

# Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee

## Smoky Mountains Hiking Club



August 2018

### AT Maintenance Work Trip- Saturday August 4

For this work-trip we will backpack mulch to the Double Spring shelter, and then perform trail maintenance on the return to the trailhead as needed. At several of the AT shelters in GSMNP, we have privies that require mulch to support the composting process and transporting the mulch to these sites is a critically important need. Mulch will be neatly packaged in plastic bags for backpacking. After we deliver the mulch to the shelter, we will perform additional trail maintenance (cutting back vegetation, cleaning waterbars/drains, etc.), as we return to the trailhead. 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.

***Please consider coming out to help in this important task!*** Hike: 6 miles RT, rated moderately difficult due to return hike up Mt. Buckley. Meet at Clingmans Dome parking lot at 9:00 am. Drive: 100 miles RT {@4¢ = \$4}. Please pre-register with trip leader so that appropriate mulch and tools will be available. Leader: Diane Petrilla, [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com), 931-224-5149.

### Important Topics from recent ATMC Meeting, and Upcoming Meeting Date

Several very important upcoming projects were discussed at the recent ATMC meeting on 7-18-18.

1. **Spence Field Privy Project:** Timelines are becoming finalized on building the new privy at Spence field. Work officially begins 2 weeks before the airlift of materials to Spence, which will be either on 9-13/14, 9-24/25, or 9-27/28. **Please be on the lookout for e-mail requests for help at various stages of the project, as the need arises.** In addition, the next ATMC meeting (see below) will focus on finalizing the arrangements for the Spence privy build.

2. **Davenport Gap Shelter roof replacement:** Plans are to use the November 3-4 (First Saturday Work Trip weekend) to wheel in roofing materials, transport old roof out, and build new roof at DG. More details will be in upcoming newsletters, but please mark your calendar to help, since many hands will be needed!

3. **Next ATMC Meeting:** August 22, 6:30pm, TN Bank, 1311 W Lamar Alexander Pkwy, Maryville, TN. Priority are details on all arrangements for preassembly, transport of materials to Cades Cove, airlift, and construction of the new privy at Spence Field.

For questions, contact [rittergeo@gmail.com](mailto:rittergeo@gmail.com).

### Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy Film Festival

SAHC, in conjunction with The Wildlife Society, is hosting a film festival (short films) at the Ijams Nature Center on Friday August 10, 2018 at 8pm (doors open 7:30pm). The event has been organized by Jay Leutze of the SAHC, and author of "Stand Up That Mountain". It will highlight awareness of public lands, including the A.T. as well as the reauthorization of The Land and Water Conservation Fund. The ATC, among others, is a co-sponsor, and SMHC will have a table at the event. Admission is free, and there will be a door prize raffle. Come out and have fun while learning about some important issues!

### Ben Barry Interim ATC Trail Facilities Manager for GSMNP

We welcome Ben Barry, currently ATC Trail Facilities manager for the Deep South ( GA, NC, TN), who is temporarily covering Javier Salazar's duties for the GSMNP. Javier has taken another position. Ben has already stepped up to help keep things on track for the

Spence Field privy project airlift, and we certainly appreciate that! We also thank Javier for his good work. Ben can be contacted at [bbarry@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:bbarry@appalachiantrail.org).



## A.T. Work Trips from 6/11/2018 to 7/15/2018

6/11 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - **Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap** - Created four drainage waterbars on steps in the first 200 yards. The water will not pool on the steps. Cleaned a step where an old drain once existed and made it much wider for thin water escape. Back filled a locust waterbar and added a step and gargoyled the area to force people to stay off the edge.

6/14 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - **Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap** - Repaired a rock waterbar, and lowered the stones to lessen the potential for a trip hazard. Repaired a locust step which served a purpose until the large tree uprooted the trail when it fell over. Widened the trail where the spring water always seeps across the trail. Moved a large stone in a rock bar creating a wider opening of travel.

6/15 - Dick Kettle, Ann Farrar - **Dry Sluice Gap to Gap W of Masa Knob** - Painted blazes and inspected NTD work following the torrential downpours that ended work in the area on June 2.

6/15 - Don Dunning - **Community Events** - Performed administrative tasks related to 22nd Annual Appalachian Trail Workday, including input to AHS National Trails Day website, preparing and distributing event registration materials, managing registrations, entry of registration data into database, and work crew planning.

6/15 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - **Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap** - Added two additional steps to complete the project started last time here. Added water drainage above the steps. Added another waterbar about 1.3 miles from NFG.

6/16 - Franklin LaFond - **Stekoah Gap to Locust Cove Gap** - Pruned vegetation, removed a couple small blowdowns, cleaned water drainage, added 1 new water drain.

6/21 - Pete Berntsen - **Dry Sluice Gap to Gap W of Masa Knob** - Hiked in after heavy rain so noted and repaired many drains between The Boulevard and West of Masa Knob. Cut grass between bear cables and privy at Icewater shelter. Also dispersed fecal cone and filled two mulch buckets in privy. Planned to empty bin #3 but found that both pairs of rubber gloves had holes so will reschedule. Cut thickest of grassy areas/blackberry canes and cleaned a few water drains between Dry

6/23 - James Fondren, Tom Howard - **Newfound Gap to Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr** - Brushing of trail.

6/26 - Don Dunning, Nancy Dunning - **Boulevard Tr to Sweat Heifer** - Packed mulch to Icewater Spring shelter privy. Moved privy seat to new position and cleaned out composted waste. Cleaned privy and refilled mulch buckets. Cleaned waterbars and drains and trimmed vegetation until afternoon thunderstorm chased us off the mountain.

6/29 - Dick Kettle, Ann Farrar - **Dry Sluice Gap to Gap W of Masa Knob** - Cut weeds and trimmed low hanging branches.

6/29 - Don Dunning, Nancy Dunning - **Boulevard Tr to Sweat Heifer** - Packed mulch to Icewater Spring shelter privy. Repainted AT blazes between Sweat Heifer trail junction and Boulevard trail junction. Performed general trail maintenance (cleaning waterbars/drains, cutting vegetation) on return to trailhead.

6/30 - Bob Williams - **Wright Gap to Wesser** - Trimmed, cleaned waterbars. Cleared one major trunk of the recent 4-tree blowdown about a mile N of the NOC trailhead. I sawed two of the four trunks, but could not move the second one I cut. GPS location noted in Trail Conditions report.

6/30 - Don Dunning - **Mulch Operations** - Mulch operations, including bagging mulch for future transport to privy sites, mulch pile & shelter maintenance, packing mulch to Icewater Spring and Double Spring shelter privies.

6/30 - Pete Berntsen - **False Gap to Dry Sluice Gap** - Finished painting trail blazes, cut grass, and trimmed brush in this two mile section of trail. Carried three pounds of trash from Icewater shelter.

7/1 - Taylor Weatherbee - **Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap** - Used my grandfather's scythe to trim briars and other foliage from trail. Cut one 8 inch tree from trail and left it in a good spot to be used later as a step.

7/2 - Jeff Cooper, Don Dunning - **Boulevard Tr to Sweat Heifer** - Cleaned water bars and drains, trimmed encroaching vegetation and trimmed overhanging limbs.

7/5 - Don Dunning - **Mulch Operations** - Packed mulch to Icewater Spring shelter and Mt. Collins shelter privies. Cut older blowdown/leaner north of Sweat Heifer trail junction and new blowdown just south of Indian Gap; chased off trail by late thunderstorm before I found tree between Indian Gap and Fork Ridge in recent RR report.

7/7 - Judy Wade, Cindy Spangler, Keith Mertz - **Fontana Dam to Route 28** - Cut back vegetation and briars. Removed two small trees from the trail.

**7/9 - Don Dunning, Nancy Dunning - Double Springs Gap Privy** - Packed mulch to Double Spring shelter privy. Mulch supply now at 1 bin about 80% full, 2nd bin empty. Refilled mulch buckets and cleaned privy. Limited pruning of blackberry/briars on return to trailhead.

**7/9 - Patti Grady, Diane Petrilla - Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead** - Cleaned waterbars, trimmed vegetation, brushed trail. Appreciated the blowdown removal from our section, done by Don Dunning! Beautiful clear and cool day high on the AT.



*Patti Grady, with beautiful cluster of Turks Cap Lily and lots of trimming tools!*

**7/11 - Cindy Spangler - Mt Love to Clingmans Dome** - Cut back encroaching grass, weeds, and briars. Shuttled a very nice couple from the Philippines back to their car at NFG.

**7/11 - Don Dunning - Cosby Knob Privy** - After being chased off the trail from their planned work projects due to bear activity, this amazing SWEAT crew volunteered to help with our mulch operations. We packed mulch to the Cosby Knob shelter privy, where the mulch supply was completely empty. This crew definitely lived up to the "E" in the SWEAT acronym - very elite hikers indeed. They helped pack an incredible amount of mulch to resupply the Cosby Knob shelter - improving the mulch supply from completely empty to half full!!!! Many thanks to Davis, Katie, and this entire outstanding SWEAT crew.

**7/12 - Diane Petrilla - Other Work** - Provided re-supply run to ATMC Shelter Survey team midway through their hike of AT in the Park. Reported an issue they had had to the Backcountry Office on my way home. Delivered gear to Cindy Spangler, who will do group pick up at end of Survey. Admired incredible trail work from NFG

towards Sweat Heifer (Mark and Janet Snyder's section)!

**7/12 - Pete Berntsen - Gap W of Masa Knob to Newfound Gap** - Performed minor brush clearing from 0.6 mile NE of Newfound Gap to area West of Masa Knob. Did major brush clearing from Charlies Bunion sign on the south end around the bunion to the sign on the north end where it connects back to the AT. Stabilized sign on north end of Bunion. South end sign was leaning on the bank. Removed rocks and dirt from where hole was supposed to be and placed sign on rock at the base of the hole. Stabilized sign with rocks and dirt. Cleaned ten water drains between West of Masa Knob and Icewater Spring. Carried mulch to Icewater privy and filled buckets so that there are now three full buckets and one storage bin is about three-quarters full.

**7/12 - Taylor Weatherbee - Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap** - Built 3 steps, one with a locust log and 2 with large rocks. Trimmed trail edges near summit. Spotted several more potential step locations where the existing step is too high.

**7/14 - Cindy Spangler - Other Work** - Transported the ATMC Shelter Survey team of 4 to Davenport Gap on July 9 where they began their AT hike (Davenport to Jakes Creek parking). Drove to Jakes Creek on Saturday, July 14, to pick up the team and return them to Knoxville.

**7/14 - Nathan Peck, Ed Peck - Goshen Prong Tr to Welch Ridge Tr** - Cleared blowdown at 0.2 mi S of Goshen Prong Tr & also cleared dead, leaning head-banger at 100 yds S of Goshen Prong Tr.

**7/14 - Randy Mitchell, Russell Redden - Low Gap to Cosby Knob Top** - Trimmed weeds and brush from trail. Cleaned water bars. Filled mulch buckets at Cosby Knob Shelter. Packed out trash (three pairs of socks, two pair of underwear and one perfectly good Sawyer bladder). Inspected repair of privy door from last trip. Sawed off 8 feet of fallen hemlock encroaching on trail north of slide area. Rolled the log off the trail. Cut some of blown down in next section trail north of Low Gap. Also cut 5 inch diameter locust blocking Low Gap trail about 1 mile from campground.



7/14 - Steve Dunkin, Neil Snapp, Ruann Wood, Amanda Beal - **Davenport Gap to Derrick Knob** - Thru-hiked a large portion of the AT in the Park, Davenport Gap to Derrick Knob inspecting shelters and privies, photographing conditions and logging inspection results for use in planning repairs. Inspection of Spence Field, Russell Field and Mollies Ridge shelters could not be done due to bear activity, and will be done at a later date. **Editor's Note: This event was a 5 night/6 day back-packing trip, coordinated by Steve Dunkin, to perform a much needed Shelter Survey for future repairs. Pre-planning was extensive, and we so appreciate these 4 maintainers who undertook this big project!**



Ruann, Neil, Steve and Amanda (L to R) preparing to begin at Davenport Gap, July 9.



Re-supply at Newfound Gap on July 12.

7/15 - Franklin LaFond, Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - **Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap** - Worked with Konnarock Trail Crew on the new .2 mile relocation being built north of the shelter. Cleared downed trees and brushy vegetation from Green Gap Rd so that crew van could get to camp area. Pruned vegetation from side trail up from Green Gap Rd to Brown Fork Shelter.

### **Maintenance 'Minders**

#### **Guidelines for Appalachian Trail Blazes**

- Paint 2 by 6 inch vertical, white rectangles.
- Neatly paint, with sharp corners and clean edges.
- Renew every 3 years, or as needed.
- Paint with high-gloss, outdoor, oil-based paint, exterior latex paint, or boundary marking ink.
- Print blazes on dry wood or rock surfaces prepared with a wire brush or paint scraper. Preference for blaze placement should be given to trees.
- Remove (this is preferable) or neutralize old blazes with flat, natural color paints on abandoned Trail sections.
- Blaze continuously between club-maintenance sections and along roads.
- Place at eye-height, facing approaching hikers, generally on the right side of the Trail.
- Place at regular intervals. Frequency is determined by the character of the Trail section and hiker safety. (Where the trail is conspicuous, place a blaze at 5 minute intervals, about 800- 1000ft. apart. In obscure areas, place blazes no more than 100 yards apart, but be sure that, except at junctions, along highways, or in open areas, you can never see more than one blaze at a time).

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**, and event notifications for the ATMC Newsletter to Diane Petrilla at [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com). Thank you for **ALL** of the work you do!