

# Hike • Save Trails • Make Friends

## Carolina Mountain Club eNews



May 2024



## **CMC Quarterly Crew/Pisgah Project Day at John Rock Trail in the PRD a Huge Success!**

by Donna Bange

In celebration of Earth Day, what better way to honor our planet than doing trail maintenance. That is exactly what 111 CMC volunteers did on Saturday, April 20. CMC and Pisgah Conservancy partnered together on the Cat Gap Loop/John Rock Trail in the Pisgah National Forest. The CMC volunteers ranged in age from teenagers (Boy Scouts) to CMC trail maintainer legends in their 80s (Skip Sheldon and Roy Davis).

Joe Bange (CMC Trail Councilor), Jan Onan (Section Rovers Leader), Chris Werbylo (Waynesville Wednesday Crew Leader), Don Cooper (Friday Pisgah Crew Leader) and Les Love (CMC President) organized the event. They worked with the Pisgah Ranger



District (PRD) to scout the trail and identify areas that needed upgrades and attention. There were 16 work crews; each crew had a veteran trail maintainer leader along with 3 to 8 volunteers. The crew leader ensured a safe working environment and conducted training for the new volunteers. Quarterly crew is designed for new volunteers to experience trail maintenance. CMC provides the safety equipment and all the tools.

The highlight of the work day was building a new log bridge that crosses a stream which flows into the Davidson River. Tom Weaver led this effort. The old bridge was rotted and dilapidated. Tom scouted ahead of time to design a new log bridge. Likewise, Don Cooper and the Pisgah Friday crew went out two times prior to the Pisgah Project day to prep the bridge location and build the foundation.



As part of CMC's community outreach and education efforts, CMC connected with the local Boy Scout Troop #628. There were 8 teenage scouts and 4 adult leaders that volunteered. The Scouts worked hard carrying rock from the forest service road to the bridge site. The Scouts were also given opportunities to work the grip hoist in securing the logs in place for the bridge. It was a real education for the Boy Scouts to see and experience first-hand all that is involved in building a new bridge. Joe Bange commented that he hoped in 30 years the Scouts will return to the John Rock trail and see the bridge they built in their youth.

Water management was a major emphasis for over half of the work crews. The Cat Gap loop trail follows the Davidson River. Water naturally flows down the mountain and into the river. The challenge is managing the water to ensure a safe and dry hiking trail. Several crews built rolling grade dips to divert the water off the trail.

There was a record number of CMC volunteers for a quarterly crew, with 111 volunteers. It was estimated that about a third were new to trail maintenance. At \$20/hour (rough estimate), the number of volunteers with their hours translates into >\$20,000 impact. CMC volunteers were essentially 25% of the total number of Pisgah Project Day volunteers. This is a testament of CMC's impact on the community and Pisgah Forest.

The next quarterly crew is on Saturday, June 1<sup>st</sup> in Hot Springs. Look for upcoming communications from Les Love.

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# SPRING POTLUCK SOCIAL

Bring your best potluck to share with everyone. Sign up on the members side of the website by clicking the Spring Social button, adding how many folks you're bringing and what dish you're bringing.

**May 25, 2024 | 11 AM - 2 PM**

Members, friends, and guests are all welcome!

**Lake Julian Park, Shelter #6**, which can be accessed from the park entrance off Hendersonville Rd., just south of the intersection of Long Shoals Rd, after you go under the railroad underpass.



## SAT MAY 25 CMC SPRING PICNIC LAKE JULIAN

It's that time of year!! Come join the fun at the CMC Spring picnic and potluck. Bring your best potluck dish to share -- CMC will provide grilled meat and tea & water to drink. If you want something else to drink, including beer and wine, please bring it along.

Sign up on the members side of the website by clicking the red Spring Social button, adding how many folks you're bringing, and the dish you plan to bring.

There will not be a formal program, but we look forward to a time of socializing and community building!

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## **Ribbon Cutting Celebrating New Viewing Platform Atop Mount Pisgah**

The Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation hosted a ribbon cutting on Friday, April 26, in the parking area for the Mount Pisgah Trail at milepost 408 on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Visitors were invited to celebrate the reconstruction of the popular viewing platform and participate in a guided hike to the site. “As the warm weather brings more hikers back to Mount Pisgah, we were thrilled to officially celebrate the completion of this platform with spectacular views,” said Carolyn Ward, CEO of the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation.

Following the ceremony, a ranger led a hike to the summit. The Mount Pisgah trailhead is on the Parkway and gives hikers access to neighboring Pisgah National Forest. The 3.2-mile out-and-back trail is a moderate to strenuous route with switchbacks and an elevation gain of 700 feet and is one of Carolina Mountain Club’s Hundred favorite hikes. The French Broad River Valley, Looking Glass Rock, Cold Mountain, and Frying Pan fire tower are visible from the platform.

The original viewing platform was constructed by the United States Youth Conservation Corps in 1979. In recent years, repairs to the platform became extensive and warranted reconstruction of large portions of the structure. A shout-out to those 1979 YCC volunteers! Their platform had withstood exposure to the elements at 5721' for over 40 years.

Forty-two Carolina Mountain Club volunteers provided 310 work hours last October to rebuild the platform with materials provided by the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation. May this new structure last another 40 plus years!

Through donor support for the Trails & Views Forever program, the Foundation funded materials and contractors for the project. Carolina Mountain Club provided a team of volunteers to reconstruct the platform. The project involved the use of a funicular owned by Sinclair Broadcast Group to transport materials up the 5,721-foot peak. Vegetation around the platform was trimmed to reveal unobstructed views.



“The Carolina Mountain Club had this project on our wish list for several years,” said Tom Weaver with the volunteer organization. “Our thanks to the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation for funding this needed renovation and to the Pisgah Ranger District for the support. We had enthusiastic participation from several of our trail crews to accomplish this project.”

The initiative was inspired by the memory of Lisa Hambrick Hagebak and championed by her family to recognize her love of the North Carolina mountains and Parkway.

The Foundation also recently funded the fabrication and installation of an interpretive sign at Buck Spring Gap Overlook parking area where the trailhead is located. The wayside panel features the history of Buck Spring Lodge, George W. Vanderbilt’s former Adirondack-style retreat which was located nearby.

Speakers at the event included:

- Neal Labrie (Assistant Superintendent, BLRI)
  - Carolyn Ward (CEO, Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation)
  - Jeff Owenby (Director, Forest Service)
  - Tom Weaver (Trails Manager, Carolina Mountain Club)
  - Hawk Hagebak (Special Guest and Donor)
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**NATIONAL TRAILS DAY**

**CAROLINA MOUNTAIN CLUB**  
100 YEARS  
1923 - 2023

**Register**

Join us as we improve a section of the A.T. Afterparty at Big Pillow, prizes, and more!

**JUNE 1ST**  
9 AM - 3 PM

**BIG PILLOW BREWING**

**HOT SPRINGS**  
APPALACHIAN TRAIL

Thank you Sponsors!

**FJALL RAVEN** | **GREEN MACHINE** | **Sawyer**

**Saturday June 1st - National Trails Day**

Join us for a day of trail work on the Appalachian Trail near Hot Springs. This event is designed for individuals who may be new to trail work, including those who work or go to school during the week. You will learn from experienced trail maintainers. All are welcome; no experience is necessary, and you do not need to be a member of the Carolina Mountain Club (CMC) to participate. Afterparty and raffle at Big Pillow Brewing. [Click here](#) to register.

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JOIN THE HIKE

# HIKE FOR HEALING

## Join a Hike!

by Kathy Kyle

The Carolina Mountain Club will celebrate inclusivity and healing through hiking with Hike for Healing, a two-day event on Thursday, June 20, and Friday, June 21.



Lee Fortune, also known as Boots On The Trail, is the founder and leader behind Hike for Healing. For the past two years, he's been taking on challenging hikes to raise awareness and spark conversations about racial healing. Last year, he conquered a grueling 46.8-mile trek from Kuwohi (Clingmans Dome) to Waterrock Knob in just 18 hours. This year, the ambitious journey takes him 62 miles from Mt. Pisgah to Mt. Mitchell (the Pitchell).

A CMC member and Charlotte resident, Lee's own multiracial family has served as a powerful bridge, teaching him firsthand the importance of healing racial divisions. You can support Lee and this initiative by joining one of the three CMC-led hikes offered on June 21st. Additionally, an informal send off will be held on Thursday, June 20, at the Pisgah Inn. Following the cheering and any snacks or food people bring or purchase at Pisgah Inn, Lee will kick off his hike by climbing Mt. Pisgah and continuing his non-stop journey to Mt. Mitchell.

Join the CMC -led hikes on Friday, June 21, at the Folk Art Center starting at 9 a.m. These hikes offer a chance to connect with nature and each other, creating a space for thought provoking personal reflections and/or potential meaningful conversations about understanding and community building. :

A moderate 4.9-mile round trip hike to Lunch Rock, offering stunning views with an 813-foot elevation gain.

A moderate 5-mile car shuttle hike (hike #296) to the Blue Ridge Parkway Headquarters from the Folk Art Center.

An easy 1.3-mile loop on the Folk Art Center Nature Trail from the Folk Art Center.

You can register for any of these hikes at [Bootsonthetrail.com](http://Bootsonthetrail.com) Updates will also be posted there as well. Hikes will be limited to 10 hikers. Another option is to walk alongside Lee: For those interested in joining Lee for specific sections of his hike, contact him at [lee@bootsonthetrail.com](mailto:lee@bootsonthetrail.com).

Be part of the conversation:

The Carolina Mountain Club (CMC) has championed diversity since its founding over 100 years ago. CMC proudly supports efforts like Lee's Hike for Healing to continue fostering inclusivity on the trails. Friends of the MST is also joining as a sponsor. Informational tables from both organizations will be available at the hike starting point.

The CMC Diversity and Inclusion Committee is organizing the club's sponsorship of Hike for Healing.

Get Involved:

To learn more about volunteering opportunities during the event or if you have any questions, contact Jan Onan at [janonan59@gmail.com](mailto:janonan59@gmail.com).  
For details about Hike for Healing, visit <https://www.bootsonthetrail.com/>.

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## **A Way to Give to the Club**

by Les Love

We know that some people would rather give donations to the club for specific items or projects rather than the General Fund or our new Endowment. There may be a way to accomplish that. Recently Joe identified the need for 50 white helmets with the CMC logo for \$1,210. He sent the bid sheet to George and several others asking if we had time to submit this for a grant or ask the council for fund approval, since it was not in the budget. One of our members asked if he could pay for the helmets as a donation to the club. George accepted the offer, received the donation by Venmo, and the helmets were ordered the next day. This avoided our Grants Committee getting bogged down with a relatively small purchase and then having to wait for the funds, while giving the donor the satisfaction of donating something critical to the safety of our volunteers.

George could create a list of people who would like to make a donation in the \$250 to \$2,500 range for specific items and when the need arises, he would send a blind copied email to all on the list with a description of the items, saying that the first to respond gets to cover the cost with their donation. A win/win for the club and the donating member!

If you would like to participate in this, email George at [cmclubtreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:cmclubtreasurer@gmail.com)

## Garlic Mustard Pull at Lemon Gap

by Barbara Morgan

The Natural Resources Team paired again with the ATC in the annual Garlic Mustard Pull at Lemon Gap. On April 23, Barbara Morgan, Mary Swain, Neill Hurst, and A.T. Section Maintainers for that section Bob Beach and Chris Werbylo joined Matt Drury of the ATC to hand pull as much of this invasive species as we could. It was year 7 or 8 of successive "pulls" and areas we'd



worked intensively in the past were almost clear! By ranging farther, the six of us pulled a combined weight of 84 pounds! We carefully bagged it, and Matt took care of disposing of it in a safe manner (you don't dare compost this stuff, or it just spreads more)!



Thanks to all who helped, and especially Bob and Chris for being so interested in their A.T. section that they jumped in to help! Want to join future events? Email Barbara Morgan ([barbc129@gmail.com](mailto:barbc129@gmail.com)).

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## The Legacy Continues: A Three-Generation Family's Dedication to Trail Stewardship

by Jan Onan

Bob Boyle has been a stalwart contributor to trail maintenance, dedicating over 2100 hours to his adopted sections and various crews such as the Asheville Friday, the Section Rovers, and the Art Loeb.



His commitment extended further when, two years ago, he welcomed his high school-aged grandson, Tyler, to join him. Tyler, eager to contribute, recently achieved the impressive milestone of 100 hours while working alongside the Section Rovers. Les Love proudly awarded Tyler the esteemed 100 Hour Hat, marking him as the first high school student within the CMC community to receive

this honor. Tyler's diligence and burgeoning skill set make him a valued CMC maintainer.

The spirit of service doesn't end there. Bob then extended the invitation to his son, Ryan—Tyler's father—who recently earned his 50-hour patch. Inspired by his father's example, Ryan, along with his colleagues at Beverly Grant, adopted a section of the MST. Their involvement began when they assisted the Section Rovers in transporting heavy locust logs to a worksite. Following in his father's footsteps, Ryan has encouraged others to join the cause, forming what we affectionately call the Boyle Boys—a testament to three generations of trail stewards.



Bob's leadership and the collective efforts of his family exemplify the true spirit of community engagement and environmental stewardship. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Bob and his multigenerational family for their invaluable contributions to the well-being of our local trails.

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Phyllis Woolen, Jana Plemmons, Katie Ray, and Judy Dykes

## Completing the 100 Hike Challenge

By Katie Wood Ray

You get to know a lot about a person if you hike 672 miles with them, and you get to know all their favorite swear words if you climb almost 30 miles in elevation while you're doing it. Now, that's more than enough miles to get you to Chicago. It's more than enough miles to get you to Philadelphia, too. And to Little Rock, St. Louis or St. Pete. And it's just exactly enough miles to complete the "100 Favorite Trails of the Smokies and Carolina Blue Ridge" on the map published by the Carolina Mountain Club.

The four of us—Judy Dykes, Jana Plemmons, Phyllis Woolen, and I (Katie Ray)—together with lots of good friends on different hikes along the way, reached a milestone on Thursday, April 4<sup>th</sup> when we completed the 100<sup>th</sup> hike on the map. It was a day more than two years in the making, including five overnight trips to complete multiple hikes at some distance from Waynesville.

We met through different hiking connections, including the Haywood County Parks and Recreation program, and began hiking together regularly when we realized we had similar hiking styles and interests. Early on, we found it challenging to figure out where to go and which hikes to do, but then we discovered the "100 Favorite Trails" map and we decided, "Why not do them all?" We made a spreadsheet (of *course* we did) to track our progress and we were on our way.

Each of us really began hiking in earnest after we retired, and using the map as a guide taught us so much about the many different trail systems in the area. We hiked on the

A.T., the MST, the Art Loeb, and of course all through the GSMNP and Pisgah National Forest. On one overnight trip, we hiked eight trails in four days in the Boone area. When I reflect on the past couple of years I realize that I've lived in Western North Carolina for thirty years and I really feel like I'm just getting to know this beautiful place through all the hiking I've done. I see the mountains in a much more connected way now.

Over time, we began calling ourselves "Sisters of the Woods" and we grew to appreciate each other more and more as we met the physical challenges of hiking close to 700 miles *together*. Whether it was traversing the washed-out ravine on Cold (Hearted) Mountain, wading through the water on the Boogerman Trail in Cataloochee Valley, or navigating around the huge boulders on the Tanawha Trail at Grandfather Mountain, we all felt it was easier to push our limits with our sisters by our side.

Hiking, of course, is literally a "boots on the ground" way of experiencing the world, and the beauty and awesomeness of it all, at times, was staggering: Mists rising up from a valley. An old growth tree so wide we couldn't encircle it with all our arms. A forest filled with wildflowers in full bloom. Two bears up ahead on a trail and a rousing song to let them know we were headed their way. The wind on Roan Mountain.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of completing the challenge, however, has been the friendships we have developed as we hiked so many miles together. You really *do* get to know someone when you hike a lot with them. You laugh together and learn from each other and find the strength to do hard things in company with others. About these friendships, Judy Dykes said, "I really can bring myself to tears thinking about how I might have missed out knowing these women if not for our hiking adventures. They are life-long friends now."

On our 99<sup>th</sup> hike, after a steep 2500 foot climb up to Ramsey Cascades, we were descending the trail when we passed another group of quite *young* women headed in the other direction. Just as they passed by us, one of them turned and said, with great enthusiasm and sincerity, "We want to be just like you when we get old!"

Or maybe she said *bold*? We aren't sure. But she should have said *bold*.

### **Fast Facts**

**Map Miles Hiked:** 672

**Average Pace:** Two miles per hour

**Hours in Motion:** 336

**Elevation Gain Over 100 Hikes:** 154,993 feet = 29.35 miles

**Additional Miles Hiked Due to Wrong Turns, Closed Roads, Etc.:** Let's just say we don't want to discuss this anymore

**Favorite Hike:** Grassy Ridge from Carver's Gap

**Least Favorite Hike:** Cold Mountain

**Coldest Hike:** Yellow Mountain, January 23, 2023 (water froze in bottles)

**Most Memorable Experience:** Retrieving one of our highlighted, dated maps from a toilet in a port-a-john in the Linville Falls parking lot.

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Carolina Mountain Club eNews is published on the first Friday of each month. Send your news to [eNews@carolinamountainclub.org](mailto:eNews@carolinamountainclub.org). **Articles are due on the last Friday of the previous month.** Please limit articles to no more than 1,000 words. You may send up to two photos as jpg attachments.

To join Carolina Mountain Club go to: [www.carolinamountainclub.org](http://www.carolinamountainclub.org). Click on "Join CMC" on the right side. Follow the instructions. For all address and email changes, log in, select "Modify Profile", make changes and click on "Update Member" or email Dennis Bass at [dbass3607@gmail.com](mailto:dbass3607@gmail.com). Your email changes will be automatically reflected in eNews delivery.

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