

Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club



July 2022

AT Maintenance Work Trip- Saturday July 7

The July 7 work trip is designated to support ATC's annual **Konnarock Trail Crew** in the Nantahala National Forest. This crew consists of volunteers from across the country, that donate their vacation time to working on the AT. This year, the crew will be working on trail restoration north of the Brown Fork shelter. The project consists of repair to rock steps, replacing rotting locust logs that are utilized to stabilize the trail, and to improve drainage in the area. This is an excellent opportunity for maintainers to gain additional skills not typically utilized for general section maintenance. The work site is approximately ½ mile hike from the trail head. The Konnarock Crew will be on location for multiple days. If any volunteers would want to join for additional days, there will be camping available near the crew's base camp. Any volunteers who work with the crew for 3 or more days will receive a Konnarock T-Shirt.

Carpool from the Maryville Walmart on Hwy 411 at 7:30 am. Alternate meeting point is at Randy Bullock's home on Green Gap Road, near Stecoah Gap at 9:00am. RT travel is approximately 120 miles (\$12.00 to driver). Volunteers will be shuttled to the trailhead behind Forest Service gates. Participants will need to wear sturdy footwear and weather appropriate attire. Bring gloves, lunch, snacks, and plenty of water. If you have a hard hat or safety glasses, please bring those as well. Pre-registration is required at smhclub.org. Leaders: Franklin LaFond 865-678-464-3380, ox97GaMe@aol.com and Randy Bullock, realrandybullock@yahoo.com

Rachel Cheatham- New ATC Southern Regional Manager for GRSM and NC

We are delighted to welcome Racheal Cheatham, our new ATC Southern Regional Manager for the Smokies and NC. Racheal replaces Stephen Eren, who departed earlier this year. She works with Sarah Adams, our Southern Regional Manager for the NNF, so we have 2 very capable managers for the 102 miles of A.T. the SMHC cares for.

Rachel's love for the A.T. is rooted in her 2015 A.T. thru-hike. She went on to become an ATC Georgia Ridge Runner in 2017 and AMC Backcountry Caretaker in the Whites of NH in 2017 (Liberty Spring) and 2018 (Garfield Ridge). Rachel also has significant trail work experience from her time with the World Trails Network in Costa Rica (2018-2019). Most recently she has worked as the Outreach Coordinator for AMC's backcountry campsite program.

"Having spent the past several years working primarily in the White Mountains, I am very excited to re-familiarize myself with this region and get to know the people who maintain it. I am equally as excited to learn from people who have dedicated years of their lives to this trail and to create opportunities for people who are less familiar to give back." **Welcome Rachael!**



National Trails Day- Saturday June 4, 2022

Saturday June 4 gave us beautiful clear sunny weather for the SMHC's 25th National Trails Work Day on the Appalachian Trail! We welcomed approximately 100 participants divided into 13 teams, including one crew working overnight at Spence Field, and one starting out from Davenport Gap. The majority of the crews worked north and south of Newfound Gap. The amount of work accomplished was tremendous! ***From 6-4-22 to 6-5-22, work related to NTD totaled 731.5 hours!*** Travel hours of course were much greater, with some folks traveling from Texas, Georgia, and even Canada! A huge thank you goes out to our regular maintainers who led crews: **Amanda and Adam Beal, Ed Fleming and Lisa Sumter, Kristi Knight and Crystal Burnes, Mark and Janet Snyder, Pete Berntsen and Patti Grady, Philip Royer and Taylor Weatherbee, Rick Hughes, Rick Waggener and Mark Armstrong, Scott McClure, and Diane Petrilla.** We also had guest crew leaders who were superb! They were: **Bruce King**, from Sevierville, **Leanna Joyner**, Volunteer Relations Program Director for the ATC, and **Scott Medlyn**, from Alexandria, VA. The Steering Committee worked tirelessly to make the day a good one and this writer can't thank them enough. They included **Cindy Spangler, Kristi Knight, Stefanie Gose, Philip and Betty Royer, and Karen Brackett** who helped design the beautiful sky-blue NTD T-shirts. **Diane Petrilla** was the Chair. Special thanks to **Taylor Weatherbee** who led teams to prep and deliver locust logs, and to **Steve Dunkin** who was in charge of bringing tools to Sugarlands on the morning of NTD. We are also so grateful to Christine Hoyer for help and coordination with the GRSM. See the Committee work trip below for others who helped with lunch assembly and other tasks!

Finally, we could not have held this event without our generous sponsors! **Todd White of Froschauer Catering** put together all of our sandwiches. **Goodness to Go** donated our vegetarian lunches. We had contributions from **Ham n' Goodys** as well as the **Mountain Moonshine Cookie Company** for delicious lunch desserts! **Food City** helped us offset food costs. **Home Federal Bank** made a generous financial

contribution for NTD. **Little River Trading Company** in Maryville made an incredibly generous donation of \$1600 worth of gift cards for our crews and crew leaders! And numerous local businesses and artisans donated gift cards and artwork for door prizes, including REI, River Sports Outfitters, NOC, Uncle Lems, Star Mountain Outfitters, Starbucks, Dunkin' Donuts, Hot Rods, Foothills Milling Company, Food City, Robert Tino, Mayfield Dairy (Andy Mayfield), Andy Phipps, Kindred Creations, Frog Valley Farm, Athens Sock Shop, Sandy Brown, Sebnem Prevar, Blount Wellness Center, and Smokies Baseball. *Please remember to patronize these businesses- we are so grateful to them!*

Below are all **work trips**, with photos, related to NTD. Lots of additional trail work has been done since our last Newsletter too, and those reports follow this article. Enjoy!

6/4 - Lisa Sumter, Stephanie Gose, Kellye Bishop, Jeff Wilson, Beth Kean, Karen Brackett, Barbara Allen (Lower Crew) - Davenport Gap to Chestnut Br Trail - We cleared drainages & dug them out deeper. Also cut back vegetation along the trail & at the shelter area. Checked the water source. Packed out a little trash.



The entire Davenport Gap group, before splitting into upper and lower crews.



Working those waterbars!



The problem



Part of the "lower" DG crew!



Solution taking shape

6/4 - Meg Gill, William Gill, Edward Fleming, Tim Bigelow, Emmanuel Serriere (Upper Crew) - Chestnut Br Trail to 1 mi N of Cam (4250' EI) - Cleared water bars, lopped the rhododendron extending over the trail, built up a section of trail that had been disrupted by a tree falling. The latter task involved cutting a large tree (props to team leader Ed!) and using it to shore up the side of the trail. Rocks & earth were moved; stakes were cut & driven; and, after an inspiring collective effort, we put the trail together again. Let it be known that on this hot summer workday, two Smokies veterans (Ed & Tim), a French-Californian DJ (Emmanuel), a pig-farming nurse practitioner (Meg), and a hapless law professor (William) found a hole in the trail and filled it with a bit of dirt, a bit of rock, and a whole lot of volunteer spirit!



The team that did this big repair! L to R, Emmanuel, Ed, William, Hiker, and Meg. Tim took the photo.

6/4 - Bert Emmerson, Becky Emmerson, Mike Waters, Tim Patterson, Scott McClure - **Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead to Spruce Fir** - Cleaned waterbars and cut back vegetation along the trail for 1.5 miles north . Used the locust timbers provided and rebuilt a crib wall that was failing with age and erosion. Adjusted and backfilled another section of logs that had been undermined by water. Saw a lot of grateful backpackers and hikers.

6/4 - Keith Blanton, Brian Schloff, Julie Labhart, Betty Royer, Philip Royer, Kristi Weatherbee, Taylor Weatherbee - **Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap** - Installed or replaced 5 water bars and 5 steps, freshened blazes, trimmed some vegetation.

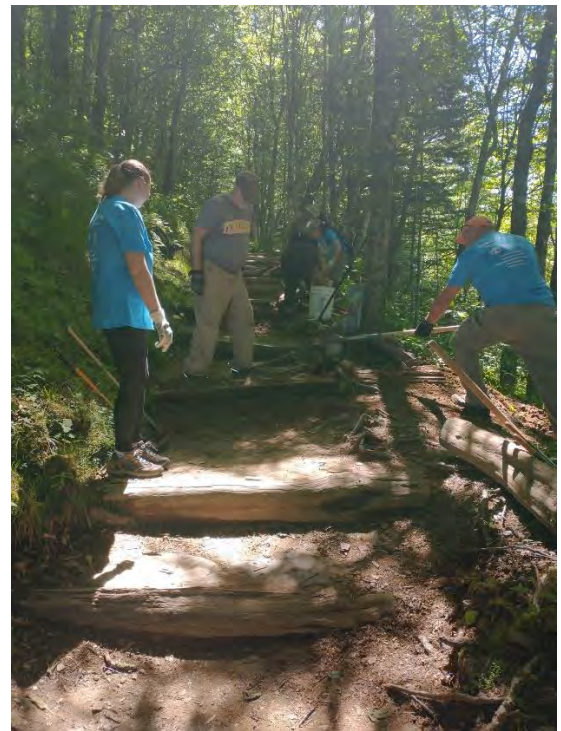


L to R, Julie, Betty, Keith, Philip, Brian, Kristi. Taylor took the photo.

6/4 - Kristi Knight, Crystal Burnes, Philip Royer, Jim Stokely, Carlos Amaya, Rachel Larson - **Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap** - We used all of our locust logs, carrying them to designated projects. The group did 11 projects in total, including: resetting old water bars, replacing multiple rotten water bars and rotten steps, adding multiple new steps.

6/4 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder, McKenzie Specht, Ed Specht, Jim Rugh, Steve Dunkin, Olivea Myers - **Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap** - Placed 10 locust logs (8') at flagged-numbered locations up the trail northbound from NFG. Used webbing straps to tote the logs up the mountain, two oxen on the front and two on the rear, the remaining three would spell off tired oxen through

the trek northbound. * Note we used oxen, as Diane had the mules! After all logs were at the flagged locations, we began the actual setting of the 8' logs in the ground in the actual site of the no longer effective smaller locust logs. The new placement of 8' logs helps prevent people from walking on the outside edge around the steps. No one like steps, I get it- that's why there are elevators etc. However it's about erosion control. The smaller removed steps were bumped up the trail or split into stakes to hold the logs. No new rebar was added in this lower section. Some existing logs did not need replaced, yet needed to be lowered. Sloped the hillside in many areas to eliminate the desire to walk around end of steps. Also boxed in the outer edge of step and sloped the side and used the dirt to fill in the box. Will need to continue to add dirt to steps. What has been added with foot traffic with compaction has a good chance of being permanent. After 3:30 Janet and I went back up the hill to finish a few of the flagged areas that were not attempted, and to look for a personal rock/pry bar that was gone from where it was placed.



Mark and Janet's crew, including Ed and McKenzie Specht, in blue, father and daughter

6/4 - Patricia Bryant, Peter Lloyd, Christi Wallace, Jim Harb, Laurel Goodrich, Rachel Cheatham, Leanna Joyner - **Mt Love to Clingmans Dome** - Cleaned 15 drains, brushed in 75 feet of user created paths parallel (or shortcutting) the A.T., installed one shingled rock waterbar, improved a 50 ft section of trail by clarifying an interior drain to escort water off an improved waterbar drain.



L to R, Laurel, Jim, Leanna, Christi, Rachel, Peter and Patricia looking pretty awesome in their PPE!



Antlers Up for Leanna's crew!

6/4 - Patti Grady, Pete Berntsen, Nancy Biddle, Elizabeth Weikert, David Gall, Mark Stanfill, Amanda Coutta, Nancy Ortiz, Vasikiki "Kiki" Hamilton, Elizabeth "Ellie" Hamilton - **Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead** - Moved six locust logs to previously identified locations for installation of log steps/water bars. Installed five new locust logs, added two rock steps, reset four locust logs, installed one check-dam to slow water in drain, cleaned multiple drains and trimmed brush from about 0.4 mile of this section of trail.



Pete and David with new waterbar



Elizabeth lookin' strong!



Nancy and Amanda with their waterbar extension



Kiki, Ellie and Nancy on a well-deserved lunch break!

6/4 - Rick Hughes, Wayne Davis, Steve Dickinson, David Shepler - Collins Gap to Mt Love -

Replaced several rotting locust log water bars, installed two new log water bars, cleared 85 water bars, prepped a few locust logs for installation.



Steve with a waterbar he installed!

6/4 - Rick Waggener, Mark Armstrong II, Ethan Armstrong, Ken Wise -Gap W of Masa Knob to Boulevard Tr -

1). Cleared all of the drains from Boulevard to ~400 yds N of the spring. Some of the drains are 15-20 yards long. 2). Cut drainage [300 ft] in the area just N of Boulevard that really should be completely re-routed. This area is badly eroded and difficult to impossible to divert water off the trail. 3). Took pictures of the Boulevard /AT sign at Christine's request, to facilitate replacement. 4). Packed out a small amount of trash from the shelter. 5). Buried 11 surface poops in the vicinity of the "closed" privy. 6). Buried 3 surface poops beside the mulch bin. 7). Placed the much bucket into the mulch bin to preclude its use as a toilet (!) 8). Followed up/evaluated the work done on the last trip: - No more water pooling under bear cables or in front of the shelter -Spring pipe was firmly in place; rock/earth cover is evidently working to keep hikers off the pipe. 9). Please note also: the "Closed" sign for the privy is up, but the door is not secured and the privy is [it is evident] being used without mulch by at least some people. Lastly, Ethan Armstrong was a digging machine!



Father and son, Mark and Ethan



Appalachian Gothic, aka Ken and Rick

6/4 - Scott Medlyn, Paul Belouze, Chris Darnold, Jason Ensley, Brad Sites - **Goshen Prong Tr to Welch Ridge Tr** - Removed vegetation and cleaned waterbars.

6/4 - Terry Wilks, James Wedekind, Randy Mitchell, Janet Gallardo, Jennifer Kelly, Alex Henderson, Alix King, Ashley King, Bruce King - **Clingmans Dome to Goshen Prong Tr** - Cleared water bars/ cut back vegetation.



Janet and Randy on Bruce King's crew

6/4 - Caleb Cummings, Bruni Dopatka, Liz Ehr, Lori Garufi, Hilary Hunter, Lynn Kszos, Mike Lane, Josh Mangers, Diane Petrilla, Nikki Reuter, Cindy Spangler, Joe Strickland, Emma Sabransky -

Mulch Operations - This mighty National Trails Day mulch mule team took 260 lbs. of mulch to the boxes at DS. One box is 100% full (and also has a healthy mice colony living in it) and the other box is 75% full. We swept the privy and filled the mulch buckets. We cleaned the fire ring and packed out 3 ground tarps and a set of Crocs left at the shelter. We had lots of interesting discussion about privies, composting and "cooked" bins. We observed Bruce King's team doing incredible maintenance work between the CD Bypass Trail and Goshen Prong. We appreciated the great weather and beautiful views, and I appreciated this crew's work!



What a great group of mulch mules!

6/5 - Adam Beal, Amanda Beal, Terry Martin, Meaghan Collins, Drew Ball, Dick Ketelle, Franklin LaFond, Alec Holtzclaw, Jack Bray - **Spence Project** - Worked Friday, Saturday and Sunday on the section between Jenkins Ridge trail and Rocky Top. Installed 8 water bars using 8' logs to improve drainage. Installed 24 log steps, 1 rock step, and 1 box step north of Jenkins Ridge to improve treadway and control erosion. Backfilled several existing steps, that were installed the week prior, with additional soil to raise the surface to match the step height. Installed 1 log water bar and 1 log step on the trail to the Spence shelter water source. The waterbar was placed near the top of the hill to get runoff from the shelter roof off of the trail as early as possible.



Terry and Adam putting in a waterbar



L to R, Meaghan, Alec, Jack, Amanda, Drew and Dick with awesome looking new steps



Strength! Amanda and Meaghan carrying a locust log uptrail.



The whole crew, L to R, Drew, Meaghan, Dick, Franklin, Alec, Jack, Amanda, Terry, and Adam

6/5 - Pete Berntsen - Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead -Installed last locust log step received for NTD. Installed six locust log check-dams.

6/4 - Cindy Spangler, Kristi Knight, Stephanie Gose, Philip Royer, Betty Royer, Karen Brackett, Barbara Allen, Diane Petrilla, Lynda Bryan, Jim Quick, Liz Ehr - Community Events - This committee met twice and communicated frequently via phone, email etc. to plan NTD this year. Coordination was carried out with Christine Hoyer of the GRSM- many thanks! Work was done to develop the registration form, email it to hundreds of potential registrants, advertise it to the SMHC and ATMC members, etc. As registrations were received, they were entered into a data base to create teams, etc., with much attention given to appropriate team composition and requests by individual registrants. Committee members solicited monetary, food and prize donations tirelessly (Cindy Spangler, Kristi Knight and Stefanie Gose). T-shirt design, production and packing was handled beautifully by Philip and Betty Royer and Karen Brackett. A team of people at Cindy's house on June 3 packed lunches and prize bags to correspond to team numbers and food requests. (Spangler, Knight, Ehr, Allen and Petrilla). Materials for remote teams were transported to them

(Davenport, Spence). Garmins for remote teams were picked up before event, and 1 returned after the event (Petrilla). Lynda Bryan and Jim Quick assisted with June 4 morning set up and take down. Note: These work hours (Community Events) are not counted towards maintainer awards.

A. T. Work Trips From 5/1/2022 to 6/8/2022 (non-NTD)

5/1 - Amanda Beal - Training - Harmon Den- Participated in 2-day class to obtain crosscut Sawyer certification

5/1 - Jonny Bruce - Training - Harmon Den Cross-cut classes and field training.

5/17 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap - Began clearing vista at .5 mile, the full exposure to the sun caused us to move on. Removed small tree protruding onto the trail. Removed three large rocks that the rain had dislodged from uphill side of mountain, small landslides are happening. (kinda neat) Broke off many pointed rocks that were protruding out of the trail, eliminating some trip hazards. Reset a locust log water bar and reset a locust log step. Repaired area where wranglers chain sawed large roots to enable the rescue by horses, added a step and backfilled with dirt/rock.*Note- Saw Tim Ryan & Jay Schmid as they were walking back from their section. Asked them what they felt could be done with this spot. Jay provided us with his one word answer which echoed what Dick Kettle said to us a few years back. Dynamite !!!

5/17 - Tim Ryan, Jay Schmid - Boulevard Tr to Sweat Heifer - Cleaned existing drainage areas and created some new ones, cut roots obstructing pedway, reset some stone placements, reinforced two waterbars with stone placements where the locust logs have deteriorated.

5/18 - Keith Mertz, David Gall - Fontana Dam to Cody Gap - Sawed out blowdown partially blocking trail midway between Yellow Creek Rd. and Cody Gap. Walked from Fontana Marina to Fontana shelter.

5/18 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap - Reconstructed a rock water bar at .25. Finished trimming the view shed at .5 mile .Broke up numerous treadway rocks with sledge. Reset a locust step. Relocated numerous huge rock/boulders and soil to edge of trail, eliminating a boulevard. Had the help of thru-hikers and our two rock bars on the largest of boulders. Added a water drain above this spot, restored about 28 feet of trail to a single treadway.

5/22 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap - Repaired lower step mentioned in May 18 report.

5/24 - Pete Berntsen - Dry Sluice Gap to Gap W of Masa Knob - Repaired step located 1.4 mile NE of Dry Sluice Gap as reported in Ridgerunner report. Rehabilitated 65 feet of trail which included adding seven new water drains and repair of one existing water drain. Cut and removed 3-inch diameter tree from across trail located 0.1 mile NE of Dry Sluice Gap. Trimmed brush from Dry Sluice Gap to 1.4 mile NE.

5/26 - Rick Hughes, Bob Merriman - Collins Gap to Mt Love - Scouted Collins Gap section for needed work to be done on NTD. Walked the section in rain, providing excellent opportunity to see how water bars are functioning, and what other repairs and upgrades are needed.

5/28 - Mike Harrington - Spence Project - Worked with Franklin Lafond to install water bars and steps.

5/29 - Charlie McDonald, Debbie McDonald - Mulch Operations - Picked up empty mulch bags at the maintenance shed. Bagged 6/40lb's for Sam Tillery for horse delivery. Bagged 30/20lb's and added to the inventory at the mulch bins. Currently have 35/20lb bags. We added estimated 500-600lbs to the tent. This along with the current mulch under tent an estimated 1200lbs drying out. Will return in a couple of weeks to turn over this will help in the drying out process. As always, if anyone needs a specific order contact me with your needs. Thanks.

5/30 - Franklin LaFond - Spence Project - Spence Log Project - Split and installed logs for 6 new waterbars and 19 new steps. Split an

additional 4-8 ft, 6-6ft, 3-4ft, and 6-3ft logs for use for the crew that is going up for National Trails Day. Flagged location for new water drainages and steps on hill north of Jenkins Ridge Trail. Added 1 new log waterbar and 1 new log step on side trail to the water source. Removed 1 small blowdown on trial to the shelter. Cleared heavy vegetation from 3 waterbars that had overgrown and were no longer visible. Cut back woody vegetation to widen trail corridor.

5/31 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap - Trimmed all needed vegetation, lopped many low hanging branches and berry canes that were reaching out to snare passersby. Cut two small trees that appeared to have been pulled toward the trail, were growing sideways. Labeled where to have 8' locust logs placed for NTD. (again thanks to Taylor's crew for prep and delivery)

5/31 - Rick Hughes, Terry Martin, Taylor Weatherbee - Newfound Gap to Collins Gap - Cut, split, loaded, and delivered locust logs for NTD.

6/1 - Pete Berntsen - Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead - Cut logs in preparation for National Trails Day. Used ends of logs to make check-dams where needed to slow water in drains.

6/2 - Mike Harrington, Glenn Gardner - Sassafras Gap (Pk) to Lewellyn Branch - Clipped vegetation, cleared water bars, and unclogged the Lewellyn Branch culvert

6/9 - Randy Mitchell - Low Gap to Cosby Knob Top - Trimmed back seasonal growth, primarily at Low Gap. Cleaned water bars south of Cosby Knob Shelter. Filled mulch buckets at Cosby Knob Shelter privy. The shelter is closed due to aggressive bear activity so I didn't linger at there. On my hike up Low Gap I passed by a wildlife ranger and learned that the bear was just seen on camera entering the decoy tent placed at the site so it is likely the shelter will be closed for some time. Later on the AT I ran into Drew Ball the new Southern Regional Director for the ATC. I spent some time talking to him and was impressed with his enthusiasm.

Bear-Human Encounters: Recent weeks have seen an increased number of bear-human encounters both inside and outside of the Park. As maintainers, please remember the reporting form available from GRSM. This can be completed and emailed to grsm_wildlife_staff@nps.gov.

REVISED 04/2020

**BEAR MANAGEMENT REPORT
GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK**

Name of Involved Party _____ Telephone (Home/Cell) _____

Incident Location _____

Incident Date/Time _____ Today's Date/Time _____ Backcountry Permit Number _____

1 # of People in Party: # _____

2 Human Contact/Injury: Yes No

3 Did Bear Follow Anyone? Yes No
(Describe in #21) How far: _____ (yards)
How long: _____ (min)

4 Did Bear Vocalize? Yes No

5 Did Bear Charge? Yes No

6 Did Bear Swat Ground/Vegetation? Yes No

7 Did Bear Get Food/Garbage? Yes No

8 Did Bear Get A Pack? Yes No

9 Did Bear Enter Vehicle? Yes No
(Or Attempt To: Describe in #21)

10 Did Bear Enter Tent? Yes No
(Or Attempt To: Describe in #21)

11 Did Bear Enter Structure/Building? Yes No
(Or Attempt To: Describe in #21)

12 Property Damage? Yes No
(Describe in #21) If Yes, Value \$ _____

13 Size of Bear? Est. Weight _____ lbs.

14 Did Bear Have Ear Tags? Yes No
Other Markings (Describe in #21)

15 Associated Bears? Cubs: #___ Yearling: #___ Other: #___

16 Did Bear Have Any Distinguishable Characteristics? Yes No
(collar, white markings, limp; Describe in #21)

17 Were Photos or Videos Taken of Bear? Yes No

18 How Close Did Bear Approach?
(Complete All That Apply in Yards; Describe in #21)
a. People: _____
b. Shelter/Tent: _____
c. Vehicle/Camper: _____
d. Picnic Table: _____
e. Building: _____
f. Other: _____

19 Visitor Response to Bear:
(Circle All That Apply; Describe in #21)
a. Nothing
b. Stood Still
c. Backed away
d. Moved Toward Bear
e. Ran Away
f. Waved Arms
g. Made Noise
h. Remained Quiet
i. Charged @ Bear
j. Threw objects
k. Used bear spray
l. Other

20 Bear Reaction to Visitor Response
(Circle All That Apply; Describe in #21)
a. Ignored me/us
b. Left area
c. Moved away but stayed in area
d. Left area but returned later
e. Other: _____

21 Details of Incident (Describe the details of the incident with the bear from the beginning to the end of the encounter. **(Continue On Back If Needed)**)

Communications/700 Notified: Yes No Date _____ Time _____ **Emailed/Faxed to Wildlife** Yes No Date _____

Reported By: _____ (Phone #) _____ grsm_wildlife_staff@nps.gov / Fax # (8