



April 2019

A.T. Maintenance Work Trip- Saturday April 6

In this month's "first Saturday" A.T. maintenance activity we will do light trail maintenance of the trail in areas north and south of Newfound Gap. Due to a delay in our chainsaw use window, we will be doing inventory of trail conditions, remove fallen branches and smaller blowdowns with hand tools, and if the ground is not frozen, we will be able to clear water bars and drains. Weather, and trail conditions permitting, we will try to cover the trail between Dry Sluice Gap trail junction southward to Clingmans Dome.

This trip will be an opportunity for people who want to know more about trail maintenance to get out and learn a little. *We encourage new maintainers to participate!*

We will meet at 8:00 a.m. at Sugarlands Visitor Center parking area near the restrooms and will form teams that may carpool to Newfound Gap. Watch weather conditions during the week prior and judge the clothing (and possibly traction devices for icy trail) you may want to have in addition to work gloves and appropriate footwear, lunch, and water. Drive: 25 Miles RT= \$1.25.

Leaders: Dick Ketelle (rhketelle@comcast.net) and Diane Petrilla (petrillad@gmail.com).

Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee Meeting

There will be a meeting of the ATMC on Wednesday **April 24, 2019 at 6:30pm at TNBank**, 1311 W Lamar Alexander Hgwy, Maryville, TN. Status of Spence project and log caches, National Trails Day, and several other issues will be discussed. If you have Agenda items, please send to rittergeo@gmail.com or petrillad@gmail.com. Thank you!

Ridgerunners already working hard!

If you receive the "**Fastfieldsupport**" by e-mail, you know our GSMNP Ridge Runners are already out on the A.T., documenting blowdowns, cleaning up the Trail and shelters, and educating day-hikers and thru-hikers about many, many things! If you see one of our ATC RRs on the Trail, please thank them for all of their hard work. Their bios were in the February 2019 ATMC Newsletter. Here are their schedules this year.

Maury Hudson: Wednesday- Saturday
David Schafer: Thursday- Sunday
Rick Rozands: Friday- Monday

Please watch for blowdown removal Work Trips notices soon!

We are waiting for finalization of the chainsaw window in the GSMNP. When we have that info (likely mid-April to mid-May), there will be information e-mailed regarding chainsaw and blowdown removal work trips. Our Sawyers need lots of help to clear the Trail of debris during their work, so even if you are not operating a saw, your participation is greatly appreciated! More information soon!

S.W.E.A.T. Crew Work Schedule this Summer

Below is the Smokies Wilderness Elite Appalachian Trail crew schedule thus far planned, starting in June. The ATC has hired David Underwood as Crew Leader, Mackenzie Haymaker as Assistant Crew Leader, and Maury Hudson as Camp Coordinator for S.W.E.A.T. and Rocky Top. The schedule for the latter will be published next month. S.W.E.A.T. helps us *significantly* in maintaining remote sections of the A.T. in the National Park- we could not take care of these parts of the Trail without them! Visits and participation by ATMC Maintainers are *always* welcome! Contact Stephen Eren at seren@appalachiantrail.org if you have any questions!



S.W.E.A.T. Crew Schedule

1	6/5 - 6/10	Sec. 1: Doe Knob to Big Abrams Gap (Mollies Ridge Shelter)
2	6/15 - 6/20	Sec 2: Big Abrams to Rocky Top (hill behind Russell Field Shelter)
3	6/25 - 6/30	Sec 3: Rocky Top to Starkey Gap (Beechnut Gap)
4	7/5 - 7/10	Sec 5: Dry Sluice Trail to Laurel Top Summit (False Gap)
5	7/15 - 7/20	Sec: 4: Starky Gap to Welch Ridge Trail (Dereck Knob Shelter)
6	7/25 - 7/30	Sec 6: Mt. Chapman to Laurel Top (Hughes Ridge)
7	8/4 - 8/9	Sec: 7: Mt. Chapman to Camel Gap (either Inadu Knob-dry- or Tricorner)
8	8/10 - 8/27	Break for Crew leaders and to have them host a training for clubs

A. T. Work Trips From 2/9/2019 to 3/15/2019

2/9 - Mark Buckles, Don Dunning, Jeff Cooper, Edward Fleming, Dick Ketelle, Franklin LaFond, Houston Phillips, Bill Pyle - **Training** - First Aid/CPR training completed for Sawyers who needed it (one was already certified) and mandatory safety talk given for chainsaw work by Ranger Hoyer, to all certified. Class conducted by NPS staff, Nick Yarnell and Mitchell Edwards.

2/16 - Bob Williams - **Wright Gap to Wesser** - Cleared 3 downed trees from trail, cleaned all water bars and drainage.

2/16 - Phillip Clarkson, Diane Petrilla - **Mulch Operations** - Filled 95 mulch bags with 40lbs. mulch each, for total at shed of 135 bags, in preparation for airlift to Pecks in March. 23 bags of 20lbs. each left at Maintainer shed for early Spring needs.



That's a lot of mulch!

2/21 - Phyllis Henry - **AT Mgt, Mtgs & Admin** - Participated in Ridgerunner Training. Bought supplies for privies and shelters.

2/22 - Edward Fleming - **Spence Project** - Drew a revised plan for the Spence Privy foundation.

2/23 - Mark Buckles, Paul Campbell, Jeff Cooper, Edward Fleming, Dick Ketelle, Franklin LaFond, Houston Phillips, Bill Pyle, Taylor Weatherbee, Anastasia Zeedyk - **Training** - Chainsaw training class conducted by Todd Sharkey of NNF for ATMC Sawyers needing certified or re-certified.

2/27 - Mike Harrington - **Sassafras Gap (Pk) to Lewellyn Branch** - Cleared waterbars and many small blowdowns. Cleared a way around two blowdowns that entirely block the trailbed. The other large ones not cleared are on or near the ground and can be stepped over by hikers. One major blowdown in my section will require chainsaw and pulaski work to recover a reasonable trailbed.

3/2 - Cindy Crandall, Greg Crandall - **Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap** - Cleared 18 blowdowns on this section, 3 by sliding them off trail, 15 by handsaw. Cleared 26 waterbars and trimmed vegetation, removed debris from trail.

3/2 - Franklin LaFond, Mark Buckles, Keith Mertz, Diane Petrilla, Bill Pyle, Neil Snapp, Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder, Bob Williams - **Cheoah Bald to Wright Gap** - Crew 1 cleared 25 blowdowns between Wright Gap and Grassy Gap. Dropped 5 hazard trees (dead pines) near Wright Gap. replaced 2 rotted steps on staircase N out of Wright Gap. Crew 2 cleared 15 blowdowns between Cheoah Bald and Grassy Gap. Crew also had to cut several trees from the Nolton Ridge FS road so they could get to their starting point.





Janet on Crew One with one of many blowdowns!



Bill, Mark and Keith, on Crew Two

3/2 - John H Gassler - Davenport Gap to Lower Mt Cammerer Tr - Removed brush, vines, and branches from trail. Removed several small trees and one 8" diameter tree from across trail.

3/3 - Franklin LaFond - Sassafras Gap Shelter - Carried in new shelter register. Cleaned privy seat, cleaned up trash around shelter and privy area. Removed a lot of smaller limb debris. Carried out 30+ pounds of trash.

3/9 - Cynthia Post, Jeff Wilson - High Pt E of Walker Gap to Yellow Creek Gap - Cleared small blowdowns & overgrowth from trail, cleaned Cable Gap Shelter including shelter, privy, firepit & surrounding area.

3/10 - Edward Fleming, Terry Martin - Mt Cammerer Side Tr to Sunup Knob - Cleared water bars and drainages, removed fallen limbs from trail, trimmed back encroaching vegetation, cut out one sizable hazardous blowdown, scattered an illegal fire ring and woodpile, packed out some litter.

3/10 - Franklin LaFond - AT Mgt, Mtgs & Admin - Attended ATC Regional Southern Partnership Conference, Black Mountain, NC. Presented 2024 and 2025 Konnorock projects. Discussed issues related to the ATC.

3/10 - Taylor Weatherbee - AT Mgt, Mtgs & Admin - Attended Southern Partnership Meeting Black Mountain, NC.

3/12 - Bob Palermo - Lewellyn Branch to Fontana Dam - 1) Cleaned 37 water bars 2) Cleared debris from trail in several places 3) Trimmed brush 4) Created a new diversion ditch. 5) Repaired slightly damaged tread from uprooted tree and created a second diversion ditch. 6) Repaired heavily damaged tread from an uprooted tree. Approximately 8 feet of tread had to be repaired. Added dirt to the downhill side of the tread to provided support. Filled in about half of the hole left by the uprooted tree. (See photos below).





Trail repair before.....



And after!

(photos courtesy of Bob Palermo)

3/13 - Taylor Weatherbee, Kristi Weatherbee - Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap - Hiked in on road to Fork Ridge Trailhead, then started work at Sugarlands Mountain trail, and came out at Collins Gap. Removed several small trees from the trail and cleaned some water bars.



**Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics First Principal –
Plan Ahead and Prepare**

As you may recall from last month's ATMC Newsletter, the SMHC Board of Directors voted to begin providing club members and maintainers information from the Leave No Trace Principals. In this way, we can all be better stewards of our fabulous National Park and National Forest, and hopefully educate others along the way!

The first outdoor ethics principal for Leave No Trace is to *Plan Ahead and Prepare*. As experienced hikers, we all have interesting stories of unexpected events on the trail. This principal reminded me of a recent hike up the Big Creek Trail. As I was walking up to BCS 36/37 to pick up trash I met two backpackers coming down the trail. I could not help but notice that one gentleman had on one shoe and a flip-flop with tape wrapped around it. As he related to me, he and his friend were new to the Park and backpacking. They decided to hike up Gunther trail that morning and he did not have water shoes. Apparently he tried to throw his brand new \$200 hiking boots across Big Creek at the trail junction. As he related, he threw the first shoe, which hit a branch and was immediately floating downstream toward the Waterville Power Plant. A kind and experienced backpacker gave him the flip-flop and tape to get him down the trail.

So, the Leave No Trace principal of Plan Ahead and Prepare can come in handy in any number of situations. The full set of principals includes:

- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you'll visit.
- Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.
- Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.
- Visit in small groups. Spilt larger parties into smaller groups.
- Repackage food to minimize waste.
- Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of rock cairns, flagging or marking paint.

Courtesy of Steve Dunkin

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!