

Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club



July 2017

AT Maintenance Work Trip- Saturday July 8

This work trip will involve backpacking mulch to the Double Spring Shelter and then performing trail maintenance on the return to the trailhead, including trimming back vegetation along the trail corridor, cleaning waterbars and drains, and performing other trail maintenance as needed. Participants should bring a moderate to large backpack (larger than a typical daypack if possible), in addition to their usual trail essentials (e.g. water, lunch, raingear, etc.). A few additional backpacks will be available for those who may not have their own packs. Other tools will be provided. Hike: 6 miles RT, rated difficult. Meet at **Alcoa Food City at 8:00am** for carpooling, or at the Clingmans Dome parking area at 9:30am. **Pre-registration is required to ensure that we have appropriate tools.** Contact: Don Dunning, dedz1@aol.com, 865-705-2154.

Volunteer Needed: SMHC Database Entry

A Volunteer is needed to take over the SMHC hike data entries. The job requires a monthly task of about 30-45 minutes to enter the names and addresses of hikers for each outing into the free Access Runtime software, using the sign-up sheets that will be provided. Requires a PC, not a Mac. Please contact George Ritter at rittergeo@gmail.com or 865-483-9758. Many thanks to Hiram Rogers and Jean Gauger, who have generously maintained this database for as long as we can remember!

Opportunities to help with S.W.E.A.T. Crew!

Javier Salazar, the Trail Facilities manager for the ATC for the GSMNP has sent us the upcoming S.W.E.A.T. schedule with the following information: "Some of the sessions still have slots open, and we would love if anyone from SMHC would like to join us at some point. I think it'd be good for the volunteers to meet some of the great people you guys have." Please contact jsalazar@appalachiantrail.org if interested.

Crew Schedule:

Session 2 - June 18-June 23: camping at Silers Bald, working on AT from Derrick Knob Shelter to Welch Ridge Trail (A196028)

Session 3 - June 28-July 3: camping at Russell Field Shelter, working on AT from Little Bald to Spence Field Shelter (A196029)

Session 4 - July 8-July 13: camping at Spence Field Shelter, working on AT from Spence Field Shelter to Derrick Knob Shelter (A196031)

Session 5 - July 18-July 23: camping at Pecks Corner Shelter/Pecks Cabin, working on AT from Dry Sluice Gap to Hughes Ridge Trail (A196032)

Session 6 - July 28-August 2: camping at Pecks Corner Shelter/Pecks Cabin, working on AT from Hughes Ridge Trail to Balsam Mountain Trail (A196034)

Session 7 - August 7-August 12: camping at the former Rocky Top camp at Inadu Knob, working on AT from Balsam Mountain Trail to Cosby Knob Shelter (A196035)



Fun and Successful National Trails Day

June 3, 2017

On Saturday June 3, 2017, approximately 100 volunteers assembled in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to participate in our 21st Annual Appalachian Trail Work Day in celebration of National Trails Day. Ten crews of approximately 8-10 people each, worked on sections of the AT from Davenport Gap (a separate dedicated crew!) to areas both north and south of Newfound Gap. We were pleased to see regular maintainers, NTD participants from previous years, as well as new folks! Much regular maintenance was performed (see reports), as well as a tough project to repair a section of trail in the Sawteeth area. At the end of the day, all enjoyed a wonderful picnic, provided by Froschauer Catering and sponsored by REI, and great raffle door prizes donated by REI, Uncle Lem's Mercantile and Outfitters, Little River Trading Co, Mast General Store, and River Sports Outfitters. All of the companies mentioned above were sponsors of NTD, along with TVA, Food City, and Cash Hardware Co. in Sevierville and their support was much appreciated. This annual event is coordinated by the NPS, SMHC, ATC and Friends of the Smokies. A very special thanks to Don and Nancy Dunning who handled all registration work and organization, Cindy Spangler who arranged the fine picnic, Pete Berntsen and Franklin La Fond who planned the crew work, and Mac McNutt who delivered the tools. We also had another beautiful and memorable T-shirt this year, thanks to Karen Brackett's design and Phillip Royer's work. Phyllis Henry also provided much-needed guidance

along the way after almost single-handedly managing this event for the past 20 years (this was our first NTD event that Phyllis was not able to attend, and it took an entire committee to even try to fill in for her). We especially thank ALL who worked on the AT during NTD this year, and helped make our 21st Annual AT Work Day such a great success!!



Getting ready.....



Just a few examples of the great crews and great work, followed by a delicious picnic at the end of the day! (NTD photos courtesy of Christine Hoyer, Cindy Spangler, Franklin LaFond, and Diane Petrilla)

AT Work Trips from 4/28/17 to 6/16/17

4/28 - Mark Shipley - **Cosby Knob Top to Camel Gap** - Cleaned out waterbars, trimmed vegetation, and restocked mulch at the privy at Cosby Knob Shelter.

5/9 - Larry Hines, Angel Tumminello, Alexis Davis, Naima McKinnie, Coutney Foney, Liam Cavanaugh, Ayanna Lindsay, Lizzie Lopez Vasquez, Sarah Paul - **Collins Gap to Clingmans Dome**-Pruned vegetation, cleaned waterbars, added 1 rock step, reset 2 log steps.

5/10 - Ed Peck - **Clingmans Dome to Goshen Prong Tr** - Removed blowdowns 1 mi S and 1 mi N of Dome.

5/10 - John H Gassler - **Davenport Gap to Chestnut Br Trail** - Worked with Franklin LaFond and the Georgia Southern University students to repair treadway, clear waterbars, and trim branches from trail. Cleaned trash from Davenport shelter.

5/10 - Larry Hines, Angel Tumminello, Alexis Davis, Naima McKinnie, Coutney Foney, Liam Cavanaugh, Ayanna Lindsay, Lizzie Lopez Vasquez, Sarah Paul - **Davenport Gap to Chestnut Br Trail** - Pruned vegetation, cleaned waterbars. Removed trash from Davenport shelter. Added 43 ft of log cribbing and backfilled with dirt to address extremely rooty section of trail. 33 ft of sidehill rehab.

5/11 - Jerry Troxler, Mac McNutt, Tom Howard, Stewart Taylor - **Spence (Bote Mt Tr) to Russell Field** - Emptied one bin in privy, moved privy and cleaned all the waterbars from Spence Field Shelter to Russell Field Shelter.

5/11 - Larry Hines, Angel Tumminello, Alexis Davis, Naima McKinnie, Coutney Foney, Liam Cavanaugh, Ayanna Lindsay, Lizzie Lopez Vasquez, Sarah Paul - **Mount Collins Shelter** - Pruned vegetation, cleaned waterbars. Serviced Mt Collins privy.

5/14 - Franklin LaFond, Cayce Moyer - **Stekoah Gap to Locust Cove Gap** - Worked with Konnorock Trail crew, replacing railroad tie steps and doing general trail rehab for 1/2-mile S. of Stecoah.

5/16 - Franklin LaFond, Crystal Gaddy, Cayce Moyer - **Fontana Dam to Wright Gap** -

Removed several blowdowns in the NNF. Trees cleared from Fontana Shelter to Walker Gap, from Stecoah Gap south for 1 mile, and from Wright Gap south for 1 mile.

5/16 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - **Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap** - Rebuilt and repositioned an existing locust waterbar to better channel water off eroded upslope of hillside as well as from trail surface. Added a new water dip with drainage at about .5 miles. Cut and removed overhead branches leaning onto trail. Cut and removed dead tree leaning into trail. Added two new steps. Built new waterbar at .8 mile in a deep eroded section. Filled in with dirt and rock to raise eroded section to a better and safer section. Beautiful day with many hikers from Europe, Africa, and Asia as well as Thru-Hikers stopping to talk and wishing to thank all who help make the trail passable.

5/20 - Dick Ketelle - **Miry Ridge to Derrick Knob** - Completed removing blowdowns on this section with crosscut saw and ax.

Was assisted on one many-branched maple top by a young park hiker from Newport. This remote trail section is difficult to access and on this trip, I did an 18+ mile loop from Tremont up Middle Prong/Greenbrier Ridge trails and down Miry Ridge/Panther Branch trails making for a very long day.

5/21 - Phyllis Henry, John Knox, Ed Owens - **Outreach & Education** - Met with 12 honor college students from multiple states, as well as 4 faculty members from the Honors College program at Va. Tech. It was raining very hard and the decision was made not to do outdoors trailwork. Instead, there was an impromptu and informative educational meeting in the NFG men's restroom "classroom!" about partnership, volunteering, giving back. Leanna Joyner and Ben from the ATC were in attendance and gave a great talk to the students. *(Photos below courtesy of Phyllis Henry.)*



Never lose an opportunity to teach!

5/21 - Steve Reagan, Scott McClure - Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead to Spruce Fir - Met a group of College students @ Newfound Gap at 9:00 There was heavy rain and non-ideal working conditions. We attended a group educational conversation about the ATC. Cleaned out waterbars for .7 miles. Made repairs to 1 step that was undercut. Made notations of areas that are going to need further repairs. Traveled the complete length of Steve Reagans section.

5/23 - Ed Peck, Stewart Taylor, Steve Reagan - Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead to Spruce Fir - Removed 30-inch blowdown that was blocking trail .6 miles north.

5/23 - Jerry Davis, Mary Lampe - Route 28 to High Pt E of Walker Gap - Walked to survey the trail for the first time. There has been a lot of work performed on a small blow down and a large blow down cleared. There has been some trail work with steps installed. We

basically walked the trail and cut back vegetation as we went.

5/27 - Chicago Hikers Meetup, 12 Group, Franklin LaFond - Mt Cammerer Side Tr to Cosby Knob Top - Repaired area S. of Low Gap where several fallen trees had damaged retaining wall and treadway. Pruned vegetation and cleaned waterbars between Low Gap and Cosby Knob. Removed several blowdowns between Cosby Knob and Mt Cammerer Fire Tower.

5/27 - Don Dunning, Nancy Dunning - Double Springs Gap Privy - Packed mulch to Double Spring shelter privy. Prior to this mulch addition, one mulch box was completely empty and the second smaller box was down to <10%. Cleaned and serviced privy. On return to Clingmans Dome trailhead, scouted potential projects for NTD.

5/27 - Randy Mitchell, Russell Redden - Low Gap to Cosby Knob Top - Met with Franklin LaFond and the Chicago Hikers Meetup group at Cosby campground. After learning of a landslide .5 mile from Low Gap the group decided to work south of the gap. Cleaned waterbars from Low Gap to high point of Cosby knob. Carried locust log from old stash south of the shelter to help with the repair of land slide area. Checked shelter and privy at Cosby. Shelter, mulch bucket and cables all in good order. Cut weeds and removed debris from trail from slide area to top of Cosby Knob while two members from Chicago group cut weeds south of slide area. Working with Chicago group gathered rocks from crush and fill after Franklin installed locust log patch on narrowed trail section. Also working with Chicago group removed limbs from hemlock that had fallen next to trail. Help cut another large hemlock with crosscut saw that was across trail. While Chicago group went to Mt Cammerer, Russ and I returned to the campground. On way back removed a couple of small blow downs from Low Gap trail. *(Photo below courtesy of Franklin LaFond).*



Bacon & Co. to finalize the design. I placed the final order on 5/25/17, and I picked up the shirts on 6/2/17 and delivered them to Don Dunning.

6/3 (NTD) - Barbara Allen, Wallace Bell, Tim Bigelow, Edward Fleming, John H Gassler, Hettie Manning, Lisa Sumter, Blake Lawson, Dennis U. Spjut - **Davenport Gap to 1 mi N of Cam (4250' EI)** - On National Trails Day, the group met at Big Creek Ranger station and carpoled to Davenport Gap. The party split into 3 groups who traveled various distances. All groups concentrated on spring maintenance including clearing waterbars, removing several smaller blow-downs, trimming vegetation which was heavy in places. The Davenport trail shelter was inspected and cleared of trash. An issue with the roof was looked at by Ed Fleming. The lower sections up to the small bunion appear to be in very good shape after the work day. The farthest work was done up to the Bunion about 3/4 mile from the Mt Cammerer Side trail. There is increasingly heavy growth of dog hobble and other underbrush in areas where hemlocks have fallen. Another brushing trip to finish trimming and clearing drains in the top segment is needed and planned. There are a few of the higher locust log steps eroding underneath and may need to be significantly dug out and reset.

6/3 (NTD) - Ben Royer, Betty Royer, Taylor Weatherbee, Bill Gooch, Meg Mabbs, Marissa Hahn, Steven Hahn, Philip Royer - **Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap** - Our National Trails Day Crew concentrated on a single, steep, slick 50 ft section of trail that has resisted all previous efforts to improve it. We carried the last remaining locust logs from the stash at the top of Mt Collins southward about 30 yards to the project location. There we installed three new locust steps, plus three large stone steps, and one salvaged spruce log from a winter blowdown. We backfilled with rock and dirt. We placed stone steps below two existing difficult log steps, and we cut the small branches from a new blowdown so that it can be stepped-over. Two crew members did not arrive: Crystal Burnes and Becki Moran.

5/29 - Diane Petrilla - **Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead** - Section survey to mark projects and prepare for NTD.

5/29 - Jack Bray, Lillian Bray - **Derrick Knob to Thunderhead** - Cleared blowdown identified in Morgan Kelley ridge-runner report of 05-16-2017, pp 25-26. 0.1 mi N of Thunderhead.

5/31 - John H Gassler - **Davenport Gap to Chestnut Br Trail** - Brushed section. Cleared downed branches from trail. Cleared two large downed trees from across trail between Davenport Gap shelter and Chestnut Branch trail. Cleaned around shelter and carried out trash. Checked water source.

6/1 - Keith Mertz, Judy Wade, Carolyn Cothron - **Yellow Creek Gap to Cody Gap** - Cut vegetation along trail. Cut small limbs off blowdowns to make for an easier path along the trail.

6/2 - Karen Brackett, Philip Royer - **Other Work** - Karen Brackett designed the front panel for the SMHC's 2017 National Trails Day tee shirt. She and I discussed various options via phone and email. On 5/10/17, we met with

6/3 (NTD) - Diane Petrilla, Eric Keller, Cindy Bell, Jennifer Costner, Karen Brackett, Lori Garufi, Janet Lisle, Pat Jelinski, Jen Lam, Jeremiah Roy - **Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead** - This excellent NTD crew worked to clean the numerous waterbars on this section, buttressed steps with rocks and dirt, trimmed vegetation, placed deterrent logs and reset some rock steps. Along the way, we passed out a little trail magic to some AT Thru Hikers who were universally appreciative of the work and NTD!

6/3 (NTD) - Dick Ketelle, Pete Berntsen, Morgan Kelley, Davis Wax, Steve Dunkin, Steven Epps, Katie Oliver - **False Gap to Dry Sluice Gap** - This National Trails Day team hiked to the Sawteeth and finished a small trail re-alignment to avoid a pending landslide where a rock wall built by the CCC has collapsed. Following that task we cleared waterbars and cut down berms in some areas to improve tread drainage. We also replaced one deteriorated step.

6/3 (NTD) - Etha Brickwood, Cherie Cone, Jacinda Cone, Leanna Joyner, Ashley King, Bruce King, John Knox, Hillary Reyes, David Shreve, Tracey Shreve - **Spruce Fir to Sugarland Mt Tr** - Cleaned all water bars, rebuilt water bars, added water bars, added dirt where needed.

6/3 (NTD) - Lee Barron, Will Butler, Dickie Davis (Friend), Alan Day, Don Dunning, Nancy Dunning, Jim Gehlhar, Emily Medlyn, Scott Medlyn, Joan Tomlinson - **Goshen Prong Tr to Welch Ridge Tr** - This outstanding National Trails Day crew packed approximately 200 lbs of mulch to resupply the Double Spring shelter privy, where the mulch supply had reached critically low conditions. After depositing the mulch, we then performed much-needed trail maintenance, cleaning waterbars and drains, and cutting back encroaching vegetation around the Double Spring shelter, and along the trail section between the Goshen Prong trail and approximately 1 mile south of the Double Spring shelter toward Welsh Ridge. On the return trip to the Clingmans Dome trailhead we admired the great work accomplished by other NTD crews. Many thanks to this outstanding crew for accomplishing this

important work and making this a fun and successful workday.

6/3 (NTD) - Logan Bolden, Bert Emmerson, Becky Emmerson, Erin Pederson, Kevin Kragenbrink, Allen Shultz, Mary Shultz, Max Brewer, Mike Waters, Scott McClure - **Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead to Spruce Fir** - Cleaned out all the water breaks on the trail all the way to the tails. Clipped back grasses, briars and limbs that have grown into the trail. We carried many buckets of soil to fill steps so they won't hold water during rain events. Carried many buckets of soil to fill a low section of trail @ approximately .5 mi from Spruce Fir north. Cleaned the brush and silt at bridges and pipe

6/3 (NTD) - Lynda Bryan, Jim Quick, Casey Gordy, Kalen Gilliam, Khid McKenzie, Franklin LaFond, Crystal Gaddy, Kaitlyn Gaddy, Mackenzie Alteran, Katie Morris - **Clingmans Dome to Goshen Prong Tr** - Pruned vegetation, cleaned waterbars, removed several trip hazard rocks and roots, rehabbed 210 ft of treadway.

6/3 (NTD) - Lisa Ivester, Randy Mitchell, Eva Jones, Adam Monroe, Russell Redden, Lynn Dszos, Jim Niemeyer, Nolan Wildfire, Shannon O'Shanasee - **Clingmans Dome to Goshen Prong Tr** - Cleaned 35 waterbars. Significantly improved 20 of these. Improvements

included widening, berm removal, large rock removal, and digging broad swales (dips). Reset 2 large log waterbars that were not functioning. Brushed/pruned the worst overgrown sections of 1 mile of trail on Mt. Buckley to 6 foot corridor.

6/3 (NTD) - Ben Barry, Josephine Cappelletti, Sergio Cappelletti, Joseph Issac, Kathleen Kitzmiller, Tevin Moore, Brian Schloff, Morgan Sommerville, Bob Williams - **Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap** - Cleaned approximately 25 waterbars, repaired 2 rock waterbars, brushed in 50 ft of trail, created 2 grade reversals, and naturalized approximately 30 square-feet of off-trail land.

6/6 - Steve Dunkin - **Pecks Corner to False Gap** - Cleaned privy at Pecks Corner, cleaned water bars on access trail to shelter. Installed rock water bar on path from privy to shelter. Cleared brush around shelter, path to water source and privy. Cleaned numerous water

bars on A.T. moving toward False Gap.
Removed trash from shelter.

6/7 - Mike Harrington - Doe Knob to Lewellyn Branch - Cut vegetation on my section and also between Sassafras Gap and Birch Springs (Campsite #113).

6/8 - Wayne Williams, Carolyn M. Williams - Collins Gap to Mt Love - Carolyn & I cleaned waterbars, did some brushing, and worked as long as we were able.

6/9 - Dick Ketelle, Ann Farrar - Davenport Gap Shelter - Carried in flashing, roofing cement, and tools to put a patch over the puncture hole in the shelter roof reported by RR Chloe. Also put a fresh coat of roofing cement over the original 20? year old material originally placed during the shelter rehab project. Ann helped me from inside the shelter to locate several holes in the metal shingles that were letting light in (maybe rain also), which I patched with roofing cement from the top side.

6/10 - Don Dunning, Nancy Dunning - Clingmans Dome to Goshen Prong Tr - Packed mulch to Double Spring shelter privy and performed routine trail maintenance on the return to the Clingmans Dome trailhead in areas that were not addressed during NTD. Plan to continue additional trips until at least one mulch box is 100% filled, and all routine trail maintenance in this section has been completed.

Maintenance 'Minders

We'll review something short this month, since there has been so much good work to review in the Newsletter!

"Treadway- Desired Appearances"

In areas with adequate drainage, leaf litter should remain on the Trail treadway; there should be less than 3 inches of "cupping" of the mineral layer of the Trail treadway; no loose rocks or roots resulting from erosion should be apparent. In wet areas, the desired appearance is a stable, non-widening Treadway, 12-18 inches in width, that uses rock and mineral-soil turnpikes or bog bridges to span saturated soils.

Proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline- Opportunity for Public Comment

The proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline would carry fracked natural gas for over 300 miles through the Virginia and West Virginia countryside, crossing over dozens of water sources, through Congressionally designated protected areas, and breaching the corridor of the Appalachian Trail. The ATC has serious concerns that this proposed pipeline would have negative impacts on the Appalachian Mountains and would threaten the unique hiking experience that the Appalachian Trail provides on an unprecedented scale. The ATC strongly opposes the proposed pipeline: "*The proposed pipeline would tear down mountaintop forests in southern Virginia, dramatically scarring the scenic landscape of the AT, irreversibly damaging local ecosystems, and potentially causing cities and towns that rely on outdoor recreation-based tourism to lose significant revenue.*" The SMHC Board of Directors is in full agreement with the ATC position. More on the ATC's position can be found at: www.appalachiantrail.org/MountainValleyPipeline, along with contact information and sample letters for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the U.S. Forest Service, and Virginia officials, if you would like to express your opinions.

The Trail should "wear lightly on the land," with minimal disturbance to the surroundings. The Treadway should reflect a concern for safety, without detracting from the opportunity for hikers to experience wild and scenic lands by their own unaided efforts and without sacrificing aspects of the Trail that may challenge their skill and stamina.

(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!