



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

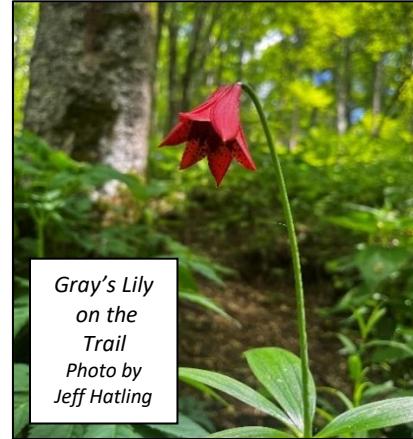
July 2024

Co-Editors – Terry Oldfield and Sharon Burnette

TEHCC.org

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Letter from the Chair

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

Happy start of the summer!! Now that we are in the heat of prime hiking and plant growth season, I'm sure everyone has started noticing more cases of poison ivy happening to friends and family. As such, here is a refresher on Poison Ivy safety.

Poison Ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*) is a vining perennial, native to much of the US. I'm sure we've all heard the moniker "Leaves of 3, let it be" growing up, and it is generally good advice for the Appalachians. While the best way to not get a rash from poison ivy is to not touch it (though some lucky people have no reaction to it at all), there are some good quick things you can do to alleviate the itch before going to the doctor, such as washing the area with dish soap and water, then applying calamine lotion.

Although there are a lot of look-alikes, most of which are totally safe, it is better to be cautious. We'll touch on two of the most common you might see that look similar, but are not itch-inducing.



Kudzu (*Pueraria montana*)

- Equal sized leaves of 3
- Notably Fuzzy near base of leaf
- Climbs by twining around objects, not with feet/hooks
- Usually in large masses



Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)

- Leaves in sets of 5 in a palm-shape
- Toothed edges of leaves
- Vine usually bare or bald on the outside, hairy on edges

Hopefully this quick and simple guide helps you better navigate the outdoors and makes you feel more confident in avoiding poison ivy in your surroundings!

Have a great and safe summer!

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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
July 11	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	TEHCC Lower Nolí 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 21 - 27	Trail Maintenance: Konnarock Crew/Temple Hill Gap, Week 1	Joe Morris	423-571-5201
July 25	Fun Fest Moonlight Hike, 7:30 – 9:30 pm	Vic Hasler	423-416-3166
July 31 – Aug 4	Trail Maintenance: Konnarock Crew/Temple Hill Gap, Week 2	Joe Morris	423-571-5201
August 15	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1 pm	Eric Dobbs	303-915-9208
August 16	Annual Hiwassee River Weekend	See APEs events	
August 24	TEHCC Paddling – Save the Date!	Andy Steffan	919-928-4738

Notice: As shared in April 2024 club newsletter, the Roan Mountain Day Use Area will not be opening in 2024 due to renovations. The limited parking (~40 spaces) at Carvers Gap has been observed recently to be filled by 7am on weekends. It is highly recommended that you seek out [alternative hikes](#) this year. (The Forest Service Road to Beauty Spot also has not reopened because of maintenance work, but can be hiked up from Indian Grave Gap.)

Details of Upcoming Events

Recurring Events

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

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

Location: Teleconference

The Steering Committee guides the general program for the club. The Committee normally meets at lunchtime on the third Thursday of each month. Meetings are open to all TEHCC members. Teams teleconferencing is used as the committee is spread across the Eastman plant site or working from home. If you want to listen/join in, please contact me.

Johnson City Kayak Roll Practice, Tuesdays, 7:35 – 8:45 pm

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

Come join the Jackson Action Wagon, [Mahoney's Outfitters](#), [APEs](#), and other paddlers from our region at Freedom Hall Pool for tips about basic kayaking skills. Have you already mastered the basics and have a bomb proof roll? There is still a lot of fun to be had at our pool session by practicing your flat-water freestyle moves and fellowshipping with other paddlers. Admission to the pool is \$2; rolling advice is free! Contact the pool office (423-461-4872) for session confirmation or questions regarding the facility.

Weekly A.T. Trail Maintenance, Most Thursdays

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

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

Hiking with Tools! 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, 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/YXgdd1Npxw3N2FCk8>

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

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

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

Scheduled Events

TEHCC Lower Noli Paddling Trip, July 20, 2024

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

Hope you will join us for TEHCC's second club-led paddle of the season! Jerry Griffin with APEs will be leading 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 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!

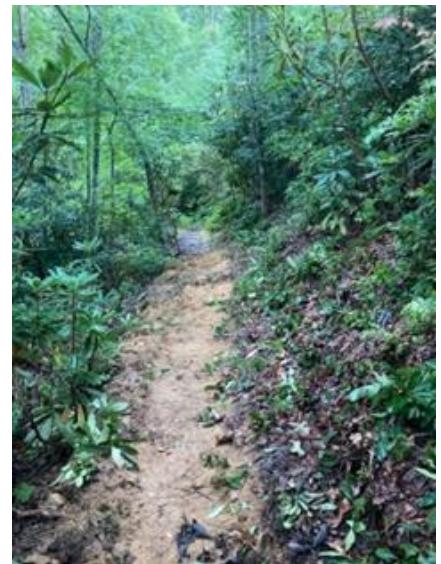
Trail Maintenance: Konnarock Crew/Temple Hill Gap,

Tuesday, July 23 thru Saturday, July 27, 2024 (Week 1 of 2)

Wednesday, July 31 thru Sunday, August 4, 2024 (Week 2 of 2)

Leader: [Joe Morris](#), 423-571-5201

The Konnarock Crew, managed by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy working with the 12 southern clubs, is having a crew repair 40-200 foot segments of the sidehill tread heading south from Temple Hill Gap. Tasks are digging out the extra rock/soil, construction of log cribbing, and improvement of a drainage problem on this remote trail section. The crew arrives on afternoon of the first day for set-up and hauling tools, then three full workdays, and departs by afternoon of the fifth day. You'll need to bring work gloves, lunch, plenty of water, and sunscreen and/or wear a hat for protection. Carpools will be arranged as needed, leaving 8:00 am each day from Kingsport and 8:30 am from Johnson City, but please call/text ahead of time so we'll know how many tools to bring and to expect you. Alternatively, you can camp with the crew. UTV support will be supplied for packing in group and individual camping gear. Volunteers who work at least 40 hours with the crew receive a Konnarock t-shirt for their efforts.



TEHCC Paddling – Save the Date, Saturday, August 24, 2024

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

Save-the-date for a paddling trip, likely on calm moving water or a lake in the area. TEHCC will provide their 7 kayaks and 1 canoe. Beginners welcome!

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

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

Rating: Easy hike around the lake

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

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. **TEHCC needs a total of 14 volunteers; we need 8 more as of June 22.** 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 7:30 pm at the Nature Center. The loop hike finishes up around 9:30 pm. **If you are interested in volunteering or getting more information, please contact Vic who will be assembling the volunteer list.** (Volunteers who assist with the event don't have to have a Fun Fest ticket to participate.)

Eastman's Day of Caring, West Cherry Knobs Trail in Bays Mtn Park

Written with thanks to all of the volunteers, trail maintainers, plus BMP and USFS staff by Vic Hasler and Jill Shivery

New for 2024, Eastman's United Way Day of Caring program was asked to recruit volunteers to dig in the dirt for rerouting the West Cherry Knobs (goat path per Megan Krager, BMP Manager) into a suitable trail – starting right across Lake Road from the eastern leg of the park trail. The work was accomplished under the leadership of Tony Messina and Carl Fritz with 16 other BMP Trail Gorillas guiding the 31 Eastman active employees (roughly 40% being TEHCC members). The dozen crews were shuttled a couple miles to the access points to rough in the sidehill trail along steep terrain during an increasingly hotter day. Everyone worked extremely hard to finish in a day, what would have taken the Trail Gorillas months to accomplish. The path will be further improved on their third Saturday workdays during the rest of 2024 before officially opening. Some volunteers were heard expressing a new appreciation for trails...



2024 Roan Naturalist, Madison Crabill

Introduction from SAHC's website



You may have already seen this year's Roan Naturalist, Madison Crabill, in the field helping educate hikers, manage habitat, and mitigate visitor use impacts in the fragile ecosystems of Roan Highlands. She grew up in Hillsborough, NC. Her love of the outdoors began at the age of 11 when she registered her family's land as a Certified Wildlife Habitat. Madison began pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts in Film and TV at New York University before pausing her studies to hike the Appalachian and Pacific Crest Trails. The natural beauty she encountered during those hikes ignited her desire to help protect and preserve fragile ecosystems. Madison is excited to return to the Appalachian Mountains as a Roan Naturalist to assist Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy's conservation efforts. She will continue her studies in the Fall 2024.

Her first field reports note the poor outdoor behaviors of trash left behind (sometimes hidden), extra fire rings in larger campsites, and social trails to flame azaleas and rhododendrons. She did see good manners of some groups, and visitors actively reading and talking about the "Not an Official Trail" and "Do Not touch the Flowers" temporary signs.

For the Record



Boone Lake Paddling Trip, June 8, 2024

Andy Steffan reporting

The group departed from the TVA Boat Ramp at Boone Lake, near the Dam, around 10 am with temperatures in the upper 60s or low 70s, blue skies, light breeze, and warming quickly. We had the maximum number of participants for the number of boats the club owns! We explored several nearby areas of the lake, leisurely paddling a total of around 3.5 to 4 miles. We passed by a duck, that some thought was fake due to how tolerant it was of us, and saw plenty of other waterfowl and birds of prey throughout the trip. Vic found a geocache site near Buzzard Cliff that required some effort to reach, and in the process, introduced several on the trip to the activity of geocaching. Trip ended successfully around 12:30 pm. Participants included: Andy Steffan (leader), Vic Hasler, Mike McCarroll and girlfriend Mabel, Jordan Jump, Sam Howell, Jessica Johnson, Jadyn Tate, Ronquille Joyner and friend Sam.



Indian Grave Gap to Beauty Spot, June 22, 2024

Josh Hayes reporting

Everyone was accounted for by 10:07A.M. including a first for me....Spike the bearded dragon! The temperature stayed a hot 91, but the end was worth it.

Some of the interns had to take the road back as it was 0.5 miles shorter than the 2.4 miles back; but everyone had a great time and had some snacks on the bald before heading back. Attendees



were Josh Hayes, Anna Vu (Intern), Mason Chapman (Intern), Connie Pei (Guest), Soma Mukherjee, Liz Guillemette (Guest), and Spike (bearded dragon).



If you go: Parking close to the trailhead is limited, so plan accordingly or consider carpooling.

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TEHCC Welcomes New Members

Mason Chapman

Katelynn Thorne

Juan Carlos Gonzalez Castillo

Leigh Loomis

Sara Vaught

Michael Patrick

Maggie Rayfield

Samantha Stapleton

Sam Howell

These new members include five summer interns who the club hopes enjoy the area's outdoor experiences while they learn and use new skills at Eastman.



A.T. Maintenance Reports

From JC of Fleetwood, NC: Just finished hiking Watauga Dam to US 421 with a couple of friends. We were impressed with trail conditions. Please accept our thanks to your hiking club's trail crews for all of the monitoring and maintenance TEHCC performs.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 5/23/2024

Purpose: Cut back encroaching vegetation, search for blowdowns and carry out trash

Location: Section 16b, From Iron Mountain Gap to the apple orchard

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: From Iron Mtn Gap to the apple orchard, I kicked out water diversions as well as removed a 5" blowdown. I removed some grass and weeds hanging over the trail to the orchard. I chopped weeds halfway down the orchard; then cut back weeds on the trail to the spring. The spring was flowing nice. There were several hikers camped in the orchard; I collected their trash and packed it out. I weeded a little more at the bottom of the orchard before returning to the trailhead just as the clouds opened up and let loose a very hard rain that lasted most of the way home.

Reporting: Bettye Boone

Date: 5/28/2024

Purpose: Collect Counter Data

Location: Section 14d, Carvers Gap

People: Bettye Boone, Saylor Fox

Summary: We went to collect the data from the 3 counters on Roan. Everything looked fine and downloaded, except someone had moved the base to the counter from behind the tree to a limb on the side of the tree where it was visible. Everything else looked fine and data downloaded properly. The problem is someone saw it and moved the base. This is the North Carvers Gap counter which is the one collecting the majority of the data. We will have to decide whether to move it to a new location.

At the top of Round Bald, we found two large trash bags full of glass beer bottles tied to one of the fir trees at the popular camping spot on Round (2nd stand of firs on Round). Trash was everywhere on the ground around the fire ring and the fire was still hot. We emptied our water bottle on the fire, and cleaned up trash. Vultures were circling. We left the trash while we hiked to Jane to download the data. When we returned, this year's Roan Naturalist was in the process of dismantling the fire ring. We helped with that task and then carried out the trash, since she was headed in the opposite direction.

Reporting: Dick Martindale

Date: 5/28/2024

Purpose: Remove small blowdown and cut weeds

Location: Section 11a, Dennis Cove trailhead to 1 mile south

People: Dick Martindale

Summary: I used a handsaw to remove one small blowdown close to the trailhead, then used a string trimmer to cut vegetation for approximately one mile.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 5/30/2024

Purpose: Cut back encroaching vegetation, clear waterbars, search for blowdowns

Location: Section 16b, Iron Mountain Gap to the apple orchard

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: From Iron Mountain Gap, I began weeding from the trailhead to remove new growth and weeds that I missed on prior trips. I went all the way to the apple orchard where I finished what I started on the last trip. I have now weeded from the trailhead to the bottom of the orchard, as well as the trail to the pipe spring. The spring is running well, but the trail to it is muddy. There may be clumps of wildflowers close to the trail that I did not remove, such as turk's cap lilies, bee balm, iron weed, joe pye weed, asters, and maybe others. I met a section hiker who said there was a large blowdown, but he could not tell me where it was except to say somewhere between Hughes Gap and the orchard.



Reporting: Dick Martindale

Date: 5/30/2024

Purpose: Weed and cut brush

Location: Section 11a, Dennis Cove Road to Canute Place, Mile 419 to 417.7

People: Dick Martindale

Summary: I used hand tools to continue cutting back encroaching vegetation. The northern half of this section is now in good shape, and hopefully I'll get to the next half within two weeks. Happy hikers were encountered; several with tales of significant hail storms over the past week.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 5/30/2024

Purpose: Variety of tasks

Location: Sections 3 to 5, McQueen's Gap to Iron Mountain Shelter

People: Greg Kramer, Scott Huskey, Joe Morris, Tim Stewart, Van Hovey, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Todd Carpenter

Summary: Work was spread over 3 sections. Carl, Todd, and Dan went to clear 2 large blowdowns coming in from US 421, Low Gap. Joe and Van rehabbed 10 places, accounting for 60 feet. They built a 6-foot turnpike, added rocks to a bog bridge approach, and added drainage on an existing rock turnpike. Greg and Scott went looking for a couple of possible small blowdowns somewhere between Cross Mountain Road and Iron Mountain Shelter. On May 6, Ken Costello and I cleared a bunch of minor blowdowns and a large tree near the Shelter. I knew we missed at least one log because of the way we came onto the trail. We found the one log I left from before and found one other small blowdown within 50 feet of the shelter. It was a long day.

Reporting: Jennifer Baird

Date: 5/31/2024

Purpose: Check trail condition and cut back vegetation

Location: Section 10, Hampton trailhead to Dennis Cove Road

People: Jennifer Baird

Summary: The trail was in good shape. There are a couple places that might need to be brushed in to keep people on the trail; one going down the rock steps at the waterfall from Dennis Cove and the other coming off the ridge going towards Pond. I'll have Dean go look at them to see what he thinks. I cut back vegetation, including plenty of dog-hobble, stinging nettle, and rodos. I removed two small trees (both approximately six inches) from trail. One I had to cut; the other I was able to pull off. I picked up trash at Laurel Fork Shelter. The high-water trail and Potato Top are in good shape. A lot of people were out enjoying the day, including young hikers (I'm talking 4-8 YO range), which was good to see. I saw several thru-hikers all heading north, except one going south. One going north was an 80-year-old man (Snail Mail) from Connecticut who is flip-flopping. He had already done Katahdin to Harper's Ferry before this year; his story was inspiring.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 6/1/2024

Purpose: Hiking with Tools!

Location: Section 11b, Canute Place to Bitter End, Hard Core Cascades

People: Tim Stewart, Rebecka Powell, Michael Luedeman, Cheri Blevins

Summary: Rhododendrons never seem to stop growing. Hiking in from Bitter End, we lopped rhodos and other encroaching vegetation. We stopped at Hardcore Cascades for lunch. Surprisingly, we encountered numerous NOBO hikers still in our area. Back at the trailhead, I issued one patch to Michael. It was a very nice day with pleasant weather.

Reporting: Dick Martindale

Date: 6/1/2024

Purpose: Remove small blowdowns, cut brush, and assess trail

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

People: Dick Martindale

Summary: I performed maintenance tasks on the entire section, mostly cutting vegetation, but removed four small blowdowns (with a handsaw), removed garbage from the Canute Place campsite, and checked/cleaned the water source. This section is in good shape and many happy hikers were encountered. There are a few spots that may need water diversion work in the future; though the rapid vegetation growth (and never-ending blowdowns) this year has taken precedence.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 6/3/2024

Purpose: Clean waterbars

Location: Section 5, TN 91 to Iron Mountain Shelter, Southern half of section

People: Greg Kramer

Summary: I cleaned the graffiti board using a different choke cleaner; it did not work as well. I cleaned waterbars starting at the shelter and made it to the Stairway to Heaven. I did some minor trimming also. It was a long day.

Reporting: Jeffrey A Hatling

Date: 6/4/2024

Purpose: Inspect Yellow Mountain Gap to the base of Little Hump

Location: Section 14b, From the Old Barn site to the base of Little Hump

People: Jeff Hatling

Summary: I checked the springs at the Over-the-Mountain camping area; both are flowing. I saw one Gray's Lily on the trail down to the lower spring (see picture). I found only a very small amount of trash at camping area. I then weed-whacked the grassy open areas from the Over-the-Mountain camping area to the ridge leading to Little Hump. I cleaned out about 12 water diversions and converted one stair into a water diversion (see picture). I also brushed in one small section to get hikers back on the trail.



Reporting: Jeffrey A Hatling

Date: 6/5/2024

Purpose: Mow the old Red Barn site meadow

Location: Section 14b, Old Barn site/Over-the-Mountain camping site

People: Jeff Hatling

Summary: I mowed the meadow.

Reporting: Dean Baird

Date: 6/6/2024

Purpose: Trim vegetation and inspect trail

Location: Section 9b, A.T. from Hampton Blue-Blaze to top of Pond Mountain

People: Dean Baird, Jennifer Baird

Summary: We did a large amount of work cutting back vegetation, particularly on the railroad grade, but also on the south-facing portion of the trail. We also worked on vegetation at the top of the mountain. This is the largest amount and fern and striped maple growth that we have seen since we have been maintaining this section. Apparently, one purpose of wilderness must be to provide habitat for the Toxicodendron sp. to thrive. Overall, the trail is in good condition. The spring on top is full blast. There were no blowdowns to be removed. The switchbacks that we built during the last rehab are in good condition. We are getting some "trail creep." At some point, we will have to rehab some small areas to get the trail back up the hill. The weather was rain on-and-off all day.

Reporting: Jim McGuire

Date: 6/6/2024

Purpose: Trim weeds along Elk River

Location: Section 12c, Campbell Hollow Road

People: Jim McGuire

Summary: I trimmed weeds along Elk River. I also cleared two blowdowns. One was a medium-size blowdown on the trail. The other was on the forest service road from Elk River Falls. I talked with two hikers. One was planning a record run of the entire trail in July. Both hikers expressed appreciation to me for trimming back weeds. I will probably need to trim weeds again in August.

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Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 6/6/2024

Purpose: Rehab trail

Location: Section 5, TN91 to Iron Mountain Shelter, Cross Mountain

People: Carl Fritz, Scott Huskey, Van Hovey, Tim Stewart, Joe Morris

Summary: We installed three new locust steps and moved one step. In addition, several locust "discs" were placed in obvious wet areas. We dug several outlets into the low side of the bench and around the steps where water was collecting. Additional rehab opportunities are available.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 6/7/2024

Purpose: Cut weeds, look for blowdowns, check spring, and remove trash

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

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: From Iron Mountain Gap to top of first tall knob at pinnacle of rocks, I cut back encroaching vegetation. I had previously clear from the trailhead to the orchard, but it needed to be covered again somewhat, so I touched it up. I then went on to the top of the mountain where I removed stinging nettles and lots of grass leaning in on the trail. I returned to the trailhead just after midnight and heard something in the weeds that I thought was a bear. I called, "Come here bear," but it didn't come out. Then I heard it again and called once more, but no movement. I proceeded to my car where I got out a bright light and shined it into the brush as I drove down the road. Out popped a dog that chased me down the road and ran up to my window. So I opened the passenger side door and she jumped right in. I'm going back to Unicoi County Animal Shelter to see if they will take her when they reopen. Otherwise, does anyone want a sweet, well behaved, house broken, pit mix medium-size dog, if the shelters won't take her?



Reporting: Jeff Hatling

Date: 6/7/2024

Purpose: Inspect condition of the trail and make needed improvements

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

People: Jeff Hatling

Summary: I cleaned out water diversion in the Little Hump area and added three additional small water diversions. I also weed-whacked the trail going up the southside of Little Hump in areas to encourage staying on the trail.

Reporting: Richard L Ramsey

Date: 6/9/2024

Purpose: Cut weeds at Doll Flats.

Location: Section 13, US 19E to Doll Flats

People: Nancy Mick, Richard Ramsey

Summary: We hiked in from US 19E to Doll Flats to cut weeds at the field at Doll Flats. A fair amount of hiking is now required to access from 19E.

Reporting: Lori Mirrer

Date: 6/10 and 6/12/2024

Purpose: Check section; whack weeds

Location: Section 15b, Cloudland Hotel to Ash Gap

People: Lori Mirrer

Summary: I decided to work my section over two days. That way I didn't have to carry all the tools and get everything done in one trip.



Day 1 (Monday, 6/10): I mainly looked over the section; trimmed some brush and checked water diversions. The trail was in exceptional shape! The blazes look good and trash is nonexistent. I did see two trees leaning over the trail, one requiring a pretty big bend to get under. I had planned to include them in this report to request they be taken out, but the very next day they'd been removed (thanks, Rick Lott!). I saw about 10 hikers. All but one were sectioners.

Day 2 (Wednesday, 6/12): I missed working Tuesday because my truck decided it needed a new "throttle position sensor." So I headed up again the day after, sling blade lashed firmly to my pack, headed for the grass and weeds alongside Ash Gap. I got them cut back on that wonderful level section (and the short climb up to the viewpoint on Beartown Mtn). I saw about 4 or 5 hikers - plus a large group at Ash Gap. Folks were talkative Monday; not so Wednesday.

Photos show a general before-and-after of the weed whacking (not the same exact area, but it should get the idea across). Gosh, this is a beautiful section of the Trail.

Reporting: Jeff Hatling

Date: 6/11/2024

Purpose: Inspect condition of the trail

Location: Section 14b, Little Hump to Bradley Gap

People: Jeff Hatling

Summary: I cleaned out water diversions and added two additional diversions. I also hand weed-whacked the blackberries in the bald area of Bradley Gap and areas along the trail to direct people onto the trail. The trail south of Bradley Gap with the new bog bridge and water diversions have made that section of the trail 100% improved. The new water diversions on the south approach to Little Hump have stabilized that section of trail allowing hikers to remain on the trail.

Reporting: Rick Lott

Date: 6/11/2024

Purpose: Cut weeds

Location: Section 13, US 19E to Trail South 0.8 miles

People: Rick Lott, Mike Watts

Summary: We used a string trimmer to cut weeds from the 19E trailhead in about a half-mile when Mike's Echo decided to die. We continued cutting with Rick's Stihl trimmer until we got 0.8 miles in and then headed back out to tackle the blowdowns on Roan High knob. Only the section of the trail near the trailhead had significant weed growth. The upper section was in pretty good shape and typically has less weed growth with the rocks and shade. We will return in a couple weeks to complete the section. We encountered a few hikers, a few NOBO thru-hikers and one trail runner. One family with three kids was backpacking/camping thru to Carver's Gap. They were from Mt. Pleasant, SC and lived about 1/2 mile from Rick's condo down there. Small world.

Reporting: Rick Lott

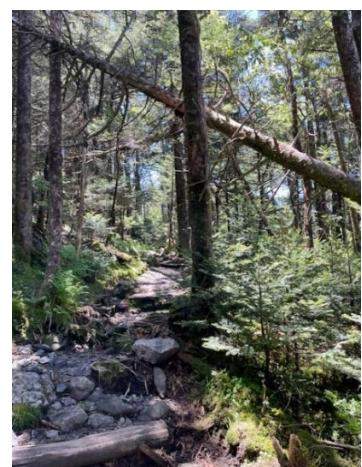
Date: 6/11/2024

Purpose: Cut blowdowns

Location: Section 15b, 0.1 mile and 0.25 miles Trail South From Cloudland Hotel

People: Rick Lott, Mike Watts

Summary: On a hike, Mike had previously spotted two blowdowns just south of Cloudland Hotel. We left the weed trimming on Section 13 and drove up through the FS gate and up to the Cloudland parking area. A FS employee had just finished cutting grass up there and said it would be OK to park there today as no construction work was going on. We cut the two targeted blowdowns without much trouble and elected to cut a hazardous leaner that could potentially fall in a high wind. (See below for pictures of the three.) In addition, we spotted two other hazard trees in the same area, but elected not to tackle them until we came back with some rigging. They did not appear to be an immediate concern. There was a huge crowd at Carver's Gap. A few cars were parked between the roadblock saw horse and the gate, but fortunately not blocking the gate. We couldn't have asked for a nicer trail-maintenance day weatherwise.



Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 6/11/2024

Purpose: Evaluate trail section

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

People: Joe Morris

Summary: Natalia Muglia (USFS), Jerry Kyle (ATC), and I walked from Yellow Mountain Gap to roughly one mile south of Stan Murray Shelter. The purpose of the trip was to evaluate the segment as a possible Konnarock work site in 2025.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 6/13/2024

Purpose: Rehab trail and construct bridge

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

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

Summary: The Thursday crew finished a new locust footbridge north of Bishop Hollow and rehabbed 160 feet of trail in the area.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 6/15/2024

Purpose: Search for blowdowns and cut back encroaching vegetation

Location: Section 16b, From Greasy Creek Gap south to first tall knob of Iron Mountain

People: Tom Sahlin



Summary: I started from Greasy Creek Gap coming up from the Friendly. I cut weeds and overhanging limbs, and cut grass and nettles with a grass whip. Coming up from the forest service road to Greasy Creek Gap, I met a young woman in the woods carrying a 5-month-old infant, which was a real surprise. More surprising was that her husband and 3 young girls were waiting at the gap, resting before setting up camp. It was delightful to meet a whole family who hiked from Iron Mountain Gap and was headed to Hughes Gap the next day. From there, I proceeded up to the first tall knob cutting nettles, weeds, limbs, and some thick grass 0.65 mile to the top of the mountain. About 0.2 mile below the top, I found the large 13-inch oak blowdown reported by a hiker 2 weeks ago (see pic). I also found 2 smaller blowdowns less than 8 inches. I will return to remove them soon.

Reporting: Elzear Lemieux

Date: 6/15/2024

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

Location: Section 8, Wilbur Dam Road to US 321

People: Elzear Lemieux, Emily Lemieux

Summary: We cut back vegetation, removed a small blowdown, and recorded a larger walk-over blowdown.

Reporting: Jon Heidrick

Date: 6/17/2024

Purpose: Clear summer growth

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

People: Jon Heidrick

Summary: I cleared grass, weeds, and other vegetation for a wide swath (6 feet) for the length of Bishop Hollow.

Reporting: Craig Haire

Date: 6/19/2024

Purpose: Cut weeds, clearing side growth

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

People: Craig Haire, Derek Haire

Summary: We cleared trailside growth on Temple Ridge and the switchback loop just north of the ridge, using 80V Kobalt and 40V Greenworks string trimmers. We advanced in leapfrog fashion. No fossil fuels were used in travel or maintenance, only inconveniencing a few electrons. I also carried a log up to the 3rd switchback loop south of the river for installing a step later. We encountered 3 late NOBO end-to-enders as well as a few day hikers. It was a very warm day.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 6/20/2024

Purpose: Complete footbridge and double stack crib

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

People: Elzear Lemieux, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Bill Murdoch, Van Hovey, Joe Morris

Summary: The Thursday crew split into two teams - one group finished the footbridge north of Bishop Hollow. Lath was installed and the ramp from the old stile was used to transition onto the bridge. The other crew created a double stacked locust crib to fix a 30-foot depression that was filled with roots. The footbridge crew hiked in to assist with backfill duty on the double stack at the end of the day. (See picture, before and after.)



Reporting: Tony Messina

Date: 6/20/2024

Purpose: Clear blowdown

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

People: Tony Messina, Jim McGuire

Summary: Jim worked the morning with Carl and part of the Thursday crew near Bishop Hollow. I picked him up at Bishop Hollow at noon and drove to Bitter End to hike in and clear a reported blowdown. I carried my string trimmer and Jim carried the chainsaw. We ended up clearing two troublesome blowdowns a short distance north of the bench. One was about 8-inch diameter and the other about 19-inch with a twist bind (see before and after pictures). Both were a bit high to crawl over and a bit low to crawl under. Jim carried the saw back to the car and drove around to meet me at Walnut Mtn Road. I proceeded on to cut weeds out to Walnut Mountain Road, and along the way cleared six minor blowdowns using my Silky. Jim saw one NOBO thru-hiker at Walnut Mtn Road and helped her obtain a shuttle to a hostel. I saw no hikers. It was a hot day, but not as bad as Tuesday! All in all, it was a very efficient use of Jim's day and my afternoon.



Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 6/23/2024

Purpose: Cut weeds on Jones Branch section

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

People: Van Hovey, Carrie Hovey

Summary: Our primary objective was to cut weeds in the Jones Branch section. We walked in from USA Raft to the second switchback, and headed back out. Along the way, we removed one blowdown with a handsaw, slid one off the trail, and cut back multiple rhodies. With two string trimmers we achieved our primary objective. We met one section hiker and a couple of day hikers. Upon query, the section hiker indicated there were no blowdowns all the way to Indian Grave Gap. Hot day Cheers.