

Hike • Save Trails • Make Friends

Carolina Mountain Club eNews



March 2024



Meet the Section Rovers Trail Maintenance Crew!

By Priscilla Estes

Section Rovers are roving trail maintainers, a merry band that travels hither and thither on Tuesdays and two Saturdays a month, dispensing brawn, brain, and training to crews in need of a helping hand. Rovers are an outgrowth of the Secondary Trail Program, which Rich Evans started as a training crew (with a “gentle” push from Les Love). Crews appreciated the training and cross pollination of ideas, and Section Rovers was born. “We are section maintainers who help one another,” Rich summarizes. On this cold Saturday in February, we work the heavily used Cat Gap trail, the location for most of CMC’s Quarterly Works Crews this year.

An unsung joy of trail maintenance is the drive: sunrises and views unobstructed by hikers, bikers, or kayakers' vans. Today's journey on US 276 through the Pisgah Forest assails the senses. Through leafless winter trees, thin sun coats Looking Glass Rock like golden butter on whole wheat toast. Miscellaneous waterfalls, quickened by snowmelt, tumble in rainbow crystals. Looking Glass Falls cascades in isolated splendor—not one car parked on the asphalt. Magical.

Jan Onan, co-leader for the Section Rovers, appreciates the aesthetics. "You won't see a better view of Looking Glass Rock in the winter than from Forest Road (FR) 5013," she says, as we stand in the parking lot of the Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education (PCWE, still closed since Tropical Depression Fred in August, 2021.) She adds that Jennifer Pharr Davis once remarked that some people *pay* to drive on forest roads and do trail work—something they can do with us for free!

A raven screams his lungs out, causing two fishermen to look up and laugh. "Maybe that's the same raven that hangs out at John Rock," Jan says. "He picks up sticks and drops them next to people, probably hoping for food." A large heron arrows over the river, looking for breakfast.

"Usually Saturday brings out more than four people," says Evans, co-leader and founder of the Section Rovers. Bob Boyle says, "Maybe it's because it's 31 degrees, Rich!" Bob also works with the Art Loeb crew. His son, Ryan, and grandson, Tyler (a senior honor student at Enka High School), often join the Rovers. Kevin Onan, Jan's other half, is usually here. He and Jan adopted 4.5 miles of Cat Gap Trail, soon to be 5.5 miles once they reclaim part of the biking trail from SORBA—the Southern Off Road Bicycle Association. Maintainers sequence through, based on physical and lifestyle status, something we can all relate to. The Section Rovers hope to welcome back Sallye Sanders, Rich Figura, Mel Skiles, Tim Kurtz, and Kevin Onan soon. Meghan Marty, a recent recipient of the 100-hour hat, is here. She used to be on the Friday crew but got a full-time job as a psychologist with the VA.

Rich asks crew leaders, "When do you want us, and who wants to join?" Last Tuesday the Rovers worked on Dale Gerhardt's section of the Asheville Corridor. Rovers also attend based on where they want to work. "Jennifer Heaslip shows when we work on her section," he adds.

At 8 a.m., trucks loaded with tools, we open the FR 5013 gate at PCWE, and drive a precarious six miles—under a leaner that threatens to truncate antennas, past enormous logs sawed in half, over the lake of clouds that hovers around Brevard—to the intersection of Art Loeb Trail and Cat Gap Loop. The journey takes 30 minutes. A real live mule could probably go more quickly.

Trucks nestled in the trees, Evans sharpens his Pulaski and explains that many trails at Looking Glass are maintained by the Pisgah climbers club, the Pisgah Conservancy, and the Forest Service, using disaster-relief funds. But we are building water diversions on this badly rutted trail, tweaking work done before, with special thanks to the Thursday Crew who logged heavy locust logs a quarter mile down the trail. Rich muses that a step may be in order, and definitely rolling grade dips that funnel water off the trail and not down the middle.

The beauty of trail work in the winter is almost surpassed by the fun of playing in the mud, like kids. Megan loves playing in the dirt. “I sit and talk all day, so this is fun!” she says, as she rakes leaves from a difficult puddle and begins digging a trench. She moved here in December 2022 from Portland, OR, to be closer to family. “My husband found out about trail work online, and suggested it as a good way to meet people and spend time in these pretty mountains.” He doesn’t do trail work (yet).

Jan also loves playing in the dirt. She worked on a farm one year when she was 13 and loved it. She remembers one dig-filled trail work excursion when a hiker asked: “Who are you burying?”

The air fills with dirt as shovels fly. Today’s mud is not frozen, but it’s gloopy. “Like quicksand,” says Rich. We look for places to mine dirt, but most of the mountainside is duff, decaying vegetable matter that clogs the dirt, making it unusable for fill (think peat bog). We admire the existing turnpikes that the Thursday Crew helped build. Turnpikes elevate the trail above wet ground. The technique uses fill material from parallel side ditches and from offsite to build up the trail base higher than the surrounding water table.

On the way out, we pass bicyclers and hikers; the parking lot is full of cars. How wonderful to have beat the rush and gotten some trail work done! Come on out for the great views and the chance to drive on closed-to-the-public forest roads, and you don’t even have to pay for the privilege! Think about joining the Free Rangers too—they fix what pre-hikers tell them needs fixing. And CMC needs section maintainers from Tanyard Gap to Hurricane Gap. Contact Paul Wulfing to get involved at paulwulfingtrailwork@gmail.com !

Educational Hike with Hemlock Restoration Initiative on March 18th

by Jeff Wilcox

Please consider joining an educational hike with staff from the Hemlock Restoration Initiative (HRI) on Monday, March 18th, at 1pm. We will head to the Green River Gamelands and take the ~2-mile, 280’, roundtrip trail to Little Bradley Falls. This hike

has a couple of technical sections and shallow stream crossings. Along the way, HRI leaders will discuss the ecological importance of hemlocks, how to ID them, what is threatening them, and what is being done about it. Jeff Wilcox, a geology professor at UNC Asheville, will talk about the importance of trees and vegetation on streams and flooding. Upon returning to the trailhead, those with time and energy will have the opportunity to add a ~2-mile, 300' roundtrip hike to the Big Bradley Falls overlook. If you opt for the hike to Big Bradley Falls, note that there will be another creek crossing.

We will be limiting the hike to 15 CMC members and, due to limited parking at the trailhead, will be organizing carpools from both the Asheville Outlets in Asheville (12:15pm) and the Blue Ridge Mall in Hendersonville (12:30pm). Please email Education and Outreach Councilor Jeff Wilcox at jwilcox@unca.edu to reserve your spot. To assist with carpool planning please indicate in your RSVP 1) whether you would prefer to carpool from Asheville or Hendersonville, and 2) whether you plan to hike only to Little Bradley Falls or to both Little Bradley and Big Bradley.

An Invitation from our President:

We are in need of a CMC member, who is a CPA, to work with our dedicated treasurer, George Bauernfeind, in a vice-treasurer role, to be another set of eyes on the club's financials, and maybe even step in as treasurer at a much later date. If you feel this might be the perfect way for you to give back and help our amazing 100-year-old club, please send an email to Les at president@carolinamountainclub.org



**John Rock Trail
Workday**

Join the Carolina Mountain Club as we restore this popular trail as part of **Pisgah Project Day!**

**SATURDAY
April
20
9am - 3pm**

REGISTER NOW
<https://carolinamtclub.org/eventform.cfm?eventid=22>

No experience necessary. All are welcome.



CMC100th.org

The poster features a central photograph of a person in a yellow shirt and blue pants using a shovel to dig a trench in a wooded area. The background is a dark green color with white text and a QR code. The overall design is clean and informative.



Save the Date - May 25th - for CMC Spring Social and Picnic!

When: Saturday, May 25, 2024, 11:00 am

Where: Lake Julian Park (directions to follow closer to the picnic)

Who: CMC Members, Friends, and Families

Yes, it is Memorial Day weekend, but what better time to bring all your visiting guests to a fun, friendly, music filled event in a beautiful setting.

Chef Tim will be grilling, and you will be dazzled by all of the wonderful potluck dishes provided by CMC members and guests!

We hope to see you there!

Waynesville Wednesday Crew Builds New Trails for North Canton Elementary School

by Chris Werbylo and Donna Bange



It is not every day that a CMC trail maintenance crew is able to design and build brand new hiking trails. Behind North Canton Elementary School was two acres of untouched mountain terrain. This past summer, Niki Paganelli, 5th Grade Teacher, approached CMC about building hiking trails on the unused land for educational, physical education and recreational purposes. Niki had previously volunteered at a CMC event for new trail maintainers and was familiar with CMC. She contacted the CMC Website and ultimately Priscilla Estes connected her to Chris Werbylo (Waynesville Wednesday Trail Crew Leader). Chris, a retired school teacher, could hardly say no to the request.

Canton, which is in Haywood County, is part of the geography that the Waynesville Wednesday crew serves.

Chris commented that it has been exciting to design and build a trail from scratch. “We met with Niki to understand the school’s needs and expectations. They wanted to be able to take classes and walk the trails for students ages 5 to 11 along with their parents and grandparents. Likewise, the teachers wanted the hiking trails to enable them to explain first hand the bio-diversity in western North Carolina. The two acres had considerable undergrowth, poison ivy, vines and invasive species. We decided to wait until late Fall, after the cold weather settled in, before we could start.”

The Wednesday crew spent considerable time mapping out potential hiking trails respected the inherent bio-diversity of the land while providing safe and comfortable hiking trails. This trail design was not for the “hearty hiker” on the A.T., but for the students and the local Canton townspeople. Even in the two acres, there was significant elevation differentials such that numerous wood steps were built. Cribbing was also installed to provide at least a 3-foot-wide trail to ensure comfortable walking.

On January 19th the Friday Asheville Crew braved the snow and ice to build steps and clear foliage for the new trails. School was cancelled that day because of the bad weather. Jill Mann, the School Principal, went to work anyway. She came and personally thanked the CMC crew members for their volunteer efforts. Jill explained how important this project was for the students and teachers. These photographs were taken on January 19th as the dedicated CMC volunteers worked in cold, snow and ice.

Waynesville Wednesday crew was very dedicated to this project. This core crew included: Ike Isenhour, Mike Phillips, Chris Werbylo, John Turley, Bob Beach, Tom Grady, Priscilla Estes, Paul Wulfing, Jim Dohms, Suzie Rogers, Steve Law, Patrick Johnson, John O’Donnell, and Tim Graden. Several CMC trail maintainers commented about how meaningful it was to work on projects that helped students learn about ecology and sustainability.

The project was completed by mid-February with over 690 CMC volunteer hours. Shortly thereafter, Niki Paganelli took her fifth-grade class to walk the trails. Ms. Paganelli reported, “They (the students) loved it!” On Saturday, March 16, a community workday is planned with parents, students and the Wednesday CMC crew. The parents will have an opportunity to work on the trail by spreading gravel to “harden” the trail and clean up any residual litter.

Our friends at Smoky Mountains Hiking Club are celebrating their Centennial this year!



Save the Date!
SMHC Centennial Fish Fry and Square Dance
May 11, 2024
4:30 p.m. -9:00 p.m.
Appalachian Club, Elkmont
Great Smoky Mountains National Park



Save the date for the SMHC Centennial "Tom and Meta Dewine Fish Fry and Vaughn Browder Square Dance" celebration.

SMHC held regular fish fry events and also Square Dances over many of the early years of the club as social events, banquets and election picnics. Plans are being finalized to celebrate and relive this history which will include a fish dinner and then a square dance. We've lined up old time square dance caller Leo Collins and friends and live music from Boogertown Gap and friends. Further details and registration will be available soon on the SMHC web site. Attendance will be limited to 100.

BENT CREEK EXPERIMENTAL FOREST has two upcoming Brown Bag Lunch presentations.

On March 18th, Katie Greenburg will be giving a talk on wildlife and natural disturbances and forest management in the southern Appalachians. You must register to attend. For more information, [click here](#). For the flyer, [click here](#).

Then, on April 1st, Margaret Woodbridge will give a talk about spring wildflowers in the Southern Appalachian Mountains. You must register to attend. For more information, [click here](#). For the flyer, [click here](#).

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The UNCA H.I.P.P.I.E.S join CMC and Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy for a hike at Deaverview Mountain!

by Karen Schultz

You may remember our UNCA McCullough Fellow Felipe Ahumada, who worked on a research project with the CMC Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Committee last year. Felipe is now a student leader for a new UNCA student group, called the H.I.P.P.I.E.S., which stands for High Impact P.E.E.R. Practices in Environmental Science. PEER are people often excluded from specific activities due to ethnicity or race. Felipe asked the D&I Committee to support the group on their first group hike!

We were thrilled to be considered and contacted Jay Leutze from the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, asking him to host us on a hike to the top of Deaverview Mountain. The Deaverview property is the future home of a beautiful park in West Asheville but is not yet open to the public. Jay was gracious to host us and the students, allowing us to get a sneak peek of the future park with jaw dropping views at the top. The SAC has plans to purchase a property known as Deaverview, which is outlined in the link below.

Deaverview Mountain Link

<https://appalachian.org/deaverview-mountain/>

[Preview attachment Deaverview Picnic table w view.jpg](#)[Deaverview Picnic table w view.jpg](#)1.9 MB

Look for more CMC involvement from the UNCA H.I.P.P.I.E.S. in the near future!

CMC's Endowment Fund - Update

by George Bauernfeind

2023 was a year of impressive growth for CMC's Endowment Fund. With over \$10,000 in contributions from CMC members and others, the Fund balance at 12/31/23 now exceeds \$50,000!

The Fund, established in 2022, is managed by the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina (CFWNC) and is invested in their Socially Responsible Fund. Its purpose is to grow and to ensure the financial viability of our Club for at least the next 100 years.

In addition to regular contributions, individuals interested in leaving bequests to CMC have a number of different options. Gifts in wills are one way, but another is what's

called a charitable gift annuity. Under this arrangement, an individual deposits a sum of money or securities with the CFWNC, and is paid a lifetime annuity at a set rate of interest, just as any regular annuity would do. An added benefit with the gift annuity, however, is that the individual receives a current tax deduction for the remainder value of the annuity, in addition to the lifetime income. The exciting news to share is that we have just had a CMC member establish one of these – our first!

Please reach out to our Treasurer, George Bauernfeind at cmclubtreasurer@gmail.com for any questions about annuities or the Endowment Fund in general.

NEW COUNCILOR FOR HIKING APPOINTED

by Karen Schultz

At the CMC Council meeting held on February 20, 2024, Les Love, CMC President, announced the appointment of Karen Lachow as the Interim Councilor for Hiking. This appointment was necessary because Daisy Teng Karasek, whose term as Councilor for Hiking began in January, had submitted her resignation effective March 4, 2024.

As part of a major life change decision, Daisy will be moving out of the Asheville area in the next few months, and therefore, not available to serve out her term. Karen Lachow, who currently serves as Council Secretary, will take on the additional role of Interim Councilor for Hiking. Karen will be completing her second term as Council Secretary at the end of this year, and will continue to serve as Interim Councilor for Hiking until the end of 2025 when election for that office will be held.

Karen has been a CMC member since December 2015. Over the past eight years, she has been an active hiker as well as hike leader. In 2019, she joined the Hiking Committee and started contributing as a hike scheduler for all-day weekend hikes. She also participates in trail maintenance activities.

Thanks and kudos to Karen for taking on this additional role.



Get to Know Jeff Wilcox Councilor for Education and Outreach

I was born in Indiana and then moved to Michigan as a kid. I earned a B.S. in geology and chemistry from Hope College (MI) and M.S. and Ph.D. in geology from Wisconsin. I met and married my wife, Sara, when we were graduate students, and we moved from Madison to Asheville in 2007. I've been a professor in the Environmental Science department at UNC Asheville ever since. We have two teenage daughters, Anna and Ella, who are in 12th and 9th grade at Reynolds High School.

I joined CMC shortly after moving to Asheville in 2009 and for many years hiked primarily on Wednesdays during my summer break. As Education and Outreach Councilor, my priorities are to schedule educational hikes, e.g. tree and bird ID hikes, more accessible hikes, "Leisure Hikes", and outreach opportunities where we can set up the club tent/booth and let more people know about all the great things happening in the CMC!

Get to Know Jan Onan Councilor for Membership



I grew up in the south side neighborhood of Beverly in Chicago spending most of my childhood outdoors with the other kids. My first experience in the mountains was as a young teen. I road my brother's huge ten speed the length of the Blue Ridge Parkway with a youth group. I moved to Milwaukee WI to pursue a career as an American Sign Language Interpreter and Instructor. I worked at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where I earned my degree in Exceptional Education and met Kevin.

We moved to Hendersonville in 1998 with our 3 young children following many family members who moved to the mountains through the years since

1971. My introduction to CMC was when Bruce Bente asked if I wanted to scout hikes where my kids were invited. Les Love was the first hike leader to welcome my kids on a CMC hike.

For 4 years, I served on the council as Education Chair, and currently, I am serving a second 2-year term as the Membership Chair. I welcome new members with a personal email including more information about CMC and ask how they might like to become involved. I mitigate any problems members might have with help from Dennis Bass. He picks up the snail mail and has taught me a great deal as he has served on the Membership Committee for several terms. The best part of serving on the council has been learning the breadth and depth of our club's work and sharing ideas with its varied experienced members.

Membership Goals for 2024

-Contact non-renewing members to determine why they left the club and if there is something we could do to welcome them back.

-Work with David Huff to improve the Hiker Orientation Video on the website.

-Create orientation packet/program for new members, allowing us to engage and follow-up with new members as they join CMC.

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.

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