



The Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Paddling News

March 2025

Co-Editors – Terry Oldfield and Katelynn Thorne

TEHCC.org

In This Issue

[Letter from the Chair](#)

[TEHCC Dinner Meeting, April 4, 2025](#)

[Event Schedule – Next Two Months](#)

[Details of Upcoming Events](#)

[TEHCC/APEs/NOLI Wilderness Courses](#)

[Paddling Rental Program Resumes March 14](#)

[For the Record: Annual Maintainer's Dinner](#)

[ATC's Branding Update for the Centennial](#)

[Appalachian Trail - Hurricane Helene Recovery](#)

[Official A.T. Detour for the Nolichucky](#)

[TEHCC Welcomes New Members](#)

[A.T. Maintenance Reports](#)

TEHCC Handed Out 55 First-Time Volunteer Patches in 2024!



*Montage by Renee Messina
created for the Maintainer's Kickoff Dinner.*

Letter from the Chair

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

Spring is almost here, everyone! I hope y'all stayed warm during the freezing January and dry during the rainy February! As part of our usual dealings with the outdoors, rain and mud are unfortunate accompaniments, especially this time of year. So, I think some tips for hiking in the wet and the mud are probably some good topics to cover for this month.

Consider The Objective

Some of us hike for views, grand vistas overlooking the mountains and valleys. Other like chasing waterfalls or just being in the green. Sudden rain can change those plans, certainly. But, sometimes the urge to get outside is met with rain showers that day. Assuming there's no flooding or lightning, you shouldn't let that stop you (so long as it's safe)! Instead of hiking to Round Bald for the view, consider finding a waterfall to enjoy. Or take that shorter hike around that lake you've been skipping for a "better hike". Sometimes the gloom and extra water can change how it all looks, creating a unique experience.

Don't Hazard a Guess at Hazards

Rain of any volume can alter the conditions of a normally safe trail. A light rain can make normally safe rocks slick, mild rain can make lots of mud, and heavy downpours can turn tip-toe water crossings into knee-deep danger. It is important to know what the trail and its hazards are normally like and consider what they will be like given how wet it has been/will be. If you have never hiked there before, make sure to study the map and read reviews of the trail (if available) to determine the hazards or difficulties. Some waterfalls will even have signs at the trailhead indicating the dangers the falls pose, during normal and excessive flows. If kayaking or canoeing, make sure to pay attention to any news about the conditions on that body of water. It's not worth turning a benign kayaking day into an impromptu whitewater trip!

[Back to Top](#)

Muddle Through the Mud

Despite how unpleasant it can be spending all day on a muddy trail, it is often the best decision. Mainly best for the trail, that is. When on a muddy trail, it is best to actually stay in the mud. Trying to bypass it or walk around it can damage the outer parts of the trail. This will cause further erosion and damage the environment and plant communities around the trail. Some ways to make the experience more pleasant could be having waterproof hiking footwear. Hiking boots vs hiking shoes can make for a more enjoyable muddy hike, and getting some gators for your shoes can help keeping you cleaner and drier. As always, if the trail looks too dangerous with the mud, it's always fine to come back another day.

Get Good Gear

Living in NETN and SWVA, we're no stranger to rain any time of year. So, it is imperative that we gear up appropriately when recreating outside. Waterproof footwear is essential for really any time of year and type of trail. Having some good rain gear is important as well, be it a good packable poncho, a fancy rain jacket, or even just a spare trash bag to keep yourself dry. If you can, something with ventilation is great for the wet summer hikes. Wool socks are king as well, helping keep your feet warm even when wet. Other wool clothes are great too, for the same reason and wicking away the moisture. A good hiking stick or pole to keep you stable on the trail is important too, but not essential. Waterproof or not, some nice hiking pants are key too. I personally choose fishing-type pants as they are cheap, somewhat water repellent, dry quickly with lots of breathability, and are easy to clean.

I hope these tips have provided some good insight for you all. With cold temperatures still on the horizon, it is extra important to make sure you stay dry while out in the cooler, wet weather. Stay dry, stay warm, and most importantly, stay safe everyone!!

TEHCC Spring Dinner Meeting, Friday, April 4, 2025

The club would like to invite you to the 2025 TEHCC Spring Dinner. ***Make your reservation today!***

The program will feature excerpts from a recently published paperback about the 650,000-acre Cherokee National Forest giving natural and organizational history viewpoints. Part III is about the Watauga Ranger District, while Part IV covers the Unaka Ranger District. We will enjoy learning about the lands that provide natural habitats for a diverse ecosystem, hydroelectric power along with flood control, and recreation.

The Steering Committee decided on Project BBQ catering, which will be \$15/person, including the meal, beverages, dessert, and sales tax. Attending only the program is free. We need a paid headcount to properly size the food order. Please let Steering Committee Treasurer [Joseph Sengeh](#) know by Monday, March 31, if you plan to attend. Make checks payable to Joseph and mail to:

Eastman Chemical Company
200 South Wilcox Dr.
Building 162, Rm. 132, Attn. Joseph Sengeh
Kingsport, TN 37660

The club leadership will update attendees on past and upcoming activities; then present recognitions for A.T. section hike completion, hours of exemplary maintenance work, 2024 USFS service hours, and more.



CHEROKEE *National Forest*



Event	Time	Details
Spring Dinner Meeting, April 4, 2025	5:30 pm	Location: Eastman Lodge, Main Banquet Hall 404 Bays Mountain Road, Kingsport, TN
Happy "Trails" Hour	5:30 pm - 6:30 pm	Donations accepted for beer and wine, or BYOB
Dinner – Project BBQ \$15/person	6:30 pm - 7:10 pm	Four BBQ'd meats (brisket, pork, chicken, & sausage) tortillas, macaroni & cheese, BBQ beans Beverages and dessert by the Steering Committee
Club Business	7:10 pm - 7:30 pm	- Update of club activities - Awards and recognition
<i>Program: A Natural History of the Cherokee National Forest</i>	7:30 pm - 9:00 pm	Marci Spencer (Author from Old Fort, NC)

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
March 7-9	Wilderness First Responder Recertification Course	Noli Link	
March 13	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1 pm	Eric Dobbs	303-915-9208
March 15	Bays Mountain Park Trail Maintenance, 9 am – 2 pm	Tony Messina	423-677-6650
March 22-29	Wilderness First Responder Recertification Course and CPR	Noli Link	
March 29	A.T. Hike: Campbell Hollow Rd to Elk River, 10 am – 2:30 pm	Vic Hasler	423-416-3166
March 29	Nolichucky River Cleanup, 9 am – 2 pm	Andy Steffan	
April 4	Spring Dinner Meeting, 5:50 – 9 pm	Joseph Sengeh	
April 10	Steering Committee Meeting, Noon – 1 pm	Eric Dobbs	303-915-9208
April 25	Garlic Mustard Pull, Devils Creek Gap, 9 am – 2 pm	Greg Kramer	

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.

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](#)

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 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.

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.

[Back to Top](#)

Scheduled Events

AT: Campbell Hollow Road to Elk River, Saturday, March 29, 2025

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

Rating: *Medium 5-mile round trip hike with 700' elevation change each way*

The objective of this in-and-out hike is to show club members (plus their family and friends) the damage to the Appalachian Trail caused by Hurricane Helene, including blowdowns, rootball holes, and significant erosion along Elk River. This trail section was opened up by four worktrips between early December and mid-January. Let's leave from Colonial Heights (Ingles parking area) at 9 am for the roughly one-hour drive (alternative pick-up locations can be arranged). Otherwise meet at the parking area on Campbell Hollow Road by 10 am. We'll hike northbound on the Appalachian Trail to reach Elk River turnaround. We can decide whether to take the blue-blaze to see Jones Falls.

Sturdy footwear and clothing layers appropriate for the weather are recommended. Pack a lunch/snack plus water to stay hydrated. We plan to be back at the vehicles around 2:30 pm and back to Colonial Heights around 3:30 pm. For further information and to let us know of your interest, please call/e-mail the hike leader.

Garlic Mustard Pull, Devil's Creek Gap, Friday, April 25, 2025, 9 am – 2 pm

Contact: [Greg Kramer](#)

The club and ATC continue to diminish the seed bank for garlic mustard growing in Devil's Creek Gap along the Appalachian Trail. We're removing this invasive species to protect desirable wildflowers in the area, such as showy orchids, blue cohosh, gay wings (fringed polygala), jack-in-the-pulpit, and black cohosh. Please join us at the location starting at 9:00 am or carpool from Kingsport (I-26, Exit 6 Rock Springs Rd). Either way, please let Greg Kramer know you're coming. Rain back-up date is Saturday, April 26.

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 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](#).

Paddling Rental Program Resumes March 14, 2025



Submitted by Andy Steffan

As the cold weather gets left behind soon, we can look forward to fun on the water. The Eastman Rec area at Bays Mountain is reopening March 14th, and the paddling rental program will resume then also. Our paddling fleet includes one canoe, four sit-in kayaks, three sit-on-top kayaks, and a trailer to haul multiple boats. All are stored at the Eastman Rec area at Bays Mountain. [This link](#) will take you to all the details on the fleet, rental options and process, and some common put-ins. Rentals through the club allow you the flexibility to take the boats wherever you'd like for a full day of fun, which not too many other local rental places (if any) will allow.

For the Record: Annual Maintainer's Dinner, February 21

Submitted by Renee Messina

The kickoff meeting for the 2025 A.T. maintenance season was held on Friday, February 21, at the Eastman Lodge. Seventy trail maintainers and other individuals interested in helping to care for the Appalachian Trail attended the event. Dinner featured Phil's Dream Pit barbecue with various sides, as well as assorted beverages and desserts, including Ed Oliver's famous banana pudding. Following dinner, the program covered topics that included 2024 accomplishments, 2025 major project plans, and discussion of

[Back to Top](#)

various issues related to TEHCC's trail maintaining responsibilities. USFS partners, Brandon Church and Tyler Neigh, were presented plaques to recognize their collaborative spirit; especially as the club works to recover from the effects of Hurricane Helene. In addition, 34 individuals were recognized for having reached milestone volunteer-hours during 2024.



Cumulative Hour Award Recipients 2024:

50 Career Hours – Josh Banks, Sharon Begley, Steve Domagala, Ruthie Edwards, Joe Gervais, Todd Gray, Tracy Harris, Sherri Millard, Wes Miller, Cheryl Ramsey, Michael Sink, Heather Waldroup

100 Career Hours – Randy Allen, Jon Heidrick, Jeff Miller, Rick Mulholland

250 Career Hours – David Allen, Jennifer Baird, Carl Belcher, Bettye Boone, Scott Huskey, Yong Li, Jim McGuire

500 Career Hours – Gerald Scott

1000 Career Hours – Renée Messina

1500 Career Hours – Scotty Bowman, Van Hovey

2000 Career Hours – Tony Messina, Steve Wilson

4000 Career Hours – Jim Foster, Steve Perri

5000 Career Hours – Joe Morris

7000 Career Hours – Tim Stewart

11,000 Career Hours – Bob Peoples

It takes a lot of work to maintain 134 miles of the A.T. Many thanks to all of the volunteers who signed up to maintain a section of our trail in 2024, with a special shout-out to our newest section maintainers, Steve Domagala, Tracy Harris, Yong Li, and Steve Mahan.

Attending the meeting were: Randy Allen, Juliane Arnold, Dean Baird, Jennifer Baird, Josh Banks, Adam Bean, John Beaudet, Sharon Begley, Carl Belcher, Paul Benfield, Scotty Bowman, Ed Brading, Phyllis Caines, Richard Carter, Brandon Church, Robin Dean, Karla Domagala, Steve Domagala, Ruthie Edwards, Dan Firth, Jim Foster, Stacy Fowler, Carl Fritz, Joe Gervais, Matthew Gilbert, Craig Haire, Tracy Harris, Vic Hasler, Jon Heidrick, Carrie Hovey, Van Hovey, Aaron Huskey, Scott Huskey, Pat Kenney, Megan Krager, Greg Kramer, Jerry Kyle, Elzear Lemieux, Emily Lemieux, Dennis Lewis, Yong Li, Steve Mahan, Jeff Marek, Renée Messina, Tony Messina, Jeff Miller, Wes Miller, Lori Mirrer, Helga Mitchell, Joe Morris, Ted Mowery, Bill Murdoch, Taylor Neigh, Ed Oliver, Bob Peoples, Rich Ritter, Tom Sahlin, Eric Scott, Gerald Scott, Brandy Sink, Michael Sink, Tim Stewart, Franklin Tate, Rolla Wade, Harold Wexler, Carol Whittington, Dennis Whittington, Steve Wilson, Joel Zabel, Joy Zabel.

ATC's Branding Update for the Centennial

Submitted by Vic Hasler

For the Centennial Celebration in 2025, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy has updated its vision and brand for their dedication to the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.



New vision for the next century: A protected, resilient, and connected Trail and surrounding A.T. landscape for all.

A new motto/tagline: Keep the Trail Alive!

A new logo shown on the left. Can you find these elements within the design?

1. A.T. symbol at the heart of our work
2. Spade shovel for the work of volunteers integral to maintaining the treadway
3. Mountain peak representing diverse landscapes from the green tunnel to mountain peaks
4. Leaves of growth and biodiversity being conserved along the important corridor
5. A protected ring for the treadway and connected lands surrounding the Trail

The celebration also has some new arrivals in the [ATC Trail Store](#): Keep the trail alive ceramic mug, 100th Anniversary topo t-shirt, 100th Anniversary patch, and ATC new brand patch.

[Back to Top](#)

Appalachian Trail - Hurricane Helene Recovery Update

Current Status

The closure notice for the Appalachian Trail ([link to Forest Order# 08-11-08-25-01](#)) designates that within the Appalachian Ranger District (ARD) of the Pisgah National Forest (PNF, North Carolina), the trail from Indian Grave to to Hughes Gap (A.T. NOBO mileage 352.9 to 374.2) continues to remain **officially closed**. While the Tennessee Eastman Hiking & Canoeing Club (TEHCC) is making progress on clearing a path through this section, excessive downed timber is slated for removal north and south of Iron Mountain Gap. Thus hikers are not to be in those areas for safety reasons. A shuttle will be required if a temporary bypass is not in place. Warning signs will be displayed during the actual removal effort with potential enforcement action for those who do not heed the warning.

An official 3.6 mile road-walk detour (refer to the separate article in this newsletter) **has been established around the destroyed Chestoa Pike Bridge over Nolichucky River**. It is now part of the Appalachian Trail until the bridge is replaced. FEMA announced in early February that \$9.77M has been funded to replace the bridge ([link](#)). Please be careful as the roads are not hiker-friendly. There are no sidewalks with vehicle traffic on some sections.

While most of the A.T. is "Open," it does not mean it is completely safe and/or cleared to all locations. The focus has been on the primary path, so blue-blaze side trails to water sources may not be readily passable. Dead trees will continue to fall. Please watch out for hazard trees at bridges, shelters, campsites, and water sources; and report any to the club and/or forest service for priority removal. Also, please clear at least 10-15 feet around campfire rings as dead brush and trees have become a fire hazard.

Continuing Efforts

Per club records, from the first of October to mid-February over 5,500 volunteer hours have been spent on recovery efforts. We wish to thank the many volunteers, including the experienced maintainers from other A.T. clubs and from the Johnson City Hiking Club. The focus remains on opening the A.T. for section and thru-hikers, while a subsequent priority is to remove blowdowns from key campsites, around shelters, and on blue-blaze trails to water. The club will also be repairing the deep holes in the tread caused by the many rootballs pulled out of the ground. However, some work will be delayed until warmer spring weather arrives.

Pond Mountain Wilderness between Dennis Cove Road and US321 is now open except for up on Pond Flats. In March, experienced crosscut sawyers will tackle opening what is needed for hikers. Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS) will focus on the remaining five miles within Big Laurel Branch Wilderness (one mile south of Vandeventer Shelter to the northern wilderness boundary).

While TEHCC continues regular weekly crews with some weekend trips, the decision was made to limit event size until April due to the winter weather. We are also suggesting that groups, such as scouts, stay off the Appalachian Trail between Interstate 40 and Virginia, but instead, enjoy public lands to the west.

Official A.T. Detour for the Nolichucky River

Revised and submitted by Vic Hasler

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

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy is sharing these precautions:

- There is heavy truck traffic on Unaka Spring Rd/River Rd due to repairs to the railroad upstream. The road is narrow with no shoulder.
- Walk on the left side of the road when possible, facing traffic.
- Wear bright colors and a 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. Walk 0.5 mile to Temple Hill Rd/TN 36, past Uncle Johnny's Hostel.
- Turn right on Temple Hill Rd. Follow for 0.8 mile to the Jackson Love Highway.
- Turn right on Jackson Love Highway and follow for 0.5 mile 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 mile 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.



[Back to Top](#)

TEHCC Welcomes New Members

Alexander Croft
Ana Davis

Md Mostafa
Kelson Anderson

Brooke Coggins
Steve Bradford

Dennis Whittington



A.T. Maintenance Reports

Maintenance stats from Jeff Sirola for Helene Recovery, 9/30/24 to 2/15/25

Miles Cleared: 77.6 (58%)

Cumulative Hours: 5549

Chainsaw Hours: 738

Total Events: 133

Fixes for Attachments to TEHCC.org Trail Maintenance Reporting Form

Tim Schaefer has found a fix for the abandoned WordPress plugin which was used to save maintenance submissions to a database; then allowed queries for the recent A.T. Maintenance page and the creation of Maintenance Reports for the club newsletter. Up to four attachments (restricted to images, TXT files, and PDFs of up to 5 MB in size) can be submitted. Many cell phone photos exceed the maximum size; so you may need to resize the attachments before you submit. If using Windows, Tim suggests a way to resize multiple photos.

1. Select the photos you'd like to resize.
2. Select "Send To". (May need to select "Show More Options" first)
3. Select "Mail Recipient".
4. Select the size you'd like the photos to be; Smaller, Small, Medium, Large (this one should be suitable).
5. Click the "Attach" button. This action will attach the photos to an email, ready to be sent. **But don't send it.**
6. Right-click one of the attached photos and select "Select All"
7. Copy and paste back to a desired files folder to save as a resized image and delete the draft email
8. Use the resized versions to include in your maintenance submission.

If you encounter any problems with the reporting form, please contact Tim at webmaster@tehcc.org.

Maintainers Rick Mulholland and Jim McGuire are beginning their 2025 A.T. thru hikes.

We wish them a safe journey.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 1/23/2025

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

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

People: Randy Allen, Steve Domagala, Joe Morris

Summary: We cleared only 0.1 mile today to 361.4. There were an overwhelming number of rootball cavities and it was difficult staying on the tread covered in snow. USFS will be back on site Monday, 1/27, with the ATC crew joining on Tuesday, 1/28. (Photos by Randy Allen.)



[Back to Top](#)

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 1/25/2025

Purpose: Repair water crossings

Location: Section 13, US19E to slightly above Wilder Mine camping area

People: Jon Heidrick, Rick Lott, Bob Peoples, Tim Stewart, Bill Murdoch, Kent Wilson, Michael Sink, Michael Watts, Jeff Hatling, Dan Firth, Karen Yates, Gerald Scott, Carl Fritz, Jim McGuire

Summary: We finished the two locust bridges near the Wilder Mine campsite that we had started a couple of weeks before the hurricane. The new upper bridge, we leveled the walking surface and fastened the two logs together with threaded rods. The replacement bridge below Wilder Mine campsite, we completely redid the handrail. We put two locust posts into the ground (no small task with the frozen ground about 16" deep). And many worked on the Buck Creek stream crossing near 19E where the bridge was washed away in the hurricane. They added more rock steps in the banks and improved the rock steps in the stream. It looks like it should hold up awhile. Karen, as a first timer, helped with the rock work and earned her patch!

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 1/25/2025

Purpose: Cut blowdowns

Location: Section 12d, Campbell Hollow Road to US19E, Just north of Bear Branch

People: Jon Heidrick, Rick Lott

Summary: Jon and Rick cleared the multiple trees that came down in the first switchback north of Bear Branch Bridge.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 1/25/2025

Purpose: Blaze Nolichucky detour

Location: Section 19b, Curley Maple Gap Shelter to Nolichucky River, Erwin, TN

People: Tim Stewart, Carrie Hovey, Van Hovey

Summary: Since the Chestoa Bridge was destroyed during Hurricane Helene, a detour through Erwin is necessary to cross the Nolichucky River. It is an additional 3.6 mile road walk. Carrie and I met about 11:00 and began blazing with vinyl blazes that Carl provided. We started at Uncle Johnny's and spaced them out on power poles. We also painted some on guard rails and on backs of signs. Van arrived at about 1:00 and joined the blazing fun. We used all the vinyl blazes and then created some out of aluminum that was found. We also posted the laminated detour route at the trailheads. There is a lot of ongoing construction traffic near Uncle Johnny's. Hikers should use caution.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 1/25/2025

Purpose: Cut blowdowns

Location: Section 12c, Elk River to 0.5 mile south of Jones Falls

People: Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Tony Messina, Gerald Scott

Summary: This was the third pass in much of this zone; but we cut a lot of head-highs and 140-year-old oaks. This zone is fairly passable now, but there are many rootball holes that will not hold up to much foot traffic. So, there is a lot of future work here.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 1/25/2025

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

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

People: Joy Zabel, Joel Zabel, Yong Li, Joe Morris, Steve Domagala

Summary: It was a cold start, but turned into a beautiful winter day. The Zabel's pressed on toward the Cherry Gap Shelter, lopping, removing debris, and flagging. The rest of the crew cut several obstacles. The snow is significant near the 363 overlook. Many return trips will be required to clear the section.

Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 1/26/2025

Purpose: Assess section

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

People: Van Hovey, Carrie Hovey

Summary: Today was an assessment day. We have not inspected our section since the last work was done on it post Helene. We started at Chestoa and hiked to the second switch back, about 3.1 miles. Other than a couple of simple blowdowns on the Jones Branch section and one 8-foot rootball, minor issue, the trail is in good condition. We did not encounter anyone else on the trail. On the walk out, we used the road from USA Raft back to Chestoa. We will revisit the trail shortly to perform the necessary inspection and maintenance of the shelter, and cover the mile we didn't cover today, as well as dispensing the blowdowns. Nice crisp day to be out Cheers.

[Back to Top](#)

Reporting: Joel Zabel

Date: 1/27/2025

Purpose: Mark trail location

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

People: Joel Zabel

Summary: To aid sawyers, I attempted to identify the precise location of the A.T. treadway south from Cherry Gap Shelter through very dense blowdowns. There was eight inches of snow and no standing trees with blazes, which made the task next to impossible, even while checking GPS continually. I placed tape where I thought the trail was for the first 60 yards, but fear some of it is off trail. I stopped placing tape until I definitely found the trail 260 yards south of the shelter. That stretch was the worst of any I've seen from Helene. I ran into Brandon Church and Taylor from USFS, and Steve Domagala, sawing northbound about 500 yards south of the shelter.

Reporting: Greg Kramer

Date: 1/28/2025

Purpose: Clear trail

Location: Section 17, Between Cherry Knob Gap and Iron Mountain

People: Greg Kramer

Summary: I swamped for the Forest Service. We started north of Cherry Gap Shelter and went to mile mark 360.3, where Iron Mountain trail was cleared. There was a large tree and rootball nearly in the switchback. The new switchback doesn't look easy unless a lot of steps are added. A tree rootball was half on the trail. I talked to Brandon about the possibility of cutting the tree short and Grip-Hoisting the rootball uphill.

Reporting: Jon Heidrick

Date: 1/29/2025

Purpose: Storm cleanup

Location: Section 12d, Campbell Hollow Road to US19E, Just across Bear Branch Creek

People: Jon Heidrick

Summary: I swamped blowdowns on the first switchback after Bear Branch Creek bridge. Sawyers will be needed to complete this section.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 1/30/2025

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

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

People: Joe Morris, Van Hovey, Heather Hendrix, Dean Baird, Nola Privett, Steve Domagala, Randy Allen, Dennis Lewis

Summary: Bit by bit, the crews get closer to connecting the trail north of Cherry Gap Shelter. Steve, Randy, and Dennis helped Brandon and the USFS crew cut the last stretch to the shelter, cut the debris off the structure, and clean several tent areas. Plus, they pressed north to 362.1. The southbound crew began the day hiking from 364.1, and cut to 362.6 within half a mile of the USFS crews. Challenges remain - but thankfully Joel, Joy, and Yong eliminated a tedious step in the process having flagged the tread location. Nola came from South Carolina to participate and received the club patch.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 1/30/2025

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

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

People: Carolina Mountain Club: John Beaudet, Dennis Boone, Boyd Mc Ginnis, Rocko Smucker, Paul Curtin, David Jones, Sarah Robinson, Cameron Jensen, Ken Murray

Summary: Ken, Sarah, and Boyd went in at Spivey Gap and worked their way north to Devils Creek Gap, clearing the last of the storm damage. The rest of the crew drove to the end of Granny Lewis Road and walked to Temple Hill Gap. Turning north on the A.T., the crew cleared one mile beyond the earlier work of the USFS. Paul Curtin scouted another mile north of the crew's end point and found one decent-sized blowdown that was "easy-enough" to get over. Possibly, a small section just south of No Business Knob Shelter needs to be cleared. However, it is quite likely that the trail is "clear" to Chestoa. Thanks to CMC for completing the work in this section. (Photos, next page, posted by CMC)



Reporting: Tony Messina

Date: 1/30/2025

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 5, TN91 to Iron Mountain Shelter, South from TN91 for 2.5 miles

People: Tony Messina, Greg Kramer, Dave Allen, Kent Gardner

Summary: Our merry subset of the larger Thursday crew cleared a blowdown tangle about 1.4 miles south of TN91. That tangle had been bypassed previously with a temporary flagged bypass. We accessed the trail about a mile south of TN91 from the gated road along Cross Mtn Road. It started out as a beautiful winter day, sunny but cold, as we trudged up through about 8 inches of snow. However, warmer temperatures with rain were promised by the end of the day. Along the way, Tony and Dave cut out a 20-inch, head-high, duck-under tree spanning the trail from a large double trunk rootball which had been bypassed previously at about MM 449.3. Greg and Kent proceeded on and began clearing the tangle which was at MM 448.4. Both pairs cleared a few stepovers and side-encroaching trees along the way. Tony and Dave eventually joined the other pair before lunch and helped clear the tangle. At lunch, a day-hiker informed us of another tangle about a mile farther south. Greg and Kent went after the distant tangle while Tony and David finished the work at 448.4. About 16 trees were cut altogether. On the way out, Tony and David hiked out to TN91 and cut out a couple of small chest-high blowdowns. Kent and Greg returned via the gated road to their cars and everyone was out just before the rain moved in. A very successful day.

Reporting: Phyllis Cairnes

Date: 1/30/2025

Purpose: Maintain shelter

Location: Section 4a, US421 to Double Springs Shelter, Double Springs shelter

People: Deb Helmer, Lori Krause, Phyllis Cairnes

Summary: It was a gorgeous day, although the 4-6 inches of snow on the ground caught us by surprise. With the warm temps, we slogged and slipped to Double Springs Shelter. There were a lot of small limbs collected for firewood under the roof overhang. Someone had also built a fire there, obviously a risk to the shelter. We removed all the wood, picked up trash, painted the graffiti board, and exchanged the logbook for a new one. The firepit was covered in snow, so we left shoveling that for next time. One small dilemma: there are two sizeable heavy vinyl tarps on the shelter floor; too heavy and unwieldy to carry out. If someone has a recommendation for how to remove those, please let me know.

Reporting: Scotty Bowman

Date: 2/1/2025

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 10: Hampton trailhead to Dennis Cove Road

People: Scotty Bowman, Michael Appleby, Daniel Appleby, Tyler Cairnes, Chris Bowman, Nyal Barber

Summary: It was the perfect day to be out clearing blowdowns. We made our way to Laurel Falls from the Hampton trailhead and were able to clear four trees blocking the trail and a section of one big oak that was within 4 feet of the the second bridge. The 2.7-mile stretch from Hampton to the falls is clear.

Reporting: Joel Zabel

Date: 2/1/2025

Purpose: Remove blowdowns and flag small detours

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to Low Gap

People: Adam Bean, Joel Zabel, Joy Zabel

Summary: The Johnson City Hiking Club hiked from Iron Mtn Gap to Low Gap to see the remarkable recent progress made by TEHCC, USFS, and the ATC sawyers. Several of us focused on clearing the few remaining, short, uncleared stretches of the 1/2 mile between 362.1 and 362.6. Using a Katanaboy saw and loppers, we made the trail passable, not perfect, for those with large packs.

[Back to Top](#)

Chain sawing is still required, but it is not urgent. JCHC and our two sawyers can go back to finish off what remains in the next week, if TEHCC and USFS want to focus on other important areas of need. Through-hikers can now make it from Unaka Mtn to Iron Mtn Gap at a close to normal pace - not long ago, a seemingly improbable feat for months to come. We also flagged with orange tape the small detours around rootballs and avoidable blowdown clusters, so hikers know the safest, shortest ways through. The shelter water source trail had been sawed, but was unmarked and not intuitive, so we flagged it and temporarily marked it at the A.T. intersection. We'll go back and mark it officially on our next visit. One small silver lining: pre-Helene, one had to walk the 40+ yards downhill before seeing if the water was flowing; now with all the trees down, one can stand near the shelter and see water pouring out from the white PVC pipe.

Reporting: Van Hovey

Date: 2/2/2025

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

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

People: Van Hovey, Carrie Hovey

Summary: Our primary objective was to remove blowdowns, scouted and reported several days ago. We removed one 20" crawl-over, another 14" crawl-over, and a couple of small overheads. When we got back to USA Raft, we decided to clear the blue-blaze access trail of five more blowdowns ranging in size from 10-14" and a rash of entangled brush. Nice day to be out Cheers

Reporting: Vic Hasler

Date: 2/3/2025

Purpose: TEHCC A.T. Committee Meeting

Location: Eastman Recreation Center

People: David Allen, Dan Firth, Carl Fritz, Tracy Harris, Vic Hasler, Greg Kramer, Renee Messina, Tony Messina, Joe Morris, Bob Peoples, Steve Perri, Andy Steffan, Tim Stewart, Steve Wilson

Summary: A well-attended club A.T. Committee meeting focused on the four topics of bridge repairs, Helene recovery (including volunteer engagement), license-plate grant applications, and the upcoming Maintainers' Kickoff dinner. The existing washed-out 22-foot bridge south of US19E cannot accommodate the wider stream; thus options are being discussed with the Forest Service. Remaining Helene recovery tasks include Iron Mtn Gap reroute, clearing blowdowns on Pond Mtn and Big Laurel Branch wilderness, repairing rootball holes, and removing dead trees from around shelters and preferred camping sites. Due to winter conditions, the volunteer engagement model will be modified to manage crew sizes and purposes. A.T. license-plate grants are being filed for first-time volunteer patches, Osborne Farm mowing, and supplies supporting Helene recovery. The committee will compile a list of shelter and trail repairs for monetary support by ATC's Resiliency Fund, to be submitted at the Southern Partnership Meeting in March. Training topics for the February 21st Maintainers Kickoff dinner will reflect follow-up tasks for the A.T. and camping areas, such as hazard tree identification. The next TEHCC A.T. Committee meeting is scheduled for June 23.

Reporting: Jeff Miller

Date: 2/3 and 2/4/2025

Purpose: Post-Helene maintenance

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to Cherry Gap

People: Jeff Miller

Summary: I cleared the trail as a follow-up to work done by sawyers.

Reporting: Scott Huskey

Date: 2/5/2025

Purpose: Routine Maintenance

Location: Section 4b, Double Springs Shelter to TN91

People: Scott Huskey

Summary: I picked up some left-behind camping gear at the shelter, cleaned the front gutter, and swept the pine needles and branches off the roof (Eddie Spears had already cleaned the rear gutter the day before). On the return back to Cross Mountain, I cleaned two diversions. The final thing I did was to work on filling a hole in the trail caused by a rootball. Using rocks and dirt, I got about six inches of fill in the hole. I plan to return to add another six inches at a later date. All things considered, this section of the trail is in good shape for hiking.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 2/5/2025

Purpose: Rootball cavity rehab

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to FS230 switchback, Right Fork - "The Kiss"

People: Steve Domagala, Joe Morris

Summary: We rehabbed three significant rootball cavities (60 feet total) and installed temporary detour signage on Right Fork/John Goodin Road for northbound hikers.



[Back to Top](#)

Reporting: Joel Zabel

Date: 2/5/2025

Purpose: Clear blowdowns

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to FS230 switchback, Mile 362.1 to 362.6

People: Yong Li, Jeff Miller, Joel Zabel

Summary: We punched through that 0.5 mile of trail on our section that had yet to see a chainsaw. There were three blowdown clusters of 40 to 60 yards long; nothing too tricky or over 18 inches. But at least a hundred cuts were needed. Yong sawed through it all efficiently without a problem. The original trail tread was followed closely. There were no major rootballs to repair; just a few small, shallow ones to tidy up. They are easy to hike through now. It's ready for the NOBOs, with nothing to stop them from Unaka Mtn to Iron Mtn Gap. I didn't think I'd be saying that a few months ago. It would be helpful, however, to place temporary reroute signs at IMG and at the bear box where Bean Creek Road and the A.T. almost touch. This would avoid confusion when hikers use Bean Creek Road for the 0.5-mile detour.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 2/5/2025

Purpose: Scout trail and check conditions

Location: Section 16a, Greasy Creek Gap to Little Rock Knob

People: Jim Foster

Summary: The trail has been cut out from GCG to LRK. There are several rootballs to repair. Clyde Smith Shelter survived with the exception of a small tear on one rear corner. The campsites and water trail remain to be cut out and made accessible.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 2/6/2025

Purpose: Cut blowdowns around the shelter

Location: Section 16a, Greasy Creek Gap to Clyde Smith Shelter

People: Yong Li, Jim Foster

Summary: We traveled to Clyde Smith Shelter and cleared all the blowdowns on the water trail. We also cleared everything around the shelter and cut as much as possible behind the shelter where the tent sites are. We then proceeded to clear up odds and ends as we hiked out.

Reporting: Jeff Hatling

Date: 2/7/2025

Purpose: Inspect trail and springs

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

People: Jeff Hatling

Summary: I removed by hand and handsaw numerous downed branches. I checked the Yellow Mountain Gap old barn site. Both springs are flowing. The lower spring has a large blowdown over the top of the spring. It is very large and will be difficult to remove. It looks like when it falls, many years from now, it will fall off to the side of the spring. I checked the camp area. The privy looks good. I picked up a small amount of trash. I also checked the Stan Murray Shelter. It is in good shape. I picked up trash and re-installed the springs piping system. There was good flow at the spring after the re-building.

I inventoried needed sawyer work. Around mile 386, three blowdowns over the trail need to be removed. Around mile 385, one blowdown over trail needs to be removed and a rootball hole needs to be filled. Southbound from the Stan Murray shelter near mile 384, two blowdowns need to be removed. I hand-sawed on those blowdowns and around the blowdowns to assist hikers over or around the blowdowns.

A large tent and trash needs to be hauled out at mile 383.4. I did not have the capacity in my backpack to haul it out, and it was too large to carry. I turned around at the intersection of the A.T. with the Grassy Ridge Trail. Photos will be sent to Renee.

Reporting: Steve Wilson

Date: 2/7/2025

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 3, McQueen's Gap to McQueens Knob Shelter

People: Ed Speer, Steve Wilson

Summary: The plan was to start cutting blowdowns at McQueens Gap hiking south; but first we had to use the chainsaw to cut three blowdowns and open the Forest Service road leading to the trailhead. Once we reached the gap, we hiked to McQueen's Knob Shelter and cut away the fallen trees that surround the shelter. Luckily the emergency shelter was undamaged by the recent storms and remains a novel place for hikers to camp. We saw one section-hiker headed south who reported no major obstructions north to the TN/VA state line.

[Back to Top](#)

Reporting: Jon Heidrick

Date: 2/7/2025

Purpose: Fix storm damage

Location: Section 12d, Campbell Hollow Road to US19E Switchbacks, Above Bear Branch

People: Jon Heidrick

Summary: I repaired the treadway and filled rootballs.

Reporting: Dean Baird

Date: 2/8/2025

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 9b, Pond Flats to Hampton trailhead, A.T. from blue-blaze intersection to the spring

People: Dean Baird, Jennifer Baird

Summary: We removed nine blowdowns that measured 5-12" in diameter using handsaws. Some of the blowdowns required multiple cuts. We also documented the remaining trees that were down with references to trail mileage (this is supplemental to the information from Tony and Tim's previous trip). Two of the remaining blowdowns are red oaks that measure 20" and 27" in diameter. We viewed the forest obliteration on top and walked the temporary reroute. We also collected and removed a bag of trash. This was a beautiful day for working on the trail.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/8/2025

Purpose: Rehab rootball damage

Location: Section 12c, Elk River to Jones Falls

People: Dan Firth, Jim McGuire, Elzear Lemieux, Carl Fritz, Karen Yates, Tony Messina, Tracy Harris, Deni Hurrula, Gerald Scott, Bill Murdoch, Jordan Fricke, Nola Versfelt

Summary: Primarily, we repaired the damage from five rootballs, replaced some locust steps, and side-logged a bad rooty area to cover with about 7 inches of soil. Tony cut side-logs and steps, plus cut back some of the protruding logs. Slowly, we are making the trail more walkable. Deni Hurrula, Nola Versfelt, and Jordan Fricke earned their first timer's patch. Jordan drove all the way from NW Ohio for this event!



Reporting: Joe Morris

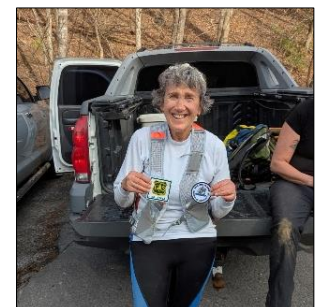
Date: 2/8/2025

Purpose: Rehab rootball cavities

Location: Section 12d, Campbell Hollow Road to US19E, Bear Branch

People: Joe Morris, Sue Bonito, Randy Allen, Heather Waldroup, Tim Stewart, Dennis Whittington, Michael Sink, Steve Domagala

Summary: The crew worked on five rootball cavities, completed four with locust crib and made the fifth passable. There's additional work in the area for a small crew, but not a priority. The area is clear to the south side of Bishop Hollow. Sue Bonito received the club patch. (Photos by Steve Domagala)



[Back to Top](#)

Reporting: Craig Haire

Date: 2/9/2025

Purpose: Repair overlook seat

Location: Section 20a, Nolichucky River to Temple Hill Gap, One mile from north end

People: Craig Haire, Helga Mitchell

Summary: On the first Nolichucky overlook south of Chestoa, there is a seat of logs stacked in log cabin fashion. We tried to secure the logs to each other with lag bolts and seated the bottom two logs in shallow trenches dug with a Pulaski. We were only able to make 6 of the 12 connections needed. It is hoped the project can be completed in another trip. There is a splendid view from the seat upstream on the Nolichucky.

Uncle Johnny's hostel is being reconstructed and is coming along nicely. We saw only one day hiker on the trail

Reporting: Jeff Miller

Date: 2/9/2025

Purpose: Post-Helene maintenance

Location: Section 17, Iron Mountain Gap to Cherry Gap

People: Adam Bean, Stacy Fowler, Jeff Miller

Summary: We cleared the trail as follow-up to the major work done by sawyers.

Reporting: Jeff Miller

Date: 2/10/2025

Purpose: Post-Helene maintenance

Location: Section 17, Cherry Gap to Cherry Gap Shelter

People: Jeff Miller

Summary: I cleared the trail as follow-up to the major work done by sawyers.

Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/10/2025

Purpose: Set up water-height measurement for Buck Creek

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

People: Carl Fritz, Mary Jane Fritz

Summary: With approaching heavy rains, we set up a crude device to measure the maximum water height in Buck Creek.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 2/13/2025

Purpose: Repair rootballs

Location: Section 16a, Greasy Creek Gap to trail north 0.5 mile

People: Yong Li, Jim Foster

Summary: Yong and I were able to repair five rootballs before we gave out and it started to get dark. There are still several more to repair since we only covered the first half-mile of our section.

Reporting: Joe Morris

Date: 2/13/2025

Purpose: Assessment for Hardcore

Location: Section 1, Damascus to Backbone Rock

People: Steve Domagala, Randy Allen

Summary: Randy and Steve started in Damascus and hiked to Backbone Rock looking for rehab opportunities. The trail was generally in good shape. There is one gnarly blowdown that is easy to navigate.

Reporting: Joe C Morris

Date: 2/13/2025

Purpose: Rehab trail and construct steps

Location: Section 12d, Campbell Hollow Road to US19E, Bear Branch

People: Elzear Lemieux, Greg Kramer, Carl Fritz, Michael Sink, Tim S 7 2tewart, Bob Peoples, Bill Murdoch, Tony Messina, Joe Morris

Summary: Tony fell a large locust, and Bill worked his MacGyver magic. We placed an approximately 30-foot crib across a large rootball cavity. Another 20-foot crib with two locust steps was created and an additional rootball was mitigated. The crew also attempted to break a large rock outcrop - additional work is required.

Reporting: Steve Wilson

Date: 2/14/2025

Purpose: Remove blowdowns and brush at shelter's water trail

Location: Section 2b, McQueen's Gap to Abingdon Gap Shelter

[Back to Top](#)

People: Ed Speer, Steve Wilson

Summary: The purpose of this maintenance trip was to clean up the blue-blaze water trail at the Abingdon Gap Shelter. In a previous outing, the upper portion was cleared; but this trip targeted the large blowdowns and entanglements near the spring. Ed and I cleared out the brush and smaller blowdowns, but had to leave five 18" to 30" diameter oak-tree blowdowns that require ducking under or crawling over. Plans are to organized a multi-sawyer outing in the future to clear these, since there is a good chance of saw binding and complications when cutting these large blowdowns. The trail is in good shape from McQueen's Gap to the shelter.

Reporting: Yong Li

Date: 2/14/2025

Purpose: Repair rootball holes

Location: Section 16b, Greasy Creek Gap to Iron Mountain Gap, Within 0.5 miles of Greasy Creek Gap

People: Yong Li

Summary: I reinforced some fixes we did earlier, and rehabed another two. We still have about 7 rootball holes that need to be worked on in this location. Some will be easy, but some will require quite a bit of work.

Reporting: Jim Foster

Date: 2/17/2025

Purpose: Repair rootballs

Location: Section 16a, 0.5 mile north of Greasy Creek Gap

People: Yong Li, Jim Foster

Summary: Yong and I were able to repair four more root balls on a cold snowy day. There are still several more to go, but we're making progress.

Reporting: Scott Huskey

Date: 2/18/2025

Purpose: Repair trail, fill in rootball damage

Location: Section 4b, Double Springs Shelter to TN91, ~Mile 451

People: Scott Huskey, Ed Spears

Summary: Ed and I finished repairing damage to the trail caused by a large rootball. Using five-gallon buckets, we hauled rock and dirt to the hole, dumped it in, and compacted it until we had a reasonably smooth trail through that point. Given the slope here, a water diversion might be required. I will monitor and see if erosion impacts this point in the trail.

Reporting: Tim Stewart

Date: 2/18/2025

Purpose: Helene recovery

Location: Section 6, Turkey Pen Gao to Iron Mountain Shelter

People: Tim Stewart, Kent Gardner, Peyton Brondos, Randy Allen, Greg Kramer

Summary: We met Brandon and Taylor at the Blue Hole parking area. We then loaded into 2 UTVs and drove on a Forest Service Road to Turkey Pen Gap. The road was an adventure! From Turkey Pen Gap, we hiked to the Iron Mountain Shelter water source while removing blowdowns. There were a bunch of tangles, but it wasn't too bad. The treadway is mostly ok as well. There is some rootball damage but nothing critical. With the exception of the Wilderness Areas, this basically completed the initial punch through. It was a good day that started cold and sunny, and then ended cold and cloudy. (Photo by Randy Allen)



Reporting: Joe Morris

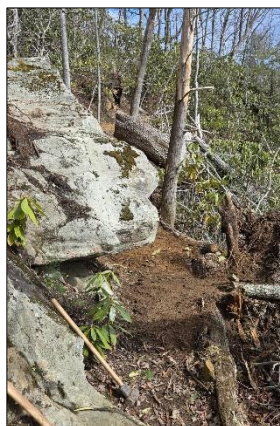
Date: 02/18/2025

Purpose: Clear blowdowns at Mountaineer Falls

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

People: Joe Morris, Jon Heidrick, Todd Gray, Gerald Scott, Boyd McGinnis, Tony Messina, Jeff Hatling, Bill Murdoch

Summary: This crew continued to clear around Mountaineer Falls Shelter, including the removal a one hazard tree. The water access trail was cleared and rehabbed to the upper falls. In addition, the crew cleared both tent areas, reestablishing around fourteen sites for camping. Comments regarding the improvements were added to the Far-Out app. (See photos, next page)



Reporting: Carl Fritz

Date: 2/18/2025

Purpose: Repair rootballs

Location: Section 12d, Campbell Hollow Road to US19E, Switchbacks north of Bear Branch

People: Dan Firth, Carl Fritz

Summary: We again tried to remove a large rock at a rootball damage, but we did not succeed. We expanded the trail so the rock can be easily hiked around.

Reporting: Scotty Bowman

Date: 2/18 and 2/19/2025

Purpose: Remove blowdowns

Location: Section 9b, Pond Flats to Hampton trailhead

People: Scotty Bowman, Kristy Ealdwine, Kacy Hirchfelt, Tyler Cairnes, Kevin Matthews

Summary: We hiked in to clear blowdowns on the south slope of Pond Mountain. We cleared three new downfalls along the Hampton blue-blaze/Laurel Falls Trail (#501) from Sunday's wind, and cleared one broken leaner that was hanging over the trail. We proceeded along the A.T. north from the junction and worked to clear to the top of Pond Flats. We cleared three trees (7-15"), red oak step-over (~18"), red oak (27") that was lying breast-to-head high, and a red oak (15") on the trail.

On the second day, we finished working towards Pond Flats and cleared the limbs of a downed oak that was blocking the trail, two small (6-8") on the ground, a red oak with limbs ~ 90 degrees to the trail, and a 20" red oak between waist and chest high. We also cleared several small trees that had fallen across the trail. This section is clear up to mile marker 425.

Reporting: Scotty Bowman

Date: 2/21/2025

Purpose: Scout and clear trail

Location: Section 10, Hampton trailhead to Dennis Cove Road

People: Scotty Bowman, Kristy Ealdwine, Kacy Hirchfelt, Tyler Cairnes, Kevin Mathews, Dean Baird

Summary: On this day, we hiked from Hampton to Dennis Cove via the highwater trail, scouting for blowdowns to cut out. We cleared one on the highwater trail and two small ones north of Koonsford Bridge. It was a shorter day for us since the crew had to travel back to their duty stations for the weekend.

Reporting: Yong Li

Date: 2/21/2025

Purpose: Assess situation, maintain trail

Location: Section 16a, Hughes Gap to mile 372.9

People: Yong Li

Summary: The trail was covered with snow. I removed some small blowdowns and took pictures of rootballs within about 1.5 miles from Hughes Gap. Between miles 373.6 and 372.9, there are about nine rootballs that require fixing.