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November 2017

AT Maintenance- Saturday November 4

The November AT Work Trip will take place along the AT from Davenport Gap toward the Mt. Cammerer Fire Tower. We will work to return the trail tread to its proper location and improve water drainage in the area. The work will require cleaning water bars and drainage features on the trail with brush removal. The section of trail from the trailhead to the shelter was worked on in October, and we will continue above where that group stopped. Participants will need to dress for the weather and bring work gloves, lunch and water. Hike approx. 5 miles, rated Moderate. Meet at **Comcast, 5720 Asheville Hwy, Knoxville** at 8am. Drive 100 miles RT. { @ 4¢/mile = \$4 }
Leader: Steve Dunkin,
jsdunkin@roaneschools.com , 865-202-3286.

Note ALL ATMC Sawyers!

The autumn hurricane related storms have brought down numerous blowdowns on the AT in the Smokies. We have been coordinating with the NPS to schedule a chainsaw use window for us this fall to remove as many of the blowdowns as possible before winter sets in. **We don't have the dates just yet but Christine Hoyer has indicated that she is requesting a time period in November for us to get out there. Please anticipate this in you plans for November activities** and try to hold some time available to help us. We expect to schedule one or two overnight trips since some of the blowdowns are in remote areas and with shorter daylight hours they are not accessible to work on as a day trip. We will

announce the exact dates when we know them and will ask for your assistance as crew leaders or crew members. Thank you! For questions, contact Dick Ketelle at rhketelle@comcast.net.

NNF Blowdown Inventory Winter 2018

We are still recruiting maintainers and hikers to help assess anticipated trail damage over the Winter 2017-18 between Fontana and Wesser (our 30 miles of AT in the NNF). **We need a trail inventory so that we can plan our blowdown removal work the first Saturday in March. It will take about three hikes to cover all 30 miles but all three are easily hiked as car shuttles; we can help with suggestions for segments and shuttles. We hope to get at least six volunteers to do this.** We have had a couple of folks volunteer so far (Thank You!) but would like a few more. They would be asked to send us a report listing the size and location of blowdowns. Keep in mind that the "Dragon" on SR 129 rarely freezes and it traverses relatively lower elevations. If you are interested, please contact: George Ritter rittergeo@gmail.com or Diane Petrilla petrillad@gmail.com.

Clingmans Dome Road closes December 1

Those of you who have AT sections accessed off of Clingmans Dome Rd., please remember to check your water bars and prep your section for Winter as best as possible before December 1, 2017 when the road closes.



AT Work Trips from 9/10/17- 10/14/17

9/10 - Bob Williams - Wright Gap to Wesser -

Trimmed vegetation, cleared fallen tree about halfway through section, cleaned water bars and other drains, and re-cut a few that had gotten silted over.

9/16 - Pete Berntsen - False Gap to

Newfound Gap - Cleared debris from trail left by hurricane. Cleared a few small blowdowns but three large trees and one small tree remain. The small tree is located less than 0.1 mile SW of Sweat Heifer and is hanging by a little wood but I was not able to pull it down. The first large blowdown is located about 0.1-mile NE of Icewater Spring and is about 16 inches in diameter. Branches were removed so can easily hike under. The second and third blowdowns are located less than 0.1 mile NE of the first Sawtooth (0.3 mile NE of Dry Sluice Gap). The second is about 20 inches in diameter and is now easy to hike under. The third is about 26 inches in diameter and rests solidly on its stump. It does not have great clearance but one man of 6-ft 4-in got under it without removing his pack. At least three other trees were taken out with this one and all were cleared including one of 18-inch diameter. Repaired 2 rock steps 0.2-mile NE of Icewater Shelter. Filled one mulch bucket and swept out privy. At a location about one mile NE of Dry Sluice Gap, rehabilitated about 85 feet of trail including leveling the top of the rock where I had previously carved two steps and adding two water drains along a 10-foot section that had standing water. Also improved a rock area about 10-inches long that I started to carve last year.

9/18 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder -

Boulevard Tr to Newfound Gap - Inspected the trail for storm damage. Did have a few downed limbs and branches on trail. Cut and removed a total of 6 limbs that had come down. Also, checked out the privy to make sure

it was clean and stocked with mulch. Only needed to top off one bucket. Checked the mulch container and no more visible moisture had dampened the mulch. If a dry workday was set for Icewater Springs the bin could be left opened to dry.

9/19 - Maury Hudson - Stekoah Gap to

Locust Cove Gap - Walked trail to identify any new blowdowns after Tropical Storm Irma passed by the previous week.

9/20 - Wayne Williams, John McCarter -

Collins Gap to Mt Love - We brushed the whole section, removed a few small blowdowns, and cleaned about half of the waterbars.

9/23 - Pete Berntsen - Dry Sluice Gap to

Boulevard Tr - With Ridge Runner Matt's assistance, corrected water flow across path from shelter to bear cables and lowered area beneath cables to improve water flow and prevent bears from being able to reach packs hanging from cables. Used excess dirt to help protect tree roots. We also used a winch to move tree that was over the trail about 0.1-mile NE of Icewater Spring so that the butt of the tree is on the same side of the trail as where the top of the tree is hung-up. Approximately one-mile NE of Dry Sluice Gap, rehabilitated about 200 feet of trail to include adding one rock step and three carved rock steps.

9/30 - Dick Ketelle - Trail Assessments -

Inspected two large blowdowns reported by John Knox. Both are located between Lower Mt Cammerer Trail Jct and the CCC walls. The first (about a quarter mile above Lower Mt Cammerer Jct) is a 15 -18 inch diameter dead oak which is about head high over the trail. Horses are bypassing and are starting to do resource damage. The other is located just below the CCC wall and is an 18-inch diameter live birch tree with fairly massive root ball comprised of good size rocks and soil.

These trees need chainsaw permissions and a work crew of several folks to deal with the root ball. Also, there is a lot of encroaching rhododendron and dog hobble from the Mt. Cammerer side trail down through the switchbacks within the upper 1.5 miles. This brush needs to be cut back about 3 feet on each side of the trail. Lower down, between Chestnut Br and Lower Mt Cammerer Tr large rhododendron on the upper side of the trail needs to be cut because it is drooping down and is too low for trailrider passage. Winter snow and ice will drag it down to interfere with hikers. Waterbars and drains need attention throughout this section.

9/30 - Steven Epps - Yellow Creek Gap to Cody Gap - Cleared brush throughout the trail, waterbar maintenance, one side hill redug, and removed three trees from the trail. Except for one blazed tree that is still standing but in danger of falling, all blowdowns have been removed.

10/1 - Alec Holtzclaw, Jack Bray - Miry Ridge to Thunderhead - Cleared 6 large blowdowns. Raked all waterbars along trail.

10/6 - Pete Berntsen - Ice Water Springs Shelter - Carried mulch to privy. Worked with Ridge Runner Matt to: Clean out privy position #1 and move "Head" from position #3 to position #1. Removed berm to improve drainage from ramp to privy. Added a drain on path from shelter to bear cables and used dirt from the new drain to fill in new step on south entrance to shelter and add dirt near that entrance where rocks had been placed. Removed old nails and broken end-plate and added new end to seat near south entrance. Carried out old nails and wood from seat and 19 pounds of privy trash.

10/7 - Pete Berntsen, Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder, Marie Yao, Fawn Landrum, Peter Landrum, Neil Snapp, Diane Petrilla, Sylvia

Fouty, George Gates - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap - For this first Saturday Work Trip, 10 maintainers, led by Pete Berntsen, hiked about 1.3 miles north from Newfound Gap on the AT. Treadway was improved by evening out rock-outcroppings on trail itself, and 11 new rock steps were created. A new rock waterbar and waterdrain were created, as well as a second water drain. Side hill was dug out to encourage less "migration" of the trail downslope. Gargoyle deterrent rock added to downhill edge of trail. We were proud to welcome 2 maintainers from great distances- Florida and Missouri!



A portion of the 10 Maintainers on the October 7 Work Trip, including a broken mattock head from all the hard work!

10/13 - Diane Petrilla, Steve Dunkin, Allie Parker, Emily Newcombe, Breanna LaTondre, Matt Dorrah - Mt Love to Clingmans Dome - With this enthusiastic group of students from Virginia Tech, we cleared all waterbars, removed trip hazards, trimmed vegetation, and hand-sawed through 3 blowdowns, each about 8-12 inches in diameter. We were able to physically move an additional blowdown off the trail. A small fire ring was broken up.



Allie, Steve, Emily, Diane, Breanna, and Matt from Virginia Tech.



Emily, Breanna and Allie cleaning waterbars.

10/14 - Pete Berntsen, Allie Parker, Emily Newcombe, Breanna LaTondre, Matt Dorrah - Davenport Gap to Chestnut Br Trail - On this second day with the Virginia Tech students, work was done to clean water drains and clear brush from Davenport Gap up the trail for 2.0 miles. The first mile required little work but the area past the shelter needed quite a bit. Near the 2-mile point we cleared a 12-inch tree from over a 10-inch tree and smaller brush trees.

Thank You Note

We have received the following lovely thank you note from the Henderson family of Arkansas:

“Our family just wanted to write y’all and thank those most directly responsible for keeping this trail up [The AT]. We maintain trail in our area and I shiver to think of maintaining with that much rainfall and that much hiker traffic! We backpacked Springer to Damascus area this summer and really enjoyed it all. Thank you so much for your efforts on the trail. What y’all do is essential to the possible hike and wonderful in its thoroughness over such a distance.”



The Hendersons

Thanks to this family for acknowledging the work of so many!

Maintenance 'Mindors

We have shared information in the last couple of Newsletters about Water Behavior on the Trail. Here are some Conditions to **AVOID**, and note in your "Trail Conditions" section that are problematic, need addressing, and are related to water behavior and erosion.

Eroding- Washing out into a gully. Compaction alone may cause a 2- to 4- inch gully. If a gully is deeper than that, with silt particles and loose rock in the gully, it is actively eroding.

Widening- Trampling of vegetation bordering the treadway, and consequent trail widening, may precede or follow the formation of a gully caused by erosion.

Divided- Multiple treadways worn by hikers bypassing poor footing or water running in the Treadway are undesirable.

Running water- Water running down the Treadway, especially in good weather, is a problem.

Breaking down- Soil breaking down on the outside edge of a graded footway, causing the treadway to narrow, indicates a problem.

Gullied- Gullies on a graded sidehill, causing water to run down the trail, rather than off the outsloping edge, indicate an erosion problem.

Short-cut- Switchback shortcuts, where woodland vegetation is trampled and soil eroded, are undesirable.

Clogged- Clogged waterbars or grade dips that no longer divert water from Treadway need to be repaired.

Deteriorating- With loose waterbars, steps or cribs.

Loosening- With cribs or steps not retaining soil

Collapsing- With cribs dislodged by saplings.

To remedy the Treadway problems above, use steps, cribs, sidehill construction or reconstruction, grade dips, coweeta dips, or waterbars. (*More on these later!*)

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

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