

Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club

RHKetelle

April 2023

A.T. Maintenance Work Trip- Saturday April 1

This work trip will focus on treadway rehab in the section between Fontana Dam and Shuckstack fire tower. Specific locations of work will be based on prioritization of work needed and number of volunteers available. 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 Fontana Dam Visitor Center near 40 Fontana Dam Rd, Fontana Dam, NC 28733 at 9:00 am. Roundtrip travel is approximately 110 miles. Please contact the work trip leaders to sign up for this event: Franklin LaFond, ox97game@aol.com, 678-464-3380.

And in case you're wondering.....

Our third (short season) Ridgerunner is not yet in place... more to come when we know more! MANY thanks to Chris Marshburn and Eric Wedding for the work they are doing now as our ATC Ridgerunners!!

A. T. Work Trips From 2/15/2023 to 3/15/2023

2/18 - Franklin LaFond - Training - Attended FS Chainsaw Recertification course. Checked out the progress of tree removal at Stecoah Gap by the NCDOT contractors. Transported several locust logs from Stecoah Gap to stash at Fontana.

2/18 - Randy Mitchell, John Lee - Low Gap to Cosby Knob Top - Walked through the section with a potential new maintainer and picked up downed limbs from the trail as I described function of steps and water bars. Checked out Cosby Knob Shelter and was pleasantly surprised to read in the new shelter log that the Ridge Runner and trainees had stayed at the shelter two days prior. The shelter was still clean.

The mulch buckets at the privy were full and best of all, the throne in the privy had been moved over the empty collection bin. At the south end on the section a large Hemlock tree was broken at the base and overhanging the trail. I judged it too dangerous to cut at this time but we were able to break off enough limbs to allow a horse and rider to pass underneath. We were able to cut 5-inch and 7-inch diameter limbs from a downed cherry tree on the trail. Also, we cut and moved an 8-inch diameter hemlock that was across the trail. Packed out empty mulch bags for re-use.

2/22 - Bill Pyle, Taylor Weatherbee - Davenport Gap

to Chestnut Br Trail - Cleared blowdowns using crosscut saw, one 10-inch tree just north of the Davenport shelter, then one 30-inch oak tree with a large rootball in the trail around 0.7 miles south of the shelter. Bill and I were able to move the rootball off the trail using his pulley system and ropes. Franklin had requested the crosscut sawyers cut that large oak in anticipation of a trail work day this coming Saturday.

2/22 - Charlie McDonald - Mulch Operations - Added 25/20lb bags of mulch to the tent at Elkmont. 32/20lb bags at the maintenance bins. Did some repairs to the tent at Elkmont.

2/24 - Tim Ryan, Jay Schmid, Ken Hughes - Boulevard

Tr to Sweat Heifer - Cleaned waterbars and extended drainage areas, reset some existing stone waterbars, added stone support to older log waterbars, removed debris, and added rebar support to stabilize some log structures.

2/25 - Lisa Sumter, Franklin LaFond - Davenport Gap

to Chestnut Br Trail - Checked the area where the blowdown & rootball were removed earlier in the week & reworked the treadway. Cleared drainages with some needing to be dug out to drain better. Removed & cut downed limbs for better access to drainages. Noted future project areas.

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3/4 - Franklin LaFond, Misty James, David Gall, Kathy Gardner, Yugong Tan, Jennifer Delaney, Nikki Reuter, Josh Mangers - High Pt E of Walker Gap to Yellow Creek Gap - Rehabbed over 100 linear feet of sidehill that had started to slip. Added 20 ft log cribbing in an area where dense roots were causing hikers to walk on outer edge of trail. Backfilled to cover up the roots. Installed 7 log steps at a steep area where hikers were using roots of large tree as stepping points. Replaced 1 rotting log waterbar. All locust logs were cut, split, and skinned close to the locations where they were used.

3/4 - Randy Bullock, Sunaree Bullock, Taylor Weatherbee - Cody Gap to Stekoah Gap - Having several reports of blowdowns in this section from hikers over the past month, the first Saturday work trip divided into two groups. My group consisted of my wife, Sunaree, Taylor and a new volunteer, Randy Jenkins. We hiked about 8 miles and cleared six blowdowns, including two trees that had disrupted the tread way. Repairs required adding rock and earth to level and cribbing to support the downhill side. Recent heavy rains showed water bars that are in place are doing a good job to prevent erosion along the steeper parts of the trail. Work done near Bushnell Knob last year by Konnorock and other SMHC volunteers also looked great in spite of heavy run off. Thanks to all who helped inform, arrange and participated in this first work trip of the year in NNF!

3/5 - Terry Martin - Mt Cammerer Side Tr to Low Gap - Word of the day "trees". I figured there would be some but not so many. Low Gap Trail, I removed what trees I could off the trail. Low Gap intersection to Sunup Knob, I removed branches off the trail. Sunup to Mount Cammerer, I removed branches off the trail, removed tree off the trail, and cleaned some waterbars.

3/6 - Bill Pyle - Training - Zoom call Spring Clearing Safety Talk

3/6 - Taylor Weatherbee - Training - Attended GSMNP chainsaw safety Zoom meeting given by Christine Hoyer for the upcoming chainsaw window.

3/7 - Randy Mitchell - Training - Safety Zoom call for Volunteer Spring Trail Clearing (AKA Chainsaw Window)

3/11 - Aenan Fee, John Lee, Randy Mitchell - Low Gap to Cosby Knob Top - Cleared all water bars and drains in the section. Removed fallen limbs from trail in section. Inspected Cosby Shelter and privy. Cleaned buildup of leaves and limbs from shelter roof. Filled mulch buckets in privy. In the course of getting mulch from the bins discovered a shovel at the bottom of the mulch. Apparently, the shovel had been there a very long time as the handle is rotten.

3/12 - Franklin LaFond - AT Mgt, Mtgs & Admin - Attended Annual ATC Southern Partnership Conference.

3/12 - Randy Bullock, Sunaree Bullock - Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap - Cleared water bars, cut one tree across the trail and repaired tread. Inspected shelter and privy, filled mulch buckets. Changed logbook.

3/12 - Taylor Weatherbee - AT Mgt, Mtgs & Admin - Attended the ATC Southern Partnership Conference.

3/13 - Charlie McDonald - Mulch Operations - Bagged 560lbs of mulch. Dropped off 320lbs to Sam Tillery for horse delivery. Started bagging order for David Michael and his team for Big Creek.

3/13 - Randy Bullock, Sunaree Bullock, Cindy Mease - Yellow Creek Gap to Cody Gap - Cut two trees across the trail, packed out a small amount of trash, cleared corridor of smaller blowdowns and branches from recent wind event.

3/14 - Randy Bullock - Stekoah Gap to Locust Cove Gap - Worked this section today cutting back growth impeding corridor, cut one blowdown.