

Appalachian Trail Maintainers News

*Remote for detachment; Narrow for chosen company;
Winding for leisure; Lonely for contemplation;
It beckons not merely north and south, but upward to
the body, mind and soul of man...Harold Allen*



Published by the Appalachian Trail Maintainers
Committee of the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club

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FEBRUARY 2010

Work Projects:

12/14: Steve Higdon--Newfound Gap
to Indian Gap--Picked up debris resulting from recent winds. Cleared one blowdown at Indian Gap.

12/30: George Ritter, Jimmy Smith--Locust Cove Gap
to part way up Cheoah Bald--Jimmy manually removed the worst of the large blowdown reported by an AT hiker. Left the main trunk as a step-over. Removed quite a few other downed smaller trees.

01/04/10: Keith Mertz, Pam Reddoch--Fontana Dam
to NC Hwy 28/Yellow Creek Gap to Cody Gap--
Made a quick walk through picking up small limbs and branches off the trail. Found 9 dead pines trees lying

across the trail, all are easy 'step-overs'. Trail is in good shape. We now have 3 blow downs that need to be removed with a chain saw. Two have been down since last summer and reported previously and there is a new one that is quite large. It is passable by climbing over.

01/18/10: Steve Reagan, Phyllis Henry, Ed Peck--AT
@ Newfound Gap--Cut two blow downs and trimmed several smaller branches that were blocking trail between Spruce fir entrance and Indian Gap. Due to ice and snow ability to access intended trail mileage was limited. Deep snow drifts--very difficult travel.

APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY OFFERS DISCOUNTS ON TENNESSEE A.T. LICENSE PLATES THROUGH EASTMAN CHEMICAL COMPANY FOUNDATION GRANT

(KINGSPORT, TN, January 19, 2010) A grant from the Eastman Chemical Company Foundation is allowing the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) to underwrite discounts on the fees for the next 500 people to apply for an Appalachian Trail license plate in Tennessee.

Once 1,000 applications are received and the state begins producing tags, ATC's share of the renewal fees will serve as a permanent funding source for the organization's work to protect and maintain the 280 miles of the Appalachian Trail in the state.

As a result of the grant, the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) license plates are now available for \$15 instead of the usual \$35 annual fee. Renewals will be at the standard \$35 annual fee.

ATC is offering its own incentive as well, thanking people who sign up for the license plate with a one-time annual membership to the national nonprofit. Existing ATC members may give someone else the membership as a gift.

The specialty A.T. license-plate program will benefit the state's natural resources and national treasure in several ways. It will broaden awareness for this resource by widely promoting the Trail on vehicles from Memphis to Bristol. In addition, each plate will generate \$15.56 annually for ATC, supporting

management of such programs as land conservation, volunteer-based trail and facilities maintenance, natural-resources management, and programs that introduce children and teachers to the A. T. in Tennessee.

The Tennessee State Recreation Plan calls the A.T. "Tennessee's First Recreation Trail" and the A.T. frequently receives accolades, such as #2 of Top 10 USA Outdoor Adventures (ABC's *Good Morning, America* and *National Geographic*) and Favorite Long Distance Trail (by the readers of *Backpacker* magazine). For more information and an application to take advantage of this offer, call ATC at (828) 254-3708 or go on line to www.appalachiantrail.org/tnlicenseplate.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR !

Following is a HUGELY HELPFUL list of 2010 SMHC/ATMC events:

3/6 – Help clear blowdowns in the National Forest AT sections

3/14 through 3/19 – Warren-Wilson College spring break in the National Forest AT sections

March and/or April– Section Leaders clear winter accumulation of leaves behind waterbars.

4/3 – Help clear blow downs in GRSM NP

5/1 – Monthly work trip

5/15, 5/22 (and possibly 5/29) Brown Fork privy preassembly in Robbinsville

5/22 and 5/23 – ATC Maintainer training session for SMHC in the National Forest

5/28 – probable date for tool refurbishment in preparation for NTD

6/5 – National Trails Day starting at Sugarlands, and annual ATMC picnic at Metcalf bottoms

6/18, 6/19 and 6/20 – Brown Fork privy construction

6/24 and 6/25 – Sierra Club work trip in the National Forest.

June and July – Section Leaders cut back weeds and brush

7/10 and 7/11 - Help Konnarock Crew on Bee Cove trail rehabilitation near Fontana

7/17 and 7/18 - Help Konnarock Crew on Bee Cove trail rehabilitation near Fontana

8/7 – Monthly work trip

8/28 and 8/29 – Possible ATC training session for SMHC

September – Russell Field shelter rehab project

September-October: Help the Rocky Top crew working on rehabbing the AT near Inadu Knob.

Oct and Nov – Section Leaders clear water bars for winter precipitation

11/6 and 11/7 – Possible ATC training session for SMHC

(Editor's note: Compilation by George Ritter)

A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE MINNIGH

George was an excellent leader and advisor for us for many years. When he retired, the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club gave him a Life Membership. That is something the club had never done before and will probably never do again. And we are obviously delighted that he is becoming permanent party on our side of the fence.

~George Ritter

From Morgan Sommerville

Regional Director for GA, NC, and TN
Appalachian Trail Conservancy

First of all, for all of you that helped ATC meet (and exceed!) its end of year 2009 fund raising challenge – THANK YOU! ATC also had another notable fund raising success at the end of 2009: We “won” \$25,000 from Chase Community Giving through a Facebook voting campaign. 500,000 organizations competed for the two-phase prize. ATC was blessed to be one of the top 100 vote getters in the competition which resulted in the \$25,000 donation.

SMHC/ATMC Meeting Minutes 1/12/10

Attendees: ATC: Andrew Downs; USFS: Lauren Stull; NPS: Bill Wright; SMHC/ATMC: Mac McNutt, Ed Fleming, Ed Peck, George Minnigh, Philip Royer, Dick Ketelle, Franklin LaFond, Cindy Spangler, and George Ritter (Scribe).

1. The ATC Capital Plan – Not discussed; to be the subject of a future meeting

2. Konnarock
 - a. 2009 Hogback relocation – Andrew plans to complete this project using the training session(s).
 - b. 2010 Bee Cove rehab – George R will prepare the logistics information needed.
 - c. 2011 Dam-Marina relocation – Dick and Morgan plan to finish flagging this route. The NEPA study completion will be needed by early next year.
 - d. 2012 Stekoah Gap rehab
 - e. 2013 Grassy Gap relocation
 - f. 2014 North of Cheoah Bald rehab
 - g. 2015 North of Wright Gap rehab – George R will prepare the Project Proposal and request the needed signatures from SMHC and USFS.

The 2010 logistics and the 2015 Project Proposal will probably be discussed at the SPM meeting on 4/8/10 – 4/10/10.

3. Andrew will hold a trail maintainers’ training session in the Nantahala National Forest on the weekend of 5/22 - 5/23/10. The group will camp at the Fontana Dam Campground and work on completing the Hogback relocation. Andrew plans to use his crew leaders but ATMC will seek volunteers to be trained and to help out. A probable additional session is tentatively scheduled for 8/28 – 8/29/10 or 11/6 – 11/7/10.

4. Proposed Silers Bald relocations – Some of this work was done, but most remains. Bill will locate the previous NEPA study and let us know if we can proceed with planning this work. Andrew plans to use Rocky Top or SWEAT Crews, plus SMHC volunteers for this work.

5. Rocky Top work near Inadu in 2010. Andrew will include in their assignment the repair of the large mud holes on the AT between Low Gap and Mt Cammerer. He is also planning to establish a new camp site and camping arrangement for Rocky Top near Inadu and Snake Den Ridge.

6. Ridge Runner plans and staffing for 2010. Dana Soehn has sent in the housing requests for the Ridgerunner (Mar-Oct), ATC Group at Big Creek (Jun-Aug), and ATC Group at the Log Cabin Dorm (Sept-Oct). We have been approved for these times - if we make changes to this calendar, we need to let her know so that she can free up this housing. Andrew plans to have three paid ridge runners: Carl at the SE end of the Park and two new ones to replace Susan and Jim. Susan has recommended two applicants for him to consider.

7. Repair of slide near Pecks Corner – Bill advised that the Park is considering the major construction approach described by Morgan but approval seems unlikely. Morgan is pursuing a less permanent fix using a commercial contractor. No schedule information is available.

8. Modification of Tricorner privy – We will proceed on the basis of constructing a new privy adjacent to the existing privy site using the same type design we used at Cable Gap and Sassafras Gap, but with

- three bins instead of two. This will be a major project requiring an air lift and a construction crew in the back country for two or three days. It will have to be done before or after the peak, summer hiking season. George R will draft a request to the Park for approval of such a plan (will circulate this draft for comments before submitting it).
9. Chainsaw, etc training and certification - A class is scheduled for March 19th & 20th in GSMNP. Jimmy Smith has a Forest Service contact person who will recertify him. There is a possibility that we can have one or two of our cross-cut sawyers trained and qualified as cross-cut qualifiers. If we have someone interested we can so advise Andrew. On first aid and CPR, Mac will arrange the needed qualification sessions as soon as Phyllis identifies how many are to be involved.
 10. March NF blowdown removal is scheduled for 3/6/10. Franklin and Andrew advised that GATC would likely be willing to help with this work so George R will check this out.
 11. April Park blowdown removal is scheduled for 4/3/10. PATC has offered to help. The Park will try to provide access for our crews to the Clingmans Road trailheads, but it will depend on the construction activity at the time. (We can possibly change to another April weekend day if 4/3 is not OK.) George R will follow up with PATC to see if they would like to help us by taking on a remote area, possibly on an overnight.
 12. SPM Meeting 4/8 – 4/10/2010 at Mountain Lake, Blacksburg, VA – Philip Royer and Ed Flemming plan to attend.
 13. Eagle Project – Nick Harris – Stekoah Gap – Nick needs a letter stating our need for this work and George R will follow up to get it to him.
 14. Eagle Project – Jimmy Bray – George R will discuss with Don Dunning
 15. Privy and mulch status - Hand-carry sites are OK for the spring season. Pecks and Tricorner are either empty or nearly empty. Andrew is waiting for trail conditions to allow horse access.
 16. Monthly work trips – George will check with Paul to see if he would like to lead these again.
 17. Warren Wilson Spring Break: March 13-21.
 18. National Trails Day work plans and picnic 6/5/10 - Dana Soehn has reserved the Metcalf Bottoms picnic pavilion for this picnic. The construction is scheduled for completion by the end of May, and there are incentives for the contractor to meet the schedule. Even if not open, the road condition by then should allow special arrangements for access as far as Mt Collins Gap.
 19. Brown Fork Gap privy – Schedule attached. Arrangements are needed soon for Morgan, USFS, and SMHC (Franklin Lafond) to visit Brown Fork Gap to select and layout a site for the new privy. Access can be from Green Gap Road if it is not blocked by blowdowns.
 20. Sierra club service trip to NF June 24th and 25th (two work days, Thu and Fri)
 21. Russell Field shelter rehab in September. Phyllis needs to set the schedule for this project.
 22. Fall Break is TBD
 23. Grant requests pending: AHS \$2,400 for Brown Fork privy materials; \$2,400 ATC/LL Bean for spring and fall break. If we receive no awards, we can request NC plate funds until 3/1/10.
 24. Andrew plans to submit another request to TN for an RTP grant. He will let us know when it is submitted so we can send letters of support.

JUST IN: Updates on items from the above meeting:

Logistics for Bee Cove Konnarock rehab this July: Morgan and Dick plan to walk this section when they walk the dam-to-marina proposed reroute. I'll finish the logistics forms when they let me know the project details.

Konnarock Project request for 2015: Has been sent to Ed Fleming for signature and forwarding to FS, then ATC.

Tricorner privy project: The project description has been sent to Bill Wright for approval.

Blowdown removal assistance: Both PATC and GATC have been advised we still do not know the extent of damage and we will contact them later if it turns out that we need help.

Eagle project in GRSM to replace mulch tent: Don has concurred and the project has been forwarded to scout Jimmy Bray, who is enthusiastic about it. The plan is to keep the existing lighter model of the tent to ensure we can manually lift it without a large work crew.

Eagle project at Stekoah Gap: The revised project description letter has gone to scout Nick Harris. The project will include the steps on the NW side of the highway and some 300 or 400 yards of trail rehab on the south side. The picnic area is not included.

Monthly work trips: Paul will not be able to lead these this year. We will need leaders for 3/6, 4/3, 5/1, and 8/7. The other months have other activities: Jun - NTD, July – help Konnarock, Sep – Shelter rehab, Oct and Nov – Section Leaders clear waterbars.

Spring break: Will stay at the campground below Fontana Dam and work the trail section from Rte 28 up to Walker Gap and 0.4 miles beyond. Warren Wilson has advised they cannot continue as Section Leader for this stretch so we will be looking for someone to replace them. This is also the stretch where Konnarock will be working this July. I have a call in to Tim Gamble at the resort to see if we can reserve a campsite with a pavilion.

Brown Fork privy: Franklin is contacting Morgan and Scott to set up a site visit as soon as weather permits.



SMHC/ATMC Meeting

(Front to back) ATC: Andrew Downs; USFS: Lauren Stull; NPS: Bill Wright; SMHC/ATMC: Mac McNutt, Ed Fleming, Ed Peck.



SMHC/ATMC Meeting

(Front to back) SMHC/ATMC: Franklin LaFond, George Ritter, Dick Kettle, Philip Royer, George Minnigh.