In 1943, when the North Shore Road project was first proposed, probably no one imagined that 63 years later there would still be so much controversy surrounding it. The road was promised to replace a previously existing road that had been flooded by the construction of Fontana Dam. The National Park Service has released a long awaited DEIS regarding the construction of this road in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Five alternatives are under consideration. The first is no action. The second is a monetary settlement of $52 million to Swain County. The third is to build a picnic area at the end of the existing road. The fourth is to partially build the road. The fifth is to build the complete 34.3 mile road through the park. The Carolina Mountain Club supports the monetary settlement alternative. Five hearings were scheduled and represented the last opportunity for public input in this matter. Five CMC members attended the hearing in Swain County on February 2. At this hearing, the majority of the speakers were in favor of the settlement. Although the National Park Service’s Environmental Impact Statement ultimately concludes that the road would not create major impairment to the park, many feel that the geology is too fragile and unstable for the road. Also many found the $590 million projected price of the road to be prohibitive. Various newspapers have called it a "disaster in the making."
Trail Maintainers clear trails at Sandburg Home

A major ice storm in mid-December blew trees down over much of upstate South Carolina and Western North Carolina and left thousands without power. Among the casualties were five miles of hiking trails at the Carl Sandburg Home in Flat Rock near Hendersonville. Known as Connemara, the Sandburg home is a National Historic Site and the trails are regularly maintained by our club members.

On December 28th and 30th of 2005, Bill Newton’s Trail Maintainers and other volunteers worked extensively to clear these trails and open the park once again for the public. Five chainsaw crews cut and stacked many downed limbs and trees and chipped five and a half dump truck loads of wood chips to be hauled away from Connemara. A few days later, according to Bill Newton, wind storms closed all the trails again, but with much less damage. On January 17th, 18th, and 19th, several small crews returned to remove downed trees and open the trails once again. Several rangers at Connemara have retired and without volunteer help it would be much more difficult for them to maintain the trails.

In the National Park Service Report of January 20, 2006, the Carolina Mountain Club was lauded for these efforts. Once again our Trail Maintainers have made us proud.

National Forests for sale?

A new threat has arisen for the conservation of our region. The FY 2007 Federal Budget proposes to fund rural school and road maintenance with the sale of over 300,000 acres of United States Forest Service land. 6,615 acres of this proposed sale will come from the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests. At the February 27 Council meeting, the following decision was made:

The Carolina Mountain Club opposes the block sale of United States Forest Service land to fund the extension of the Secure Rural Schools & Community Self-Determination Act for the following reasons:

• The large-scale sale of increasingly scarce real estate for the purpose of offsetting short-term financial deficits is unwise and self-defeating in the long run.

• Sale or other transfer of public land should not be linked arbitrarily to a specific, immediate operational need such as the Rural Schools program. Disposition of land should be considered on its own merits.

• If certain National Forest parcels are deemed truly unproductive and not likely to meet the needs of the public as Forest Service lands now or in the future, they should first be offered to other governmental entities or non-profits, such as states or land trusts, to protect the lands for future public benefit, or else exchanged for more important land.

Public comments are being accepted. Two informational contacts are Cindy Carpenter, Public Relations Person for Pisgah National Forest, 828-877-3265, and Bob Gale with Western North Carolina Alliance, bbg@wnca.org.

North Shore Road

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Don Waltons attends trail coalition meeting

Don Walton is a former CMC president, current Webmaster, past E-News editor, MST Trail Maintenance coordinator, and one of our busiest members. On December 9-11, 2005, Don attended the strategic planning meeting of the Southeastern Footpaths Trail Coalition at Cottara Lodge in Chattooga, Ga. The coalition is working to build a network of trails spanning nine southeastern states. In a recent conversation, Don explained that the coalition included representatives from trail and hiking organizations all over the Southeast. Their ultimate goal is to tie together 5000 miles of trail from Florida to Virginia. One of the results of that objective would be closing the gap in the Mountains to the Sea trail in the middle of North Carolina. This is an unprecedented undertaking and new ground is being broken. Don was placed on the Intern Executive Committee, a group that would work to insure the sustainability of the project.

LET’S GO PRODUCTION CHANGES

Beginning in this quarter’s edition, the editorial and production responsibilities for our newsletter have changed hands. Stuart English will take over the editorial duties. Jean Reese will produce the newsletter. Stuart is a relatively new club member and an enthusiastic hiker. He is a native of the area and currently lives in Brevard. He has a BA in English from East Carolina University and an Associate’s in Social Services from AB Tech. Stuart volunteers weekly at the VA hospital.

Jean Reese publishes a bed and breakfast directory for Unitarian Universalists with CMC directory for Unitarian Universalists with CMC. She is an active volunteer at Evergreen Community Charter School where her son, Jonathan, 6, is a kindergarten student, and is married to musician Vance Reese (organist at Temple Beth Ha-Taphila, principal bassist with the Asheville Symphony Orchestra). The family lives at Westwood cohousing community in West Asheville.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SHERMAN!

Some hikes are more special than others. On December 7, 2005, Ken and Carol Deal led the club’s annual cookie hike in the Bent Creek Arboretum area. Each hiker was instructed to bring some homemade goodies to share. This cookie hike had two added meanings: 1) the importance of being close to the birthday of one our most beloved members. 2) the club’s annual cookie hike will be continued.

Sherman Stanbury, the oldest active member of the club, would soon be 85 years young. Ken and Carol gave Sherman a big cookie on a stick. Sherman routinely walks three miles a day in his neighborhood in order to continue hiking with the club. In an interview with our club newsletter, Sherman said that he had completed an eight mile hike the day before with the club in the Turkey Pen area. Sherman is living proof of what we could have to look forward to in our later years.
Hike on the P400  *Note early start time.

HALF-DAY No. H0602-009
April 16 1:15 PM.
Hike 4.4, Drive 15, Rated C-C

HALF-DAY No. H0602-153
April 26 9:05 AM.
Hike 5, Drive 40, 600 ft. ascent, Rated C-C

HALF-DAY No. H0602-464
April 9 1:30 PM.
Hike 8.9, Drive 80, 2000 ft. ascent, Rated B-A
HALF-DAY No. H0602-439
July 2 10:00 AM.
Hike 200, Drive 200, Rated C

HALF-DAY No. A0602-220
June 17-18 8:00 AM.
Hike 13.7, Drive 250, 3500 ft. ascent, Rated AA-AA

BACKPACK NO. A0602-208
June 17-18 1:00 PM.
Hike 15, Drive 100, Rated B-A

TOPICS:
1. Strenuous hike
2. Moderate hike
3. Easy hike

Hike 400  *Note later start time.

Note later start time. We will hike from the Roaring Creek Road to Yellow Mountain Gap, which at which point we join the AT, along an open ridge to Little Hump Mtn. and on to Hump Rock, from where we will have a grand view of the basin at 5587 ft. We return to Yellow Mt. Gap and take the Overmountain Victory Loop back to the trailhead. The fabulous vistas and meadows full of flowers make the drive moderately strenuous hike very worthwhile. Topo: Carver’s Gap, White Rocks Mtn.

HALF-DAY SUNDAY HIKES

All hikes submitted by Paula Robbins, 828-281-3253, paularw@bellsouth.net.

HALF-DAY No. H0602-101
April 9 1:00 PM.
Hike 3.9, Drive 44, 700 ft. ascent, Rated C-C

HALF-DAY No. H0602-454
April 19 1:00 PM.
Hike 6, Drive 600, 600 ft. ascent, Rated C-C

HALF-DAY No. H0602-009
April 16 1:15 PM.
Hike 4.4, Drive 15, Rated C-C

HALF-DAY No. H0602-009
April 16 8:30 AM.
Hike 9, Drive 40, Rated B-A

HALF-DAY No. H0602-195
April 9 8:30 AM.
Hike 9, Drive 40, Rated B-A

HALF-DAY No. H0602-208
June 17-18 1:00 PM.
Hike 15, Drive 100, Rated B-A

HALF-DAY No. H0602-220
June 17-18 8:00 AM.
Hike 13.7, Drive 250, 3500 ft. ascent, Rated AA-AA

Ruth Hartzler, 828-251-0886, ruthhin@bellsouth.net

P400 Note later start time.

This hike is designed for photography and is timed for the peak of bloom for the rare pink-sheen azaleas. Expect to see many other flowering plants and wildflowers on this hike with many stops for pictures and sight-seeing. Second meeting place: Pisgah Ranger District. For information, contact John Gallemore, jackfitzgerald@charter.net.
June 7 Big East Fork, Art Loeb Trail, Shining Creek Loop 8:00 AM Hike 13, Drive 70, 2800 ft. ascent, Rated A-A 
Tom Sanders, 252-252-6327, tom2y2@charter.net 
*Note later start time. We will start with a round trip and down Mt. Pisgah stopping to enjoy the view, and then follow back a beautiful section of the MST north-bound to Bent Creek Gap. Expect good views along the route. Car shuttle. Second meeting place: BRP French Broad over-look at 8:40 AM. Topos: Cruso, Dunsmore Mtn.; also Natl. Geo. PRD map & MST Profiles, pg. 53-55.

AYE #2006-0063 June 7 Big East Fork, Art Loeb Trail, Shining Creek Loop 8:00 AM Hike 13, Drive 70, 2800 ft. ascent, Rated A-A 
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