



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

February 2025

Co-Editors – Terry Oldfield and Katelynn Thorne

TEHCC.org

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A Snowy, But Beautiful Day for A.T. Maintainers

Letter from the Chair

Submitted by [Eric Dobbs](#) (2025 Steering Committee Chair)

Happy New Year TEHCC family! I hope everyone had a great holiday season and was able to see friends and family and take some time to get outside. Since we are in the depths of winter and back to our day-to-day distractions, I think it is important to go back over some winter hiking safety tips. Primarily due to the multiple snows we've had lately, let's review some hiking/walking ice safety tips!

1. [Check the weather](#)

As with any time of year, checking the forecast before you go is important. If there has been snow, will it be above freezing while you're out? Will the ice melt totally throughout the day or just the surface? Is more snow or freezing weather going to happen? These are all important questions, as a warm day can melt the top layer of ice, making it even more slick. Melted puddles and drainage can quickly freeze over if the temperature drops, making it slick once more.

2. [Traction is key](#)

Whether you're sure there's ice or just a chance of ice, it is a good idea to carry some kind of spike or crampon with you. These are usually small and flexible enough to fit in your bag and put on/remove easily. Spikes are better for thinner, grippier ice and can better handle treading on rocks and bare dirt. But crampons are much better when you know there's going to be a lot of ice and not as much rock and dirt. When walking on ice with traction aids, make sure to stamp your feet down well when you take a step, as ice is still slick and you need to ensure the spikes make proper contact into the ice.

3. [Testing Ice](#)

When you are about to walk on the ice, make sure to test its durability. If you have a pole or hiking stick, you can use that to test. A hollow sound means there is some kind of void underneath, which means it may be unstable, so proceed with caution. If crossing ice that is over water, make sure there isn't a risk of falling through and getting wet. Steep, exposed sections can also cause a risk of injury.

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4. Going Down

Before you decide to start your uphill ascents, remember: You have to go back down. Or, in the words of my father, “Don’t go up if you don’t know how you’ll come down”. It may seem easy enough going up a rocky, icy slope. But just think about what it will be like going back down. Is it going to require a different route? Do you need to sit and scooch to make it safely? Is it worth risking falling down? All important things to consider when looking up where you’ll be coming down from.

I hope these quick lessons will help you remember or learn something new about safely traversing on ice. While I encourage everyone to go out and enjoy the few snows we get here, only do so if you can do it safely! Have a warm and safe beginning of 2025 everyone!

~Eric Dobbs

2025 Steering Committee

The Steering Committee for 2025 will be made up of nine members. Returning members are Eric Dobbs, Andy Steffan, Gabriela Brueggeman, Joseph Sengeh, Vic Hasler, and Tim Schaefer. Eric has agreed to continue as Chair, while Josh will serve as the Past Chair. A quick election approved the entire slate with Katelynn Thorne and Mike McCarroll being new to the Steering Committee.

New Steering Committee Members



Katelynn Thorne: I first got into hiking through Clemson’s hiking club my freshman year, and then I expanded to kayaking and camping through the university’s outdoor recreation program. The structured outdoor adventure trips showed me the endless opportunities available in the mountains. In the 7 months I have been with Eastman full time, I have gone hiking, kayaking, white water rafting, spelunking, and skiing. I enjoy spending time in nature with others and am looking forward to more memories.



Mike McCarroll: Hello folks, I was born and raised in Vermont, where the population density was 0.5 persons per square mile. As you can imagine, that meant most of my childhood was spent outdoors exploring. From ponds, hiking, waterfalls, lakes, and lots of mountains, the outdoor adventures were endless. Moving to the South about 7 years ago was a wonderful improvement in weather and temperatures. I started with Eastman about 3 years ago, and moving to Northeast TN region has been a beautiful adventure. The hiking and kayaking club has been a great way for me to explore TN and see its beauty. I am excited to be asked to join the Steering Committee and hope to help continue the great adventures and rental opportunities that this club provides.

Hurricane Helene Recovery Update for the Appalachian Trail

Submitted by Vic Hasler, with input from Carl Fritz and Joe Morris

The massive tree damage across the NC/TN region will shock those visiting for the first time. US Forest Service (USFS) and TEHCC, along with volunteers (a few traveling great distances) are now tackling the worst of the trail sections. Several sections are still closed to public access and some sections are flagged to indicate temporary detours.

Current Status:

The Appalachian Trail designated within the Pisgah National Forest (North Carolina) continues to remain officially closed, specifically from just north of Iron Mountain Gap to Doll Flats. Do not enter. (continued next page)



Root Ball - photograph by Tim Stewart

While the A.T. is shown as “Open” for Cherokee National Forest (Tennessee), this does not mean it is safe and/or cleared for passage. Some sections will take multiple hours just to travel two to three miles. North and south of Iron Mtn Gap is the worst, even after multiple days cutting by the USFS and other maintainers. When the proposed timber salvage is underway around Iron Mtn Gap, the section will also be closed to hikers. A long walk around will probably be in effect. Pond Mtn Wilderness between Dennis Cove Road and US321 is closed until crosscut saws (as required by land management regulations) can be dispatched to clear difficult tangles of trees. The Pond Mtn summit has been flagged with a walk around and will stay that way for the foreseeable future. Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS) have four miles north of Wilbur Dam Road open, while crosscut saws are again required for the Big Laurel Branch Wilderness.

Trees will continue to fall. Most camping areas have not had downed trees removed. Please watch out for hazard trees at bridges, shelters, campsites, and water sources; reporting any to the club and/or forest service to give priority for removal.

An official 3.6-mile road-walk detour has been put into place around the destroyed Chestoa Pike Bridge over Nolichucky River (see article below, [Official A.T. Detour for the Nolichucky River](#)).

Continuing efforts:

Weather permitting, crews of 4-10 members with multiple sawyers are being dispatched - typically Thursdays, plus second and fourth Saturdays. **Sawyers must have current first aid training and certification by the US Forest Service.**

As the A.T. becomes more open, the priority is to repair the deep holes in the tread caused by the many root balls pulled out of the ground (see photograph above).

Interested volunteers who would like to help should send an email to helenevolunteer@tehcc.org to be added to a distribution list which shares the plans for the upcoming one or two weeks. It's your choice then on whether to volunteer for specific outings.

TEHCC would again like to thank the experienced volunteers from other A.T. clubs and Johnson City Hiking Club for their assistance in clearing some difficult stretches.

Three weeks of Konnarock Crew are scheduled for March-April 2025 for yet to-be-determined sections.

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
February 13	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1 pm	Eric Dobbs	303-915-9208
February 15	Bays Mountain Park Trail Maintenance, 9 am – 2 pm	Tony Messina	423-677-6650
February 21	TEHCC Maintainers Kickoff Dinner, 5:30 pm	Renee Messina	423-384-6650
March 13	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1 pm	Eric Dobbs	303-915-9208

Details of Upcoming Events

Recurring Events

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

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

The Steering Committee guides the general program for the club. The committee normally meets at lunchtime, now on the second Thursday of each month starting with December. 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.

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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! Second & Fourth Saturdays

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

While Hiking with Tools! has officially been discontinued for the season, there are many opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and help clear the trail. **Helene cleanup is being scheduled for the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month, weather dependent.** Chainsaw sawyers require swampers to help with assessments, safety observance, and removal of cuts. In places, the trail needs to be temporarily relocated with ribbon placement and perhaps blazing. And of course, there is a lot of debris that requires removal. All tools will be furnished, and no prior experience is required! All are welcome. Email Tim for details.

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

Contact: [Tony Messing](mailto:Tony.Messing@tehcc.org), 423-677-6650

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

Nolichucky River Clean-ups, Last Two Weekends of the Month

Contact: nolichuckyrestorationproject@gmail.com

If you are looking for an opportunity to help with clean-up efforts from the hurricane, besides just the trails, the Nolichucky Restoration Project is likely planning to complete clean-ups twice a month on the last two weekends of the month from now until May. Fortunately, there are land-based opportunities on each clean-up, so don't feel like you can't help if you don't boat or want to get in the river. You can follow them through Facebook or Instagram. For more information, including meeting locations, please email nolichuckyrestorationproject@gmail.com.

Scheduled Event

TEHCC Maintainers Kickoff Dinner, Friday, February 21, 2025, 5:30 pm

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

The annual dinner to kick off our 2025 trail maintenance season will be held at the Eastman Lodge banquet room. The event will start at 5:30 pm with a social time, followed by dinner at 6 pm. After the meal, we will present awards and discuss various issues related to maintaining TEHCC's section of the Appalachian Trail. All maintainers or individuals interested in maintaining are invited to attend. The TEHCC A.T. Committee has agreed to cover the cost of dinner, being Phil's Dream Pit barbecue. Please notify Volunteer Coordinator Renee Messing (atmaint@tehcc.org) by Monday, February 17, if you plan to attend, so we can get an accurate head count for the meal.

TEHCC/APEs/NOLI Wilderness First Aid and Responder Courses

Submitted by Andy Steffan

Have you considered what you would do if you were on a hike or maintaining a trail and the unthinkable happens to you or someone else? Are you prepared? If you want to be an asset to yourself and others by being prepared to treat injury and illness when help is not close at hand, these classes are for you. The normal venues for NOLI classes have been wiped out by Hurricane Helene. To help out, TEHCC has partnered with APEs and NOLI to host a few classes early in 2025 at the Eastman Lodge, as follows.

- Wilderness First Aid: Feb 15-16 (CPR optional as an Add-On) [Wilderness First Aid Course - 2 Days](#)
- Wilderness First Responder Recert: Mar 7-9 (CPR optional as Add-On) [Wilderness First Responder Recertification - 3 Days](#)
- Wilderness First Responder: Mar 22-29 (includes CPR) [Wilderness First Responder Course - 8 Days](#)

All the specifics, including curricula, certification, packing list, class times, etc. are at the links above. Registration is available at the links also. Using the discount code TEHCCSPECIAL, TEHCC members can receive 15% off each of the classes, including the optional CPR classes. If there are any questions/concerns, feel free to reach out to [NOLI](#) or [Andy Steffan](#).

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Official A.T. Detour for the Nolichucky River

Devised and submitted by Vic Hasler

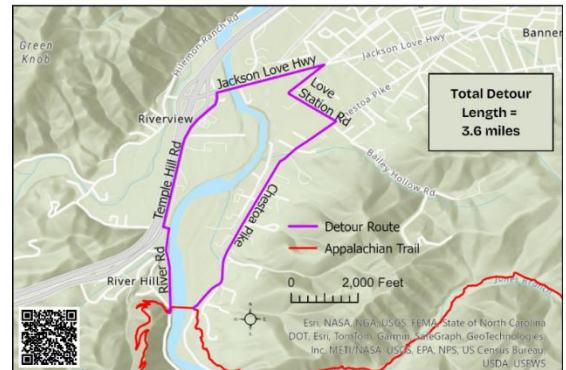
The Chestoa Bridge was destroyed during Hurricane Helene, and was the Nolichucky River crossing for the Appalachian Trail. The USFS, TN DOT, and town of Erwin agreed to a 3.6 mile road-walk detour until the bridge is rebuilt. It has been marked with white blazes as the official A.T. route, temporarily.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy is sharing these cautions:

- There is currently heavy truck traffic on Unaka Spring Rd/River Rd due to repairs to the railroad upstream. This is a narrow road with no shoulder.
- Walk on the left side of the road when possible, facing traffic.
- Wear bright colors and wear your headlamp with the light on, even during the day.
- Do not walk along roads at night.
- Walk single file; do not walk side by side.

Northbound Directions:

- Come out of the woods and turn left on Unaka Springs Rd/River Road and walk 0.5 mi to Temple Hill Rd/TN 36. You'll walk right past Uncle Johnny's Hostel.
- Turn right on Temple Hill Rd and follow for 0.8 mi to the Jackson Love Highway.
- Turn right on Jackson Love Highway and follow for 0.5 mi to Love Station Rd.
- Take the sharp right on Love Station Road/Carolina Ave and follow for 0.5 mi to Chestoa Pike.
- Turn right on Chestoa Pike and follow for 1.3 mi back to the other side of the washed out bridge. The A.T. heads back up into the woods to the left, off Jones Branch Rd just past the intersection.



Appalachian Trail Stamps in 2025

Submitted by Vic Hasler

For next year's Centennial Anniversary of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), the United States Postal Service announced a panel of 15 Appalachian Trail forever stamps (currently 73 cents each) – one for each state plus the "green tunnel". Tennessee appears to be the Laurel Fork Falls. Antonio Alcalá, an art director for USPS, designed the stamps with images from various photographers.



TEHCC Welcomes a New Member

Ruth Pickwell



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Maintenance stats from Jeff Sirola for Helene Recovery, 9/30/24 to 12/31/24

Miles Cleared: 57.3 (43%)

Cumulative Hours: 4054

Chainsaw Hours: 554

Total Events: 87

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Dates: 4/23/24 – 6/3/2024 on 7 different occasions

Purpose: Rehab or mow trail

Location: Section 4a, US421 to Double Springs Shelter

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed carried and installed check steps, widened and levelled about 200 ft of trail, and mowed the trail.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 11/9/2024

Purpose: Assess and remove debris

Location: Section 15c, Cloudland to Hughes Gap

People: Steve Domagala, Randy Allen

Summary: This was an assessment hike with some brush removal.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 11/23/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 16a, Hughes Gap

People: Steve Domagala, Randy Allen

Summary: They assisted USFS with tree removal.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 12/4/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 12b, Walnut Mountain Road to Sugar Hollow, Elk River and Mountaineer Falls

People: Joe Morris, Bill Reagan, Rick Mulholland, Greg Kramer, Benj Lipchak

Summary: This crew finished the section from Walnut Mtn Rd to Sugar Hollow. There are some large trees left to cut on the low side of the bench and some future tread work opportunities. The section is passable, which is no small achievement. We cleared the bulk of the brush and small trees on or near Mountaineer Falls Shelter.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 12/5/2024

Purpose: Cut Blowdowns from Helene

Location: Section 12c, Campbell Hollow Rd to Jones Falls

People: Randy Allen, Ken Filar, Jim McGuire, Gerald Scott, Ken Murray, Van Hovey, Carl Fritz

Summary: After multiple work trips we finally punched through the A.T. between Campbell Hollow Rd and Jones Falls. Let's say we still have 2-foot-high step-overs, 4-foot-high crawl-overs, and 4-foot-high crawl-unders, plus a lot of root ball holes to fill. But it is passable. Many thanks to Ken Filar, a 2021 thru hiker, who drove from NW Ohio just to help us!

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Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 12/7/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 20c, Spivey Gap

People: Steve Domagala

Summary: Steve assisted USFS with tree removal on three different trips.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 12/7/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 11b, Canute Place to Bitter End, Elk River and Mountaineer Falls

People: Elzear Lemieux, Gerald Scott, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Wes Miller, Jon Heidrick, Bill Murdoch, Megan Krager, Rich Bowerman, Dennis Whittington, Dennis Lewis, Randy Allen, Benj Lipchak, Tony Keck, Heather Waldroup, Andy Kraus, Stephanie Kraus, Ricky Amba, Tom Sahlin, Joe Morris

Summary: Excellent turnout on a Saturday outing with beautiful seasonal weather. The group split into three teams: Team one went south from the shelter and cut one mile worth of trail obstructions (0.3 mi. remains to be cleared); Team two stayed around the Moreland Gap shelter and cleared blowdowns adjacent to the shelter; Team three ventured north and cleared 0.9 mile of obstructions to MM 415.0 N. Dennis Lewis, Tony Keck, Andy and Stephanie Kraus, and Ricky Amba received their first outing patches.



Reporting: Scotty Bowman

Date: 12/7/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 7, Vandeventer Shelter to Wilbur Dam Rd

People: Scotty Bowman, Tyler Cairnes, Alex Rucke, Cater Gray, Noah Spaulding, Taylor Horn

Summary: It was great day to get out and do some crosscutting. We hiked in to tackle a big complex downed 28" DBA oak with multiple limbs blocking the trail, located at 2.7 miles in from Wilbur Dam Rd. It took 15 cuts in total to remove from the trail. It was a full day of good work.

Reporting: Steve Wilson

Date: 12/7/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdowns after Hurricane Helene

Location: Section 3, McQueen's Gap to US421 Cutting blowdowns in the middle of Section 3

People: Steve Perri, Ed Speer, and Steve Wilson

Summary: The ATC has hired a four-man professional sawyer crew to help clear blowdowns after Hurricane Helene. During this outing we met and oriented the crew to the access trail heads for cutting blowdowns in TEHCC's northern sections (1-3). Steve Perri, Ed Speer, and Steve Wilson met the crew at Backbone Rock parking lot and provide the orientation.

The first day of work was to continue clearing the middle of Section 3 between Low Gap and McQueens Gap. With seven people and three sawyer teams, we removed a remarkable 150 blowdowns in roughly a 3/4 mile stretch opening the trail from FarOut app mileage 457.8 to 458.6. We found several 2-to-3 foot diameter poplar wood trees knocked down by the storm at the spring. The experienced sawyers and big saws were vital to the task of cutting these big blowdowns. We club members also appreciated the safety and technique advice from the pros.

Reporting: Joel Zabel

Date: 12/8/2024

Purpose: Identify location of A.T. treadway beneath Helene damage, check A.T. reroute options

Location: Section 17, Mile 360 to Iron Mtn Gap

People: Yong Li, Joy Zabel, Joel Zabel

Summary: We used yellow marking tape to locate the exact trail position beneath the worst of Helene's blowdowns to aid contracted sawyers in following the A.T. We marked two segments: between miles 363.8 and 364.1, and 363.4 and 363.5.

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We also hiked two possible reroute sections: FS230D (0.85 miles long) between Red Fork Rd and the A.T. (~0.4 miles north from destroyed Cherry Gap Shelter). It is very usable with minor clearing, except for the last 150 yds requiring blowdown attention; And a 0.4 mile section of abandoned A.T. on the SE flank of Unaka Mtn that connects Red Fork Rd to the current A.T. We only had time to hike the northern end, but it looks like a good option. I emailed Carl Fritz a digital interactive map highlighting these trail conditions and others along our section with GPS positioning.

Reporting: Rick Lott

Date: 12/10/2024

Purpose: Remove step-over and duck-under blowdowns left from prior maintenance trips

Location: Section 12c, Sugar Hollow Creek to Campbell Hollow, Road Mile 399.7 to Mile 400.1

People: Rick Lott, Randy Allen

Summary: We hiked in about a mile to where a 26" step-over blowdown was left from prior maintenance trips. This one was cut and then we started cutting as we headed back to the trailhead. We cleared about 4 other step-over blowdowns and about 4 duck-under blowdowns. We left a few more complicated duck under blowdowns. Step-over and duck-under blowdowns still exist on the first half-mile from Campbell Hollow Rd. We had hoped to get the biggest step-over, one about a 22"; but had to leave it as the rain was moving in quickly. About one more trip in should clear this half mile. We did run into Murray and Megan from the ATC out of Asheville who were surveying the remaining trail damage.

Reporting: Steve Perri

Date: 12/11/2024

Purpose: Discuss Helene Recovery Work for 2025 Konnarock Crews

Location: Multiple Sections

People: Joe Morris, Jerry Kyle, Murray Lamb, Megan Faimon

Summary: Joe and I had a call with Jerry, Murray, and Megan of ATC to discuss opportunities where 2025 Konnarock crews could help repair damaged trail areas after Helene. Murray and Megan have been conducting trail assessments where root balls on side hill sections took out the trail and will need major repairs. The Elk River area was heavily damaged and was identified as a possible starting point. Murray and Megan are conducting more assessments next week and will try to prioritize areas for crew time. Jerry offered up to 6 weeks time based on two 3-week hitches. We expect Elk River to use up maybe 3 weeks. Several other areas will be considered after further assessment, including south of Iron Mt Gap, Hughes Gap area, and Spivey Gap North. Current windows of time would be April 15th to early May and end of July to mid-August. We'll firm up priority areas after our next call.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 12/13/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 11a, Elk River and Mountaineer Falls

People: Jim McGuire, Randy Allen, Greg Kramer, Elzear Lemieux, Rick Lott

Summary: This crew went north out of the Canute Farm and cut to mile 417.8.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 12/13/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 11a, Elk River and Mountaineer Falls

People: Joe Morris, Dan Firth, Bill Murdoch, Carl Fritz, Todd Gray, Tim Stewart

Summary: This crew headed south from the Canute Farm and removed blowdowns to mile 415.9.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 12/14/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdowns and rehab trail

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

People: Carl Fritz, Joe Morris, Tom O'Day, Gerald Scott, Dan Firth, Jeff Hatling, Van Hovey, Ken Murray, Megean Krager, Wes Miller, Ren "Ramdino" Ramsey, Jim McGuire, Laine Jennings, Marlee "Dirty Bird" Jennings, Heather Waldroup, Tim Stewart

Summary: A larger than expected turnout led to a very productive day near Moreland Gap. The sawyer crew cut from 415.9 to the catastrophic damage at 415.0, including a clearing of the old trail grade to evaluate as a possible reroute. The concept of a reroute was abandoned due to the slope on the south side of the knob. Two treadway rehab groups created a six-step locust staircase over root ball damage, multiple locust log cribs to stabilize root ball damage (total 100 ft.), and sidehill digging away from root ball storm damage totaling another 50 feet. Great overall crew day. Marlee Jennings and Ren Ramsey received TEHCC first-time patches. (See photos next page.)



Reporting: Steve Mahan

Date: 12/14/2024

Purpose: Clearblow-downs to make trail passable

Location: Section 11a, Dennis Cove Road to Canute Place, From mile 318 to 420.2

People: Tony Messina, Elzear Lemieux, Bob Peoples, Rio Berry, Randy Allen, Dennis Lewis, Steve Mahan

Summary: We assembled at Roan Mountain Community Park at 9 am and were assigned to Coon Den Trail (Dennis Cove) to A.T. mile 318.6. We ascended Coon Dem Trail with two sawyers clearing blowdowns. We cleared 5 large blowdowns, 15+ canopies, and smaller trees. On descent to Dennis Cove, we cleared one blowdown. Section 11a is now passable.

Reporting: Scotty Bowman

Date: 12/17/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 7, Vandeventer Shelter to Wilbur Dam Rd

People: Scotty Bowman, Tyler Cairnes, Murray Lamb, Megan Juneau, Nola Privett, David Lloyd, Thomas Rice

Summary: It was a great day to be out clearing trees. The rain held off until the hike out. The goal for this trip was to continue with blowdown removal starting at 2.7 miles from the trailhead. We broke up into two teams to tackle the days tasks. Murray and Megan led one team which tackled a large complex of oaks with multiple trunks across the trail. I led the other team and headed trail north to clear as much as we could. On this day we were able to clear 7 trees (18" - 36" dia) and 2 treetops that were blocking the trail. This section is clear from Wilbur Dam Road to 4 miles.



Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 12/17/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdowns and rehab trail

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

People: Joe Morris, Tony Messina, Steve Wilson, Dennis Lewis, Ken Murray, Dennis Whittington, Van Hovey, Todd Gray, Dan Firth, Greg Kramer, Jim McGuire, Gerald Scott, Rick Mulholland, Carl Fritz, Ed Speer, Kent Gardner, Sherri Millard

Summary: Remarkable completion of the rehab one mile north of Moreland Gap Shelter including: a six-step staircase, all blowdowns, and 120 feet of locust crib to mitigate three root ball cavities. Part of the crew removed all of the blowdowns off the Moreland Gap Shelter roof.

Reporting: Jeff Hatling

Date: 12/17/2024

Purpose: Check access road to the old Barn site

Location: Section 14b, Bradley Gap to Yellow Mountain Gap, Old Barn site

People: Jeff Hatling

Summary: Roaring Creek Road has been rebuilt. It is in better shape than it was. Above the gate has not been rebuilt. It is in good shape. I walked the old Barn site camping area. All is good. Walked up to the A.T. All is good. I believe Grassy Ridge sheltered the area from some of Helene's heavy winds.

Reporting: Tony Messina

Date: 12/18/2024

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Purpose: Recover lost tools

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

People: Tony Messina, Dan Firth

Summary: Dan and I hiked up the Coon Den Falls blue-blaze to search for Elzear's titanium bar which had been lost on Monday by one of the volunteers. We searched all the way to the junction with the A.T. and then cut out Helene blowdowns on the return trip. We used a metal detector as well as Mark 1 eyeballs to search for the bar, all to no avail. As a consolation prize, we did manage to remove about 20 blowdowns and the Coon Den Trail is now passable. There are four significant crawl-overs left (20-30 inch dia) that will require a large saw for removal. Three of these are above the spur trail to the falls. There is also one significant rootball hole about 0.25 mile above the spur that really needs attention, and will likely require steps and/or cribbing. The spur trail to the falls is completely blocked by a tangle of ten to twenty jackstraw blowdowns, none of which appear from the outside to be greater than maybe 18 inches.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 12/19/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdowns and rehab trail

Location: Section 12c, Campbell Hollow north

People: Joe Morris, Tim Stewart, Van Hovey, Bob Peoples, Megan Krager, Wesley Miller, Carl Fritz, Dan Firth, Gerald Scott, Rebecka Powell, Jim McGuire, Heather Waldroup, Tracy Harris, Cheryl Ramsey

Summary: The crew continued with a secondary chainsaw pass from Campbell Hollow northward. Several large stepovers were removed and the corridor "widened". Several root balls were mitigated totaling approximately 100 feet of rehabilitation. This section will require additional work (Jones Falls access needs to be cleared) but, for the balance of the winter this area is in satisfactory shape.

Reporting: Tony Messina

Date: 12/19/2024

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 14c, Bradley Gap to Stan Murray Shelter

People: Tony Messina, Elzear Lemieux, Greg Kramer, Jeff Hatling, Michael Sink, Conner Sheppard, Steve Cobb

Summary: We had with us two guys from Florida who have met Kevin Sedgwick. They traveled to help TEHCC with recovery and plan to work with the CMC tomorrow and GATC on Saturday. We cleared our assigned section, but not as planned. We drove around Yellow Mtn to meet Jeff, who was waiting amid devastation in Minneapolis. Roaring Fork Road was devastated as well, but the unpaved part is newly graveled up to the gate and graded above. It is in the best condition I have seen. From OverMountain, Greg, Jeff, and Michael headed north with two saws and Tony, Elzear, Conner, and Steve headed south toward SM, also with two saws. The NOBOs encountered their first blowdown at about 0.25 mile. However, when Tony pulled the starter cord on his Echo, it broke. We lacked tools for field repair. So, Elzear and the two Florida guys continued north and Tony returned south to catch up with the others. Tony humped it to treeline below Little Hump and was able to shout to the guys up the hill to STOP. Greg and Michael headed back south. About that time, Elzear's saw died as well. So Elzear and his posse continued on to the shelter, lopping and hand sawing. They turned around and met up with Greg about 0.6 mi north of SM. Altogether, NOBOs cut about 15 trees and SOBOs about 30. Nothing complicated. Most less than 8 inches. Patches were given to the Florida guys. Good Times!

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 12/23/2024

Purpose: Cut blowdowns from Helene

Location: Section 4a, US421 to Double Springs Shelter

People: Dan Firth, Elzear Lemieux, Steve Wilson, Ed Speer, Carl Fritz

Summary: Brandon, T1, and T2 were able to join us for the first time since Helene. We targeted the blowdown tangles north of Double Springs Shelter to Locust Knob. FS, Ed, and Steve approached from Osborne Farm while Dan, Elzear and I approached from Low Gap. We successfully met and finished clearing while using a lot of fuel. The trail is now open from Iron Mountain Shelter to TN/VA line! Elzear, Dan, and I cleared a number of big leaners and two-foot stepovers on the return to Low Gap.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 12/24/2024

Purpose: Rehab trail and cutout blowdowns

Location: Section 12d, Bishop Hollow to 19E

People: Dan Firth, Elzear Lemieux, Gerald Scott, Tony Messina, Carl Fritz, Van Hovey, Bob Peoples, Rio Berry, Dean Baird, Ed Speer, Tim Stewart

Summary: FS joined us again today. Brandon, Seong, and T2 did a cleanup of blowdowns from 19E to Bishop Hollow. T1 cut locusts for rehab. We repaired 75' of trail including 4 root balls, 5 rock steps, and 5 locust steps. We cribbed another huge root ball hole

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and filled it with locust chunks. About 5 more root ball holes remain to be rehabbed with one requiring the root ball to be removed probably with a grip hoist. A successful way to end the year!

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 12/28/2024

Purpose: Repair stile

Location: Section 4b, Double Springs Shelter to TN91

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed replaced a stile board on the last stile at the woods. He checked the trail for more blowdowns to Double Springs Shelter.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 12/30/2024

Purpose: Rehab trail

Location: Section 4a, US421 to Double Springs Shelter, Just north of Double Springs Shelter

People: Ed Speer

Summary: Ed constructed two short trails around the first two root balls north of the shelter.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 12/30/2024

Purpose: Rehab trail and remove blowdowns

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to FS230 switchback, Iron Mountain Gap

People: Joe Morris, Van Hovey, Ken Murray, Michael Sink, Tom Sahlin

Summary: The crew worked on four root ball cavities in another of many trips to the south side of Iron Mountain Gap. We brushed in the temporary route and reestablished the trail on the original grade.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 12/30/2024

Purpose: Rehab Trail

Location: Section 12d, Bear Branch to Bishop Hollow

People: Dan Firth, Todd Gray, Gerald Scott, Tony Messina, Bob Peoples, Greg Kramer, Dennis Lewis, Jeff Hatling, Tim Stewart, Carl Fritz, Thomas Rice

Summary: We rehabbed major root ball damage. It is slow going filling 4-foot-deep holes that are over 20 feet long. We successfully pulled one root ball off the trail. We rehabbed about 60 feet and added 6 rock steps and two log steps. Another day is justified before many hikers come. Thomas Rice on his first day was given a patch for engineering a turnpike for one root ball.



Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 1/2/2025

Purpose: Cut Trees and Blowdowns

Location: Section 12d, Bear Branch to Bishop Hollow

People: Dan Firth, Tony Messina, Carl Fritz

Summary: We cut back some of already-cut blowdowns on the uphill side, cut out one switchback that had been bypassed, and cut 12-inch and 30-inch oaks whose root balls were going to destroy the trail.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 1/2/2025

Purpose: Inspect bridge

Location: Section 13, US19E to Doll Flats, Just south of 19E at Buck Creek

People: Dan Firth, Tony Messina, Carl Fritz

Summary: We inspected and mostly uncovered the bridge that washed 200 yards away in Helene. The bridge is in good shape. It was buried in rocks up to a foot in diameter, trees, and root balls. It is recoverable with considerable work.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 1/4/2025

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

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

People: Steve Domagala

Summary: I assisted USFS with tree removal.

Reporting: Joel Zabel

Date: 1/12/2025

Purpose: Explore proposed A.T. reroute around proposed salvage logging north and south of Iron Mtn Gap

Location: Section 17, One mile south and 1.1 miles north of Iron Mtn Gap

People: Yong Li, Joel Zabel

Summary: We hiked to the reroute start one mile south of Iron Mtn Gap (IMG). The first 400 yards had about a dozen blowdowns blocking the old forest road that is the reroute. We climbed through and over those, but reached the point where 80%+ of the trees were down. Due to the snow and ice coating the trunks, we turned back as we felt it: a) was too hazardous to continue to climb over them, b) could see no relief in sight, and c) our pace had slowed to about 500 yds/hour working through that mess - not enough daylight to make it north to Hwy 107 if much of the next 1.7 miles was bad. We then hiked to the northern A.T. and reroute junction, 1.1 miles north of IMG. There were many blowdowns at the reroute start, but after dropping 100 feet vertical below the ridge, it was clear. We used GPS to follow the route through mostly open woods, as much of the first 0.6 miles was not on forest roads. Some old trail was visible, but renatured by rhodos and mountain laurels. We reached the open junction with FS 53442. The next 1.1 miles south to Hwy 107 was an easy walk, as the FS had sawed it clear of Helene damage - it's 4 wheeler/ hiker ready.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 1/13/2025

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to FS230 switchback
Iron Mountain Gap

People: Franklin Tate - ATC, Todd Gray, Tim Stewart, Steve Domagala, Greg Kramer, Van Hovey, Joe Morris, Tony Messina, Randy Allen

Summary: USFS crew asked for assistance as they started the process of clearing the corridor south of Iron Mountain Gap. We shuttled to the "kiss" about a half-a-mile south of IMG to begin the cutting for the day. The crew cleared 0.3 mile in less-than-ideal conditions. There will be multiple outings to cut blowdowns, as 2.2 miles remain to reach Cherry Gap Shelter. In addition, there are going to be many challenging tread repairs in this area. Work here might be ideal for Konnarock outings. (Photo by Randy Allen)

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 1/15/2025

Purpose: Cut blowdowns

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to FS230 switchback, Cherry Gap to Cherry Gap Shelter

People: Randy Allen, Steve Domagala, Ken Murray, Joe Morris, Carl Fritz

Summary: Interesting adventure to fight our way to Cherry Gap Shelter (which we could not even quickly find because of blowdowns) in six inches of snow, and clear the A.T. to Cherry Gap.

Reporting: Carl Fritz



Date: 1/16/2025

Purpose: Cut blowdowns

Location: Section 12a, Walnut Mountain Rd to about 0.7 miles north

People: Tony Messina, Dennis Lewis CMC, Henry Kassell CMC, Art Hagar GATC

Summary: This crew finished cutting out some bad tree tangles that we bypassed on the first pass. This entire section has now been cut. CMC and even GATC members supported us. And all three earned their first time patches with TEHCC.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 1/16/2025

Purpose: Cut Blowdowns

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

People: Greg Kramer, Dennis Boone CMC, Russell Gillenwater CMC, Paul Curtin CMC

Summary: This crew removed additional blowdowns near Walnut Mtn Rd, then cleared many of the blowdowns to the water source at Mountaineer Falls Shelter. All three CMC folks earned their first time TEHCC patch.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 1/16/2025

Purpose: Cut blowdowns

Location: Section 12c, 0.2 miles south of Jones Falls to Elk River

People: Elzear Lemieux, Carl Fritz, Tim Stewart, Mike Phillips CMC, Tom Fink CMC, Rocko Smucker CMC, David Huff CMC, Wesley Kinsley CMC, Mike Knies CMC, Bill Sanderson CMC, Boyd McGinnis, Thomas Rice, Peyton Brondes, Cameron Jensen, Phetsamay Gleaves, Jeff Hatling

Summary: We cut additional trees that we bypassed on first pass so there are fewer trees to duck under and 36-inch diameter trees to crawl over. We still have another day with two sawyers about a quarter mile south of Jones Falls. We also did a little clearing of the blue-blaze to Jones Falls. If we get the first 200 feet, the blowdowns decrease. Twelve folks earned their first time patches including many from CMC.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 1/16/2025

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to FS230 switchback, Low Gap toward Cherry Gap

People: Steve Domagala, Van Hovey, Joe Morris, John Beaudet, Randy Allen, Michael Sink

Summary: Another challenging day of blowdown removal as the crew accessed the trail via Low Gap at 360.7 N and cut to 361.3 N with Brandon, Luke, Taylor and Levi of the USFS. On the surface it appears two more outings will be necessary to reach Cherry Gap Shelter at 361.7 N due to the excessive number of downed trees.

Reporting: Joel Zabel

Date: 1/17/2025

Purpose: Mark the A.T. through blowdowns to aid sawyers

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to junction with FS 230D

People: Yong Li, Joel Zabel

Summary: We hiked in from Iron Mtn Gap and tape-marked the uncleared A.T. treadway to FS 230D. There were 6 blowdown stretches ranging from 50 to 170 yds, for a total of 1/3 mile of blowdowns over the 1.6 miles of A.T. This section's maintainers, the Johnson City Hiking Club, with it's two sawyers and multiple swampers, can clear these stretches to passable once the weather warms. This would leave the TEHCC and USFS pro-sawyers to tackle tougher sections that require less hiking in.

Reporting: Joel Zabel

Date: 1/22/2025

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 17, 1.25 miles south from Iron Mtn Gap (0.75 miles south of bear box)

People: Yong Li, Joel Zabel

Summary: We hiked 0.75 miles south from the bear box through the recently cleared area until reaching the first bad blowdown area. We cleared to passable, not perfect, about 90 yards of that 140 yard bad stretch. It was a beautiful sunny day with fresh snow, over 6" in most places.