile south of Temple Hill Gap and rehabbed 20 feet of trail.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 5/16/2024

Purpose: Rehab Trail

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

People: Greg Kramer, Jeff Hatling, Joe Morris, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Elzear Lemieux, Tony Messina, Van Hovey, Tim Stewart

Summary: We split into two groups and had two Forest Service Trail Techs in each. Joe took a group to rehab in the lower section of Bishop Hollow and rehabbed 88 feet of trail. Sixty feet of the this rehab had locust sidelogs; three steps were also added. The other crew hauled two 12" diameter locust logs 15 and 18 feet long and two shorter but larger diameter logs as sleepers. These logs were debarked and placed over a stream crossing about 1,000 feet heading north. The bridge was not assembled and this will have to be done on another workday.



Before



After

Reporting: Scott Huskey

Date: 5/16/2024

Purpose: Trail maintenance

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

People: Scott Huskey

Summary: I went in specifically to cut weeds with a string-trimmer. I weeded the entrance area around the gate at TN 91 and roughly 1¼ mile of trail from the Double Spring Shelter back towards TN 91. Also, I cut back encroaching vegetation. There is a dead tree hung up over the trail at Mile 451.1. It is about 16 to 18 inches in diameter at its base. It does not interfere with hikers, although it will eventually fall across the trail.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 5/21/2024

Purpose: Trail Maintenance

Location: Section 16b: Greasy Creek Gap to Iron Mountain Gap Iron Mountain Gap to top of first ridge.

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: From Iron Mountain Gap to top of first ridge above the apple orchard I used the grass whip to remove tall grass and weeds hanging over the trail. I also kicked out some waterbars filling with leaves and dirt. I will return to weed to the orchard.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 5/21/2024

Purpose: Inspect shelter

Location: Section 15a, Carvers Gap - Cloudland Hotel, Roan High Knob Shelter

People: Dan Firth, Carl Fritz

Summary: We made more measurements of the four locust logs in transit as well as the logs that need to be replaced on the shelter. Ten logs total are needed. Three of those are nine-foot or less. But the rest are 15-foot or longer. Because of the deteriorating logs, the shelter is listing forward as well as sideways. The forward slope is greater than 1" per foot, so it exceeds a wheelchair ramp! The shelter will be down for months because we have to start by building a pier for each corner.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 5/23/2024

Purpose: Rehab Trail

Location: Section 19a, Indian Grave Gap - Curley Maple Gap Shelter, North Indian Grave Gap

People: Greg Kramer, Jim McGuire, Elzear Lemieux, Tim Stewart, Tony Messina, Van Hovey, Todd Carpenter, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz

Summary: On this short trip, we were able to rehab 338 feet of trail and install 3 steps. We went in expecting to find the trail narrowed and that hikers were walking on the edge of the trail. What we found was that the trail was being narrowed by encroaching vegetation. In the worst spot, we dug into the side of the trail by more than a foot and cut rhododendrons back 5 feet. The trail was covered with roots that were high and loose enough to cause tripping. We plan to go back with more tools for removing vegetation and roots. We need a Sawzall reciprocating saw to cut roots without disturbing the trail surface, limb loppers, and hedge trimmers to cut vegetation back 6 feet on the high side of the trail.