

Carolina Mountain Club

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February 2018

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Newly Completed Wildcat Rock Trail in Hickory Nut Gorge Celebrated by Conserving Carolina & CMC

by Peter Barr

Conserving Carolina and project partners including CMC recently celebrated the completion and opening of the Wildcat Rock Trail. The new trail is located in Gerton-about 30 minutes southeast of Asheville. It is a segment in the budding Upper Hickory Nut Gorge Trail loop, a soon-to-be 20-mile permanently-public hiking route. Prior to its completion in 2017, the trail had been known as the Little Bearwallow Trail.



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Completion of the Wildcat Rock Trail

advanced the Upper Hickory Nut Gorge

Trail loop by three miles, extending its segments to a cumulative 11.5 miles.

This trail loop will eventually connect

scenic and forever-protected

destinations such as Bearwallow

Mountain, Wildcat Rock, Florence Nature

Preserve, Little Bearwallow Falls, and

Blue Ridge Pastures.

The construction of the trail spanned

four years, from 2014 to 2017,

accomplished through the collective work of multiple trail builders including

Benchmark Trails, Trail Dynamics, Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, North Carolina

Conservation Corps, American Conservation Experience, the Conserving Carolina Rock

Crushers Trail Crew, and Carolina Mountain Club's Friday Crew.

Future construction of a 2.5-mile connector trail segment between the Bearwallow

Mountain Trail and Wildcat Rock Trail will begin this year along with a 3-mile segment

that will link the upper terminus of the Trombatore Trail to Hickory Nut Gap at

Highway 74A. Trailhead additions and expansions are also planned.

The Upper HNG Trail is only one component of a broader plan of 100+ miles of future

public trails that will traverse the length of the Hickory Nut Gorge, one day

connecting to Chimney Rock State Park and circumnavigating Lake Lure.

CMC President Barbara Morgan, Vice President Randy Fluharty, Councilor for Trail

Maintenance Ron Navik, and Friday Crew member Jack Fitzgerald attended the

ceremony and were recognized for CMC's contributions to the Wildcat Rock Trail and

Upper HNG Trail network.

Conserving Carolina—formerly Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy and Pacolet Area

Conservancy—is dedicated to protecting and stewarding land and water resources vital

to our natural heritage and quality of life and to fostering appreciation and

understanding of the natural world.

Since 1994,

Conserving Carolina has protected

more than 35,000 acres in Henderson, Transylvania, Rutherford, and Polk counties in western North Carolina including the Hickory Nut Gorge, Blue Ridge Escarpment, and French Broad River watershed. Conserving Carolina has also coordinated the construction and stewardship of more than 20 miles of new hiking trails in the Hickory Nut Gorge since 2010.

Respectfully submitted by Peter Barr, Conserving Carolina Trails Coordinator & CMC member

Meet Dennis Bass, 2017 Award of Appreciation Recipient

by Bobbi Powers



Does anybody remember the 1952 classic movie *The Quiet Man*? CMC has its own *Quiet Man* in the form of Dennis Bass, a real Western NC native. This distinguished-looking, reticent member speaks softly but gets a lot done for the club and has led an interesting life.

The Award of Appreciation is generally given to a member who has done something outstanding for the club in a given year. But since Dennis quietly accomplishes many behind-the-scenes tasks for the club each year, he was given the award in 2017. Initially, Dennis handled the membership data base. This primarily involves collecting the club's mail from the post office, logging member payments and creating new membership records in the club's on-line database. Unfortunately, sometimes things don't work as desired and the CMC Treasurer, the Councilor for Membership, the Councilor for Technology, and the website support/programmer have to be consulted to resolve issues. As if there weren't already enough on his plate, the Communications Committee asks him to coordinate the submissions for each photo sharing program. Adding each individual's name to each photo and then getting the show on the road for the event is a time-intensive project. Thank you, Dennis!

Dennis leads half-day hikes and his hikers appreciate the dark chocolate treats he provides. Being GPS-savvy makes him in demand to help scout hikes.

Dennis has degrees in chemical engineering from North Carolina State University and worked for Exxon/ExxonMobil for 30+ years, primarily in the Houston area. His job took him to the Netherlands for seven months and numerous business trips to the UK, France, Italy (including Sicily), Germany and Argentina. An unforgettable Sicily incident:

As he was being passed by a car on a two-lane road, another car simultaneously

passed the car that was passing him. Yikes!

Retirement drew him back to the mountains where he stays busy attending OLLI classes and volunteering with MANNA, as well as hiking once or twice a week. He has co-taught a beginning hiking class at OLLI and plans to do so again in the spring term.

Dennis is also a student of French, having taken classes at OLLI from beginning French through advanced intermediate and plans to continue at the next level in Spring 2018. In addition, he is diligent about doing a Duo Lingo French class online daily and takes semiprivate French lessons. And he also dabbles in oil painting, having taken a couple of classes at OLLI.

Dennis is fortunate to have family in the area - a sister an hour away and his father at Givens Estate. We are fortunate to have this quiet man as a friend to many of us, as well as a great asset to CMC.

Meet Paul Curtin CMC's New AT Maintenance Supervisor

One of the key positions for CMC's maintenance program is the supervisor of all 32 sections of the AT that CMC is responsible for maintaining. Recently, after a decade of volunteering in this capacity, Tim Carrigan has retired. Fortunately for CMC, Paul Curtin has agreed to serve.

Here is an interview with Paul and Ann Hendrickson:

Paul, welcome to WNC, CMC, and the CMC Trail Crew! As a newcomer to the area and CMC, I am sure that people are curious as to what brought you to our mountains and to CMC. Can you give us some insight? "I discovered this area when I came through as part of my thru hike of the AT in 2015. My old friend Tom Weaver showed us around and we were really impressed. Nothing in Ohio looks like this!"



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I have experienced first-hand what an excellent addition you are to the Asheville Friday Crew. I know you have accepted an assignment as a Section Maintainer for both the MST and the AT. Why, first of all do you feel you are qualified to take on the role as the AT Maintenance Supervisor, and why would you take on such a big role for the club?

"Thanks, I am learning from the best!

I can bring some recent perspective from the whole trail and understand well what hikers need physically and emotionally from the AT.

I always knew I wanted to give back in a big way to the AT and I was thrilled to be asked to take on a role where I could make a significant contribution.

It's an honor and a privilege to be able to serve in this way."

The role of the AT Supervisor is integral to the club. As a club, our priority is to maintain 93 miles of the trail (the AT is our first maintenance priority), including several shelters. Can you outline your role, what your priorities are, and how "we" members can help you? What can AT Section Maintainers do to improve? "

The first priority is to make sure we have qualified and motivated maintainers for each of our 32 sections of trail, and to quickly assign replacements when needed.

I also have to make sure our maintainers know what they need to do, when to do it, are trained to do the work and have the right tools and resources.

The role is an advocate for getting work done on the AT by our trail crews, and I set short, medium, and long term goals for improvements required to keep the trail to the standards set by the AT C . My main priorities for 2018 and where most attention is needed and to spread the influence of some of our more experienced and dedicated maintainers.

We are going to use them to monitor 10 to 12 mile sections of trail and work closely with our maintainers, especially when new maintainers come on board.

Getting that structure in place will take our AT maintenance to a new level.

I would like to work with each maintainer to understand

how they see their section and what their needs and ideas are.

One priority section

we know for sure we want to make a big impact on in 2018 is Max Patch, to restore it to what it should be.

Every CMC member can help by writing trail issue reports when they hike the AT or any CMC trail.

It helps to have more eyes out there.

We will also

be organizing some overnight/weekend maintenance crews to address some of the more remote sections this summer; anyone can help out with that."

Anyone interested in becoming an AT Section Maintainer (or for more information)

should contact Paul at:

atsupervisor@carolinamountianclub.org

. We are eager to

commence an exciting year on the AT maintenance schedule. Watch for opportunities to participate!

Donations

by Gregory Bechtel

Have an extra backpack or some outdoor clothing that's not being fully utilized? On behalf of Homeward Bound/Room at the Inn (www.homewardboundwnc.org) CMC is collecting such items for the homeless in Western North Carolina.

You can contact Gregory Bechtel (gabechtel@gmail.com) to arrange a pickup or directly to the Donation Center at 549 Elk Park Drive, Unit 708, Asheville, NC 28804 Mondays and Thursdays from 11:00 to 1:00. You can also contact Ashely Campbell at 828-694-4548 to arrange another drop-off time and day.

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There are multiple reasons that backpacks are at a premium for those experiencing homelessness. Have you ever considered what it would be like to literally carry everything you own on your back? As experienced hikers you are certainly used to carrying your needed supplies. How does that same hike look if you are carrying your clothes, your medications, your important documents; any food that you will need for 24-hours; plus, a blanket and pillow? Literally homeless means that you carry what you need and what you own

Backpacks are a lifeline for people to keep and container their belongings. Here are some other reasons for backpacks, that our PATH outreach team shares with us: (1) Folks are often having to move camps as they get run off by property owners, easier to do with a backpack; (2) Ease of carrying items (instead of many smaller and/or plastic bags), (3) Some items that you must always carry with you because you wouldn't want to leave them unattended, such as IDs, family photos, "nice" items like a good pair of

boots, etc. and (4) In our climate, it can be very cold in mornings and warm through the afternoon, it is helpful to have a backpack to carry extra layers. You can contact Gregory Bechtel (gabehtel@gmail.com) to arrange a pickup or directly to the Donation Center at 549 Elk Park Drive, Unit 708, Asheville, NC 28804 Mondays and Thursdays from 11:00 to 1:00. You can also contact Ashely Campbell at 828-694-4548 to arrange another drop-off time and day.

Technology - Hike Scheduling for Hike Leaders

by Jim and Judy Magura

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1. Logon to the Member site, click "Hiking", then Hike Search. Enter your Hike Number and click "Search."

2. On the Hike page, click on the green icon "Request to Lead Hike." It may be on the side or bottom of the page.

3. Enter the date of the hike, meeting locations and times, and then click "Register."

Your Hike Scheduler will receive an email confirming your selection. As a safety check, you can go to your Hike page and review what you entered. You will note new hikes scheduled have a pending status. At this point you can also delete or modify your scheduled hike. In case you need a refresher on these instructions, you can always click on the "Hike Leaders" icon on the Member page or drop us an email.

There is also a video to review the registration process on the Member page as well.

**Everyone talks about the weather
but.....
or
Holiday in Ice
by Mike Knies**



Extremes of weather provides rare opportunities for outdoor types at times. I am fascinated by big weather and the force of nature. There isn't anything you can do to stop it so you might as well make the most of it. The massive flooding in Deep Creek and Oconaluftee in the Smokies a few years ago provided such an opportunity. The area rivers and waterfalls were at an almost unprecedented level for recent times and I had to get over there to see them. The horrible tragedy of the Chimneys fires was another such event. My friends and I made numerous expeditions into the burned areas to inspect the startling impact of the damage and the unique sculptures that the conflagration created. Every 4-5 years we have a prolonged period of extreme cold with temperatures in the single digits. Rather than stay at home in front of a cozy fire dreaming of an outing in milder weather, we had to get out and experience the impact on the waterfalls. So what follows is a video that fellow member Cindy McJunkin composed of our trip on January 7 of this year.

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The first series is from Rainbow Falls below Mt. LeConte which is about three miles up

a very popular trail in the Smokies. We were the third car in the parking lot and were

able to experience the "freeze" almost to ourselves with a temperature of about 5

degrees!! The second is from Quilliams Cave which is below the Sugarlands trail about

half way up Hwy 441 between the Visitor Center and the Chimneys picnic area. It is a

mini version of Alum Cave but with a lot of water coming off the top. Finally we stopped

at Fort Harry which is just before the Chimneys trailhead parking lot but on the opposite

side of the road and only about 200 yards from the highway. Note the chimneys in the

background of the last picture.

[https://photos.smugmug.com/photos/i-JFdFm3T/0/085ad20c/1920/i-](https://photos.smugmug.com/photos/i-JFdFm3T/0/085ad20c/1920/i-JFdFm3T-1920.mp4)

[JFdFm3T-1920.mp4](https://photos.smugmug.com/photos/i-JFdFm3T/0/085ad20c/1920/i-JFdFm3T-1920.mp4)

Senior Hiker Magazine - A review

by Danny Bernstein

About ten years ago, I volunteered to lead hikes for College for

Seniors, now OLLI, at UNC-Asheville (<https://olliasheville.com>). I

wanted to introduce the over-50 crowd to hiking in Western North

Carolina, and not so subtly, encourage them to join CMC after the

course.

I carefully chose six- to eight-mile walks with moderate ascent, all

the while reminding the students that we were in the mountains.

Even downtown Asheville isn't flat.

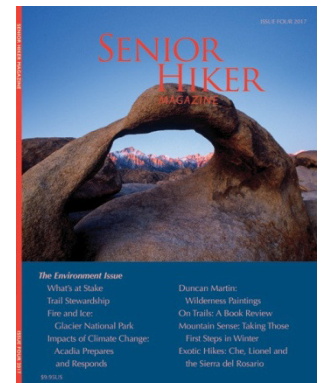
A few terms later, after a rocky six-mile walk, a student – a man

over fifty, by definition – complained to the director that I had

chosen hikes that weren't appropriate for seniors. I wasn't asked to lead for College for Seniors

again. If you can fire a volunteer, I was fired!

So, it was with curiosity and a little trepidation that I opened the first issue of



Senior Hiker

(www.seniorhikermagazine.com), a glossy magazine published by Deer Isle Press, a small publishing house on the coast of Maine. The magazine focuses on hikers over fifty years old, maybe taking the cue from AARP, which also starts at this age.

I need not have worried. Articles range from adventures in the White Mountains to pushing the limits off-trail in the Catskills. Mile for mile, these are difficult hikes, much more challenging than those in the Southern Appalachians.

The article on

How I became a senior hiker

spoke to me.

The irony is that even though I was older, I felt in better shape and was better prepared setting out than I had been twenty or thirty years earlier.

I've had the pleasure of now reading the first four issues. As the issues progressed, the content expanded from the Northeastern U.S. to the Tetons, Glacier, and Santa Fe. The articles span from coyotes to snakes.

Senior Hiker

partners only with nonprofit organizations and has no commercial ads. Maybe that's why they have the space and inclination to feature articles about hiking clubs in a series they call

Hard Corps

. I submitted a piece on CMC, which they'll publish sometime at the end of the year.

After a hiking friend flipped through the magazines, she said, "I enjoyed the exotic hikes the best. Who knew there was hiking in Cuba?"

The magazine has potential.

Their first issue had only 50 pages, but 82 pages by Issue 4. Beautiful glossy pictures show active seniors with good equipment and well-shod – no one had an external frame packs.

The editor and graphic artists have also thought about other factors. The font is a little larger than in similar magazines, but most important, most of the text is black on white background. No funky color combinations that are unreadable by folks at any age.

After reading four issues, I realized that I had not encountered breathless words like badass, suck, cool, wicked, or ... you get the idea.

You can read an article or two online. But the magazine is meant to be read in print and saved.

See their website:

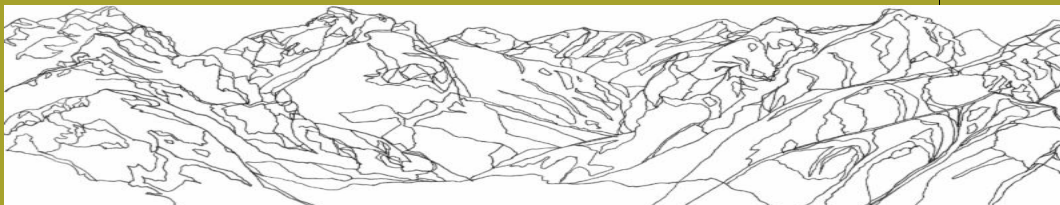
www.seniorhikermagazine.com



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. Do not resubscribe yourself to the eNews. That will be done automatically.

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