



May 2023

**A.T. Maintenance Work Trip – Saturday May 6**

This work trip will concentrate on the east end of the Smokies beginning at Davenport Gap and working as far as the Mt. Cammerer Fire Tower side trail. We will work on cleaning out water drainages, pruning back encroaching vegetation, and install/repair a few log steps as time allows. Some tread repair and removal of downed trees may also be required. Several work groups that are willing to hike different distances up to 5 miles in to the far end of the section would be good.

We will meet at the Cracker Barrel (1510 Cracker Barrel Ln, Knoxville TN 37914) at 8:00 am or at the Davenport Gap trailhead at (TN 32 / NC284, I-40 Exit 457 Waterville NC) at 9:00 am.

Parking at this location is limited, so carpooling is strongly encouraged.

Bring sturdy footwear, gloves, lunch, snacks, plenty of water, and weather appropriate attire.

Pre-registration with the leaders is required. Register at [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org) or contact: Tim Bigelow 865-607-6781, [bigelowt2@mindspring.com](mailto:bigelowt2@mindspring.com) or Franklin LaFond 678-464-3380, [ox97game@aol.com](mailto:ox97game@aol.com)

**National Trails Day June 3, 2023**

**It's Time To Register for National Trails Day, Saturday June 3, 2023!**

National Trails Day is on Saturday June 3 this year. This is the 26th year that the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club has hosted an NTD event. We are looking for a few more crew leaders and lots of volunteers to fill the crews that will work on the Appalachian Trail from Silers Bald Shelter to Icewater Springs Shelter.

Volunteers will meet at Sugarlands Visitor Center at 7am for an orientation and dispersal of tools for the day, and then carpool to their designated trailheads by 8:30am. We will provide a bagged lunch, a free commemorative T-shirt, and prizes!

**Please see the Registration Form that is a separate attachment to this Newsletter.**

You can register by:

- Going to [smhclub.org](http://smhclub.org) and clicking on the link displayed on the home page or
- Printing the registration form and mailing to the address listed at the bottom or
- E-mailing Franklin LaFond directly with answers to each question on the registration form, at [ox97game@aol.com](mailto:ox97game@aol.com).

**All Volunteers, including crew leaders, must complete a registration form. Deadline to receive registrations is FRIDAY MAY 19. Come out and help us with a day of work and fun on the A.T!**



## Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee

### Smoky Mountains Hiking Club

RHKetelle

May 2023

#### A. T. Work Trips From 3/20/2023 to 4/6/2023

**3/20 - Randy Bullock, Sunaree Bullock, Cindy Mease - Yellow Creek Gap to Cody Gap** - Hiked in to do yearly privy maintenance. Replaced hardware cloth with new. Replaced bolts with new as several had rusted and broken.

**3/21 - Randy Bullock - Cheoah Bald to Swim Bald** - Hiked in from Ledbetter Road (Bartram Trail), to do yearly maintenance on Sassafras shelter privy. Shelter, water source and privy in good order.

**3/22 - Diane Petrilla, GRSM Consortium Group - Mulch Operations** - The NC Outdoor Consortium is a group of 100 students from colleges all over the country who come to the Smokies/ Tremont to study different tracks related to Outdoor Recreation Management. This is my 4th year working with this group, taking over from the greatly esteemed Don Dunning. Our most beneficial work with the students usually involves backpacking mulch to Icewater shelter, but with the privy closed and the A.T. very, very icy, we chose to go to the Elkmont mulch tent. We met with Christine Hoyer met from 9-10 am, then we went to Elkmont. There, we discussed all aspects of backcountry human waste management. We bagged 19 / 40 lb. bags on mulch which the Backcountry Horsemen of NC will transport to Cosby and Tricorner the first week of April. Following that, we did a 7-mile hike (not counted in work trip hours) Jakes Creek/ Cucumber Gap/ CS 21/ and Little River. At CS 21, we found a large abandoned tent, cooked food in the fire pit, a skillet and other waste and trash. The students helped pack all of it out (except for the tent), the priority being the food waste. It was later reported to the BCO. A great lesson in LNT and Visitor Use Management. We were back by 3:30pm, having discussed many aspects of AT maintenance, our Club, cooperative management, volunteerism and more.



*What a great group! North Carolina Outdoor Consortium at the Mulch Tent*

**3/24 - Jim Rugh, Linda Nowak, Jim Nowak - Sunup Knob to Low Gap** - Cleared 69 water bars. (There were long sections of the trail with no water bars; we dug short drains where we felt that the water could run off the trail.) Also threw small branches and "tripper stones" off the trail. Cut rhododendron branches and other vegetation getting close to the trail. BTW, saw quite a few through hikers coming through; they had started at Springer Mt. in late February.

**3/25 - Jonny Bruce - Training** - Attended a Sawyer/Chainsaw Certification Course

**3/25 - Randy Mitchell - Training** - Attended classroom orientation and practical training and certification for chainsaw work

**3/25 - Taylor Weatherbee - Training** - Attended Dennis Helton's chainsaw recertification class.

**Don't forget to register for National Trails Day on the separate registration form sent with this newsletter!**

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*Some of our very own Sawyers attending chainsaw certification/recertification training*

**3/26 - Terry Martin - Mt Cammerer Side Tr to Sunup Knob** - Cleaned out all my waterbars. Rehabilitated 4 waterbars. Trimmed back some vegetation. Cleared tree limbs out of waterbars and trail. Put in two rebars for steps. Hid rebar by my next project. Hammered in wooden stakes at steps that were loose.

**4/1 - Mark Holmberg - Wright Gap to Wesser** - Removed three small blowdowns with hand saw, repaired one rock water bar.

**4/2 - Bill Pyle, Kelly Conway, Dick Ketelle, Randy Mitchell - Newfound Gap to Mt Love** - Cleared trail of all blowdowns reported and unreported (yesterday's high winds added some additional work).

**4/2 - Diane Petrilla - Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Rd Prng/Tom Prng Lead** - Walked section to survey for winter issues. Cut and removed 2 small blowdowns. One blowdown too thick and heavy for me; sending pics to Sawyer team. Starting at south end of section, dug out and cleared 20 waterbars. Many more to go.

**4/2 - Jack Bray - Derrick Knob Shelter** - Patched roof leak.

**4/2 - Rick Hughes - Newfound Gap to Collins Gap** - Joined Bill Pyle, Kelly Pyle, Dick Ketelle, and Randy Mitchell in clearing a number of downed trees from the Trail between Collins Gap and Newfound Gap

**4/3 - Taylor Weatherbee, Bill Pyle - Indian Gap/Rd Pr Tr to Collins Gap** - Monday morning GSMNP Weekly Partner Debrief. Then met Bill Pyle and went to Indian Gap and went south 0.2 miles to the small blowdown reported by Diane (we left the larger one for a chainsaw). We then relocated to Collins Gap where we cleared all of the 25 water bars/drainage ditches in the "no-man's-land" between our sections, removed a small blowdown there reported to us by hikers at Indian Gap. We then cleared another 25 water bars/drainages on my section north of Collins Gap, where we also rebuilt a stone water bar, and removed a recently downed 12 inch rotten blowdown.

**4/4 - Randy Bullock - Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap** - Cleared water bars, removed 4 large limbs from the trail. Packed out a small amount of trash. Checked privy, shelter and water source.

**4/5 - Randy Bullock - Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap** - Changed the privy, packed out trash. Cleared the trail leading to the shelter using a crosscut saw.

**4/5 - Taylor Weatherbee - Sugarland Mt Tr to Collins Gap** - Cleaned almost all of the remaining water bars/drainage ditches on the south side of Mt Collins. Left around 10 water bars and 2 turnpikes to clean out. Removed 2 small blowdowns, then pushed over one leaning dead tree that was then moved off the trail with the help of a hiker named Blue Blood. Heard reports from several southbound hikers about a blowdown that was eventually found to be around 0.5 miles south of the Fork Ridge junction. Removed an 8–10-inch tree with a handsaw.

**4/6 - Charlie McDonald - Mulch Operations** - I met Taylor Weatherbee to load 25/40lb bags of mulch. Taylor delivered to Dave Michael for a horse transport to Big Creek.

**4/6 - Jim Rugh, Sara Shamblin - Clingmans Dome to Goshen Prong Tr** - Cleared 153 water bars; removed branches and "tripper" rocks from trail. Cut one 8" rotten blowdown with folding saw. Just as we got to CD we met Chris, the remaining Ridge Runner, heading south. Saw quite a few through hikers heading north.

**4/6 - Taylor Weatherbee - Mulch Operations** - Delivered 25 bags with 40 pounds of mulch to the horsemen