



November 2020

A.T. Work Trip- Saturday November 7

This A.T. Maintenance day will involve cleaning water bars from Clingmans Dome to the Goshen Prong Trailhead (1.9 miles). This section has not had a leader for awhile, and all help is appreciated! Meet Steve Dunkin at the Clingmans Dome Parking Lot at 9:00 am on Saturday, November 7th. He will either be standing at the beginning of the paved path to the Dome or sitting in his white Ford Ranger if it is cold. Please bring a shovel and gloves along with appropriate clothing for anticipated weather that day. If the weather calls for rain, snow, sleet or cold below 32 degrees on top of the mountain the trip will be canceled. Plan on eating lunch at Double Springs Gap shelter. Pre-register with Steve Dunkin at jsdunkin1302@gmail.com.

However, George eschewed awards and recognition. He worked quietly and steadily to help multiple processes for the Club and maintainers, being proficient in the creation of crucial databases which we still use. People use words like “kindness”, “integrity”, and “fairness” to describe him. He passed on his love of the outdoors to his children and grandchildren, a gift that is timeless. This writer uses the words “role model” and “Dad’ to describe him. He will be missed enormously.
DP

**In Memorium- George G. Ritter- October 10, 1929-
September 27, 2020**

The Smoky Mountains Hiking Club and A.T. Maintainers lost an exceptional man on September 27, 2020. George Ritter joined the SMHC in 1984, having developed a deep love for hiking and backpacking after moving to East Tennessee in 1975. In 2001 he became a member of the SMHC Board of Directors, and remained so until his death. He served as Treasurer in the past, Handbook Editor and Membership Secretary, most recently. In 2007 he joined the Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee. George maintained a section of A.T. in the National Park, participated in many special building projects and provided leadership in recruitment and organization for the ATMC. He was recognized by the ATC as Volunteer of the Year in 2013. As a member of the Club, he received the Marshall Wilson Presidential Citation in 2007 and 2013. He received the Harvey Broome Award in 2009.



Escalante River backpack, 1986
(photo courtesy of Will Skelton)



ATMC Meeting

We are planning an Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee meeting on Wednesday night, November 18 at 6:30pm via Zoom. Assessment of current issues, as well as some preliminary planning for 2021 will be on the Agenda. This includes contingency ideas for the potential continuation of current operating conditions under COVID. We hope to have an update from the ATC's Adaptive Recovery Task Force regarding recommendations for the A.T. including thru-hikers and volunteers for next year. A Zoom link for the meeting will be sent to committee members the week before the meeting.

SMHC/ A.T. Maintainer Volunteer Hours October 1, 2019- September 30, 2020

Each year, we submit to the GRSM National Park, Nantahala National Forest and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy total hours worked and traveled by our volunteers. Despite losing about 4 months (almost half) of our "useable" work time due to COVID restrictions, you, our maintainers, logged an impressive number of hours.

Total field work hours NP and NF: 2392 hrs. (4914 hrs in 2019)

Total field work and admin hours NP and NF: 3847 hrs. (6708 hrs. in 2019)

Grand total NP and NF hours with travel: 5342 hrs. (9014 hrs. in 2019)

Thank you ALL! Individual accumulated hours with Awards will be published in the December ATMC Newsletter.

A. T. Work Trips From 8/28/2020 to 10/15/2020

8/28 - Franklin LaFond - Stecoah Gap to Locust Cove Gap - Met Morgan, Steven, and a NCDOT surveyor at the gap. Flagged potential reroute on both sides of Stecoah Gap that will be needed in support of the road widening project. Cleared side trail to water source.

9/9 - Stewart Taylor - Spruce Fir to Sugarland Mt Tr - I cut the weeds around Mt. Collins Shelter as well as

cleaning the ditch in front of the shelter. I also further cleaned 4 water drainage ditches near the shelter.

9/13 - Diane Petrilla - Other Work - Picked up radios at BCO and took them over to Backcountry Horsemen of NC at Big Creek in preparation for their chainsaw work on A.T. this week.

9/13 - Franklin LaFond - Fontana Dam to Locust Cove Gap - Evaluated construction of new trail platform at NOC. Took pictures and sent to Morgan. Cut weeds and woody vegetation in the following areas: 1 mile south of Stecoah Gap, Stecoah Gap to Sweetwater Gap, Fontana Marina to Walker Gap. Bug-bombed the Fontana shelter to address flea infestation reported by hikers.

9/16 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock, Sunaree Bullock - Lewellyn Loop Trail, Fontana Village Resort - Removed deadfall on this loop trail, picked up litter. Overall condition good with minimal drainage issues. Will hike again and clear water bars

9/19 - Jimmy Glascock, Leonard T Gaddis, Tim Glascock, Paul Glascock - Swim Bald to Wright Gap - Cut and removed 7, 6 – 8" blow downs Cleaned water bars. Removed about a pound of trash from fire rings.

9/19 - Kelly Conway, Bill Pyle - Collins Gap to Mt Love - Removed three small trees from trail, cleared branches, moved some rocks to boggy areas. Assessed water bars for next trip. Enjoyed taking the high road where Kristi Knight had opened the way earlier that day.

9/19 - Kristi Knight - Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap - Finished clearing out brush in level area above a section of trail that has migrated down from its original position over time. Also worked on removing roots to allow a clear path in order to reroute this section of trail back to its original position, away from the edge of a slope and briar patch. Moved a few rotted logs off to the side of the trail going north. Ran into Bill Pyle who had removed a blowdown from our section as he was heading south to his section. Traffic was extremely heavy on the way back home, in fact at a standstill for quite awhile. I found out a little too late the it was Rod Run weekend! I won't make that mistake again!

9/21 - Jack Bray, Alec Holtzclaw, Daniel Bray, Jens Holtzclaw - Miry Ridge to Thunderhead - Cleared brush and blowdowns between Thunderhead and Miry Ridge.

9/21 - Pete Berntsen - **Dry Sluice Gap to Gap W of Masa Knob** - Cleared water drains and trimmed brush that included two large blackberry bushes. Other: Repaired drainage from Icewater spring so that it no longer drains down trail. Removed trip root located about 0.5 mile SW of Charlies Bunion.

9/22 - Cindy Spangler - **Mt Love to Clingmans Dome** - Finished cleaning the water bars on my section, piled brush on 2 social trails, picked up a small amount of litter, and cleaned 11 water bars on the section north of mine and south of Taylor's. Taylor has really worked hard on this section (in addition to his own)!

9/23 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock - **Brown Fork Gap to Stecoah Gap** - Walked aprox .1 mile each side of Brown Fork Gap Shelter. Removed two blowdowns causing hikers to detour downhill. Restored path to prevent erosion. Noted two small trees across the trail, will remove with hand saw in the next few days. Took a look at shelter, will revisit this weekend too.

9/23 - Patti Grady - **Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead** - Cleared all the overgrown vegetation. Discovered two more waterbars that were completely overgrown and hidden. Did a little more deterrent work to keep hikers on the trail. Picked up some trash. Talked to some section hikers last week and today who were very complimentary of the trail condition in the park. Kudos to everyone!

9/26 - Gene Desrosiers, Tracy Kressler, Kristi Knight, Joan Tomlinson, Melanie Harmon, Ernie Wiles, Neil Snepp - **Double Springs Gap Privy** - Hauled 180 lbs of mulch to Shelter and filled mulch pails in privy.

9/26 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock - **Brown Fork Gap to Stecoah Gap** - Repaired wooden mileage trail sign at 1/8 mile from start of trail. It had rotted and I found it on the ground. Replaced wood holding it to posts and secured posts with gravel to secure. Picked up trash around trail and parking lot.

9/26 - Kristi Knight - **Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap** - After helping a team of volunteers take mulch to Double Springs, stopped off to do a little work on my group's section of trail. Heading south, worked on cleaning out water bars. Also raised up one of the turnpikes with some fill dirt. Hours travel are included in the report from the mulch trip to Double Springs.

9/28 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - **Boulevard Tr to Newfound Gap** - Scouted out the section between Sweat Heifer and the Boulevard Trail in preparation for the Oct.3 work trip. Put ribbons and made notes where improvement are needed. Also, took note of Don Dunnings' hard work which will help Saturdays workers considerably. Cut 8 'leaners' from the trail, these 'leaners' were eyeball level. Also, pruned 3 jagged broken limbs from a large downed tree. Sawed flush with the large trunk.

9/30 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock - **Brown Fork Gap to Stecoah Gap** - Removed 6 blowdowns today as I enjoyed the stroll up Jacobs Ladder to Brown Fork Gap Shelter. Packed out trash and refilled buckets at privy with leaves.

9/30 - Pete Berntsen - **Dry Sluice Gap to Gap W of Masa Knob** - Trimmed back brush and cleaned out water drains in this area. Removed 8-inch blowdown located 0.5 mile SW of False Gap. Trimmed branches from 18-inch blowdown located 0.2 mile SW of False Gap. This is an easy hike-around.

10/1 - Patti Grady - **Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead** - Worked on several muddy areas - set large flat rocks in some steps, filled in three areas with rock, back filled a muddy turnpike area, worked on a waterbar that was not properly draining the trail and causing a muddy spot.

10/1 - Taylor Weatherbee, Bill Pyle, Rick Hughes - **Collins Gap to Mt Love** - Cleaned a couple dozen water bars, reset one, and built two new stone water bars. Also installed four stone steps to complete our day.

10/2 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - **Other Work** - Collected tools for Saturday Oct.3 work trip. Spent more time getting the large rat out of the tool box than it took to get the desired tools. Cleaned out the large cache of very large acorns which the 'Rat' had so laboriously gathered. Also, cleaned up the rat nest and discarded numerous medium sized rubber gloves, Miss Rat used the box for it's nest. I am really surprised that Patty Grady did not see this rat, for if Patty is like my wife Janet, she may have not gotten any tools. (Patty was at the tool box the day before.)

10/3 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder, Dick Kettle, Pete Berntsen, Elizabeth Weikert, Andy Zimmerman, Houston Phillips, David Gall, Dale Gerhardt, Rachel Brooks - **Boulevard Tr to Sweat Heifer** - Divided into 3

groups; with Dick Ketelle leading a group of 4, including himself, Pete Berntsen likewise having a group of 3 and Pete makes 4, the 3rd group was Mark and Janet. Dick's group started at the Boulevard Trail and worked South, Pete's group went about .6 mile past Sweat Heifer and worked South, with the 3rd group starting at Sweat Heifer and worked North. This separation of people was to keep within Covid-19 guidance. Dick's group completed the following: Totally refurbished 3 'Turnpikes' by re-digging the side drains as well as opening the downhill drain canals. Re-set 2 check steps below waterbars and filled steps for an even surface. Built 1 new rock check-step, which replaced a rotted wood step. Placed a cut ash tree (had fallen over) as a new waterbar log, and gargoyled a section to keep people on trail. Cleared and widened water drainages, and added rocks in two locations to extend past the log to help shoot water flow off the trail. Pete's group cleaned and widened and extended 12 water drains. Eliminated numerous trip roots and trip rocks from the trail. Spent considerable time at a turnpike, which was totally refurbished, with just a little enhancement remaining. Mark/Janet comprised the 3rd group. After doing a few critical needs to their own section which is right before Sweat Heifer, was able to clear, widen and extend 10 water drains and made one new stone waterbar above the turnpike. Kept our distance from Pete's group but assisted with providing gravel ballast for the turnpike as we made 25' of "thin water". Also, cut vegetation to 8' as well as any side branches extending to the trail.



Above and previous page: Great work done on this October 3, A.T. work day! David (first picture) and Rachel, Houston and David (next page).
(photos courtesy of Dick Ketelle)

10/4 - Franklin LaFond, Joseph ("Randy") Bullock - Brown Fork Gap to Stecoah Gap - Removed 4 trees with power saw and cleared. Assessed water drainage on steep portion of trail section, discussed immediate plans to clear water drains and correct minor washout around a few steps. Discussed location and building of steps to complement excellent work done in the past few years on steeper section of trail section. Inspected Brown Fork Gap shelter area, discussed future maintenance. Inspected water source for shelter. Picked up trash at Stecoah Gap.

10/4 - Lisa Sumter, Barbara Allen - Davenport Gap to Chestnut Br Trail - We painted the blazes & removed any fallen limbs along the trail. We stopped by the shelter & checked the water source.

10/6 - Bill Pyle - Club Mgt, Mtgs & Admin - Met Diane at Weigel's on Topside to pickup PPE for AT maintainers. Delivered to maintainers residing in Blount County from Louisville to Townsend. Diane had prepared the distribution and gave me excellent routing assistance. Her directions were flawless.

10/6 - Pete Berntsen - Dry Sluice Gap to Boulevard Tr - Secured "SHELTER" sign near Icewater Spring and turned pipe at spring so that water was not lost due to hole in pipe being in lower position. Sign at southern end of Charlies Bunion was placed more upright but not properly secured as I did not have needed tools. Secured sign at northern end of the Bunion. Installed

heavy rebar just past Dry Sluice Gap. Refurbished 88 feet of trail, including five drains, located 1.2 miles NE of DSG.

10/7 - Charlie McDonald - Mulch Operations - Added 20/20lb bags of mulch to the current shed inventory. Currently 30/20lb bags and 10/15lb bags (these have a red ribbon tied around them on the shelf to the left). Also added estimated 20 bags worth of wet mulch to the estimated 30 bags of dry under tent. I will go back in two weeks to turn over to aid in drying. Friendly reminder: Please report any bagged mulch taken from the current shed inventory. Thank you!

10/8 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap - Worked southbound from Sweat Heifer. Cleared 53 waterbars/drains. Rebuilt one rock waterbar and added gravel ballast to a step. Cut numerous trip roots and removed large limb from uphill side of trail which was protruding onto trail. Repaired two holes in trail with stones and dirt. Cleared or smoothed about 100' of thin water edge for drainage.

10/8 - Taylor Weatherbee - Pecks Corner to False Gap - Cleared 22 inch blowdown with crosscut saw.



Impressive work with that crosscut! (photos courtesy of Taylor Weatherbee)

10/9 - Bill Pyle - Collins Gap to Mt Love - Headed South towards Clingman's Dome. Cleaned water bars, removed vegetation, and made note of needed work for future dates.

10/9 - Dick Kettle, Ann Farrar - Dry Sluice Gap to Gap W of Masa Knob - Cleared waterbars and drains.

10/9 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap - Worked northbound from NFG. Cleared 50 waterbars and drains, reset one locust waterbar, lowered one step, and added a new locust step and filled with crushed stone and dirt. (Met Ranger Libby as she was inspecting the trail, she seems very conscientious about her job and is very pleasant as well!)

10/10 - Cindy Spangler - Club Mgt, Mtgs & Admin - Delivered bags of PPE materials to area trail maintainers.

10/11 - Bill Pyle, Kelly Conway - Collins Gap to Mt Love - Hiked in light rain. Saw water bars in action. Attempted to improve runoff in numerous locations in both directions from our entry point on the AT.

10/13 - Pete Berntsen - False Gap to Dry Sluice Gap - Continued minor trimming while walking to my work area. Refurbished 92 feet of trail including three large water drains and adding four small water drains. Filled two mulch buckets at Icewater. Cut leaning 2-inch diameter tree from across the trail almost 1.5 miles NE of Newfound Gap. (It looked like someone broke it during the day and left it leaning).

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!