



April 2022

### A.T. Maintenance Work Trip- Saturday April 2

This April's scheduled AT maintenance outing will be a bit different from recent years. The National Park Service has scheduled the annual chainsaw window for blow-down removal to occur between April 15 – May 15. This means that on April 2 we will get out on our AT sections from about Icewater Spring to Double Spring Gap to remove limbs and smaller trees amenable to cutting with hand tools. If the ground is not frozen this will be an opportunity to clear out the water drains along the trail for the first time of the season. We will poll our A.T. Section Leaders in the area to arrange for dispersing our volunteers to cover different areas in the company of the Section Leaders. **If you are a new volunteer, this would be an excellent opportunity to go out with an experienced maintainer and get a sense of what we do!**

Please contact the leader below in advance to get your name on a list, so that we can make plans to connect volunteers with Section Leaders on this outing.

We can meet in the Sugarlands Visitor Center parking area at 8 a.m. to form teams before heading up to Newfound Gap and beyond.

Leader: Dick Ketelle ([rhketelle@comcast.net](mailto:rhketelle@comcast.net))

### From the Chair: Volunteer Safety is Priority #1

Safety should always be the first priority with any of the volunteer work that we do. It is always good practice to do a self-check safety briefing before you head out on your work trip. The safety check should also include travel to/from the trail.

Safety items to consider include:

- **Emergency Phone #s.** Always have the emergency response number(s) available with you.

- **Weather.** Know the forecast for before, during, and after your planned trip. Be alert for changing weather and possible trail and road conditions. Be prepared for the weather conditions that you are likely to encounter. Be prepared to alter your plan if the weather changes.

- **Tools.** Do you have the right tools for the task that you plan to do? Are the tools properly serviced and in good working order.

- **Job Hazard Analysis.** Periodically review the JHA to understand the potential hazards of the task(s) you will be performing. Know the risk mitigation options for those tasks.

- **Safety gear.** Some tasks require Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Is your safety gear in good working condition.

- **Know your exit strategy** and be prepared to execute it if/when necessary.

-Franklin LaFond

### Regional Partnership Committee Representative

Each of the 5 Southern Regional maintaining clubs have 2 representatives (currently Franklin LaFond and Taylor Weatherbee) at the regional level. Franklin LaFond has been the SMHC representative for the past 10 years, and will be transitioning out of this position by end of the year. This is an excellent opportunity to meet representatives from the other clubs, get to know our various cooperative partners, get insight into the future vision/direction of the ATC, and work on issues and concerns shared across the clubs within our region and the entire Trail. The RPC meets twice per year; Spring and Fall. The spring meeting is a 2-day joint session with the Southern and Virginia regions. The Fall meeting is a 1-day session and rotates between each of the 5 club's areas.

The Spring meeting will be in Damascus, Virginia on April 23rd and 24th.

If you have interest in this opportunity, please contact: Franklin LaFond [ox97game@aol.com](mailto:ox97game@aol.com) 678-464-3380

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**NATIONAL TRAILS DAY SATURDAY JUNE 4,**  
**2022!**

The NTD Committee will be having its first meeting soon. Our event this year will resemble last year's event with no large morning gathering or afternoon picnic. However, we hope to be able to enlarge our crew numbers, with the Park's permission, and will be arranging bagged lunches and prizes again! Maintainers will be contacted soon about leading crews. Thank you in advance for helping us offer another NTD working on the A.T.!



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### Our 2022 Ridgerunners !

By now many of you have seen some reports from our 2022 Ridgerunners. We are delighted to welcome back 3 returnees:

**Amelia Cary** (15 weeks)

**David Shafer** (15 weeks- Fontana))

**Ricky Vandegrift** (35 weeks, long-season)

If you see them out on the Trail, be sure to welcome them. We are so fortunate to have people back with us, who have wonderful experience and perspectives!



*Our fantastic 2022 Ridgerunner team, (from L to R)  
David, Ricky, and Amelia*

### New Trail Treadway Sub-Committee being formed

The ATMC is forming a new Sub-committee that will focus on treadway projects that are larger than can reasonably be expected to be addressed by an individual maintainer. This subcommittee will work with individual maintainers, ATC, and the National Park to identify areas of need, and develop plans for addressing those areas.

In addition, there are some initiatives that are being started trail-wide that this group will be tasked with planning for.

These include:

a) Visitor User Experience categorization of various sections of the trail. What is it today? What would we want it to be in the future? How do we get to the future state?

b) Overnight Camping Initiative. How do we minimize impacts of overused and rogue camping sites (Forest Service)? How do we plan for future growth?

This group would also start looking at how we could potentially utilize our seasonal backcountry trail crews (SWEAT & Rocky Top) a little differently to better support some of the more remote areas.

If you have interest in this opportunity, please contact:  
Franklin LaFond [ox97game@aol.com](mailto:ox97game@aol.com) 678-464-3380

### Farewell to Stephen Eren and Kristin Cozza of the ATC

Last month we announced the departure of Stephen Eren, who has been our SORO (Southern Region Office) District Manager and Kristin Cozza, SORO Office (Asheville) Manager/ Administrative Support. Both of these individuals have fulfilled vital roles for us in interfacing with the ATC and many other partners for the Appalachian Trail. If you know them, and would like to post a farewell message, please go to these Kudo Board links:

For Stephen:

<https://www.kudoboard.com/boards/A6yWLEri>

For Kristin:

<https://www.kudoboard.com/boards/EOif85LF>

We are so grateful for their work and wish them the best!

### A. T. Work Trips From 2/20/2022 to 3/17/2022

**2/20 - Pete Berntsen - Newfound Gap to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead** - Cleared minor blowdown debris from trail. Cut and removed three small trees that were broken but not totally severed. Removed five small trip-roots. Cut 8-inch diameter tree that is lying across trail at 0.6 mile NE of Newfound Gap. Removed branches from part of tree across trail so it is a very easy step-over. Could not remove tree as it is frozen to the trail but will be easy to remove when the ice melts. Reset AT sign at southern trail entrance from the Newfound Gap parking area. Removed a large 6-inch diameter blowdown from across trail located 0.6 mile SW of Indian Gap.



**April 2022**

**2/25 - Rick Waggener - Gap W of Masa Knob to Boulevard Tr** - Cleared quite a bit of debris from the windstorm. Hauled ~3gal of trash from Icewater shelter. Observed drainage patterns while it was raining to better be able to cut new drains. Marked the spots that need attention next. Cleared water bars.

**2/28 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock, Sunaree Bullock - Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap** - Removed small blow downs, cleared water bars, checked the shelter and privy. Packed out a small amount of trash.

**3/1 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock, Sunaree Bullock - Stekoah Gap to Locust Cove Gap** - Finished Locust Cove to Simp Gap corridor clearing that Ox and I had started last week. The rhodos and briars had really narrowed this section. Pleased to see so much progress! Encountered 10 hikers northbound to Maine.

**3/3 - Ann Farrar - Outreach & Education** - Created a poster for AT maintainer volunteer recruitment.

**3/3 - Kathy Gardner - 1 mi N of Cam (4250' EI) to Mt Cammerer Side Tr** - Cleared debris from water bars and trimmed vegetation.

**3/5 - Dick Ketelle, Ann Farrar, Kathy Gardner, Bill Pyle, Kelly Conway, Taylor Weatherbee - Fontana Dam to Yellow Creek Gap** - Cut around 20 trees off the trail, and had a ton of promotional video taken.

**3/5 - Franklin LaFond, Terry Martin, Yugong Tan, Jonny Bruce, Randy Mitchell - High Pt E of Walker Gap to Yellow Creek Gap** - 80 ft of sidehill rehab in areas that were extremely rooty and the trail was slipping downhill. Added 40 ft of log cribbing in this area. Repaired 1 root ball hole that was approximately 6 ft across. Cleaned out the fire pit at the shelter. Broke up a second fire ring beside the first one and used those rocks to level and improve the first one. Filled up 3 mulch buckets with leaves.

**3/5 - Pete Berntsen, Diane Petrilla, Keith Mertz, David Gall - Cody Gap to Brown Fork Gap** - Removed 5 blowdowns from across the access trail. Removed blowdown (14-16 inch) from trail about 200 yards south of Hogback Gap and hiked about 0.3 mile beyond and saw no more blowdowns. Repaired area 75 yards south of Cody gap where a root ball from a small tree tore out part of the trail. We cut a small trench on either side and set two logs that Franklin left to form cribbing. We added some rocks below the logs before placing them and added more rocks to the trail side of the cribbing. We

used dirt from the opposite bank to fill in around the rocks and allow hikers to easily traverse the area. Other work between Cody Gap and Hogback Gap included stabilizing a few rocks by removing and replacing/resetting the rocks. We added one large rock step across the trail near another rocky area and filled in behind with wet soil that will probably pack down and need a small amount of fill. We improved drainage below the added rock. We added one rock step in front of and lower than an existing tree root. We cleaned out a couple of other small water drains. We had a very good day; accomplished tasks and had no injuries!



The March 5 work day crew! (photo courtesy of Ann Farrar)

**3/6 - Franklin LaFond - Fontana Dam to Route 28** - Rehab 60 ft of sidehill that had slipped off the side of the hill. Added 3 log steps.

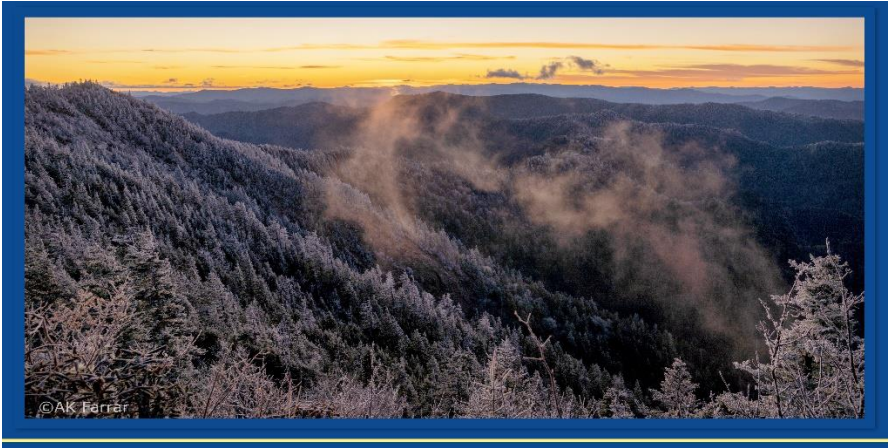
**3/7 - Charlie McDonald - Mulch Operations** - Prepared 30/20lb bags of mulch for the airlift to Mt. LeConte on Friday March 11. Also turned over the mulch under the tent to aid in drying. We currently have 35 bags that are stored in the mulch bins at Sugarlands. As always if you have a special request for mulch please let me know as soon as you can. Thanks.

**3/14 - Joseph ("Randy") Bullock, Sunaree Bullock - Cheoah Bald to Swim Bald** - Changed privy side to emptied pit. Packed out trash and discarded tent. Clipped briars and overgrowth from Cheoah Bald to Sassafras Gap.

**3/15 - Charlie McDonald, Debbie McDonald - Mulch Operations** - Inventory mulch/ lubricated locks on mulch bins for better access. Currently have 36/20lb bags available. As always, please let me know if you take any bags. Thanks.



April 2022



Do you love trails to  
backpack, hike or run?  
Ever think of giving back?

**We need your help!!**



Smoky Mountains Hiking Club seeking  
Appalachian Trail volunteer maintainers.  
Email [smhc.elm@gmail.com](mailto:smhc.elm@gmail.com) or go to [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org)  
and click "AT Maintenance" tab and Volunteer "sign-up"

Thank you **Ann Farrar**, for this fabulous recruitment poster, now on the SMHC FB page and available for displaying and posting in different venues. If you know of a good venue to post this, please contact Ann at [ann@fandkphoto.com](mailto:ann@fandkphoto.com) to obtain a copy!