



September 2021

**A.T. Maintenance Work Trip – Saturday
September 11, 2021**

On this A.T. work trip, we will be hiking out of Cosby along the Low Gap Trail. Once at Low Gap, we will divide into groups with some participants going north and some south. We will perform general maintenance duties including clearing out vegetation and cleaning waterbars.

Pre-registration with the leader is required and the contact e-mail address is shipleymark57@gmail.com. The leader will be applying the updated SMHC COVID Guidelines which are available for viewing on the Home Page of the Club's web site.

Help us Make a Movie!!

Ann Farrar is producing some promotional videos for the SMHC ATMC, to aid in volunteer recruitment. She is interested in participating in work trips and other ATMC activities with her camera gear to capture pictures and videos. If you are interested and willing, please let her know about events you are coordinating so she can participate. *For example, if you are planning an independent work trip with several folks, let her know!* Contact her by email (Ann@FandKPhoto.com) or cell (text or call but text preferred at 865-850-6940). She is currently available starting the last week in September and can participate during the week or on weekends. Ann is limited as to how far she can hike in for work trips with her camera gear but will let you know when contacted if she can participate. Thanks to the teams that have allowed her to capture footage, and thanks in advance for future participation! We would like to have many different outings and events for this effort.

Current Section Maintenance Needs, GRSM

Have you signed up as a volunteer and feel ready to take on a section of A.T. to maintain?

The commitment is at least 4 trips a year, usually between March and the end of October, to clear water bars, trim vegetation, remove Trail obstructions and/or report blowdowns. We can help train you and tell you how to get tools where we store them. It's a wonderful way to give back, if you are a hiker and lover of the outdoors, and it's fun to care for a section through the seasons! Below are the areas we need help with:

- Clingmans Dome to Goshen Prong Tr (2.3 miles)
- Boulevard Tr to Sweat Heifer Tr (1.1 miles)
- Mt Cammerer spur Tr to 1 mile N of Cammerer (1.1 miles)
- 1 Mile N of Cammerer to Lower Mt Cammerer Tr (1.1 miles)

Please contact petrillad@gmail.com or call or text me at 931-224-5149 if you are interested.

**Federal Mask Mandate back in effect in the
GRSM- Please be Aware**

1. Masks are worn, regardless of vaccination status, in federal buildings such as BCO - including if they were to be in a government vehicle (example: Ridgerunner during RR shuttle)
2. Masks are worn, regardless of vaccination status, in the outdoor areas when it is not possible to maintain 6 feet of physical distance



Maintainers carrying Bear Spray

There have been some questions lately, given increased bear activity in the park, about maintainers carrying bear spray. Below is Christine Hoyer's response to the question:

"In order for volunteers to carry bear spray while completing their duties they would need to go through bear spray training. We do this for Ridgerunners, crews and employees. Please let me know if there is an interest from a number of the ATMC volunteers and we will work to get it scheduled."

If you would like to have training in and be permitted to carry bear spray in the GRSM as a volunteer maintainer, please contact Phyllis Henry at phyllishenry@yahoo.com. Enough people need to express an interest to schedule the training.

November 6, 2021. Please contact Franklin LaFond at OX97game@aol.com with questions if you are interested.

A. T. Work Trips From 7/14/2021 to 8/15/2021

7/14 - Franklin LaFond - Locust Cove Gap to Cheoah Bald - Worked with the Konnorock Trail Crew. The crew installed 43 new log steps and did rehab on roughly 200 yards of trail treadway.

7/18 - Franklin LaFond - Route 28 to High Pt E of Walker Gap - Cut, split, skinned, and transported a total of 11 locust log segments to near the junction of the BMT on the FS road. Cut weeds between the FS road and the rock staircase. Added 3 new log waterbars. Removed 2 small blowdowns with handsaw. Cleaned out waterbars that had filled with sediment. Removed several trip hazard roots. Groomed some of the previous sidehill rehab areas.

7/19 - Steve Dunkin - Other Work - Measured interior of new tool shed and laid out hand tools to assist in developing a plan for the new tool racks.

7/21 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Mulch Operations - Took 80lbs of mulch to Mt. Collins, re-dug some of the drainage ditches at shelter, cut back some of the vegetation at shelter. When this was completed drove to our section N of NFG and added a bottom step where needed.

7/22 - Pete Berntsen - False Gap to Dry Sluice Gap - Trimmed grass and shrubs along entire section of trail. Cut two-inch diameter tree close to False Gap.

7/22 - Stewart Taylor - Spruce Fir to Sugarland Mt Tr - Cleaned out water bars, sawed out three logs for steps/water bars and carried them up to the trail, installed three steps.

7/24 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock - Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap - Cleared 8 water bars, Cut three trees that had fallen across the trail. Met six section hikers, who responded that the trail south of Stekoah Gap was in good condition. Returned a lost dog that had followed one of the hikers from Yellow Creek to its owner.

Franklin LaFond elected as new Chair of ATMC

At the ATMC meeting on Wednesday evening 8-18-21 via Zoom, Franklin LaFond was elected the new Chair of the ATMC. Diane Petrilla has been Chair since January of 2019, assuming this position when George Ritter became ill and subsequently passed away. Franklin will be scheduling future meetings and coordinating our A.T. maintenance efforts in the GRSM and NNF. Thank you Franklin!

We need an Appalachian Trail Conservancy Regional Partnership Representative (Alternate)

Each of the 31 maintaining clubs for the A.T. is part of a "Region," of which there are 4. We are part of the GA/NC/TN region. Each Club in this region sends a representative and an alternate representative to Regional Partnership Meetings twice a year. During COVID, these have been via Zoom. **The meetings are important to get updates about the Trail and ATC work, as well as to interface with representatives from partner organizations such as the NPS and USFS.** The SMHC needs to fill the alternate rep position. The next RPC meeting for our region is

7/25 - Dick Ketelle, Ann Farrar, Taylor Weatherbee, Rick Hughes, Bill Pyle, Kelly Conway - **Newfound Gap to Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr** - We hiked the short distance from Newfound Gap to a fallen cherry tree that was leaning and working its way down into the trail about 0.75 mile south of Newfound Gap. We used crosscut saws and other hand tools to bring the tree down and cut the top portion off to allow easy passage through the area. Photos and video of the crosscut project were recorded for future enhancement of our ATMC website content. Our second task was carrying 300 pounds of mulch to the Mt Collins shelter to completely fill the mulch box at the privy. That task was followed by eating lunch in the pleasantly cool, shady woods near the Mt Collins shelter.

7/25 - Meg Gill, William Gill - **Chestnut Br Trail to Lower Mt Cammerer Tr** - cleared water bars; removed dead tree branches from across trail.

7/25 - Taylor Weatherbee - **Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap** - Primarily did vegetation trimming, but also cleaned a couple of water bars, and reset a loose rock. This trip was added on to the blowdown clearing and mulch delivery to the Collins shelter.

7/26 - Patti Grady - **Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead** - Finished clearing overgrowth, found and cleared two overgrown waterbars, cleaned 15 waterbars, set deterrents for folks walking around the steps, set stones in two muddy areas.

7/27 - Franklin LaFond, Keith Mertz - **Fontana Dam to Yellow Creek Gap** - Sawed 8 blowdowns from trail. Installed 3 water bars. Installed 2 steps.

7/28 - Franklin LaFond - **Davenport Gap to Chestnut Br Trail** - Split large locust log into 40 stakes. Moved stakes to current staged locust log piles near Davenport Gap. Installed 2 new log steps. Added stakes to several waterbars to improve stability.

7/28 - Jack Grant, Steve Hill - **Mulch Operations** - Bagged 21 bags of 20 pound mulch and delivered to maintainer shed. Bagged another 8/ 40 pound bags for future equestrian runs; left at tent. Will ask for another mulch dump outside tent. Looking

forward to using new scale obtained by Christine Hoyer for weighing bags at the next bagging session! (Delivered by Petrilla yesterday)

7/31 - Rick Waggener, Mark Armstrong - **Gap W of Masa Knob to Boulevard Tr** - Cleared water bars, entire stretch. Cut back summer vegetation both on the trail & at the shelter. Rest the rocks that protect the spring. Cleaned trash out of the shelter. Filled mulch buckets. BTW, much bins (2) are almost empty

8/3 - Franklin LaFond - **Davenport Gap to Chestnut Br Trail** - Cleaned up debris from large tree that fell across road near trailhead parking. Added 2 new log steps. Replaced 3 rotted steps. Lowered 1 log waterbar that had been kicked out by horse traffic. Cleaned a few waterbars.

8/5 - Taylor Weatherbee - **Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap** - Installed 2 steps and one water bar. Dug out a few water bars. Widened the trail where grasses had been encroaching on the foot path.

8/6 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock - **Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap** - Cleared 6 water bars, removed 3 small blowdowns, took notice of condition of privy at Brown Fork Gap shelter, packed out trash.

8/7 - Kristi Knight, Yugong Tan, Melanie Harmon, Joan Tomlinson, Elizabeth Weikert, Randy Mitchell, Neil Snapp, Hilary Hunter, Joe Strickland, Cindy Spangler, Nikki Reuter, Terry Martin, Hiram Rogers, Janet Snyder, Mark Snyder, Jean Gauger, Liz Ehr, David Gall, Mike Harrington, Taylor Weatherbee, Josh Mangers, Diane Petrilla - **Mulch Operations** - This STELLAR group of mulch mules, one of the largest ever assembled (!) packed mulch into the Icewater shelter mulch boxes. Participants carried 20 or 40 lbs. each, and one Herculean maintainer carried 60lbs.! A total of 540lb was backpacked in. This left one box 80% full, and the other 60% full. Privy mulch buckets were filled; no broom available to sweep. Most folks hiked out before rain came, but a few got wet. We welcomed several new participants, and many loyal regulars. Thank you everyone, so much.



Mulch Mules, ready to roll!



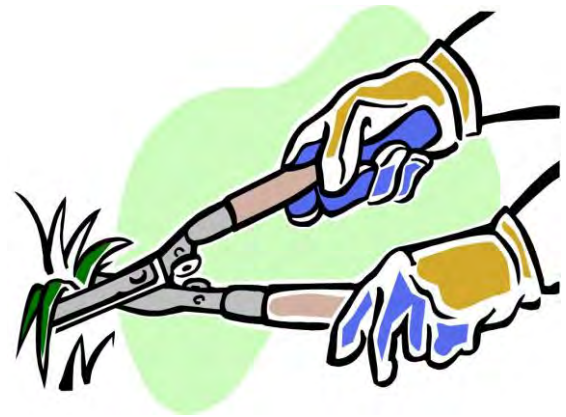
Filling those mulch boxes!

8/8 - Terry Martin - Mt Cammerer Side Tr to Sunup Knob - I trimmed vegetation in my section and the open sunny spot right before Sunup Knob.

8/14 - Franklin LaFond - Stekoah Gap to Locust Cove Gap - Picked up a load of locust logs and transported to the trailhead. Carried 3 step logs and 10 stakes to worksite. Installed 3 log steps and 1 rock step. Reset one log step that was starting to slip. Used remaining stakes to stabilize other log steps as I exited. A medium sized rock had slid onto the trail. I was able to move it to the downhill side of the trail to allow hikers to walk around it on the uphill side while still keeping it accessible for

possible cribbing or as a future rock step. Transported remaining logs to a staging area near Fontana.

8/15 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock - Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap - Primary goal to evaluate and flag step placement, locate and cut locust logs for steps. We cut and staged 30 locust sections for this purpose after taking a look at a steep section near the top of Jacobs Ladder which shows some erosion and trail creep. Once in place, these steps will help control erosion and give hikers a more stable path, especially on descending south. We also inspected waterbars, noting a couple of repairs needed due to erosion and wear. Browns Fork Gap shelter was inspected, noting a needed repair to one of the platform leading to the latrine. Walking north, we removed 2/ 6 inch blowdowns, and took a look at a planned project to improve a rocky, narrow section.



Let's be sure we've all done this on our sections before Fall arrives!

Please send any items of interest, **photos**, and event notifications for the ATMCS Newsletter to Diane Petrilla at petrillad@gmail.com. Thank you for **ALL** of the work you do!