A.T. Maintenance Work Trip - Saturday Oct. 2

This work trip will take place about 1.2 miles north of Newfound Gap. We will work to return the trail tread to its proper location, while improving water drainage on the trail. The work will require moving rocks and adding steps if needed. Participants will need to dress for the weather and bring work gloves, lunch and beverage. Rock bars will be provided. Meet at Newfound Gap parking area at 8:45 am and we’ll be back at the cars by 4 pm. Pre-registration is required. Pre-register at smhclub.org, or contact leaders.

Leaders: Mark and Janet Snyder, markandjanets@gmail.com, 865-388-5261.

Maintainers - No Tarps on Shelters Please

Phyllis Henry, in consultation with Christine Hoyer, has requested that maintainers do not put tarps up at shelters this Fall/Winter due to concerns about COVID spread in enclosed spaces. Thank you.

Please be sure your work hours are reported

By September 30, I will be doing our annual fiscal year calculations of volunteer hours spent on the A.T. These numbers are sent to the Great Smoky Mountains NP, the Nantahala NF and to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (in different formats). They are also used to calculate maintainer awards each year. Please be sure if you have any work trips completed before September 30, to get them filed at smhclub.org under the A.T. Maintenance tab. If you need any help with this, please contact swalker.dev@gmail.com or petrillad@gmail.com.

A. T. Work Trips From 8/6/2021 to 9/14/2021

8/6 - Steve Dunkin - Other Work - Constructed two tool racks and moved tools from Mac's barn to SMHC Tool Shed.

8/18 - Barbara Allen, Meg Gill, Phyllis Henry, Stephanie Gose, Kristi Knight, Franklin LaFond, Lisa Sumter, Randy Mitchell, Philip Royer, Cindy Spangler, Neil Snepp, Taylor Weatherbee, Diane Petrilla - Club Mgt, Mtgs & Admin - ATMC Zoom Meeting to discuss maintainer work and other relevant topics.
8/18 - Pete Berntsen - False Gap to Dry Sluice Gap - Rehabilitated 132 feet of trail to include adding three water drains and lowering about 10 feet of outer trail to create an area of flat water drainage. Cut foliage back further in area of work. Trail improvements completed to 1.3 mile NE of Dry Sluice Gap.

8/18 - Taylor Weatherbee - Welch Ridge Tr to Miry Ridge - Trimmed vegetation, primarily blackberry briars, from around the shelter, trail to cables, and trail to water source, then down the trail to the junction with the Welch Ridge Trail (Diane Petrilla had requested help in this area)

8/20 - Randy Mitchell - Low Gap to Cosby Knob Top - Cut back summer growth in section. Removed a few limbs from the trail. Despite the heavy rains there were no blowdowns in the section. Inspected the newly reopened Cosby Knob Shelter. It was very clean with only one piece of trash in the fireplace. While sweeping the sleeping platform I noticed a small wet spot on the third from the right top bunk area. There was only a bit of dampness on the roof support under the skylight junction. It was raining lightly while I was there but there was not an active leak at that time. I have pictures if needed. Cut summer growth from under bear cables and had to cut a path to the fire ring. Topped off mulch buckets, knocked down the cone and sanitized the seat in the privy.

8/21 - Jack Grant, Steve Hill - Mulch Operations - Jack and Steve bagged 40/20lb. bags of mulch. New large platform scale provided by Christine Hoyer greatly sped up process! 20 bags are at maintainer shed, 20 are still under tent, along with 8/40lb. bags for anticipated equestrian haul to Cosby.

8/24 - Pete Berntsen - False Gap to Dry Sluice Gap - Completed rehabilitation of 120 feet of trail including removal of trip rocks, repairing three water drains, adding one water drain, and cutting brush. Work area is located about 1.3 miles NE of Dry Sluice Gap. End of work area is at top of steps carved into rock in 2019.

Great looking trail section after Pete’s work! (photo courtesy of Pete Berntsen)

8/24 - Rick Hughes, Taylor Weatherbee - Goshen Prong Tr to Welch Ridge Tr - Trimmed vegetation with scythe and cleaned water bars.

8/25 - Ernie Wiles, Diane Petrilla - Goshen Prong Tr to Welch Ridge Tr - cleaned 20 + water bars and trimmed tree limbs over hanging trail.

8/26 - Cindy Spangler - Mt Love to Clingmans Dome - I brushed the trail by removing lots of encroaching weeds and grass.

8/27 - Jeff Osler, Taylor Weatherbee - Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap - Trimmed vegetation, cleaned water bars, and installed one new rock water bar in the section between the Bill Pyle/Rick Hughes section and our section north of Collins Gap (this is a section that usually is missed between our sections).

8/29 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock - Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap - Cleared corridor of two large limbs from recent winds, removed minimal trash from parking area and shelter. Split locust steps and stakes for steps.

8/29 - Lisa Sumter - Davenport Gap to Chestnut Br Trail - I removed branches from the trail, trimmed a few spots, checked the shelter area & water source.
8/29 - Pete Berntsen - NFG to Goshen Prong Tr - Work identified in Aug 26 and 27 ATMC Work Reports from Cindy Spangler and Taylor Weatherbee. Cleared dead tree blowdown located 15 feet from AT north sign. Used ax and handsaw. Cleared small brush between North and South access paths near Clingmans Dome. Cleared encroaching briars located in sunny area from 0.4 mile to 0.6 mile SW of Clingmans. (Hikers advised that Clingmans to 0.6 mile SW of Newfound was clear.) Checked blowdown "a ways south of Indian Gap" by hiking from Indian Gap SW for 1.2 mile. No blowdowns but did cut briars in the entire area. The blowdown reported around 0.5 mile SW of Newfound gap involved three trees. A two-inch diameter and a six-inch diameter were cut and removed. A 12-inch branch was also cut and removed to make the blowdown easy to hike over or under. Also reset a log waterbar located 0.3 mile SW of Newfound.

9/2 - Pete Berntsen - False Gap to Newfound Gap - Cleared brush, 0.25-inch to 8-inches diameter, from trail tread and a few dangling overhead, from entire length of this section. Cleared a thicket of briars about 0.8 mile NE of Dry Sluice Gap. Completed 114 feet of trail tread rehabilitation located about 1.3 mile NE of Dry Sluice Gap. This included removing berm to create "flat water" drainage.

9/2 - Randy Mitchell - Low Gap to Cosby Knob Top - Cleared all waterbars and drains in section. Removed many small limbs from trail. Inspected shelter and privy at Cosby Knob. Ran into Park Service intern who was removing bear warning signs from shelter. Packed out abandoned air mattress from shelter.

9/2 - Stewart Taylor - Spruce Fir to Sugarland Mt Tr - Checked all the drainage ditches and water bars from the trailhead to Mt. Collins shelter. Most were fine but I had to clean some that were blocked where the ditches left the trail. The shelter was clean as well as the area around the shelter. Cleaned the ditches in front of the shelter. Put in two steps on the A.T.

9/2 - Tim Ryan, Jay Schmid, John Harrison - Sunup Knob to Low Gap - Cut vegetation, cleaned waterbars and drainage areas, created several new drainage areas, removed mud from two boggy areas, trimmed trees encroaching on footpath, removed roots from footpath.

9/5 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock, Franklin LaFond - Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap - Added 17 steps, split and prepped locust for next work section. Cleared corridor and assessed needed water bars to further control erosion along the corridor.

9/6 - Franklin LaFond - Fontana Dam to High Pt E of Walker Gap - Transported locust logs to work area near junction of Benton MacKaye trail. Walked section to locate blowdown reported by hikers. Added 2 new log steps. 25 ft of sidehill rehab. Removed several small blowdowns and limb debris brought down by storm.

9/6 - Pete Berntsen - Gap W of Masa Knob to Boulevard Tr - Assisted Taylor Weatherbee with repair of breaches in metal on the back of the privy. Trimmed brush and grass from the privy to the spring and on the trail south of the shelter. Did major repair of the water drains near the bear cables and on the trail just south of the trail entrance toward the shelter. Filled two mulch buckets in the privy. Carried out shovel head that
was in the maintenance bin and picked up minor trail trash on the hike back to Newfound Gap.

9/6 - Taylor Weatherbee, Nate Gressett Hiker, Luke Hiker, Jess Hiker, Casey Hiker - Gap W of Masa Knob to Newfound Gap - Repaired breaches in metal on the back of the privy, adding essentially 2 layers of hardware cloth to each of the 3 bins, being careful to still allow the middle bin door to be removed by leaving access to the 4 bolts holding it in place. Pete Bernstein assisted in this work, then stayed to work on the trail further. I then went to the tree 0.5 miles south of NFG (that Pete had worked on previously). 4 hikers eagerly assisted in getting the tree off the trail.

Who is this man??
(photos courtesy of Taylor Weatherbee)

9/9 - Franklin LaFond, Taylor Weatherbee - Fontana Dam to High Pt E of Walker Gap - Removed 4 large blowdowns, including the HUGE oak that was creating safety concerns recorded over Labor Day weekend. Repaired 2 log steps damaged by huge blowdown. Repaired rock cribbing damaged by large blowdown. Added 7 new log steps and 1 log waterbar. Identified 5 green locust logs on FS road near Benton MacKaye Junction that had been cut by the Trail Dimensions Trail crew and tossed over the embankment. These were split to manageable size and transported to stash where they can dry out and be skinned before being utilized for future projects.

Thanks to these hikers!
(photo courtesy of Taylor Weatherbee)
Massive blowdown, Taylor working to clear. (photo courtesy of Franklin LaFond)

9/9 - Rick Waggener, Pete Berntsen - **Gap W of Masa Knob to Boulevard Tr** - 1 very long & 1 short drain 2 stone steps. Surveyed section and tagged about 10 places requiring priority attention (drainage issues).


9/12 - Janet Snyder, Mark Snyder - **Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap** - Built one rock step, and one locust log step, total of two new steps. Repositioned (lowered) previous placed locust waterbar. Cleaned all waterbars in the first .4 mile. Cut some vegetation where needed, and cut dead trip roots. Took numerous photos of deliberate damage to the trail resulting in erosion and losing the trail, this section was rehabbed by the Rocky Top Trail Crew in Sept. 2016. These photos will be shared with Franklin Lafond.

9/13 - Pete Berntsen, Rick Waggener - **Clingmans Dome to Goshen Prong Tr** - Cut back vegetation along entire area. Cleared approximately 90% of all water drains in the area. Most other drains were okay except for a couple that will require more extensive work to clean. Reset one rock water bar. Dispersed one fire ring near Clingmans Dome.

Photos above, steps before and after build and repair
on the trail and discussed options for addressing concerns about some areas of the trail.

9/14 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap - Worked south, from Sweat Heifer, cleaning water bars, cutting vegetation, lowering a locust water bar. Met up with Franklin Lafond as he was returning from an observation of what may be needed along the trail. Spent time as to what may be done at two critical areas and Franklin suggested there is actually three critical areas of major concern in our area. Pictures were taken and discussion about each critical area took place. It was stated by Franklin that these critical areas were more than two maintainers can undertake. As we continued down the trail we continued to remove problem rocks.

Remember Clingmans Dome Rd. will close by December 1. If your A.T. section is out that way, please plan your Fall cleaning of waterbars, etc. before the closure. Thank you!

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!

9/14 - Franklin LaFond - Gap W of Masa Knob to Newfound Gap - Walked area to look at several project areas get an assessment of number of potential locust logs that might be needed to accomplish them. Worked with Mark and Janet Snyder on the way back to remove problem rocks.

The section from Clingmans to Goshen is challenging. This was a good fix for a very boggy area. (4 photos above courtesy of Pete Berntsen)