

Appalachian Trail Maintainers Committee

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club

March 2024

A.T. Maintenance Work Trip- Saturday March 2

Nantahala National Forest - Join the first work trip of 2024 as we meet at the Yellow Creek Gap AT crossing in the Nantahala National Forest. This hike will focus on a few areas North of Cable Gap Shelter using mattocks, rakes, and shovels to reclaim short sections of trail corridor using cribbing where needed. The overall hike distance is less than 8 miles out and back over moderate terrain. The trailhead at Yellow Creek adjacent to the AT has lots of parking and the area generally has cell coverage. Bring gloves, eye protection and any PPE you find useful along with lunch and water. From NC 28 turn onto Upper Tuskegee Road and drive approximately 2.8 miles. From NC 129 (Topoco Road) turn onto Yellow Creek Road and drive 8.9 miles. Meet at Yellow Creek trailhead at 10:00 a.m. **To register go to smhclub.org** or for more information, call trip leader Randy Bullock, 850-554-8509 or email jrbperfusion@gmail.com

Opportunity to joint SMHC members for AT Trail Maintenance Backpack Hike

March 30 and 31—Saturday and Sunday

Tim Bigelow and Steve Dunkin plan to hike up Middle Prong and Greenbrier Ridge Trails to the AT and Derrick Knob Trail Shelter where they will spend the night along with possible through hikers. After resting up a bit they will hike southbound on the AT a mile or so and perform some light trail maintenance such as trimming vegetation, small blowdown removal and waterbar cleaning. They will return to the shelter for the night. In the morning after packing up, they will head northbound on the AT and continue working on the trail over to Buckeye Gap and the Miry Ridge Trail. There they head downhill to the Lynn Camp Prong trail and return to Middle Prong and back to the cars. Hike 8.3 miles plus 2-3 on the AT Saturday with 3000 ft. elevation gain and 12.7 Sunday. Rated Difficult. Drive 60 miles RT. **Please register in advance at smhclub.org** or with a leader. They plan to reserve several bunks at the trail shelter. Leaders: Tim Bigelow, Bigelowt2@mindspring.com, 865-607-6781 and Steve Dunkin, Jsdunkin1302@gmail.com

Wilderness Skills Institute 2024

The Southern Appalachian Wilderness Skills Institute (WSI) is a training partnership between the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, the U.S. Forest Service and Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards. This year's WSI will be in Transylvania County, NC on the Pisgah National Forest at the Cradle of Forestry.

Week 1 is May 20-24 and includes: Crosscut A/B & Wilderness First Aid/CPR, Wilderness Ranger & Technician Workshop, Advanced Trail Techniques – Stonework.

Week 2 is May 28-31 and includes: Intro to Horse Packing, Wilderness Management Fundamentals, Trail Layout and Design, Land Navigation & Orienteering, Southern Appalachian Ecosystems.

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



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2024 Appalachian Trail Ridgerunners

Jamie Carson, Short Season Ridgerunner (Fontana)



Recovering attorney. Feline adorer. Endeavoring aerialist. Wanderlust enthusiast. Aspiring writer. Occasional yogi. Lethargic gardener. Persistent soul.

Jamie is a native of San Diego, California. Though never touching a surfboard in her life, she spent most of her time on the beach, and when the ocean grew cold, she frolicked in the Borrego Desert, braved the winter winds of Joshua Tree, and tried ever so gracefully to disembark the ski lifts at Big Bear. The winds carried her east for college, landing in the Front Range at the University of Wyoming. For the better part of a decade, she explored Northern Colorado and every inch the wild state of Wyoming had to offer. She backpacked with marmots in the Tetons, got lazy in the hot springs at Thermopolis, drank quarter beers with the cowboys in Cody, and

got lost in the Milky Way at Vedauwoo. But the Mountain West couldn't contain her spirit forever, and she was beckoned further east. The mountains of Western North Carolina, these Blue Ridge, have captured her heart. And for now, her soul finds rest, finds rejuvenation, and finds peace, in a place she finally calls home. Jamie lives with her husband and two finicky felines in a cabin in the woods of Cullowhee, North Carolina.

Collin Chambers, Long Season Ridgerunner



An Atlanta native, Collin grew up enthusiastically exploring the mountains of North Georgia by seeking out every hiking trail she could discover. After losing over 100 pounds by adding a daily walk to her life, she has become a well-respected advocate for health, happiness, and personal transformation through immersion in nature.

Since beginning her career as a walking coach, motivational speaker, hiking guide, and event facilitator, she has helped countless people discover their inner strength and self-confidence through the simple act of walking. Collin's love of hiking inspired her to open and manage a hiking and backpacking shop near the southern terminus of the Appalachian Trail.

After selling her beloved business, Collin's enduring wanderlust led her to hike several long-distance trails, including the Appalachian Trail, and mystical adventures throughout Peru, Nepal, Thailand, Europe, and India, including recent hikes on the Inca Trail and a trek to Mount Everest Base Camp.

Collin is the author of the award-winning book [WildWood Magic: A Guide to Walking as a Sacred Path](#), a yoga instructor, Wilderness First Responder, Backcountry Survival Instructor, and a *Leave No Trace* Master Educator. Collin teaches these and other skills through experiential, custom-created programs and sacred treks around the world, inspiring others to empower themselves through walking in nature.

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Andrew "Andy" Petras, Short Season Ridgerunner

Andy thru-hiked the Appalachian Trail in 1991 and was a Ridgerunner for the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club in 1995. He has participated in a number of ATC crews since 1993, including stints in Maine and Vermont, and on the Konnarock, SWEAT, and Rocky Top crews. He is a life member of the ATC and is a member of a number of maintaining clubs, including the Mountain Club of Maryland, the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, the Green Mountain Club, and the Appalachian Mountain Club. As an active member of the Mountain Club of Maryland, Andy maintained a six-mile stretch of the A.T. from the Susquehanna River in Duncannon to the Cove Mountain Shelter for six years.

Last August, Andy completed a 29-year career as a police officer in Maryland. In addition to hiking and backpacking, he enjoys cycling and long-distance running. He and his wife have been married for over 30 years; she is in the midst of her 30th year as a high school counselor. The couple has identical twin boys who are in their third year of college.

A.T. Work Trips from 1/1/2023 to 2/13/2024

1/25 - John Lee - Sweat Heifer to Newfound Gap -
Remove 2 blow downs.

1/26 - Taylor Weatherbee - Mulch Operations - Went up to check in prep for Sunday's work session to fill 40 bags of mulch for the LeConte airlift. Found that the winds had trashed the other end of the mulch tent (one end was covered with a tarp last fall to cover a hole in the roof). No tarp was available at the Back Country Office, so I went to a nearby Ace Hardware store and purchased a 20X16 thick tarp that I placed over the other end of the mulch tent, which looks like it will restore its functionality. Mulch was delivered last December but was dropped off around 75 yards from the mulch tent.

1/28 - John Duffy, Terry Martin, Rachel Martin, Rick Martin, Taylor Weatherbee - Mulch Operations - The 3 Mulchsters (and Terry's brother and sister-in-law) filled 40, 20 pound bags of mulch to be used for the LeConte airlift. They also moved around 7 wheelbarrow loads of wet mulch into the tent for drying.

2/2 - Kelly Karr, Raymond Karr - High Pt E of Walker Gap to Yellow Creek Gap - Cleared debris crossing the trail and clipped overhanging briar.

2/8 - Randy Bullock, Sunaree Bullock - Stekoah Gap to Locust Cove Gap - Cut a step through on a large Red Oak that had fallen across the trail. The huge root ball was located close to the trail and likely had a significant end bind, so I just notched an easy step through that will provide a safe thoroughfare for hikers. Removed several small blowdowns. Also, for those reading that haven't been aware of the construction progress at Stecoah Gap, the old trail on the North side has been detoured behind concrete barriers along NC 143 to a crosswalk and temporary trail connector with wooden stairs built by professional contractors. Once this was accomplished, large detour signs were placed at the intersection of the connector and the section of AT affected by the project was closed. To help Northbound hikers locate the detour, I located a 4x4 with a white blaze next to the corridor.

2/9 - Randy Bullock - Brown Fork Gap to Stekoah Gap - Removed 2 blowdowns from the top of Jacobs Ladder that had fallen across the trail. Began to dig out roots on a short section above this work area to prevent erosion. Added a section of cribbing using one of the blowdowns.