

# Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee

## Smoky Mountains Hiking Club



May 2018

### A.T. Maintenance Work Trip-Saturday May 5

We will start at Davenport Gap and work up toward Mt. Cammerer side trail. We plan to clean waterbars, inspect Davenport Gap shelter, trim vegetation, clear any manageable blow downs and perform light trail maintenance. A moderate hike of six to eight miles is typical. Meet at Comcast at 7:30 or Davenport Gap trailhead at 9:00. Drive 120 miles RT. Tools will be provided.

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### S.W.E.A.T. Crew Dates

There are seven S.W.E.A.T. work trips scheduled this summer, with hard-working volunteers taking on trail projects on more remote sections of the A.T. in the GSMNP. Volunteers are chosen and organized by the ATC and stay at Soak Ash. It's always great if SMHC maintainers have a chance, to meet or hike up and visit the crews occasionally, and even work along-side. Exact locations for the work are TBD. Please contact Javier Salazar, [jsalazar@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:jsalazar@appalachiantrail.org), if you are interested in connecting with one of the crews, either at Soak Ash, or on the Trail!

1. June 6 - 11 (Wed-Mon)
2. June 16- 21 (Sat-Thu)
3. June 26- July 1 (Tues-Sun)
4. July 6- 11 (Fri-Wed)
5. July 16- 21 (Fri-Wed)
6. July 26- 31 (Thu- Tue)
7. Aug 5- 10 (Sun- Fri)

### Save the Date! GSMNP National Trails Day- Saturday June 2, 2018

Join us for this annual Park event to work in crews on the Appalachian Trail! 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 dinner at the Greenbrier Picnic 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. Registration forms will be available at area outdoor outfitters and on the SMHC website, [www.smhclub.org](http://www.smhclub.org).

### Administrative Permits for GSMNP Shelter Use

Just a reminder, that maintainers may request an Administrative Permit (no fee) to use one of the shelters in the Park if they plan to camp overnight to do maintenance work on their section. The permit is only for use in the Shelter on/near the section where you are working. Please contact Christine Hoyer at [christine\\_hoyer@nps.gov](mailto:christine_hoyer@nps.gov) if you need one.



### **A.T. Work Trips from 3/10/18 to 4/14/18**

**3/11 - Franklin LaFond, Cindy Spangler, Diane Petrilla, Rebekah Young - AT Mgt, Mtgs & Admin**

- Attended Southern Partnership meeting consisting of SORO, VARO, ATC, Southern Region Forest Service agencies, GSMNP, APPA, as well as Trail communities. [For summary of meeting, see April 2018 issue of ATMC Newsletter].

**3/11- Cindy Spangler-** Checked in student work crew from Warren Wilson College.

**3/17 - Franklin LaFond - Fontana Dam to Route 28** - Cleared 4 blowdowns, 10 ft of sidehill rehab

**3/17 - Randy Mitchell, Russell Redden - Low Gap to Cosby Knob Top** - Cleaned water bars in section. Inspected Cosby Shelter and privy.

Checked mulch supply in bin. Removed green briar encroaching on trail. Removed two blow downs just north of shelter. One was brittle and was able to be broken up and slid off trail. The other 11-inch hemlock had to be sawed to be removed. Also cut limbs from oak that has been overhanging Low Gap trail for a few years and continues to gradually shift lower.

**3/20 - Cynthia Post, Jeff Wilson - Route 28 to Yellow Creek Gap** - Cleared blowdowns from Hwy 28 Crossing to Yellow Creek Gap, cleared brush from Walker Gap to Yellow Creek Gap.

**3/20 - Tom Howard, Eckerd College Group - Newfound Gap to Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr** - Cleaned water bars.

**3/21 - Don Dunning, GRSM Consortium Group - Mulch Operations** - For many years, we have appreciated the service provided each March by college students from the annual Outdoor Recreation Consortium held each year at GSMIT, generally packing mulch to one of our backcountry privy sites and other trail maintenance activities. This year our planned mulch packing trip was thwarted by the wintry weather and road closures. So, we had to go to Plan B. Christine Hoyer led an outstanding classroom session for about 4-5 hours to help the students better understand challenges in backcountry management, opportunities in federal service, and many other topics. Then we went to our mulch storage area at Elkmont (on their way back to Tremont), where they helped to move

a huge pile of mulch into our storage shelter. Another great group of enthusiastic and engaged students.



*Outdoor Recreation Consortium helping with Mulch Operations*

**3/22 - Don Dunning, Eckerd College Group - Mulch Operations** - Outstanding group of students from Eckerd College in Florida was scheduled to help pack mulch to one of our backcountry shelters. However, weather conditions and road closures precluded this planned activity. So instead they help complete the transfer of the outdoor mulch pile into our storage shelter and learned about our backcountry mulch operations.





*Eckerd College students helping with Mulch Operations*

**3/25 - Don Dunning - Training** - Participated in annual safety review for chainsaw operations. Then restocked mulch supply at HQ storage shed.

**4/1 - Bob Williams - Wright Gap to Wesser** - Cleaned water bars, trimmed vegetation, removed roots in trail that posed tripping hazards. Cleared one dead tree blowdown.

**4/1 - Franklin LaFond, Sonja Ball - Fontana Dam to Swim Bald** - Removed several blowdowns from Swim Bald to Locust Cove and Yellow to Fontana Marina. Moved privy position at Sassafras Gap Shelter. Filled mulch buckets with leaves. Carried out 25 lbs of trash from privy and shelter area. Extensive pruning of encroaching woody vegetation

between Cheoah Bald and 1.5-mile South of Locust Cove. Cleaned waterbars from Sassafras Gap Shelter to Locust Cove.

**4/3 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap** -Cleared waterbars, cut two small limbs and one large overhead treetop that was hung-up in the limbs. Spoke with many people as we worked informing them of the trail and the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club efforts to maintain the trail.

**4/3 - Pete Berntsen - False Gap to Newfound Gap** - Removed fallen limbs and blowdowns (except one) from this entire section. The remaining tree is about six feet above the trail. The 16-inch diameter tree trunk rests on top of its stump on the lower side of the trail with the tree crown on the upper side of the trail. I could not remove the lower trunk from the stump so could not cut it. It is located about 5.5 miles NE of NFG (N 35, 39.025'; W 083, 21.387). Cleaned water drains between Dry Sluice Gap and False Gap. Re-seated pipe at Icewater spring to improve flow. Also improved discharge drain so that water no longer flows from the spring onto the trail.

**4/4 - Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap** - Cut small limbs, back-filled a waterbar, eliminating a trip hazard. Cut numerous dead roots and finished all waterbar cleaning. Expanded thin water drainage in multiple areas. Lots of hikers even though it is very cold. Took four AT hikers down to Gatlinburg at dark. They were cold and tired and pushed hard to get to NFG, took them to their hotel they reserved.

**4/6 - Diane Petrilla - Other Work** - Performed tool inventory at McNutt Farm shed in preparation for National Trails Day.

**4/7 - Dick Ketelle, Brian Groenhout, Neil Snepp - Newfound Gap to Spruce Fir** - Despite dire weather forecasts and the NPS starting to close roads, 3 stalwart trail maintainers ventured up to the Smokies crest to remove blowdowns. Sections covered include Fork Ridge Trail Junction to Spruce Fir Nature Trail and Indian Gap to Newfound Gap. One Ridgerunner blowdown was removed between Fork Ridge and Spruce Fir. Several hazard trees were removed between Indian

Gap and Newfound Gap. Although there was near constant mist we never really needed raingear.

**4/8 - Franklin LaFond - Fontana Dam to High Pt E of Walker Gap**

- Removed lots of limb debris from trail. Cut out several small blowdowns. Cleaned out water drainages. Pruned back woody vegetation. 60 ft of sidehill rehab. Moved several large rocks from treadway where hikers were walking around on the softer downhill edge of trail. Flagged potential relocation option near Bee Cove Lead.

**4/12 - Patti Grady - Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead**

- Cut back a couple of small overhanging trees on the trail. Cleared about 20 waterbars. Several had dead trees and limbs that had fallen over them during the winter, so these had to be cleared out before the waterbar could be cleaned.

**4/12 - Wayne Williams, Jim Gehlhar - Collins Gap to Mt Love**

- I went out with Jim Gehlhar for the first time. It is great to have someone go with me to work. We cleaned waterbars from Mt. Love to Collins Gap. We met a bunch of thru hikers and had a beautiful day to work. Jim is great help. We had a good time and got a lot done.

**4/13 - Diane Petrilla - Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead**

- Spring waterbar cleaning, clearing debris from trail, reset one dislodged log step.

**4/13 - Don Dunning - Boulevard Tr to Sweat Heifer**

- Cleaned all waterbars, turnpikes, and drainage features between Sweat Heifer trail junction and Boulevard trail junction. Removed small amounts of limb debris from trail and collected microtrash.

**4/13 - Jerry Troxler, Stewart Taylor - Spence (Bote Mt Tr) to Russell Field**

- Moved the privy and refilled the mulch buckets. Cleaned all the water bars between Spence and Russell Field Shelters and carried out broken shovel from Spence Field Shelter.

**4/13 - Paul Tanguay - Clingmans Dome to Goshen Prong Tr**

- Cleaned 15 waterbars, repaired 3 waterbars.

## Maintenance 'Minders

### Guidelines for Shelters and Campsites

Leave only one fire ring, where allowed (remove others on each work trip).

Remove all litter (perform on each work trip).

Clean the water source (perform on each work trip).

Where needed, provide appropriate food storage devices (such as a cable system) to prevent bear problems. {In the GSMNP where there are bear cables, our role can be to encourage and educate about the use of these.}

Make sure the site does not exceed the user impact limit jointly established by the club and the managing agency.

Make sure the site is well-drained.

Make sure the site is erosion-free.

Make sure the site contains signs as listed on club sign inventory.

Ensure that the site has no visible human waste.

Identify hazard trees to be cleared once per year.

Ensure that privies are structurally sound, with no rot. With pit privies, plenty of capacity should be left in the pit. Privies should be simple and rustic in appearance.

Ensure that shelters are free of leaks, structurally sound, clean, free of bear and rodent problems, simple and rustic in appearance, and equipped with a register in which hiker comments can be recorded.

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!