

Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club



July 2020

A.T. Maintenance Work Trip- Saturday July 11- TBD

As you will read below, we are beginning to transition to return-to-work as maintainers on the Appalachian Trail. Maintainers in the Nantahala National Forest have been given the green light to work as of Friday June 19, with the guidelines below, based on the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's COVID-19 Task Force, and endorsed by the National Appalachian Scenic Trail Superintendent Wendy Janssen. Christine Hoyer of the GSMNP plans a telephone call meeting with members of the ATMC on Wednesday June 24 to discuss volunteer re-engagement on the A.T. in the National Park. If we are able to conduct a work trip on July 11, we will communicate by email, following the conference call.

COVID-19, and A.T. Adaptive Recovery Guidance, with far greater detail, can be found at www.appalachiantrail.org/volunteeracknowledgement, which you will need to go to anyway (see below).

We strongly encourage you to read these documents. *Here are some critical highlights:*

1. Please complete an online training video (about 15 minutes) and on-line acknowledgement form regarding safe practices while doing Trail maintenance during this pandemic. See: www.appalachiantrail.org/volunteeracknowledgement
2. No more than 4 volunteers in a work group.
3. There will be no shelter or privy maintenance until further notice. Other basic Trail maintenance activities are permitted, with the usual safety guidelines.
4. No carpooling except with household members.
5. Maintain social distancing space of at least 6 ft.
6. Use a mask for situations when a 6 ft. distance cannot be maintained.
7. Use washable work gloves
8. Do not share tools, and clean tools before and after use, especially if using Club tools (resources for cleaning procedures in ATC link above.
9. Wash hands and/or use hand sanitizer frequently, and before eating.
10. Do not work if you are sick, and if you become ill after doing maintenance work, please contact Diane Petrilla, petrillad@gmail.com, or Franklin LaFond OX97game@aol.com.

SMHC Maintainers may resume work on A.T. in Nantahala National Forest as of June 19, 2020

After receiving direction from the ATC and the Nantahala National Forest Ranger District, the SMHC has authorized maintainers to proceed with work in the NNF, under the Phase 2 definition, as defined within the attached ATC "One Pager" Volunteer Recommendations document, as of Friday June 19. *At the time of this publication, this ONLY addresses volunteers in the Nantahala National Forest.* Our GSMNP Land Manager Supervisor Christine Hoyer will be letting us know the way forward for maintainers in the Park, with plans for a telephone ATMC meeting next Wednesday June 24.

Attached to this newsletter email is a 1 page quick review of the ATC volunteer safety guidelines. The ATC Job Hazards Analysis in the setting of



11. There will be additional group work trip considerations when we (hopefully) progress to Phase 3 in the next few weeks.

Please note: we will be applying for PPE supplies from APPA (National Appalachian Scenic Trail) but this will take several weeks for the application process and to receive/distribute. We will also be discussing this through the Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee. Please let us know if you need PPE before then.

COVID-19 is new territory for all of us. The primary consideration is your safety and health. Questions will arise as we go forward; please don't hesitate to contact Franklin or Diane with questions or concerns. Look forward to seeing work trip reports again!!

ATC Kill the Dam Invasives event for 2020 TBD

This annual partnership event with the ATC, GSMNP, and Fontana Village has been cancelled for July due to the pandemic. At this time, it is not clear if the event can be held in the Fall, or whether it will need simply be held again in 2021. We will update all as we receive information.

Spence/ A.T. Locust Log Emplacement Project Grant Deadline Extended

Working with the ATC and the NC Division of Parks and recreation, we have been able to extend our deadline for locust log emplacement on the A.T. north and south of Spence Field until November 30, 2021. We are grateful to Kristin Cozza of the ATC and Talivia Brodie of the NC Division of Parks and Recreation/ Dept. of Natural and Cultural Resources for their work and assistance on the request for this extension.

Changes at Fontana Village Resort and Marina

As of June 1, 2020, the current owners of Fontana Village surrendered their lease back to TVA. The resort is closed, but the marina does remain open. The COVID-19 pandemic of course was a significant economic factor in this decision. Franklin LaFond, our ATC Regional Partnership Committee Chair and Stewardship Council Rep, has spoken with a representative of the town of Fontana Dam. TVA is looking at other options for the Village, including operating it themselves for an interim time. This obviously impacts A.T. hikers. Franklin has requested that we be kept in the loop regarding ways to support this important Trail Town (Fontana Dam) going forward. In addition, we may explore a way to help with Village trail surveillance/ upkeep on an temporary basis. If anyone is interested, please contact Franklin, OX97game@aol.com, and if interested, you can also walk the trails in the Village area. A map is attached to this email.

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



Ready to go!