



January 2017

November 2016 Wildfires GSMNP and Sevier County: Impact on the AT

As everyone now knows, on Monday November 28, high winds and extreme drought conditions caused a previously somewhat contained fire in the Chimney Tops area to spread explosively to other parts of the Park as well as to the Gatlinburg area. Details of damage and loss of life outside of the Park have been tragic to read about. An excellent list of ways to help, with links, has been recently published in the January SMHC newsletter. For the ATMC, it is important to know that the 101.9 miles of AT in the Park and NNF that we maintain were not directly affected by the fires. Wind damage, and yet-to-come normal winter weather will of course affect our sections of the AT, and will be assessed as we usually do with individual work trips, and then monthly work trips which will resume in the Spring. According to a recent communication from Christine Hoyer, the GSMNP Backcountry Ranger, "**Adopt a Campsite and AT volunteers are now able to go back to their volunteer duties --- anywhere that is OPEN in the park. At no time are volunteers to travel, access or work on the CLOSED trails/campsites. If/when we get to the point of requesting volunteer assistance with the those trails, I will be in touch with you. For information on what is closed you can check the park website at:**

www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/temproadclose.htm or **contact the Backcountry Office 865-436-1297. Please be alert in the park, no matter where you are traveling, for storm damage and/or trail hazards. As always, I appreciate any information about what you see out there (be it as a volunteer or a hiker).**" Christine has also stated that if/when the park needs assistance with other trails in the Park affected by the fires, she will reach out to the SMHC/ATMC.

In addition, we do know there has been direct fire damage along sections of the AT maintained by the Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club (TEHCC), Nantahala Hiking Club (NHC) and Georgia AT Club (GATC) as well as sections in the Shenandoah National Park. The SMHC/ATMC has specifically committed to helping the NHC organization with AT

recovery and rehabilitation; their section has sustained some of the worst damage. Specific details of work trips must wait until more complete assessments are available, and plans are made. These plans will likely come together closer to Spring, and we will publish information in the Newsletter, as well as communicate via e-mails. In addition, you may check the following links, among others, to evaluate for other volunteer opportunities:

www.nps.gov/grsm/getinvolved/volunteer.htm

www.friendsofthesmokies.org

www.appalachiantrail.org (includes links to latest trail updates)

www.nantahalahikingclub.org

<http://tehcc.org/>

Thank you to all Maintainers who have inquired about ways to help, and for the many new folks who have signed up as Maintainers because of the fires. Repair, recovery, and maintenance of the AT, as always, is continuous and ongoing and your volunteer efforts are greatly appreciated.

2016 SMHC Recognition of Trail Maintainers

SMHC trail maintainers work without any thought of compensation and, as the ATC notes in their recognition program, "... some very dedicated volunteers reject the thought of formal recognition for their efforts." But the number of volunteers and their total hours are so impressive as to warrant special recognition by those who hike the trail and use the shelters. Here is a list of our SMCH maintainers who achieved special levels of performance.

<New awards are underlined; asterisks indicate awards in prior years; **bold** indicates they did it again this year.>

SMHC Awards – Hours for One Year Ending 9/30/16

Platinum Pulaski (200 hours)

Pete Berntsen*, Don Dunning*, Edward Fleming*, Phyllis Henry* Tom Howard*, **Franklin LaFond***, Mac



McNutt*, Ed Peck*, Steve Reagan*, Stewart Taylor*

Gold Pulaski (100 hours)

Tony Bolt*, **Greg Crandall***, Lynn DiFiore*, Steve Dunkin*, Nancy Dunning*, Steven Epps*, Pamela Fleming*, James Fondren*, David S. Gray*, Billy Heaton, Pete James*, Dick Ketelle*, Keith Mertz*, **Ed Owens***, Lamar Powell*, Pam Reddoch*, **Philip Royer***, Brian Schloff*, Jimmy Smith*, **Mark Snyder***, Jerry Troxler*, Wayne Williams*, Mike Wood*

Silver Pulaski (50 hours)

Crystal Gaddy, John Knox, **Bob Palermo***, Diane Petrilla, Craig Rightmire, Cindy Spangler, thirty-five maintainers previously earned this award.

Bronze Pulaski (25 hours)

Doug Pitner, Matt Richardson, Mark Shipley, Mike West Sixty-Eight previously earned this award.

ATC Awards – Hours since 10/1/2000 (Start of the Database)

ATC Vest (1000 hours)

SPECIAL RECOGNITION is greatly deserved by our maintainers who have provided the greatest and longest commitments over the history of our AT involvement. We greatly appreciate the contribution of these 1000-hour maintainers:

Pete Berntsen*, Don Dunning*, Ed Fleming*, James Fondren*, Dennis Fulcher*, Jim Goddard*, Doris Gove*, Phyllis Henry*, Steve Higdon*, Tom Howard*, Pete James*, Bill Kerr*, Dick Ketelle*, Franklin LaFond*, Mac McNutt*, Lou Murray*, Ed Peck*, Randy Puckett*, Steve Reagan*, Philip Royer*, Stew Taylor, *Jerry Troxler*, Wayne Williams*

ATC Cap (500 hours)

Dick Barnes*, Alan Duff*, Nancy Dunning, Terry Elmore*, Mike Faith*, Ann Farrar*, Dianne Gruber*, John/Annette Hartigan*, Charlie Klabunde*, Paul LeClercq*, Jim Lowe*, Keith Mertz*, Carter Moulden*, Lamar Powell*, Jim Quick*, Randy Rainey*, Pam Reddoch*, Paul Ruble*, T.J. Tolnas*, Bob Williams, Mike Wood*

ATC Patch (100 hours)

Leonard Gaddis, Billy Heaton, Alec Holtzclaw, Dan Schmiesing, Paul Tanguay, Amy Wright, One-hundred-fourteen maintainers previously earned the patch.

ATPO Awards (250 hours since eligibility date)

Sixty-Three of our maintainers have earned this pass, many of them more than once or twice.

Some ATMC Accomplishments in 2016

In the year ending 9/30/16, 269 ATMC maintainers logged a total of 7,358 hours maintaining the AT between Davenport Gap and Wesser, NC. Franklin LaFond and Pete Berntsen worked more than 201.6 hours in calendar year 2016, qualifying for the special AT Centennial Medal issued by the National Park Service.

One hundred and thirty-three volunteers contributed to a very successful twentieth annual National Trails Day. Volunteers came from GA, KY, NC, OH, TN and TX. Over past years they have come from a total of 22 states. Many thanks to Phyllis Henry for managing those twenty events!

ATMC built bunks in Soak Ash Crew Quarters and with ATC personnel, completed an inventory of trail installations such as steps and waterbars. With help from the Rocky Top Crew we constructed a major trail improvement in an area just north of Newfound Gap that had deteriorated due to extensive public use. We also conducted work trips with groups from The Southern Ruck, Lynchburg College, The Chicago Hikers Meetup Group; and a consortium from NC-State, Texas A&M, Missouri, Penn State, Eastern Carolina University, and Western Illinois University.

A. T. Work Trips From 10/27/2016 to 12/15/2016

10/27 - Edward Fleming - Soak Ash Creek Crew Quarters - Cutout and installed trim and sheetrock for a trapdoor in the gear room ceiling, changed batteries in two smoke detectors on the assembly room ceiling.

10/30 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Top W of Sweat Heifer - Cut three dead root trip hazards and cut two dead limbs/trees that had fallen across two waterbars. Built one new waterbar, rebuilt three waterbars. Added one step to eroded area and rebuilt existing step and added one additional step to existing step. Cleaned existing waterbars.

11/6 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Top W of Sweat Heifer - Built one new waterbar, rebuilt two waterbars and completely re- altered an existing waterbar by making a swell or hump. Cut dead roots and cleaned waterbars and raked leaves from trail.

11/7 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Top W of Sweat Heifer - Completed waterbar cleaning and raking of leaves from the trail. Cut numerous trip hazard roots and spent much time on new steps added- a five step run total.

11/16 - Edward Fleming - Mt Cammerer Side Tr to Sunup Knob - Hiked from Low Gap to Sunup Knob with Tim Ryan and Jay Schmidt to introduce Tim to his new AT section. Cleared water bars and drainages between Sunup Knob and the Mt Cammerer Trail. Filled the mulch buckets, swept the floor, dispersed the cone, and cleaned the riser at the Cosby Knob privy.

11/17 - Billy Heaton - Goshen Prong Tr to Knob W of Jenkins Knob - Inspected shelter, privy, water source and bear cables. Everything is as normal and in good repair except for a dry spring. Filled mulch buckets in privy and dispersed fecal cone. Mulch bin #1 is at 100% capacity and bin #2 is at 10%. Privy bin #1 is at 30% and cooking, bin #2 is empty, bin #3 is at 70% and currently in use. Dug out/cleaned out as many water bars south of Dbl. Springs as time allowed. (30+ which got me to just south of Jenkins Knob.) Trail is in good shape except for remaining water bars that are full of leaves. There is one blow down on that part of the trail

that hikers are easily going around. All SOBOs had heard the news of trail closures and were going to get updates at Fontana.

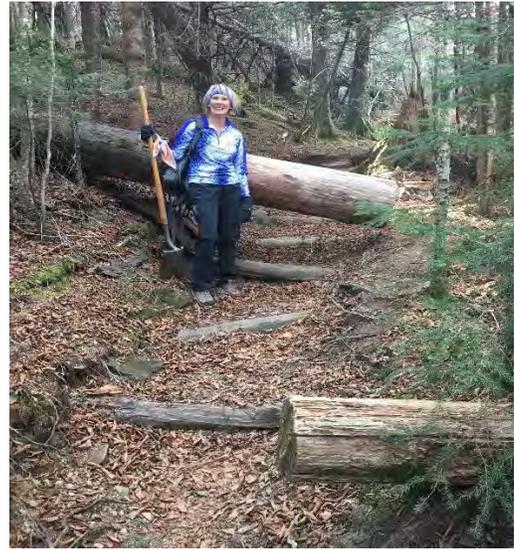
11/19 - Pete Berntsen - False Gap to Boulevard Tr - Cleaned remaining water control devices, trimmed brush and reset two rock steps between The Boulevard and West of Masa Knob. Cleaned water drains and trimmed brush between Dry Sluice Gap and False Gap. Filled two buckets of privy mulch while chasing two mice from the bin.

11/20 - Don Dunning - Mulch Operations - Packed 6 bags of mulch to restock Mt. Collins privy mulch supply. Cleaned privy and refilled mulch buckets. Picked up micro-trash around shelter.

11/20 - James Fondren, Kyle Herrell, Tom Howard - Tricorner Knob Shelter - Pecks shelter: Cleaned shelter, cleaned privy, filled mulch buckets, leveled out bin currently being used, emptied a bin that had composted and carried up mulch from cabin. Tricorner shelter: Took off old sky lights and installed new on roof, repaired leak in right hand back corner that had been reported, cut and bundled old material taken off roof (ready to be hauled off the mountain), privy cleaned, bin currently being used was leveled out, emptied a bin that had composted.

11/22 - Mike Harrington - Sassafras Gap (Pk) to Fontana Dam - Raked leaves out of water bars

11/22 - Patti Grady, Diane Petrilla - Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead - Cleaned and deepened water bars. Placed deterrent logs on edges of trail widened by hikers. Hand sawed through one 8" dead blowdown blocking trail.



11/22 - Phyllis Henry - AT Mgt, Mtgs & Admin - Participated in 5 Ridgerunner interviews with ATC, Park Service and rep. from GA AT Club, held on conference calls.

11/27 - Bob Williams - Wright Gap to Wesser - Cleared and recut water bars in advance of rain event. Trimmed vegetation and cut and cleared some trees from trail corridor.

12/11 - Dick Ketelle - Dry Sluice Gap to Newfound Gap - Removed fallen branches, dragged dead treetop off trail, cut and removed one blowdown between Icewater Spring and Masa Knob.

12/11 - Don Dunning, Nancy Dunning - Mulch Operations - Inspected the mulch storage tent for wind or fire damage - happily, the mulch storage tent and the surrounding structures at the Elkmont storage yard were completely undamaged. Replaced tie-lines on the tarps and battened down the shelter for the winter season.

*Thank you all ATMC
Maintainers for a great 2016!*

Thank you for ALL your time and dedication and here's wishing you a happy and healthy 2017! See you out there!