



December 2021

No Regular First Saturday 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 Nov. 29. 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, healthy and warm!

2021 Maintainer Awards!

Normally in early December each year, we gather for the SMHC Annual Installation Banquet which includes well-deserved recognition of our A.T. maintainers. Because of the ongoing historic COVID pandemic, the Board of the SMHC made the difficult decision to cancel the holiday dinner for the second year in a row. However, **everyone** who volunteers is deeply appreciated. The lists below show awards for those who have contributed extraordinary amounts of work in the last year (October 1, 2020 to September 31, 2021). We certainly hope that next year we can return to an in-person celebration and recognition! Your awards will be mailed to you in January. If you have any questions about the awards or calculations, please email petrillad@gmail.com.

SMHC Awards: given for trail work hours earned in 1 year. Repeat Platinum and Gold cap award winners receive an ATC pin for their caps.

PLATINUM (200 hours) (new): Dick Kettle, Bill Pyle
Platinum (again!): Pete Berntsen Franklin LaFond, Janet Snyder, Mark Snyder, Taylor Weatherbee.

GOLD (100 hours) (new): Randy Bullock, Rick Hughes,
Gold (again!): Terry Martin, Randy Mitchell, Diane Petrilla.

SILVER (50 hours) (new): David Gall, Jack Grant, Melanie Harmon, Ann Farrar, Steve Hill, Rick Waggener, Elizabeth Weikert. There are 11 additional maintainers who *repeated* at least 50 hours of work this year, at the silver level.

BRONZE (25 hours) (new): Stephanie Gose, Scott Medlyn, Lisa Sumter, Davis Wax. There are 15 additional maintainers who *repeated* at least 25 hours of work this year, at the bronze level.

Appalachian Trail Conservancy Awards: given for cumulative hours since 10/1/2000, start of database.

ATC Vest (1000 hours): Taylor Weatherbee

ATC Cap (500 hours): Bill Pyle

ATC Patch (100 hours): Lillian Bray, Randy Bullock, Rick Hughes, Eric Keller, Charlie McDonald, Brad Sites, Rick Waggener, Elizabeth Weikert

ATPO Awards: 250 hours since last eligibility date to earn National parks Pass for 1 year.

Maintainers who are eligible will be contacted individually to choose whether they want the Pass.

These recognition awards seem small in light of all that these volunteers have accomplished and that all of our A.T. volunteers accomplish. The Smoky Mountains Hiking Club is proud of our tradition of being a maintaining club for the A.T. since our founding in 1923 and we are very proud that you carry on this mission.

Thank you! You all are the best!



Section Leader Changes this Year

This year we welcomed or are welcoming several new section leaders to A.T. maintenance. If you know them or see them, please thank them! They are:

Meg and William Gill (Lower Mt Cammerer Tr to Chestnut Branch)

Kathy Gardner (assisting Tim Bigelow) (1 mi N of Cammerer to Mt Cammerer side trail)

Mark Armstrong (assisting Rick Waggener) (Gap W of Masa Knob to Boulevard)

Peter Lloyd and Patricia Bryant (Mt Love to Clingmans Dome)

Brent Gregory (Lewellyn Branch to Fontana Dam)

Melanie Harmon (assisting Keith Mertz) (Yellow Creek gap to Cody Gap, NNF)

We are so very grateful to maintainers who have retired from their sections:

Russ Redden (Cosby Knob Top to Low Gap)

Cindy Spangler (Mt Love to Clingmans Dome)

Tim Ryan and Jay Schmid (Sunup Knob to Low Gap) who are moving to Boulevard to Sweat Heifer section)

We have a number of sections that need help or leadership; updated list will be published in next Newsletter.

We will be having a recruitment meeting in December 2021 or early January, 2022. Several people have already indicated an interest. Please contact petrillad@gmail.com if you would like to be involved!

New Tool Shed and Tool/ Mulch Box arrangements at Sugarlands Maintenance Area

As many of you are probably aware, thanks to Christine Hoyer and monies from the Friends of the Smokies, we have a new tool shed at the Sugarlands Maintenance area. There are 2 white sheds on the right, as you pull into the parking lot; ours is the smaller of the two, without a double door. The tool box is now located behind the new shed, and 2 mulch boxes are located next to the shed (see photo). Bagged mulch will be stored in the outdoor boxes. Combinations on all box locks remains the same (please let me know if you need that combination). HUGE thanks to Steve Dunkin who

spearheaded the effort to build storage racks in the new shed, get *all* of the tools previously stored at the McNutt barn moved to the new shed, and led the work day on November 7 to clean all tools. Date to do final cleaning out of old shed is TBD.



Brown Tool box on left, red mulch boxes on right (view from behind new shed)

A. T. Work Trips From 10/13/2021 to 11/15/2021

10/13 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock, Franklin LaFond - Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap - Added 22 steps to steep trail section near top of Jacobs Ladder. Cleared 10 water bars and repaired an existing step. Discussed future water bar placement to mediate erosion on lower section. Over this season, Franklin LaFond and I added a total of 66 steps.

10/15 - Rick Hughes - Goshen Prong Tr to Welch Ridge Tr - Cleaned out 25 fully silted water bars.

10/17 - Rick Waggener, Mark Armstrong II - Gap W of Masa Knob to Boulevard Tr - There are [now] 24 drains between Boulevard & Icewater shelter. Many are new, deep, and long. All are cleared and functioning - most leaves are down at this altitude, but I will follow up before winter. Packed trash out from the shelter; 30% mulch remaining, only. Refilled buckets. Buried poop along the trail. Mark Armstrong was a digging beast, thanks!

10/18 - Ann Farrar - NL & Website - Ann filmed our work trip at several points as part of a larger effort to create a maintainer recruitment video for SMHC website and other uses. She was a great director!

10/18 - Diane Petrilla, Randy Mitchell, Aenan Fee, Kathy Gardner, Dale Gerhardt, Elizabeth Weikert, Debra Barton, Ernie Wiles, Neil Snepp, Jean Gauger, Hiram Rogers - **Mulch Operations** - This great crew of 11 hauled 260lbs. of mulch to the mulch boxes at DS. Buckets in the privy were filled, privy swept. Mulch supply in 1 box now at 80%. We were delighted to have Ann Farrar with us, filming portions of our work for an A.T. maintainer recruitment video.

10/18 - Rick Waggener - **Gap W of Masa Knob to Boulevard Tr** - Cleared leaves from drains. Cut 2 more drains on Kephart. Secured the Boulevard sign with stakes [it has been wobbly for several months].

10/19 - Rick Hughes - **Clingmans Dome to Goshen Prong Tr** - Finished clearing silted waterbars between Goshen Springs Trail and Double Springs shelter. This completes waterbar clearing between Goshen Springs Trail and Welch Ridge Trail.

10/19 - Taylor Weatherbee - **Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap** - Dug out and widened water bars

10/20 - Pete Berntsen - **False Gap to Dry Sluice Gap** - Rehabilitated 157 feet of trail to include rework of two water drains, adding four new water drains, and filling two root systems with rock.

10/20 - Pete Berntsen - **Dry Sluice Gap to Gap W of Masa Knob** - Hikers advised where I was working that they had set the sign up at the northern entrance to Charlies Bunion and had placed some stones to hold it in place. I used a 4-pound sledge to to better secure the sign.

10/21 - Taylor Weatherbee - **Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap** - Widened and dug out water bars and 2 turnpikes, installed one rock step, dug out 1 drainage dip, and did trail rehab of 110 feet of trail where the tread had gotten too narrow.

10/22 - Dick Ketelle - **Dry Sluice Gap to Gap W of Masa Knob** - Cleared water drains of accumulated leaves and sediment in preparation for winter. Made dimension measurements and pictures of Icewater Spring Shelter fireplace and top of chimney in planning for possible repairs to be made in 2022.

10/23 - Franklin LaFond, Gabby (Hiker) Moseley, Telia (Hiker) Moseley - **Fontana Dam to High Pt E of Walker Gap** - Installed 14 new log steps and 1 new log waterbar. Built one log box step to protect large tree roots, backfilled it with crushed rock, and covered with dirt. Rehab 60 ft of sidehill. Removed 20 inch dead oak

that had fallen across the trail near the Fontana Shelter. Cut fallen limbs from camping area near the shelter.

10/23 - Steve Dunkin - **Other Work** - Prepared area for Nov 7 Tool Cleanup/Sharpening Event

10/23 - Stewart Taylor - **Mount Collins Shelter** - Went to Mt. Collins Shelter, cleaned out the ditches in front of the shelter, checked the shelter and the area around the shelter and the privy. I then cleaned all the water bars from the shelter to almost the Fork Ridge Trailhead.

10/24 - Franklin LaFond, Telia (Hiker) Moseley, Gabby (Hiker) Moseley - **Davenport Gap to Chestnut Br Trail** - Carried 4 locust logs from trailhead to locations where existing logs were either rotting or too short for waterbars. Replaced 2 log waterbars, added 9 new log steps, added additional soil to some of the steps that were installed early this month. Split additional locust stakes and stacked near locust logs up the trail. These will eventually be utilized with the locust logs staged at the Davenport Shelter trail junction.

10/24 - Randy Mitchell, Diane Petrilla - **Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead** - I brought an extra shovel to the mulch hauling trip, hoping to recruit a helper for my section, to work after the mulch haul. I had 3 incredible volunteers! (I should have brought more tools!!) Randy and I dug out waterbars- I was so grateful for the help.

10/24 - Terry Martin, Melanie Harmon, Dale Gerhardt, Lynn Kszos, Janet Snyder, Diane Petrilla, Randy Mitchell - **Mulch Operations** - 7 Mighty Magnificent Mulch Mules carried 220 lbs. of mulch to Double Springs. All bucket sin privy filled and privy swept.



L to R: Dale, Melanie, Lynn, Terry, Janet, Randy
(photo courtesy of Diane Petrilla)

10/26 - Franklin LaFond - Trail Assessments - Met Morgan and Sarah (ATC), and Heath (FS) to walk the proposed relocation and get the GPS route documented. New grade was verified to be less than 10%. Length of new trail measured to be 850 linear feet. Checked shelter for trash.

10/26 - Taylor Weatherbee - Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap - Installed 3 stone steps, 2 stone water bars, dug out and widened around 20-30 water bars and drainages, and widened the treadway on 90 feet of trail.

10/27 - Charlie McDonald - Mulch Operations - Gathered all empty mulch bags from the maintenance shed delivered to Elkmont Tent. While there I bagged 25/20lb, added estimated 600lbs of dry mulch under the tent. Currently estimated 750lbs mulch drying out. Delivered the 25/20lb bags back to the maintenance shed, current inventory at the shed is 38/20lb bags. Please let me know what inventory you remove. This helps with making certain we always have an adequate supply. Thanks.

10/27 - Franklin LaFond - Fontana Dam to High Pt E of Walker Gap - 50 feet sidehill rehab. Removed 2 small blowdowns. Moved locust logs and split stakes to install 5 new steps.

10/27 - Pete Berntsen - False Gap to Dry Sluice Gap - Rehabilitated 124 feet of trail to include returning trail to hiking width, cutting two large hazard roots, improving six water drains, adding one new water drain, and adding three rock steps.

11/1 - Pete Berntsen - False Gap to Dry Sluice Gap - Cleaned leaves from water drains. Improved 169 feet of trail. Returned trail width to normal. Added one new water drain and improved two old water drains. Removed 46 feet of berm to allow water to flow across the trail. Removed three large protruding rocks and filled with small rock material removed from berm areas. Added one temporary rock step which will be replaced with one heavy rock. (A rock-bar is needed.) Filled all three empty mulch buckets at Icewater Shelter. There is about three more buckets of mulch left in bin closest to privy and mulch is about four inches deep in the other mulch bin. Icewater spring is flowing at one liter per minute.

11/2 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap - Cleaned water bars starting at Sweat Heifer and worked south. Dug out some with pick and shovel and some just needed the leaves removed. Was still a good crowd of people on the trail, which slowed the process, as many are curious as to our purpose on

the trail. Many tourists express they never thought that someone was constructing or maintaining the trail.

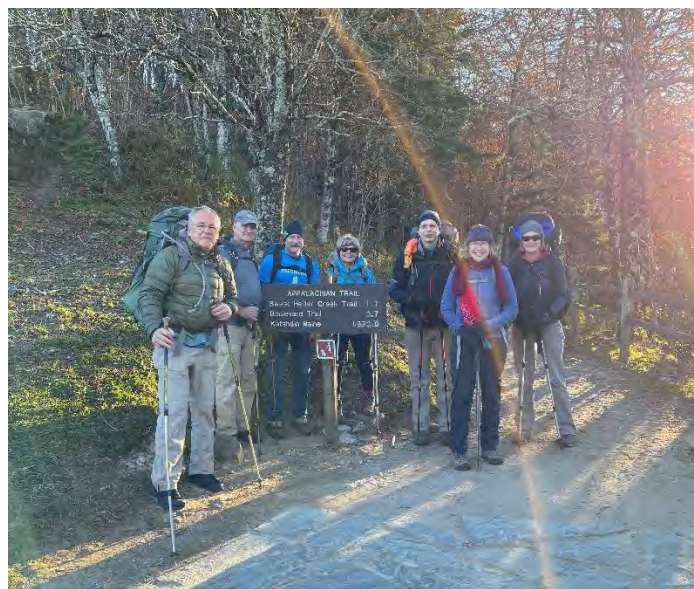
11/5 - Rick Hughes - Collins Gap to Mt Love - Fall waterbar clearing. Cleared 56 waterbars, widening several of those.

11/5 - Taylor Weatherbee - Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap - Dug out and widened water bars. Added extra stone to a narrow water bar. Only a few water bars left near Collins Gap, and between our section and Bill and Ricks section.

11/7 - Franklin LaFond, Joseph ("Randy") Bullock - Cheoah Bald to Swim Bald - Removed 3 blowdowns. Pruned back some woody vegetation. Rehab 75 ft of sidehill trail 1/4 mile north of shelter. Picked up trash from Sassafras Gap shelter and privy area. Filled 3 mulch buckets. Dropped off new shelter register notebook.

11/7 - Steve Dunkin, Nicole Samu, Neil Snepp, Diane Petrilla - Other Work - Cleaned, stenciled and painted as required all tool in the SMHC Tool Shed. Cleaned tools in job box behind old tool shed. Moved PPE items from old to new shed.

11/8 - Debra Barton, Kathy Gardner, Dale Gerhardt, Terry Martin, Diane Petrilla, Taylor Weatherbee, Ernie Wiles - Mulch Operations - 7 hardy mulch mules packed 240 lbs. of mulch into the Icewater mulch boxes. After wards, 6 packed 260 lbs. of mulch to Mt. Collins.



L to R: Dale, Ernie, Taylor, Debra, Terry, Diane, Kathy
(photo courtesy of Diane Petrilla)

11/8 - Taylor Weatherbee - Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap - After participating in Diane's mulch delivery to Icewater and Mt Collins privies, I got on the roof of the Collins shelter to try once more to fix the leak in the roof. Then I went to the other end of our section to widen the rest of the water bars, and install one stone step (found a nice large stone when widening a water bar.)

11/8 - Terry Martin, Ernie Wiles, Diane Petrilla - Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead - After mulch hauling, 2 wonderful mulch mules helped me finish clearing water bars on Patti's and my A.T. section. All travel hours for this work reported on mulch haul report.

11/9 - Franklin LaFond, Hannah Levi, Rachelle Webb - Davenport Ga to Chestnut Br Trail - Installed 10 new log steps. Cleaned out a few waterbars where we needed soil to backfill new steps. Reset and staked in 2 water bars. Removed limb debris from trail. All major problem areas in this section have now been addressed via the log step and waterbar installations that have occurred this past season. Many thanks to all the volunteers that have helped make this project a success.

11/9 - Mark Snyder- Sweat Heifer to NFG -Finished cleaning water bars in our section, the bottom half mile. Removed some trip roots.

11/10 - Pete Berntsen - False Gap to Dry Sluice Gap - Removed low hanging dead branches along route. Planned to replace thinner rock step installed last week but kept it in place and secured it with the much larger rock placed on top (two steps). Completed trail improvements of 75 feet which included adding three additional rock steps, two new water drains, and improvements of two existing water drains.



2 big steps installed (photo courtesy of Pete Berntsen)

11/12- Stew Taylor, Jerry Troxler- Mt Collins shelter to Fork Ridge- Changed the privy at Mt. Collins Shelter, cleaned water bars/drainage ditches about 1 mile north from the Fork Ridge Trailhead, cut two large logs to be cut further into steps and water bars.

11/14 - Ann Farrar, Dick Ketelle - NL & Website - Dick and Ann worked together on film footage of the mulch team, as well as some stills, to continue our video-for-recruitment project. Great thanks to them!

11/14 - Diane Petrilla, Neil Snepp, Janet Snyder, Elizabeth Weikert, Ernie Wiles - Mulch Operations - This magnificent mulch mule team backpacked 100 lbs. of mulch to Icewater. Buckets in privy filled, privy swept. 1 mulch box about 75% full, the other about 40%. Janet and Diane worked for a few minutes to shore up a log on one side of the trail, on the way back, at a big dip. Diane picked up mulch and returned un-used mulch.

11/14 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock - Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap - Cleared corridor using a sling blade as briars cut earlier in the season are making a comeback. Removed 3 small blowdowns. Inspected shelter and privy, filled leaf buckets. Cleared water bars. Water source flowing.

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!

**HAPPY
THANKSGIVING!**