



February 2022

No Regular Work Trip February

February is the last month in winter that we do not schedule a first Saturday work trip. Be on the lookout in the next Newsletter for details on our **Saturday March 5** work trip. This work trip is dedicated to blowdown removal in the Nantahala NF on the 30 mile section of A.T. we maintain there. We'll need sawyers and swampers (to help clear limbs and debris.) Mark your calendars!

e. If there are multiple people on the work trip, do they know the safety plan, and could they execute it if something happens to you? Should a more extensive tailgate safety talk be conducted with the entire work team?

If any volunteers would like information regarding how to conduct tailgate safety discussions, you can reach out to Franklin LaFond ox97game@aol.com 678-464-3380

From the ATMC Chair: Safety First!

Our Appalachian Trail Maintainer Committee Chair, Franklin LaFond, wants to remind everyone as we get ready to start a new work year, that safety while working on the trail should always be a primary focus for all volunteers. As part of the work trip reporting, you are asked whether a safety briefing was conducted. We should always be able to check that box as 'Yes'. It is good practice to think about safety during your work trip planning. Prior to each work trip, perform a mental safety check that includes the following:

- a. Let someone know your itinerary. Where are you going, when do you plan to be back, and who should they contact if you are significantly late returning?
- b. What work will you be performing? Do you have the proper tools and protective gear for the task? You can review the Job Hazard Analysis Form to know potential risks of the work and to be safety prepared.
- c. What is the weather going to be like for the duration of your work trip, including driving? If weather changes drastically, be prepared to change your plans accordingly.
- d. Do you know who to contact if an emergency arises? Will you have cell service in your work area? If you have a park radio, do you know which channel to utilize for your location? Do you know where the nearest medical services are located.

Do you have skills or an interest in helping on the A.T.?

Not everyone wants to be an A.T. section leader or crew member (although we are happy to talk to you about that at any time, if you want more information!) However, there are LOTS of ways you can volunteer to help us in our mission to care for the 100 miles of Appalachian Trail our Club has maintained for almost 100 years!

Do you have experience in construction or building, or are just pretty handy with home DIY projects? We would appreciate your help on our **Shelter Committee**, where projects come up pretty regularly for fixes on certain parts of the shelters and privies we maintain. Please contact Dick Kettle at rhkettle@comcast.net, or Philip Royer at philip.royer@asgarch.com

Do you have some chainsaw or cross-cut saw experience? We take care of blowdowns in the Nantahala National Forest and the Smokies (during the chainsaw "window" each Spring). Would you be interested in certification or re-certification? Please contact **Sawyer Training Chair**, wcpyle@comcast.net.



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A.T. Work Trips From 12/15/2021 to 1/20/2022

Would you be interested in occasionally packing 20 lbs. of bagged mulch in a backpack to a hikeable shelter (Icewater, Double Springs or Mt Collins?) The trips are done in groups and organized and led by Diane Petrilla. A typical trip only takes about 4 hours and is great exercise and actually fun! Contact petrillad@gmail.com, chair of **Mulch Ops** to be on the Mulch Mule list; you absolutely do not have to participate in every trip!

Would you have an interest in Tool inventory and care? **Contact Tools and Maintenance Shed** manager, Steve Dunkin at jsdunkin1302@gmail.com.

Volunteer Recruitment is a crucial task for us. We need help from maintainers to contact people who submit volunteer applications, to offer to go out and work with them, and to mentor them. We need folks who might be willing to contact other organizations to help us publicize our need for volunteers. We need a poster designed! If you think you could help, contact Ann Farrar at ann@fandkphoto.com or Diane Petrilla at petrillad@gmail.com.

Every first Saturday in June, June, we host National Trails Day in the Great Smoky Mountains, where many small volunteer crews do maintenance and projects on the A.T. in the Park. We have a small but strong planning committee, but welcome more help! Please contact petrillad@gmail.com.

Please consider volunteering! Helping with our work on the Appalachian Trail is far more than working on the Trail itself, and it's a wonderful way to give back to the trails we love to hike.

12/25 - Franklin LaFond - Cody Gap to Brown Fork Gap - Cleaned out 6 waterbars. Removed 7 blowdowns. Repaired a couple rooty areas. Widened roughly 100 ft of sidehill in various areas where it was starting to get narrow, to prevent future slippage.

12/27 - Franklin LaFond - Fontana Dam to High Pt E of Walker Gap - Removed 3 small blowdowns, and a lot of limb debris. Removed limbs from one large blowdown so that hikers can easily step over without having to walk around it. Installed 9 log steps and 1 log waterbar. Replaced a log waterbar that was too short and hikers were walking around it, causing the drain to no longer be functional. Cleaned out waterbars.

12/27 - Pete Berntsen - False Gap to Dry Sluice Gap - Removed three small (4- to 6-inch diameter) blowdowns and other brush from trail. Cleaned over 100 water drains and trimmed rhododendrons.

1/4 - Franklin LaFond, Shannon Finn - Fontana Dam to High Pt E of Walker Gap - Pruned back rhodo and saplings that were leaning across the trail from weight of snow and ice. Removed numerous limbs and small branches that had snapped and fallen on the trail. Cleaned up around the Fontana Hilton Shelter and removed items that had been left in the hiker box.

1/10 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock, Sunaree Bullock - Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap - Cleared small blow down debris, removed minimal trash, cleared water bars. Replaced notebook at shelter for 2022 hikers. Checked condition of privy, refilled leaf buckets.

Thank you everyone!