



Carolina Mountain Club

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March 2022

CMC Secondary Trails & Emails

by Les Love

Our Secondary Trails Program is doing incredibly well and we've taken on 10 new trails. Some are pretty short, so here's your chance to pick up a favorite trail and give back to the trails we love by becoming a Secondary Trail Adopter. Check these out at the bottom of the spreadsheet.

Thanks to Jan & Kevin Onan and Rich Evans, the Section Rovers Crew, that meets either on Tuesday or Saturday each week, many trails are getting improvements and more and more newbies are learning how much fun trail maintenance can be.

Here are some interesting stats compiled by Rich: For the past 3 years since the Secondary Trails Program was created, CMC has logged 4,998 average hours per year of work in the Pisgah Ranger District. If you compare that to the 14 previous years, the average had been only 1,500 hours. So thank you to all of you hikers who have become trail maintainers! But we need more of you to step up as you can see on the spreadsheet. Rich shows you what to do and issues you the tools to do it.

Please let me know if you would like to get involved.

Les

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New Challenge for Carolina Mountain Club's 100th Anniversary

by Tom Weaver

CMC will be celebrating its 100-year anniversary in 2023!

At our 90-year anniversary in 2013, two new hiking challenges were introduced. These were the A.T. and the MST Challenges both which were predecessors of today's AT-MST Challenge. The 2013 A.T. (~94 miles) and the MST (~150 miles) challenges require one to hike the miles within the calendar year.

A new challenge has been established for CMC's 100th anniversary. This challenge requires one to hike 50 miles total on club led hikes (of any length) and perform 50 hours of trail work. Although the 100-year anniversary is not until 2023, this challenge will recognize efforts that start this year, Jan 2022, to give club members more opportunity to complete the challenge. The challenge will end on December 31, 2023. We have redesigned the CMC logo into a patch adding the 1923-2023 date. Additional recognition ideas are being considered.

The advantage of this challenge is that it is conceptually simple and CMC members of any fitness level can participate at their own speed. Many of our CMC challenges require a certain level of endurance and fitness to complete. Trail maintenance hours can be as simple as scouting trails, lopping brush, or more physical tasks such as cleaning water diversions and more on a trail you have adopted or on trail crew events.

We still have a few details to work out, but wanted to announce this to get you started on the challenge. The existing CMC website trail maintenance hourly log will be used to track hours worked. There is a personal hike log form available to download so one can manually log their hiking accomplishments.

Look for more details coming soon....

New program trains hiking club members to assist SAR missions

To read the Smoky Mountain News article about CMC joining in Search And Rescue missions, go here:

<https://smokymountainnews.com/outdoors/item/33029-all-hands-on-deck-new-program-trains-hiking-club-members-to-assist-sar-missions>

SAVE THE DATE - SPRING SOCIAL SATURDAY, MAY14

This year we will revive the Spring Social! A potluck will be held at the Lake Julian Pavilion on Saturday, May 14. More details to come. . . .

CMC Endowment Fund Established

by Tom Weaver

The Carolina Mountain Club has established an endowment fund with the intention of using the interest and earnings to help sustain our club as we move into our second 100 years.

The initial funding will come from the club's general balance in the amount of \$30,000. The endowment fund will be invested via The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina (CFWNC) in their Socially Responsible Portfolio. The investment goals for the fund shall emphasize conservative and long-term capital appreciation and income.

Future additions to this Fund balance can come from excess monies in the Club's general fund, life member dues, and future bequests from members or the public. Please consider investing in Carolina Mountain Club as you update your estate planning.

Income and growth from this Fund is intended to be used to augment the Club's conservation, education, environmental activities and for maintenance and management of the trails the Club is responsible to build and maintain.

The Club has established a small team called the Endowment Fund Committee consisting of the Treasurer, President, Past President and Vice President to manage the Fund and make recommendations to be voted on by the Council for the following:

- Investment portfolio decisions for the options provided by CFWNC
- Additional contributions from the Club's general balance to the Fund
- Disbursements of the annual spendable income. Potential expenditures will be solicited across the Council members in advance of final recommendations.

Welcome, Brent Laurenz, Executive Director of Friends of the MST

By Danny Bernstein

"The MST was built for times like these," proclaims the latest annual report of the Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail (FMST). It certainly was. During the height of the pandemic, the MST was the only trail open for most of us in Western North Carolina.

Brent Laurenz was on the Mountains-to-Sea Trail during the pandemic as well. And now he has become the second Executive Director after Kate Dixon who has just retired. And with only three weeks on the job, overlapping with Dixon, he agreed to give me an interview – a brave man indeed.



Laurenz grew up in Texas. He attended Virginia Tech in the Virginia Blue Ridge where he enjoyed the mountains and the forests. He went on to get a master's degree in political management from George Washington University in Washington, D.C. The next step was to work in the nonprofit world but Washington DC with its crowds was getting less and less exciting.

In 2009, he, his wife Jessica and two boys moved to Raleigh and promptly fell in love with North Carolina. Brent discovered the MST by reading Allen DeHart's account of his MST trek in 1997. DeHart and Alan Householder were the first MST completers. Now as of the end

of 2021, we have 148 – yes, I counted them from the website.

Laurenz and his boys (now six and eight) hiked the MST here and there in the Falls Lake area around Raleigh with their dog – we can't forget the dog. But when the pandemic hit, entrances to all the public lands seemed to be closed, except the MST. They hiked the same stretch of MST over and over again. Didn't we all?

Then Kate Dixon, the first and only Executive Director of Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea, announced her retirement. The ED job popped up and Brent threw his hat (or his resume) in the ring and was offered the position.

Now Laurenz brings his considerable experience in the nonprofit world. His last job before the ED post was as Deputy Director at Common Cause, NC, which according to its website, *is a nonpartisan grassroots organization dedicated to upholding the core values of American democracy. We work to create open, honest and accountable government that serves the public interest, promote equal rights, opportunity and representation for all.*

Our own Marcia Bromberg, former CMC president and now president of FMST, was the chair of the search committee. "The board is thrilled to welcome Brent as the Friends' new Executive Director," says Bromberg. "He brings considerable nonprofit experience, a successful track record of working with volunteers, and, most importantly, a love of the MST. We are looking forward to a long partnership with the newest member of our trail family!"

Again, with only three weeks on the job, Laurenz says :

"I am so amazed by the passion and dedication to this trail from volunteers, task forces that work on the trail, the Board and donors. They bring the trail to life. From the outside you don't know the people involved. The Board is amazing and passionate. They are the biggest advocates and salespeople for the trail. They will build awareness of the trail," He has met with almost all the board members already.

The NC legislature passed a new state budget that comprises \$29.25 million of new trail funding, most of it targeted toward completing North Carolina's official State Trails. The new state funding will be used to acquire land, build new trail, and improve trail heads and signs all along the MST and other state trails. Laurenz sees a tremendous opportunity that the NC state legislature recently made in trails. "It's a transformative investment," Laurenz says. "It will allow us to build more trail off the road."

"Everyone is so helpful and accommodating," Laurenz continues. "The MST depends on a coalition of partners with land managers. I am hopeful that we can continue to build productive relationships with state parks and hope they care as much about the trail as we do. The general public has discovered the trail in the last couple of years. I hope the public will stay in love with the trail after the pandemic."

Is the MST one trail? The completers, those that walk the whole trail, are a small number of people. "It's a cool way to experience our state," Laurenz says. "A holistic way to understand North Carolina. The number of people who complete the trail keeps growing every year."

"When will the trail be finished?" You always hear this.

"You can walk the whole trail now. You can start at Clingmans Dome and walk to the ocean," Laurenz says. "But day hikers are the bigger constituency."

The MST is not a trail between two sets of trees. Communities change, the landscape changes as you move further east (or west). It's not a thousand miles in the woods and then you pop up at the beach. The eastern part of the trail is a challenge, right now. There's not a lot of access to public land.

Last month (February 2022), Laurenz and Kate Dixon, on her last evening on the job, led a forum for a small group of active members about building a diverse and inclusive MST. "I thought it was a perfect combination of long-time MST supporters and new hiking friends from whom we can learn about reaching out to others," Laurenz said. "It takes all of us to reveal the history and spread the word about the pleasure and opportunities of our statewide trail." The program, named JEDI, which stands for Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, was started by the FMST board in 2020.

"Now the biggest pieces include looking at all of our work (volunteering, events, trail materials and the trail itself) to figure out how to make them/us more welcoming. How do we become an asset to partners already getting diverse communities on the trail, considering all decisions with an equity lens," Betsy Brown, FMST Outreach manager, said.

FMST Gathering

We invite you to attend our annual Gathering of Friends April 7-10 at Lake Junaluska to welcome Brent to the MST Community and honor Kate Dixon, the only executive director in Friends' history as she hikes off to enjoy her retirement. See <https://mountaintoseatrail.org/gathering-of-friends/>

Hemlock Restoration Initiative events in March: hikes, demos, and volunteer days!

Spring is just around the corner, and Hemlock Restoration Initiative is preparing a suite of fun events for the month of March, including volunteer days, hikes, and treatment demonstrations. Click the link on the dates below for more details. All events are free, but registration is required.

<https://savehemlocksnc.org/events/>

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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