Eighteen CMC members attend Appalachian Trail Conservancy conference

During eight days in July, 18 CMC members attended the Appalachian Trail Conservancy Conference at Ramapo College in New Jersey. Workshops and hikes were scheduled daily. Those who think that CMC hikes are a rugged lot should try hiking in New Jersey. Hikes at the conference were rated by terrain, distance, elevation gain, and pace. A fast hiker usually covered three miles an hour. One of our faster hike leaders was told he needed to speed up.

The ATC Conference takes place every two years. The next one will be held July 17-24 at Castillo State College in Castleton, Vermont. More info can be found at www.ventom2009.org.

Annual Dinner and Photo Contest

All members and their guests are enthusiastically invited to attend our Annual Dinner and Meeting on Saturday evening, November 3. The event will include a social hour with appetizers and punch, dinner, our annual business meeting, and then the long-awaited showing and awarding of prizes for the Club photo contest. For example, you may send your digital pictures into the contest just as they come from your camera...no fiddling with image sizes now. All you need to do is rename your picture with your name and category as in this example: gmNabb_wildlife.jpg, for identification and category purposes.

A complete list of rules can be found at a link on the CMC web page. If you wish, you may enter one picture in each of our five categories. Prizes had not been announced at press time. Judging will be done by CMC officers.

THE PRESIDENT’S CORNER

The last few months have brought much good news on the protection of our hiking areas.

In May, the State of New Carolina finalized the purchase of Chimney Rock for inclusion in the new Hickory Nut Gorge State Park, protecting this icon forever.

In June, Dale Dittmann, Superintendent of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, announced that he would be recommending cash settlement with Swain County instead of a formal settlement with Swain County. It looks like there is finally light at the end of the tunnel to nowhere.

Also in July, North Carolina Governor Michael Easley signed a bill allocating $128 million over the next two years for land and water conservation projects. It’s less than the $1 billion over five years that we were campaigning for, but still a real commitment.

CMC, through our Conservation Committee, was a partner in the efforts to achieve all three of these goals. A heart-felt thank you goes to all of the CMC members who helped by speaking at public meetings, writing letters, or raising public awareness. You have made a difference.
CMC enters partnership with Land-of-Sky Regional Council

At its July 24 meeting, the CMC Council agreed to enter a partnership with the Land-of-Sky Regional Council, which represents Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties.

The partnership will allow our trail maintainers, both trail crews and individual members, to become part of the Retired and Senior Volunteers Program (RSVP), and become eligible for that program’s benefits.

Full immersion trail maintenance

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy has a program that utilizes volunteers to maintain remote sections of the AT in the Smokies. The program involves several days of backpacking and is called the Smokies Wilderness Elite A.T. (SWEAT) Crew. Gary Elben, Community Outreach Manager of Diamond Brand Outdoors and CMC member, recently participated in this effort and recounted his experience to us:

For six days in July I was a member of a SWEAT Crew working on the AT from Tri Corner Knob Shelter North towards Inadu Knob. Those of you who do trail work are quite familiar with the tools and techniques. I especially liked combining trail work with camping out for five nights.

The AT Conservancy provided our food and our leaders, and we four volunteers ranging in age from 17 to 57 (me) had a great time working in the rain and mud, expressing ourselves with pulaskis, fire rakes and swing blades. We built water bars, steps, relocated trail and knocked back a few acres of blackberry bushes. We camped 220 paces up from the AT shelter (I counted) and had our breakfasts and suppers at the shelter.

Our last night, after dinner, we helped four Tennessee volunteers move the privy. I think I skipped dessert that night. It was good for the soul to see people of different ages and locations who share a love for the outdoors and a willingness to get completely muddy for a good cause. I want to go back next year.

More on the SWEAT crew: Are bears a bit more lonely now?

The SWEAT crew has returned from the backcountry and here are some preliminary numbers. The crew logged 2,992+ volunteer work hours from over 48 volunteers. These folks dug more than 1,745 feet of side hill and cleared at least 27.7 miles of overgrown trail, under the leadership of Hannah-Jacobsen Hardy, Andy Kruse, and Randy Puckett.

Equally impressive was the fact that three thru-hikers stopped by to work a total of 5 crew weeks. So now for some fun numbers—the longest pack in: 11 miles, largest elevation gain: over 4,000 feet, most bee stings in a week: 23, number of rattlesnakes sighted: 3, Elk encounters: 1, Bears: plenty.

The SWEAT crew’s contribution to CMC’s ongoing trail maintenance. Don Walton will report hours worked on trail maintenance to Land-of-Sky for inclusion in their annual statistics.

It will be limited to the trail maintainers who are at least 55 years old and live in one of the four counties covered by Land-of-Sky, but that is almost all of our trail maintainers.

The program provides accident insurance for volunteers while they are volunteering—from the time they leave home to the time they return. It also provides rewards such as free tickets to local theatre events and recognition celebrations.

The partnership will allow our trail maintainers to become part of the Retired and Senior Volunteers Program (RSVP), and become eligible for that program’s benefits.

CMC will take part in Brevard Outdoor Festival Sept. 29

On Saturday, September 29, the Brevard Outdoor Festival will be held in the area around Poppies Market. Poppies is located on Market Street in Straus Park, Hwy 64, and 1.5 miles east of Pisgah Forest.

• From 7 a.m. to noon: great gear swap and sell. Businesses, camps and individuals set up to sell (and swap) outdoor gear and apparel.
• From 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.: speakers, demos, exhibits and music.
• Activities in the Forest or near-by: group road cycling, ride/walk on the new bike trail across from Market Street, beginner climbing trip, waterfall hike, and a CMC-led hike that will begin at 1 p.m.

More about the hike will be announced in the eNews at a later date.

Spring Social and Old Timers set for April 19

Reserve April 19, 2008 for our next Spring Social and Old Timers event at the Arboretum. Dig out old photos, documents, gear, and stories to share. Former members invited. Watch for details.

From the archives—

A look at snippets of past newsletters

Not long after joining our club, most people begin to feel that they have become a part of history and tradition. It is fascinating to imagine what hiking was like over 50 years ago. Here are some random items from old newsletters.

From 1937: Clothing: Low heels are recommended for women. High shoes are better; get a half size larger than usual and wear heavy socks.

Club Trip Regulations: No cars are to start until the leader gives the word and as a rule he rides in the first car. When cars are parked, no one is to start ahead of the leader without definite permission, nor to lag unreasonably far behind the group. In returning, all cars are to wait until leader gives the word before starting.

From 1938: Possum Hunt Leaders: Jimmy Rash and his dogs The hunt will probably take place somewhere off Pole Creek Road. Jimmy promises to catch enough to go around, so have your sweet ‘taters ready.

Driving: A little piece of great gear

Hiking: Around in circles. Climbing: Over all the fences and logs in the woods.

From 1931: Hiking: No pick-up for place; eat and take his place. Not long after joining our club, most people believe that they have become a part of history and tradition. It is fascinating to imagine what hiking was like over 50 years ago. Here are some random items from old newsletters.

[continued on next page]
HALF-DAY SUNDAY HIKES

HALF-day hikes submitted by Paula Robbins, 828- 281-3253, paulaw@bellsouth.net, with the assistance of Ruth Breeding and Ann Gleason. Note: hiking round-trip from Asheville. All hikes assemble at the Westgate Shopping Center parking lot near CVS (Exit 38 off I-240) UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. Some hikes will have secondary descriptions as listed like hike sites.

HALF-DAY NO. H0704-035

Oct. 7

Looking Glass Rock

8:00 AM*

Hike 2.5 miles, Drive 700, 500 ft. ascent, Rated B-R.
Nonmembers, call leader, Ruth Breeding.
828-492-0159, breee_lw@planetusa.net

HALF-DAY NO. H0704-434

Nov. 11

Laurel Mountain Trail 1:00 PM

A moderate hike on the Pisgah National Forest along several trails, including Thrush Cove Trail, Doubletop Creek Trail, and several tributaries.

HALF-DAY NO. H0704-579

Nov. 25

Pump Gaper Loop’s Leap Loop 1:00 PM

We will start at the French Broad River, ascend the Pump Gapper Trail to the Appalachian Trail, follow it south past Lookout’s Loop, with views of springs, and return along the French Broad River to the trailhead.

HALF-DAY NO. H0704-410

Dec. 20

Mountaintop Loop 1:00 PM

This is a moderate hike including the Lookout Loop over Lookout Rock and then following the East Table Trail to Sowgrass Gap. Return will be by the Black Gap Trail, and the Old Table Rock Trail. After the moderate ascent steep ascent and a short rock scramble, we will follow the ridge over several knolls and then return with an easy walk along the Toll and Tollroads. Second meeting place: Parking lot adjacent to Mountainaire in Black Mountain Off Exit 64 of I-40 at 1:15 PM.

HALF-DAY NO. H0704-407

Oct. 28

Blue Ridge Parkway

1:00 PM

This moderate to easy hike starts on the Blue Ridge Parkway near Mt. Mitchell, with great views on top. Second meeting place: Folk Art Center lower parking lot at 1:20 PM.

HALF-DAY NO. H0704-009

Nov. 4

Ox Creek Road to Rattlesnake Ledge 1:00 PM

We will hike up to Rattlesnake Ledge for a great view above town. Second meeting place: Picnic area along Ocoee Rd off of US 64.

HALF-DAY NO. H0704-44

Catawba Loop 1:00 PM

This loop hike will start at FS 1206, go along a ridge trail toward Black Mountain and return via the Laurel Trail. There should be great views of the Mills River Valley. Meet at Westgate at 1:00 PM to form carpools, and meet leader at the North Hills River parking area at 3:00 PM.
Meet leader at Coontree Picnic area at 9:30 AM*.

ALL DAY NO. A0701-372  Oct. 27  Big Fork Ridge Loop Trail
Hike 9.3, Drive 15, 900 ft. ascent, Rated B-C 8:00 AM
Danny Bernson, 828-236-0192, dbernson@charter.net

Notes: This hike starts southward toward Lookout Mountain, but veers north to hike along the side west of the ridge to Sourwood Gap, and then along the east side of the ridge through Long Gap to Pot Cove Gap, the site of an old quarry. By alternating sections of the Old Trestle Trail, the Big Fork Ridge Trail, and the Pot Cove Mountain Club for logging and later for passengers, and the Old Toll Road to Mt. Mitchell, the hike will circumnavigate most of Mt. Mitchell and the Pot Cove Mountain Club.

Other trails in the Mt. Mitchell area, including the Forest Service and the Mt. Mitchell Club, will be joined. We'll carry moderate hike will travel a typical trail and will point out what and how to maintain it. We'll share cookies to eat along the way, too. More detailed information can be found on the MCM website, www.mcm.org.