



**Carolina Mountain Club**

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**eNews** | Hike . Save Trails . Make Friends.

February 2021

## Introducing Todd Eveland CMC Trails Counselor

As we begin anew another year of Trail work I want to thank our Crew Leaders, Section Maintainers, and the many Crew volunteers for their hard work and perseverance this past year. I'm pleased to report we had a very safe and productive year despite the many challenges. I also want to thank Ron Navik for his tireless work and dedication to keeping our trail work on track this past year and during his entire term as Trails Counselor. Please join me in thanking Ron.

As a quick introduction I am Todd Eveland and have been a member of the CMC since 2019. My wife Pam and I retired and relocated from Chicago about 2 years ago. We love Asheville and the wonderful mountains and trails to explore. I am currently a section maintainer, MST supervisor, Thursday Crew Leader and now the recently appointed CMC Trails Counselor. I look forward to working with you as we embark on a new year of trail work. So let's get started....

Each year we request our CMC Trail Maintenance Volunteers to sign our Annual Waiver, update their Volunteer Profile, and solicit anyone who has not joined the CMC to join our Club so they can get credit and rewards for their efforts. If you haven't done so already, please log in to our website and complete these tasks.

In 2021 we have been asked by the Forest Service Districts we partner with to provide additional personal information to assist them in compiling some demographic data for

reporting and analytic purposes. Providing this personal data is not mandatory and is strictly confidential. The CMC will use this data to better understand trends and assist in the recruiting process going forward. I want to thank John Whitehouse and Tim Carrigan for spearheading this effort.

Should you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at [pepsitodd1@gmail.com](mailto:pepsitodd1@gmail.com).

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## El-Genk Family - 40 Hike Challenge Completion

*Note from Les Love: When making thank-you calls to people who donated to the Friends of the Mountains to Sea Trail, I got to speak to Hussein El-Genk for making a sizable donation. He was so gracious and appreciative to those of us who have made the MST possible.*

*The following is what Betsy Brown, the Outreach Coordinator for FMST, has written about this amazing family being the first to complete the 40 Hike Challenge. If this doesn't make you want to join FMST and make a donation I don't know what will!*

### Great Day Hike Completer Spotlight | The El-Genk Family

I wanted to share with you exciting news about the first completions of our 40 Hike Challenge (our invitation to hike all 40 Hikes in the Great Day Hikes book.) Details are here:

Over the holidays, we learned that the El-Genk family, Hussein and Nashua, along with their 4 children had finished the challenge. We knew they were working on it, but hadn't realized that they were nearly done! The day after we received their completion form, I went over to Durham to give the family their patches and a few other goodies we had on hand. We went for a hike on the Ellerbe Creek Greenway and talked all about the MST, getting people outdoors, parenting...it could not have been a more enjoyable afternoon.

One funny moment, we passed a significant portion of the watershed. Hussein was telling me that it was an important mating grounds and he was struggling to remember which species of bird returned there, and paused. And his daughter looked up and said it was an important mating ground for people. Nashua, the mum, Miller, my daughter, and I both burst into giggles and tried to carry on.

This is a very impressive family and they are so eager to help get more people out onto the trail. I think what is most interesting is that they didn't even know about the MST at the start of 2020 and they are the first completers of this challenge. When you read the blog post, you'll get the full extent of the type of trail ambassadors the family will be.



We posted a story about them right away in December, and then a follow up today with more about the family. I'm working on a press release to go out too.

Here is a link to the blog piece on the FMST website:

<https://mountaintoseatrail.org/2021/01/great-day-hike-completer-spotlight-the-el-genk-family/>

<https://mountaintoseatrail.org/challenges/40-hike-challenge/>

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### **A.T. Vista Inauguration to Be Conducted in 2021 and 2022 – Be a Part of the History!**

With the great news of vaccines for COVID-19, the planning team for the inaugural A.T. Vista has updated the program to provide for both a virtual experience in 2021 and an in-person experience for 2022. This expanded program presents a great opportunity to allow wide participation each year, and we seek assistance from your club members.

We know it has been since 2017 that we've been together to spend time on the trail, learn, and socialize together; however, the uncertainties involved in rolling out COVID-19 vaccinations has led us to avoid a trail-wide in-person event in 2021. We want the inaugural A.T. Vista to be memorable and this expanded two-year program rollout will allow us to develop and maintain momentum so that we can continue to share in the great camaraderie of the kindred spirits that cherish the Appalachian Trail.

As we want to continue to honor the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Benton MacKaye's 1921 article, "*An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning*," the 2021 A.T. Vista program will be conducted with dispersed local hiking opportunities all along the Appalachian Trail (and perhaps even elsewhere!) plus virtual gatherings providing an opportunity for participants at any location to follow the hikes online as photos and videos are posted.

For the 2021 program, we are seeking hiking leaders from trail clubs to conduct small group hikes along the Appalachian Trail and other trails in your serving area. We are also seeking workshop proposals for topics that are conducive to an online presentation.

We anticipate the 2021 program will still be a 4-day event with virtual experiences available August 6-9, 2021. A planned itinerary is below (details are in process):

1. **Friday, August 6 (in the evening):** A virtual keynote program with welcome remarks, highlights of the virtual program, and online entertainment (components may be pre-recorded).

2. **Saturday, August 7 from 8AM to 5PM:** Local hikes to be conducted along the Appalachian Trail (and other trails in your area). **Afternoon and Evening:** Pictures and videos from these hikes to be uploaded and shared as armchair activities to engage people with various fun facts and opportunities for viewers to experience the hikes vicariously.
3. **Sunday, August 8 and Monday, August 9 from 9AM to 4PM:** Various workshop tracks

We are still working out many details for this expanded program while we continue to pursue the in-person program now scheduled for **August 5-8, 2022**, at the State University of New York (SUNY) at New Paltz.

If you have members of your club that would be interested in making this a memorable and ongoing future event, email us at [atvistainfo@gmail.com](mailto:atvistainfo@gmail.com) to join the team. Provide the requested information below for the hikes and workshops, and if you have other ideas, feel free to send those too. The A.T. Vista organizing team will be putting together an online program and registration system based on the submitted opportunities.

**Hike Submission:**

1. Leader Name and Contact info (email, phone)
2. Co-Leader Name and Contact info
3. Location
4. Trail Name/Section
5. Description to be used
6. Number of Miles
7. Level (easy, moderate, strenuous)
8. Roundtrip or one-way hike?

**Workshop Submission:**

1. Workshop Name
2. Workshop description
3. Workshop Leader Name and Contact info (email, phone)
4. Length of session (average is expected to be one-hour)
5. Session Date: Sunday or Monday (or both!)
6. Would you be able to host more than one session if needed?
7. Would you also like to conduct this workshop online or in-person for the 2022 program?

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**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail invite you to join us Friday and Saturday, March 26th-27th, for our virtual annual meeting, this year affectionately called the unGathering of Friends.**

Until it's safe for our community to come together in person, we'll gather safely around our small screens to salute the trail that unites us - the **Mountains-to-Sea Trail**. Even though we're "unGathered," this is still a very united and active group, and we are eager to see you again!

Friday evening will be "members-only" celebration and happy hour for current members of Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail.

Saturday morning and afternoon will be open for all to learn about North Carolina's 1175-mile flagship trail. This is a great chance for those who haven't been able to join us in-person before to attend a Gathering.

**More details and registration information will be available soon. Even though this is a virtual event, the agenda will be active and participatory.**

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2/4/2021

## **Masks now required on parkway, Great Smokies**

**Karen Chávez** Asheville Citizen Times USA TODAY NETWORK Have those masks handy, outdoor lovers.

The National Park Service on Feb. 2 implemented a mask requirement for employees, visitors, partners and contractors to all national parks. These include the

Blue Ridge Parkway , Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site and Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

The Appalachian Trail is also part of the National Park Service.

The mandate is in support of President Joe Biden's Jan. 20 executive order requiring that masks be worn on all federal property to help reduce the spread of coronavirus amid the deadly pandemic now raging for an entire year.

'Wearing a mask around others, physical distancing, and washing your hands are the simplest and most effective public health measures to help stop the spread of COVID-19,' NPS Office of Public Health Director Captain Sara Newman said in a statement.

'Getting outside and enjoying our public lands is essential to improving mental and physical health, but we all need to work together to recreate responsibly.'

Face masks are now required in all Park Service buildings and facilities, which include visitor centers on the parkway and in the Smokies, historic buildings and gift shops. Note that many facilities are now closed across Western North Carolina due to wintry weather and hazardous road conditions.

Public information officers for the parkway and Smokies would not answer park-specific questions, instead referring media to the national headquarters in Washington, D.C., which did not immediately respond to questions.

But the press statement makes clear that anyone visiting a national park should be in possession of a mask, even while walking or hiking on trails or stopping at an overlook, or walking behind gates when they are closed to motor vehicles.

Masks are also required on NPS-managed lands when at least 6 feet of physical distancing cannot be maintained, including 'narrow or busy trails, overlooks and historic homes,' the statement said.

In 2019, the Smokies was the most visited national park, with 12.5 million visitors. The parkway was the second-most visited of all national park units (including the Statue of Liberty, monuments, battlefields, seashores and other large parks such as Yellowstone and Yosemite) with some 15 million visitors.

While visitation numbers for 2020 are not yet official, preliminary data show these parks came close to 2019 numbers even though they were closed for several weeks at the start of the pandemic.

So many people swarmed outdoor areas for exercise, entertainment and seemingly safe activities during COVID-related lockdowns, that popular trails and parking lots were overwhelmed, traffic on warm, sunny weekends was bumper-to-bumper, and trash, litter and human waste was left behind since many bathrooms were closed.

Other public health measures are in place at national parks, including capacity limits, one-way trails and temporary closures in response to local conditions.

'Working with public health officials and following the latest science and guidance, we can make national parks safer for employees, visitors and partners,' NPS Deputy Director Shawn Bengé said in the statement.

'We will continue to evaluate operations and make appropriate modifications to visitor services as needed.'

Visitors should check individual park websites and social media for details before they visit, including the following:

**Blue Ridge Parkway** : [www.nps.gov/blri](http://www.nps.gov/blri) . **Great Smokies** : [www.nps.gov/grsm](http://www.nps.gov/grsm) . **Carl Sandburg** : [www.nps.gov/carl](http://www.nps.gov/carl) . **Cars overflow at the Alum Cave trailhead in Great Smoky Mountains National Park.** *Courtesy Great Smoky Mountains National Park*

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## Help Wanted!

If you would like to help CMC, please consider joining the Communications Committee — especially if you have an interest in social media or communications of any kind. The committee is in need of new members to help communicate the club's mission, as well as hiking, conservation, trail maintenance work and other club opportunities. Contact the club at [carolinamountainclub2015@gmail.com](mailto:carolinamountainclub2015@gmail.com) for more information.

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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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