

Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club

March 2023

A.T. Maintenance Work Trip- Saturday March 4

For this first Saturday work trip of 2023, we will focus on treadway rehab and small blowdown removal in the Nantahala National Forest. Specific locations of work will be based on number of volunteers and weather. All work locations will be less than 5 miles round trip from the trailhead. Participants will need to wear sturdy footwear, bring work gloves, lunch, snacks and plenty of water. Meeting times and locations: Maryville Walmart at 2410 US-411 S at 7:30 am or at the Robbinsville Ingles at 2 Sweetwater Rd. at 9:00am. Roundtrip travel is approximately 110 miles. Alternate weather delay date will be Saturday March 11. Please contact the work trip leaders to sign up for this event:

Franklin LaFond: ox97game@aol.com 678-464-3380

Randy Bullock: jrbperfusion@gmail.com

Wilderness Skills Institute 2023

The WSI planning team has been in high gear, trying to meet the needs of wilderness stewards and aspiring wilderness stewards in the southeast. Applications opened on January 23rd, and **will close on 3-1-23**.

Week 1 is May 22-26 and includes: Crosscut A/B & Wilderness First Aid/CPR, Advanced Trail Techniques – Rockwork, Wilderness 101, and Leading a Volunteer Experience.

Week 2 is May 30 to June 2 and includes: Intro to Trail Maintenance, LNT Trainer and Making Public Contacts, Advanced Axe Techniques and Hanging, and Advanced Wilderness Stewardship.

Check out the courses and apply [here](#).

Volunteers with Construction Experience Needed

Materials are being ordered and plans being made for repairs on the Mt. Collins shelter roof. There are similar repairs needed on a number of the shelters we care for on the A.T. We are looking for folks with construction experience who might be able to help with these projects. Mt Collins shelter is a very short (.75 mile) walk off of Clingmans Dome Rd. If you might be interested, please contact Dick Ketelle, rhketelle@comcast.net.



Help Needed Planning for Soak Ash Facility Repairs

The Soak Ash facility near Pittman Center is used as housing for our Ridgerunners and our SWEAT and Rocky Top crews when they are not in the field. The facility was closed last fall when black mold was discovered. The ATC and the Park Service are working to remediate this issue and are hoping to have the facility available for use again by early summer. To help prevent future mold issues, there are some repairs that are needed at the facility. The ATC and SMHC would like to plan a joint work day to address some of these repairs. Specific dates are not known at this time. We are targeting for a weekend in either March or April. We are looking for volunteers that would be interested in helping with any of the following tasks:

- A. Replace existing gutters and downspouts
- B. Replace and paint damaged fascia boards
- C. Dismantle current well pump housing and secure insulated housing for pipes
- D. Paint DRYLOK on exterior masonry walls.

Anyone interested in helping with this project can contact Franklin LaFond: ox97game@aol.com
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Ridgerunners 2023!

Meet Chris Marshburn – Long Season Ridgerunner

Chris was born in Raleigh, North Carolina and grew up in Central Florida. He is a graduate of Davidson College and the Vanderbilt University School of Law. Chris enjoyed a long and successful legal career in Memphis, Tennessee, first as an assistant district attorney and then doing personal injury defense litigation as staff counsel for two insurance companies. Chris has a son and daughter both in Memphis of which he is very proud as well as a new granddaughter. Though busy with work and family Chris has been an avid hiker and backpacker most of his life, and he has been fortunate to enjoy many of the great outdoors spaces in this country, including long sections of the Appalachian Trail in Georgia, New England and the Great Smoky Mountains. Recently Chris made the decision to take a break from the practice of law and pursue opportunities in outdoor stewardship, a long-held passion. In 2022 Chris served as a backcountry caretaker for the Appalachian Mountain Company in the White National Forest, and was responsible for one of the busiest campsites along the Appalachian Trail. Chris has earned certifications in Wilderness First Aid and as a Leave No Trace Trainer, and recently became a member of the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club. Chris is thrilled to be serving as the long season Ridgerunner in GSMNP, and looks forward to meeting his fellow Club members.



Chris Marshburn

Meet Eric Wedding – Fontana Ridgerunner

Eric has lived in the mountains along the Appalachian Trail of Western North Carolina for 8 years. In this time, his love for the trail and the forests that contain it has grown abundantly. On any given day, you may find him hiking, climbing, whitewater rafting, trail running, or backpacking somewhere along the trail. This is Eric's first year working as a Ridgerunner, and he is excited to share his tips, knowledge, and love of the outdoors with all those whose paths he crosses this season.



Eric Wedding

(Note: we will publish our 3rd RR bio, when it's available, in the next ATMC NL.)



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And a Thank You from Phyllis Henry, ATMC Treasurer.....

Special thanks to the following for donations made to the ATMC for improvements to the trail and its facilities: Donald Box, Cleveland, TN, Judith McGuire & Author Tsien of Chevy Chase MD. In addition, donations were made in to Franklin LaFond to pay for meals provided to the Konnarock crews in June and July of 2022. Katherine Ross of Yardley, PA, William Baker Pensacola, FL made donations in honor of Franklin for his spontaneous and generous trail magic to some weary SOBO's at Fontana Village. We greatly appreciate any donations to help maintain the Trail.

A. T. Work Trips From 1/21/2023 to 2/15/2023

1/21 - Charlie McDonald, Debbie McDonald - Mulch Operations - Inventoried bags of mulch, turned over mulch under the tent for drying out.

1/21 - Randy Bullock, Sunaree Bullock, Cindy Mease, Steven Fitzgerald - Brown Fork Gap to Stecoah Gap - Cleared water bars and inspected shelter and water source. Introduced new volunteers to trail maintenance.

1/23 - Randy Bullock - AT Mgt, Mtgs & Admin - Sat in on a meeting with several representatives from Forestry, ATC, DOT, and contractors relating to the corridor K project on NC 143 to discuss hiker safety and other aspects of the land bridge at Stecoah Gap.

1/25 - Randy Bullock, Sunaree Bullock, Cindy Mease - High Pt E of Walker Gap to Yellow Creek Gap - Moved 7-8 small trees/brush off the trail, took photos of Cable Gap shelter for reference. Looked at condition of privy. Packed out trash.

1/27 - Randy Bullock, Sunaree Bullock, Cindy Mease - High Pt E of Walker Gap to Yellow Creek Gap - Cleaned Privy at Cable Gap. Cut all reported blowdowns in this section.

1/29 - Randy Bullock, Franklin LaFond - Cheoah Bald to Swim Bald - Emptied privy and added mulch to aid in composting, filled leaf buckets. Cut 8 small blowdowns, packed out trash from privy and shelter.

2/1 - Franklin LaFond, Randy Jenkins, Jim Rugh - Outreach & Education - New Maintainer Administrative Orientation. Review JHA, Tailgate safety, and reporting work hours.

2/8 - Keith Mertz - Yellow Creek Gap to Cody Gap - Pulled 2 small blowdowns off trail. Tossed limbs off trail. Lopped intruding vegetation.

2/8 - Pete Berntsen - Gap W of Masa Knob to Newfound Gap - Removed small debris from entire section. Cut and removed 3 approximate 2-inch diameter blowdowns. Cleaned 4 water drains between Icewater Spring and The Boulevard and an additional 8 water drains to Sweat Heifer Boulevard. Tapped down three pieces of rebar near 1.5-mile NE of NFG.

2/11 - Franklin LaFond - Fontana Dam to Stecoah Gap - Walked from each of the road crossings to identify and flag work areas for upcoming March work day. Removed a couple small blowdowns and limb debris from trail. Talked with crew that is currently clearing trees at the Stecoah Gap crossing. Collected locust logs from roadside where NCDOT crews had cleared a blowdown. These logs were transported to the stash near Fontana Marina and split to usable sizes.

2/11 - Lisa Sumter - Davenport Gap to Chestnut Br Trail - Removed numerous branches from trail. Sawed & cleared a tree & a rhododendron which were across the trail. There is a large uprooted tree across the trail at 1.6-1.7 miles, not far from Chestnut Branch. Someone has cleared a path around the backside, I cut out a few more roots to make it a bit easier to get past. Checked the shelter area. There was a 2 ft tall aluminum pot with a lid in the shelter which had trash in it, packed out the trash, left the pot to retrieve later.