



Carolina Mountain Club

Since 1923

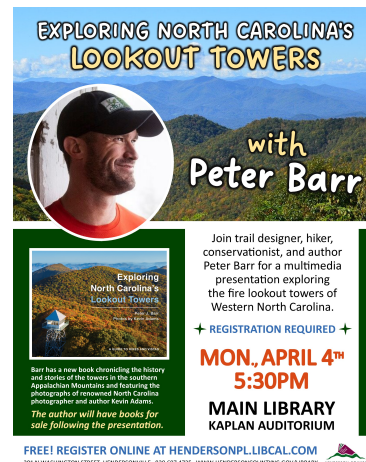
eNews | Hike . Save Trails . Make Friends.

April 2022

## Exploring North Carolina's Lookout Towers

by Peter Barr

Longtime CMC member Peter Barr is excited to be presenting his hiking & historical guidebook ***Exploring North Carolina's Lookout Towers*** at a handful of events in the region in April. This book is extremely helpful in pursuing CMC's Lookout Tower Challenge, and features 28 historic fire lookout towers as well as 8 former lookout tower sites, complete with professional images from preeminent WNC photographer Kevin Adams.



One presentation is an exciting partnership with Lazy Hiker Brewing Company that is hosting "Fire Towers & Beer" at their taproom in Sylva on April 5th @ 6:30pm. Pints of their fire tower-themed brews--Trail Mate Golden Ale & Wesser Evil Porter--will be \$1 off. Peter will also be presenting at libraries in Hendersonville (April 4 @ 5:30pm), Lake Lure/Mountains Branch (April 5 @ 11:00am), and Brevard (April 7 @ 6:30pm).

Please come out and join him to learn about historic fire lookout towers and see the book's stunning images from Kevin Adams Photography!

Can't make it? Check out NC fire tower hikes at [www.nclookouts.com](http://www.nclookouts.com).

Links to event pages w/ detail:

April 4 - Hendersonville, NC: Henderson County Public Library - 5:30pm

<https://www.facebook.com/events/751002709153779>

April 5 - Lake Lake, NC: Mountains Branch Library - 11:00am

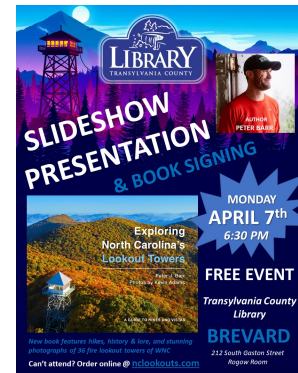
<https://www.facebook.com/events/1027794584473658>

April 5 - Sylva, NC: Lazy Hiker Brewing - Sylva Taproom - 6:30pm

<https://www.facebook.com/events/462771612195117>

April 7 - Brevard, NC: Transylvania County Library - 6:30pm

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1648294155502278>



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## In Memoriam

by Marcia Bromberg

Paula Robbins, a long-time CMC member, passed away February 19<sup>th</sup>. Paula's love of nature was demonstrated through her many outdoor activities, prime of which was hiking. Before moving to North Carolina she was an active member of the Appalachian Mountain Club in New England where she climbed all of the 48 mountains over 4,000 in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. After moving to Asheville and joining the CMC she became a hike leader for the club and was the Sunday half-day scheduler for many years. She also led her own small hiking group called the Bent Creek Harriers. In 2011 Paula moved to Givens Estates where she quickly came to enjoy the trail system running through the campus.

Given her love of nature it's not surprising that Paula choose a natural burial at Carolina Memorial Sanctuary in Mills River. Family and friends participated in a very moving memorial and burial service. If you'd like to honor Paula you can make a donation to the North Carolina Arboretum in her memory.

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## CMC SPRING PICNIC will be at LAKE JULIAN on SAT. MAY 14

Please RSVP on CMC website to attend

see attached flyer.



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## Let's vote Carolina Mountain Club Number 1 Again!

by Danny Bernstein



CMC was voted the number one *Hiking Club or Group* by Mountain Xpress readers two years in a row. Can we make it a third?

With over 200 scheduled hikes every year, nine trail maintenance crews, and a diverse Youth Challenge program, is it any wonder that we're the number 1 hiking club? Are we unbeatable? Only if we all vote again.

With so many other informal hiking groups popping up, I'm sure we'll have more competition. Let's keep voting CMC Number 1.

To do that, go to <https://mountainx.com/bestofwnc/>. The voting ends at the end of April. So vote to make CMC number one again.

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## Register Now! ATC Vista Set For August

by Kathy Kyle

Early registration opens April 1, 2022 for the first ATC Vista scheduled for this August. The Vista replaces the annual ATC conference, which allows people to hike, meet other hikers and see more of the country and culture surrounding the A.T.

The conference will be held at State University of New York (SUNY) in New Paltz, NY August 5 - 8, 2022. The 4-day extended weekend program offers over 60 hikes along trails in New York and New Jersey, over 45 educational and fun workshops, and various local excursions to explore the area.



Access to certain activities will have limited spaces, so register early to join the fun and save money.

For more information, check out the hikes, excursions and workshops on the menu of the website: <https://atvista2022.org/>

CMC has hosted ATC conferences in the past and many members have enjoyed attending the event that has been held from Maine to Georgia.

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## Kate Dixon Retires from Friends of the MST

by Danny Bernstein

Last month in the CMC eNews, I introduced Brent Laurenz, the new Executive Director of Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail. Here we say goodbye to Kate Dixon and look at a few of her many accomplishments.

Kate Dixon has been the first Executive Director of Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail (FMST) and has served for the past fifteen years. She started in 2007 after a great deal of experience with the Triangle Land Conservancy. FMST was lucky to get her. Before she came in, the group was an all-volunteer organization focused mostly on trail work, led by Jeff Brewer, the first board president.



*1 Kate Dixon at Stone Mountain SP*

I was lucky to meet with Kate in Winston-Salem, half-way between Asheville and Raleigh where Kate lives with her husband, Dan Wilkinson. I wanted to chat with her about her FMST legacy face-to-face; we were both tired of Zoom.

I started with the view that everything that occurred under Kate's watch was influence by her. So I asked, "What do you think were your most memorable accomplishments?"

There's been a Mountains-to-Sea Trail across North Carolina since Allen de Hart and Alan Householder walked from Clingmans Dome to Jockey's Ridge State Park in 1997. But in terms of trails on dirt, that's a different story. In 2007, less than 500 miles of trail were on natural surfaces. Now it's over 720 miles. Some of the improvements incorporate CMC's great work in building the trail from Balsam Gap to Waterrock Knob.

Documenting the trail has always been a challenge. Where does the trail go? What happens when the white circles are missing? Now the MST website is a beautiful, professional resource. It includes interactive maps and updated trail segments. Current FMST members can download the latest trail changes.

Many of us like a book in our hands to see the overall picture and plan a long-distance walk. "Trail guides are important tools to manage the trail," Kate said. She praised the Trail Resource Manager, Jim Grode, for his attention to details.



But most hikers are not interested in doing a long-distance walk. Jim Grode wrote *Great Day Hikes on North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea Trail*, published by the prestigious UNC Press. The book, which includes forty best day hikes along the trail, came out just as the pandemic shut down so many other trails and parks. Great timing for hikers, not great for publicizing the book.

When I hiked the MST across North Carolina, the trail between Raleigh and the coast was on US 70. I walked miles and miles on the side of a low-trafficked road which eventually took me to New Bern; my hiking partner, Sharon, rode her bicycle the whole way. There is very little public land in this area of Eastern North Carolina. But Kate was determined to find public land and get the MST in that area off the road as much as possible. She collaborated with community leaders to design the Coastal Crescent route.

Now the MST makes a C, a crescent, which heads south and goes through Singletary State Park and public game lands, Jacksonville and even a greenway to the Camp Le Jeune Memorial Gardens. Past Morehead City, it rejoins the original trail on its way to the ferry to Ocracoke.

Since the Coastal Crescent Trail has been defined and has been walked, the route might seem obvious but it wasn't when it was first conceived. First the route had to be worked out. Kate spent a lot of time "ground truthing," going to the sites where the trail might work, connecting with towns in the area and explaining the benefits of having the MST go through their communities. The MST now includes a paddling route on the Neuse River. If all of this seems like a foreign country to CMC mountain hikers, see the interactive map at <https://mountaintoseatrail.org/the-trail/map/>

Kate grew the organization in many ways. When Kate came in, she was the only staff member. Now five people work for FMST. The staff bring different skill sets and contributions toward the same goal, championing the MST. FMST is a much stronger organization as well. When Kate started, there were only 67 members. Now there are over 2,300 members and of course, growing. The pandemic showed people the importance of trails in general and of the MST in particular. Even when every public access to trails seemed to be closed, the MST was always open somewhere.

The MST became a NC state trail as part of the state park system before Kate came to the organization. But now, "State Parks sees us as leaders in pushing the trail forward," Kate says. "They are delightful partners." There are twelve long distance trails in North Carolina including the Fonta Flora Trail, the Carolina Thread Trail, the Triangle Trails. FMST is a leader in the Great Trails State Coalition. See <https://greattrailsnc.org>.

Last year, the NC state budget included \$29.5 million for 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. It is the first significant investment of funds ever targeted specifically at the State Trails.

FMST is looking to buy land in the Coastal Crescent area. Building a trail is difficult in that area because there's a lot of water. "We are working on looking where to

strategically buy land. We're talking around Fayetteville and around Surf City. The state isn't going to send us a check. We need to check off all the right boxes," Kate says.

Kate is leaving Brent Laurenz, the new ED, a powerful organization. "He will have the challenge of how to spend the state money, a good problem to have," Kate says. She will be at the MST Gathering in two weeks. We all wish Kate a vibrant, exciting retirement.

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Carolina Mountain Club eNews is published on the first Friday of each month. Send your news to [eNews@carolinamountainclub.org](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:dbass3607@gmail.com). Your email changes will be automatically reflected in eNews delivery.

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