

Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club



August 2020

A.T. Work Trip- Saturday August 1

By the date of this August work trip, we will have begun the process of return-to-maintenance work under the GRSM guidelines with a new Volunteer Service Agreement and Job Hazard Analysis (JHA). Nantahala National Forest maintainers returned to work on June 19. Signing and returning of JHAs to Christine Hoyer for the Park will still be in progress. For this work day, we would encourage maintainers who have received confirmation that their signed JHA was received by Christine, and **who feel safe**, to return to their sections to perform regular needed maintenance. This is all we are permitted to do at this time, in groups no larger than 4, and no shelter or privy work is permitted. If you did not receive an email containing all of the guidelines, with the JHA to sign, or if you have a question about the JHA, please contact Diane Petrilla at petrillad@gmail.com or 931-224-5149. **Please be safe.**

Important information about Return-to-Work in the GRSM

Recently, information was sent to all regular Section Leaders and Crew in the Smokies, as well as several other key regular maintainers regarding return to volunteer work. The email included the new Job Hazard Analysis that must be signed and return to Christine Hoyer. You must receive confirmation that Christine received the JHA before returning to volunteer work. There is also a requirement to watch a short video by the ATC regarding COVID and the A.T. at www.appalachiantrail.org/volunteeracknowledgement. There are several ways to return the JHA after signing it: by email, regular mail, or I can send you a copy to sign and mail to Christine. As time goes on, and we are able to do more group trips with other maintainers, leaders will have a copy of the JHA for “guests” to sign. This is a lot of information- PLEASE don't hesitate to contact me with questions about any of this. Diane Petrilla petrillad@gmail.com or 931-224-5149.

Important Information about Return-to-Work in the Nantahala National Forest

Thank you all who have begun taking care of your sections in the NNF using safety guidelines related to COVID-19 previously published (and see below). Please be on the lookout for communication from Franklin LaFond regarding your signature needed on the new Job Hazard Analysis for the NNF. This is a consolidated JHA, which contains all regular job hazards, as well as those associated with the presence of COVID. It is required that we have valid and up-to-date JHAs on file with the NNF (and GRSM; see info in this NL).

Information on blowdowns sought

As we begin to return to maintenance work in the National Park, chainsaw work days will be planned based on locations of blowdowns on the A.T. We will not be having a regular chainsaw “window”, but Christine Hoyer will schedule a “Safety Conference Call” in conjunction with Dick Ketelle for all sawyers. Variances for chainsaw use will be issued by date. Since we do not have Ridgerunner data this year, ***we need any information you may have on blowdowns located south of Clingmans Dome on the A.T., as well as between Dry Sluice and Pecks.*** We have data on most other areas. If you are hiking or maintaining in any of those areas, please take a photo of any significant blowdown, describe location (waypoints are helpful) and email to Dick Ketelle at rhketelle@comcast.net. Thank you!



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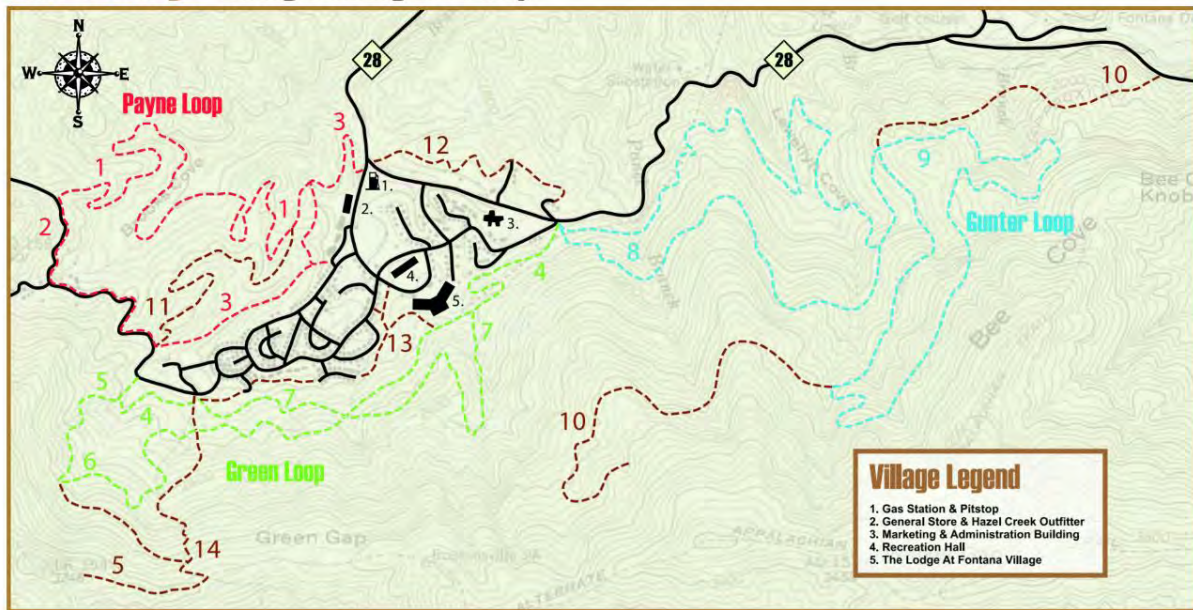


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Maintenance help for Fontana Village Trails

Many of you are aware that the owners of Fontana Village Resort surrendered their lease back to TVA on June 1, 2020, largely as a result of the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. TVA is looking for interim management. Franklin LaFond has been in contact with residents of the town of Fontana Dam, which is a designated A.T. Trail Community. The Smoky Mountains Hiking Club is the sponsoring Club for Fontana Dam as a Trail Town. As a way of supporting them until the resort is operational again, the SMHC Board of Directors voted unanimously for Franklin's suggestion that we try to do some light general maintenance on approximately 8 miles of trails around the village. We would work on trails that are in the NNF, and have worked with Heath Emmons of the Cheoah/ Tusquee Ranger District to temporarily include these trails in our Volunteer Service Agreement. There is NO obligation from anyone to work, but if you have an interest and some time to do light general maintenance on these trails, please contact Franklin LaFond at OX97game@aol.com or 678-464-3380 or Mark Buckles at mbuckles@ups.com.

Fontana Village • Biking & Hiking Trail Map



Payne Loop

5.5 Miles - Moderate
Trails: 1. Brooks Cove 2. Fontana Heights Road 3. Turkey Chute

Green Loop

5 Miles - Moderate to Strenuous
Trails: 4. Whiting Rail 5. Lookout Rock 6. First Blood 7. Elmer Hollow

Gunter Loop

6 Miles - Easy to Moderate
Trails: 8. Llewellyn Cove 9. Gold Branch 10. Old Fontana Road

OTHER TRAILS: 11. Piney Ridge 12. Hoor Hollow 13. Squatter 14. Stairway to Heaven



A Great Smoky Mountain Destination
Hwy. 28 North • Fontana Dam, NC
800.849.2258 • www.fontanavillage.com

Trails we would help maintain: #1 Brooks Cove (red), #8 Llewellyn Cove (blue), and parts of 2 trails just east of what is on map, Fontana Loop and Bee Cove (non-Benton-MacKaye portions). See contacts above for further details.



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Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Available

As a result of a grant from the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, we now have a supply of PPE available for maintainer use. Please see the list below. If you would like to use any of these supplies, please contact me and we will make arrangements to get them to you. We have:

Surgical masks

Non-permeable Latex Extended- cuff Gloves

Hand Sanitizer

Face Shields

Disinfectant Solution (for tool cleaning if desired)

We also have full-length hooded Tyvek 600 disposable coveralls, which we will be able to use once we return to privy work.

A.T. Work Trips 6/21/2020 to 7/19/2020

6/21 - Bob Williams - Wright Gap to Wesser - Cut back vegetation; cleared fallen limbs from trail; cleared two small fallen trees; cleared clogged waterbars of silt and leaves. Used PPE whenever possible (no hikers were observed with any PPE in use during the day.)

6/28 - Dick Ketelle - Other Work - Obtained bar and chain information to provide Christine Hoyer for purchasing bars, chains, and other tools with NPS Grant funds.

6/30 - Dick Ketelle - AT Mgt, Mtgs & Admin - VIP/ATC conference call meetings

7/2 - Keith Mertz, Judy Wade - Fontana Dam to Route 28 - Brushed out trail with sling blade and loppers. Repainted a few fading blazes. Hand sawed a @5" blowdown out of the trail.

7/10 - Keith Mertz, Judy Wade - Yellow Creek Gap to Cody Gap - Brushed out trail with two battery powered weed eaters. Lopped out some greenbrier and woody vegetation. Hand sawed one 8" blowdown.

7/13 - Bill Pyle, Taylor Weatherbee - Fontana Dam to Locust Cove Gap - Cleared 4 trees between the Fontana shelter and the marina, then 2 trees just around 0.5 miles south of the marina, then 10 trees between

Stecoah Gap and Locust Cove Gap.

7/15 - Patti Grady - Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd

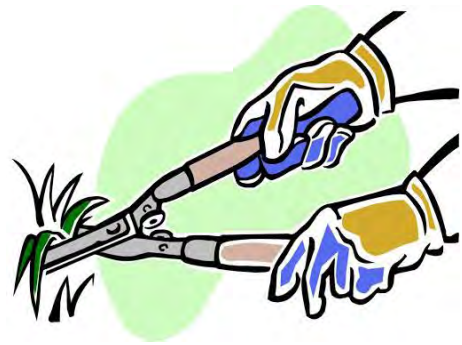
Prng/Tom Prng Lead - Cleaned 16 waterbars and cleared some overgrowth on the trail.

7/16 - Keith Mertz - Yellow Creek Gap to Cody Gap - Continued brushing out trail between Yellow Creek Gap and Cody Gap. Tossed more limbs and branches off trail.

7/16 - Michael Vaughn - NL & Website - Changed method of work report email distribution. Instead of the mail being sent to atmc@smhclub.org and then being forwarded from my workstation, it is again being sent to atmc-work-reports@smhclub.org and being distributed from the email server directly. I had originally changed the method some years ago due to high rates of bounces of work reports sent to AOL and Yahoo addresses. We don't have as many maintainers on those two older services now, and I had been having problems with the forwarding occurring in a timely manner, often having to manually forward.

7/16 - Randy Mitchell - Low Gap to Cosby Knob Top - Cut annual growth on trail from Low Gap to Cosby Knob. Removed two blowdowns from the trail. Took picture of Cosby Shelter and privy but did no work there. I had intended to do some lopping of intruding branches on my return trip but a thunderstorm popped up just as I reached the ridge top.

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! And please be safe and careful!



COVID-19 Guidelines for A.T. Volunteers

Protect Yourself and Others While Maintaining the Appalachian Trail

Three Phases for Re-Engaging with Trail Maintenance, if state and local governments are open and lands host to the A.T. are open

Phase 1

- Local, county-level COVID-19 cases not decreasing
 - Staff/volunteers on Trail by request only

Phase 2

- Local, county-level COVID-19 cases decreasing for 14 days
 - Maintaining groups of no more than four

Phase 3

- Local, county-level cases continue to decrease after additional 14-day period
 - Maintaining groups of 10 or fewer

Volunteers: Before You Participate



Read CDC Guidelines and understand health risks



Use the CDC Self Checker



Stay home if showing any COVID-19 symptoms



Bring washable work gloves and a CDC approved mask



No ridesharing beyond household. Limit stops.

Crew Leaders: Before the Trip



Disinfect all group gear



Bring extra hand sanitizer, face masks, and tissues



Establish hand washing routines and daily health checks



Ensure all participants are aware of CDC health and safety guidelines



Maintain participant rosters with relevant contact information

Volunteers and Crew Leaders: In the Field



Wash/sanitize hands frequently



Do not share tools and equipment



Maintain social distancing



Do not clean shelters or privies until further notice



Ensure appropriate personal protective equipment is available and utilized



If you show any COVID-19 related symptoms after participating in a volunteer activity, inform the crew leader immediately.

For up to date information on COVID-19 guidelines and current A.T. closures, visit appalachiantrail.org/covid-19.