



March 2018

**AT Maintenance- Saturday March 3**

This work trip is directed toward clearing the 30 miles of trail between NOC and Fontana of any trees and limb debris that has fallen over the winter and prepping the trail for the upcoming thru hiker season. We need sawyers, and volunteers to assist the sawyers with removal of debris after it is cut, and repair any tread as needed where trees have fallen. Specific work locations will not be known until a walkthrough is completed in late February, and based on number of sawyers and volunteers sign up. Ideally, we would like to have 4 crews. Each crew would hike no more than 7 miles over moderate terrain. Meet at the Maryville Walmart on Hwy 411 <see list> at 7:00 am for carpooling. Drive: 110 miles RT {@4¢ = \$4.40}. Participants will need to wear sturdy footwear and bring work gloves, lunch, snacks, and plenty of water. If you have a hardhat, ear protection, and/or safety glasses, please bring those as well. **Please pre-register with leaders so that appropriate tools will be available.** Alternate bad weather date is Saturday March 10. Leaders: Franklin LaFond, 678-464-3380, [ox97GaMe@aol.com](mailto:ox97GaMe@aol.com), and Maury Hudson, 540-629-1021, [mlhowe13@gmail.com](mailto:mlhowe13@gmail.com).

**Visiting Volunteer Groups in the Park in March**

Currently we have 2 visiting college volunteer groups scheduled to be working with maintainers in the Park in March. From March 11-16, we have a group from Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, NC. From March 18-24, we have a group from Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, FL. coming. Both groups will be staying at Soak Ash. If you would like to volunteer to assist with any of the outings for these groups, or have a maintenance need on your section of the AT that is accessible at this time of year, please contact:

Diane Petrilla (for Warren Wilson group) at [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com) or 931-224-5149 **OR**

Phyllis Henry (for the Eckerd group) at [phyllishenry@yahoo.com](mailto:phyllishenry@yahoo.com) or 865-577-2604.

**Ridgerunners for 2018**

Each Spring, beginning March 1, we welcome and greatly appreciate the work of the ATC Ridgerunners in the GSMNP. This year, we are fortunate to have Carl Goodman (returning for his 15<sup>th</sup> season!) covering Fontana to Spence Field. Chloe DeCamara, another wonderfully experienced RR, will alternate on the North and South end with Christine Popp. Christine is the newest RR, and will be the “long season” RR. Here is a little about Christine, in her own words:

“I am 26 years old and from Orange, CT. I grew up loving the outdoors in Connecticut. My first big overnight hikes were family trips down the Grand Canyon and up Mt. Adams and Mt. Washington when I was 11 years old. Ever since then, I have loved hiking. I attended college at The George Washington University and graduated with degrees in Middle Eastern Studies and International Development. I then fulfilled my dream of serving in

**Chainsaw Window for GSMNP**

The Chainsaw window for blowdown removal in the National Park this year is Sunday March 18- Sunday April 22. Please watch in the next few weeks for announcements about trips. Chainsaw users must have current Sawyer certification as well as First Aid and CPR certification. There will be a mandatory safety meeting scheduled also, before the work begins.



the Peace Corps in Ethiopia as a community health educator. Upon returning to the United States, I thru hiked the Pacific Crest Trail in 2017 and fell in love with the idea of living and working in the backcountry and knew Ridgerunning would be the perfect introduction for me. This is my first time in the Southeast, and I am so excited to get to know the beauty of the Smoky Mountains. I will be the long season Ridgerunner in Great Smoky Mountains National Park from March through October. I look forward to seeing you on Trail!”

Welcome Christine, and we look forward to seeing you as well! Thank you for your work!



#### **ATMC Meeting date still being planned**

We are still working with the GSMNP and the ATC to plan a date for the next ATMC meeting (soon) to discuss the Spence privy project (helicopter window dates which then determine all prep for the privy construction before then), as well as other items such as planning for NTD. Stay tuned!

### **Wilderness Skills Institute**

We have received the following notification from Benjamin Barry, ATC Trail Facilities Manager for the Deep South, GA, NC, and TN. This is an ideal opportunity for maintainers who wish to grow their skills!

#### **“Hello Club Affiliates and Partners,**

This year's [Wilderness Skills Institute \(WSI\)](#) will take place May 21-25 and May 29 - June 1; our [2018 course selection](#) provides a wide variety of training options that I hope will appeal to all. WSI is a collaborative training event held in partnership with the US Forest Service, Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards, and Appalachian Trail Conservancy. Held annually, this has become the premiere wilderness and trails training event in the Southeast and it is extremely important to me that ATC volunteers feel included and are able to take advantage of this wonderful resource.

Some of the classes we are offering in 2018 are of particular note, providing especially valuable opportunities for stewarding Wilderness on the A.T. As clubs continue to work with a variety of organizations to manage the Trail, we have scheduled a class during our first week on Building Strong Partnerships for Wilderness Stewardship. Focusing on important legislation and policies that effects the decision-making process, this course incorporates volunteer recruitment and other tools to help grow club capacity.

I've been impressed with how many of the clubs continue to grow their education and outreach efforts; to support that, I have taken the lead on providing a class on Environmental Interpretation. This class has three instructors, all of which are full-time environmental educators. To support growing Trail Ambassador programs, this course will devote a section to the informal visitor contacts that are so regular while in the field; while also providing another section of the course that outlines the structure needed for more formal outdoor programs, such as campfire talks and guided hikes.

For those akin to trail maintenance and design, we are hosting numerous opportunities for crosscut

certification during week one, and I will be co-instructing a Griphoist and Rigging course that same week. For introductory students, we have included a day of Griphoist operation and safety into our annual four-day long Trail Maintenance course during the second week. I have made a push to include these rigging courses at the behest of many clubs' members, so I doubly hope that they will be well attended.

Our [full course line-up](#) for week one (May 21 - 25):

- Building Strong Partnerships for Wilderness Stewardship
- Crosscut A/B and Wilderness First Aid & CPR
- Crosscut C
- Griphoist and Rigging

Courses offered week two (May 29 - June 1):

- Protecting Wilderness Character: Processes and Tools for Wilderness Stewardship
- Introduction to Equestrian Packing for Wilderness Stewardship
- Trail Maintenance
- Environmental Interpretation
- Attendance at WSI requires a short application which can be [found here](#). Applications will be reviewed shortly thereafter, with admittance confirmation being issued by the end of March. All courses are free, with camping and other facilities available at no cost on site. I truly hope all of our southern clubs will be represented at this event!!”

Benjamin Barry, Trail Facilities Manager,

ATC- Deep South - GA, NC, TN

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## Work Trip Reports 1/16/18- 2/15/18

**1/21 - Bob Williams - Wright Gap to Wesser -** Had report of 3 blowdowns on section. Cut back one existing walk-under near NOC and found another complex of downed trees at the other end of the section - about 50 yards from Watia Road. Reduced the tree to a minor step-over. Will go back later from the Watia Road side and entirely remove the balance. Did not see a third blowdown.

**2/6 - Keith Mertz, Pam Reddoch - Yellow Creek Gap to Stekoah Gap -** Hand sawed three small blowdowns. Clipped some greenbrier and overhanging limbs. Threw numerous branches and limbs off the trail.

**2/12 - Phyllis Henry - AT Mgt, Mtgs & Admin -** Participated in Ridgerunner Training. Had meeting with Christine Hoyer and Javier Salazar.

### Maintenance 'Minders

Last month we published [Guidelines for Trail Clearing](#). This month we continue in the same vein, by listing Conditions to Avoid (Trail-clearing problems that would need to be addressed):

**Blocked-** Blocked by blowdowns making passage difficult or forcing hikers to detour from the Treadway.

**Cleared downhill-** Cleared of vegetation on the downhill side on sidehill sections, which allows hikers to walk on or below the outside edge of the Treadway.

**Overgrown-** With bushes or briars that brush, scratch, or during rain, soak the hiker.

**Cleared too widely-** Cleared so that hikers leave the Treadway, causing Treadway widening, or such that the Trail loses the appearance of a simple footpath.

**Cleared too narrowly-** Cleared to less than 3 feet in width, making the route obscure or passage difficult.

To be continued.....

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**, and 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!