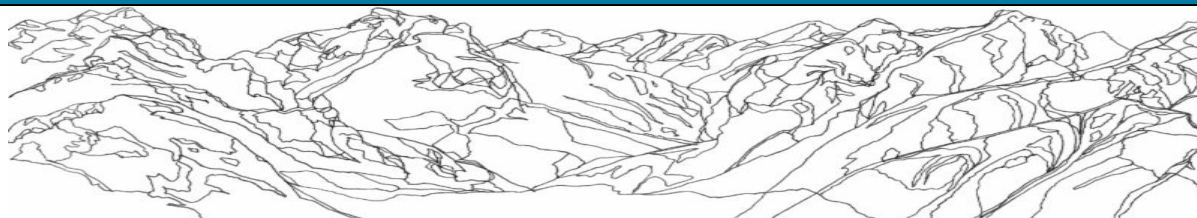


**From:** Carolina Mountain Club <enews@carolinamountainclub.org>

**Subject:** January 2015 Enews

**Preheader:**

**Reply:** enews@carolinamountainclub.org



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January 2015

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**Plants On The Trail**

## Identifying Plants In The Winter

**By Becky Smucker**

How can you even think about trying to identify plants in the winter when nothing is blooming and leaves are dead? Let's see if I can make a case for why you might want to give it a try.

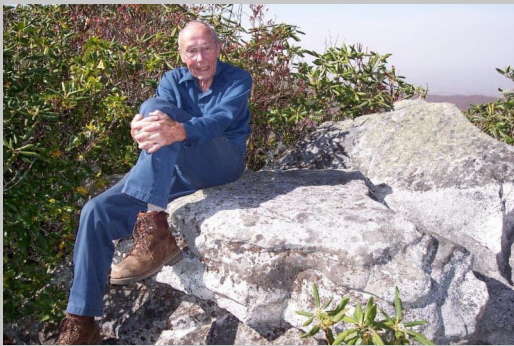
First, and most obvious, many plants look pretty much the same all year round, so you may as well learn them in the winter when other plants aren't competing for your attention.

Several groups of plants are all evergreen, and some other groups have representative evergreens. We think of evergreens as trees, but there are also evergreen vines, shrubs, ferns, club mosses, and mosses. All of these groups have significant numbers of representative plants that can be learned in the winter, and knowing which are evergreen can be a piece of information that helps identify them.

Winter plant identification will broaden your repertoire of observation skills. For deciduous trees, for example, without leaves you will look at a whole different set of traits: habitat, growth shape and general habit, and bark, twig and bud details including odor. This is a great time of year to learn ferns, club mosses, and mosses, since with other ground level plants withered back, those that are still green will catch your eye. Many flowering plants retain remnants of their fruits in the winter. You may find yourself rummaging in

the leaf litter for various kinds of evidence. All of this will stay with you when spring and summer come around, and will add to your plant identification skills in all seasons.

Lastly, it's all too easy to think of plants as dormant and unchanging in the winter. While it's true that change happens more slowly, the fact is that in our climate, plants are continuing to develop in some ways through the winter. If you pay attention, you will see buds on many woody plants change and start swelling well before spring arrives. Twigs and bark can change color and texture. Some of our "weeds" and mosses continue their growth and development right through the winter, and a couple of our orchids have leaves ONLY in the colder months. Even if a plant is showing nothing above ground during cold weather, it may be busy preparing underground for spring growth, and an unusually warm spell can cause it to send up early shoots. So winter study can expand your understanding of how plants behave. I will be leading a hike on February 8 that will focus on plant ID in the winter. While we will also try to get some good exercise, we will stop now and then to talk about the plants we see and can identify. This will be focused on beginning level winter ID, but more advanced interested folks are also invited, as there is always more to learn, and we can teach each other. The hike is limited to 10 people, so email me if you'd like to reserve a spot. I look forward to hearing from you! [bjsmucker@gmail.com](mailto:bjsmucker@gmail.com)



## Howard McDonald, Maintainers Honored

By Lenny Bernstein

The Friday Trail crew hosted a pot-luck lunch to honor Howard McDonald, who was celebrating his 89th birthday, and the 15 other active or recently retired trail maintainers over 80-years-old. Howard has accumulated an amazing 9,067 of volunteer work-hours over his career. Lou Blodgett, who is older than Howard, is second with 6,541 volunteer hours, and, in total, our 16

octogenarians - 10 of whom are still active - have accumulated 53,951 volunteer work hours, a truly impressive accomplishment.

Howard's contributions to the club include serving as CMC President for two years, and as our representative to Appalachian Trail Conservancy for many years after that. He was our first Trail Facilities Manager, and it was that role we got to hear most about. The way the trail maintainers told it, Howard likes to build things. Howard also is an engineer, which means he has strong ideas about how things should be built. But Howard is not the only trail maintainer who is an engineer with strong ideas about how things should be built. As Skip Sheldon tells it, this has led to many interesting discussions over the years - we wouldn't want to call them arguments. But in the end, Howard usually got his way - and he was usually right.



You can't walk CMC's section of the Appalachian Trail without seeing Howard's handiwork. He designed Roaring Fork Shelter. He designed the wheelchair accesses, moldering privies, and bear cables at each of the shelters on CMC's section. For the privies, Howard thought it is was silly to backpack in 55-gallon drums of woodchips, as other clubs do. He realized that dried leaves would do just as well, so our shelter maintainers collect leaves - which are free and very available - instead of having the back-breaking job of carrying woodchips to the shelter. Bear cables were first installed at shelters in the Smokies, but Howard thought their design was too weak, so he strengthened them. When the Smokies saw Howard's design, they adopted it. Howard supervised the construction of the Fireskald Bald relo, giving CMC's section of the A.T. some of the best views in the Southern Appalachians. While the crew was working on the relo, he always be moaned the fact that a large rock, which would have made a great lunch and view spot, was vertical rather than horizontal. On the last day of work on the relo, the crew tipped the rock, which had become known as Howard's Rock, into place, creating the rest spot Howard always envisioned. Rumor has it that trail elves will install a brass plaque honoring Howard some dark night.

The Asheville Citizen Times also featured Howard. The story can be found [here](#):



## Meet John Whitehouse - A Leader By Example

By - Ann Hendrickson

I have the good fortune of having John as my Section Maintenance Supervisor, and sitting on the Trail Maintenance Committee with him. Some CMC members may not have yet met John. If one hikes at all in the Black Mountains, undoubtedly they are witness to John's (personal) 2,000 hours of trail maintenance, and the carefully monitored work done on 19 MST sections. It is my pleasure to "share" a bit of John's background.

Please tell us about your getting involved with the CMC trail crew. I know that you are a Section Maintainer, Section Leader, and the Monday Crew leader...how did all of this evolve? How many hours a month do you average on CMC maintenance?

I joined CMC while still living in SC. My wife Sandy and I had decided to retire to the Asheville area and we purchased land in Yancey County and started building a house. In late 2005 I took one of the CMC sponsored chainsaw certification classes. In February 2006 I joined John Soldati's Wednesday Crew. The first day out John asked me to saw. He and I played "leap-frog" sawing downed trees on the AT between Hurricane Gap and Allen Gap. It was windy and cold but I loved it! A few years later my teaching schedule made it difficult to go out Wednesdays so I joined Barth Brooker's Monday Crew. Both John and Barth were excellent mentors for me. Besides learning about trail work I was also introduced to dozens of trails I would never have found on my own. Trail work is my exercise program, my "gym". I average about 35 hours per month on CMC activities.

Another great aspect of the crews is the many interesting people you meet. I've learned so much from folks like Jorge Munoz, Don Christensen, Dave Roberts, and many others. As Barth taught me the crew objectives are (1) have fun, (2) enjoy socializing and (3) get some work done! I became a Section Maintainer about eight years ago thanks to Don Walton. I had noticed that the Big Butt trail, which is only ten minutes from my house, did not have a SM. I approached Don and he cleverly made me an offer. He'd let me and my wife become Section Maintainers on this trail IF we agreed to take the MST section from Black Mountain Campground to Higgins Bald. He was having trouble finding someone to do this section so we agreed. Big Butt trail, from the BRP (at Walker Knob Overlook) to Cane River Gap on NC 197, is my favorite trail. It has incredible wildflowers and a fantastic view of the Black Mountains from Little Butt. We hike it several times a year and do our best, with the help of crew members, to keep it clear. Please describe how you see your role as a Section Leader. What is the most frustrating part of this "job"? What is the most rewarding? How long have you been in this position? How many MST Section Maintainers report to you? Is there high turnover with Section Maintainers? Do you have to train Section Maintainers? How do you recruit new ones? Barth asked me to take over the MST Section Leader position in late 2013. There are 19 sections from the Folk Art Center to Black Mountain Campground with one to three maintainers for each. By and large we have a great group of maintainers on these sections of the MST with very little turnover. I've been able to fill vacancies fairly easily. I've been particularly impressed with Rocko Smucker's work on his section from Rich Knob to Potato Field Gap. He put more than 500 hours into trail maintenance in 2014! The majority of these hours were on his section. It has been a pleasure to get to know the maintainers and to work with them on projects with the Monday Crew. There are several different CMC Maintenance crews, tell us about the Monday crew, how many crew members? How long has the crew been together? What trails does this crew focus on? Are you recruiting new members? The Monday Crew has been around for a long time. Barth led the crew before he asked me to take over. We are a smaller crew with typically six to ten folks out on any given work day. Most of our members are based out of Burnsville so we tend to work the northern side of the area covered by CMC. This includes the AT from Devil's Fork Gap to Spivey Gap and the MST from the Folk Art Center to Black Mountain Campground. We do have a number of Asheville members and welcome new recruits. Besides the AT and MST we focus on Forest Service trails in the Appalachian Ranger District (ARD) including Douglas Falls, Shelton Laurel trails, and trails on the Black Mou

mountains. Of course some of the other CMC crews work these trails as well so I try to coordinate our efforts to prevent duplication.

A few years ago a number of CMC members in the Burnsville area formed the NC High Peaks Trail Association to develop and promote trails in Yancey County. We are a separate 501c(3) organization. I lead a monthly trail crew for High Peaks which allows us to focus on trails outside the normal CMC range. Our organization does virtually all the trail work on the Black Mountain Crest Trail (outside Mt. Mitchell SP) and the numerous feeder trails. We have also taken responsibility for an MST section between Black Mountain Campground to NC 80. High Peaks is not in competition with CMC in any way. We feel we are a junior partner promoting and caring for trails in an area adjacent to that traditionally maintained by CMC. High Peaks is also the official Friends of Mount Mitchell SP organization. I've enjoyed working with the rangers at the state park on several projects. Currently we are installing a new webcam near the summit. CMC financed the original webcam which has been out of action for several years. John, a lot of people assume that people "retire" from hiking to take on a section of trail to maintain. Are you an active hiker now? Do you have a favorite trail? I actually got interested in trail work before becoming an active hiker. My wife and I participate in local hikes and hike a lot on our own. I have led some hikes for CMC in the Black Mountains and hope to do so again. Leading hikes has shown me how much work and responsibility is placed on the hike leader. It is not unlike what crew leaders deal with. I've already mentioned Big Butt as my favorite trail but a close second is the Black Mountain Crest Trail. The seclusion and sense of remoteness on the trail really attract me. The section from Winter Star Mountain north to Celo Knob is particularly beautiful and less hiked than the section in the state park. A lot of people are "transplants" or "migrants" to the mountains. Can you please tell us what you did for "pay" prior to your committing to all your CMC duties? How did we get so lucky to have you a) join the club) and b) make such a tremendous commitment to serve? Besides CMC, do you have other passions? I am a retired nuclear engineer. I spent 30 plus years in the civilian nuclear power and government nuclear weapons industries. The work was fascinating and challenging. My last full-time job was at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina. Towards the end of that career we started looking for mountain land/home in western NC and eastern TN. We really like Yancey County. Our home sits at nearly 4000 feet with a clear view of the Blacks from Deep Gap to Mount Mitchell. To keep my brain active I teach math and physical science as a part-time adjunct professor at Mars Hill University. When we have a little time we travel. If there is one recommendation or suggestion you could make to CMC club members what would that be? Take a hike! Get outside as much as you can. If you feel physically able try working on a CMC maintenance crew!

## Dogs On Trails - What Are The Rules?

By Kathy Kyle

Pets are not allowed on CMC hikes and in National Parks, but what are the rules for dogs on the trails? The rules are complicated. It depends on where and when you are hiking.

Dogs have to be on leashes in state parks such as DuPont State Park unless they are a hunting dog. The rule states: "Except in designated areas, no person shall have any dog, cat or other pet upon a State Forest or Educational

State Forest unless the animal is on a leash and under the control of the owner or some other person.

Hunting dogs used in accordance with NC Wildlife Commission Game Land Rules pertaining to State Forests are exempt from this rule." See rules [here](#)

. Wilderness areas? In Shining Rock and Linville Gorge wilderness areas, dogs must be on "leash or under control." See rules [here](#)

. If you are in a national forest dogs are not required to be on leashes. "National forest guidelines require that dogs be on a six-foot leash at all times when in developed recreation areas and on interpretive trails. There are no leash requirements in the general forest areas." See rules [here](#)

. Montreat? According to the rules and regulations on the website: "please keep pets under control at



all times." See rules

here. In South Carolina State Parks, the rules state "Pets are allowed in most outdoor areas provided they are kept under physical restraint or on a leash not longer than six feet. Owners will be asked to remove noisy or dangerous pets or pets that threaten or harass wildlife. Pets are not allowed in or around cabins, cabin areas or other lodging facilities." See rules here. The Blue Ridge Parkway rules state: •

"Pets. Dogs and other pets must be on a leash or under physical restraint at all times while in the Park. The territorial instinct of dogs can lead to fights with other dogs on the trail. Dogs also frighten hikers and chase wildlife. If a pet cannot be kept under control, it should be left at home." For Bent Creek Experimental Forest, the rules state: •

"Federal regulations require dogs to be contained or on a leash no longer than six feet in developed recreational areas. This public land regulation applies to the Lake Powhatan Recreational area and paved parking areas. It is also unlawful to allow dogs to run unleashed from March 1 until the Monday on or nearest October 15 (Public Lands Bear Sanctuary Regulations)."



APPALACHIAN TRAIL  
CONSERVANCY®

March 27-29

## ATC Spring Partnership Meeting To Be Held

Because the Appalachian Trail Conference (ATC)'s Southern Regional Office (SORO) is located in Asheville, many CMC members have close ties with ATC's regional staff. However, as a club, our official link with ATC is through the Deep South Regional Partnership Committee (RPC), which includes the four other A.T. -maintaining clubs in Tennessee, North Carolina, and Georgia.

The Deep South RPC meets twice a year. In the Spring, its meeting is held in conjunction with the Virginia Area RPC, made up of the seven clubs that maintain the A.T. from the southern end of Shenandoah National Park to the Tennessee border. These Southern Partnership Meetings alternate between locations in Virginia and the Deep South. This year, on March 27-29, it will be held at the Lutheridge Conference Center, near the junction of Airport and Hendersonville Roads, in Arden. All CMC members are welcome to attend to learn more about ATC and the issues it is dealing with.

The overall schedule for the Spring Partnership Meeting includes: •

Friday, March 27: A partnership hike - details to be announced. •

Friday evening: A discussion of the potential impact of the release of the film *A Walk in the Woods* on use of the A.T. and ways in which ATC could address the anticipated increase in Trail use. •

Saturday morning, March 28: Reports from ATC Chair of the Board, Sandi Marra, and Executive Director, Ron Tipton; the National Park Service; and Forest Service on issue of importance to the A.T. •

Saturday lunchtime: Volunteer and Partner of the Year awards. •

Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning, March 29, parallel Deep South and Virginia Area RPC meetings to discuss: •

Specific plans for responding to the projected increase in hikers on the A.T. as the result of *A Walk in the Woods*, • Efforts to restructure ATC's biennial meetings, •

ATC's draft policy on pipeline crossings - this is not an issue of immediate concern to the Deep South, but one which ATC's three other regions are dealing with on a day-by-day basis, •

Work plans for ATC regional staff, and •

A.T. Community requests. Lenny Bernstein and Tom Weaver will represent CMC at the Deep South RPC Meeting, but the Club has only one vote. Ann Hendrickson also plans to attend. You are welcome to attend as much of the meeting as you wish. There is no registration fee, but you will have to pay for meals at Lutheridge. If you plan to stay, a single occupancy room plus meals for the two nights is \$235; double occupancy is \$170 per person. You will have to make reservations by Feb. 20 by sending a check made out to Appalachian Trail Conservancy to Kayah Gaydish at SORO. Please let Lenny Bernstein know if you plan to attend any or all of the meeting so that he can provide you with more information as it becomes available.



At Diamond Brand

## Koepplinger To Recount Adventure

The Ageless Adventurer, Carroll Koepplinger, will recount how his anticipated 'adventure' on the sparsely traveled GR78 (La voie de Piemont in the foothills of the Pyrenees) became a 'challenging adventure'.

The presentation at Diamond Brand will be Feb. 24, 2015 at 6 p.m. at the new location at 1378 Hendersonville Rd. Asheville. (immediately north of the BRP)

## CMC Maintainers: Hours Of Work On MST

The following CMC trail maintainers completed 75 or more hours of volunteer work on the Mountain to Sea Trail in 2014.

Bob Beach (203 hrs)

Jake Blood (106) (\*Cynthia Blood had 54 hrs)

Piet Bodenhorst (174)

Les Love (68 trail work hours, admin Task Force Leader hrs pending)

Mel Skiles (346)

John Whitehouse (170)

Lewis Blodgett (108 hrs)

John Busse (109)

Tim Clark (119)

Jeffrey Dektor (136)

Richard Evans (399)

Bill Falender (271)

Rick Gloor (110)

Ann Hendrickson (211)

Joe Lappin (89)

Bob Lindsey (311)

Peter Litvinchyk (77)

Bill Otto (165)

Keith Pope (90)

Tom Reeder (130)

Skip Sheldon (153)

Rocko Smucker (450)

Larry Sobil (146)

Wayne Steinmetz (202)

Mary Swain (124)

Philip Swartz (141)

Paul Thraikill (96)

Tom Weaver (173)

Bob Williams (92)

Mike Williams (178)



Send eNews articles to [eNews@carolinamountainclub.org](mailto: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, February 27, so send your news by Friday evening at 9 P.M. before

the newsletter comes out, that is, by Friday evening February 20, to Kathy Kyle at [eNews@carolinamountainclub.org](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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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