



# APPALACHIAN TRAIL MAINTAINERS COMMITTEE

## SMOKY MOUNTAINS HIKING CLUB

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February 2021

### No First Saturday Work Trip in February

As always, there is no regularly scheduled first Saturday work trip in February. However, regular first-Saturday - of-the-month work trips will resume on Saturday March 6, 2021 with blowdown removal in the Nantahala National Forest. Please mark your calendars and plan to help! Swampers to clear debris, as well as chainsaw folks will be needed! Details and contact info will be in the next ATMC Newsletter.

### Volunteers Needed for Spring Clean-up Fontana Village Trails

You may recall that our Club agreed to assist Fontana Village last August in doing light general trail maintenance on the approximately 8 miles of trail in the NNF around their property. Fontana Dam is a designated A.T. Trail Community, with sponsorship by SMHC. We are looking for volunteers now to assist with Spring clean-up. If you can help, please contact Franklin LaFond at [OX97game@aol.com](mailto:OX97game@aol.com) ASAP. Thank you!

### Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee Meeting via Zoom Tuesday February 9, 6:30pm

There will be an ATMC meeting on Tuesday February 9 (note different day) at 6:30pm via Zoom. Plans for upcoming Spring work and for 2021 will be discussed. If you did not receive an email about the meeting and would like to attend, please let me know at [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com).

### Section Leaders Needed

As a new work season approaches, if you are at all interested in working an A.T. section of your own (or with someone), these are several that we need help with:

**In the GRSM: Fontana Dam to Lewellyn Branch-** this is the first section of A.T. accessed after crossing Fontana Dam. Although the section is considered to be 2.7 miles long, about a mile of that is across the dam itself. The maintainer who cared for this section has moved, and it is badly in need of attention. Contact [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com).

**In the NNF: Cheoah Bald to Swim Bald-** this a remote and strenuous section in the Nantahala NF. It is 2.2 miles long. Anyone interested in helping here should contact [OX97game@aol.com](mailto:OX97game@aol.com).

### Maintenance guidelines with COVID continue

With no significant decline in COVID incidence, our maintenance guidelines remain in place. They are listed below. Hopefully over the next six months or so, as vaccination efforts increase and COVID cases decline, we can ease restrictions. In the meantime, please stay SAFE and please contact me [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com) , if you need any personal protective equipment (gloves, masks, face shields, hand sanitizer, tool cleaner)

1. No more than 4 volunteers in a work group.
2. There will be no shelter or privy maintenance until further notice. Other basic Trail maintenance activities are permitted, with the usual safety guidelines.
3. No carpooling except with household members.
4. Maintain social distancing space of at least 6 ft.
5. Use a mask for situations when a 6 ft. distance cannot be maintained.
6. Use washable work gloves
7. Do not share tools, and clean tools before and after use, especially if using Club tools (resources for cleaning procedures in ATC link above).
8. Wash hands and/or use hand sanitizer frequently, and before eating.
9. Do not work if you are sick, and if you become ill after doing maintenance work, please contact Diane Petrilla, [petrillad@gmail.com](mailto:petrillad@gmail.com), or Franklin LaFond [OX97game@aol.com](mailto:OX97game@aol.com).



## **A.T. Vista Inauguration to Be Conducted in 2021 and 2022 – Be a Part of the History!**

### **News from the ATC, for all maintaining Clubs. Let's discuss this at the February 9 ATMC meeting!**

"With the great news of vaccines for COVID-19, the planning team for the inaugural A.T. Vista has updated the program to provide for both a virtual experience in 2021 and an in-person experience for 2022. This expanded program presents a great opportunity to allow wide participation each year, and we seek assistance from your club members.

We know it has been since 2017 that we've been together to spend time on the trail, learn, and socialize together; however, the uncertainties involved in rolling out COVID-19 vaccinations has led us to avoid a trail-wide in-person event in 2021. We want the inaugural A.T. Vista to be memorable and this expanded two-year program rollout will allow us to develop and maintain momentum so that we can continue to share in the great camaraderie of the kindred spirits that cherish the Appalachian Trail.

As we want to continue to honor the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Benton MacKaye's 1921 article, "An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning," the 2021 A.T. Vista program will be conducted with dispersed local hiking opportunities all along the Appalachian Trail (and perhaps even elsewhere!) plus virtual gatherings providing an opportunity for participants at any location to follow the hikes online as photos and videos are posted.

For the 2021 program, we are seeking hiking leaders from trail clubs to conduct small group hikes along the Appalachian Trail and other trails in your serving area. We are also seeking workshop proposals for topics that are conducive to an online presentation.

We anticipate the 2021 program will still be a 4-day event with virtual experiences available August 6-9, 2021. A planned itinerary is below (details are in process):

1. **Friday, August 6 (in the evening):** A virtual keynote program with welcome remarks, highlights of the virtual program, and online entertainment (components may be pre-recorded).
2. **Saturday, August 7 from 8AM to 5PM:** Local hikes to be conducted along the Appalachian Trail (and other trails in your area). **Afternoon and Evening:** Pictures and videos from these hikes to be uploaded and shared as armchair activities to engage people with various fun facts and opportunities for viewers to experience the hikes vicariously.
3. **Sunday, August 8 and Monday, August 9 from 9AM to 4PM:** Various workshop tracks

We are still working out many details for this expanded program while we continue to pursue the in-person program now scheduled for **August 5-8, 2022**, at the State University of New York (SUNY) at New Paltz.

If you have members of your club that would be interested in making this a memorable and ongoing future event, email us at [atvistainfo@gmail.com](mailto:atvistainfo@gmail.com) to join the team. Provide the requested information below for the hikes and workshops, and if you have other ideas, feel free to send those too. The A.T. Vista organizing team will be putting together an online program and registration system based on the submitted opportunities.

#### **Hike Submission:**

1. Leader Name and Contact info (email, phone)
2. Co-Leader Name and Contact info
3. Location
4. Trail Name/Section
5. Description to be used
6. Number of Miles
7. Level (easy, moderate, strenuous)
8. Roundtrip or one-way hike?

#### **Workshop Submission:**

1. Workshop Name
2. Workshop description
3. Workshop Leader Name and Contact info (email, phone)
4. Length of session (average is expected to be one-hour)
5. Session Date: Sunday or Monday (or both!)
6. Would you be able to host more than one session if needed?
7. Would you also like to conduct this workshop online or in-person for the 2022 program?"

#### **Vision**

***A.T. Vista aims to be recognized as THE forum for engagement of all who cherish the future of the Appalachian Trail's protection, stewardship, and connection of the human spirit with nature while increasing participation from younger and diverse members.***



## A. T. Work Trips From 12/16/2020 to 1/15/2021

**12/17 - Dick Ketelle, Philip Royer, Taylor Weatherbee - Trail Assessments** - Dick Ketelle, Philip Royer, and Taylor Weatherbee participated in a Zoom meeting with ATC and APPA to complete the parametric assessment of A.T. structures and the trail in the SMHC section between Wesser, NC and Davenport Gap TN/NC.

**1/5 - Franklin LaFond - Stekoah Gap to Locust Cove Gap** - Removed 4 small blowdowns with handsaw and removed a lot of small limb debris. Reset 2 log steps. Installed 1 new log step. Rehab 60 ft of sidehill that was starting to show signs of trail slippage.

**1/5 - Keith Mertz - Yellow Creek Gap to Cody Gap -** Refreshed blazes between Yellow Creek and Hogback Gaps..Repainted blue blazes between Cody Gap and spring. Tossed many limbs and branches off trail. Pulled one blowdown off trail.Lopped greenbrier, rhodo, and assorted unknown greenery off the trail. Picked up trash at Cody Gap and Hogback Gap.

**1/13 - Charlie McDonald - Mulch Operations** - Bagged and delivered 25/20lbs of mulch to the Sugarland maintenance shed. Current inventory 25 bags with another estimated 20 bags undercover at the tent. If anyone has a need for a specific # of mulch bags please let me know with as much notice as possible. I plan to bag and add wet mulch to the tent over the next two weeks. To the person/persons that bring back the bags and twine, THANK YOU!

**1/14 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock, Sunaree Bullock - Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap** - Walked section clearing limbs, small blowdowns. Cleared water bars along Jacobs Ladder. Inspected Brown Fork Gap Shelter, talked to a couple of section hikers.

*[Note: This ATMC newsletter editor inadvertently left the following 4 reports out of the last newsletter. Although the maintainers listed don't seek recognition, this editor wants their work to be known!]*

**11/8- Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder- Sweat Heifer to NFG-** Restored an area about 1.3 miles from NFG. People had been hiking around a mature tree on the down hill side and not the preferred/original uphill side. The footwear and water erosion had begun to degrade the trail to the point of major problems had we not provided remediation. Thus we added four rock steps, and placed numerous stones(and dirt around the stones) in a rip-rap effort to help slow the erosion and force hikers to use the steps. Widened the trail at the top of the steps, and added drainage above and below the steps.

**11/9- Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder- Sweat Heifer to NFG-** At 1.1 mile N of NFG restored the trail where hikers have created a path on the downhill side of trail to get past a large tree, then walk back up to the existing trail. We added a large stone to serve as a retaining wall step. This was done to retard further erosion, we back filled the retaining wall with dirt an stone which widen the trail at the top.

**11/10- Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder- Sweat Heifer to NFG-** Created a new step by adding a locust log and backfilling with crushed stone and dirt. Lowered 2 waterbars, as erosion has the old stone/log waterbar sticking high in the air.(Similar to "long in the tooth") Added a stone step. Raked leaves from waterbars. Saw many thru-hikers, mostly SoBo.

**11/13- Mark Snyder, Janet Snyder- Sweat Heifer to NFG-** Added a stone bottom step to 2 places, one step was placed where Dick said we could use one. The other step is where Pete felt we could use one. We appreciate the critique from learned trail people. Returned to work location done a week before, to see how it was after the goodly amount of rainfall. Needed to add more stone to the rebuilt areas as in was somewhat muddy.

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!

