

# Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee

## Smoky Mountains Hiking Club



August 2021

### A.T. Maintenance Work Trip- Saturday August 7

Our August A.T. work trip is dedicated to MULCH HAULING! For this trip, we will hike mulch to the Icewater Springs shelter mulch storage boxes. All you need is a large-ish backpack (I have extras if needed) to pack in a bagged 20 lb. bag of mulch. You don't have to have much experience to be a mulch mule- just a pair of strong legs. And you'll be performing a much needed task before we see the south-bound surge of thru-hikers this Fall. Please come out and help! We'll meet at Sugarlands Visitor Center at 7:30am for those who would like to carpool, or at Newfound Gap parking lot at 8:15am. **Register at <https://smhclub.org/event-4403056> OR by emailing Diane Petrilla at [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com) or calling 931-224-5149.**

### Volunteers to recruit Volunteers

Most, if not all of the 31 Appalachian Trail maintaining Clubs, including ours, face challenges in recruiting new volunteers for everything from trail maintenance to leadership positions. We would really like some help in forming a Volunteer Recruitment Committee to cover different facets of these efforts. We need help with:

- Making initial contact with interested volunteers who contact us, and getting them engaged in an A.T. activity sooner rather than later.
- Reaching out proactively to different groups to explain what we do (colleges, universities, community groups for example)
- Making maximal use of social media
- Maintainers who can mentor

*Our future as a maintaining club depends on these types of efforts more than anything else.*

If you are interested in helping, even if not quite sure how, please contact Diane Petrilla at [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com) or Ann Farrar at [ann@fandkphoto.com](mailto:ann@fandkphoto.com). We would like to plan an initial brainstorming meeting to discuss plans.

### Sunday August 8, 2021 A.T. Vista Hike

The Appalachian Trail is celebrating **100 years** of its history this year with the A.T. Vista event to be held on the weekend of August 7/8! Each state the A.T. goes through has been asked to sponsor a hike for that weekend, with photos and videos to be uploaded and shared virtually with the entire A.T. community! The SMHC proudly maintains 102 miles of Trail in the GRSM and 30 miles in the NNF. We invite you to join us on a hike from Clingmans Dome (the highest point on the entire A.T.) to Silers Bald. We'll talk a little history, enjoy cooler high elevation air, and have a birthday treat for the A.T.! The hike is approximately 9 miles RT, rated moderate. We can meet at Sugarlands Visitor Center at 8am on Sunday August 8 to carpool to Clingmans Dome parking lot, or meet at the CD parking lot at 8:45am. **Register at <https://smhclub.org/event-4404429/Registration> OR by emailing Diane Petrilla at [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com) or calling 931-224-5149.**



### **S.W.E.A.T. Dates and Work Locations**

S.W.E.A.T. crews this season will be working on general Trail maintenance in our hardest-to-access sections. The staff this year is from the Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS) Session 1: July 9-14: Gregory to Spence Field (Mollies/Spence)  
Session 2: July 21-28: Sequoyah to Cosby (Tricorner)  
Session 3: August 4-11: Dry Sluice to Mt Sequoyah (Hughes Admin Cabin)  
Session 4: August 18-25: Spence Field to Welch Ridge (Spence/Silers)  
For any questions, please contact Stephen Eren at [seren@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:seren@appalachiantrail.org). These are paid crews this year, so volunteers will not be able to work with them.

### **Rocky Top Dates and Work Locations**

Rocky Top crews this season will be working on installing locust log steps between Pecks Corner and Mt. Chapman. They will be staying at the Hughes Admin cabin. The date windows for work are:  
August 19-26  
September 2-9  
September 16-23  
For any questions, please contact Stephen Eren at [seren@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:seren@appalachiantrail.org). These are paid crews this year, so volunteers will not be able to work with them.



### **New Regional Manager for ATC "Georgiahala"**

The ATC has recently been implementing leadership organizational changes to better serve the Trail, land managers and maintaining clubs. **Stephen Eren** remains our GRSM Regional Manager, and we are delighted that is so! For Georgia and the NNF, including the 30 miles of A.T. in the NNF we care for, **Sarah Adams** has been named the new RM. This Regional Manager position operates from Amicalola Falls State Park on the approach trail in GA and covers up to Fontana Dam in NC. Sarah grew up in Dahlonega, GA, where the A.T. has always been a presence in her life. At Yale, she was an Environmental Studies major and pursued learning an environmental humanities approach to research, policy, and community engagement. Her senior thesis examined cross-cultural connections between the A.T. and Japan's Shinetsu Trail, which was heavily modeled after the A.T. for its cooperative management system. After graduating in May 2020, she returned home to Dahlonega and became involved with ATC first as a North Georgia AT Community Coordinator. She's thrilled to continue building on her work with ATC in the region she calls home! Welcome Sarah!

### **And Goodbye and Best Wishes to Chloe DeCamara 🥲**

The end of July marks the end of Chloe DeCamara's time with the ATC and the SMHC, as she moves onward and upward to pursue a graduate degree at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. She will be studying to receive a Master of Public Affairs and Master of Science and Environmental Science. We have had the privilege of working with her for 7 years- as a Ridgerunner, as Soak Ash manager, and as manager of the Ridgerunner program. Chloe has come out and led teams for NTD, and trained many of us in privy bin cleaning, as someone who claims she REALLY LOVES backcountry waste management! How can you go wrong in life with such an awesome attitude??!! We will really miss you, Chloe, but know that whatever you undertake to do, or change, will be a success!

## A. T. Work Trips From 6/6/2021 to 7/16/2021

**6/6 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap** - Added two large flat stones to serve as stepping stones to new section of trail added. I think this will correct any problems until trail surface gets compacted. Repaired a rock step and added a new step below the repaired step. Turned an exposed root into step to conceal the root and removed the dead exposed root below the root-step. This eliminated a trip hazard and saved a root. Since we were spending much time improving the section within a half mile of the parking lot we had a very inquisitive number of walkers all afternoon.

**6/16 - Keith Mertz, David Gall - Yellow Creek Gap to Cody Gap** - Completed brushing out this AT section.

**6/16 - Kristi Knight, Cindy Spangler, Diane Petrilla - Community Events** - Planning and execution of SMHC A.T. Work Day including 3 Zoom meetings for initial planning and post-event door prize drawing, communicating with approximately one hundred potential participants, collecting and organizing registrants and teams, collecting door prizes from donors, mailing and distributing door prizes, lunch prep, pick-up and distribution.

**6/16 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap** - Added fill (dirt and stones) to new section rebuilt on NTD. Removed dead tree trunk and roots from middle of trail, built new water diverter, cleaned all waterbars, cut tree branches. Created a new waterbar and cut upslope vegetation.

**6/16 - Pete Berntsen - False Gap to Dry Sluice Gap** - Did major brush cutting in this area. Cut three branches from blowdown located about 0.75 mile NE of Newfound Gap.

**6/16 - Taylor Weatherbee - Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap** - Cleared vegetation from the sides of the trail. Removed one blowdown leaning over the trail.

**6/18 - Franklin LaFond, Paul Sealy - Locust Cove Gap to Cheoah Bald** - Aggressive cutting of woody vegetation that was encroaching trail for

roughly 1/2 mile. Corridor cleared to 3 ft on the uphill side of the trail. Moved log to be used for cribbing at an area where dead tree fell and left large hole on side of trail.

**6/19 - Franklin LaFond - Cody Gap to Brown Fork Gap** - Cut back woody vegetation and weeds. Removed 2 small blowdowns.

**6/19 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap** - Needed to add more fill and stones to new refurbished section. Heavy rain soaked into new fill before trail could become compacted, thus we had to gather rock and break rocks in the hot sun, I thought "I fought the law and the law won." Painted blazes on trail. Many interruptions from inquisitive hikers.

**6/23 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap** - Again added more stone to area reclaimed on NTD. Cleared all water diverters and finished vegetation trimming and painting of blazes. Sawed one small tree that had been pulled down off side of trail. (no reason for someone to go up side hill off the trail) Moved two downed tree trunks off of trail. The tree trunk at the junction of Sweat Heifer, was pushed even further off the trail than the last time we moved.

**6/26 - Amanda Beal - Thunderhead to Spence** - Lopped woody branches on the way out to Thunderhead, and brushed the tender green growth with the swing blade on the way back, up to RockyTop.

**7/1 - Mike Harrington - Sassafras Gap (Pk) to Lewellyn Branch** - Trimmed vegetation and cleared water bars.

**7/3 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock, Sunaree Bullock - Stekoah Gap to Locust Cove Gap** - Cleared trail corridor of overgrowth and small blowdowns.

**7/4 - Taylor Weatherbee, Rick Hughes - Lewellyn Branch to Fontana Dam** - Chainsaw clearing of 30" oak tree just south of marina. Crosscut clearing of 3 blowdowns from AT trailhead north of Fontana Dam, with last one just south of Lewellyn Branch. This last was a locust. Cut 2 logs for water bars

**7/5 - Dick Ketelle - Dry Sluice Gap to Gap W of Masa Knob** - Mowed the trailside vegetation and



cut back tree branches encroaching in the trail edge.

**7/6 - Stewart Taylor - Spruce Fir to Sugarland Mt Tr** - cut log and put in one step, located and cut logs for additional steps and water bars

**7/7 - Randy Mitchell - Low Gap to Cosby Knob Top** - Cut back annual growth. Removed one blow down from trail. Tree was eight inches in diameter but rotten and broke into pieces as I moved it from trail. Also repainted all blazes in the section.

**7/9 - Dick Ketelle - Other Work** - Met with Steve Dunkin and Christine Hoyer to look at new tool storage shed and discuss next steps to prepare to move our tool inventory.

**7/9 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock - Locust Cove Gap to Cheoah Bald** - Assisted Konnorock work crew.

**7/9 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock - Locust Cove Gap to Cheoah Bald** - Assisted Konnorock work team with locating and fitting rock steps.

**7/9 - Steve Dunkin - Other Work** - Inspected new shed with Christine Hoyer and Dick K. to determine tool storage

**7/10 - Dick Ketelle, Ann Farrar - Locust Cove Gap to Cheoah Bald** - Worked with Konnorock Crew on rock steps project.

**7/12 - Diane Petrilla, Neil Snapp, Randy Mitchell - Double Springs Gap Privy** - 3 maintainers and 2 ATC trainers (Chloe DeCamara and Stephen Eren) hiked into Double Springs from Clingmans Dome, each carrying 20 lbs. of mulch. At the DS privy, we learned all steps of privy bin cleaning including toilet cleaning, stirring the compost, mulch and waste to promote aeration, and then emptying a "cooked" bin from the back of the privy. This included picking out all non-biodegradable materials then dispersing the mature compost in the woods. All of this was done in full Haz-Mat gear. 100 lbs. of mulch was left at the boxes, but we used about 50 lbs. to aerate waste and fill mulch buckets. Mulch is now 50% in one box and 5% at the other. Cleaned out a busy mouse nest in one box. Excellent teaching by Chloe and lots of laughing, despite the task at hand!!



Aliens?? (photo courtesy of Diane Petrilla)



**7/12 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock - Locust Cove Gap to Cheoah Bald** - Worked with Konnorock crew.

**7/13 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock - Locust Cove Gap to Cheoah Bald** - Assisted Konnorock work crew.

**7/13 - Pete Berntsen, Patti Grady, Diane Petrilla - Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead** - With Pete Berntsen's invaluable instruction, we removed 5 poorly functioning log steps, and reset them in places where other steps were too high, or not working well with water drainages. We removed one completely rotted log step, and used a non-locust log to put in a new step. We used large stones to help make steps and wedges to stabilize steps. We lowered about 10 ft. of berm from a section of trail to promote better water flow off trail. Vegetation was trimmed.





Patti and Pete at work



Great work, beautiful Trail! (photos courtesy of Diane Petrilla)

**7/13 - Steve Dunkin - Other Work** - Measured and photographed new tool shed in order to develop tool rack fabrication plans.

**7/14 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock, Sunaree Bullock - Locust Cove Gap to Cheoah Bald** - Assisted Konnorock work team.

**7/16 - Eric Keller, Diane Petrilla - Mulch Operations** - Obtained new scale from Christine

Hoyer at new maintenance shed, picked up Elkmont gate key at BCO, and filled/ loaded 8 / 40 lb. bags of mulch for horsemen to take to Spence. Delivered bags to Sam Tillery.

**7/16 - Neil Snepp - Inadu Knob to Tricorner** - Cleaned water bars, trimmed vegetation, Tier One Privy Maintenance. Cut limbs from a blow down suspended across and above the trail to permit passage under tree. Overnight at TriCorner permit A294834.

**Quiz:** Can you find the 2 rattlesnakes that Amanda Beal spotted on this locust log pile during her June 26 work trip?!



(Photo courtesy of Amanda Beal)

Please send any items of interest, **photos**, and event notifications for the ATMC Newsletter to Diane Petrilla at [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com). Thank you for **ALL** of the work you do!