



September 2017

AT Maintenance- Saturday September 9

On this AT worktrip participants will clean water bars and trim vegetation from Sassafras Gap to Doe Knob at the southern section of the AT in the Smokies. Participants are encouraged to bring appropriate clothing, gloves, water and lunch. For those interested, a side trip to Shuckstack firetower will also be planned. Pre-registration with the leader is required so that needed tools will be available. As part of pre-registration the leader will provide for a meeting time and place and any other pertinent information.

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Rocky Top Crew Schedule

The ATC Rocky Top Crew, a group of volunteers who work in some of the most remote sections of the AT in the GSMNP will have the following sessions this August, September and October:

- Session 1: Aug 29- Sept 5 (Tues-Tues)
- Session 2: Sept 10-17 (Sun-Sun)
- Session 3: Sept 22-29 (Fri-Fri)
- Session 4: Oct 4-11 (Wed-Wed)
- Session 5: Oct 16-23 (Mon-Mon)

They will be working south of Tricorner Shelter, doing general maintenance work, as well as putting in steps, water bars, etc. as needed. The crew will be based at the Pecks

Maintenance Cabin. As you will read in the next article, one of our maintainers recently had a great experience working with the SWEAT crew this summer in the Smokies. If you have any interest to hike in, work and camp a day or two with the crew, to show support from our club and maintainers, as well as to just help out, please contact Javier Salazar at jsalazar@appalachiantrail.org.

ATC SWEAT Crew Session 5: Through the Eyes of an ATMC Maintainer

This summer I had the opportunity to meet up with the Session 5 (July 18-23) SWEAT Crew of the ATC at Peck’s Corner (Leader Davis Wax). It was one of my best experiences in the Smokies. Not knowing quite what to expect, I hiked from Newfound Gap to Peck’s Corner to connect with the crew, who had hiked in the day before. About four miles from the Hughes Ridge trailhead I bumped into members of the crew clearing brush along the AT with hand sickles and loppers. I hiked down to the Park Service maintenance cabin near the Peck’s Shelter where they had set up a basecamp. This SWEAT was composed of seven crew members with two ATC leaders. Most of the volunteers were college students (who walked me into the ground every day and were experiencing withdrawal because of no cell phone service!) The crew also included a few folks who just love the AT and took vacation time to work on the Trail. Each day we got up at daybreak, hiked out about five miles and



Welcome New AT Ridgerunner!

We are delighted to have Matthew Henderson join the ATC as Ridgerunner for the second half of this season. In his own words:

“My name is Matthew Henderson and I have the honor of being the new Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s Ridgerunner out in the Great Smokey Mountains National Park. I’ve always been an adamant hiker, backpacker, and traveler, so I’m very excited to start getting out on the trail! I recently graduated from Florida Gulf Coast University with my bachelor’s degree in Biology with a concentration in Organismal and Ecological Studies. During my undergraduate years I got involved in a number of extracurricular activities, such as being the President of the FGCU Wildlife Club, volunteering and researching white-handed gibbons at the Talkin’ Monkey Project, and working as a Student Naturalist for our Colloquium department. These years of learning, teaching, and working in the environmental field helped cement my goal of becoming an environmental biologist. I also just finished spending a year abroad, which included a three-month internship working at an animal sanctuary in Thailand, working and backpacking around Australia, and then traveling around the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. I hope to bring my years of experience and my drive to improve the natural world here to the Great Smoky Mountains and the Appalachian Trail. “



began working our way back clearing brush, blowdowns and working on water bars. It was a great experience. For the most part the crew members did not realize the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club did so much for the AT and were very appreciative of our efforts. An overview of work accomplished included clearing brush from Dry Sluice Gap to the Hughes Ridge trailhead, cleaning and repairing all waterbars and pruning back limbs and overhanging vegetation along this section. If you get the chance next summer, take the opportunity to connect with SWEAT and give them a hand. It’s tough but rewarding!

Steve Dunkin

Peck’s Corner to False Gap Maintainer



Steve helping out with SWEAT Crew (*photo courtesy of Davis Wax*)



Base Camp (*photo courtesy of Davis Wax*)

Welcome again Matthew, and thank you for what you are doing! Look for Matthew on the AT; his contact info is: msstter1@gmail.com.

AT Work Trips from 7/11/17- 8/15/17

7/11 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap - Responded to Dick Kettle's report of vandalized rock/stone waterbars near NFG. This vandalizing took place between June 19 and July 3. Assessed the first 14 rock/stone waterbars and decided what to correct and what not to address at this time. The first rock waterbar was totally reconstructed and reset at much lower height as to not be a trip hazard This was a vandalized waterbar. The 2nd rock waterbar needed to be totally reconstructed as it was too high and beginning to collapse. Rebuilt to proper height. The 3rd waterbar was vandalized and needed totally reset to proper height. We added a locust step where erosion had made the first step northbound much too high. We were able to find the log near the trail head so put it to use.

7/11 - Maury Hudson, Shawn Hudson - Stekoah Gap to Locust Cove Gap - Hiked from Stechoah Gap to the end of the rhodo tunnel just south of Locust Cove. Cleared several low-hanging rhodo branches and brushed out trail corridor on the way back to Locust Cove.

7/12 - Don Dunning - Mulch Operations - Packed mulch to Mt. Collins shelter privy and to Icewater Spring shelter privy. On return to trailhead, began routine trail maintenance between Sweat Heifer trail junction and Boulevard trail junction.

7/12 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap - Continued fixing vandalized rock waterbars. The 4th, 5th and 7th waterbar from Newfound Gap were reset to lower height. The removed stone in the 6th waterbar was reset, the waterbar will need to

be lowered at later date. Removed dead root in existing waterbar to enable greater exit flow of water off the trail. Had to sit out a one-hour rain delay, returned to work after rain. Cut a broken limb that was on trail.

7/13 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap- Painted AT blazes North and South. Cut uphill vegetation and overhead branches. Cleaned waterbars and cut saplings that hikers have pulled down as well as heavy rain has brought down.

Removed small trees that were growing out of the rock retaining wall; the roots had begun to destroy the Treadway. Filled the hole and will keep a watch on this section. Trimmed the branches on an uprooted leaning tree at about .4 mile from NFG. In time this tree may come down on it's own, seems sturdy enough now.

7/18 - Cindy Crandall, Greg Crandall - Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap - Removed 6 large blowdowns; cleaned shelter and privy; removed approximately 4 pounds of trash from shelter; cut back vegetation from the up side of the trail and across the ridge for approximately 1 mile.

7/18 - Don Dunning - Mulch Operations - Packed mulch to Icewater Spring shelter privy. Refilled mulch buckets and cleaned privy. On the return to the trailhead, completed routine trail maintenance between Sweat Heifer trail junction and Boulevard trail junction. Special thanks to Chloe DeCamara and Javier Salazar from ATC for helping to pack mulch, and making this workday particularly enjoyable.

7/19 - Don Dunning - Mulch Operations - Packaged mulch for future transport to shelter privy sites. 20-lb bags for backpack supplied sites are staged at HQ Storage Shed, and 40-lb bags for trailrider use are staged at Elkmont Mulch Storage Tent.

7/21 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Mulch Operations - Hauled mulch to bins at Mt.Collins and then to Icewater Springs. Swept privies and made sure buckets were full.

7/21 - Pete Berntsen - False Gap to Newfound Gap - Minor brush trimming on the entire route. Cleaned water control devices between The Boulevard and Icewater Spring shelter. Minor drain touch- up to SW of Masa Knob. Filled 1.5 mulch buckets at the privy. Secured shelter sign at Icewater. Added two new rock steps approximately 0.2-mile NE of the shelter. Sign at SW entrance to Charlie's Bunion was leaning so removed sign, dug out dirt, and reset sign. Set sign with rocks, added two pieces of rebar, and placed large rocks around sign post. Cleaned drain just before sign and added one large step rock. Sign at NE end of Charlie's Bunion was leaning forward so set upright and secured with additional rocks. Added two carved rock steps about 0.1 mile NE of Dry Sluice Gap.

7/22 - Franklin LaFond, Jim Gehlhar - Stekoah Gap to Locust Cove Gap - Removed 7 blowdowns. Cut 1 waterbar and 5 step locust logs pieces and stacked 1/4 mile north of Simp Gap.

7/22 - James Fondren, Tom Howard - Newfound Gap to Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr - On the 21st brushed and on the 22nd cleaned water bars.

7/22 - Steve Dunkin - Pecks Corner to Dry Sluice Gap - Linked up with SWEAT crew (supervised by Davis Wax). There were two ATC staff and 7 crew. We set up base camp at maintenance building on Hughes Ridge Trail. Team brushed from Dry Sluice Gap to Hughes Ridge maintenance building. Cleaned and repaired 50+ water bars. Constructed several new water bars. Trimmed overhanging limbs from trail. Laid stones on two boggy areas of trail. Brushed around Peck's privy. Repaired rafter in Peck's shelter. Cleaned privy and filled two bins with mulch. *[See article above]*

7/23 - Bob Williams - Wright Gap to Wesser - Trimmed vegetation, cleaned water bars, removed fallen branches and one small tree from trail corridor.

7/26 - Don Dunning - Icewater Springs Privy - Packed mulch to Icewater Spring shelter privy. Cleaned privy and refilled mulch buckets. Performed routine trail maintenance as needed on return to trailhead. Met Mark & Janet Snyder also packing mulch to Icewater on return to trailhead both days! Thanks so much!

7/26 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Icewater Springs Privy - Packed mulch to Icewater Springs storage bin.

7/27 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap - Cleaned waterbars, added a waterbar, broke/smashed rock(s) to create a channel for water to flow to existing waterbar. Hammered off trip hazard rocks and went over the side to retrieve large stones that were put in place on National Trail Day. Placed large stones in eroding waterbar to slow down the collapse of waterbar. Created over 50 feet of 'thin water' trail surface. Continued to trim uphill vegetation and overhead branches. Added two steps in eroded area.

7/27 - Mike Harrington - Sassafras Gap (Pk) to Lewellyn Branch - Cut vegetation and cleared water bars.

7/29 - Randy Mitchell, Russell Redden - Low Gap to Cosby Knob Top - Trimmed overgrown weeds from trail. Cleared water bars in section. Inspected slide area north of shelter and took several pictures. Picked up small amount of trash at shelter and filled mulch buckets. Noted relocation of bear cables at shelter. Took several pictures of slide area.

7/30 - Franklin LaFond - Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap - Worked with the Konnorock Crew on the Brown Fork relocation project.

7/30 - Mark Shipley - Cosby Knob Top to Camel Gap - Cleared vegetation from Camel Gap to Cosby Knob Shelter.

7/30 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap - Rebuilt a damaged waterbar, inspected a leaning tree to determine if it is an imminent threat and decided it should hold for a while. The tree is leaning due to the waterbar sending water which is undermining

the root system. Finished vegetation clearing, may not need any more effort on vegetation this hiking season. Took a sledge and chisel to numerous large boulders to create a pathway between the boulders.

7/30 - Phyllis Henry, John Knox, Ed Owens, Doug Pitner - Spruce Fir to Sugarland Mt Tr

- Cleaned shelter and privy, filled mulch buckets and leveled cone in privy. Cleaned waterbars and cut back vegetation. Carried rocks to several muddy spots.

8/2 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap - Lowered a locust waterbar which had a high trip edge and below this waterbar added a locust step. Back filled the step with buckets of rock and dirt. Had to carry the log about .4 mile to make the step. Also, hid another log to be used later, a smaller log. Sawed many dead roots Spoke with Davis Wax and asked for his input on steps at .3 mile up the trail(North). He suggested a major work project to correct and prevent people from actively vandalizing the steps.

8/3 - Edward Fleming - Mt Cammerer Side Tr to Sunup Knob - Cut back encroaching vegetation. Cleared waterbars and drainages.

8/3 - Pete Berntsen - Pecks Corner to Dry Sluice Gap - Checked blowdowns previously reported by Davis Wax, S.W.E.A.T. Crew. The one located at 0.1 mile SW of False Gap was reported as a hazard tree by me last year. It did fall and was partially blocking the trail but was removed. The large hazard tree reported by Davis Wax included photo and is resting on the trunk with about 15 feet extending out past the trunk and the top of the tree is solidly on the ground. Most hikers did not realize that it was over the trail. I attached a winch from near the large trunk to the most solid tree in the area which left the winch pulling at about a 45 degree angle. I tightened the winch as much as I could and only heard the tree creak slightly. I don't believe that this tree is as dangerous as the one left last year. It will be a dangerous process to remove. I also removed two

approximate six-inch diameter blowdowns between False Gap and Pecks. I filled the mulch buckets at Pecks. Shelter and privy area are clean.

8/4 - Rich Crompton, Diane Petrilla, Eric Keller - Goshen Prong Tr to Welch Ridge Tr

Three 20lb bags of mulch were taken to the Double Springs shelter. Privy and shelter areas were cleaned, privy buckets filled, bear lines/hooks checked and 5lb of trash was packed out. Waterbars and vegetation were in good shape between Goshen and Double Springs. All waterbars were cleared between Double Springs and Welch Ridge, but vegetation was only trimmed between Double Springs and 0.9 miles North of Welch Ridge. We also hung a few packs left unattended at the shelter on the bear line and later educated hikers on bear safety.



Eric and Rich at Double Springs Gap Shelter after cleaning up. *(photo courtesy of Diane Petrilla)*

8/5 - Franklin LaFond, "Hopeful" Powell, Wayne Powell - Fontana Dam to Yellow Creek Gap - Cut 19 blowdowns from this section. Cut a step notch in a 35+ in diameter blowdown.

8/6 - Franklin LaFond - Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap - Worked with Konnorock Crew Week 2 on the Brown Fork relocation project.

Crew completed 500 feet of new sidehill trail.
8/7 - Phyllis Henry - **Other Work** - Met with new Ridgerunner Matthew Henderson and Christine Hoyer. Delivered supplies needed for shelters and privies.

8/13 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - **Icewater Springs Privy** - Transported mulch for privy.

8/14 - Patti Grady, Diane Petrilla - **Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead** - Cleaned waterbars. Trimmed all vegetation. Placed deterrent logs.

Please send any items of interest, photos (**we love to publish your Work Trip photos!**), and event notifications for the ATMC Newsletter to Diane Petrilla at petrillad@gmail.com. Thank you for **ALL** of the work you do!

Maintenance 'Minders
Guidelines for drainage and Treadway stability

Part 1

Treadway- A well-drained Treadway is one covered with leaf litter, with waterbars and grade dips free of sediment build-up, and no standing water or muddy areas.

Sidehill- On sidehill sections, Treadway should be slightly outsloping, allowing water to drain downhill, across the Trail. Outslope should be restored whenever the tread becomes rutted and channels water.

Ruts- Mineral soil erosion (rutting) should be less than 3 inches deep.

Waterbars and drainage ditches- Waterbars and their drainage ditches should rest solidly in place, clear of silt and debris, and should be cleaned [at least] twice per year, once after the Spring rainy season, and again after the leaves have fallen.

Dips- Grade dips should be distinctly mounded, clear of silt and debris, and cleaned twice per year.

Run-off ditches- Waterbar ditches and grade-dip run-off ditches need to be at least a foot wide and continue far enough off the AT so the water runs away from the Trail. Drainage ditches should be clear of silt and debris and cleaned twice per year. They should be 1 ft. wide and 1 ft. deep and have sloping sides, so that they do not cave in.

Turnpike- Turnpike should be firm, with solid cribs, and should be recrowned once per year or when it becomes rutted.

Culverts- Culverts should be clear of obstructions, solid, and cleaned twice per year.

To be continued.....

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