



December 2019

No Regular First Saturday A.T. Work Trip in December

We take a break now from our regular first Saturday work trips for December, January and February. Clingmans Dome Rd. will close for the winter on December 1. As weather and Trail conditions allow, and of course as you desire, sections can always use work, no matter what time of year! Stay safe and warm!

Would you consider being our A.T. Community Representative for the town of Fontana?

A.T. Communities along the A.T. must meet specific criteria that indicate strong support for hikers of the A.T., protection of the A.T., and hosting volunteer or educational events that are A.T. related. Trail Towns are a very important partner for the A.T., ATC, the Maintaining Clubs, the National Forests, etc. In 2014 Fontana Village became a designated A.T. Community, and as such, requires a lead volunteer liaison from the SMHC/ ATMC. **We now have a need for a new representative.** The Smoky Mountains Hiking Club contact person would be expected to meet about once a year with members of the Fontana Advisory Committee, and help with communications about Fontana events that are directly related to the A.T. We can of course help publicize those events through this Newsletter and the SMHC Newsletter, but we need someone to be the lead communications person with Fontana. If you are interested, please contact me at petrillad@gmail.com, and I will put you in touch with the appropriate Fontana Village Advisory Committee people. Thankyou!

Maintainers Invited to Annual Holiday Installation Banquet Saturday December 14!

Please see information, including registration link at end of Newsletter. We'd love to see you!

A.T. Sections which Need Leaders and/or Crew

During the quieter winter months, would you think about taking on the commitment of maintaining a specific section of the A.T. miles we care for in 2020? Here is a list of current section needs, from North to South.

Need Section Leader(s) and Crew:

- Chestnut Branch to Lower Mt. Cammerer Tr (1 mile)
- Camel Gap to Inadu Knob (2.3 miles)
- Tricorner to Mt Sequoyah(2.6 miles)
- Mt Sequoyah to Pecks Corner (2.7 miles)
- Pecks Corner to False Gap (3.9 miles)
- Clingmans Dome to Goshen prong (2.3 miles)
- Mollies Ridge to Doe Knob (3.2 miles)
- Cheoah Bald to Swim Bald (NNF- 2.2 miles)

Need Crew Help:

- Collins Gap to Mt Love (1.2 miles)

If you are interested, or aware of other needs, please contact me at petrillad@gmail.com.

Please support the Appalachian Trail Conservancy

As maintainers, we give tremendous support to the Appalachian Trail by way of hard work and volunteer hours, and the appreciation for that is tremendous! Please also consider giving support to the ATC, the crucial organization that works to preserve and protect all 2190 miles of the A.T. Easy ways to do this are by becoming an ATC member, for \$45 / year as a maintaining Club member at

<https://donate.appalachiantrail.org/default.aspx?tsid=7709> or you might want to consider participating in the A.T. license plate program <http://www.appalachiantrail.org/home/ways-to-give/at-license-plates> Thank you!



Safety: Remember to let someone know where you are maintaining

Especially when going out alone, please be sure someone knows:

*Where you will be working,
Where you will be parking (at what trailhead),
Approximately when you might be done and home, and
Who to contact if you don't report in.*

For the GSMNP, your family member or friend should call GSMNP Park Dispatch, 865-436-9171 or for the Nantahala NF, call the NF Cheoah Ranger District at 828-479-6431.



First picture, getting ready to hike mulch, and then at Double Springs with Warren Wilson group. (photos courtesy of Diane Petrilla)

A. T. Work Trip from 10/1/2019 to 11/15/2019

10/1 - Tom Howard - Newfound Gap to Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr - Cut back vegetation and cleaned some of the waterbars.

10/17 - Don Dunning, Nancy Dunning, Diane Petrilla, Janet Snyder, Ernie Wiles, Warren Wilson College Group - Mulch Operations - With a wonderful and enthusiastic group of 4 students and one staff person from Warren Wilson College, as well as 5 maintainers, we backpacked 200 lbs. of mulch to the Double Springs mulch bins. We swept the privy, filled mulch buckets and picked up micro-trash at the shelter. We had a chilly but beautiful day, and the Warren Wilson group learned much about the A.T., A.T. maintenance, and the GSMNP. While at DS, we came upon two 14yo boys who had taken a little walk from the A. T. spur trail at Clingmans, thinking they would loop back to the parking lot, but wound up at Double Springs. They had no food, no water and no warm clothing! We notified the BCO they were with us, and Ernie Wiles hiked them back to their parents.



10/17 - Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap - Returned the tools gathered on Oct. 13 for the Oct.16th work day with students from Warren Wilson College. This trip was cancelled due to rain. Disappointing as these students were a fun group to be with.

10/18 - Keith Mertz, Pam Reddoch - Yellow Creek Gap to Cody Gap - Cut back weedy vegetation, cleaned water bars, removed 2 small blowdowns, picked up lots of small branches.

10/19 - Franklin LaFond - Wright Gap to Wesser - Installed 4 new log steps and replaced 2 rotted log steps. Pruned woody vegetation. Rehab 20 ft of sidehill treadway. Carried logs to locations for future steps. Split and skinned 20 locust stakes.

10/20 - Pete Berntsen - False Gap to Dry Sluice Gap - Cut back vegetation and cleaned water controls in the area. Also rehabilitated 35 feet of trail to restore original position.

10/20 - Taylor Weatherbee, Betty Royer, Philip Royer - Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap - Shortly after a heavy rain, we experienced the trail as a flowing creek from Fork Ridge to the steep slope of Mt Collins. As we breached the leaf litter jams in the drainage trenches, the unleashed water rushed downhill and away from the trail. We concluded that occasionally a rainy day is a good time to clean waterbars. We cleaned all waterbars and improved the diversion ditches along our entire section. The sun beamed just as we emerged at Collins Gap.

10/20 - Tom Howard - **Newfound Gap to Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr** - Cut back vegetation and cleaned some of the waterbars.

10/22 - Phyllis Henry - **AT Mgt, Mtgs & Admin** - Attended year end late lunch with Rocky Top crew leaders, ATC staff, NPS staff, Rocky Top paid crew and one volunteer. Took a couple of deserts for crew lunch. Bought rebar for crew working on turnpike at Fork Ridge.

10/24 - Jerry Troxler, Paul Ruble - **Spence (Bote Mt Tr) to Russell Field** - Cleaned out all of the water bars. Cleared one blow down that had fallen across the trail and was nearly blocking the trail completely. Picked up litter around both Spence and Russell Field shelters but they were fairly clean. Untangled the bear cables. Swept out the privy, refilled the mulch buckets and knocked down the cone. The new tarps had already been hung at both shelters. We carried out one old tarp and a garbage bag full of unserviceable material from the gear box. Both mulch bins were about 70% full. The privy was about 60% full with 2 empty bins.

10/25 - John Knox, Doug Pitner, Caroline Pitner, Ed Peck, Jerry Troxler- **Spruce Fir to Sugarland Mt Tr** - Thoroughly cleaned all water bars. Removed debris from trail where needed. Filled dirt in where needed.

10/26 - Charlie McDonald - **Mulch Operations** - Shoveled and bagged 30 mulch bags. Added 5 wheelbarrow loads back to the tent area. I did not want to add more due to the possible relocation of the tent. Loaded bags and delivered to the maintenance shed. Current inventory 34 bags total. Added new batteries for the scale.

10/27 - Janet Snyder, Mark Snyder - **Mulch Operations** - Long drive to NFG from home as Gatlinburg was the only entrance into the GSMNP due to Saturday's rain/wind storm. We are happy to report that there was not damage to the trail, only limbs easily tossed from the trail. We packed 40 pounds of mulch to Icewater Spring Shelter, filled two buckets with mulch (now 4 full buckets), swept privy and collected trash from privy and shelter. Packed out about 2 pounds of wet clothing left by hikers. Cleaned some of the waterbars in our section Sweat Heifer to NFG. Met only 1 thru-hiker, a young man who had flip-flopped.

10/29 - Janet Snyder, Mark Snyder - **Mulch Operations** - Backpacking 40 pounds of mulch to Icewater Spring Shelter. Finished cleaning all of the waterbars from Sweat Heifer to NFG. Saw 7 thru-hikers today- 4 were SOBO and 3 were flipflopers. 6 were male and 1 was female.

10/30 - Pete Berntsen, Steve Dunkin, Edward Fleming, Dick Ketelle, Kristi Knight, Franklin LaFond, Diane Petrilla, Philip Royer, Neil Snepp, Janet Snyder, Mark Snyder, Cindy Spangler, Taylor Weatherbee, Ernie Wiles - **Club Mgt, Mtgs & Admin** - ATMC meeting to discuss items including log emplacement plans N and S of Spence, locust log availability in general, mulch ops, volunteer recruitment, reports from ATC and GSMNP, and other items.

11/2 - Diane Petrilla - **AT Mgt, Mtgs & Admin** - Attended ATC Southern Regional Partnership meeting (Deep South). Many topics covered including ATC updates, Trail asset inventory data, Trail- wide food storage recommendations, Trail threats, MOUs, Tag grants, etc.

11/2 - Dick Ketelle - **Collins Gap to Mt Love** - Cleared waterbars, spent much time and effort digging out drains that were "lost" over time and needed to be re-established to divert water. Found a 6-foot piece of locust near a location where a new waterbar was needed so installed it. Set one temporary log to serve as a water diversion structure to prevent winter runoff from cascading down the trail near the top of the second switchback.

11/9 - Ernie Wiles, Gavin Morrisett - **Mulch Operations** - Checked mulch supply for Dec 7 mulch delivery hike. filled mulch pails and swept Privy. Mulch is low; bin 1 5% full, bin 2 is 50% full. Privy center bin is 110% full and needs to be changed over soon.

11/10 - Janet Snyder, Mark Snyder - **Mulch Operations** - Backpacking 2 bags of mulch (40 pounds) to Icewater Spring Privy. Though Ernie had filled all buckets on Sat. Nov. 9, one was already empty. Sunday was sunny and warm; hundreds of day-hikers going to Charles Bunion. During the time I was at Icewater Spring, 3 day-hikers used the privy and backpackers were coming in for the night. Refilled the empty bucket and gathered up toilet paper. The privy broom was missing; found it in the shelter. Gathered candy and a gallon plastic water jug left in the shelter. Packed all trash out. Swept leaves out of all the waterbars from NFG to Sweat Heifer. Talked with 2 thru-hikers- 1 female and 1 male.

11/10 - Pete Berntsen - **False Gap to Dry Sluice Gap** - Finished cutting back brush and clearing water drains in this area. Also removed blowdowns: one 8 inch diameter located about 100 feet SW of Dry Sluice Gap; one 10 inch diameter about one mile NE of DSG; and one 12 inch diameter about 1.5 mile NE of DSG. The largest blowdown was located about 1.8 mile NE of DSG and is about 15-inch diameter. I was not able to clear it with my

small saw but did clear limbs and smaller trees that were taken down by this blowdown so that hikers can easily climb over.

11/10 - Taylor Weatherbee - Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap - Chopped a 10 inch and a 14 inch blowdown off the trail (with my Pulaski, slow work), moved a large rotten log off the trail, a built two stone steps.

Leave No Trace Principle # 6: Respect Wildlife

- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed animals. Feeding them damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing food and trash securely.
- Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.
- Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young or winter.

Please send any items of interest, **photos**, and event notifications for the ATMC Newsletter to Diane Petrilla at petrillad@gmail.com. And at this time of Thanksgiving, I give thanks you for **ALL** of the work you do!



Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Holiday Installation Dinner

The annual SMHC Installation Dinner will be held Saturday December 14, 2019, 5pm-8:30pm at Fox Den Country Club 12284 N. Fox Den Drive Knoxville, TN. 37934. **All**

maintainers are invited!

5-6 pm Reception- Oak Ridge High School String Quartet

6-7:30 pm- Dinner and Business meeting

7:30- 8:30pm- Guest Speaker, Andrew Herrington. Mr. Herrington is head of the BUSAR (an all-hazard, all volunteer, non-profit, highly trained Search and Rescue team) who assist the GSMNP and NPS in search and rescue missions. BUSAR was founded by Andrew in 2015 and was recognized with the NPS Search and Rescue Award in 2018. He will be accompanied by two crew members, and will be talking about his experiences assisting the National Park, as well as best safety practices, even for the most experienced hikers! He is also the owner of BigPig Outdoors, Smoky Mountain Bushcraft and Survival School.

8:30pm- Handbook distribution

Please go to <http://smhclub.org/forms/banquet/> to register, and make your dinner choice, or contact Jeannette Gilbert, 865-483-8774 Priscilla Clayton, 865-966-4142 or Beth Eades, 865-609-8311.

