



Carolina Mountain Club

Since 1923

eNews | Hike . Save Trails . Make Friends.

March 2023

Interested in Joining CMC Search and Rescue Crew?

by Bill Sanderson

The next training and qualification event for prospective Search and Rescue Crew members will be on Sunday, March 26, 2023. This may be the last opportunity until Fall to begin the process of joining the SAR crew so if you are interested please contact the crew directors at SAR@carolinamountainclub.org for details.

Youth Partner Challenge: Our Family Friendly Hikes

by Jan Onan

Our new Education Chair, Jeff Wilcox, has set a goal this year to schedule two YPC hikes each quarter. The aim is to help our members introduce our love of the outdoors to youth in a safe, planned activity where learning about our public lands is fun.

We need your help! Spread the news about these amazing hikes to parents, grandparents, friends so we can fill the YPC hikes. We want to expose our youth so they will learn to appreciate our public lands and become the caretakers when we are no longer able.



Check the Let's Go for our second quarter YPC hikes on April 30th and June 4th.



Calling for Trail Maintainers! Section Supervisors Need Your Help.

Please help us keep our 400+ miles of trails that CMC is responsible for by adopting a trail section. We will issue you the tools and show you what needs to be done. For the trail sections that are available,

https://carolinamtnclub.org/_maps/open_sections_eneews.cfm

Thursday, March 23rd

Film Screening – “The Mystery of George Masa” 6:00- 8:00 pm Highsmith Student Union Grotto FREE

As Carolina Mountain Club (CMC) celebrates its 100th year as a club, we have teamed up with UNCA to sponsor this hour and a half screening about George Masa, an early member of CMC. He was a Japanese immigrant who came to the Southern Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina in 1915, where he focused his camera and his passions on preserving the beauty of the wilderness he discovered. His photographs helped inspire the creation of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Come learn more about our CMC past. CMC will have our display table set up. Come by and say hello.

Carolina Mountain Club Diversity and Inclusion Committee
Jan Onan



Bear Box and New Floor at Groundhog Creek Shelter

by Paul Curtin on behalf of the Asheville Friday crew

On February 10th the Asheville Friday crew undertook a major challenge: installing a bear box at the Groundhog Creek shelter.

Why a bear box? Don't all the CMC shelters on the A.T. already have bear cables for food storage? Yes, they do.

However, bear activity is on the increase, and the USFS Appalachian Ranger District (ARD) last year asked the club to install bear boxes at all the shelters, and furthermore to put them at least 100 yards away from the shelter to decrease the association of people and food among bears. Last year the Groundhog Creek shelter was closed for several months due to persistent bear presence and attempts to get hiker food. The intent of this new policy is to better prevent bears from getting food. When bears get food it's always a bad result for the human and for the bear as well.

Last year the ARD purchased a Pilot Rock bear box with 30 ft³ capacity for use at Groundhog Creek. Now all CMC had to do was figure out a way to move the 355 lb box uphill 1/3rd of a mile on the old Groundhog Creek trail to and 100 yards past the shelter.

The GA club loaned us a modified deer cart called the "Zebmobile" they use to move boxes. Paul Curtin picked up the box from the ARD at Mars Hill. It filled the back of the Honda Ridgeline. Meanwhile Tom Weaver prepared materials to restore the shelter floor to a level condition. This 1939 shelter had seen better days, and the floor was terribly warped and out of level. Hikers sleeping overnight would slide into the floor center overnight, which looked like a potato chip.



We were not sure we would be successful but willing to give it a go. After traveling about 3 miles in on a Forest Service road, we slid the box out of the truck onto the plywood sheets Tom brought for the floor and onto the cart. Sturdy ratchet straps were used to attach it to the Zebmobile, and 8 eager volunteers took on the task of pushing and pulling it uphill. Others

cleared rocks and roots and brush from the path. Section maintainer David Huff documented the work and provided these pictures.

The herd of turtles made steady progress, and by lunchtime the box was near its final resting place. We cleared a level area, flipped it into position, and chained it to a tree. Ready for use!

In the meantime Tom's team was rebuilding the floor with plywood and shims. They obtained an outstanding result and the floor is level and beautiful! No more nasty hiker comments in the shelter log!



Now only 9 more bear boxes to do. Fortunately, the club recently received a very generous donation from bear box proponent Sal (Obsessed) Puleo through ATC for \$20,000 to pay for more boxes. Over the next couple of years we should be able to complete this task. The bear cables will remain in place for now but will be removed as they fail.

This inaugural event is being held in our area, and CMC members will be leading some of the hikes.

Appalachian Trail Vista Event August 4-7, 2023 Wild & Free in Tennessee

The Northeast Tennessee Tourism Association and Visit Johnson City will host the in-person Appalachian Trail Vista 2023 program in the beautiful Johnson City, Tennessee area, with hikes, excursions, workshops and entertainment at the East Tennessee State University (ETSU) campus. The event is four days, Friday through Monday for a gathering with hundreds of hiking and outdoor enthusiasts!

The A.T. Vista is the rebranded ATC Biennial program, somewhat streamlined but keeping most of the exciting activities. It's been since the summer of 2017 that we've been able to gather, spend time on the trail, learn, and socialize. This inaugural A.T. Vista program is being planned to carry on the great camaraderie of kindred spirits that cherish the Appalachian Trail and being outdoors.

***Come to Tennessee!
Mark your calendars for August 4-7, 2023***

Affordable on-campus rooms and delicious and healthy buffet meals will be available onsite. The local Johnson City area offers lots of wonderful dining opportunities including a variety of vegetarian and ethnic options, as well as excellent local breweries. If you opt to reside on campus in the dormitory system, you can arrive as early as Thursday evening and stay through Tuesday morning, as program activities begin on Friday, August 4 and extend through Monday, August 7.

Nearby vacation homes, hotels, campgrounds, and RV and camping will also be available.

Programming includes over 40 hikes, of which many will be on the Appalachian Trail, and the remainder using many of the hiking areas that are within an hour's drive from the Johnson City area. There are nearly 35 workshops expected, and over ten exciting excursions. Evening entertainment includes concerts and opportunities to meet other attendees. An opening session and reception are scheduled for Friday night, August 4.

Early Registration for the inaugural A.T. Vista program will open in January and regular registration will open in May. Visit www.atvista2023.org for the details.

Access to certain activities will have limited spaces, so register early to join the fun!

You can also sign up to get the A.T. Vista monthly newsletter, with the latest information about the event and the programming.

We are still seeking volunteers to assist in implementing many of the 2023 activities. View the various A.T. Vista 2023 volunteer position needs and sign up today. Go to the atvista2023.org website and select the "Volunteer" tab.

Additional volunteer opportunities include **Hike Leaders, Workshop Assistants, and Excursion Chaperones!** We need volunteers to lead or co-lead hikes, chaperone one of the many fun excursions, or provide assistance during a workshop session. (You don't need to be from the area to volunteer in any of these roles!) If any of these opportunities interest you, email us at atvista2023@gmail.com or sign-up online at www.atvista2023.org

This inaugural A. T. Vista program is sponsored by The Northeast Tennessee Tourism Association, Visit Johnson City, and the Committees of the A.T. Vista program representing many A.T. Clubs along the Appalachian Trail. A.T. Vista is a marketing program of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy that provides an opportunity for kindred spirits to come together to hike, learn, and play in local communities near the Appalachian Trail.

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A.T. Vista Committee
atvistainfo@gmail.com

SAT MAY 13 CMC SPRING PICNIC LAKE JULIAN



We are rolling out the Spring Picnic again! Come join the fun at a potluck with no charge to members. CMC providing the meat and tea & water to drink. If you want something else, including beer and wine, bring it yourself.

Bring your best potluck to share with everyone. Sign up on the members side of the website by clicking the red Spring Social button, adding how many folks you're bringing and what dish you're bringing so we won't have too much of one thing.

No formal program but Danny Bernstein will be signing and selling our newly released book:

Carolina Mountain Club: One Hundred Years (\$15 cash or check)

Please RSVP on CMC website to attend [Click here for flyer.](#)

Carolina Mountain Club institutes Code of Conduct for all members and volunteers

by Bill Sanderson



The Carolina Mountain Club has further formalized its dedication to safe, inviting, and inclusive recreation and volunteerism by instituting a Code of Conduct, which will be in force at any and all CMC events, including (but not limited to) hikes, trail maintenance outings, and club-sponsored social gatherings. All future hike forms, maintainer

agreements, and other personnel-management documents will have a statement verifying that the member/volunteer has read and agrees to the conditions of the Code of Conduct, so please locate and read the full text of the Code, which is located on the CMC website.

DOG HIKE

by Tim Carrigan

One of my favorite pastimes over the last few decades is to hike with my dog(s) from the sandy soil & Live Oaks in NW Florida to National Forest in North Carolina & Tennessee. I also enjoy meeting other happy dogs and their owners on the trails, which happens often when I'm maintaining my section of the A.T. on the north border of Wolf Laurel.

On Sunday, 4/9/2023, a limited number hikers are invited to come to Wolf Laurel with your dogs, provided they are friendly, and hike on a combination of trails and spur trails beyond the Wolf Laurel gate, which includes Big Bald. I can even show you the historical landmark of Hog Greer's Cave. The hike will be in two parts. The first is approximately 2 miles with a 650' ascent to the Big Bald summit. The second will be another 3.5 miles with gentler paths. All the trails will have springs and streams for the dogs to rehydrate. At the end of Part One, you'll be within 200 yards of the Big Bald parking lot in case you or your pooch are pooped.

Everyone is required to carry a leash, as a backup, and everyone is responsible for your dog's good behavior.

As this hike is somewhat of a prototype, I am going to limit reservations to the first 12 vehicles that I'll need to get through the Wolf Laurel gate. How many is in each vehicle will be up to you. Please email me at tim.carrigan@gmail.com for more information or to reserve a spot for you and yours.

CMC Endowment Fund Update

by Tom Weaver, Carolina Mountain Club President

One year ago the Carolina Mountain Club established an Endowment Fund in the amount of \$30,000, with the intention of using future interest and earnings from the fund to help sustain our Club as we begin our next 100 years. Additions to the fund are from excess monies in the Club's general fund, life member dues, and donations from Club members and the public. The fund is professionally managed by the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina (CFWNC).

For 2022, the Club's general fund had an excess of revenues over expenses of just over \$2,000. In accordance with the original plan, in its most recent meeting Council

voted to transfer this amount to the Endowment Fund. With this transfer, the fund has received nearly \$12,000 in donations in its first year of existence. Many thanks again to all of the Endowment Fund's supporters!

The CFWNC staff is available to assist if any donors wish to discuss leaving bequests in their wills or making other future donations such as a charitable gift annuity. Anyone interested should reach out to our Treasurer, George Bauernfeind.

Carolina Mountain Club in the 1970s

by Danny Bernstein

Continuing the story of CMC extracted for the forthcoming book, *Carolina Mountain Club: One Hundred Years*:

The first time my husband, Lenny, and I went to find our new Appalachian Trail (A.T.) section, we drove very slowly on Rice Creek Rd. in Flag Pond, TN. It was a windy, narrow road seemingly with no end. Then we heard a voice coming from the porch of a modest house. "You're looking for the Government land?" an old man in a rocking chair asked.

"Yes sir. We're looking for the Appalachian Trail. We're the new section maintainers with Carolina Mountain Club."

"Just keep going," He pointed further into the holler.

At the end of the lane, we found an obvious place to park and a hint of a trail or road up. We weren't on the A.T. but on an access path. Even with a four-wheel drive Jeep, we were not going to drive up the road. We started walking up with our pack, unsure what we would find. Finally, we reached the A.T. at Rice Gap with its reassuring white blazes. Whew!

By the 1960s, CMC maintained eighty miles from Spivey Gap close to Burnsville, North Carolina, to Davenport Gap. The club started a series of sequence hikes on the A.T. to inspect the trail. At the time, the US Forest Service crews cleared alternate halves of their sixty miles each year, including moving big logs blocking the trail. The other twenty miles were on private land. But group maintenance and work parties were not enough.

Start of Section Maintenance

In 1973, Jack Davis, president of CMC, and the Council proposed a new maintenance procedure. The club created what is now known as Section Maintaining. The primary responsibility was to remove the annual growth along the trail and to get rid of any other obstacle that would hinder a hiker with a backpack. Section maintainers were asked to schedule three trips on their A.T. section:

- Spring walk-through should take care of blazes and blowdowns.
- Summer needs clippers and weeders to brush out the trail to four feet wide and eight feet in height.



-Fall is for cleaning out water bars and improving the trail tread.

Davis implemented the current system for Trail Maintenance by dividing CMC's A.T. section into sixteen segments, each with its own maintenance leader. Each section was about five miles.

Maintaining a section is very appealing.

You get your own piece of real estate with magnificent views. You don't need great experience or powerful tools. You are the eyes and ears of the trail. You do what you can and report what you can't do. In these early years, reporting was done by a phone call to someone or a letter through the mail. You work at your own pace. Adopting a piece of trail is a little like the *Adopt a Highway* program, which only started in earnest in 1988. CMC and other trail maintaining clubs were way ahead of the Highway Program.

Unlike the Adopt a Highway scheme, there are no signs on the trail saying, "This piece of trail maintained by Jack Davis." However, observant hikers can discern when the trail maintainer changes. They certainly notice when the A.T. club changes as they hike long distances. Now, the list of CMC maintainers and their sections is kept on our website.

Jack Davis adopted his own A.T. section from Devil's Fork Gap in Madison County, NC, to Rice Gap in Unicoi County, TN, going A.T. North. Today this 4.9-mile section is considered an exceptionally long piece of trail without any roads in between. There is a large parking area at Devil's Fork Gap on NC 212 in Madison County which takes you right on the trail. The Forest Service Road leading to the A.T. at the other end at Rice Gap is steep and poorly maintained. This adds to the complexity of working on the trail and attracting members to adopt that section.

We can follow the A.T. segment from Devil's Fork Gap to Rice Gap through several section maintainers. After Jack Davis, this piece of trail was maintained by:

1981 – WENOCA (western North Carolina) chapter of the Sierra Club

1990 – Dwayne Stutzman

1991 – Bob Byrd

2000 – Bill Berry

2002-2013 – Lenny and Danny Bernstein

Lenny and I had a routine worked out. We drove from Asheville in two cars and placed one at the end of Rice Creek Rd. in Flag Pond. Then we parked the second car at Devil's Fork Gap, where we started our walk-in. We clipped bushes, weeded the growth, and sawed the occasional branch obstructing the trail. After reaching Rice Gap, we walked down the blue-blazed trail to pick up the first car and drove back to Devil's Fork Gap for the second car. It was a long day.



A.T. hiker painting a blaze

For all this work, we got rewarded when hikers came through. They stopped long enough so we could explain what we were doing. If we were touching up the white blazes, some asked if they could paint a blaze or two, reminding me of Tom Sawyer getting others to paint his white picket fence.

In exchange for listening, I volunteered to take out their garbage. They were surprised because their usual trail magic was another piece of chocolate or granola bar. But I remembered when my husband and I hiked the A.T., getting rid of trash was the most frustrating part of the trail routine.

Now the section is split in two making it easier to maintain. The Rice Gap to Sugarloaf Gap Access for 2.8 miles is managed by a section maintainer and the Burnsville Monday Maintenance Crew. Sugarloaf Gap Access to Devil's Fork Gap for 2.1 miles is maintained by two other people and the Burnsville Crew. The goal is to keep trail sections no longer than 2.5 miles and have two maintainers for every section.

CMC maintenance now has a hierarchical structure similar to a corporation. Paul Curtin, a retired engineer, is the A.T. supervisor. "A.T. section maintainers are the glue that helps the club in its mission to keep trails safe and sustainable," Curtin says. "They do the routine lopping, water diversion cleaning, privy and shelter cleaning, and weed eating that frees the weekly crews up for more challenging work. They are also the eyes and ears who report significant downfall and other important issues that the crews address. Without them, the club would struggle to accomplish its mission."

Carolina Mountain Club eNews is published on the first Friday of each month. Send your news to 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. 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. Your email changes will be automatically reflected in eNews delivery.

Carolina Mountain Club - P.O. Box 68
Asheville, NC 28802
www.carolinamountainclub.org