

Nantahala Hiking Club

"Keep ever clear the trails that lead to mountaintops."

Franklin, NC

www.nantahalahikingclub.org



Welcome to New Members

Dear NHC Members:

Please bear with us through this month's email newsletter!!!! We are hopeful of having our "real" newsletter style in place again for the next issue. Meanwhile, the club continues to be involved in many projects, the A.T. thru-hiker season is upon us, etc.-- and so, without further delay, the news.....

Message From Our President

As the winter months pass and spring seems to tease us with an early arrival, please keep our NHC members in your thoughts as many continue to be challenged with health concerns for their family and themselves. Though there is a promise of the COVID cloud lifting, our club will continue to adhere to the guidance of local and state authorities. Our traditional hiker season activities are being modified. Some will be postponed until another year passes. This should NOT prevent you from acting like the "trail angels" you are known to be. We ask you to protect yourself and others in the safest manner.

Katharine

New Hike Schedule & Leaders

The March/April hike schedule isn't attached to this email because, to be completely honest, I have no clue how to do it. Sorry. However, thanks to the quick work of Karen Franks, it is already posted on the club's website in a printable version.

We are thrilled to welcome the following new club members:

- Mary Ann & Don Baird, Metairie, LA
- Larry Barnett, Bryson City, NC
- Linda Brookshire, Demorest, GA
- Jim Chambers, Elizabethton, TN
- Ashely & Christopher Foradada, Franklin, NC
- Jenny Giarratano, Decatur, GA
- Pamela Ives, Franklin, NC
- Steve James, Young Harris, GA
- Leah & John Kennedy, Franklin, NC
- Thomas Lash, Murphy, NC
- Madeline Mathes & Tyler Sisson, Franklin, NC
- Christine Pope, Franklin, NC
- Joseph Stagi, Clearwater, FL
- Edwin Varnadoe, Knoxville, TN
- Lynn "Cricket" Woodward, Franklin, NC

A hike leader training for new hike leaders was conducted on January 23rd by Gail Lehman and Katharine Brown. Seven new hike leaders will be scheduling hikes in the upcoming months. In fact, some of them are leading what sound like fantastic hikes in the next two months. Check out the hike schedule. We welcome: David Stearns, David Heck, Laura Lauffler, Steve James, Linda Brookshire, Deborah Gregory and Larry Barnett. In preparation for this training, Gail and Katharine updated the Hike Leader Guide and had it republished. Thanks to the UPS Store for doing such a GREAT job with layout. Pictures on the Guide's cover come from many NHC led hikes. You may see yourself if you look closely.

Trail Manager's Report by Rich Corporon

Since the shutdown last year, the NHC maintainers have managed to work all of our sections of trail. The recent storms have caused many blowdowns so we have no shortage of things to do. During December, we concentrated on clearing the southern sections of the AT which are difficult to access now that the Forest Service gates are closed for the season. Since the new year began, we have been focusing on the northern sections, servicing privies and doing tread work. Well over 100 feet of cribbing and sidehill has been done between Winding Stair Gap and Wallace Gap. Turnout for our Wednesday maintenance has been good. We have been averaging between 10 and 15 people every week.

The NHC maintainers have, as always, continued our trail work throughout the winter. We plan to have the NHC's section of the AT ready for the influx of thru-hikers in early spring.

Come join us for trail maintenance on Wednesdays. We would love to have you. Please email me if you are interested at NHCtrailcrew@gmail.com.

We Love Our Maintainers!!!

We just can't have a newsletter without mentioning the ongoing and amazing job of our dedicated maintainers. They are working hard to prepare the trail for the 2021 hike season. Due to continued COVID-19 risks, all shelters and privies are officially closed, but two of our ten privies were recently cleaned out. Our maintainers know there will be usage even when closures are posted. Franklin has already seen a number of hikers coming through and the ATC registration data shows over 2,000 registered to begin a northbound hike in February and March. More information can be found throughout this newsletter regarding hiking season events.

Hunting Season Information for Hikers

What follows is a list of hunting season dates for various animals in North Carolina. Please remember that when hiking on forest land many logging roads are also hunting areas. Brightly colored clothing (neon green, yellow, oranges and reds) should be worn.

- Turkey: April 10-May 8
- Deer:
 - Archery, September 12-September 27
 - Muzzle Loading, September 28-October 12
 - Archery, October 12-November 22
 - Rifle, November 23-December 12
 - Archery, December 13-January 1 (Bucks Only)
- Bear: October 12-November 21 AND December 14-January 1
- Squirrel, Rabbit & Grouse: October 12-February 28
- Quail: November 21-February 28

Want to Learn About Leave No Trace Principles?

A quick (30-40 minutes) tutorial to learn the basics can be found at <http://www.LNT.org/online-awareness-course/>. As we enter another season for thru-hikers, this information can be shared by hike leaders and Trail Ambassadors to educate others.

A Message From Our Immediate Past President Mary Stone

GIVE THEM A RIDE!

As AT Thru-Hiker Season begins, notice those hikers on the streets and give them a lift. Maybe to the Post Office or grocery store or a motel or hostel. They've walked 110 miles to get to Winding Stair Gap at Franklin and might really appreciate a ride and a conversation with a local. Interactions with people during the AT thru-hiker season are a very memorable experience--for both hikers and locals. Your offer will be uplifting to them and show that we value them in our community. You will find it a joy to talk to these highly motivated hikers. Make them welcome!

P.S. I'm happily settled in Greenville, SC and love to have company. It's a joy to read of the work of NHC maintainers and know that the Ambassador, Visual Inventory and hiking programs are going strong. The club will survive COVID. I'm hiking with the Greenville Natural History Association (GNHA). They offer a number of hikes each week ranging from VVS (very very strenuous) to E (easy)! They work almost entirely through MeetUp. I'm learning the Paris Mountain, Jones Gap, Cesar's Head and Table Rock Mountain State Parks.

Updated Hiker Shuttle List

Thanks to the hard work of Deborah Gregory we now have a revised hiker shuttle list. Look for it on our website and at various locations throughout Franklin. This took a considerable amount of time and effort to put together. Thanks again, Deborah!

Macon County Transit will be requiring masks to be worn while aboard their vehicles and they will be supplied to whoever might need one. Their vehicles will be sanitized in between trips up the mountain. Passengers will be spaced in an attempt to offer every hiker possible the service of

clean, safe and warm travel for an affordable price. For further information, see the revised hiker shuttle list.

How to Purchase NHC Merchandise

Thanks to Starr Strese for suggesting that this information be publicized.....Merchandise with the NHC logo can be purchased at WNC Sports Zone here in Franklin at 209 Franklin Plaza. The logo can be put on virtually anything they sell and, even if they don't sell it, they can probably get it. While they have some merchandise in stock, if they don't have the size or color you want, it can be ordered. So if you want a hat, jacket, shorts, t-shirt or something less traditional in order to proudly display the NHC logo, you now know where to go. Thanks, Starr!

A.T. Thru-Hiker Season Activities

Chow Down: In recent years, the club has hosted a buffet-style meal for hikers at the Lazy Hiker brewery. This event has been canceled for 2021 due to constraints imposed by COVID-19.

Easter On The Trail: For many years Elena and Tom Marsh were the club's lead volunteers for Easter On The Trail. This yearly event was a highlight for members to be "trail angels" as well as to share camaraderie with one another during the preparation of items to be handed out to hikers over the Easter holiday weekend. COVID-19 continues to impact the manner in which we are able to continue providing our treasured events and this spring is no exception. This event will be modified as follows: From Good Friday on April 2nd until April 10th (Easter week), you are encouraged to go out on the AT at ANY time and provide trail magic along your hike or set up a tailgate from the back of your vehicle at major AT crossings. The following link details the ATC's suggestions for trail magic: <http://www.appalachiantrail.org/explore/hike-the-a-t/thru-hiking/trail-magic/>

The First Baptist Church in Franklin has decided to hold its annual hikers breakfast. In the past, the club has made a financial contribution to this event. They will be serving hikers daily from March 15 - April 15 from 7:15 am to 8:00 am. They will spread out in the fellowship hall and will limit seating at the tables. Unlike previous years, they will not be providing transportation to and from the church.

Some of our members are volunteering to shuttle hikers to and from the trail to Franklin. Macon County Transit will also be offering shuttle service. Please see the updated shuttle list on our website.

The Franklin A.T. Community Council is in the midst of planning a couple of things for thru-hikers. Nancy Reeder, Bill Van Horn and Debi Gedling represent the club on the Council. There may be an opportunity for the club to be involved in a trail magic event. More details to follow.

The World Outside The Nantahala Hiking Club by Bill Mandler, NHC Regional Partnership Committee Representative

With the spring Regional Partnership Committee (RPC) meeting coming up in March, I thought it might be worthwhile to explain to other members how the NHC fits into the wider world of Appalachian Trail management.

The primary entity that manages the trail under the cooperative management arrangement is the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC). It provides the central focus of trail management and works with the National Park Service (the AT is actually a national park), the U.S. Forest Service and many other state and local agencies (agency partners) that have an impact on the trail. Its authority is federal mandated by Congress. For the section of trail the NHC is responsible for maintaining, the Nantahala National Forest is our main agency partner as the land the trail goes through is under the purview of the U.S. Forest Service.

The NHC is one of 31 maintaining clubs that provide the "boots on the ground" to keep the trail open throughout its almost 2,200 mile length. The clubs are grouped into four regions by the ATC, which has staff dedicated to each: New England Regional Office (NERO), Mid-Atlantic Regional Office (MARO), Virginia Area Regional Office (VARO), and the Southern Regional Office (SORO). The SORO is based on Asheville. The RPC reps serve as a communication link between the maintaining clubs and the ATC and agency partners. I am the NHC RPC rep and Dave Heck is the alternate rep.

Five maintaining trail clubs are grouped under SORO: Georgia Appalachian Trail Club, Nantahala Hiking Club, Carolina Mountain Club, Smoky Mountains Hiking Club, and Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club.

An RPC meeting for each of the regions is held twice a year, usually in March and November. These meetings provide an opportunity to hear from the agency partners (ATC, NPS, USFS, etc.) about issues regarding the trail and provide a forum for the maintaining clubs to offer feedback to the agency partners regarding what we are seeing from our vantage point.

In addition, a Southern Partnership Meeting (SPM) is held in conjunction with the RPC meeting in March. The SPM combines representatives from SORO and VARO to provide a broader view of issues affecting the trail.

For many club members, the scope of the work that is required to maintain the trail may not be readily apparent. Hopefully, this information will help everyone to understand the number of players involved and the amount of behind-the-scenes work that occurs to keep the trail open.

Visual Resource Inventory Project (VRIP)

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy, in coordination with the National Park Service, is continuing to

move forward with inventorying all of its Visual Resources (Scenic Views along the A.T. and their View Shed) to better protect and manage these important resources. We currently have identified 31 scenic views on our 60 mile section. Volunteers are needed to help conduct the inventory. The work requires day hiking to the scenic views and spending about one hour with a 4-7 person team at each view point to do an objective analysis. NHC has 18 trained volunteers but would like to increase that number. If you are interested, contact Bill Van Horn (airborneengineer20bde@gmail.com or 828-369-1983), the lead volunteer of NHC's VRIP. Bill plans to conduct a hike each month on the fourth Tuesday to do the View Description and Scenic Quality ratings for one or two views.

Announcements

NHC sends blessings of comfort to Jean Hunnicutt at the passing of her husband.

NHC thanks Don O'Neal for his work with the ATC on the national historic landmark project.

Syndie Cassidy has graciously agreed to be the Chair of the Nominating Committee. She needs volunteers to assist her in preparing a slate of officers for the 2021-22 year. If interested, please contact Syndie at syndiecassedy1225@gmail.com or 850-384-1272.

On March 10th at 8:30 a.m., Bill Van Horn will lead a trail maintenance hike in order to provide education and training to new board members or other NHC leaders who have NOT experienced first hand the trail maintenance that is carried out by dedicated men and women each Wednesday along our over 60 miles of AT and 30 miles of side trails. If you are available and interested in attending or want further information, please contact Katharine Brown at 828-421-4178 by March 1st.

On March 8th at 5:30 p.m. the NHC will resume its board meetings on Zoom. Members should have received a link to join the meeting already. The guest speaker will be Shalin DeSai, ATC's VP for Advancement. He will be speaking about the financial model currently used by the club, as well as his article which appeared in Journeys magazine recently about his own AT experience.

The club will resume general membership meetings beginning on March 12th at 7:00 p.m. Our presenter on Zoom will be Michelle Braumleck. she is a biologist/researcher for the U.S. Forest Service. Her expertise is about ramps and that will be the subject of her talk.

Because of Easter, the April board meeting will be on Zoom on April 12th at 5:30 p.m.

The April general membership meeting will be on Zoom at 7:00 p.m. on April 16th. Bob Scott, Mayor of Franklin, will present on amateur radio along the AT.

Reminder: Folks are able to report their volunteer hours in the Volunteer Portal (formerly known as Salesforce) on an individual basis. If you need help, please contact Syndie Cassidy, Amber

Hornbarger, David Heck or Katharine Brown. Stay tuned: The system reportedly has been improved to make it more user friendly! Look for details in the next newsletter.