



February 2019

**Government Shutdown Continues**

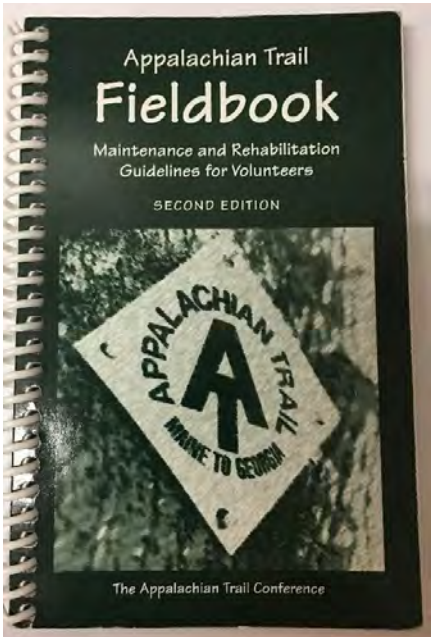
As a reminder, during the Federal government shutdown, all volunteer activities in the Park and National Forest are suspended. This includes all A.T. maintenance activities. Of course, there is no regular first Saturday work trip in February each year due to limited trail accessibility. Once the shutdown is over, there will be plenty to do! And for many, many reasons, I know we all hope the shutdown does end soon.

**Summary ATMC Meeting January 16, 2019**

On January 16, 19 maintainers and 3 ATC partners met in Maryville to discuss plans for the 2019 season. Despite the shutdown, a framework for the year is in place, so action can be taken as soon as we are able. **Please note, several projects below will need our volunteer maintainer help to get accomplished, once we can begin!** So be on the lookout for notifications about these. And of course, all is dependent on the re-opening of the Federal government.

**Appalachian Trail Fieldbooks**

The Appalachian Trail Fieldbook is a pocket-sized definitive resource for all things related to Trail maintenance and rehabilitation. If you would like one, please contact Stephen Eren, our new ATC representative at [seren@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:seren@appalachiantrail.org)



1. Blowdown removal: Help may be needed for blowdown surveillance/documentation once we can work on the Trail in both the the Park and NNF. Typically in April, we have a “chainsaw window” in the Park, when certified chainsaw operators and swampers go out in teams to cut blowdowns and clear debris; blowdown removal in the NNF is not subject to a window of time. **Please watch for the call for team members to help with surveillance and/or clearing in both the Park and NNF, to support our chainsaw workers.**
2. Spence privy project: We are hoping, with the help of the ATC and the Park, to have a helicopter airlift in March, of pre-assembled Spence privy materials as well as 12 different locust log caches. The latter will be dropped in locations between Spence and Thunderhead for rehab projects along the Trail there. **Help will be needed at different stages of this project, so please watch for notifications.**
3. National Trails Day: will be on Saturday, June 1, 2019. Planning is beginning, so please mark this in your calendar. **We hope you come out to be part of a team!** Our focus for NTD is to engage new folks (as well as our loyal returnees) in volunteerism on the A.T. **If you are interested in being a Crew Leader**, please e-mail



[peteberntsen@gmail.com](mailto:peteberntsen@gmail.com)

or

[petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com).

4. **Shelter survey project:** Last summer and Fall, a team of four maintainers backpacked the entire A.T. in the Park to survey the 12 shelters we maintain, and record structural and other issues that need to be addressed. That information is under review now, for prioritization and decisions about how best to fix different problems. ***If you have a shelter on your section, and want a link to the results of that survey,*** please e-mail me at [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com).
5. **Volunteer recruitment:** As part of our on-going efforts to recruit and retain volunteers for the 102 miles of A.T. the SMHC/ ATMC maintains, we have formed a Volunteer Recruitment subcommittee: Diane Petrilla, Taylor Weatherbee, Steven Eren and Chloe DeCamara. We had some great success on the night of the meeting, pairing some new volunteers with experienced maintainers who are ready to “retire” or who simply need additional help on their sections. ***If you would like help,*** please notify me at [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com). Likewise, if you have a friend who would like to get involved, they can sign-up on the SMHC website, <http://www.smhclub.org/> under the ATMC tab.

### **Meet our 2019 Ridgerunners!**

We are very pleased to welcome the 2019 ATC Ridgerunners, who do so much to provide oversight on the A.T., educate thru-hikers about so many issues, and do maintenance tasks themselves! We are extremely grateful for their work!

**Maury Hudson** first caught the hiking bug when she thru-hiked the A.T. in 2008, her first major backpacking trip. In 2012 she hiked a 1,000 mile section of the Pacific Crest Trail, and returned to the A.T. in 2014 to hike from Georgia to Harpers Ferry. While she wasn't on the trail, she was interning with the National Park Service, teaching English in South Korea, and guiding teenagers through the backcountry as a field instructor at a wilderness therapy program. She became the Smokies long-season Ridgerunner for the ATC in 2015 and 2016. Maury believes that anyone can

hike the A.T. if they truly want to-- all it takes is the right mindset and the right amount of planning. Maury will be serving as a short-season Ridgerunner in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Welcome back Maury!! So glad to have you.



*Maury Hudson*

**David Schafer** was born and raised outside of Asheville, NC, where the beauty of western North Carolina helped his love for the outdoors blossom. He has hiked over 9,000 miles across North America, including thru-hikes of the Appalachian Trail, Pacific Crest Trail, and Continental Divide Trail. Additionally, David is a graduate of the Creative Writing program at Warren Wilson College and loves to reflect on the natural environment through the written word. David will be the Fontana Ridgerunner in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Welcome David!



*David Schafer*



**Rick Rozands** was born and raised in south Louisiana. In 2015 he completed a thru hike of the Appalachian Trail and section hiked a large portion of the Pacific Crest Trail in 2017. He went on to volunteer with Americorps in southern Utah where he spent his time building trail, fencing, and rock climbing. He is looking forward to learning new skills and meeting new people on the Appalachian Trail. Rick will serve as the long-season Ridgerunner in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park through October. Welcome to you, too, Rick!



*Rick Rozands*

Again, thank you all, and if you run into one of these wonderful people on the Trail, please extend a warm welcome.

#### **A. T. Work Trips from 12/16/2018 to 1/15/2019**

**12/16 - Franklin LaFond, Jake Thompson, Amy Thompson - Fontana Dam to High Pt E of Walker Gap** - Removed 6 blow downs.

**12/18 - Tim Ryan, Jay Schmid - Sunup Knob to Low Gap** - Cleared waterbars and drainage areas. About 200 yards of trail were under ice and frozen snow. Removed debris. Cut and removed a large, green tree across the trail. There were several large trees across the Low Gap Trail (park service maintained) including two Hemlocks.



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!



*Photos courtesy of Michael Zielinski*

