



Carolina Mountain Club

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February 2022

Forest Plan

by Tish Desjardins

Over approximately ten years, Carolina Mountain Club, as one of the partner organizations, contributed collaboratively with many other organizations to the new Forest Plan via the "Nantahala-Pisgah Forest Partnership." Carolina Mountain Club also contributed its own comments for consideration by the Forest Service for the new management plan. I have been CMC's representative at their many meetings.

The Forest Service published their final Forest Service Management Plan on January 22, 2022. The Plan includes the 360-page land management plan and 738-page environmental impact statement, the whole plan totaling around 3,000 pages, according to Forest Planner Michelle Aldridge. For a much shorter, 26-page reader's guide, with visuals, key themes and a breakdown of where to find specific topics within the plan, visit the Forest Service website.

Individual members of the public are invited to comment on the plan. All comments are due by March 22, 2022.

For the Forest Service's announcement letter, see below.

To read the Plan on the Forest Service's web site, go here:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/nfsnc/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fseprd972970>



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Happy New Year!

The National Forests in North Carolina is releasing the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests revised land management plan and final environmental impact statement on Friday, January 21. The revised plan will sustain healthy ecosystems, connect people to the land, and provide clean and abundant water, all through the work we'll do partnering with others. The plan provides strategic direction to guide future decision making, while also enabling the development of projects to meet the specific needs of local conditions.

As you know, the revised plan has been built on a strong foundation of science, along with unprecedented levels of engagement with the public, governments, and organizations. Through this planning process, one thing is clear—there is an inspiring amount of passion for these forests. I am grateful to the thousands of individuals who shared their input in the development of this plan and those who worked in collaborative settings toward solutions that advance shared interests. As a result of diverse input, this plan provides a strong foundation for addressing the challenges ahead of us, while moving all our interests forward.

The revised plan will be accompanied by a draft decision. Next, individuals, governments, or organizations that have previously submitted comments have an opportunity to object to the plan, and the Forest Service will work to resolve the objections prior to signing a final decision, which is anticipated in mid-2022.

Please visit the Forest Service website at: www.fs.usda.gov/goto/nfsnc/nprevision, for additional information including a Reader's Guide with key elements of the plan, a press release, and a one-page explanation of the objection process.

I hope you all will continue to stay engaged as we implement and monitor the new plan—this is where our work together really begins. If you have questions, please reach out to me or Alice Cohen (alice.cohen@usda.gov), Partnership Coordinator.

Sincerely,
James Melonas

News from the Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail

by Marcia Bromberg, FMST Board President

We are pleased to announce **Brent Laurenz** as our new executive director. He will succeed Kate Dixon, who is retiring in early 2022. Brent, who began work January 18th, will overlap with Kate through mid-February. He has more than 15 years of nonprofit leadership in North Carolina and nationally, most recently as deputy director of Common Cause of North Carolina, a successful

track record of working with volunteers and, most importantly, a love of the MST. Look for an in-depth interview with Brent in the March edition of eNews.

Mark your calendar! The Friends will be celebrating the 45th Anniversary of the MST at our Gathering of Friends, April 7-10, 2022 at Lake Junaluska, the community where the trail was first proposed in 1977. Events will start with a full day of trail building workshops on Thursday, followed by hikes, excursions, meetings and celebrations Friday through Sunday. To learn more and register for the Gathering go to <https://mountainstoseatrail.org/gathering-of-friends/>

Guest speaker at Mars Hill University March 15

Sarah Adams, the Nantahala and Georgia Regional Manager for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, will speak about her research comparing the A.T. and Shinetsu trail of Japan. The presentation will be at Mars Hill University by on Tuesday, March 15 at 8:00 to 9:30pm.

Visit here for more information:

<https://www.mhu.edu/event/guest-speaker-sarah-adams/>

Does trail maintenance pay?

by Danny Bernstein

Bob Terrell was a raconteur, a storyteller who wrote for the *Asheville Citizen-Times* for over fifty years as a sportswriter and later as a columnist. He published many books sharing stories of local people. This is a story that Terrell wrote about Jack Trump, a CMC maintainer, in May 1988 for the *Asheville Citizen Times*:



Figure 1 Joe Hamrick and Jack Trump on Rumbling Bald

Jack was part of the CMC Friday maintenance crew that was building the MST. On March 16, 1988, the crew was working at MM 386 on the Blue Ridge Parkway, which is about a mile west of the US 74 intersection. They were digging below the Parkway when Jack found a waxed bread wrapper. It looked like the wrapper wasn't just left as litter but that it had been buried. Hmmm....

Jack kept digging and hit something hard, a fruit jar. We

would call it a mason jar these days; it would be used to store canned fruit. The jar had been buried so long that the lid was stuck. Jack broke the lid and found a hundred money orders inside, wrapped in foil.

Now, we need to pause here to remind you what a postal money order is:

When sending money by mail, use money orders as a safe alternative to cash and personal checks. U.S. Postal Service® money orders are affordable, widely accepted, and never expire. Your money order receipt will help you track your payment and show proof of value in case the money order gets lost, stolen, or damaged.

Money orders were typically used by people who didn't have a checking account and needed to send money through the mail. If you didn't want to mail cash, you went to the post office and got a money order; you can still do this. Each of the money orders in the fruit jar had been made out for \$90 to \$100. Jack kept digging and found a second jar with 102 money orders also filled out for \$90 to \$100. All were dated 1968.

I'll save you doing the arithmetic. If all the money orders were for \$90, that would be \$18,180. But some were for \$100. So, in total, this find was probably worth about \$20,000 in 1988, which is over \$47,000 now. Not bad for a day's work on the trail as a volunteer.

The whole point of money orders is they're like cash. So Jack could have cashed them, but of course he didn't. He turned them over to the post office in Asheville which turned them over to postal inspectors in Charlotte.

Bob Terrell speculated. Why bury these money orders? If they were too hot to handle, they could have been burned. Maybe the perpetrator meant to come back. Maybe he couldn't find the place or maybe he was offed - you know - like on *The Sopranos*.

Dwayne Stutzman, the Mountain Region Trails Specialist (retired) and a longtime CMC member who gave me the newspaper clipping, said that it was understood that the Blue Ridge Parkway management wanted to keep this incident quiet. But I don't know how quiet it could be when Bob Terrell wrote about it. I never found a news article about this incident which would have been published much closer to the time of the find.

Jack Trump died in 1994. His obituary in the CMC *Let's Go* praised him as a hiker, backpacker, an A.T. section maintainer and a regular on the Friday trail crew. The obit went on about his pipe smoking and the stewed apples he shared, in fact, a lot of fun facts about Jack but nothing about finding the money orders and his honesty in turning them over to the post office. I would have thought it would be one of the most interesting things about his time with CMC.

Photo: Courtesy of the UNCA Special Collections Carolina Mountain Club Archives

A Tale of a Bench

by Bobbi Powers

It's just a little hand-hewn bench with a simple inscription on a plaque.

SAM CLARKE
CMC TRAIL CREW

But that little bench intrigued me and my five friends who were hiking the MST in November 2021.

The bench sits about 200 feet from Beaver Dam Gap parking going east on the MST toward Ferrin Knob, and we speculated about it as we hiked. That section of trail from Beaver Dam to Bent Creek Gap is a 2-mile challenge for both hikers and maintainers because it goes pretty much straight up to the foundation of an old fire tower on Ferrin Knob, followed by a long steep descent to Bent Creek Gap. Water tends to hit the top and cascade down the trail in both directions. However, we noticed lots of new water diversion ditches along the way. On the steep portion, there are massive rock cliffs which hold seeps, and near these seeps there have been lots of upgrades to the trail. Ditches and strategically-placed rocks now control the water. Near the end of the section as it goes down into Bent Creek Gap, there is a brand-new, CMC-built bridge dated 2021. People have been very busy improving this trail, and my interest was piqued.

It turns out that Sam Clarke, along with his wife Ann, had been the maintainers for this section, and Sam was also the co-crew leader with Hugh Hensleigh for the Thursday Crew. Sam was a part of CMC for about three years and completed just over 1000 work hours. Todd Eveland summed up Sam's impact: "Sam was a special man whose hours may not rate among our top performers, but he overcame adversity (battling cancer) to continue working on the trails without fanfare or complaint about his health. He was a brave and quiet trail leader who cared about CMC and its mission." Others on the Thursday Crew echoed Todd's comments. Mel Skiles stated, "Sam's exceptionalism was his kindness every day to everyone." Ken Hummel added, "Seeing Sam come out and work with us even with his health issues inspired me beyond words." Hugh Hensleigh said, "He's the guy who didn't say much but knew what to say." Every one of the crew members I spoke with talked of Sam's unassuming nature, his intelligence, his trail-building knowledge, his soft-spoken nature, and over and over again his kindness.



On September 10, 2020, the crew who had worked with Sam over the years invited Sam and Ann to a bench dedication ceremony to honor Sam. After the ceremony Sam said to his co-workers, "The important part of the plaque on the bench is the bottom line (CMC TRAIL CREW). Any time you go by the bench, you can look at the bottom line and say to yourself, "Yes, that's me and who I represent." Three months later, Sam died peacefully at home.

Sam never got to work on the major rehabilitation of this section due to health issues, but I truly believe that his spirit remained with each member of the Thursday Crew as they improved



the trail. Monuments are often built to commemorate famous people. The Thursday Crew chose to honor a trustworthy, giving, hard-working, nice, witty, and kind man with a simple hand-hewn bench. Somehow it seems totally appropriate.

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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