



May 2021

A.T. Maintenance Work Trip-Saturday May 1

This work trip will concentrate on the east end of the Smokies beginning at Davenport Gap and working as far as the Mt. Cammerer side trail. Although a lot of progress in these sections has been accomplished already this spring, we will work on cleaning any remaining waterbars and trail drains and repair of a few log steps as time allows. Some tread repair, vegetation trimming and removal of downed trees may also be required. Several work groups that are willing to hike different distances up to 5 miles into the far end of the section would be good. We will meet at the Davenport Gap at 9:00 am. Bring gloves, lunch, snacks, and plenty of water.

Pre-registration with the leader is required. Leader: Tim Bigelow, 865-607-6781 bigelowt2@mindspring.com

Mulch bagger(s) needed

Our steadfast Charlie McDonald, who has been handling mulch bagging operations for some time now, is out for an indefinite period with a back injury. **We need help.** The job entails:

1. Getting the key to the Elkmont shed gate at Back Country Office when you are ready to bag (pre-arranged by email with Christine Hoyer).
2. In the near future, we need 40 bags with 40 lbs. of mulch each, bagged for equestrian runs to Spence (early May) and Tricorner (mid May). These privies are desperately in need of mulch.
3. Ongoing, we keep about 20-30 20lb. bags of mulch in the maintainer shed for backpacking teams to take to Icewater, Mt. Collins and Double Springs.
4. After bagging at the shed, more mulch is spread out in the tent there to dry for the next bagging. If you can help, we can show you the process! Please contact me at petrillad@gmail.com if you can help. Thank you so much for considering this.

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY "MODIFIED" THIS YEAR- Saturday June 5- PLEASE VOLUNTEER!

Last year, NTD was cancelled due to COVID. This year, we are happy to announce that we can have a "limited" NTD to work on the Appalachian Trail in the GRSM. In accordance with continued guidelines for volunteers published by the ATC, and with approval by Christine Hoyer and the GRSM, we will have teams of 4 (1 leader and 3 crew members) go out on A.T. sections from Icewater Shelter to Silers Bald to work. Some sections can certainly have more than one crew! We will not have a morning gathering or an afternoon picnic, but we WILL provide:

1. A bagged lunch
2. A special patch to commemorate this unusual year
3. A virtual door prize drawing the Monday after Trails day to award some great gifts to random participants (we will notify you if you win!)

Because we cannot advertise the event to the general public, we will not be officially affiliated with the American Hiking Society this year. **We invite anyone who is on our maintainer lists, or who has participated in a prior NTD to join us on Saturday June 5. We need you!!** Please register using the form that came with this emailed Newsletter. The deadline for registration is Friday May 14. **Please consider coming out and helping with general maintenance as well as some special projects on June 5!** ★ In addition, even if you have already agreed to be a crew leader, please complete the registration form. ★



USFS re-opens A.T. shelters

A.T. shelters that are located on the Chattahoochee, Nantahala, Pisgah, Cherokee, and George Washington-Jefferson National Forests in Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia have been re-opened by the U.S. Forest Service. Below are the guidelines we should observe to conduct shelter maintenance in the NNF.

1. SMHC Maintainers may now work on shelters and privies (on the Park) and NNF miles that we are responsible for.
2. To clean up a shelter, please ask all hikers, etc. to wait outside.
3. We can carry mulch to privies, fill mulch buckets, sweep and clean privies.
4. Before doing any bin emptying, we would like to have training by Chloe De Camara (of ATC) on proper techniques, for those who need it (scheduling TBD).

Amelia Cary to stay as our Long-Season Ridgerunner this year

Many of us have had the pleasure of meeting Yael Girard, Ricky Vandegfift and Amelia Cary performing their work as Ridgerunners this season. We are pleased to know that Amelia will be staying as the long-season RR for 2021. If you see Amelia, Yael, or Ricky, please be sure to extend our thanks!



Welcome New Section Leaders!

We are pleased to announce new section leaders and co-leaders for the following A.T. sections:

Chestnut Branch to Lower Mt Cammerer Trail: **Meg and William Gill**

1 mi N of Cammerer Spur Tr to Mt Cammerer Spur Tr: **Kathy Gardner, Co-Leader with Tim Bigelow**

Clingmans Dome to Goshen Prong: **Michael French and Chastidy Myers, Co-Leaders with Steve Dunkin**

Lewellyn Branch to Fontana: **Brent Gregory**

If you see any of these folks working, please extend them a warm welcome!

A. T. Work Trips From 3/15/2021 to 4/15/2021

[Editor's Note- Everyone has been very busy since the last Newsletter- thank you! If you don't see your work trip report in the list below, it should appear in the next Newsletter. My cut-off date for publishing is the 15th of each month. DP]

3/15 - Rick Waggener - Gap W of Masa Knob to Boulevard Tr - Cleared water bars. Picked up trash from the trail & shelter. Reset the pipe at Icewater spring [again]. The 12' balsam I had used to divert the spring from running down the trail had been used for firewood; repaired this with rock. Met Ridgerunner Yael - she arrived as I was leaving. Very impressed with her.

3/19 - Franklin LaFond, "Hopeful" Powell - Fontana Dam to High Pt E of Walker Gap - Installed 5 new log steps. Replaced 1 log waterbar. Cut 2 locust logs. Split several logs for future steps and waterbars. Moved all remaining locust logs down from Walker Gap to sloppy/slick areas where they will be utilized later to rehab treadway between Walker Gap and the new locust bridge. Rehab of 30 ft of sidehill above rock staircase. Removed several roots that had become trip hazards. Cleaned out all water drainages. Removed 2 small blowdowns.

3/19 - Rick Waggener - **Outreach & Education** - Represented SMHC & ATC at Fontana Village Hiker Haze for thru hikers. Brought doughnuts & cookies. Discussed LNT and what we do.

3/20 - Jack Bray, Lillian Bray - **Derrick Knob to Thunderhead** - Cleared blowdowns. Patched roof leak at Derrick Knob shelter.

3/20 - Mark Buckles, Edward Fleming, Dick Ketelle, Franklin LaFond, Bill Pyle, Taylor Weatherbee, Houston Phillips - **Training** - FA / CPR /AED Class taught by Nick Yarnell.

3/20 - Randy Mitchell, Russell Redden - **Low Gap to Cosby Knob Top** - The first day of spring turned out to be an excellent day to be outside. The day started out cold but sunny. Spring wildflowers were budding but not open yet on Cosby Creek. We passed a few hikers headed up Low Gap to Mt. Cammerer and a couple of hikers doing a loop of the AT and Camel Gap. My main goal was to survey the trail and try to pull out a few locust logs from an old log pile on the saddle between Cosby Knob and Ross Knob. The pile has been there for some time as several medium size cherry trees have grown up through the pile and it was covered in moss, sticks and leaves. The plan worked better than I had hoped. I expected that there would be a few usable logs in the pile. As it turned out we were able to stage 4 logs on the north slope of Cosby Knob for waterbar locations. We also stacked 11 or 12 good locust logs next to the trail on the saddle between Cosby Knob and Ross Knob. They can be used on my section or the sections further north as needed. Several backpackers passed by. I presumed them to be thru hikers as they seemed intent on making miles. All were very appreciative of our work. I'm not sure if we scared on hiker though. We had shouldered a heavy log and tossed it overhead on the uphill side off the trail. Russ turned to see a backpacker standing right behind him with her eyes bugged out. She didn't say anything and hurried on north. I cut one six inch blowdown and moved it off the trail. We were pleasantly surprised at how few blowdowns and debris was on the trail. Apparently the Ridgerunner had cleared much of it. We cleaned waterbars north of Cosby Knob Shelter to Cosby Knob. I will return soon to finish clearing

waterbars between Low Gap and the shelter. Also I plan to install waterbars on the slope north of Cosby Knob. We topped off the mulch buckets and inspected the shelter area. Everything there was in very good shape. In talking with a thru hiker "Papa Groot" the Ridgerunner had just been through. Papa Groot related finding an abandoned pack and equipment a couple of miles from Pecks Corner. He said the Ridgerunner was aware and was investigating. On our return trip the early wildflowers near Cosby Creek had opened up.

3/21 - Dick Ketelle, Ann Farrar - **Dry Sluice Gap to Gap W of Masa Knob** - Cleared water drains, chopped out one trip root, sized up plan for upcoming trail project.

3/21 - Meg Gill, William Gill, Diane Petrilla - **Chestnut Br Trail to Lower Mt Cammerer Tr** - Cleared and dug out water bars; cleaned and disguised two unauthorized campsites; removed trash.

3/21 - Terry Martin - **Mt Cammerer Side Tr to Inadu Knob** - In my section I cleaned out waterbars, removed tree debris, and piled stones at corner of one of the step treads. Low Gap - Snake Den I removed tree debris. Rolled tree log to lower side of stone step to deter hikers from walking on edge of trail. Removed fallen rotten tree and trimmed back branches at face level.

3/22 - Pete Berntsen - **False Gap to Dry Sluice Gap** - Removed tree butt causing hikers to walk to the outer edge of trail located 0.6 mile NE of Dry Sluice Gap (DSG). Removed small blowdown debris from trail and cleaned water drains to 1.25 miles NE of DSG.



(Photo courtesy of Pete Berntsen)

3/26 - Kathy Gardner, Diane Petrilla - 1 mi N of Cam (4250' EI) to Mt Cammerer Side Tr -

Cleaned out all the waterbars on this section and removed a few smaller blowdowns. Talked to about 15 thru hikers and a Ridgerunner enjoying a beautiful day on the trail between storms - including 'Supermom' with her 7 yo 'Supergirl' who started in GA with their minds set on ME. Impressive!!

3/26 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap -

Cleared numerous water diverters starting at Sweat Heifer and working back to NFG. People on top of people were on the trail, and parking at NFG was very congested. Numerous questions about what we do as trail maintainers were asked. More than one person asked us if we were volunteers, even when looking at us with our blue 'A.T. Volunteer' shirt on and fully in view. Removed an old dead root ball in middle of trail just before S.H. Refilled where root ball was with almost 4 foot of backfilled rock and crushed stone. Cleared numerous waterbars, enlarging the width where practical, and channeling downward well away from the trail. Cut numerous trip roots from trail, constant job as trail erodes and exposes more roots. Reset two rock waterbars, and dug channel above the rocks to keep normal runoff from contacting rocks. Sawed an 8 in. downed tree, that had pulled up the edge of the trail; in doing so the trail was able to settle down and should reseal itself.

3/26 - Mike Harrington - Sassafras Gap (Pk) to Lewellyn Branch - Cleared waterbars and painted white stripes.

3/27 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock - Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap - Cleared water bars, repaired two steps that had washed out. Since several steps are needed in this steep section to both preserve the path and control erosion, I set out today on this project adding two steps to Jacobs Ladder. This is a continuation of the work done by other SMHC volunteers over the years, and I appreciated their time and effort. I met about 20 hikers, all expressing their gratitude to the maintainers.

3/29 - Charlie McDonald - Mulch Operations - Added 20/20lb bags of mulch to the existing shed

inventory. Currently have 43/20lb bags (Diane will be needing 30-35 for upcoming April mulch trips) total. Also, bagged 10/40lb bags for the upcoming horsemen's trip to Spence. I will be bagging 15 additional 40lb bags over the next week or two for this trip.

3/29 - Franklin LaFond - Cheoah Bald to Swim Bald - Removed 4 small blowdowns. Cleared limb debris and dead rhodo along the trail. Cleaned out water drainages. Filled mulch buckets at the Shelter. Rehabbed 60 feet of slipping sidehill.

3/29 - Pete Berntsen - False Gap to Dry Sluice Gap - Completed cleaning water control devices in this area. Did minor brush trimming. Removed one six-inch blowdown and removed end of five-inch blowdown that extended into the trail. Removed five trip roots.

3/29 - Tim Ryan, Jay Schmid - Sunup Knob to Low Gap - Dug out 4 boggy areas (Peter Bernsten's fix works!), cut and slid 10"inch tree off the trail, removed debris, cleared waterbars and drainage areas, dug new drainage, removed several exposed roots, removed tree off trail on our climb to Low Gap.

3/30 - Franklin LaFond, Joseph ("Randy") Bullock - Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap - Franklin "Ox" LaFond and I spent the day building 15 steps at the last section of Jacobs Ladder. Repaired several existing steps along the path leading up from Stecoah Gap. Thanks to Ox for his help and experience in this type of project.

3/30 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap - Reset two locust steps that were about washed out. While struggling with the large step, a couple from Oregon took pity on us. (At least his wife did, as she volunteered her husband's muscles.) Forty-five minutes later the step was in place. Thanks Oregon. (As they left, you could hear him say never volunteer his services again.) Reset a waterbar and made the drainage as wide as could be. Brushed with leaves and loose sticks where hikers were going down slope around trees. Did this in three areas. A sink hole was patched in the trail. Widened the trail at a swell (coveeta dip) and placed crushed stone in

bottom of dip to provide stability, sledged stones into ground.

4/3 - **Cindy Spangler, Amanda Beal, David Gall - Mt Love to Clingmans Dome** - Retrieved bags of mulch (3 x 40lbs) from the mulch shed before our start at Clingmans Dome. Made slow progress on AT on VERY frozen and VERY icy trail. Drove to Fork Ridge to meet maintainer Kristi Knight and the 4 of us hiked to Mt Collins shelter privy to drop off 160 lbs of mulch. Replenished privy buckets. Storage bin at Collins is now 80% full.



Icy trail for David to work on!
(Photo courtesy of Cindy Spangler)

4/3 - **Dick Ketelle, Davis Wax, Taylor Weatherbee, Edward Fleming, Randy Mitchell - Gap W of Masa Knob to Boulevard Tr** - We installed steps in a badly eroding section using logs cut from downed red spruce trees. We also installed a log crib about 17 feet long with rock and soil fill to repair a trail section where the trail edge was slumping down the steep north slope. Despite frozen ground we were able to make a good job of these tasks and afternoon temperatures were quite pleasant.



Great looking set of steps!
(Photo courtesy of Dick Ketelle)

4/3 - **Franklin LaFond, William Sharp, Deb Emerson - Clingmans Dome to Goshen Prong Tr** - This was a training work trip for 2 new recruits. We talked about basic tools, their usage and safety related to each. We discussed various trail maintenance type issues and how to address them. Pruned back some woody vegetation. Cleaned and groomed some waterbars. Installed 1 log step. Reset 1 log step that was about to fail.

4/3 - **Kristi Knight - Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap** - Picked up bags of mulch, (2) 20lb bags, from the mulch shed before heading up to Fork Ridge. Tried to clear some water bars but made very little progress as the ground was frozen and there was a significant amount of ice on the trail. Went up to Collins Gap heading North, which had less ice and in some areas a little less frozen ground. Made some slow progress. Met up with Cindy and her crew at Fork Ridge and the 4 of us delivered mulch to Mnt Collins Shelter. As reported by Cindy, bin is now about 80% full and privy buckets were checked. Returned to Collins Gap and continued to clear water bars heading north. Cleared any significant debris from trail.

4/3 - Lisa Sumter, Stephanie Gose, Kellye Bishop, Barbara Allen - **Davenport Gap to Chestnut Br Trail** - Cleaned all of the water drainages & trimmed vegetation. Checked the shelter area & cleared leaves from the water source.

4/4 - Terry Martin - **Double Springs Gap Privy** - I took three bags of mulch to Double Spring Gap shelter. I filled up three empty buckets, swept privy, took photos of bins showing how much there was, and cleaned up some trash. There are two trees across the trail about halfway and took photos. Dropped empty bags off at shed. I

sent photos to Diane.

4/5 - Franklin LaFond, Joseph ("Randy") Bullock - **Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap** - Walked section, cleared water bars and repaired two steps that had been compromised by recent rains and wear of foot traffic. Built 10 new steps on a winding area near the summit of Jacobs Ladder. Interacted with approx. 30 northbound hikers, always a pleasure.

4/6 - Franklin LaFond - **Fontana Dam to Route 28** - Removed 2 small blowdowns that had been reported by hikers. Cut back woody vegetation. Removed roots and regraded treadway. Rehab treadway in several locations. Added 2 new log steps, backfilled with crushed rock.

4/6 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - **Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap** - Picked up 8 bags of mulch, filled buckets in privy and filled the bin to its capacity. (Mt. Collins privy and shelter) Still had room for tarp and buckets. All told 160lbs. was added. Saw Stewart Taylor working his section; that man works!! Met Taylor Weatherbee coming to fix the leak in the roof. He did that, then did more work around the shelter. For old guys, they really can work. We drove to NFG and went up the A.T. to finish water bars and to fix a rock step and a locust log step, only to find out that we had two locust log steps that needed fixed and two rock steps that needed fixed. We finished the steps as it got dark. Ran out of sunshine and worked our way back to our van, using head lamps.

4/6 - Taylor Weatherbee - **Spruce Fir to Sugarland Mt Tr** - Worked on cleaning water bars and drainage ditches

4/6 - Taylor Weatherbee, Chappy Hiker - **Mount Collins Shelter** - Removed the old patches(2) from the Collins shelter roof, and caulked (with polyurethane caulking recommended by Ed Fleming) small cracks in the skylight material. Dug out the trenches around the shelter, with a little help from thru-hiker Chappy. Dug out a few water bars on the trail back up to the AT, and installed one step where Stew Taylor had prepped a log last fall.

4/7 - Charlie McDonald - **Mulch Operations** - Added 20/20lb bags of mulch to the inventory at the tool shed. Currently we have 47/20lb bags. Also added estimated 500lbs of wet mulch to the tent. As always, report mulch taken so I may keep everyone supplied that needs it. Planning on bagging and adding to the tent weather permitting next week. Big thanks to everyone that brings bags and twine back.

4/9 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - **Mulch Operations** - Returned 8 bags and twine from previous mulch run.

4/10 - Amanda Beal - **Thunderhead to Spence (Bote Mt Tr)** - Cleaned 22 waterbars.

4/11 - Jack Bray, Alec Holtzclaw - **Tricorner Knob Shelter** - Patched roof leak(s). Reseated bench. Trenched in berm log and staked it to prevent water flow around reseated bench.

4/11 - Michael French, Chastidy Myers, Brittney Hanson, Mitchell Hanson - **Clingmans Dome to Goshen Prong Tr** - Cleared 1 8" tree from across the trail, There still one more to clear. It is passable underneath. We cleared some of the waterbars, still a lot full of pine needles and mud. There is one waterbar needing replaced due to wear.

4/11 - Steve Hill, Kristi Knight, Terry Martin, Randy Mitchell, Diane Petrilla, Neil Snapp - **Double Springs Gap Privy** - This great mulch mule crew packed in 190 lbs. of mulch to Double Springs. All 3 mulch buckets in privy filled, privy swept. Box #1 is 60% full, box #2 is 80% full. Gorgeous day! My gratitude to everyone.



Mulch team to Double Springs
(Photo courtesy of Diane Petrilla)



Mulch team to Icewater
(Photo courtesy of Diane Petrilla)

4/11 - Taylor Weatherbee - **Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap** - Cut and set one log step, reset one log step, and installed one large stone step. Cleaned out water bars.

4/12 - Cindy Spangler - **Mt Love to Clingmans Dome** - After participating with Diane's mulch delivery to Icewater, I drove to the Dome to work on my waterbars and remove the blowdown reported in Ridgerunner report. Picked up a record amount of trash on the side trail leading from the Dome to the AT.

4/12 - Debra Barton, Liz Ehr, Melanie Harmon, Paula Hemmerly, Steve Hill, Randy Mitchell, Diane Petrilla, Neil Snapp, Cindy Spangler, Elizabeth Weikert - **Icewater Springs Privy** - Yet another group of Magnificent Mulch Mules packed 210 lbs. of mulch to the Icewater mulch bins. Buckets were filled in the privy (Yael Girard was there when we were!) Both mulch boxes are about 50% full. It was a blustery but beautiful day. Extra work time for Petrilla was to obtain mulch for 2 days and return unused bags and empty bags to shed.

4/14 - Bill Pyle, Rick Hughes, Taylor Weatherbee - **Clingmans Dome to Miry Ridge** - Cleared 10-15 blowdowns using a chainsaw, then stashed chainsaw, PPE, other gear at the Miry Ridge trail junction and hiked back out to Clingmans.

4/14 - Diane Petrilla - **Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead**- Walked to southern end of section for overview of conditions. Re-dug and reset a waterbar and a step that were completely dislodged and laying on the trail. Dug out waterbars. Picked up litter. More waterbars to go.

4/15 - Bill Pyle, Taylor Weatherbee, McQueen Hiker - **Miry Ridge to Derrick Knob** - Cleared blowdowns and snags using the chainsaw and gear we had stashed at the Miry Ridge junction the yesterday. We got as far as the 36 inch beast that was 0.8 miles south of Derrick. Using a car shuttle, we came out the Greenbrier Ridge trail to avoid climbing up Mt Buckley again.

Don't forget to register for the
Smoky Mountains Hiking Club
Appalachian Trail Work Day,
Saturday June 5, 2021 using the
registration form in your email!