

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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May 1st Work/Training Trip

There will be a work/training trip for all maintainers on Saturday May 1st. We will meet at the east end of Knoxville at 8:00 AM and travel to Davenport Gap, then work the trail from there going southwest for 5 miles. Work will involve waterbar clearing, brush cutting and tread repair. There will be a second meeting place at Davenport Gap about 9:00 to 9:15AM. Please notify the leaders if you plan to attend so they know how many tools to bring:

Tim Bigelow	675-3822	bigelownt2@mindspring.com
Tim Ryan	691-8861	tim_ryan@premierinc.com
Franklin LaFond	(678) 464-3380	ox97game@aol.com

Note: The hiking club has changed the meeting place east of Knoxville because the Asheville Highway Food Lion there is closed. **The new meeting place is in the Comcast parking lot.** Leave I-40 at the Asheville Highway exit, turn left and go east on Ashville Hwy. Take a right at the traffic light about a quarter mile east of I-40. Park in the large lot at the bottom of the hill.

Special Training Opportunity

Andrew Downs of the ATC Southern Regional Office will conduct special training for trail maintainers on May 22nd and 23rd in the National Forest. This is an excellent opportunity to learn how to install waterbars, grade trails, and do other trail tasks. You can attend on both days or on Saturday only. Those attending both days will camp at the campground below Fontana Dam. If you would like to learn, visit the following website and register:

http://atc.civcore.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=Opportunities.View&Opportunity_ID=368

Weekly Training Opportunities

Some ATMC members go out to work most Wednesdays and Saturdays on some section of the AT. These trips are not always planned far in advance so a specific schedule is not available. If you wish to go along and help, contact Phyllis Henry at (865) 577-2604 or phyllishenry@yahoo.com; or Mac McNutt at (865) 983-3237 or (865) 389-9636 or mcnutfarm@gmail.com to find out if there is a trip and what the plans are for the next upcoming Wednesday or Saturday. Franklin Lafond also goes out at irregular times and can often use some help. He is at (678) 464-3380 or ox97game@aol.com. This is a good opportunity to get some on-the-job training or to just go and help out.

Section Leader Assignments

The website smhclub.org was recently updated with a list of our Section Leader assignments. Since that posting, three additional Section Leader assignments have been made:

Inadu to Tricorner Knob	Paul Campbell
Route NC-28 to High Pt E. of Walker Gap	Tim Ryan

A listing of other available sections was sent to all of our "Extra Crew" maintainers. Of the nine remaining sections without Section Leaders, six require more than a 5-mile hike to reach them.

A. T. Work

2/24 – Steve Reagan: Gathered all materials needed for trip to NF & NOC. Delivered saws to Mac for servicing and use on trip to National Forest. Packed and cleaned cooking items for trip to NOC with Warren Wilson College students.

2/28 - Jim Huff - Davenport Gap to Chestnut Br Trail - Picked up all tree and rhododendron branches from trail and waterbars, hecked out condition of waterbars and shelter. Quite a bit of snow, 4-5", south of the shelter. Plan on returning weekend of March 3/6.

3/6 T.J. Tolnas, Mike West, Carl Smith - Cody Gap to Brown Fork Gap - Cleared blowdowns that were too many to count.

3/7 - Jim Huff - Davenport Gap to Chestnut Branch Trail - Cleared waterbars where possible between Chestnut Branch Trail to Davenport Gap. There was significant snow, 4-5", south of Davenport Gap Shelter. Cleared most waterbars from shelter to Davenport Gap. Will return in two weeks to complete clearing.

3/8 - Pam Reddoch, Keith Mertz - Yellow Creek Gap to Cody Gap - A general walk through to evaluate the blowdown situation. We removed as many large limbs as possible from the trail and several small blowdowns.

3/13 - Jimmy Smith, Jim Lowe - Reconnoitered the three main access routes for the planned blowdown removal on Monday. The road to Nolton Ridge is still in snow starting at about 3700 ft. el. J&J reached the Bartram Trail intersection below Cheoah Bald only after putting chains on the 4-WD jeep and clearing rocks and blowdowns. We need to abandon the idea of sending chainsaw crews in that route next week.

3/13: Steve Reagan: Gathered all materials needed for trip to NF & NOC. Delivered saws to Mac for servicing and use on trip to National Forest.. Packed and cleaned cooking items for trip to NOC with Warren Wilson students.

Breaking News Reported March 17

Seven SMHC/ATMC maintainers, nine Warren-Wilson College students and four Forest Service Fire Fighters just cleared a HUGE mess of blowdowns. They cleared 27.5 of the 30 miles from NOC to Fontana Dam and the last 2.5 miles is scheduled for clearing Monday, March 22. These guys are good! Details next month. ~George Ritter

AT Ridgerunners Carl Goodman, Carrie Johnson and Scott Thomas

The SMHC is very fortunate to have three dedicated Ridge Runners patrolling our section of AT. Phyllis Henry suggested I share some information about these three intrepid servants so I'm offering the following interview which is the first in a three-part series. This month I am featuring Carl Goodman; next month Carrie Johnson; and June—Scott Thomas.

Based in Fontana, Carl has been the southern end Ridgerunner for several years. After a bit of a break, he has returned to work from March through May and patrols from Fontana to Spence Field.

Q. Where did you grow up and why did you decide to apply for this crazy job?

A. I'm from Kentucky and since I was very young I have enjoyed the outdoors, hiking and spending much of my early years on the banks of the Ohio River. I am a 'Ridgerunner' at heart.

Q. Please relate two memorable events that have occurred during your time on the job.

A. My first season in the Smokies I had a group of eight Marines at Mollies Ridge. Two 13-year old girls passed the shelter, one of which I thought was the mother of the other (she was nearly 6 ft tall). Calling to them, they hunkered down, probably at the sight of so many men, and they hurried past. About 45 minutes later, three boys also 13 year olds, passed the shelter. This time I specifically stopped them and asked where they were going. They said they were on a day hike up to the AT and back and were following two girls. After questioning the young boys, I learned they were from a party of young children taking a day hike from Cades Cove to Russell Field Shelter via Anthony Creek Trail and then north on the AT to Spence Field, back to Cades Cove via Boat Mountain. The children, unprepared for anything but a day hike, got turned around and I could see they were headed for trouble. I kept the three boys at the Shelter and two of the young marines volunteered to catch up with the girls on the AT who were heading in the wrong

direction and bring them back to the Shelter. I contacted Park rangers, advised them of the situation, and was told to keep the kids at the shelter and hike them out to Cades Cove the next morning. The marines helped to turn a dangerous situation for the children into a safe, memorable experience. The marines and I provided what extra clothing we had for the night. All ended well when I hiked the kids down to the ranger station the next morning.

Another instance was a case of hypothermia where a 30-year old hiker had become chilled on a cold, wet day to the point of disorientation. All his gear was totally soaked. I had to place him in my sleeping bag for several hours in order to warm him up. Thanks to a couple of hikers who got a good fire going in the shelter, we were able to dry his sleeping bag. When he recovered fully the next morning we hiked out to the trailhead at Russell Field with his brother-in-law. This situation could have ended badly.

Q. What are a few of your favorite books and who are your favorite adventurers?

A. My favorite books are westerns by Louis L'Amour who was an adventurer in his own right. My favorite adventurer is John Muir, a major player in the existence of our national park system.

Q. What is the most frustrating part of your job? The most rewarding?

A. The most frustrating part of my job is people enter the mountains with no prior preparation thinking they are strolling through a city park. Often, leaving much of what they bring up just to get back down and consequently trashing the park. The most rewarding part of my job is being in a position to assist hikers in trouble due to physical or weather related events.

Q. Any suggestions for our Club that would make your job easier?

A. The Smoky Mountain Hiking Club has always been very supportive of the Ridgerunner program and that support in itself is an encouragement to me personally and has created a successful liaison between the park service and the ATC. So many hikers have commented on the trail conditions in the Park which is a direct result of the Club's efforts.





Tricorner Knob Shelter / Photo: Carrie Johnson



Unbroken AT / Photo: Carrie Johnson



Scott Thomas at Work / Photo: Carrie Johnson