

April 2024

A flyer for a "John Rock Area Workday" on Saturday, April 20, from 9 AM to 3 PM. It features the Carolina Mountain Club logo, a QR code, and a photo of a person working on a trail. The text encourages joining the club to restore trails as part of Pisgah Project Day. A small logo for "THE PISGAH CONSERVANCY" is also present.

John Rock Area
Workday

Join the Carolina Mountain Club as we restore trails around John Rock as part of **Pisgah Project Day!**

SATURDAY
April
20
9 AM - 3 PM

Be sure to specify Carolina Mountain Club under the question "Do you want to work with a specific volunteer group or business?" on the Pisgah Project Day registration form.

<https://www.pisgahconservancy.org/events-1/pisgah-project-day-2024.html>

Mountains-to-Sea Trail Gathering of Friends

May 3 - 5, 2024

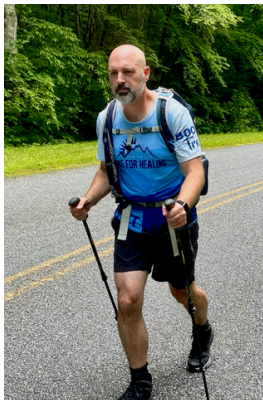
by Marcia Bromberg

Those of us in Western NC are fortunate to have easy access to one of the prettiest parts of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail. And we're also fortunate that the 2024 Gathering of Friends, the FMST annual meeting, is being held just down the road in Black Mountain at the YWCA Blue Ridge Assembly May 3-5. We expect over 200 Friends to attend this annual event—MST through hikers, section hikers, day hikers, and trail builders and maintainers. There will be hikes (led by your fellow CMC'ers), fun events, and an update on progress moving the trail off-road in other parts of the state. And while we have an amazing part of the trail in our backyard, the Gathering is an opportunity to learn about other beautiful and interesting sections across the state, including an historic perspective of the lands the trail crosses and the people who first lived on those lands. Just go to <https://mountaintoseatrail.org/gathering-of-friends/> to learn more about the Gathering and register for the meeting. You won't be sorry!



Hike for Healing

by Jan Onan



Hike for Healing is an annual event that encourages self-reflection and open, honest, and meaningful conversation to ignite healing of racial and cultural divides... healing begins with a conversation.

Carolina Mountain Club is partnering with Hike for Healing for 2024. As part of this event, CMC will lead several guided hikes along Segment 3 of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail that aim to help facilitate meaningful conversation. Hike for Healing is scheduled for June 21. More details to come soon!

CMC Waynesville Wednesday Crew Makes Smoky Mountain News Front Page on February 28 2024

by Donna Bange

It is not every day that CMC Trail Maintainers make the news. Chris Werbylo (CMC Waynesville Wednesday Crew Leader) and Priscilla Estes were featured in the Smoky Mountain News for their efforts on leading the new North Canton Elementary School trails on land adjacent to the school. CMC's efforts were featured in last month's CMC eNews on building these new trails for the Haywood County school. This month we are proud to include the link to the Smoky Mountain news article if you have not seen it.

<https://smokymountainnews.com/outdoors/item/37381-carolina-mountain-club-builds-trail-at-north-canton-elementary>

CMC Hike Leaders Appreciation and Education Dinner

by Danny Bernstein

About 75 leaders and council members were invited to the 2024 annual Hike Leaders Dinner at the Hilton Asheville Biltmore Park. This includes all CMC members who led a hike in 2023 and in the first quarter of 2024.



CMC Hiking Committee

Daisy Karasek and the CMC hiking committee put together a lovely meal and a great program to thank hike leaders for their work planning, scouting and leading hikes. Altogether, CMC scheduled about 250 hikes in 2023, according to Daisy.

The hike leaders' dinner started in the mid-2000s with the formation of the CMC Education Committee. "The event is formally called the Hike Appreciation and Education Dinner," Bruce Bente reminded the committee. Bruce, along with Dave Wetmore, Don Walton, and Danny Bernstein, were the first committee members. They wanted a vehicle to gather all the hike leaders together for an educational session. They also wanted to provide a way to thank hike leaders along the same vein as the trail maintainers, with their rewards of hats and jackets for hours spent working on the trails.

Highlights of the Evening

Lee Silver introduced the program. "Without hike leaders, we wouldn't have a club." On behalf of CMC, Lee recognized Jack Dalton who has been leading hikes for years and is now retiring from hike leadership. Dalton was instrumental in introducing hikers to trails in the Hot Springs area other than the A.T.

Brenda Worley awarded T-shirts to leaders who led their first ten hikes. She also recognized Carroll Koeppinger, who has led over one hundred hikes, with a lovely jacket. Carroll is now the fifth hike leader in CMC with that distinction. The first four were recognized last year: Paul Benson, Bruce Bente, Danny Bernstein, and Marcia Bromberg.

Main Discussion

Karen Schultz, CMC's VP and Hiking Committee member, led a brainstorming session on various issues most often faced by hike leaders. The format was a rapid-fire session where attendees gave their views succinctly and could not comment on other people's ideas. Lee Silver took careful notes. The Hiking Committee will review all the feedback provided during the brainstorming session and create an updated and enhanced set of Hike Leader Guidelines.

A few of the topics hike leaders brainstormed:

- Content of scouting reports. This includes trail conditions, water crossings, mileage and elevation gain, highlights of the trail such as views, flowers, or historical artifacts. It is nice to also include photographs.
- Screening hikers. Since most (but not all) leaders now require hikers to sign up in advance, this seemed like a good opportunity to let new hikers know what they can expect from a hike. Through email, the hike leader can ask the new hiker about what hikes they have done recently. The leader can also encourage a hiker new to CMC to go on a half-day hike first and to read the scout report carefully.
- Handling hikers of different abilities. This topic probably stimulated the most discussion. Some said that the hike should go as fast as the slowest hiker. Others wanted guidance on how to take back a hiker that can't keep up with the rest of the group. Everyone agreed that the sweep was an important part of hike management and should never be the "slowest hiker."
- While brainstorming what should be included in the hike leader's *First Aid Kit*, several hike leaders commented about the importance of taking a Wilderness First Aid course. CMC organizes a two-day course for hike leaders and trail maintainers almost every year.

Major Changes to the Hiking Committee Announced



Daisy Karasek

Daisy Karasek, who became Councilor for Hiking this year, is resigning from this post effective March 4, 2024, due to a major life change requiring her to move out of the area. Daisy has been on the Hiking Committee for several years and responsible for the Wednesday hike schedule alternating with Brenda Worley. We will miss her. Judy Magura becomes the new Wednesday hike scheduler alternating with Brenda.

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 the election for this office will be held.

In Closing...

CMC President Les Love ended the dinner meeting by praising the hike leaders for their dedication and work. He also recalled the big celebrations CMC had in 2023 including the huge 100th Year Birthday party at the NC Arboretum. The hike leaders were happy to hear that the club is going to continue the 50/50 challenge – 50 hours of trail maintenance and 50 miles of hiking with CMC.

In final recognition of the incredible commitment of the hike leaders to CMC members and guests, Les said, “Nice people attract nice people,”

The Asheville Thursday Trail Maintenance Crew

by Kit Ogburn

When I was asked to write an article about the Asheville Thursday Crew, I thought, “How can I write about *each hard-working, good-hearted person* on the crew?” because *it is the people on the crew that make it what it is*. This article, though, is limited to an introduction—who we are as a crew and what we do. It is a pleasure to write about the crew that I joined five years ago.

History and Leadership. Since the time that a CMC trail maintenance web site was created in 2006, entries have been made for volunteers working on Thursdays. But it wasn't until 2012 that the Asheville Thursday Crew, first led by Bill Falender, became the Asheville Thursday Crew as we know it today. Hugh Hensleigh joined Bill as a co-leader in 2016. In 2018 the leaders were Hugh and Sam Clarke. They co-led the crew



until 2020, when Hugh continued as a leader, joined by Todd Eveland and Ken Hummel. Todd and Ken served as co-leaders beginning in 2021. Our leadership changed again in 2023, with Ken continuing as a leader, joined by Dale Gerhardt and David Pizzolato. For several years, I have served as a leader in charge of most communications.

Our Reach. We work mainly in the “Asheville Corridor,” from the Folk Art Center to Mount Pisgah. We work on the Mountains-to-Sea Trail (19 sections), the Appalachian Trail (6 sections), trails within the Pisgah Ranger District (14 sections) and the Appalachian Ranger District (2 sections), and on the Blueridge Parkway (5 sections). We are assigned about 76 miles of trails, but we work on many more trails. We usually meet at a base in Asheville and carpool to our worksite, from less than thirty minutes to an hour away. We’ve left our mark in a lot

of places!

Our Membership. One member of our crew, Mel Skiles, was an original member of the newly organized Asheville Thursday Crew in 2012, and Dave Roberts, another member of our crew, joined just a month later. From its origin as a very small crew, the crew has grown to about twenty-five active members plus many others who occasionally volunteer. Some volunteers are still working full-time or part-time. Several of the volunteers who have joined us within the last year or so are some of our most dedicated members. We are a “tuff as duff” crew, taking on many projects, often requiring plenty of muscle and special skills. We have seven certified sawyers, and three more have recently received training. Most of the active crew members are trained to use weed trimmers.

Two Special Guys. We are fortunate to have Rich Evans on our crew because Rich is tops when it comes to envisioning solutions to problems and teaching us the skills we need. Rich is the current CMC trail maintenance *volunteer hours leader* with nearly 13,000, and crew members are the recipients of the knowledge that Rich has gained over many years. We are also fortunate to have Mel Skiles on our crew because he, also, has volunteered several thousand hours, and is a valuable resource for all of us. Both Rich and Mel have been recognized with several awards for their many years of dedication to trail maintenance.

Beyond Thursdays. Several on our crew serve the CMC beyond the work they do on Thursdays. Tom Belt teaches the First Aid/CPR/AED class for the CMC. He’s been teaching the class for nearly three years. At least twelve on our crew have received

this training. Tom Hudson is our representative on the Volunteer Engagement Committee. And there is the über-dedicated Rich, who is the co-founder and co-leader of the Section Rovers Crew and founder and leader of the Art Loeb Crew. The Asheville Thursday Crew has fourteen members who have adopted a trail, serving as maintainers.



Satisfaction Guaranteed. At the end of each Thursday workday, we can look back and realize the “before and after” difference and know that we have made a trail safer and more enjoyable for hikers. Sometimes the work is more routine—lopping, side-hilling, creating or improving water diversions, improving the tread with turnpikes, steps, step-overs, and removing fallen trees, etc. There have also been some unique projects that stand out. Here are just a few examples.

- We removed large and dense debris from Dingle Creek after Tropical Storm Fred.
- We worked with volunteers from other crews to rebuild the viewing platform at Mt. Pisgah.
- We added numerous new steps to the otherwise treacherous Art Loeb Trail.
- We added safety railings to nine bridges on the Dark Prong Gap Trail.
- We have repeatedly replaced boards in steps, boardwalks, and bridges at Graveyard Fields Loop Trail and the Lower Falls Trail.

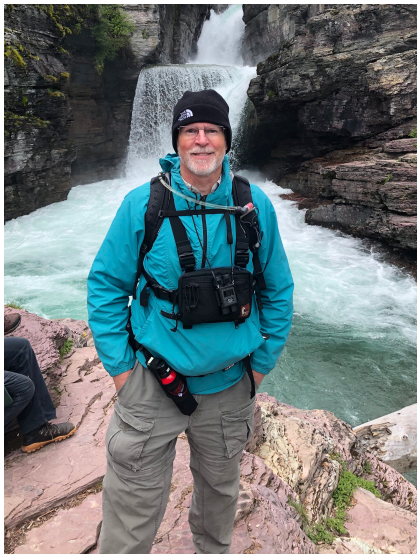
- We are continuing to contribute to the strenuous work of building a new (relocated) section of the Appalachian Trail.

The Asheville Thursday Crew is proud to contribute to the trail maintenance mission of the Carolina Mountain Club. In concert with the tremendous work of other crews, we believe we are making a positive difference in the betterment of Western North Carolina trails and improving the physical environment of our community.

One other interesting fact! Two of our leaders, Dale Gerhardt and David Pizzolato, are currently tackling their first thru-hike of the Appalachian Trail. They started on March 24 from Georgia. The whole crew is eagerly following their progress and wishing them well.

Acknowledgements. Rich Evans, Ken Hummel, and Mel Skiles provided material for this article.

Get to Know Steve Law Councilor for Conservation



Growing up on a small lake in southern New York, I was introduced to the joy of nature and the beauty of wildlife at an early age. In fact, those outdoor experiences were the spark that led me to a long and rewarding career in conservation. After earning a B.S. in wildlife management at the University of Maine, my 40+-year career included consulting forestry, environmental education, and land acquisition, management and conservation. Over the past three decades, I created and managed a division of natural resource for Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation and directed two land conservancies — in Connecticut and most recently in Tennessee. In 2022, my wife, Dot, and I retired and headed to the mountains of western NC that we had enjoyed and explored for many years.

I engaged with CMC a year ago to volunteer my time to further conservation initiatives. I joined the Wednesday trail crew over the summer and then last fall became the new Councilor for Conservation. My 2024 priorities as Councilor are to re-establish an active Conservation Committee and to secure opportunities for committee and club members to assist our natural resource agencies and partner conservation organizations with hands-on habitat restoration projects and biological surveys. Look for more information about this in the months ahead.

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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