

APPALACHIAN TRAIL MAINTAINERS COMMITTEE
SMOKY MOUNTAINS HIKING CLUB



December 2018

No First Saturday Work Trip in December

As always, there is no scheduled first Saturday work trip in December. Rest up, enjoy your holidays, and thank you for all of your work this year!

Maintainers Invited!



***Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Installation
Dinner and Awards Presentation***

Saturday December 8, 2018, 5:00- 9:00 pm

Fox Den Country Club, 12284 N. Fox Den Drive, Knoxville, TN. 37934 (in Fox Den subdivision, off Kingston Pike, in Farragut, 865-966-9771).

Social hour 5-6pm with light refreshments followed by dinner at 6pm. A cash bar will be available.

Musical entertainment provided by the **Oak Ridge High School String Quartet** and the **Manny-Herz Band**. Our special speaker this year is **Benny Braden**, who holds the 2017 speed record for completing all the trails in the Smokies!

Please RSVP by December 3rd at www.smhclub.org or by calling Priscilla Clayton (865-966-4142), sigmtngirl@earthlink.net, Beth Eades (865-609-8311), eadesb@comcast.net, or Jeannette Gilbert (865-483-8774), corsica111@att.net. Cost is \$25 at the door or via the website with PayPal. Pre-payment is appreciated. If you make a reservation, but are unable to attend, we would request that you cover the cost of the dinner (cancel by Dec. 5). When reserving on the website, please select your choice of entrée.

Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee

Meeting

There will be a meeting of the ATMC on **Wednesday January 16 at 6:30pm** at TNBank, 1311 W Lamar Alexander Pkwy, Maryville, TN 37801. We will be discussing the Spence privy project plans, National Trails Day, (Saturday June 1, 2019), Volunteer Recruitment, Mulch Operations, and other topics. If you have an item that you would like to placed on the Agenda, please contact George Ritter at rittergeo@gmail.com, or Diane Petrilla at petrillad@gmail.com.

A. T. Work Trips from 10/1/2018 to 11/15/2018

10/1 - Barbara Allen, Barbara Allen's Friends Group

- Davenport Gap to Chestnut Br Trail - Spent night in shelter, cleaned water drainages, cleaned shelter, checked water source and cleaned up horse dropping near water source. Someone had brought horse down to the water to drink evidently, which is unsatisfactory as spring is so small.

10/5 - Keith Stayton - Davenport Gap Shelter

- Keith drove to Sevierville and picked up the roofing metal for the Davenport Gap shelter project then took it to his place for storage in a garage until needed.

10/6 - Barbara Allen, Barbara Allen's Friends Group

- Davenport Gap to Chestnut Br Trail - Moved some downed limbs, cleaned water drainages, cleaned shelter and carried out trash.

10/17 - Cindy Spangler - Mt Love to Clingmans

Dome - Cleaned water bars and brushed the trail.



10/17 - Edward Fleming - Davenport Gap Shelter

- Drove to Sevierville and picked up materials to build a rack for the wheeled litter to adapt it for hauling roofing metal. Also picked up additional materials for the Davenport Gap shelter roofing project.

10/17 - Janet Snyder, Mark Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap

- Cleared some large waterbars and cut trip roots. Brought a large rock down the trail to place as a step. Reworked the eroded trail filling in with crush to slow erosion as well as a waterbar to minimize erosion. The new step is at about .8 N of NFG.

10/18 - Edward Fleming, George Minnigh -

Davenport Gap Shelter - Drove to the Sugarlands maintenance area and picked up the wheeled litter and other equipment for the Davenport Gap shelter project. Returned to the workshop and built the frame to adapt the litter for metal hauling.

10/19 - Phillip Clarkson, Haley Ferguson - Mount

Collins Privy - Hauled 60lbs mulch to Mt Collins privy bin; bin is now about 75% full. Filled buckets inside privy and swept privy out.



Who says mulch and privy work isn't glamorous??

10/20 - Cindy Spangler - AT Mgt, Mtgs & Admin -

As a SMHC representative, I attended the 2018 Fall ATC SORO RPC Meeting held at the Macon County Library, Franklin, NC.

10/20 - Edward Fleming, Pamela Fleming -

Davenport Gap Shelter - Cut down the litter frame

to accommodate hauling shorter metal making it more manageable. Put one piece of 11' roofing metal not needed for the project in storage.

10/21 - Virginia Tech Group, Rick Brown, Paul Campbell, Don Dunning, Edward Fleming, Arnold Guzman, Eric Keller, Dick Ketelle, Kristi Knight, George Minnigh, Diane Petrilla, Philip Royer, Cindy Spangler, Keith Stayton, Taylor Weatherbee -

Davenport Gap Shelter -The Davenport Gap Shelter roof replacement project was a dedicated 3 day effort involving 18 different people at different stages. On 10-18/18, 5 students from Virginia Tech arrived at Soak Ash on a service-outreach project called VT Engage. Eric and Diane met them and stayed with them for the next 3 nights at Soak Ash. On 10-19 a crew of 11 strong people, 5 students and 6 additional maintainers, hauled a gurney with a very long wide wood frame built onto it by Ed, up and down the A.T. from DG to the shelter, hauling several hundred pounds of load each time, and bringing back old removed roof from the shelter. The 4- person roof crew, led by Ed each day, worked steadily to tear off the moss-covered leaky roof and started to get the new roof into place. A total of 3 gurney haul trips were made. On Day 2, 10-20, the 5 VT students and 2 maintainers made 3 more trips with a shortened gurney (shorter roofing pieces to take up) and continued bringing down old materials. Four incredible roofers continued their work at the shelter. On Day 3, 10-21, 3 roofers completed the project and 1 maintainer made 4 hauls to carry off material, before all of us made a final haul with a gurney piled high with some construction trash, tools, ladders, etc. We actually had help on this last haul with a day-hiker who volunteered to assist. The new roof looks wonderful, strong and secure. Great appreciation goes out to all involved in this project! **[Please also see article, photos at end of Newsletter about this project.]**

10/22 - Edward Fleming - Davenport Gap Shelter

- Unloaded tools and equipment from the roofing project. Drove to Sugarlands and returned the wheeled litter and other equipment. Drove to Sevierville and returned some unused materials from the project. Looked for an outlet to sell the old roofing material and scrap from the new roof.

10/23 - Diane Petrilla, U of Georgia Group - Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead -

Worked with Wilson Riggan, a student at U. Ga. who was doing a project for a course called Environmental Resources and Society. We performed routine maintenance work, especially digging out waterbars and discussed the A.T., the model of Co-operative management of the A.T., threats to the A.T. as well as to the GSMNP, and many other topics.

10/23 - Edward Fleming, Keith Stayton -

Davenport Gap Shelter - Loaded the metal scrap from the Davenport Gap shelter project on two trucks and hauled to Sevier County Iron and Metal Recycling Center where we sold 960 lbs. for \$57.60. This completes this project. Proceeds from the metal sale will be used to help fund future A.T. projects.

10/25 - Ed Peck - Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead -

Removed remains of blowdown 0.8 mi south of Indian Gap.

10/25 - Pete Berntsen, Steven Epps - False Gap to Dry Sluice Gap -

Minor vegetation trimming and cleaned water drains between False Gap and Dry Sluice Gap. Steven started carving steps at location about 1.4 mile NE of DSG on Oct 24. I continued with trail rehabilitation and completed 131 feet of trail which included four new water drains located at 1.2 mile NE of DSG. Removed four large limbs that were falling from a dead tree over the trail located about 0.7 mile NE of DSG. Filled two privy buckets at IWS and cut links from fence in front of shelter to eliminate trip hazard. At location about 1.2 mile NE of Icewater Shelter, cut back root-ball that left about 12 inches of trail width after being cut.

10/29 - Janet Snyder, Mark Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap -

Cleared waterbars in the lower section (near NFG). Re-secured a waterbar. Added dirt to the trail along with rocks to raise the height in an eroded area.

10/30 - Tom Howard, Steve Reagan - Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead to Spruce Fir -

Installed tarp at Mt. Collins, emptied privy bin, moved riser from center to left side over emptied bin, knocked down and mulched bin that was at eighty percent.

Sanitized seat and filled buckets. We also carried in mulch. Walked trail section to check a future project.

10/31 - Janet Snyder, Mark Snyder - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap -

Raked leaves off trail above waterbars and cleared waterbars of debris for winter. Repaired one waterbar and continued to add more gargoyles to the dangerous edge of the steps at .3 mile North of NFG. Cut trip roots and backfilled a waterbar. Added stones to steps. Removed large blowdown from trail. Secured retaining wall by resetting top stones.

11/1 - Taylor Weatherbee, Kristi Knight -

Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap - Cleaned water bars and removed one small tree.

11/2 - Jerry Troxler, Randy Rainey, Stewart Taylor - Spence (Bote Mt Tr) to Russell Field -

Put up new tarp at Russell Field Shelter and carried out one old tarp and trash found in the box. Cleaned out all waterbars from Russell to Spence Field Shelter. Repaired the privy at Spence using 2- 2/4's nailed under the eaves of the shelter. Cleaned out a bin in the privy and carried out one tarp and the trash in the privy.

11/3 - Jerry Troxler, Stewart Taylor -

Spruce Fir to Sugarland Mt Tr - Cleaned out all waterbars on the way to Mt. Collins Shelter and then cleaned out the waterbars back toward the other end of the section. Unable to clean all the water bars due to running out of time.

11/3 - Paul Tanguay, Alison Ashby - Clingmans Dome to Goshen Prong Tr -

Cleaned 40 waterbars and did minor repairs to 5 others.

11/3 - Pete Berntsen - Ice Water Springs Shelter

- Carried tarp (with some youthful assistance for the majority of the hike) and mulch to Icewater. Installed new heavy-duty tarp on the front of the shelter. Had a tall hiker help with the south end of the tarp as I can't reach the beam on that end. Cleaned the privy bin #1 which resulted in hauling 13 pounds of trash down the mountain. Cleaned water drains/control devices between Icewater Spring and 0.1 mile south of the shelter. Also cleaned the drain in front of the shelter so, as the

ice rink melted, water flowed away from the shelter. The area was dry when I left.

11/3 - Steve Dunkin, Ernie Wiles, Terry Martin, Neil Snapp, Barbara Allen, Barbara Shaver -

Davenport Gap to Chestnut Br Trail - Cleaned waterbars. Cleaned spring at Davenport shelter and collected trash on trail and at shelter.

11/4 - Dick Ketelle - Clingmans Dome to Welch Ridge Tr - Cut two "duck under" leaner trees west of Siler's Bald plus a step over blowdown 5+ miles out. Cut several tree branches encroaching in the corridor. On the way out at Siler's shelter I found an abandoned sleeping bag (thankfully not wet) and several pounds of abandoned food that I packed out and trashed at Clingman's Dome. Met a herd (about a dozen) of southbound thru hikers as I was passing through from Mt. Collins shelter, with plans to stay at Russell Field or Spence.

Revitalizing a Roof and a Shelter- Davenport Gap

For Appalachian Trail hikers, the Davenport Gap Shelter represents the (likely!) welcome end of the countless ascents and descents on the A.T. in the GSMNP on a northbound hike. For southbounders, it is also the welcome beginning of the A.T. through the Smokies, in what will become their last major challenge before the final stretch to Springer Mountain. The shelter sits deep in a cove, so that a hiker above it on the A.T. can look down through the trees and see it's broad sloped roof. The historic shelter, named after William Davenport, who surveyed the state line between Tennessee and North Carolina in 1821, was originally built by the CCC. The roof was replaced in 1998 by the SMHC, along with other renovations. After 20 years however, with leaks and moss and overall deterioration, it was definitely time for a new roof!

The Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee of the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club decided to undertake the DG roof replacement project in early 2018. The ATMC Trust Fund, established and supported by generous donations from individuals and groups, was the source of monies for all

materials for the project. Partnership with the GSMNP and ATC was the source for some crucial task help. Finally, 19 volunteers were the source of skill and raw strength to get this job done!

Ed Fleming, a long-time maintainer, past President of the SMHC and our "go-to" builder on multiple A.T. projects, did all of the measurements, design and procurement of materials. The National Park was an excellent partner in this project, removing three hazardous trees the week before and closing the shelter for the weekend of October 19-21. The Park provided the 1-wheeled litter onto which Ed would build a frame for hauling materials up and down the 1.2 miles and 600 ft. elevation of A.T. to and from the DG shelter. We timed the project to coincide with a visit from a wonderful group of 5 students from Virginia Tech, part of VT Engage. VT Engage is a service-learning program, partnering with non-profit organizations to meet designated needs and develop student leadership skills. Our students were Matt Darrah (leader), Rachel Hall (leader), Tania Kazi, Sharif Islam, and Rivan Navir.



L to R, Rivan, Rachel, Tania, Sharif and Matt

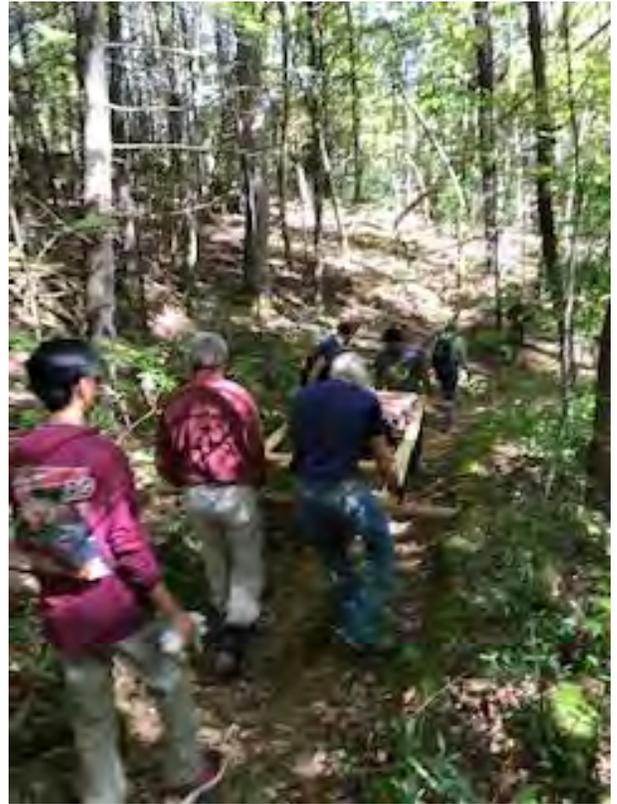
The students arrived on Thursday October 18, and with the help of one of our other wonderful partners, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, we were able to house them at Soak Ash, the ATC basecamp in the park. Eric Keller and Diane Petrilla stayed with them for the 3 nights they were there.

On Day 1, October 19, hundreds of pounds of long sheets of roof material were loaded onto the modified gurney, strapped into place, and the

“pullers” on ropes in the front as well as strong people at all edges of the gurney began the extremely arduous bumpy haul up the A.T. from Davenport Gap.



Ed and the gurney



Heading up!



Getting ready for the first trip up

Strength on this first day was provided by the 5 students, Paul Campbell, Don Dunning, Kristi Knight, Diane Petrilla, Cindy Spangler and Taylor Weatherbee. It took close to 1.5 hours to slowly make that trip, with stops to breathe, change positions, and navigate waterbars, steps and roots. Some of us wondered if this was the way it felt to be the people who had built the pyramids in Egypt!



Resting involved allowing the gurney to tip onto it's side



This blowdown had to go, on the first trip up!



Finally arriving at the shelter!



L to R, Keith, Ed, Rick and George

In the meantime, the roofers that day, Ed Fleming, Rick Brown (retired Law Enforcement officer from GSMNP) George Minnigh (30 year career as Backcountry Ranger for the GSMNP) and Keith Stayton (very dedicated long-time ATMC maintainer who helped with the Soak Ash renovations) had headed up to the shelter to begin tearing off the old roof, a huge job.

When the haulers made it up, we all collapsed to rest, then unloaded materials, and loaded old roofing to carry back down. Was the downhill any easier? Not by much! The people on ropes were on the back now, to provide “brakes” while the gurney holders (where much strength was required) balanced the whole load.

And then we did it 2 more times that day.

By the end, this is how we looked:



On Day 2, Saturday October 20, three more trips were made up and down the A.T. to the shelter, with a shortened gurney for shorter metal sheets. It was still heavy! The haulers were the 5 VT students, Arnold Guzman, and Diane Petrilla. The roofers that day were Ed, Dick Ketelle (one of our longest-tenured maintainers and Club members) Philip Royer (another SMHC past-President) and Keith Stayton. Of course, no endeavor in the Smokies is complete without some rain, which we got that day!



Ed, Keith and Philip, making definite progress

On Day 3, Sunday October 21, the students were scheduled to head back to Blacksburg. We couldn't thank them enough for their diligence, enthusiasm and perseverance! What a great group of young people! Ed, Dick and Keith were set to finish the roofing, and Diane made several trips up and down the Trail, to haul off as much construction debris as possible before the final clean-up. Sometimes the hauling "apparatus" was creative.



Don't be fooled by that smile.



There was a young bear on the first switchback below the shelter who hung out there most of that

Sunday, not quite sure what to make of the strange comings and goings.



Finally, by the end of the afternoon, the work was done. A very kind day-hiker offered to help us with the last gurney load of debris, down the mountain. This was fortunate, because the gurney was piled high, and was heavy and unwieldy. We couldn't have done it without him!

...Before

And after.....



L to R, Ed, Keith, Diane, Dick

All in all, about 800lbs. of material was hauled up and down the mountain on those 3 days. Ed and Keith were able to turn in the scrap metal for a modest but helpful sum to be applied to future work. **Our profound thanks goes out to ALL who participated in this project!** And here are the before and after photos of the results! Stop by and check it out, next time you're up that way! 😊

By Diane Petrilla

