



May 2022

AT Maintenance Work Trip - Saturday May 7

Davenport Gap to Mt. Cammerer Side Trail: 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 in to 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.* Register at smhclub.org or contact Tim Bigelow, 865-607-6781, bigelowt2@mindspring.com

Volunteer Recruitment Team Leader Needed

As you can imagine, volunteer recruitment is crucial to our efforts to maintain the 100 miles of A.T. our Club does. As new volunteer interest forms come in, the VR Chair:

- Forwards names interested in working in the NNF to Randy Bullock and Franklin LaFond.
- Makes an initial email contact with new Park volunteer sign-up to welcome them and describe what we do.
- Follows up by asking someone from our data base of willing maintainers to call the new person, and if interested, take them out for a day of maintenance.
- Keeps track of what sections need leaders or help with extra crew to recruit and make assignments.
- When a new section leader is identified, gets proper paper-work completed.
- Interfaces with visiting college and service groups

D. Petrilla has been in charge of VR since 2017. She will step down as of June 15, 2022. She can train you in all you need to know! Please contact petrillad@gmail.com if you can help.

It's Time To Register for National Trails Day, Saturday June 4, 2022!

National Trails Day is on Saturday June 4 this year. This is the 25th year that the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club has hosted an NTD event! We still need a few crew leaders and we *most certainly need* crews to register to work on the Appalachian Trail, in crews from Davenport Gap, Newfound Gap, along Clingmans Dome Rd. and Spence Field. Crew leaders will meet at Sugarlands Visitor Center at 7am, and then meet their crews at designated trailheads at 8:30am. We will provide a bagged lunch, a free commemorative T-shirt, and prizes! ***Please see the Registration Form that is a separate attachment to this Newsletter.*** You can register by:

- Going to smhclub.org and clicking on the link displayed on the home page **or**
- Printing the registration form and mailing to the address listed at the bottom **or**
- E-mailing Diane Petrilla directly with answers to each question on the registration form, at smhc.elm@gmail.com.

EVERYONE, including crew leaders, has to complete a registration form. **Deadline to receive registrations is MONDAY MAY 16.** Come out and help us with a day of work and fun on the A.T.!



Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club

RHKetelle

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A. T. Work Trips From 3/20/2022 to 4/17/2022

3/20 - Charlie McDonald, Debbie McDonald - Mulch Operations - Bagged 4/40 lb bags of mulch for Sam Tillery to be delivered via horseback to a shelter, delivered to Sam's home. While there we bagged an additional 12/20lb. Left there at the tent for mulch bin replenishment. Also turned over mulch to aid in drying.

3/20 - Lisa Sumter, Franklin LaFond, Lynn Kszos, Robin Penegar - Davenport Gap to Chestnut Br Trail - We cleared all of the drainages & removed down branches. Pruned back vegetation, primarily rhododendron. Sawed & removed a log partially blocking the trail. Roots chopped out & tread smoothed out in several areas. Checked the shelter area.



Franklin and Lynn working on a blowdown
(photo Courtesy of Lisa Sumter)

3/20 - Pete Berntsen - False Gap to Dry Sluice Gap - Cleared debris from the trail, cut and removed two small trees from across the trail, and did minor clearing of drains. Trimmed rhododendron from area 0.3 to 0.5 mile SW of False Gap. Removed 10-inch blowdown with hiker assistance 0.34-mile SW of False Gap. Cut and cleared 13-inch diameter tree from 0.52 miles NE of Dry Sluice Gap. Cut and cleared 6-inch diameter tree 0.5 miles NE of Dry Sluice Gap. OTHER CLEARED TREES: Cut and cleared, with assistance, 8-inch tree 0.25-mile SW

of Dry Sluice Gap. Cut and trimmed tree 0.34-mile NE of The Boulevard.

3/23 - Diane Petrilla, GRSM Consortium Group - Mulch Operations - For the first time in 2 years (due to COVID) we welcomed back students from the Outdoor Recreation Consortium, a group of 5 colleges who sends students to the Smokies to learn about all aspects of the Park, from ecology to management. As part of this, the students have traditionally helped us in years past, haul mulch to Icewater shelter. Unfortunately, high winds and blowdowns closed NFG Rd. until early afternoon. We spent time at Metcalf Bottoms learning about the Park from Christine Hoyer, with additional information provided by myself regarding the work of the SMHC on the A.T. I then took the students to the Elkmont mulch tent, where we bagged 12/ 40 lb. bags of mulch, in anticipation of an upcoming equestrian haul to Cosby and/or Tricorner. Afterwards, with clear weather we took a hike, and continued discussing many aspects of Park ecology, Visitor Use, and A.T. management. This a delightful group, and hopefully we'll have them next year for a mulch run! Thank you to the maintainers who volunteered to go with us (until I cancelled due to weather).



What a great group of students!
(photo courtesy of Erin Seekamp)

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3/24 - Taylor Weatherbee, Bill Pyle - Mollies Ridge

Shelter - Worked on leaks in the roof of Mollies and Russell Field shelters. A small crack was noted in the skylight of the Mollies shelter (at the spot where a screw attached the skylight to the wood slat under it). I think this will be successful. I couldn't spot any problem in the area of the documented leak in the Russell shelter roof, but I sprayed sealant along some seams and edges. Hopefully that will help. We used a crosscut to remove the sole blowdown between Mollies and Russell. We returned by way of the Russell Field Trail and the Anthony Creek Trail. We removed 5-6 blowdowns on the way back. We left 3 blowdowns on the Russell Field Trail, one up high, within around 0.5-0.75 miles of the top. This is a very solid 28 inch diameter tree. We were able to modify another one down low so that it is an easy step over. There were also 3 more blowdowns on the Anthony Creek Trail that will need to be removed.

3/26 - Randy Bullock, Franklin LaFond - Cheoah Bald to

Wright Gap - Cleared 20 large blowdowns in this section using Wright Gap as an entry point. During the clearing, 3 of the trees were large enough to cause obstruction to the trail and possible hazard. Once corrected the trail path was restored negating future walk around and erosion concerns. One larger group of branches from a dead pine were removed and tread way was restored.

3/27 - Randy Bullock, Franklin LaFond - Stekoah Gap to

Locust Cove Gap - Flagged and marked 10 project areas for summer work crew. Evaluated trail corridor and tread way around Bushnell Knob for future improvements to address tread way, corridor and erosion concerns.

3/29 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder- Sweat Heifer to

Newfound Gap - Cleared all waterbars on trail and lopped numerous overhanging branches. Very crowded day and had to wait as people needed through. (Constant vigilance is required as people encroach upon the workplace. The lookout asks people to stop for a moment, and after they either ignore a safety request

or respond that there is room to pass, as they will time their pass through between the swings of the pick mattock. Ultimately, the user of the tool has to stop. Numerous trip roots removed.

3/29 - Taylor Weatherbee - Mulch Operations -

Hauled 40 pounds of mulch. Worked a tiny bit on the only blowdown in that section. Too big for the little hand saw I carried. About 16-18 inches in diameter and pretty solid.

3/31 - Randy Bullock - Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap

- After a strong windstorm, I hiked this section removing several blowdowns and trees across the trail, 1 causing a potential hazard as it was in a narrow corridor. Cleared water bars where necessary. Inspected shelter and water source.

4/1 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to

Newfound Gap - Had to re-clear numerous water bars as strong winds brought limbs and twigs down from trees and blew dry leaves into the water bars. Had to block, gargoyles, a social path created for no apparent reason, well below a fallen tree. Had to remove the tree from the trail, sawed the 10" tree. Used the trunk of the tree as a part of the gargoyles. Removed the lower part of the trunk which enabling the trail to be made wider by pulling two large stone over to widen the trail. Cleared all water bars to Sweat Heifer, cut trip roots, looped and sawed over hanging branches, reset a locust water bar, pulled up a lower step that Janet said would not make it thru the winter. (She was right, we men were wrong.)

4/2 - Diane Petrilla, Elizabeth Weikert, Kelly Conway, Gene Desrosiers, Tracy Kressler, Hiram Rogers, Melanie Harmon, Lynn Kszos, David Gall, Kathy Gardner, Cindy Spangler, Adam Beal, Amanda Beal, Brian Groenhout, Mike Harrington, Nicole Samu, Jonny Bruce, Bill Pyle -

Mulch Operations - 17 AWESOME mulch mules hauled 400 lbs. of mulch to the Icewater privy mulch bins. The privy was swept and buckets filled. We were greatly assisted by having the mulch bags brought to NFG by Bill Pyle and Kelly Conway. Some of our haulers then

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joined Dick Ketelle's work trip group to complete the day. Many day hikers and thru-hikers. The mulch bins at IW are now 100% and 50% full.

4/2 - Dick Ketelle, Bill Pyle, David Harlow, Bill Gorie - Boulevard Tr to Newfound Gap - Our group used crosscut saw and other hand tools to remove a large blowdown previously reported by RR. After that task we cleared some waterbars north of Sweat Heifer Tr and installed one new rock waterbar to replace totally deteriorated log bar. The new waterbar was installed in a critical location where channelized flow in the trail broke over the previous structure to cascade down a short set of rock steps to cause continuing erosion farther down the trail.



Cross-cut, above Dick Ketelle and next page, Brian Groenhout



The team, L to R, Bill G., David, Bill P. and Dick
(work trip photos courtesy of Bill Gorie and Dick Ketelle)



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4/7 - Charlie McDonald, Debbie McDonald - Mulch Operations - Bagged 24/20lb bags to add to the inventory at the mulch bins, current total of 36 bags. Bagged 13/40lb bags to add to the 12 at the Elkmont tent. The 25/40lbs are for the horsemen upcoming trip. Also added estimated 550-600lbs to the tent.

4/7 - Rick Waggener, Pete Berntsen - Gap W of Masa Knob to Boulevard Tr - 1). Cleared drains at Icewater shelter. The rockwork placed under the drip edge of the shelter by a National Trail Days work party some years ago made it much easier to drain the pond that had formed in front of the shelter. We also drained a similar [but smaller] pond under the bear cables. 2). Repaired privy sign at shelter. 3). Cut several drains along the trails from shelter to AT & spring. 4). Cleared the drain which directs the spring away from the trail; reset the pipe once again. This time I covered it with rocks & dirt to about 30 inches so hikers [hopefully] will not step on it. 5). Reset a locust step. 6). Took pictures of the Boulevard sign post: the lower sign has rotted to the point that it is difficult to read. 7). Consulted with Pete & used his experience to plan for a Trails Day team. We plan to use them on the stretch of trail between Boulevard & shelter [the section that should be rerouted]. We have plenty of work on this short section for 6-8 volunteers, should they be available. 8). Cleared a bit of the debris from the latest wind storm.

4/8 - Rick Waggener - Gap W of Masa Knob to Boulevard Tr - Continued to work on drainage in the vicinity of the shelter & north past the spring

4/10 - Franklin LaFond - Route 28 to High Pt E of Walker Gap - Cleaned water drainages, cut back woody vegetation. Rehab 20 ft of sidehill, cleared small branches from the trail. Removed 3 blowdowns that did not require cutting. reset 1 step that had worked itself loose.

4/12 - Patti Grady, Diane Petrilla - Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead - Walked entire section to check for blowdowns. There are none. Knocked down berm in several places to allow water to drain. Cleared

40 waterbars. Began to flag areas that need work. Placed logs to deter hikers from leaving the trail.

4/13 - Taylor Weatherbee - Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap - Cleaned water bars, installed a couple of steps, reset 2 rock steps that were loose, dug out the 45 foot trench at the jxn of Sugarlands trail and AT, dragged down 2 leaning dead trees that were trying to be blowdowns and moved them off trail

4/14 - Dick Ketelle - Dry Sluice Gap to Gap W of Masa Knob - Cleared water drains of debris. Cut back several low hanging limbs.

4/15 - Bill Pyle, Kelly Conway - Collins Gap to Mt Love - Removed reported blowdown near the summit, cleaned all water bars on this section, and scouted needs for Trails Day.

4/17 - Charlie McDonald, Debbie McDonald - Mulch Operations - We picked up 25/40lb bags of mulch and delivered to Dave Michael at the Big Creek Campground. Horsemen will carry the mulch to the Cosby and Tricorner shelters.

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!

Remember to register for National Trails Day, Saturday June 4, 2022, at smhclub.org or with the form that came with this newsletter and email!