



April 2018

A.T. Maintenance Work trip- Saturday April 7

We will remove blowdowns from the trail within day-hike distance from trailheads. Our certified chain sawyers and/or crosscut sawyers will need assistance for limb lopping and removing cut brush from the trail. Specific work areas will be determined in March, based on locations with the greatest need. Participants need to be aware of the mountain weather forecast and bring appropriate clothing, work gloves, lunch, water, and perhaps a vacuum bottle of a hot beverage. Although returning to the trailheads before dark is anticipated, it is always a good idea to pack a headlamp or flashlight. Meet at the Sugarlands Visitors Center at 8:00 am. Participants will need to wear sturdy footwear and bring work gloves, lunch, snacks, and water. If you have a hardhat, ear protection, and/or safety glasses, please bring those as well. **Please pre-register with leader so that appropriate tools will be available and team assignments can be planned.**

Leader: Dick Ketelle, 678-464-3380, rhketelle@comcast.net

ATMC Meeting- Wednesday March 28

The Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee of the SMHC will meet on Wednesday March 28 at 6:30pm at TnBank in Maryville (1311 W Lamar Alexander Pkwy, Maryville, TN). There are many topics to discuss including planning for National Trails Day on Saturday June 2, 2018, the Spence privy project, mentoring new maintainers, etc. All new maintainers are welcome and encouraged to attend!

Do you need help with your Section?

As time goes on, we need to be training and mentoring the “next generation” of maintainers! If you are interested in some help with your section, and perhaps eventually having someone else lead maintenance on it, please communicate with me. In addition, if you are willing to mentor a future maintainer for your section, let me know. Perhaps you want to keep your section for now, but may be willing to show a new maintainer “the ropes?” Let me know! It’s good to be planning for the future now! petrillad@gmail.com

Are you willing to help with Volunteer Groups?

In recent years, we have seen an increased interest from different volunteer groups (colleges, other hiking clubs, etc.) in working with the SMHC A.T. Maintainers to help out with regular trail maintenance or special projects. We have been working with a few of our own interested Maintainers, the ATC, the GSMNP and the NNF to develop volunteer resources and a “checklist” for us to use as we receive these requests. Taking time to work with volunteers is a very special gift of your time, but we feel strongly that this helps promote stewardship of the A.T., as well as inspiring potential future maintainers. If you are willing to volunteer occasionally to work with visiting groups (with assistance), please let me know. This will help us develop our list of resource folks! Thank you! petrillad@gmail.com

Spring is here- please remember to start checking and cleaning those waterbars when your section is accessible!



*****Update on Hgwy 28 closure in NC: In December, a rockslide closed NC 28 at the Rainbow Falls location, between Hike Inn and Cable Cove campground. The road has now re-opened, but traffic will be one lane during daytime hours to complete work in the area.***



Southern Partnership Meeting

The Southern Partnership meeting of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy was recently held at Hungry Mother State Park in Marion, VA. (March 9-11). Regional Partnership Committee representatives from the SMHC/ATMC who attended were Cindy Spangler, Diane Petrilla, and Franklin LaFond. Franklin is the current VP of the Southern Regional Organization (SORO) RPC, and will be President in 2019. In addition, Rebekah Young, ATC Stewardship Council representative from our club attended. This meeting allowed wonderful exchanges on information between different clubs in the Southern partnership (Virginia with 7 Clubs, Tennessee, North Carolina and Georgia with 5 different Clubs) as well as with the ATC, National Park Service, National Forest Service leadership, representatives from A.T. Communities and others. The depth and breadth of the interfacing groups that care for the A.T. in all of their different ways was impressive and inspiring, and much was learned!

A.T. Work Trips from 2/17/18 to 3/15/18

2/17 - Diane Petrilla, Eric Keller - Stekoah Gap to Cheoah Bald - This was a blowdown surveillance trip in preparation for chainsaw work in the NNF in March. We documented 9 blowdowns or branch obstructions in this 5.5 miles, some of which can likely be removed with a handsaw. We cleared many downed limbs from the trail, and picked up trash in various areas. Very rainy, windy and blustery day! Saw two Nobos who had started early February at Springer. Admired the fantastic work that has gone into these two sections with trail structures and rehab.

2/18 - Steve Dunkin, Ernie Wiles - Low Gap to Camel Gap - Hiked up Low Gap from Walnut Bottoms to Low Gap then on to Cosby Shelter for the night. Picked up micro trash and cleaned privy. Enjoyed playing with the brand new bear cables-very nice. Hiked on to Camel Gap and pushed aside a few minor tree limbs and small blowdowns.

2/21 - Gary Bryant - Fontana Dam to Yellow Creek Gap - Blowdown survey in preparation for March 3 work trip in NNF. Info on number and size of blowdowns forwarded to Franklin LaFond.

2/24 - Mike Harrington - Sassafras Gap (Pk) to Lewellyn Branch - Cleared waterbars on my section between Lewellyn Branch and Sassafras Gap. Cleared blowdowns from trailhead on west side of Fontana Dam to Campsite #113. Carried out a little trash from #113 and re-clipped all the cables, which were hanging loose.

2/25 - Bob Williams - Wright Gap to Wesser - Between Wesser & Wright Gap: Cleaned water bars, removed old hanging snag near NOC that had been too high to cut. Tree slipped vertically, putting it in the trail corridor. Removed and no longer a danger. Inspected section for new blowdowns. Between Wright Gap and turn-around: Checked section for blowdowns needing chainsaw removal.

2/27 - Barbara Allen, Cody Leiding - Davenport Gap to Chestnut Br Trail - Cleaned water drainages and any debris on the trail. Dug out the water catchment pool at the shelter water source.

2/27 - Tim Ryan, Jay Schmid, John Harrison - Sunup Knob to Low Gap - Cleared waterbars and drainage areas, cut briars, trimmed vegetation and overhanging limbs, removed debris and fallen trees.

3/3 - Franklin LaFond, Russell Miller - Cody Gap to Brown Fork Gap - 4 teams set out from different points and removed a total of 21 blowdowns from this section. Removed trash from Locust Cove, Brown Fork Shelter, and Cody Gap. Filled mulch buckets at Brown Fork Privy. Rehab .3 miles of trail South of Stecoah Gap. [SEE BELOW ALSO]

3/3 - Edward Fleming, Maury Hudson - Stekoah Gap to Cheoah Bald - Cut out five blowdowns that were across the A.T. Picked up a bag full of litter near Locust Cove Gap.

3/3 - Keith Mertz, Don Dunning, Cindy Spangler - Yellow Creek Gap to Cody Gap - Chain sawed out about 8 blowdowns on A.T. and manway access trail. Cleared trail of limbs and branches.

3/3 - Pete Berntsen, Neil Snepp, Peter Landrum, Fawn Landrum - Stekoah Gap to Locust Cove Gap - Removed forked, cross-trail blowdown of approximate 6-inch and 18-inch diameters. Corrected for some trail creep for a distance of about 0.3 mile. Corrected one large outward sloping step and added two landing steps to help protect tree roots.



Don, Franklin, Keith, Peter, Fawn, Russ, Neil getting ready for March 3 NNF blowdown removal!



Maury (above) and Ed (below) at work



Franklin at work

3/4 - Franklin LaFond - Other Work - Picked and returned chainsaws, PPE, and first aid kits for 3/3/18 sawyer work trip. Dropped off and picked up SMHC NP chainsaw to be tuned up and chains sharpened at Maryville Co-Op.

3/10 - Judy Wade, Keith Mertz, Melanie Harmon - Fontana Dam to Route 28 - Filled in root ball hole on side of trail. Cut back briars and encroaching vegetation. Removed dead tree limbs. Refurbished four blazes.

3/11 - Cindy Spangler - Outreach & Education - Checked in student work crew from Warren Wilson College.

3/14 - Diane Petrilla, Pete Berntsen, Warren Wilson College Group - Davenport Gap to Lower Mt Cammerer Tr - On March 12, working with an enthusiastic group of students from Warren Wilson College, we dug out many waterbars, clipped low-hanging rhododendron branches, cleared small blowdowns, picked up trash at DG shelter and dug out water pipe area there. We worked about .75 miles beyond (S) of Lower Mt. Cammerer Tr. On March 14, we actually worked about 1.5 mile N of Davenport, into the Pisgah NF (not maintained by our club), with Pete Berntsen giving instruction as well. Water drainages were improved, branches clipped. (See photos below.)



Great job Don and Keith!



Maintenance 'Mindors

For the last 2 months we have published Guidelines for Trail Clearing and Conditions to Avoid (Trail-clearing problems that would need to be addressed). This list completes the latter category:

Trimmed Neatly- With trailside vegetation trimmed to look like a hedge [*avoid this*]

Inadequately cleared- Cleared to a height of less than 8 feet.

Covered- Covered with cuttings or brush piles that make the footway unsightly, hide dangerous holes or roots, make footing unstable, or pose a fire hazard.

Bordered by stumps or stubs of cut limbs- Bordered by items that catch on hikers' packs or clothing or that might injure a hiker who trips or falls.

Obscuring vistas- With vistas obscured by growth.

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

SAVE THE DATE!

***National Trails Day, Saturday June 2, 2018.
More to follow!***

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!

Warren Wilson Volunteers at Davenport Gap and with Pete Berntsen