



Friday, May 11, 2018
Tartan Hall
Franklin, NC



We dedicate this Program to our founder
Rev. A. Rufus Morgan 1885-1983

*The NHC would like to give a special Thank You to our major partners:
the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (Southern Regional Office)
and the USFS (Nantahala and Tusquitee Ranger Districts).*

The Morgan Legacy ...

- 1818** Rufus's ancestors settle in area. Grandparents Albert and Johanna Siler give land for Episcopal Church in Cartoogehaye.
- 1838** The Silers give land to local Cherokee Chief to give him amnesty from the Cherokee removal.
- 1879** Chief Chuttahsotee and wife Cunstagih die. Buried at St. John's cemetery.
- 1881** Rufus's parents Alfred and Fanny Siler Morgan married at St. John's Episcopal Church
- 1885** Rufus born on Oct. 15th. First boy of 9 children. Baptized at St. John's.
- 1891** Morgan family moves to Murphy. Father: editor and lay preacher. Mother begins religious services for African Americans. Begin Episcopal Church. Rufus leaves for schooling in Waynesville, Chapel Hill, and New York City.
- 1914** Rufus marries Madeline Prentiss (his German tutor at Columbia University). Family moves to Penland, NC. Francis and Rufus Jr. born.
- 1917** With sister Lucy, Rufus begins Appalachian Industrial School. Lucy starts Penland Craft School at Spruce Pine.
- 1923** Rufus moves to SC as circuit preacher, Superintendent of schools, Boy Scout Leader, Chairman of Red Cross, and Business Manager at Kanuga Conference Center, running summer camps and conferences.
- 1925** St. John's torn down, cemetery abandoned.
- 1928** Rufus's first trip up to Mt. LeConte
- 1940** Returns to Cartoogehaye to take over AT maintenance with friends. Begins Girl and Boy Scout Troops; they help on the trails!
- 1940's** Served "local" churches in Franklin (St. Cyprians and St. Agnes), Highlands (Church of Transformation), Murphy (Church of the Messiah), Sylva (St. John's), Cullowhee (St. David's), Cherokee (St Francis), and Hayesville.
- 1945** Begins reconstruction of St John's Cartoogehaye church.
- 1946** Helps to form Macon Historical Society to save the Indian Mound in Franklin.
- 1950** Builds Community Center as a Health Center. No Doctor found. Erects old cabin for weaving classes. Francis Cargill and Sally Kesler teach. Develops craft program for local school children.
- 1951** Moves back into family home at Nonah; begins farming, bees, pigs, chickens, cattle, sheep.
- 1953** Wins "Honor Farm" award for conservation practices.
- 1972** Wife dies.
- 1975** Nonah burns down. Reconstructs old cabin into new home "Talohi".
- 1978** Takes last trip up Mt LeConte at 93 years of age. 172nd trip.
- 1981** Recognition Award for serving on ATC Board of Managers for 20 yrs.
- 1983** Passes away at Deerfield Retirement Home in Asheville on Feb 14th at 98 years of age.
A. Rufus Morgan Trail dedicated.
AT Museum Hall of Fame

Local Landmarks:

Siler Bald in Macon named for Rufus' Great Grandfather William Siler
Siler's Bald in the Smokies named for Jessie Siler, William's brother
Albert Mountain named for Rufus' Grandfather Albert Siler
Rufus Morgan Trail and Morgan Shelter named for Rufus



The Club and the Appalachian Trail ...

- 1921** Benton MacKaye conceives of a 2000 mile trail from highest point in the North to highest point in the South, Mt. Washington to Mt. Mitchell
- 1923** Early trails in place by hiking Clubs in New England
- 1925** Appalachian Trail Conference holds first meeting March 2-3
- 1930** George Tabor, of Almond, begins the Nantahala Appalachian Trail Club, blazes Nantahala National Forest.
- 1936** George dies, Club disbands
- 1937** Last section of AT finished at Hanover, NH
- 1939** First issue of Appalachian Trail News
- 1941** A. Rufus Morgan returns to WNC, takes over trail work for 55 AT miles. Enlists help from family, friends Sally Kesler and Francis Cargill, and boys and girls in scout troops (that he starts)
- 1951-1967** NHC jokingly called the "one man hiking Club"
- 1958** AT terminus moved from Mt. Oglethorpe to Springer Mountain, GA
- 1963** Standing Indian Campground built
- 1966** AT recorded 234 persons had walked the entire trail
- 1968** Friends and workers convince Rufus to formalize Club. Elect William Hazelden as President, with 14 charter members
- 1968** Congress passes the National Trails Act to preserve the AT
- 1977** Winding Stair relocated due to new US Hwy 64 construction
- 1980** Wesser Creek Trail abandoned as AT, kept as side trail
- 1981** A. Rufus Morgan Shelter completed
- 1983** A. Rufus Morgan Trail dedicated
- 1985** Club incorporated, recognize volunteers with Forest Service awards
- 1986** Club members propose a "Riverwalk" along the Little Tennessee River. 60 mile rocker started, wedding of two members at Wayah Bald
- 1990** Begin "Easter on the Trail" with goodies for thru-hikers. Started regular Wednesday work hikes called "TM hikes"
- 1991** Built new platform on Wesser Tower
- 1994** Club members design Nantahala shelter, build 6 shelters from 1994 to 2007, and modify 3 other shelters to fit design
- 1995** Build trail bridge over Moore Creek near Winding Stair Gap
- 1996** Begin Website, approved off-set trail blazes
- 1997** Do relocation at Wesser due to highway widening
- 2001** First privy built in Nantahala section at Siler Shelter
- 2004** Licklog Gap landslide and relocation
- 2005** Appalachian Trail Conference becomes Conservancy with broader stewardship mission
- 2006** NHC launches Trail to Every Classroom program
- 2007** Wayah shelter constructed, privy upgrade project initiated, Cold Spring shelter rehab, Long Branch shelter constructed
- 2008** New steps on north side of Winding Stair Gap
- 2010** Town of Franklin, NC designated the first AT Community
- 2016** NHC initiates Trail Ambassador Program
- 2018** Betty's Creek campsite designated with ten campsites

Future plans - (dependent on NEPA approval and funding)

- Rock Gap Shelter and privy replacement 2019
- Siler Bald Shelter and privy replacement 2020
- Cold Spring and Wesser privy replacement 2021-2022



Chainsaw Certification
From left: Gail Lehman, Paul Dyer, Ken Westmoreland,
Tom Marsh, Tom Rodgers, Cindy Rodinsky, Terri Barr, and Bill Van Horn

The Nantahala Hiking Club - Keeping the Legacy Alive Through Community Service

- Maintains AT approach trails in Nantahala National Forest
- Teacher and Club member Carol Fritz received ATC Grant to promote outdoor skills and enjoyment to her middle school class.
- Club members Bill and Sharon Van Horn implemented teacher workshops and Trail to Every Classroom in Macon County Schools.
- Rebuilt Bell Tower at St. John's Episcopal Church in Cartoogechaye.
- Repairs and repainting of Clubhouse from time to time.
- Provides shuttle service to thru-hikers from Franklin back to the AT trailheads
- Numerous members serve on the Friends of the Greenway Board, walking trails built at Patton Community Center, Sycamore Center and St. John's Episcopal Church
- Participates in ATC's Threatened and Endangered Species monitoring
- Recreational and Saturday work hikes provide opportunities for the public 55 to 70 times a year
- NHC was instrumental in Franklin becoming the first AT Community

Past Presidents

1962-1968 Albert Rufus Morgan
 1968-1976 William Hazelden
 1977-1979 Don McLean
 1979-1980 Barbara McGawn
 1980-1982 Barb Lull
 1982-1984 Virginia Alford
 1984-1986 Amber Burnham
 1986-1988 Kay Coriell
 1988-1989 Amber Burnham
 1989-1991 Bob Belding
 1991-1992 Dick Watson
 1992-1995 Charlie McLaughlin
 1995-1997 Kay Coriell
 1997-1999 Charlie McLaughlin
 1999-2001 Bud Colcord
 2001-2002 Don O'Neal
 2002-2005 Larry Jelley
 2005-2006 Kay Coriell
 2006-2008 Fred Haller
 2008-2010 Bill Van Horn
 2011-2014 David Lippy
 2014-2015 Olga Pader
 2017– present San Ho Choi

Past Trail Managers

1940-1978 Albert Rufus Morgan
 1978-1984 Barbara Lull
 1984-1989 Jack Coriell
 1989-1990 Don Bradley
 1990-1993 Jack Coriell
 1993-2002 Fred Haller
 2002-2012 Don O'Neal
 2012-2013 George Gover
 San Ho Choi
 Bill Van Horn
 2013-2016 San Ho Choi
 2016– present Don O'Neal

We give many thanks to the women and men who have served as trail maintainers through the years to maintain the 58.7 miles of the AT and 30 miles of blue blazed side trails. Additionally, we give tremendous thanks to them for following our founder's charge to:

"keep ever clear the open trails which lead to mountain tops".

Franklin AT Community Supporters



Cartoogechaye Elementary School

Currahee Brewing Company

Elevations Pizza & Eats

First Baptist Church of Franklin

The Town of Franklin

Franklin Area Chamber of Commerce

Franklin Health and Fitness

Gooder Grove Adventure Hostel

Lazy Hiker Brewing Company

Macon County Public Library

Macon County Public Schools

Outdoor 76

The Rathskeller Coffee Haus and Pub

Three Eagles Outfitters

The NHC has had an average of 119 volunteers annually for the last five years.

Work hours accumulated by those volunteers in the last five years are 38,821. The breakdown is as follows:

TRAIL MAINTENANCE: 27,328 hours * CLUB ACTIVITIES: 10,583 hours * TRAVEL: 910 hours

Twenty-eight Club members have completed the Appalachian Trail.

The NHC would also like to give a special Thank You to St. John's Episcopal Church and The First Presbyterian Church for their continued generosity and support that are vital to our mission.

