



October 2020

**A.T. Maintenance Work Trip –
Saturday October 3**

We will be refurbishing the A.T. section from Sweat Heifer to the Boulevard Trail and will need numerous workers as this section needs some real TLC! We plan to scout the most critical needs prior to the work day so as to best use everyone’s efforts on October 3. To comply with COVID-19 A.T. work guidelines, we will split into groups of no more than 4, to work in particular areas. Meet at Newfound Gap parking lot at 8:45am for the tailgate safety meeting. *Pre-registration with the leaders is required.*

Leaders: Mark and Janet Snyder,
markandjanets@gmail.com, 865-448-1183

We Need Your Work Trip Hours!

In less than 2 weeks, we must prepare our annual reports for the GRSM, NNF, Appalachian National Scenic Trail, and Appalachian Trail Conservancy tabulating all of our volunteer work hours for the fiscal year. (October 1, 2019- September 30, 2020.) If you have any hours that you have not yet filed, **PLEASE DO SO NOW**. This includes not only work, but attendance at ATC meetings or any specific training you have done directly related to working as a maintainer. Our hours will be understandably lower this year because of COVID-19, so every hour counts! Go to smhclub.org, click on the ATMC tab, click on “Report Your ATMC Maintenance Work” and enter User name and PW (if you need a reminder on that, please e-mail, call or text me at petrillad@gmail.com, 931-224-5149). Thankyou!

JHAs to be signed by all assisting maintainers

For new folks coming out with us on work trips, whether the first Saturday ones, or others that you plan for your own sections, JHAs must be signed as part of the tailgate safety meeting. Once signed, these will be good for quite some time, so if someone signed one on another recent work trip, they do not have to re-sign. You can print copies of blank ones for signatures, or I can mail you some blank ones I have pre-printed for this purpose, or if you know ahead of time who is going, they can sign a JHA on-line (same one originally sent to Section leaders) **Please** let me know if I can assist you in this process. petrillad@gmail.com, 931-224-5149. Feel free to call or text.

Update on COVID-19 guidelines for maintainers

There is essentially no change in the current work rules for maintainers, under COVID-19 conditions. If you feel comfortable however, you may now fill mulch buckets in privies, wearing gloves of course (using mulch stored in the bins at the shelters). We are slowly getting PPE (including non-permeable gloves) distributed. Feel free to contact me about the PPE we have received through a grant to the Appalachian National Scenic Trail if you need some of these supplies immediately.

Tool bin and Mulch bin padlocks

Be sure to carry your old bin key when you plan to access tool or mulch bins at shelters or the maintenance shed, etc. Not all keyed padlocks have been replaced with combination padlocks. So you need to know that combination, too! Please let Diane Petrilla know if you need a reminder on what the combination is for the locks.



ATC Virtual Town Hall

The ATC held a Virtual Town Hall Meeting on September 10, with representatives from maintaining Clubs throughout the Eastern United States, as well as ATC personnel. Sandi Marra, ATC CEO, outlined the ATC's ambitious 2021-2024 Strategic Plan in advance of the ATC's 100th year Anniversary in 2025. The plan takes into account the increasing pressures on the A.T. including hiker numbers and climate change. The Plan includes 5 major areas: Landscape Protection, Visitor Use Management, Cooperative Management, Engagement, Capacity and Risk Management, and J.E.D.I. (Justice, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion). To read more about the plan, go to appalachiantrail.org. ***It is also crucial that we support the ATC financially, via memberships, the TN and NC license plate programs, and donations, for their next 100 years!***

Blowdowns on our 102 miles of A.T.

This year has been a challenging one for blowdown removal on the 102 miles of A.T. we care for due to COVID-19 and limited work windows. Many folks have helped in the effort to remove downed trees to help hikers and preserve the Trail. **Franklin LaFond**, the manager of our Nantahala National Forest A.T. miles, has headed up efforts for chainsaw efforts there. **Dick Ketelle**, **Taylor Weatherbee**, and **Bill Pyle** have been key in the NNF and the GRSM National Park, using cross cut saws and underbucking systems when we couldn't use chainsaws, on multiple blowdowns. With a chainsaw variance, the same 3 made three different work trips for evaluation, staging of tools and then removal of a huge blowdown complex south of Doe Knob. Many maintainers have pulled out their handsaws to remove trail obstructions. **Stephen Eren** and **Rick Rozands** of the ATC, removed about 20 smaller blowdowns by hand on the A.T. between Inadu Knob and Pecks. Finally, last week, equestrian teams led by **David Michael** of the **Backcountry Horsemen of America, NC Chapter** set up camp for 4 days at Big Creek, and took care of all blowdowns between Davenport Gap and about 2 miles Trail north of Pecks. They will return soon to finish their work. A big thank you to **Rangers Christine Hoyer of the GRSM** and **Heath Emmons of the NNF** for facilitating all of this! If you see any of these folks, please take a moment to say thank you!!

A. T. Work Trips 8/16/2020 to 9/15/2020

8/16 - Amanda Beal - Thunderhead to Spence (Bote Mt Tr) - Cleared waterbars for entire section and did some light trimming from Thunderhead back to Rocky Top.

8/16 - Barbara Allen, Stephanie Gose, Lisa Sumter - Davenport Gap to Chestnut Br Trail - We trimmed vegetation & any overhanging limbs. Also cleared 58 water bars.

8/17 - Bill Pyle, Taylor Weatherbee - Boulevard Tr to Spruce Fir - Cleared blowdown just north of the Sweat Heifer Trail using Ed Peck's underbucking device, and also removed a large beech tree branch from just north of NFG. Then drove to the Spruce Fir entry and hiked north toward Indian Gap to clear a small blowdown about midway between the two. On the way back couldn't resist doing a little pruning.

8/17 - Stewart Taylor - Spruce Fir to Sugarland Mt Tr - I continued to clean the waterbars/drainage ditches going north on the trail. On my next trip I plan to clean the remaining water bars going north. I will then start cleaning the waterbars going south. My section ends at the Mt. Collins Shelter. Thanks to the volunteers that cut the huge dead tree that had fallen across the trail.

8/17 - Tim Ryan, Jay Schmid, Dick Stevens - Sunup Knob to Low Gap - Cleared vegetation on upslopes, removed debris, cleaned drainage areas and waterbars, reinforced two waterbars with rebar, completed cut and removal of 15" tree on trail. Someone had started cutting (maybe Terry?) so we finished and removed.

8/18 - Kristi Knight - Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap - Worked on trail cleaning waterbars that were grown over with vegetation. Dug out a couple of new waterbars to help boggy areas and laid rock.

8/20 - Neil Snepp - Inadu Knob to Tricorner - Trimmed vegetation, cleared waterbars, cleared debris and small blow downs, improved drainage at some trail structures to allow pooled water to drain off.

8/20 - Stewart Taylor - Spruce Fir to Sugarland Mt Tr - Cleaned out the waterbars/drainage ditches. Cut back overgrowth. I will continue working north until reaching the end of my section and then I will work south towards Mt Collins shelter.

8/21 - Diane Petrilla - Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead - Continued digging out waterbars. Pulled several downed rotted logs off Trail, and placed deterrent logs at various places to try to keep

hikers on trail. Trimmed vegetation at north entrance to the section.

8/22 - Ernie Wiles - Goshen Prong Tr to Welch Ridge

Tr - Cleaned waterbars and cut vegetation, checked mulch supply (60% in large bin, 90% in small bin). Wanted to cut vegetation from Bypass Trail to Goshen Prong Trail the next day which is badly needed but rain would not allow it. Will try on a different trip.

8/22 - Kristi Knight - Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap -
Continued to clear out waterbars.

8/22 - Randy Mitchell, Russell Redden - Low Gap to Cosby Knob Top - Despite being a Saturday, foot traffic on the trail was light, probably due to the forecast for rain that didn't come. We witnessed a large dead tree fall when we paused for a rest at Low Gap. Fortunately it did not fall on the trail. Russ and I cut the annual growth for the second time on the section. We finished clearing the water bars in the section. Also we trimmed back some of the rhododendron and dog hobble encroaching on the trail. There were no new blow downs in the section. The large hemlock .1 mile south of Low Gap that I reported previously seems pretty stable. The shelter at Cosby remains closed due to bear activity. We did trim annual growth at the spring and cut back some of the rhododendron on the trail to the shelter. We broke up a stone fire ring and charred wood from the overflow campsite south of the shelter.

8/23 - Ana Teper, Roman Teper, Tim Bigelow, Diane Petrilla - 1 mi N of Cam (4250' EI) to Mt Cammerer Side Tr - On this day, Tim and Diane went out with two delightful new maintainers, a couple from western NC. On the big climb to Tim's section, we used small saws to remove 1 blowdown, and partially sawed through another. On Tim' section, we dug out waterbars and trimmed vegetation. Ana and Roman were very engaged and worked hard, even after the long hike! We are delighted to welcome them as volunteers for the ATMC!



*Previous photo, a mushroom as high as Ana's knee!
Roman, Ana and Tim at Davenport Gap (photos
courtesy of Diane Petrilla)*

8/25 - Patti Grady - Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead - Cleared 10 waterbars, 3 of which were completely overgrown. Cut back two very small leaners. Did a little overgrowth cutting and a little rock work on a couple of muddy steps. Also did a little more dead limb laying to keep hikers on the trail. About 8 more waterbars to go and trimming of overgrown vegetation.

8/26 - Stewart Taylor - Spruce Fir to Sugarland Mt Tr -
Finished cleaning all the waterbars/drainage ditches going north on my section. Next trip I plan to complete all of the same going south to Mt. Collins shelter.

8/27 - Taylor Weatherbee - Collins Gap to Mt Love -
Cleaned out waterbars, reset one water bar.

8/30 - Dick Kettle, Ernie Wiles - Clingmans Dome to Goshen Prong Tr - Cleared vegetation along trail in the areas that get the heaviest annual growth and lopped low tree limbs to maintain appropriate vertical trail clearance.

9/2 - Bill Pyle, Taylor Weatherbee - Doe Knob to Fontana Dam - The primary goal was to work on the large blowdown just south of Doe Knob, anticipating a chainsaw clearing the weekend after next. We cut through 5-6 small blowdowns off the trail on our way, and also located another large complex blowdown around 0.5-1.0 miles south of Shuckstack.

9/5 - Gene Desrosiers, Melanie Harmon, Tracy Kressler, Randy Mitchell, Diane Petrilla, Cindy Spangler, Ernie Wiles - **Icewater Springs Privy** - 7 Magnificent Mulch Mules hauled 180lbs. of mulch to the IW storage bins. The weather was beautiful, and there were many hikers, but we all used masks when needed. One bin is 90% full and the other 70% full. Plan one more trip to IW this season, and a trip to Double Springs. APPA grant germicide for tool cleaning left in tool box at IW. Petrilla went to Mt Collins with 1 bag of mulch afterwards, and to leave germicide for tools there. Mulch bin is about 40% full, but really can't hold much more because of tools and buckets and tarp.



Magnificent Mulch Mules! L to R, Melanie, Gene, Cindy, Diane, Randy, Ernie, Tracy (photo courtesy of a kind bystander)

9/5 - **Melanie Harmon, Cindy Spangler** - **Mt Love to Clingmans Dome** -Melanie Harmon and I drove through horrific traffic following our mulch haul to Icewater Privy, to Clingmans Dome. After finding parking down the mountain (!!!), we cleaned waterbars, and on our return from Mt Love we clipped vegetation. Kudos to Taylor and crew for the removal of the huge blowdown on this section. I plan to return Sept 26 for more waterbar/vegetation clearing.

9/6 - **Dick Ketelle, Taylor Weatherbee** - **Doe Knob to Fontana Dam** - Carried chainsaw and other tools up to toolbox at Birch Spring Gap (CS 113) for use on weekend of 9/12-13 to remove very large blowdown from trail on north end of Greer Knob.

9/7 - **Kristi Knight** - **Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap** - Worked on clearing brush and vegetation above a portion of trail that has migrated below its point of origin over the years. Loppers ended up getting bent and I

wasn't able to fix them. Will continue working on this area when I go back up to the trail.

9/9 - **Judy Wade, Keith Mertz** - **Fontana Dam to Route 28** - Cleared two blow downs. Cut back vegetation, briars, and rhodo.

9/9 - **Stewart Taylor** - **Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap** - Finished cleaning all the water/drainage ditches from Fork Ridge Trailhead to Mt. Collins Shelter. All waterbars on my section are now cleaned,. On my next trip, I plan to cut weeds around Mt Collins shelter.

9/10 - **Rick Waggener** - **Boulevard Tr to Sweat Heifer** - 1). cut back brush 2). 2 of the 3 mulch buckets at Icewater privy were full of trash; packed out 3). temporarily reset the Icewater spring pipe which had been removed.

9/11 - **Don Dunning** - **Boulevard Tr to Sweat Heifer** - Cleared all waterbars and drains of debris.

9/12 - **Dick Ketelle, Taylor Weatherbee, Bill Pyle** - **Doe Knob to Fontana Dam** - Dick Ketelle, Taylor Weatherbee, and Bill Pyle hiked to Birch Spring Gap (CS 113), picked up the chainsaw and other tools cached there previously in the toolbox and hiked on to our principal objective of the day, which was a very large fallen tree. 3 hours of nearly continuous work were required to get the tree cut into multiple large chunks to open the trail. On our way back to Fontana Dam we removed other blowdowns from the trail.



Taylor checking out that huge blowdown earlier in the Spring



After the work! Thanks to Taylor, Bill and Dick (photos courtesy of Dick Ketelle)

9/12 - Mark Shipley, Hiram Rogers, Diane Petrilla, Rachel Brooks, Houston Phillips, Samantha Stacey, Randy Mitchell - 1 mi N of Cam (4250' EI) to Camel Gap - Cleared vegetation from Low Gap to Camel Gap in one group and the other group cleared vegetation just past the Mt. Cammerer side trail north on the AT. (maintaining small group sizes as per COVID-19 guidelines)



Houston and Rachel enjoying gnats and rhododendron trimming (photos courtesy of Diane Petrilla)

9/15 - Patti Grady - Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead - Cleared the last 10 waterbars. Laid some more fallen branches to deter hikers from going off the trail. Cut some low hanging limbs.



L to R, Randy, Rachel, Samantha, Hiram, Mark and Houston

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!



Enjoy Fall everyone! Be safe and stay healthy!