



April 2017

AT Trail Maintenance- Sat-Sun March 25-26

Pecks Corner Backpack and AT maintenance:

From Newfound Gap, we'll hike the AT 11 miles north to the Pecks Corner shelter and along the way enjoy nice views such as Charlies Bunion and Bradley View. We'll also perform some light trail maintenance along the way, particularly closer to Pecks Corner. We'll stay at the Pecks Corner shelter for the night. In the morning, we will hike down the Hughes Ridge Trail to Chasteen Creek Trail and on to Smokemont. Hike: 21 miles, RT rated Difficult. A backpacker reservation is required in order to spend the night at Pecks Corner, and no camping is permitted outside the shelter. If you do not obtain a Park Backpacker Permit for Pecks Corner you will not be able to make this hike. We will have 4 permits available for hikers, so contact Steve Dunkin if you would like one, or contact GRSM Backcountry permits to make a reservation as soon as you can for Sat. March 25. This is Spring Break, and also AT Thru-Hiker season, so the shelters book up. **Pre-registration with the trip leaders is absolutely required, so please contact one of the trip leaders to learn the meeting [place and time. Also please let us know if you have your own reservation or need one of ours.** Leaders: Steve Dunkin, jsdunkin@roaneschools.com and Tim Bigelow, bigelowt2@mindspring.com.

AT Trail Maintenance- Saturday April 1

Due to changes in the dates for the window for chainsaw use in the Park, this work trip has been moved to the Nantahala National Forest. We hope to get enough volunteers to staff 2 work crews – one to work at Browns Fork Gap to repair erosion-related deterioration of a roof support post, and the second crew to work on treadway rehab near Stecoah Gap. This is a great opportunity for **new maintainers** to learn about general trail maintenance activities. Bring sturdy footwear, work gloves, water, lunch/snacks, and rain gear; tools are provided. The hike to the shelter is 2.5 miles each way on mostly moderate trail. The hike for treadway rehab is less than a mile each way on moderate terrain. Meet at the Maryville Walmart <see list> at 7:00 am for carpooling to Stecoah Gap. Drive: 120 miles RT { $@4\phi = \$5$ }. **Please preregister with leaders to assist planning.**

Leaders: Dick Kettle, rhkettle@comcast.net, [865-483-9345](tel:865-483-9345), and Franklin LaFond, ox97game@aol.com, [678-464-3380](tel:678-464-3380).

Park Chainsaw Window

We do have dates for the GSMNP chainsaw window this year of Friday April 7 through Sunday May 7, **HOWEVER** new guidelines require a group safety meeting with Christine Hoyer **BEFORE** any work is done. Plans are underway for this; please **DO NOT** proceed with any chainsaw work in the NP before this is accomplished. More information to follow.



New procedure for Injury reporting

A recent maintainer injury caused Park administrative problems because reporting requirements were not followed. The Park has provided new reporting instructions that we will distribute to Section Leaders in a revised page for their Injury Packets. Injuries to volunteers during Park maintenance are to be reported directly to Park Dispatch at (865) 436-1230 (911 after hours). When reporting an injury, request that Christine Hoyer be notified. Paperwork must be filed with any Hospital for treatment to be authorized for any workman's compensation claim and documents/notifications of an injury must be filed within 24 hours at the Park level. Once you contact Christine, she will walk you through all the necessary steps. Maintainers are encouraged to work in groups of two or more to provide mutual support in the event of an accident and, before setting out, to inform someone of their planned route and work locations. For all chainsaw and crosscut work trips, Park radios are required and must be checked out from the Park commo or backcountry office.

National Trails Day Coming Up!

Please mark your calendars to participate in National Trails Day on Saturday June 3, 2017. There will be important and much needed projects scheduled for several crews on the Appalachian Trail in the National Park. This is a great opportunity to work with both experienced and new maintainers, or simply volunteer to make a difference on this day! Registration information will be communicated soon!

Welcome To Our 2017 Ridgerunners

This year, for the first time, we will have ATC Ridgerunners supporting the entire section of the AT maintained by the SMHC, including the Nantahala National Forest south of the GSMNP.

Morgan Kelley, from Nashville, worked with the SWEAT Crew in 2015 as an assistant crew leader. He will start out patrolling the north end of the GSMNP (Newfound Gap to Davenport Gap) working Tuesday through Saturday, through the end of May.

Chloe DeCamara, an ATC employee who also manages the Soak Ash crew quarters, will patrol from Newfound Gap to Spence Field through the end of May. Chloe and Morgan will switch sections midway through the season.

Nick Espinosa, from Florida, will patrol the section from Spence Field to Fontana. Carl Goodman, who has worked this section in past years, will be assisting Nick. Nick's session will end in May.

Maury Hudson, who has worked as a RR in the park for the past 2 years, will be working this year in the NNF between Fontana and NOC during March and April. We are very happy to have had this position added this year!

Ridgerunners for June-October have not been selected yet. We are grateful to all those above who work so hard to educate hikers and help keep the AT in the Park (and now in the NNF!) in great shape for all to enjoy!

Thru-Hiker Season is Upon Us!

Please remember it's that time of year to get out and start maintaining your section, if you haven't already done so! Thru-hikers started very early this year, with the relatively mild winter, and of course there are other backpackers and hiking groups. Maintainers should visit their sections and work at least 4 times a year, for general maintenance, and please report larger project needs to Phyllis Henry at phyllishenry@yahoo.com (for the National Park AT) or Franklin LaFond at OX97game@aol.com (for the Nantahala National Forest AT).

Attention New Maintainers! Are you Interested in a Work and Training Trip?

We are in the process of scheduling a combination Work/Training trip for newer maintainers, tentatively on Sunday May 7, 2017. This Work Trip would be on the Wright Gap section (in the Nantahala National Forest) near Wesser, NC and the Nantahala Outdoor Center. Waterbar maintenance, root removal, sidehill maintenance, safe tool use and more are all part of this working trip. Please let Diane Petrilla know if you are interested at petrillad@gmail.com. We would carpool from Maryville, which is about 1.75 hours. We could also enjoy a meal at the NOC afterwards!

AT Work Trips From 2/16/17 to 3/15/17

2/16 - Judy Wade, Keith Mertz - Swim Bald to Wright Gap - Painted new blazes on recently re-routed AT section trail south of Swim Bald. Refreshed some faded blazes between Swim Bald and Grassy Gap.

2/19 - Bob Williams - Wright Gap to Wesser - Cleared part of hanging tree over the trail at the NOC cabins. Main part of trunk remains 7-8 feet above the trail and is not a hazard at this

time. Also removed roots along trail that presented a tripping hazard. This is an ongoing project so we don't encourage erosion.

2/19 - John H Gassler - Chestnut Br Trail to 1 mi N of Cam (4250' EI) - Trimmed vegetation on uphill side of my section and cut low-hanging overhead branches on entire section. Cleared several waterbars.

2/24 - Franklin LaFond, Greg Crandall, Cindy Crandall - Brown Fork Gap to Stecoah Gap - Cut 54 locust logs and moved beside the trail for future steps and waterbars on upper section of Jacobs Ladder. Added 9 ft of new log cribbing where hikers were cutting a switchback. Removed trash from shelter, cleaned out fire pit. Filled privy mulch bucket. Replaced some of the flagging on the two relocations North and South of the shelter that had been removed. Marked 12 projects for May Konnorock Crew South of Stecoah Gap. Removed 1 blowdown .25 S of Stecoah Gap. Put up new National Forest Leave No Trace signs at Stecoah Gap trailhead.

2/26 - Mac McNutt, Tom Howard, Stewart Taylor - Cosby Knob Privy - Moved the privy, refilled the mulch buckets, moved the excess mulch to the mulch bin and made a tool inventory. Checked the shelter.

3/4 - Franklin LaFond, Pam Reddoch, Billy Heaton, Jim Gehlar, Cindy Spangler, Steven Epps, Maury Hudson, Melanie Harmon - High Pt E of Walker Gap to Yellow Creek Gap - Dug 275 feet of sidehill to repair tread; installed 2 wood steps; installed 18 feet of rock cribbing; installed 38 feet of log cribbing; installed 6 feet of riprap; removed 4 blowdowns; filled mulch buckets at privy; installed hooks for mulch buckets; removed hazard tree from shelter area and installed National Forest Leave No Trace signs. *(Please see great photos next page, courtesy of Cindy Spangler!)*

3/8 - Judy Wade, Keith Mertz - Fontana Dam to Route 28 - Cleared three small trees with hand saw. Cut back encroaching vegetation.

Photos from the Sat. Mar. 4, 2107 Work Trip



Maintenance 'Minders

Last month we began this new series by listing the 10 basic maintenance tasks that all maintainers should try to do on their section work trips. Let's elaborate on one this month!

"1. Clean the AT's drainage structures, including waterbars, grade dips and drainage ditches."

Guidelines for waterbars:

- Clean [*at least*] twice per year; tamp all mineral sediment over and below the bar; scatter organic debris downslope.
- use rock, or 6- to 8-inch-diameter, rot resistant peeled logs [*locust for us*].
- Install at a 45-degree angle across the Trail.
- Extend beyond both side of the Treadway, with the uphill end buried in the cutbank.
- Bury in a trench so that the top is even with the center of the Treadway on the downhill side. Butt rocks end-to-end in the trench, or, if thin, overlap them in shingle fashion.
- Drain by an outflow ditch as least as wide as a fire rake (18 inches).
- Reinforce with a step just below the bar on steep grades.
- Hold logs in place by larger rocks or stakes if the bar cannot be constructed with rock.

Drainage dips

On slopes of less than 10 percent, drainage dips may be installed to provide adequate drainage. They are built by digging a shallow 3 foot wide [*where feasible*] ditch across the Treadway at a more gentle angle than for a waterbar (about 60 degrees from perpendicular), then mounding and packing soil 6-8 inches high on the ditches' lower side,

to form a gentle "banked turn" that routs water smoothly off the Trail.....the Treadway above the dip should be gradually graded into the ditch and extra mineral soil packed into the mound.

(Appalachian Trail Conference. *Appalachian Trail Fieldbook: Maintenance and Rehabilitation Guidelines for Volunteers*. Harpers Ferry, WV: ATC, 2003. Print.)

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

