May 2019

A.T. Maintenance Work Trip- Saturday May 4

We will start at Davenport Gap and work up towards the Mt. Cammerer side trail. We plan to clean waterbars, inspect Davenport Gap shelter, trim vegetation, clear any manageable blowdowns, and perform light trail maintenance. A moderate hike of 6-8 miles is typical. Meet at Comcast Service Center, 5720 Asheville Hgwy, Knoxville, TN. at 7:30am or Davenport Gap trailhead at 9:00am. Drive 120 miles RT= $6.00. Tools will be provided. Leader Jeff Cooper, 865-804-5065

Let’s Show Support for Konnorock!

ATC’s Konnorock Crew is coming to the Nantahala National Forest soon. This crew is made up of volunteers from across the country and often includes members of other trail associations. This annual crew is utilized to build treadway structures, construct new trail segments, and perform extensive trail rehab. This is a great opportunity to learn or improve log and rock skills from trained ATC crew leaders and help improve this section of trail.

This year’s project is a 1/4 mile long rehab project, 1 mile south of the Fontana Marina. The hike to the worksite is moderate. The crew will be on location the dates listed below. The crew will be leaving from the Marina around 8:30 each morning and returning around 4:00 each afternoon. You may car camp with the crew at Cable Cove Campground or at the Fontana Hilton Shelter for any number of nights if you would like. Participants will need to wear sturdy footwear and bring work gloves, lunch, snacks, and plenty of water. If you have a hardhat, shin guards, and/or safety glasses, please bring those as well.

Dates: May 2-4, June 6-8 and June 14-16.

For more details, contact: Franklin LaFond 678-464-3380 ox97GaMe@aol.com

Please see NATIONAL TRAILS DAY

Registration on last page for Saturday June 1, 2019! Registration is free this year, but registration is required, and the deadline is May 15. Please contact Diane Petrilla if you are willing to be a crew leader, or for any questions at petrillad@gmail.com or 931-224-5149. Look forward to seeing you!

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!

Spring Maintenance Reminder and Alerts

It’s time to be out on your sections performing routine Spring maintenance work, including clearing waterbars, removing debris from the Trail, and repairing steps, checkdams and waterbars as needed. **Please note:** if your section includes a shelter, or you hike by a shelter, on the A.T., please check the shelter and the mulch/tool boxes for trash. This season has been a heavy one so far for trash and gear to be left behind; the Ridgerunners will store what they cannot haul out in the boxes at the shelters. If you can make an extra effort to bring out trash (and in the process educate anyone about Leave No Trace principles!), it would be greatly appreciated!
Below, you will see many work trips (and many hours!) that were invested in the Spence privy re-build this Spring. This project has special meaning to many maintainers and members of the SMHC, because it marked the final project in a long era of A.T. shelter and privy re-builds beginning in 1989 with the Cable Gap shelter in the Nantahala National Forest. The first shelter re-built by the SMHC in the National Park was Davenport Gap in 1998, and came to be known as the “Smokies Sheraton,” since it’s new design, with it’s clerestory window, covered front “porch” and other features. If you recall, last Fall, 20 years later, the roof at Davenport Gap was replaced by our club. Over the ensuing 23 years after Cable Gap, a total of 15 shelters and 7 privies have been renovated and/or re-built by the SMHC, with the Spence project being the last. This is a remarkable accomplishment, and a testament to design and building skills, logistics, and thousands of hours of volunteer work by SMHC maintainers and other crucial partners including the ATC and GSMNP and NNF. For the Spence project, beginning with grant approval in 2017, our maintainers put in 485 work hours and 87 travel hours for a total of 572 hours. In addition to a HUGE thank you to you, our maintainers, we’d like to thank Morgan Sommerfield and Stephen Eren of the ATC, and Christine Hoyer of the GSMNP. Many other people helped, and we are so grateful. [Source for shelter structure history: “Give Me Shelter” by Philip Royer, A.T. Journeys Magazine, September/October 2011]

Below are the “work trips” related to the Spence privy project with accompanying photographs. Enjoy!

3/15 - Edward Fleming - Spence Project - Revised plans for Spence Field privy, loaded and hauled equipment to Soak Ash for privy preassembly, received delivery and unloaded materials from Cash Hardware for privy, Loaded truck at workshop with tools and equipment for the preassembly project.

3/16 - Edward Fleming, Terry Martin, Keith Stayton, Philip Royer, Betty Royer, Charles Cantrell, George Minnigh, Phyllis Henry, Don Dunning, Christine Hoyer - Spence Project - Cut and fit the materials to build the new privy at Spence Field, prepared lunch for the crew, loaded the materials into the ATC horse trailer.

L to R, Don Dunning, Ed Fleming, Philip Royer and Terry Martin
(photos courtesy of Christine Hoyer)
3/17 - Jack Bray, Dan Schmeising, Dan Newton, Larry Lindsey, Alec Holtzclaw, Daniel Bray - Spence Project
- Dismantled old privy. Left the current bin intact and covered with the privy roof for continued mulching.
  Identified old privy materials with NPS hazardous material warning signs (materials to be flow out during upcoming airlift). Dug in the foundation for the new privy, to a 42" drop from the beginning of the approach ramp. Secured dig site with rocks over the post holes, and a 1/2" rope around the dropoff for hiker safety.

3/19 - Edward Fleming - Spence Project - Drove to Sevierville to pickup the upswing grab bar ordered from Home Depot and other materials for the privy project, picked up some additional materials from Cash Hardware.

Above and below, new Spence privy dig and old privy materials ready for removal by helicopter

(photos courtesy of Maury Hudson and Jack Bray)

3/21 - Edward Fleming - Spence Project - Drove to Sevierville and returned unused lumber, picked up some additional materials from Cash Hardware, Tractor Supply, and large sandbags from Blalock Hardware.

3/22 - Edward Fleming - Spence Project - Drove to Soak Ask and unloaded materials picked up yesterday, loaded up all of the scrap materials from the privy preassembly, hauled the scrap materials to the dump on Birds Creek, packaged tools to send to Spence Field on the airlift.

3/26 - Edward Fleming - Spence Project - Loaded tools to be flown to Spence Field for privy construction. Drove to Soak Ash and left the tools with Morgan to take to the LZ, helped get the horse trailer hooked up, escorted Morgan and the trailer to Pigeon Forge as an adapter was needed to hook up the trailer brake and tail lights. After we got the lights working, I returned to Gatlinburg.

3/26 - Tom Howard, Phyllis Henry - Spence Project - Hauled 31 bags of mulch for Spence from Elkmont to Cades Cove LZ. Helped Morgan with various task at Cades Cove.

3/27 - Diane Petrilla, Phyllis Henry - Spence Project - Stopped traffic on Loop Rd. as helicopter crossed over the road.

3/27 - Franklin LaFond - Spence Project - Assisted with Spence airlift.

3/28 - Don Dunning - Spence Project - Assisted with airlift of Spence Field privy materials, mulch, and locust logs for trail improvements. (Other participants have submitted individual work reports.) Great time working with outstanding, hard working, and fun ground crew and flight crew.

3/28 - Mike Wood - Spence Project - For two days, assisted at Cades Cove LZ for helicopter lift of Spence privy building materials and locust logs.

3/28 - Phyllis Henry - Spence Project - Traffic control, helped with trash, waited for group to come down from Spence to turn in radio.
The helicopter lift with both locust logs, privy materials, and mulch from Cades Cove, with crew there. A total of 30 lifts were performed over 2 days.

Traffic control in Cades Cove and answers to many questions about bears provided by Phyllis Henry (photo courtesy of Diane Petrilla)

3/28 - Bill Pyle - Spence Project - Worked as a member of the ground crew at Spence Field shelter and along the AT from the shelter to Thunderhead Mtn. Cleared trip hazards from drop sites including the fire ring that occupied the prime opening in the canopy near the shelter, blocked hiker traffic while the helicopter was in the vicinity, Helped move building materials and position logs safely.

3/28 - Scott McClure - Spence Project - Assisted the ATC with Heli Drops at Spence Field Shelter. Started with privy materials, as they flew in materials we moved
and stacked materials close to privy build site. While we waited on the logs to start cleaning out all the water bars leading from the AT to the shelter. When logs arrived I assisted with numerous log drops starting at DZ 4 and working my way back to DZ 7. We were shut down around 7:00 p.m. The next morning we started early around 7:45 at DZ 7 had made 8 more drops I believe. Went back to shelter covered the privy materials with tarps, and begin my walk off the mountain. What a great experience to be a part of!


And this is what it looked like at Spence!

4/7 - Edward Fleming, Terry Martin, Pete Berntsen, Taylor Weatherbee, Diane Petrilla, Mike Harrington - Spence Project - Hiked to Spence Field Shelter and built a new moldering privy, cleaned up area around new privy, put up privy sign near shelter, hiked out with construction tools and trash.

And finally…. The build!


3/31 - Diane Petrilla - Spence Project - Coordination and recruitment of volunteers for various stages of Spence privy project
3/31 - Phyllis Henry - Spence Project - Buying supplies, emails, phone calls, etc.
Again, thank you to SO MANY people who helped on the Spence project, and who have helped over the last 23 years to rebuild and restore the shelters and privies on 102 miles of Appalachian Trail the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club maintains.

There was alot of other work going on during this time period too......

A.T. Work Trips from 2-11-19 to 4-15-19

2/11 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap - With a 15% chance of rain we attempted to clean water bars and any downed trees or limbs from the trail. After about 1.5 hours of work the rain forced us back to the parking lot. The rain turned to sleet and then large snow flakes, after eating lunch and watching the sky get darker and darker we called it a day.

2/13 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap - Cleaned water bars to about 1 mile north of NFG. Along the way 4 branches were cut out of trail as well as removed a tree trunk that had slid onto trail. Removed 4 large rocks out of trail along with a dislodged rock that served as a natural step up. We had to chisel off the outer edges to make it small enough to move the dislodged natural step up. Made a temporary fix to the site of the dislodged rock and will keep an eye on it. Reset two steps out of place due to ice, traffic, or vandalism. Placed two stones on retaining wall and back filled with stones and dirt to proper grade. Cut five trip roots and one large dead root from trail. Spread leaves over trail surface to help hold soil until foot traffic tamps the soil in place.

2/14 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap - Cleared out a fallen tree out of a water bar. Reset a step, and rebuilt an old stone water bar. Scraped off profanity from algae covered trail side boulder walls. Cut trip roots and the end of a downed tree that had slid onto the trails edge. Repaired the coweeta dip from last year’s NTD efforts. Also wish to THANK Don Dunning and Ed Peck for cutting large blow downs from this section. We appreciate it, You saved us much time. The hikers appreciated it also.

3/13 - Barbara Allen, Deborah Dougherty, Miranda Dougherty, Kathy Markward - Davenport Gap to Chestnut Br Trail - Cleaned all water drainages of debris on this section. Checked shelter for trash and checked water access for debris.

3/16 - Pete Berntsen - False Gap to Newfound Gap - Removed sticks, branches, and boughs from this section of trail. First tree removed was three inches in diameter and located abt 80 feet SW of Dry Sluice gap. The second tree was eight inches diameter and was cut and removed. The third tree was located next to the second, was six inches in diameter, cut, and removed. Both were located at N 35 degrees, 38.506 minutes and W 083
degrees, 21.911 minutes. Cut and cleared fourth tree located about 200 feet NE of other two. Large branches from a tree located about 1.3 miles NE of Dry Sluice were pushed from the trail. Cut a few rhododendron and briers, and cleaned drains between Dry Sluice Gap and False Gap.


3/17 - Phyllis Henry, Tom Howard, Caroline Pitner, Doug Pitner - Mulch Operations - Loaded and hauled mulch to Luftee Overlook for flight to Pecks Corner maintenance cabin. Bought 2 new heavy duty shovels for privy at Peck and Tricorner, and tarps for each site. Filled 21 bags of mulch at tent to be flown to Spence.

3/17 - Phyllis Henry, Tom Howard, Caroline Pitner, Doug Pitner - Mulch Operations - Loaded and hauled mulch to Luftee Overlook for flight to Pecks Corner maintenance cabin. Bought 2 new heavy duty shovels for privy at Pecks and Tricorner, and tarps for each site. Filled 21 bags of mulch at tent to be flown to Spence.

3/18 - Don Dunning - Mulch Operations - Prepared mulch for Outdoor Recreation Consortium students to backpack to Icewater Spring shelter.

3/18 - Phyllis Henry - Mulch Operations - Mulch airlift today to Pecks Corner, worked at Luftee Overlook. 5200 lbs. flown in, along with tools. 670 lbs. of trash flown out, including old tarps.

Special thanks to Stephen Eren, Rick Rozands and Phillip Clarkson who helped at Pecks!

3/20 - Don Dunning, Nancy Dunning, Diane Petrilla, GRSM Consortium Group - Mulch Operations - Students and faculty from the annual Outdoor Recreation Consortium helped backpack mulch to the Icewater Spring shelter privy. The Outdoor Recreation Consortium consists of students and faculty from North Carolina State, East Carolina, Penn State, Texas A&M, Missouri, and Western Illinois who meet each March for a week at the Great Smoky Mountain Institute at Tremont. The students choose between a variety of course options each day. Students who choose the Backcountry Track perform a service project for the Park on one day, and we have been privileged to have their help with our backcountry mulch operations for many years. Thanks to this group, we were able to pack over 500 lbs of mulch to the Icewater Spring shelter privy and refill both storage bins to full capacity. We also cleaned and serviced the privy, refilled mulch buckets, cleaned up micro-trash around the shelter area and trail. We also discussed our backcountry mulch operations program and other aspects of the AT management. Many thanks to Professor Myron Floyd, and students Erin Beach, William Beam, Collin Bowen, Fester Boyle, Julianna Clevenger, Alex Caraynoff, Katharina Deutch, Davis Edmunds, Brendon Ericson, Sarah Higgins, Shawnee Holliday, Dylan Huley, Addie Hurwitz, Jennie Kuykendall, Molly Legband, Lauren Richter, Andrew Rogers, Gabrielle Tarantino, Michaela Wandrisco, and Teal Woodard. Hardware, loaded some extra lumber for return to lumber yard.

3/21 - Don Dunning - Mulch Operations - Delivered available backcountry storage bin locks to Backcountry Office (3 new locks and 2 rehabbed locks) from available inventory. Later found 1 additional new lock and 2 additional old locks that I was able to get repaired and
working properly. This exhausts the inventory of locks. Also returned clothing item left by Outdoor Recreation Consortium student in one of my loaner backpacks to GSMIT (will refrain from wisecracks about coed leaving pants in my pack).

3/23 - Bob Williams - Wright Gap to Wesser - Cleaned water bars & other drainage, cleared trail of about 3 trees that had fallen together across the corridor. These trees required most of the time and effort on the trip.

3/23 - Franklin LaFond - Fontana Dam to Swim Bald - Removed one large blowdown and 2 small blowdowns between Marina and Fontana shelter. Inspected Brown Fork Shelter for reported vandalism (none). Removed 3 small blowdowns between Cheoah Bald and Sassafras Gap shelter. Carried in 30 pound bale of pine shavings to use as mulch for privy. Cleaned privy, dispersed cone, and added a layer of pine shavings to aid with composting. Cleaned up trash pile from privy area. Hauled out 50+ pounds of trash from Sassafras Shelter. Beautiful weekend to be in the mountains.

3/23 - Jeff Cooper, Angela Cooper, Pete Berntsen - Gap W of Masa Knob to Sweat Heifer - Primary purpose of the trip was handover of 0.8 mile section from Boulevard Trail to Gap West of Masa Knob including Icewater Springs shelter from Pete Berntsen to Jeff Cooper. Packed in two bags of mulch for the Icewater privy. Both bins were full so left four full buckets of mulch in privy. Picked up a small amount of micro trash around the shelter and packed out one small bag of trash left hanging on the bear cables plus one left in the tool box. Removed an over sized log (8" x 8') from shelter fireplace and repatriated to the woods. Found privy shovel in shelter, apparently being used as fireplace poker, and returned to privy. Attempted to clear water drains along trail but ground was frozen.

3/30 - Franklin LaFond, Keith Mertz - Yellow Creek Gap to Stekoah Gap - Removed 15 blow downs. Removed encroaching rhododendron in several areas. Trash can at Stecoah was overflowing and trash stacked beside it. Looked like perhaps a hiker feed had occurred there. Hauled off this trash and put in new trash bag.


4/6 - Dick Ketelle, Wayne Williams, Leslie Baugues, Houston Phillips, Eric Sundstrom, Larry Johnson, Diane Petrilla, Amanda Beal, Patti Grady, Paula Umberger, Liz Ehr, Jeff Cooper - Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Clingmans Dome - We had a good turnout of 12 volunteers for this monthly work day. We formed two work teams and cleared waterbars and did other relatively light maintenance activities on the Clingmans to Collins Gap and Spruce Fir to Indian Gap trail sections. We are pleased that some "first time" volunteers joined us and we hope they all had a good day and feel that their contributions to our program are appreciated as they certainly are.

4/6 - Franklin LaFond, Crystal Gaddy - Stekoah Gap to Cheoah Bald - Removed 15 blow downs. Removed encroaching rhododendron in several areas. Trash can at Stecoah was overflowing and trash stacked beside it. Looked like perhaps a hiker feed had occurred there. Hauled off this trash and put in new trash bag.

4/9 - Ed Peck - Collins Gap to Mt Love - Cleared blowdown just N of Mt Love.

4/10 - Bo Peck, Nathan Peck, Ed Peck - Clingmans Dome to Goshen Prong Tr - Cleared blowdown just N of Double Springs shelter and another smaller 25 ft, S of Buckley. Pruned several spots of overgrowth, removed a dead snag hovering.

4/13 - Ed Peck - Derrick Knob Shelter - Carried out trash stored in tool bin at Derrick Knob shelter.

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 the work you do!

Now, open the other attachment, to complete your National Trails Day registration! See you there!