

# Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee

## Smoky Mountains Hiking Club



May 2017

### **AT MAINTENANCE- SAT MAY 6**

We will start at Davenport Gap and work up toward the Mount Cammerer side trail. We plan to clean water-bars, trim vegetation, remove smaller blow-downs, perform light trail maintenance, and inspect the shelters. A moderate hike of 6 to 8 miles is required depending on the interest level. Meet at Comcast on Asheville Hwy at 8:00 am for carpooling to Davenport Gap, or at the trailhead at 9:00am. Drive: 100 miles RT {@4¢=\$4}. We plan to enjoy watermelon at the end of the hike. **Please preregister with the leaders to assist planning.**

Leaders: Tim Bigelow, [bigelow2@mindspring.com](mailto:bigelow2@mindspring.com), 865-607-6781; Steve Dunkin, [jsdinkin@roaneschools.com](mailto:jsdinkin@roaneschools.com) 865-202-3286.

### **21<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL GSMNP APPALACHIAN TRAIL WORK DAY ON NATIONAL TRAILS DAY – JUNE 3, 2017**

**The 21st Annual Appalachian Trail Work Day in GSMNP will occur on National Trails Day, Saturday, June 3.** Get some exercise, enjoy a day of camaraderie (RAIN OR SHINE), receive a t-shirt designed by artist and club member Karen Brackett, and conclude your day with a fabulous picnic at the Metcalf Bottoms Pavilion. Volunteers of all skill and experience levels are welcome – this is a great opportunity to learn trail maintenance techniques from experienced leaders. The staging area will be the Sugarlands Visitor Center (bus parking lot) at 7:30 AM.

**Pre-registration is required.** Registration fee is \$20 (\$25 after May 15). These funds help with the acquisition of materials for trail improvement. For example, it costs thousands of dollars to have locust logs and construction materials airlifted

to specific trail sites. Registration forms can be found at area outdoor outfitters and on the SMHC website: [www.smhclub.org](http://www.smhclub.org).

### **AT WORK/TRAINING TRIP- SUN MAY 7**

#### **Attention all newer maintainers!**

We are pleased to announce this year a “Work and Train” AT trip, led by one of our most experienced Maintainers, Bob Williams, on his section of the AT in the Nantahala National Forest. We will meet in the parking lot of the Nantahala Outdoor Center, NNF, 13077 West Highway19, Bryson City, NC, 28713, at 10am that morning. Bob will demonstrate safe tool use in the parking lot, and then we will be able to go directly onto the AT, hiking in about 1.5 miles on his section, and working on some root removal, waterbars, sidehill work and brush trimming. We will have the tools there for your use. Bob will also explain many other principles of treadway maintenance, water drainage/erosion issues, etc. At the conclusion, we can provide information if you would like to help work a particular "section" in the future, or just have other questions, etc. (We manage about 30 miles of AT in the Nantahala, and over 70 miles in the Great Smoky Mountains NP). After we are done, we can get a bite to eat and visit NOC if you like. There will be a carpool for people from the Knoxville area, leaving from the Maryville Walmart, 2410 US Hgwy 411 S, at 8am that morning. (meet at the far right /east side) Some of you live in NC, so it is easier obviously to get to NOC on your own. Please let us know if you plan to attend, and especially if you will be meeting at Walmart, at [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com). Looking forward to seeing you out there!



## **Notice of 2 Additional Special Work Trip Opportunities!**

**May 7-11** A group from Georgia Southern University will be working on the AT in the GSMNP. This group will be based out of Soak Ash and driving to various work locations between NFG and Clingmans, and at Davenport Gap.

**May 27-28** The Chicago Area Backpackers Meetup Group will again be coming to GSMNP. This group did a work day at Clingmans Dome last year, and enjoyed it so much that they have increased the group size for their second visit. This group plans to make at least one trip each year, and possibly do a spring and fall trip. The group will be working one day near Davenport Gap and will be doing a day hike to Mt Cammerer on the other. Specific work day will depend on weather forecast.

Anyone interested in joining either of these groups can get more details by contacting Franklin LaFond [ox97GaMe@aol.com](mailto:ox97GaMe@aol.com) [678-464-3380](tel:678-464-3380).



*Photo- Pam Reddoch doing AT maintenance*

### **Pam Reddoch Retirement**

Pam Reddoch, who has served as the Nantahala National Forest Maintainer Leader for many years, has announced her retirement from that position, effective May 1, 2017. Pam has been a member of the SMHC since 1999. She served on the Board of Directors from 2009 through 2011, and was the representative to the Southern AT Partnership in 2009. She joined the AT Maintainers Committee in 2012, but had been working on the AT in the NNF since 2002, maintaining the steep difficult section between Stekoah Gap and Brown Fork Gap for a time. Pam will continue as a maintainer on the Yellow Creek Gap section of the NNF. Pam has been a tireless volunteer, a wonderful liaison with the Nantahala National Forest service, worked with our college outreach programs and has been a constant source of wisdom about how to manage the AT in the NNF. We are deeply grateful to her for her work, and wish her the best as she "lightens her load" a bit!

### **Jimmy Smith Retirement**

The ATMC would like to thank Jimmy Smith, a volunteer maintainer in the Nantahala National Forest (NNF), for his 17 plus years of work on the AT. Jimmy, who resigned his position last month, worked on one of the most beautiful sections in the NNF – Cheoah Bald. It is not easy to get to the Bald, but once you do, what a view you have at the end of the day! Not only did Jimmy maintain this 2.4-mile section of rugged trail, he was a certified chain sawyer who gave freely of his time to help clear the AT of blowdowns. When we built accessible privies in the NNF, he not only helped, but he also loaned us the use of his wood-working shop for the necessary material preparation and preassembly. Beyond trail maintenance, Jimmy is a true patriot. He served two tours of duty as a US Marine in Viet Nam including a stint as a "Tunnel Rat." Jimmy will be spending time with his grandchildren and his wife Ann and he will most assuredly make at least one trip each year to camp at the Bald, his favorite camping spot. Thank you, Jimmy, for your years of service!

**Next month, recognition of Steve Hidgon and Pete James,** who are also retiring from their respective AT sections after many years of service. Our gratitude to both of them!

### **Work Trip Reports 3/13/2017-4/15/2017**

#### **3/13 - Phyllis Henry, Doug Pitner - Mulch**

**Operations** - Filled 4 vehicles with 100 bags of mulch and hauled to staging area. With two SUV's and 2 small trucks, we had mulch everywhere, even tied to the top of 1 vehicle. But we were able to get it there in one trip. Started snowing before we finished.

**3/17 - Dan Martin, Paul Campbell - Davenport Gap to Lower Mt Cammerer Tr** - All water bars (70) cleared and treadway maintenance performed.

**3/17 - Don Dunning, Nancy Dunning - Mulch Operations** - Packaged 4500 lbs (100 x 45-lb bags) of mulch for airlift to Pecks. Packaged additional mulch for later transport to other sites. Moved remainder of mulch pile inside storage tent.

**3/18 - Carl Smith, Mike West - Cody Gap to Brown Fork Gap** - General trail work and talked with thru hikers.

**3/18 - Pete Berntsen, Don Dunning, Edward Fleming, Billy Heaton, Dick Ketelle, Ed Peck, Craig Rightmire, Janet Snyder, Mark Snyder, Stewart Taylor - Training** - Completed crosscut sawyer certification/recertification with instructor Dennis Helton. Classroom session at Soak Ash on Friday, March 17, and field session at Harmon Den on Saturday, March 18.

**3/19 - Bob Williams - Wright Gap to Wesser** - Trimmed, cleaned water bars & drainage systems, cleared numerous fallen branches from trail and cut/cleared 2 fallen trees from trail corridor.

**3/22 - Phyllis Henry - Mulch Operations** - Bought buckets and brooms to fly to be taken to Tricorner Knob privy. Prepared nets with mulch and equipment, received trash that was flown from mtn.

**3/23 - Pete Berntsen - Gap W of Masa Knob to Newfound Gap** - Removed small branches from trail hiked to work area. Cut and removed a two-inch leaner over trail near 1 mile NE of Newfound Gap and a second two-inch leaner with branches in trail located 0.1 mile NE of The Boulevard. Swept privy and filled one mulch bucket. (Three full buckets of mulch in privy and approximately 3/4 full in one bin with the other bin empty.) Packed out five pounds of trash from storage bin and shelter. Water drain pipe at spring had been removed. Chiseled rock at spring to improve drain into pipe

and reinstalled pipe. Cleaned water control devices from spring to 0.1 mile NE of shelter. Broke up last of 4-inch thick ice in 15-feet of trail tread and removed ice.

**3/24 - Barbara Allen - Davenport Gap Shelter** - Cleaned water drainages, picked up TP and trash. Talked with numerous thru hikers regarding LNT.  
**3/24 - John H Gassler - Davenport Gap to 1 mi N of Cam (4250' EI)** - Cleared several downed trees and vines from trail, cleared and redug several waterbars, cut back vegetation overhead and on uphill side of my section, cleaned Davenport shelter and surrounding area of all trash and cleaned ashes from fireplace.

**3/26 - Amanda Beal, Tim Bigelow, Steve Dunkin, Lori McBride - Pecks Corner to Newfound Gap** - The group backpacked in from Newfound Gap and stayed at Pecks Corner Shelter. Along the way, these tasks were performed :

- Vegetation trimming (primarily north of Charlies Bunion)
- Clearing of waterbars and drains (mainly the entrance area where plugged with debris)
- Filled mulch buckets at Ice Water Spings and Pecks Corner
- Cleared several minor blow downs
- Trimmed two large blow downs for better access
- Picked up trash at Pecks Corner and checked Ice Water Spings

**3/29 - Alan Duff - Sassafras Gap Privy** - Hauled 8 bags of mulch in for the privy. Emptied one bin of the privy and moved the seat over to the empty bin. Cut one dead leaner tree that appeared it would fall over the privy when it comes down. Cut two knee high blow-downs on the way north toward Cheoah Bald. We got great cooperation from Drew Hopkins, the new volunteer coordinator for the US Forest Service. He put the mulch into his truck and drove us to the turn- around just 3/10 of a mile from the shelter. He worked with us on the privy and also brought in a chain saw and cut the blow-downs. Maury Hudson, the Ridgerunner for the National Forest met us at the shelter and spent the day working with us.

**3/30 - Mike Harrington - Sassafras Gap (Pk) to Lewellyn Branch** - Cleared water bars on my section. On one ~12 ft long section dug into the sidehill in an attempt to preserve trail bed where it had narrowed to less than 12 inches.

**3/31 - Mark Buckles, Don Dunning, Edward Fleming, James Fondren, Tom Howard, Dick Ketelle, John Knox, Franklin LaFond, Mark Shipley - Training** - Attended 2017 chainsaw safety briefing conducted by Christine

Hoyer and completed applicable forms.

4/1 - Dick Ketelle, Franklin LaFond, Crystal Gaddy, Fawn Landrum, Peter Landrum, Jerry Davis, Don Dunning - **Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap** -

Repaired eroded area around corner post at Brown Fork Gap Shelter. Filled privy mulch buckets. Added hooks at privy to hang mulch buckets. Removed 2 large blowdowns. Added 8 ft of log cribbing to repair treadway damaged by large blowdown. Rehab of 135 ft of sidehill. Added 1 rock step.



Photo- Dick Ketelle works at Brown Fork Gap Shelter

4/1 - Steve Higdon, Donna Higdon - **Newfound Gap to Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr** - Cleared debris. Cut back brush. Removed trip hazards. Picked up trash. Using sledge, hammered in all stakes that had loosened during winter.

4/2 - Don Dunning, Franklin LaFond, Erin Seekamp, GRSM Consortium Group - **Mulch Operations** - Professor Erin Seekamp and 17 students along with 2 SMHC leaders packed mulch to the **Icewater Spring shelter** and learned about our privy mulch operations. This group is part of the Outdoor Recreation Consortium, which consists of students from North Carolina State University, East Carolina University, Penn State University, Texas A&M University, University of Missouri, and Western Illinois University. The group meets for a week every March at the Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont, and has become an important contributor to our maintenance program. This hard-working group transformed an empty mulch storage bin into full bin. Special thanks to Professor Seekamp and these dedicated students.

4/8 - Dick Ketelle, Pete Berntsen, Cindy Spangler,

Todd White, Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder, Don Dunning - **Newfound Gap to Sugarland Mt Tr** - Removed blowdowns.

4/8 - Jimmy Glascock, Paul Glascock, Leonard T Gaddis - **Swim Bald to Wright Gap** - Cleared water bars. Removed small blow downs. Picked up trash. Diverted small water fall from trail. Noted 22 north bound through hikers and 10 day hikers.

4/10 - Franklin LaFond, Orren Gardner - **Fontana Dam to High Pt E of Walker Gap** - Cleaned out waterbars. 98 ft of sidehill rehab. Added 3 step rocks, 3 log steps, and 1 waterbar. Installed 43 ft of log cribbing and 8 ft of rock cribbing. Removed 6 small blowdowns. [Report split for the record between NNF and NP]



Photos- Orren Gardner, above, and Franklin LaFond, Orren and Nick Espinosa, Ridgerunner, below

4/10 - Patti Grady, Diane Petrilla - Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead - Dug out and cleaned approx. 40 waterbars. Filled in treadway where deep muddy holes existed. Picked up trash. Saw numerous NoBos who were universally grateful for the work of the Club and maintainers, and even gave one of us a "trail karma" necklace to pass on, as thanks! Have planned a second trip to complete the remaining waterbars.

4/14 - Dick Ketelle, Ed Peck, Allison Williams, Edward Fleming, Jim Gehlhar - Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Clingmans Dome - Ed Fleming and Wayne Williams cleared blowdowns from Clingmans Dome to Collins Gap. Dick Ketelle, Ed Peck, and Jim Gehlhar cleared blowdowns between Fork Ridge Trail and Collins Gap and cut the walk-around log between Indian Gap and Tomahawk Branch.



**Photos of helicopter mulch lift to Pecks Corner 3/22/2017- What a sight! And thank you to all from the GSMNP, ATC and ATMC who helped make this happen!**



**Great Smoky Mountains National Park  
Volunteer Appreciation Celebration!**

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park will host a Volunteer-In-Park Appreciation Celebration this Spring! **AT Maintainers are invited!**

The event is set for Thursday May 18th, 7 - 9:15pm at the Park Vista Hotel, 705 Cherokee Orchard Rd., Gatlinburg. This event is to celebrate volunteer accomplishments during the National Park Service Centennial Year, 2016! Registration is at 6:30pm, and the program begins at 7pm.

**To RSVP**

RSVP by calling the Park Reservation Line by the evening of Sunday April, 30th. You'll be prompted to state your first and last name, your phone number and the full name of your guest (if you will have one). Once you leave this information in the voicemail, your reservation is confirmed!

Reservation Line: [865-436-1200](tel:865-436-1200), Ext [440](tel:865-436-1200). \*RSVPs made as far in advance as possible are much appreciated. The line is open now and ready for your use!

Park Vista offers a limited number of rooms that may be reserved at a reduced rate (now through 4/26). The rooms are available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

**To Reserve a Room by Phone:** Call 800-421-7272, ask for Reservations (you will be transferred to the central reservations office), Press 1 for "New Reservations", then Press 1 again. Then press the \* key and give the agent your reduced room rate code "GSM."

**To Reserve a Room Online:** Go to [www.parkvista.com](http://www.parkvista.com), put in the date you wish to reserve, and when prompted, put in the code "GSM" to receive a reduced room rate.

**Maintenance 'Minders'**

This is the third in our series elaborating on the 10 basic maintenance tasks that maintainers should try to do on their sections during their work trips.

**"2. Cut plant growth along the AT, including woody growth, such as branches, saplings, and blackberry canes, and soft annual growth."**

The Trail shall be kept clear of vegetation and obstructions that unnecessarily impede foot travel. It shall be cleared to such a width and height that a hiker with a pack can walk the Trail without undue difficulty. [4x8 ft clearance: minimum 3 foot width between trees (across the Trail from each other). Trim branches, rather than cut trees, when possible].

Vegetation along the Trail should be undamaged , with healthy plants growing close beside the Treadway. Vegetation clearing for maintenance should not be hindered by this principle. In fact, inadequate clearing of uphill vegetation will force hikers to the outside of the tread, causing it to fail. Bare soil exposed during construction or reconstruction should be mulched with leaf or needle litter at the end of each work day; minimizing erosion and visual impacts until revegetated. Brush cut during construction or reconstruction should be moved out of sight of Trail users. A "natural" look should be achieved as soon as possible after work is completed.

(Appalachian Trail Conference. *Appalachian Trail Fieldbook: Maintenance and Rehabilitation Guidelines for Volunteers*. Harpers Ferry, WV: ATC, 2003. Print.)

Please send any items of interest, photos, event notifications for the ATMC Newsletter to Diane Petrilla at [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com). Thank you for **ALL** of the work you do!