

Carolina Mountain Club

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April 2015

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New For 2015

"Free Range" Trail Crew

By Ann Hendrickson

A new trail maintenance initiative has been implemented as a cooperative effort between the CMC Hike Leaders and the CMC Trail Maintenance Committee. The principle intent of this maintenance crew is to specifically mitigate trail issues that have been identified by Hike Leaders on their "scout" hike prior to a scheduled CMC hike.

Currently, the CMC has six permanent crews that maintain about 450 miles of trail in WNC. With over 200 scheduled club hikes a year, it is sometimes difficult for our crews to respond to reported trail issues in an immediate manner, especially if there is a CMC hike occurring within a couple of weeks. It is the goal of the CMC to preserve the integrity of our trails (and the surrounding environment), while providing an excellent hiking experience.

The maintenance liaison for the Free Range Crew is John Busse,

jfbusse@hotmail.com

. (John Busse is now a full-time NC resident bringing a wealth of maintenance talent, and a "hiker heart")

Any and all CMC Hike Leaders can and should contact John directly if they find trail maintenance issues that they deem "high priority" to be resolved prior to the scheduled club hike. (A high priority item is any trail issue that requires the hiker to leave the trail to continue forward; a down tree, missing steps, extremely wet trail, weak bridge, etc.) The Free Range Crew is made up of seasoned maintenance members who are strong hikers whom have agreed to take on additional duties on short notice. Uncertain if the trail is maintained by CMC? Contact John. Do you want to join the Free Range Crew? Contact John. Section Maintainers, please keep an eye on the hike schedule and ensure your trail has been groomed prior to our hikes. Need help? Again, contact John! Currently all trail issues should be reported on the CMC website on the drop down menu. In the case of trail issues, a photo is truly worth a million words! Take photos of what you are reporting. (Make a note in the report that you have these photos) A crew leader can then, for example determine if a downed tree needs a sawyer, or can be handled by a bucksaw. Please take some notes as to the location of the issue that is being reported...how far from the beginning or end of a section, any key landmarks, etc. If steps are missing, then how many? Are the steps wood or stone? Again, a photo is of great help! A crew leader needs to decide how many people are needed for the repair, time involved, as well as the type of supplies and materials needed to accomplish the task. If a trail issue has been already reported, please, report it again and maybe again until the issue is resolved.

Beth Ransom - Swimming, Boating And Hiking

By Danny Bernstein

Sometimes a child leads a parent to a good thing. Beth Ransom wouldn't have discovered CMC if it wasn't for her son, Garrett. And all the way from Tampa, where they live with husband, John and younger son, Watson.



Beth Ransom

Beth Ransom, born in Meridian, Mississippi, grew in Biloxi and Gulfport. If you google August 17, 1969, you'll get two prominent events: Woodstock and Hurricane Camille. To Beth who was eight years old at the time, Hurricane Camille will always be the most important experience. The family lived without running water or electricity for two to three weeks. Since they didn't have radio or TV, Woodstock never registered as an epic event.

Beth is proud to be a native Mississippian but she's always liked change. When her father, who worked for a power company, was transferred to Birmingham when she was in high school, she welcomed the move. In fact, she drove her mum and brother to their new home. They were broken up about having to move, but not her. Her father took young Beth to a coal powered plant and it made a real impression on her. She loved chemistry in high school, partly because of a great teacher. When she started college at Ole Miss, she declared Chem Eng as her major. Not surprisingly, she was one of only four women in the class and in 1983, three women graduated in the major. Beth knew she didn't want to spend her days at a desk. Armed with a valuable degree, Beth started working in paper mills and traveled a great deal for her company. She married and moved to Charlotte where her two children were born. Charlotte is a corporate town with good childcare and support for working professional women. When the Ransom family moved to Tampa, the atmosphere wasn't as welcoming to professional women or to engineers looking to work in large manufacturing plants. She decided that working outside the home didn't make sense anymore and became active in several charitable organizations. Beth's active life in Tampa and North Carolina In high school, she played tennis and kept it up until about seven years ago. When she worked, she ran at 5:30 am and rode bikes. Now in Tampa, she sails and races in a sailing league. She's entered Triathlons. She loves open-water swimming. In Tampa, you can swim in the gulf from end of March to October. But as much as she loves her outdoor life in Tampa, she's always looked lovingly at the North Carolina mountains. Her boys went to summer camp here. After she'd dropped them off for the summer, "I would dread going back to hot Tampa." She took them to Grandfather Mountain. "I really liked being out in the mountains." However, it wasn't until Garrett needed to do some community service that the family discovered CMC. Garrett started going with the Friday trail crew. "They gave Garrett, still in high school, life stories. And they stopped in Hot Springs for pie." Let's not forget the pies. "They always said to come by when he was in town." While working with the Friday crew, Garrett met Wayne Steinmetz, who specializes in rock building. It turns out that Wayne was one of the authors of Garrett's college chemistry book. By this time, the family had a second home in Bilt

more Lake, which allowed them to come up quite often. Beth started hiking with CMC. Beth and Garrett joined the Saturday Wilderness crew. They did the SB6K, and recently finished the Pisgah 400. In addition, she finished the AT90. "My younger son is not that interested in hiking," Beth says. What is the one hike you would take a visitor to WNC, if you knew they could keep up with you?

It would have to be Black Balsam to Shining Rock. Black Balsam is a little busy but then you lose the crowds. You can watch the rain from Tennent Mountain while enjoying just a little mist around you. In the fall, there's a sea of blueberries. "I certainly appreciate learning about trail maintenance. As I hike, I can hear Becky Smucker, saying 'stay on the high side of the trail.' But mostly, I appreciate the friendships I made in CMC.

Save
the
Date

Save The Date Annual Dinner Set For Friday, October 30

Save the date! CMC's Annual Dinner and Meeting will be held on Friday evening, October 30, at UNC-A's Mountain View Room located in the Sherrill Center. Mark your calendar now.

Due To Emissions Air Quality Poorer At Higher Elevations

The Sierra Club commissioned a study that showed plumes of sulfur dioxide gas emissions from the Duke Energy Progress's smoke stacks in Arden/South Asheville. Winds carry those gases in all directions from Duke's power plant. Using emissions data collected by Duke Energy Progress from 2011-2013, meteorological information from the National Climatic Center, and computer modeling software, the study found that every third or fourth day the one-hour concentration of sulfur dioxide exceeded the EPA's maximum allowable public health standards by up to threefold.

A map of that report is located at:

http://content.sierraclub.org/coal/sites/content.sierraclub.org/coal/files/Asheville%20Air%20Modeling%20Report_Gebhart_2.13.2015_1.pdf shows the paths of the plume and poor air quality areas within the county. The highest concentration of gases appears to be at higher elevations (2700-2800ft).

Duke Energy Progress's air quality permit is up for renewal. You can help. Contact the Regional Air Quality Board and require them to enforce the existing air quality standards for safe public health set by the EPA. It's easy. You can do that in one of three ways: (1) Attend the Public Hearing at 6pm on April 29 at Erwin High School (see <http://www.buncombecounty.org/Governing/Depts/wncair/default.aspx>); (2) Write a letter to the Regional Air Quality Board (see above link); (3) Take part by signing an on-line petition at bit.ly/StopAVLSO2



Photo Courtesy of Asheville Citizen Times

Plants On The Trail

VERNATION!

By **Becky Smucker**

No, I'm not swearing here. I am, in fact, exulting! "Vernal" means "spring", and vernation refers to the unfolding of new leaves. Spring makes me want to shout, and the opening of new leaves is worth shouting about.

We love spring for the new color, the flowers, the spring smells, and of course, the new warmth and light as the days get longer. But think about adding the fascinating developmental patterns of new leaves to your collection of reasons for rejoicing. When was the last time you examined newly opening leaves closely?

There are many different patterns of vernation. Most folks are familiar with the circinate vernation of many fern leaves, which we even have a name for: crozier, or "fiddlehead". They unfurl from a wound up spiral, and the smaller leaflets unfurl out to the side at the same time.



Maple leaves open very differently from ferns. They are pleated in a delicate palm-shaped arrangement echoed by their veins, then gradually unfold and little by little flatten out and get almost smooth. Some plants, like peas, sourgrass, and magnolias, have a flat, page-like opening of leaves or leaflets. Others, like hostas and grasses, open from a curled, wrapped pattern. If you keep looking, you will find that different plant species demonstrate striking variations in their vernation.

What is the meaning and purpose of all these different ways of doing things? The patterns of vernation result from the chemistry and physiology of the generative cells that start bud development. The shape of the cells, including the number of sides/edges, how many of those germ cells there are, and how they divide and multiply determines the developmental shape of the leaves. Successful patterns of development in different species have evolved and reproduced themselves over millions of years.

A plant needs to have its new leaves as ready to go as possible when the conditions are right, but still remain wrapped up and protected in the meantime. By early spring what's inside a bud is compact but already formed as what it will become, and when the bud bursts open, water makes it swell and fill out relatively rapidly to get on quickly with its business of producing sugar and competing. The overall process is the same from plant to plant, but the details of chemistry and pattern vary among species and give us the fascinating diversity.

So while you're out there examining the beautiful new flowers, take a look at the vernation of the new leaves. They, too, come in different colors, textures, shapes and smells, and can add a meaningful dimension to your spring excitement. And the next time you hike, be sure to use this word out loud at least once: vernation!

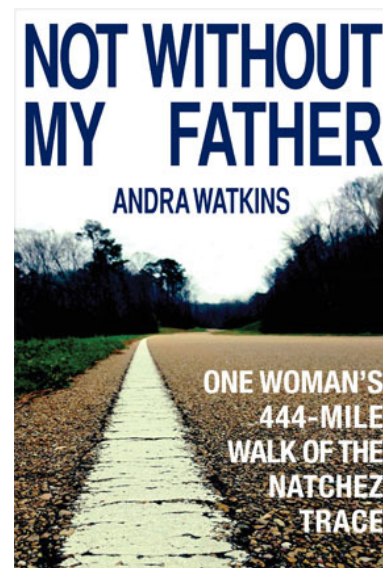
Not Without my Father: One Woman's 444-Mile Walk Of Natchez Trace

Reviewed by Danny Bernstein

I once knew a man who walked the whole Blue Ridge Parkway, not the Mountains-to-Sea Trail, but the road. I don't know how he dealt with the logistics.

But Andra Watkins, in *Not without my Father*, tells you step by step how she walked the 444-miles of the Natchez Trace Parkway - with her father as support, gadfly, and super book salesman. If you want to learn about the Natchez Trace, go to the national park website. But if you want a sometimes funny, sometimes sad, always entertaining memoir about parents and their middle-age children, you'll love *Not Without My Father*.

I picked up the book, since I'm visiting and writing about all the national park units in the Southeast, which include the Natchez Trace. The Natchez Trace, which goes from Natchez MS to Nashville, TN, hasn't been walked since steamboats became safe and cheap, about 1820. President Jackson brought back his troops from New Orleans to Tennessee after the Battle of New Orleans in January 1815. Andra is the only living person who's walked the whole road. She got the idea as a way of publicizing her first novel, *To live forever: An afterlife of Meriwether Lewis*. Lewis, of Lewis and Clark fame, died on the Trace. Was it murder or suicide? Andra walks fifteen miles a day for six days and rests the seventh. But the Trace isn't the A.T. She's walking on a road and it's hard on her feet. It's a flat trail, which sounds great to us mountain hikers, until you realize that the repetitive motion stiffens her muscles. She wakes up stiff and goes to bed stiff. The junk food made her sick. That's what would get to me, the fast food that seems to be the only restaurants around. Make your own lunches and snacks, I want to tell her. But all of that, though difficult, is nothing compared to her interactions with her father, her mother, and female friend of the family. They're out there supporting her with rides, lodging and fried chicken while constantly telling her to quit. What was she thinking, taking all those people along? The real hero of the story is her loving husband who stays back and goes to work every day, sending Andra supportive texts. Her account is interspersed with the father's perspective, also written by Andra. Along with the usual family and business drama of Roy Watkins's life, it turns out that Andra's dad was an unsung hero. He was at the University of Georgia during their first attempt at desegregation in the early 1960s. Charlayne Hunter (Gault, now), a famous PBS and NPR journalist, was one of the first two African-Americans accepted at the university. During a riot after a basketball game, the police used tear gas indiscriminately. Roy Watkins pulled Hunter out of the gas-filled dorm and saved her life. It would be tempting to compare Andra with Cheryl of Wild but they're very different. Cheryl had big psychological problems, which she worked out while on the PCT. Her internal life made her book a best-seller, not her hike. I thought the book was similar to Jennifer Pharr Davis' *Called Again* about her record-setting hike on the A.T. Jennifer also had a support team that she had to deal with but with a lot less drama. Andra understands the budget challenges facing the Natchez Trace. She encourages readers to support the Trace and donate to the park. Thank you, Andra! She's on her way to becoming a national writer. Right now, she's on a national book tour, getting great publicity. I wonder if she's already been to Asheville. I could learn a lot about marketing books from her.





Kephart Exhibit Opens At Cultural Center In Asheville

Article Courtesy Of The Asheville Citizen Times Emily Patrick

Next time you hike in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, thank Horace Kephart, advocate for the park, avid outdoorsman and student of Appalachian customs. He's also the subject of an exhibit at the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources that recently opened.

Best known for his books *Camping and Woodcraft* and *Our Southern Highlanders*, Kephart meticulously cataloged his adventures in the forests near Asheville with tips from people he met there in the early 1900s. Some of the gear he used during his explorations is on display at NCDCCR, including the prototype for the Kephart Sheath Knife, a design still used in the outdoors. Other camping items in the exhibit include shoes, fishing lures, a lantern and map-making equipment.



Two Rescued From Park's Backcountry

By Caitlin Worth - GSMNP news release

Great Smoky Mountains National Park rangers and members of the Tennessee Highway Patrol Special Operations and Aviation Section rescued two individuals from the park's backcountry near the Spence Field Shelter on a recent Saturday. At 6:10 a.m. park dispatch received a call from an Appalachian Trail thru-hiker advising of a pair of hikers in distress near Spence Field Shelter.

The hikers, a father and son, got separated from a third member of their party while trying to make their way from Derrick Knob Shelter to Spence Field Shelter on Friday night, a distance of 6.3 miles. After leaving Derrick Knob the weather deteriorated and the hikers were left traversing over rocky terrain in the dark, driving rain and thunderstorms. Only one member of the party made it to Spence Field Shelter as planned.



photo courtesy of Wild South

CMC's Conservation Committee Needs Your Help

By Lenny Bernstein

One of CMC's objectives is to encourage the conservation of our natural scenery. Our Conservation Committee spearheads this effort. Their task is particularly challenging at this time because the U. S. Forest Service is revising the Nantahala-Pisgah National Forest Management Plan - forests where most of our hikes and trail-maintenance activities take place. Forest Plans are massive documents, which establish multi-use goals and objectives, including desired future conditions, for the next 10-15 years. They deal with issues such as which parts of the Forest are suitable for timber harvest and how many and what types of trail the Forest will maintain.

We sometimes forget that National Forests are managed very differently from National Parks. The mission of the National Park Service is to manage parks in a way that "will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." The mission of the Forest Service is "to achieve quality land management under the sustainable multi-use management concept to meet the diverse needs of people." Thus, the Forest Service can and does permit large scale growing and cutting of parts of the land it manages, multi-use (hikers, bicyclists, and horses) on trails, and a variety of other practices that are not allowed in National Parks.

To protect both Western North Carolina's natural beauty, and the CMC hikers' experiences, we need to be as involved in the National Forest planning process as we can. This requires reading, evaluating, and commenting on planning documents, building coalitions with other forest users, and educating both club members and the public on the importance of the decisions that the Forest Service is making.

For the past few years, almost all the work of the Conservation Committee has been done by two very dedicated CMC members: Ruth Hartzler and Tish Desjardins. As the Nantahala-Pisgah Forest Plan moves into its final stages of development, Ruth and Tish cannot do all that needs to be done. They need help from other CMC members. CMC members have the skills: reviewing maps, itemizing valuable features of trails, learning about recreation management, wildlife management and timber management, communicating hikers' needs and the Club's positions, and others. If you are willing to participate in this critical task, please contact one of them.



Take Food Hiking Survey For Article

By Jan Onan

Happy spring, hikers!

I am working on a research project, so I am gathering information to find out what food and beverages you bring on the trail using SurveyMonkey. Think about both for day hikes and long term hikes as well as brand names of store bought items.

The survey is only 10 questions. My goal is to write an article for Trail to Every Classroom for ATC and eventually write an e-Book once I gather enough info. The survey is limited in scope, so if you would like to write more details, please email me with more specific information. Please pass the survey on to other hikers you know! Thank you for helping me out!! <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/K95QVPP>

Near Waynesville New Rest Area Being Built

By Bruce Bente

A new rest area is being built on US 23/74 near Waynesville. It is on the southbound side of the highway, and apparently will open in May (although it looks like they've

got a lot of work to do before they can open it). When the new rest area is open, the existing one on the other side of the highway will be used for northbound traffic only. The sign in the photo explains more.



Send eNews articles to eNews@carolinamountainclub.org

The newsletter will go out the last Friday of every month. The deadline to submit news is the Friday before it goes out.

The next issue will come out on Friday, May 29, so send your news by Friday evening at 9 P.M. before the newsletter comes out, that is, by Friday evening, May 22, to Kathy Kyle at eNews@carolinamountainclub.org. Include your email address at the end of your story. Thank you.

Westgate parking - Park in the northernmost part of the lot - past EarthFare, in the last row of parking spaces.

To join Carolina Mountain Club go to: www.carolinamountainclub.org. Click on "Join CMC" on the right side. Follow the instructions. Send all address and email changes to Gale O'Neal at gogalemail@gmail.com. Do not resubscribe yourself to the eNews. That will be done automatically. If you are a non-member subscriber, you need to go back to the eNews and make the change yourself.

Kathy Kyle

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