



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

August 2024

Co-Editors – Terry Oldfield and Sharon Burnette

TEHCC.org

In This Issue

[Letter from the Chair](#)

[Event Schedule – Next Two Months](#)

[Detail of Upcoming Events](#)

[Fall Dinner Meeting, Save-the-Date, October 4, 2024](#)

[Appalachian Trail Centennial Act \(ATCA\)](#)

[For the Record](#)

[TEHCC Welcomes New Members](#)

[A.T. Maintenance Reports](#)



Turk's Cap Lily on the A.T. (Photo by Tim Stewart)

Letter from the Chair

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

Happy August, everyone! July was a doozy with the heat and drought; but now it seems that rain showers and thunderstorms have returned to East Tennessee. While bringing much relief, they also arrive with danger once again! Both in the form of floods and lightning, of which I'll discuss the latter.

Lightning is a very dangerous thing to encounter, both on the trail and in daily life. While the promise of tree cover may provide some sense of security during a storm, that may not necessarily work for lightning. Growing up in Colorado (one of the leading states for lightning deaths), lightning safety is hammered into you from a young age, and sometimes feels taken for granted. So, I will relay a few lightning safety tips below for everyone to brush up on.

• Preparations and Avoidance

- The safest way to deal with lightning is to avoid it in the first place. If the forecast calls for thunderstorms, it's best to postpone the hike or go to somewhere else not under threat.
- If you are out and a storm is approaching, get off of mountain tops, ridgelines, and exposed areas.
- Thunderstorms usually appear in the afternoon, so be prepared to finish your hike or bail early to beat any incoming storms.

• Protection

- If you do get caught in a storm, seek shelter if possible. A fully enclosed building is best, but hard-top vehicles are also safe. Open shelters such as many on the A.T. and picnic patios aren't necessarily safe but may be better than an open field.
- If shelter isn't nearby, look for low spots in the terrain (depressions, valleys, gulches, etc.).
- If you have any metal on you (pack frames, poles), put them at least 100 ft from you. Groups of people should also disperse ~100 ft from each other.

• Safety Position

- If lightning is striking close by, and you can't get to a fully enclosed shelter, the safety position should be done.
 - Crouch on the ground on the balls of your feet with your feet together. Lower your head and cover your ears.
 - NEVER lie flat on the ground!

Hopefully this column has been a useful refresher for you all! Remember, if it thunders, it's best to start packing up and heading back to the car! I hope everyone stays cool, dry, and safe for the remainder of this wild summer! Have fun out there!

[Back to Top](#)

ATTENTION: Eastman retirees (and active employees who prefer to receive this newsletter at a non-work address), please send your current email address to membership@tehcc.org. We have lost many members who recently retired as Eastman Recreation does not typically have the new connections.

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 31 – Aug 4	Trail Maintenance: Konnarock Crew/Temple Hill Gap, Week 2	Joe Morris	423-571-5201
August 8	Steele Creek Park Nature Paddle and Picnic, 6 pm – 9 pm	Debbie Briscoe	423-534-3636
August 9 - 10	Meet the Mountains Festival, Winged Deer Park Lakefront, Johnson City	See website	
August 10	Hiking with Tools! TN 91 to Double Springs Shelter	Tim Stewart	
August 15	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1 pm	Eric Dobbs	303-915-9208
August 16 - 18	Annual Hiwassee River Weekend	See APEs events	
August 24	TEHCC Paddling, South Holston Lake, 10 am – 2:30 pm	Andy Steffan	919-928-4738
September 14	Hiking with Tools! Indian Grave to Beauty Spot	Tim Stewart	
September 19	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1 pm	Eric Dobbs	303-915-9208

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 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.

[Back to Top](#)

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/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

TEHCC Paddling, South Holston Lake, Saturday, August 24, 2024, 10 am – 2:30 pm

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

Location: 421 Bridge Boat Ramp, Bristol, TN, 37620

I hope you will join me for a leisurely 5-to-6-mile paddle on S. Holston Lake. We will likely paddle out to an island or cove, hopefully take a rest break for a snack/lunch, swim, etc., and then return. Bring water, snacks/lunch, sunscreen, and change of clothes and/or towel if you plan on swimming at all. Beginners welcome!

Club will provide seven kayaks and one canoe, PFDs, and paddles. Others who have their own gear are welcome to join in as well; just indicate on booking form or reach out.

Meeting location will be at the US-421 bridge boat ramp at 10 am.

Fall Dinner Meeting, Save-the-Date, October 4, 2024

While the Steering Committee is making food arrangements for the club's Fall Dinner at the Eastman Lodge, please mark your calendars for Friday evening, October 4. Mr. Charles Maynard will enlighten us about John Muir's walk through Tennessee in 1867 and his return to the Roan Highlands in 1898. ([Article posted on Sierra Club website.](#)) Awards from ATC's recognition program and others will be presented. Come celebrate those who wander our local mountains and take care of their paths.

Appalachian Trail Centennial Act (ATCA)

Compiled from information provided by ATC (Appalachian Trail Conservancy)

This proposed legislation, timed for ATC's upcoming 100th anniversary in 2025, aims to secure the cooperative nature of the Appalachian Trail plus all National Scenic and Historic Trails, as well as strengthen the management roles of trail-maintaining clubs and volunteers alongside their federal partners. No organization can oversee a national trail on its own; thus, the ATCA would bolster the Cooperative Management System and strengthen public-private partnerships needed to protect National Trails. For the A.T., there are 4,700 volunteers spread across 30 trail-maintaining clubs giving roughly 170,000 hours per year.



The Appalachian Trail Centennial Act would:

- **Establish Designated Operational Partners (DOP) for National Scenic and Historic Trails.**
The legislation will clarify the role and responsibilities of non-governmental organizations like the ATC, which must have demonstrated experience in trail management, maintenance, and preservation. Agreements of up to 20 years would be with the National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), or another federal agency. It officially recognizes the critical and essential role of A.T. clubs in the Cooperative Management System.
- **Bolster Land Protection.** National Scenic and Historic Trails would coordinate efforts related to land and resource conservation with federal, state, and local entities within their corridors.
- **Study and Monitor Visitation and Economic Impact.** Processes would be created to track visitor levels and usage patterns as well as measure the local economic benefits of trail visitation. Although this data collection and study is common in the National Park and Forest Systems, the National Trails are not consistently considered. Thus, these insights will be useful for planning and managing the visitor experience by the trail communities.
- **Better Coordinate Partners.** It will also streamline funding/donation processes (such as surplus tools and equipment for trail maintenance) and encourage consultation among government entities, trail administrators, and designated partners to ensure greater stability.

Feedback about this legislative initiative can be shared directly with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy or through our A.T. Committee. It would benefit designated national trails across the country.

For the Record

TEHCC Lower Noli Paddling Trip, Saturday July 20, 2024

Andy Steffen reporting

The trip began with a significant downpour in the Visitor Center parking lot. Fortunately, by the time we carpooled up to the put-in, the rain had essentially subsided. Jerry Griffin provided a great overview of the trip, along with paddling and safety tips. We uneventfully got in the water and began the leisurely paddle downstream. The flows were fairly decent due to the recent few days of rain; thankfully, since we otherwise likely wouldn't have had enough flow to go. The first few rapids went without incident, with rain sprinkling down every now and then. Over the middle few rapids, we had 3 total swimmers, but no major concerns besides getting a little wet. Each time, we recovered all the gear, drained boats, had a laugh together, and continued on. With about ¼ mile or less to go, the skies re-opened and a heavy downpour began. Most of the group sheltered along the edge under trees until it subsided some, while others enjoyed the downpour in the middle of the river. The rain basically negated use of all phones or electronics, which created for a nice, peaceful trip enjoying nature; but unfortunately, very few pictures to document it. All participants indicated they had a great time and look forward to future paddling trips; so even the rain couldn't dampen the fun too much! The trip covered a ~2-mile stretch of the river with several Class I rapids. Participants: Andy Steffan and Jerry Griffin (leaders), Thanya Nguyen and friend Arman, Mike McCarroll and Mabel, John Rolstead and son Travis, Manan Patel, Carrie and Van Hovey, Larry Brammer, and John Maine and daughter Amanda.



[Back to Top](#)

FunFest “Moonlight” Hike, July 25, 2024

Vic Hasler reporting

The weather for the Thursday evening turned out to be better than forecasted earlier in the week, so some stars could be seen in the clearing sky. However, while the moon was in its third quarter, it did not rise until 11:33pm. This FunFest event drew 140 hikers plus Bays Mtn Park staff and Kingsport Lifesaving Crew who started at 8:30 pm from the dam to finish back at the nature center around 10 pm. The Lakeside and Holly trails did show several path improvements made by the Trail Gorillas. (To volunteer on third Saturdays, refer to the *Bays Mountain Park Trail Maintenance* recurring event in this newsletter.) Many thanks to the following folks who helped to not lose anyone in the dark forest: Neil Boaz and Stephanie Clendennen, Barbara Carico, Bill Cook, Eric Dobbs, Vic Hasler, Josh Hayes, Pam Kelley, Tim McClain and daughter, Dan and son Daniel McKinney, Michael Rogers, Gerald Scott, Joseph Sengeh, Tim Schaefer plus Ginette and Mr. Tolleson.

TEHCC Welcomes New Members

Jacob Bellow
Helen Zhu

Brian Bermonty
Stella Haley

Sonyalee Soto
Anna Whitfield

Austin Fink
Jeff Gray

Otniel Ulloa
Aaron Grills



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 6/17/2024

Purpose: TEHCC A.T. Committee

Location: Eastman Recreation Center

People: Steve Falling, Carl Fritz, Vic Hasler, Joe Morris, Renee and Tony Messina, Andy Steffan, Steve Wilson

Summary: The Committee continued on the 2024 work plan, including work north of Curley Maple Gap shelter, weed trimming, Roan High Knob shelter repair (delayed to 2025), and Konnarock Crew. Consensus was not favorable on installing bear boxes; but if placed, first ones would be placed at the shelters at Abingdon Gap, Iron Mountain, and No Business Knob, due to reported bear encounters.

Reporting: Bettye Boone

Date: 6/22/2024

Purpose: Set up and staff information table for Rhododendron Festival

Location: Section 14d, Carvers Gap

People: Bettye Boone, Saylor Fox

Summary: We prepared signage for the table at Carvers Gap highlighting: (1) Reason for Rhododendron Garden closure for 2024; (2) Purpose of the Roan Highland Visitor Use Management Committee; (3) Stay on trail, including not getting off trail to photograph flowers; 4) Leave-No-Trace principles, etc. Tim Stewart joined us at the table and shared information on TEHCC. We answered visitors' questions, including questions about parking.

Reporting: David Allen

Date: 6/24/2024

Purpose: Cut weeds

Location: Section 1, TN/VA state line to Backbone Rock Trail

People: David Allen, Scott Morie

Summary: We hiked up Backbone Rock blue-blaze trail, then cut weeds from the trail intersection to the TN/VA state line. We did some minor trimming on the blue-blaze trail, and using a handsaw, removed a blowdown that had completely blocked the Backbone Rock trail.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 6/25/2024

Purpose: Paint graffiti board, clean waterbars, cut vegetation

[Back to Top](#)

Location: Section 5, TN 91 to Iron Mountain Shelter

People: Greg Kramer

Summary: I cleaned and painted the graffiti board with two coats of Kilz. Last time I cleaned the graffiti board it looked very sad. My last trip to clean waterbars, I had started at the shelter and headed north. I got to the stairs and had to quit. This time, I started at the stairs after cutting back vegetation between the shelter and the stairs. I cleaned the stairs' many waterbars.

Reporting: Michael Watts

Date: 6/25/2024

Purpose: Cut weeds

Location: Section 13, US 19E to Doll Flats

People: Michael Watts

Summary: I finished cutting summer weeds on the section, including the blue-blaze trail to the water source.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 6/25/2024

Purpose: Establish the cutting plan for SAHC Mow-Off and cut weeds

Location: Section 14d, Stan Murray Shelter to Carvers Gap, Grassy Ridge

People: Joe Morris

Summary: The day began innocently enough as Marquette, Travis, and I chatted about the upcoming SAHC Great Grassy Ridge Mow-Off scheduled for July 20-21. They left me with a string trimmer at Engine Gap and things quickly got out of hand. Seasonal growth is at least 4 weeks ahead of schedule in the Highlands. I had a full day and only cut to one mile south of the shelter. Grim Reaper spotted in the area.

Reporting: Bettye Boone

Date: 6/25/2024

Purpose: Download Trail Counter Data, cut weeds, and paint blazes

Location: Section 15a, Carvers Gap - Cloudland Hotel

People: Bettye Boone, Saylor Fox

Summary: We hiked out and back to collect Trail Counter Data and uploaded the data to TRAFxDataNet.

Counter data: June 2024 - 40,926 clicks

June 15, 2024 - 3,194 clicks

June 22, 2024 - 3,092 clicks (Rhododendron Festival)

We returned home to get a string trimmer; then cut back encroaching vegetation at the two trailheads at Carvers Gap (south & north). We also painted blazes to the water source and on the A.T. at the beginning of the trail headed south.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 6/25/2024

Purpose: Cut back encroaching vegetation and inspect trail for blowdowns

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

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: From Iron Mountain Gap to the bottom of the orchard, I cut back vegetation. In the orchard, I cut back what was left after the Forest Service mowed the orchard. Many wildflowers were lost in the mowing, reducing the butterfly habitat. We must care about our pollinators. Eliminated wildflowers were Turk's Cap Lilies, Joe Pye Weed, Iron Weed, Tall Golden Rod, Red and White Bee Balm, Wood Betony, and others. My many long hours of work in the orchard were mostly erased.

Reporting: Richard Ritter for the Old Timers Hiking Club

Date: 6/26/2024

Purpose: Annual Trail Maintenance on A.T.

Location: Section 18, Indian Grave Gap to service road crossing, first mile only

People: Richard Ritter, Ruthie Edwards, Debbie Loudon, Jack Lawson, Willie Tyree, Joanne Manahan, Sharon Begley, Dave Polon

Summary: The road was closed, so we worked on our first section. We cleaned waterbars and used loppers and handsaws to clear vegetation. We also picked up trash.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 6/27/2024

Purpose: Transport locust and rehab trail

Location: Section 4b, Double Springs Shelter to TN91

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

Summary: The remaining logs for the Roan High Knob Shelter rehabilitation were cut to length and transported by the USFS to Toll House Gap. They included: 2 pcs 9-10 inch x 9 ft, 2 pcs 9-10 inch x 15 ft, 1 pc 10-11 inch x 17 ft, additional front wall replacement locust, and two corner posts. The crew also dug 300 feet of new bench halfway between Double Springs and TN 91.

[Back to Top](#)

Reporting: David Allen

Date: 6/27/2024

Purpose: Weed cutting

Location: Section 2a, Backbone Rock Trail to roughly 2 miles north of Abingdon Gap Shelter

People: David Allen

Summary: Another day of weed cutting. I finished a small section of high weeds on Section 1, then spent the day cutting weeds on section 2a, starting at the Backbone Rock trail intersections. Reports from hikers this week said the only high weeds on Section 2a were within a mile of the blue-blaze intersection, which is where I spent the day. I did not make it to the end of section 2a.

Reporting: Lotta Murray

Date: 6/28/2024

Purpose: Control summer vegetation

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

People: Lotta Murray, Ken Murray

Summary: We cut weeds, lopped, painted blazes, knocked apart a fire ring at a campsite, and carried out a small amount of trash from the shelter.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 6/29/2024

Purpose: Annual Maintenance

Location: Section 16a, Hughes Gap to Greasy Creek Gap

People: Joel Zabel, Joy Zabel, Jeff Miller, Jeff Bennett, Josh Banks, Adam Bean, Yong Li, Ed Brading, Denny Samuel, Jim Foster

Summary: The whole section was trimmed using string trimmers; plus we cleaned water diversions, checked signage, picked up trash, checked Clyde Smith Shelter, and checked the water source. The guys removed one large 17" blowdown using the Katanaboy saw. The trail is now in very good condition.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 7/1/2024

Purpose: Cut back encroaching vegetation

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

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: From Iron Mountain Gap to the orchard, I weeded and cut back low hanging limbs. At the orchard, I weeded the new growth since the orchard was bush hogged, as well as down to the spring. I moved on to Weedy Gap where I turned around since it was getting too dark to see. I pruned low hanging limbs on the way back to the trailhead. The spring was flowing well.

Reporting: Ken Costello

Date: 7/2/2024

Purpose: Clear weeds

Location: Section 3, 1/2-mile section from McQueen's Gap to McQueen Knob

People: Ken Costello

Summary: I weeded whacked from the parking area to 1/2 mile southwest, finishing just beyond the peak of McQueen Knob. I cleared a swath approximately 4 ft wide; edged the downhill side of the worn trail and cut back weeds 3 ft on the uphill side. Tall weeds on the downhill side were topped off so not to obstruct hikers using the worn path. Of note, there were two blowdowns in this section: one in sight of the parking area, the other 1/2 mile SW.



[Back to Top](#)

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 7/2/2024

Purpose: Cut weeds

Location: Sections 14c and 14d, Yellow Mountain Gap to Grassy Ridge

People: Van Hovey, Joe Morris

Summary: Van and I whacked weeds from Yellow Mountain Gap to one mile south of the Stan Murray Shelter. We removed one blowdown and cleared the water trails to Overmountain and the Stan Murray water sources.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 7/3/2024

Purpose: Cut back encroaching vegetation

Location: Section 16b, From Greasy Creek Gap to top of first tall knob

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: From Greasy Creek Gap to the top of first tall knob, known as Iron Mountain on Farout, I used a weed whip to remove primarily stinging nettles, but also grass and weeds close to or hanging over the trail.

Reporting: Richard Ritter for Old Timers Hiking Club

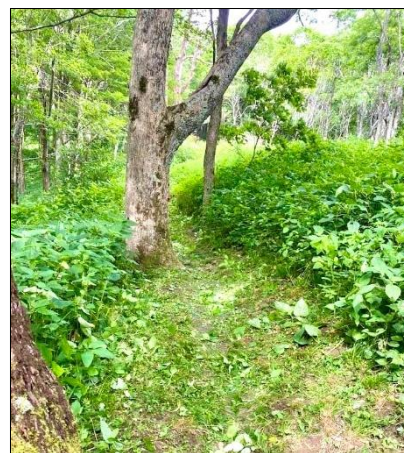
Date: 7/3/2024

Purpose: Annual Trail Maintenance on A.T.

Location: Section 18, FS230 switchback to Indian Grave Gap

People: Ruthie Edwards, Pat Kenney, Mary Major, Joanne Manahan, Richard Ritter, Willie Tyree, Jack Lawson, Dave Polon, Joy Cook, Rick Culbertson, Jeannie Snyder, Jolene Yetter, Joe Gervais, Jeannine Edwards, Wayne Jones, Jeff Marek

Summary: We had three extra Forest Service workers that made a huge difference and allowed us to finish the section in one full day. Forest Service trucks took us up to Beauty Spot and delivered groups from there, up and down the section. Our main work was cutting weeds along the very overgrown trail. Vegetation was cut back as needed, but will need it again on the ridgeline where it is very thick. We might need help with bigger equipment to cut back a couple feet in a half-mile section. We also cleaned water diversions, removed blowdowns, picked up trash, and checked the water source.



Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 7/4/2024

Purpose: Whack weeds

Location: Section 11b, Canute Place to Bitter End, Canute Place

People: Tim Stewart

Summary: I decided to weed whack the Canute Place. It was a long, tiresome day. I drove in as far as I could on FS293 and parked before the trench. That left about 1½ miles of hiking on the road to the Moreland Gap Shelter access. I bushwhacked up to the spring which was flowing nicely. Before setting off to Canute Place, I repainted the graffiti board at the shelter. Of course there were rhodos to lop into submission. At Canute Place, it took about an hour to beat the tall grass down, including the blue-blazer to the spring. The spring was flowing nicely. The heat and humidity wore me down. I was happy to make it back to the car. The Forest Service needs to regrade the road soon. That would save at least 3-4 miles of hiking.



Reporting: Joel Zabel

Date: 7/6/2024

Purpose: Summer Work

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to FS230 switchback

People: Adam Bean, Jeff Bennett, Kit Parks, Josh Banks, Todd Markwalter, Ed Brading, Yong Li, Stacy Fowler, Joy Zabel, Joel Zabel

Summary: Most of the work was cutting weeds; the heaviest between Iron Mtn Gap and Cherry Gap Shelter. I cut back rhodos with the Dewalt Lithium hedge trimmer and hand loppers. We cleaned out waterbars and checked the shelter. All is in good order (graffiti board is working, no graffiti on walls). The water source is running well with the pipe. We cut one 7" blowdown and several smaller blowdowns with the Katanaboy saw.

Reporting: Russell Fleming Jr

Date: 7/7/2024

Purpose: Trail Maintenance

Location: Section 15c, Ash Gap to Hughes Gap, Roan Mountain

People: Russell Fleming

Summary: I performed maintenance: cleaned water diversions, cut back encroaching vegetation, removed blowdowns, painted blazes, checked signage, picked up trash, and checked the water source. Everything was looking good and normal for this time of year.

Reporting: Jim McGuire

Date: 7/8/2024

Purpose: General Maintenance

Location: Section 12c, Sugar Hollow Creek to Campbell Hollow Road

People: Jim McGuire

Summary: Walked my section on a very hot Monday. I cleared two medium-sized blowdowns and lopped many branches. I collected some trash, but not much. I could not find the large rootball recently reported. I think I will need to return to Elk River with a trimmer in a couple weeks. I also noticed graffiti on a couple signs. I'll take sandpaper on my next visit to see if that will clean it off. I met and talked with 8 hikers. One said she was a trail maintainer in the Great Smoky Mountains Natl Park.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 7/10/2024

Purpose: Cut back encroaching vegetation

Location: Section 16b, From Greasy Creek Gap to the fourth knob past the first tall knob

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: From Greasy Creek Gap to the first tall knob above the gap, I cut back vegetation from new growth and anything hanging over the trail. Then I went on to the fourth knob between the two tall knobs on each end where I cut many stinging nettles, weeds, and grass, as well as pruned any branches over the trail. It was a hot day going up the Forest Service road to the gap, but was cooler once I got to the gap. By the time I got to the fourth knob, the sun was going down and I was about spent. The temperature had dropped to 65 by that time with a 10 mph wind. It helped me make it as far as I did. Great day on the trail. I saw no hikers.

Reporting: Bill Fuller

Date: 7/10/2024

Purpose: Cut back grass and weeds

Location: Section 9a, US 321 to Pond Flats

People: Bill Fuller

Summary: I started at the cemetery/forest gate and cut back high grass and weeds with the swing blade. I worked my way up to the powerline cut where it was pretty overgrown. I swing-bladed a couple feet swath on both sides of the trail until I reached the forest. I also cut back a few encroaching limbs here and there, and did some more brushing in of the upper forest road. The weather was a little cooler today, so it was nice to be out.

Reporting: Tom Sahlin

Date: 7/11/2024

Purpose: Cut back encroaching vegetation

Location: Section 16b, From Greasy Creek Gap to the tallest knob at the pinnacle of rocks

People: Tom Sahlin

Summary: From Greasy Creek Gap, I went to the top of the first tall knob. From there I touched up anything that was hanging over the trail that I missed the day before. From the fourth knob between the tall knobs on each end, I used the grass whip to cut tall grass, stinging nettles, white snake root, and other weeds all the way to the pinnacle of rocks at the middle of this section. The side of the mountain going up to the rock pinnacle was in bad shape and took a lot of slashing to remove a host of blackberry vines and other weeds leaning in on the trail. I am so happy that is done. I didn't want to have to come back just for that hillside, so I hit it as hard as I could all the way to the rock pinnacle. It was the toughest weeding I have done to date, especially with the distance covered; three hours of walking and six hours of weeding. Whew. I also cut more limbs overhanging the trail. It was a tough day, but it's done. I saw no hikers.

[Back to Top](#)

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 7/11/2024

Purpose: Move locust logs

Location: Section 15a, Roan High Knob

People: Joe Morris, Tim Stewart, Van Hovey, Scott Huskey, Bob Peoples, Greg Kramer, Tony Messina, Dan Firth, Elzear Lemieux

Summary: It was a big day moving logs with the USFS for refurbishing the Roan High Knob Shelter. All the logs placed at Toll House Gap last week were moved to various positions between the trail intersection and the shelter. The crew used SCH40 PVC pipe, which worked beautifully as impromptu rollers. Bob removed the bark from the two original locusts staged at the shelter. A day hiker from New Hampshire (Adam) helped us move one of the logs up the access trail and received an Eastman patch. Bill Murdoch was, once again, a wizard with snatch blocks, pulleys, and rope. We were able to move the logs without the use of grip hoists.

Reporting: Renee Messina

Date: 7/13/2024

Purpose: Assess trail, remove blowdowns and vegetation

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

People: Stephen Mahan

Summary: Stephen performed maintenance tasks on the entire section, mostly cutting vegetation but also removing 8 small blowdowns (removed intact). There is one blowdown (8"-9" in diameter) across the trail approximately 1.8 miles from the Dennis Cove Trailhead. He checked the water sources; due to lack of rain, no water was present. This section is in good shape. He encountered three hikers. One of the hikers, "Twisted," advised there are several blowdowns and obstacles in the trail between Damascus, VA and Watauga Dam.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 7/13/2024

Purpose: Hiking with Tools!

Location: Section 16a, Hughes Gap to Little Rock Knob

People: Tim Stewart, Rebecka Powell, Otniel Ulloa, Kayla Carter

Summary: We met at the Roan Mountain Community Park and then carpoled to Hughes Gap. We hiked south of the Gap and, although it was hot, we still managed to find some rhodos to lop. It was a steady uphill climb to Little Rock Knob, but the tree canopy helped to keep it cool(er). We were rewarded with some outstanding views. A good day for trail maintenance. I gave a TEHCC patch to Otniel.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 7/18/2024

Purpose: Moving logs at Roan High Knob

Location: Section 15a, Roan High Knob

People: Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart, Rio Berry, Van Hovey, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Joe Morris, Greg Kramer, Jonathan Lukas

Summary: The Thursday crew continued to work with the USFS to move logs in proximity of the Roan High Knob Shelter. Jonathan Lukas, a 2023 thru-hiker, joined the group for his first maintenance event and received a TEHCC patch.

Reporting: Bettye Boone

Date: 7/19/2024

Purpose: Remove vegetation from Grassy Ridge Spur Trail

Location: Section 14d, Stan Murray Shelter to Carvers Gap, Grassy Ridge Spur Trail

People: Bettye Boone, Saylor Fox

Summary: We weeded and lopped encroaching vegetation along the Grassy Ridge Spur Trail.

Reporting: Bettye Boone

Date: 7/22/2024

Purpose: Complete maintenance on Grassy Ridge Spur Trail and collect counter data for VUM

Location: Section 14d, Grassy Ridge Spur Trail and Carvers Gap to Grassy Ridge

People: Bettye Boone, Saylor Fox

Summary: We downloaded counter data for the A.T. between Carvers Gap and Jane Bald.

Reporting: Karen Berry and Annette Vinding

Date: 7/23/2024

Purpose: Routine maintenance and flower I.D.

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

People: Karen Berry, Annette Vinding

Summary: We picked up trash along the trail. We also familiarized ourselves with trail side herbaceous flora and located the rare white monkshood.

[Back to Top](#)

Reporting: Bettye Boone

Date: 7/23/2024

Purpose: Roan Highland Visitor Use Management (VUM) Committee

People: Bettye Boone

Summary: I uploaded counter data and communicated with the committee regarding VUM.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 7/23/2024

Purpose: Transport for Konnarock

Location: Section 20b, Temple Hill Gap

People: Joe Morris

Summary: I transported the Konnarock crew (10 participants) and their gear to Temple Hill Gap. Chad and Neil from the Forest Service provided UTV support. I removed two blowdowns south of the gap. The USFS has cut all the rhododendron along Granny Lewis Road from US 19W to the FS 189B gate.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 7/25/2024

Purpose: Support Konnarock

Location: Section 20b, Temple Hill Gap

People: Joe Morris

Summary: I went to Temple Hill Gap to check on the Konnarock crew, to make plans for their departure on Saturday, and to remove their trash. The crew is doing remarkably well considering the elements.

Reporting: Jim McGuire

Date: 7/25/2024

Purpose: Find Reported Root Ball

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

People: Jim McGuire

Summary: I left Walnut Mountain Road, hiking south in the pouring rain looking for the reported root ball. I found it just south of Mountaineer Falls at mile 404.0. I took several photos and sent them to Joe and Carl. There was also a medium-sized blowdown that I cleared near the root ball. I encountered one hiker.

Reporting: Scott Huskey

Date: 7/26/2024

Purpose: Routine maintenance

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

People: Scott Huskey

Summary: I took a string trimmer on the trail and cut the grass and other encroaching vegetation. Otherwise, the trail looked fine.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 7/26/2024

Purpose: Maintenance with church volunteer group

Location: Section 10, Hampton trailhead to Dennis Cove Road, Laurel Fork Falls

People: Tim Stewart, Bob Peoples, Bill Murdoch, Chance Pendleton, Crawford Lilavivat, Rush Lilavivat, C. Ryan Clinton

Summary: We took a couple of youth and adults from St. John's Episcopal Church in Johnson City for a maintenance outing. We met at Dennis Cove Rd and then hiked to Laurel Fork Falls. The normal tasks of lopping rhodos and other vegetation were completed. We disturbed a paper wasp nest and did receive a couple of stings. The nest was right next to the trail. Bill was able to very carefully remove the branch the nest was on and drag it off the trail with some rope. Bob did not hike down to the falls. Instead he returned to Potato Top and cleared that trail. Everyone else went down and had lunch at the falls. After lunch we continued on the A.T. to the shelter and returned via the High Water trail. Back at the trailhead, I was surprised to see Bob's truck. I passed out 4 patches and then Bill and I decided to hike back to find Bob. We checked the swimming hole first and then proceeded to Potato Top. After crossing Koonford Bridge, we saw Bob just coming off the steps. In the end, it was a good day.



Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 7/26/2024

Purpose: Work with the Konnarock crew

Location: Section 20b, Temple Hill Gap to Mile 339

People: Vic Hasler

Summary: I came to work with the first Konnarock crew by lopping rhododendron from the uphill side of the tread repairs. Due to unfavorable weekend weather and family plans, I'm running behind on the summer trim. An early start today allowed cutting the growth between the taped sections; then I followed part of the crew working farther from Temple Hill Gap. They had cleared the muck from the mile-339 wet spot, so hopefully it will be more passible. Both crew parts were cutting the shelf from the path. There are four key sections for the second week of Konnarock to tackle.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 7/27/2024

Purpose: Rehab Trail

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

People: Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Van Hovey, Tony Messina

Summary: We hiked in from Walnut Mtn Rd to rehab the trail where a big root ball had removed the trail. It took all four of us to restore the 20 feet of trail because the hole was three feet deep. We saw only one hiker. We cleared seven blowdowns with the largest being 8 inches. We also removed several rhododendron tangles sagging into trail.



Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 7/27/2024

Purpose: Support Konnarock crew

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

People: Joe Morris

Summary: I met the Forest Service at the Can Lot and assisted the Konnarock crew on Crew One getaway day.



Week one of Konnarock rehab at Temple Hill Gap is in the books. Thanks to the crew for a great week.