



Carolina Mountain Club

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July 2019

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CMC to Kick Off a Trail Ambassador Program at Max Patch

by Paul Curtain

CMC to Kick Off a Trail Ambassador Program at Max Patch by Paul Curtain As you may know, CMC has been working with the USFS and the ATC within the framework of the Visitor Use Management process to improve the hiker/user experience at Max Patch and to make it more sustainable. As one of the crown jewels of the Southern A.T., it is being "loved to death." We have made a lot of progress at Max Patch on the ground, but we need to connect with hikers in a personal way to take the final steps needed. That connection will be made by Trail Ambassadors. Trail Ambassador programs are becoming more common in the 31 maintaining clubs on the trail from north to south as the number of users increase. Why are Trail Ambassadors needed at Max Patch? How did we get to a point in history where there was room for such an idea as this? In 1921 Benton MacKaye wrote his now-famous article entitled, "An Appalachian Trail: a Project in Regional Planning." In that article he proposed a footpath that would serve as a sort of retreat or refuge from a civilization which was becoming too mechanized." At the time, the idea that American citizens might want to hike and camp in the mountains was a novel one. Since the concept of the A.T. was approved in 1927, CMC members have built and maintained the A.T. in NC/TN, making it one of the best hiking trails anywhere. One of the reasons for this program is that we have done too good a job. Now the Trail is overused and abused, especially at high profile areas like Max Patch. Many of those hiking on it know or care little about how precious the resource actually is. That presents the desperate need for trail ambassadors. Despite the abundant resources regarding nature, outdoor recreation, and conservation, most hikers come to nature unprepared. It is this lack of concern coupled with the ever increasing number of hikers that threaten the resource. Many in the general public who utilize trails in our region are under the impression that some government agency, state or federal, will take care of everything and clean up their mess. Of course we, the volunteers who make up the Carolina Mountain Club, know different. That's because we are the ones who take care of everything and who clean up all the mess. Max Patch is particularly vulnerable because of the high numbers of inexperienced day hikers who go there. The dream of the Trail Ambassadors program is that there must be a better way to protect our beloved Trail. That better way is to meet the hiker on the Trail and teach him or her the better way. The better way is the principles of "Leave No Trace." Benton MacKaye probably never envisioned the need for such principles. He would probably be amazed to discover how many folks come to hike his footpath every year. He would probably be even more amazed at the mess those folks leave in their wake.

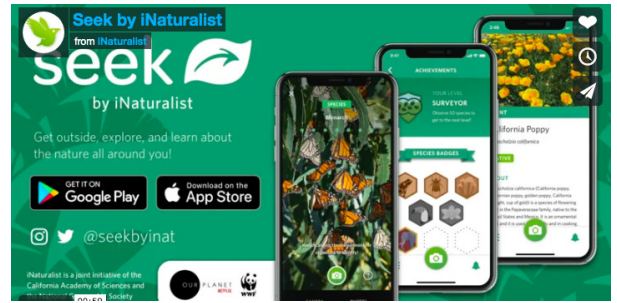
Flower Identification

by Kathy Kyle

This spring, like most of us, I saw many flowers along the trail. Some I knew the names for. Some I didn't. I recently learned there is an easy way to identify plants and wildlife with your camera on your phone. Just as I have seen some CMC hikers use applications on their phones to identify peaks in the distance, you can now use a free phone application to identify wildlife and plants.

I was at a recent program for Bee City USA Pollination Celebration Month and an educator from the NC Arboretum told a group of outdoor fans about inaturalist.org and the application: Seek.

What you take pictures of can be identified with this application and also every observation can contribute to biodiversity science, from the rarest flower to the most common mushroom. Inaturalist.org shares findings with scientific data repositories like the Global Biodiversity Information Facility to help scientists find and use your data. All you have to do is observe.



Go to https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/seek_app to find out more about the phone application and learn more about what you see on the trail. And you can earn different levels of badges. After sharing my picture of a Bluebead Lily, I'm at a tadpole level.

Another WNC Trail Earns National Award: Weed Patch Mountain Trail in Hickory Nut Gorge

by Peter Barr



Weed Patch Mountain Trail, in the Town of Lake Lure, has been recognized as one of the best new trails in the nation. On Tuesday, June 11, in a ceremony on Capitol Hill, the national Coalition for Recreational Trails announced its annual achievement award in the category of trail design and construction. The award went to Peter Barr, Conserving Carolina Trails Coordinator & CMC member, and Chris "Shrimper" Khare for their work on Weed Patch Mountain Trail.

Senator Richard Burr and the office of Senator Thom Tillis presented the coalition's Tom Petri Achievement Award to Barr, who designed the trail, and to Khare, of Terra Incognita Trail Specialists, who led the construction. Marianne Fowler and Derrick Crandle, co-chairs of the Coalition of Recreational Trails, presided over the ceremony. They were joined by Jay Leutze, representing the Blue Ridge Forever coalition.

It was the second year in a row that Conserving Carolina won the national award. In 2018, the award went to Barr and Conserving Carolina for Wildcat Rock Trail in Gerton, NC. Carolina Mountain Club was one of several entities that contributed to the construction of that trail.

Weed Patch Mountain Trail, which opened last year, travels for 8.6 miles through the Town of Lake Lure's Buffalo Creek Park and connects to Chimney Rock State Park. It offers stunning scenery and backcountry adventure for both hikers and mountain bikers. It also provides the first access to Eagle Rock, a newly established destination for rock climbers. Its spur trail to Eagle Rock in Chimney Rock State Park passes through a natural rock tunnel.

"This is an outstanding achievement, and I join Conserving Carolina's members, volunteers, and the surrounding communities in celebrating this honor," said Senator Thom Tillis. "As an avid outdoorsman,

I stand in awe of the spectacular views and natural beauty of North Carolina. I am glad that Conserving Carolina's hard work, commitment to our community, and thoughtful design has been acknowledged." Conserving Carolina partnered with the Town of Lake Lure to create the Weed Patch Mountain Trail in only one year, completing it in 2017. In addition to designing the trail, the land trust helped fund the project through private donations to supplement the Town's Recreational Trails Program grant. It also facilitated the creation of the Town's 1,500-acre Buffalo Creek

Park through which the trail traverses, and its permanent protection via a conservation easement. Barr and Khare spent much of the year on Weed Patch Mountain's steep slopes implementing the trail. A tight timeline due to an expiring grant forced Barr to design much of it with Khare digging just yards behind. The project faced additional obstacles including crossing private property, remote and rugged terrain, and the 7,200-acre Party Rock forest fire that engulfed the surrounding landscape during construction. The fire destroyed Barr's initial flagline, and Khare was forced to evacuate his equipment and crew for nearly two months on a project already strapped for time.

The trail was designed and constructed to high standards of sustainability, with features that help prevent erosion, minimize impact to natural resources, reduce needs for maintenance, and enhance users' experience. These features include a moderate grade, curvilinear design, and more than 200 masoned stone steps and hundreds of yards of rock armoring of the tread.

Khare constructed the trail both by machine—utilizing a narrow mini-excavator—and by hand, employing a small crew that included his two sons, Henry and Bergen, who cut vegetation, shaped and refined tread, and moved large rocks into place.

Others also contributed to the construction of Weed Patch Mountain Trail. American Conservation Experience (ACE) aided Khare with two miles of the trail and also built an ornate rock staircase at its crossing of Trout Creek. Deno Contos and Benchmark Trails of Greenville, South Carolina built the spur trail that reaches the Eagle Rock climbing area, installing 160 stone-masoned stairs leading through its rock tunnel. And Conserving Carolina's Rock Crushers Trail Crew donated 645 volunteer hours in its support.

"This project was an incredible partnership between Conserving Carolina, Town of Lake Lure, NC State Parks, and private landowners and donors. We were out of time, out of money, and had strict design and construction standards to live up to in order to protect the natural resources while still creating a fulfilling experience to users of the trail," Barr said. "I am grateful to everyone who played a role in the creation of the Weed Patch Mountain Trail, and excited to share this honor with all those who made it possible."

The Coalition for Recreational Trails presents the award each year to recognize projects that make outstanding use of funds from the federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP). This program uses revenues from gasoline taxes for off-highway recreation to fund trail development and maintenance.

"Weed Patch Mountain Trail features state-of-the-art sustainable design and construction that offers a world class user experience in the Hickory Nut Gorge to hikers, mountain bikers, and rock climbers. Its artful trail design and masterful trail construction demonstrate its outstanding use of RTP funding," said CRT co-chair Derrick Crandall.

Conserving Carolina is a local land trust dedicated to protecting land and water, promoting good stewardship, and creating opportunities for people to enjoy nature. Learn more and become a member at conservingcarolina.org.

For more information including maps and trail descriptions of the Weed Patch Mountain Trail, visit: <https://conservingcarolina.org/weedpatch/>

Annual Dinner Photo Share

by Bobbi Powers

A new photo sharing opportunity is here!

The Annual Dinner is not until late October, but we want everyone to have lots of time to take and send in photos from the mountains or wherever for the pre-dinner entertainment.

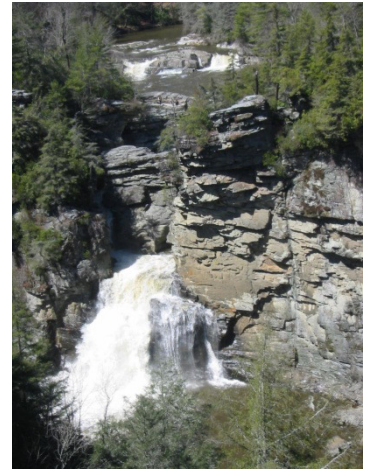
The theme is WITS. Use your wits to create fabulous summer and fall photos of:

Waterfalls

Insects

Trees

Stones



Send up to 6 photos to CarolinaMtnClubPhotos@gmail.com. As always, your thank you will be a pat on the back and your name on each photo.

Pisgah Ranger District Secondary Trails

by Rich Evans

With the year half, over I wanted to let you know how the secondary trail maintainer program has impacted the Pisgah Ranger District.

We now have 33 of the 47 sections adopted (70%) which adds up to 80 of the 102.2 miles (78%) in the PRD.

Hours worked report for first half of 2019 compared to last year:

Trail

| Sections | 2018 | 2019 |
|--------------------|------|------|
| ***** | | |
| Art Loeb Trail | 136 | 623 |
| wilderness trails | 214 | 308 |
| Rest of PRD trails | 677 | 976 |
| ***** | | |
| Total | 1027 | 1907 |

The first half of 2019 has produced 85% more hours than all of 2018.

All the crews and section maintainers who work in the PRD deserve our thanks for a job well done (so far).

Why Knot Get Together at Sierra Nevada?

by Jan Onan

CMC maintainer and instructor Bill Sanderson does knot bight and there is no dressing up, so join us until the bitter end over a beer and maybe dinner.

OK, I could knot resist using some of the names we learned to express the fun we had learning knots and their uses. Why Knot Get Together gatherings allows hikers and hike leaders to learn how to tie a few useful knots for camping or survival skills. I will have 6' lengths of cordage you can buy for \$3.



From the parking lot, go around back to the left-hand side of the building. Follow the sidewalk to the left and go down the hill towards the stage. We will meet near the outside bathrooms.

Where: Sierra Nevada

When: the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of July from 6:00-7:00

July 10 and 24, 2019

Education Outreach Committee

Questions, contact Jan at janonan59@gmail.com

Stomp for the Smokies

by Danny Bernstein

Do you want to see some old-timey radios and help to fund a modern, much needed upgrade to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park's radio communications system?

Come to the Friends of the Smokies second annual Smokies Stomp Barn Party.

On: Saturday, July 20 At: Hickory Nut Gap Farm in Fairview - only 20 minutes from Asheville

There will be a gourmet farm-to-table dinner, live music by Buncombe Turnpike, and a silent auction for some pretty nifty experiences. Square dancing will be called by Representative Joe Sam Queen (NC-119), a celebrity himself.

Proceeds from the evening will help raise money for a radio communications system used by first responders, emergency and law enforcement personnel for search and rescue and traffic accidents. Lots of unexpected events occur in a park which welcomes over 12 million visitors a year. Hopefully, CMC hikers will never need these services but who know?



The silent auction will include a trip to Nashville for the 53rd Country Music Awards, a Christmas at Dollywood package, an island getaway near Charleston, South Carolina, and a private tour of East Fork Pottery's production facility with owners Matt and Connie Matisse.

And those old radios? There will be some at the dinner tables, thanks to the Asheville Radio Museum.

Put on your blue jeans and come and stomp.

To purchase tickets or learn more visit <https://friendsofthesmokies.org/smokiesstomp/>



The eNews is published on the first Friday of each month. Articles are due on the last Friday of the previous month. send your news to eNews@carolinamountainclub.org. 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. Send all address and email changes to Dennis Bass at dbass3607@gmail.com. Your email changes will be automatically reflected in eNews delivery.

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