



Nantahala Hiking Club

Newsletter

nantalahikingclub.org

2nd Quarter 2022

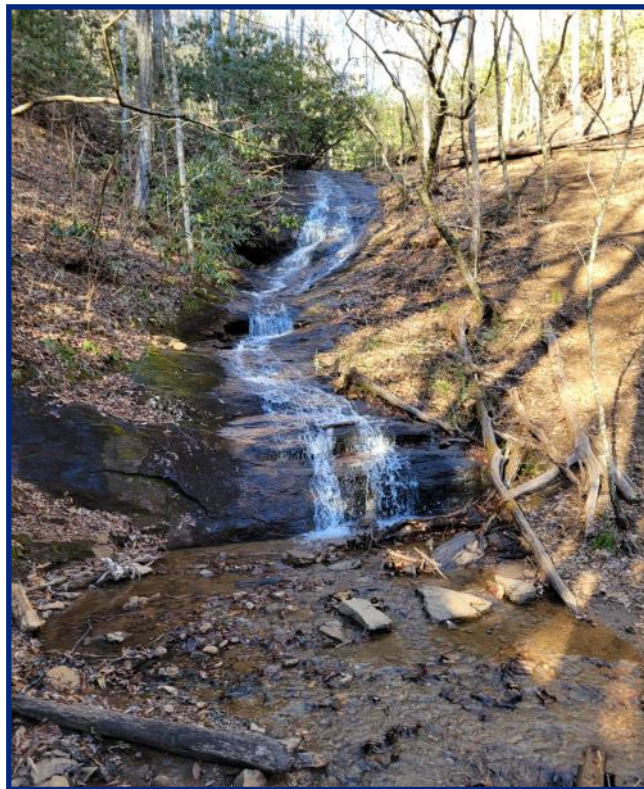
“Keep ever clear the trails that lead to mountaintops.”
— Rev. A. Rufus Morgan, Club Founder



The view from Standing Indian Mountain, submitted by Robert Barnable

Welcome to New Members!!!!

Kyle Altman, Franklin, NC
Becky Barr, Franklin, NC
Doreene & Bobby Gaff, Otto, NC
Tori & Doug Garton, Franklin, NC
Dean Hodapp, Franklin, NC
Jerry Holland, Otto, NC
Aaron Joslin, Sylva, NC
Susan Koppen, Roswell, GA
Lisa & Mathew Michalik, Franklin, NC
Cathleen Miller, Bryson City, NC
Donna Noland, Franklin, NC
Velma Randall, Franklin, NC
Lorraine Ross, Franklin, NC
Mike & Nancy Smith, Franklin, NC
Ilva & Dan Thompson, Franklin, NC
Cathy Weimann, Franklin, NC



Submitted by Matt Villo

President's Message

By Victor Treutel

president@nantahalahikingclub.org

Soon the dogwoods will bloom, signaling the great resurgence of life in our mountains. It's a mystery to me as to how they know it's time to bloom. I wonder if they're triggered by the thru-hiker season, which is in full swing. There is never a doubt that spring is just around the corner when I see and smell the hiker trash (their term, not mine) around town. Maybe that's how the dogwoods know their time is close.



The thru-hikers are only 110 miles into their monumental journey from Georgia to Maine when they arrive in Franklin. They are still smiling, which might not last as the Smokies are not an easy hike, nor are any of the other mountains they will face along the Appalachian Trail. For a few months, we get to experience their journey with them and our club gets to help them along by *keeping ever clear the open trails that lead to the mountaintops* (Rev. A. Rufus Morgan). The thru-hikers understand the importance of the Nantahala Hiking Club's volunteers in allowing them to undertake their life-changing journey, for without our club and the 30 other clubs who maintain the A.T., they wouldn't be hiking from Georgia to Maine or even Albert Mountain to Wayah Bald.

It is a wonderful time of year for us to share their journey with them, to be inspired by their accomplishments, as we inspire them. As a club, we have many upcoming events over the next few months: Easter-on-the-Trail where our members go out on the trail and distribute Easter goodies; Thru-Hiker Chow Down where we feed them while they drink a few beers at the Lazy Hiker Brewery; our weekly maintenance crews who ensure the trail is clear; and our Trail Ambassadors who greet them with warmth and encouragement. We will be supporting a number of local events as well.

It is truly a wonderful time of year! Welcome to the beginning of spring in the Smokies and thanks for your support of our efforts.

LEAVE NO TRACE (LNT)

<https://lnt.org/>

1. What is the Leave No Trace concept?

To follow the best practices to protect the natural environment we love and leave it the way we found it for others to enjoy.

2. What are the seven principles of Leave No Trace?

The Leave No Trace Seven Principles

Plan ahead and prepare.

Travel and camp on durable surfaces.

Dispose of waste properly.

Leave what you find.

Minimize campfire impacts (be careful with fire).

Respect wildlife.

Be considerate of other visitors.

3. How do you Leave No Trace and why is it important?

Many people enjoy getting outdoors and enjoying nature. Earth is home to incredible beauty and spectacular wildlife. These natural wonders are available for everyone to enjoy, and should be cherished and protected. This is why **it is vital for you to leave no trace behind when you are exploring the outdoors.**

4. LNT Basics 3-2022:

<https://lnt.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/LNTBasics-3-2022-english-1.pdf>

5. Online awareness course:

<https://lnt.org/get-involved/training-courses/online-awareness-course/>

6. Outdoor Ethics for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail: Principle number one (Plan ahead and Prepare) is the most important to follow so you are not forced to take short cuts that violate the other 6 principles.

Plan Ahead and Prepare:

- Know the regulations, group size limits, and other key information for the section of the A.T. you plan to visit.
- Carry a waterproof bag and 50' of rope to hang food and garbage or carry a bear proof storage container. Know where bear proof containers are required.
- Bring the clothing and gear you'll need for protection from cold, wind and rain. Also bring a map, a reliable guide book, stove and a trowel for digging cat-holes (burying feces).
- Carry a tent, tarp or hammock: do not entirely rely on shelters.

7. Authority of the Resource a method to help convince others to “do the right thing”.

<https://Int.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Authority-of-the-Resource.pdf>

NHC April Program

The club's next meeting takes place on April 14th at 6:00 PM at the Macon County Public Library. Entitled "Wolf Tales", this program will be presented by Rob Gudger, who worked with the Boy Scouts for fifty years doing outdoor leadership and wildlife programs. In addition, he worked for Duke Power for twenty-four years and took part in creating the Foot-hills Trail system. Rob has a degree in Wildlife Biology from North Carolina State. Although he has 3 wolves, he will be bringing just one with him to the meeting: Wayah, a female grey wolf. Please join us for this exciting program!

This event will only happen if cleared by the Nantahala Hiking Club and if COVID is in remission

Easter on the Trail: APRIL 16, 2022 @ 8:30 AM

If you are uncomfortable joining a group activity like this, please consider donating some of the items needed for the event, listed below.

Contact Elena Marsh at 828-369-8915, email – marsh67@frontier.com if you have any questions or would like to sign up for the event prior to the April hiking club meeting.

We will be collecting bags of candy brought to the APRIL meeting. There will also be a sign up sheet to register.

This year we would like to concentrate on more fruits, nuts and other healthy treats with a smaller amount of candy. Remember to bring some doggie treats for those 4 legged friends who are hiking with their companions.

We will meet at the Clubhouse on Carl Slagle Road on Saturday, April 16th at 8:30 am to make up the bags and then head out on the Trail to distribute them. Trail distribution areas will be assigned according to personal preferences and ability to hike or travel to them. Members are encouraged to work together at each area.

COLORED HARDBOILED EGGS and FRESH FRUIT can ONLY be delivered to the Clubhouse on Saturday, APRIL 16th. This makes sure that the items are fresh for the hikers to enjoy.

Have Hiking Gear to Sell, Trade or Give Away?????

In connection with Franklin's AT110 events, the Lazy Hiker will be holding an Outdoor Music Jam & Gear Exchange on Friday, April 26th starting at 6:00 PM. If you would like to participate, you should send an email to graham@lazyhikerbrewing.com and taproom@lazyhikerbrewing.com with your requirements such as how much table space you'll need. Tables will be supplied. Lazy Hiker can accommodate 15-20 participants depending on how much gear is involved. Space will be allocated on a first come first serve basis !!!



MARCH 20 -
APRIL 22, 2022
 FIRST DAY OF SPRING - EARTH DAY

*A Designated
 AT Community
 at Mile 110*

SAT, MARCH 26, 5PM
HIKER BASH
 AT CURRAHEE BREWING CO.

FRI, APRIL 1, 3 PM
28TH ANNIVERSARY HIKER FEST
 AT THREE EAGLES OUTFITTERS

SAT, APRIL 2, 12-2 PM
NANTAHALA HIKING CLUB'S THRU HIKER CHOWDOWN
 AT LAZY HIKER BREWING CO.

FRI, APRIL 8, 5 PM
FOOD, FIX & BREWS
 AT OUTDOOR 76

SAT, APRIL 9, 3 PM
**HIKER HUNGER GAMES &
 GOODER GROVE'S GROOVY GATHERING**
 AT GOODER GROVE HOSTEL

FRI, APRIL 15, 6 PM
AT110 FEST BENEFITING MAINSPRING CONSERVATION TRUST
 AT THE RATHSKELLER COFFEE HAUS & PUB

FRI, APRIL 22 6 PM
OUTDOOR MUSIC JAM & GEAR EXCHANGE
 AT LAZY HIKER BREWING CO.

ATmile110.com

*Made possible by a grant from the
 Franklin/Nantahala TDC and Town of Franklin TDA*



Macon County Public Library

Macon County Public Library's "Walking with Spring" series of films and programs complements Franklin's AT-mile110 Celebration.

All programs are held in the Meeting Room of MCPL at 149 Siler Road, and are free and open to the public. Please call the library at 828-524-3600 or email Kristina Moe at kmoe@fontanalib.org to register, confirm times and for more information.

Mar. 26, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.
 Nantahala Hiking Club co-founder
 Sally Kessler Memorial Art Reception

Mar. 30, 5:15 p.m.
 Yoga For Hikers (and everyone else)
 with yoga teacher Jennifer McIntee
 please sign up at beyondbendingyoga.com/schedule

April 6, 6:00 p.m.
 Fundamentals of Footwear
 with professional bootfitter Kev Martin

April 13, 6:00 p.m.
 Grandma Emma Gatewood Returns with
 Storyteller/AT hiker Nancy Reeder

April 20, 6:00 p.m.
 Are You BearWise?
 How to co-exist safely with bears,
 with N.C. Wildlife Resources
 Commission's Ashley Hobbs

ATmile110.com

*Made possible by a grant from the
 Franklin/Nantahala TDC and Town of Franklin TDA*



NHC Members Volunteering at Currahee Brewery's Hiker Bash





Grandma Gatewood Returns!

On Wednesday, April 13th at 6:00 PM in the Macon County Public Library Meeting Room, NHC member, A.T. thru-hiker & storyteller Nancy Reeder will perform as Grandma Gatewood and then answer questions as Emma Gatewood.

Trail Ambassadors 2022

"I'll take Nicknames for \$2000."

"Stache, Mary Jane, Coyote, Hop-a-long, Skeeter, Stix, Jackrabbit (x2), That Way, Pippi, Iris, Campfire Woman, Grandpa, Turtle Lady, Starr, Fungi, Quincy, The Mayor, Bluebird and Leprechaun"

"What are the trail names of some of the Nantahala Hiking Club Trail Ambassadors alphabetically by their last names?"

"Very nice. That is correct!"

What a great turnout for the 2022 Trail Ambassador Orientation in February. Thanks to COVID, this was the first time in two years that we were able to meet in person. So many members signed up that The Mayor (a.k.a. Victor Treutel) asked the experienced Ambassadors to skip the orientation and join us afterwards for a meet and greet. It didn't hurt that it was held at The Lazy Hiker.

Victor closed the door to get the meeting going and there it was—a relic from days gone by when we could meet in person. Taped to the back of the door was the poster explaining "Leave No Trace". It had been there for two years!

It was interesting listening to the stories of what inspired members to become Ambassadors and how they came to live in the North Carolina mountains. Whoever had a trail name shared it with the group. Mary Jane is not what you may think but is someone named for her mom. Leprechaun isn't named for his looks but because he always has Notre Dame gear on. (If you ever see him without it, he will give you a dollar.....Just kidding, but I never have.) There was great feedback and Bluebird kept us on track for a two-hour meeting.

In just a month and a half I have enjoyed reading the reports that Ambassadors have sent in. One Ambassador, Grandpa, talked to thirty-three thru-hikers in a 5-hour hike. The hikers are so

appreciative of us being out there for them and the Ambassadors appreciate being on the A.T. and hearing their stories. We might share with them the distance to the next shelter or weather conditions which often prompt comments like, "Are you kidding? It's supposed to snow tomorrow? I'm heading into town!" We learn when they started their hikes and how they're holding up. We ask them about trail conditions between wherever we are and the Georgia line so that any issues can be brought to the attention of the club's maintainers. Stache, while working on a project, met a few hikers that needed a ride into town. Instead of attending the party for those who worked to refurbish the Clubhouse, she went back and picked them up to take them into Franklin.

Skeeter and I were excited that the Forest Service roads were now open and headed to Deep Gap for a hike. I told Rich Corporon, our Trail Manager, that we would be happy to be section trail maintainers and that Deep Gap would be our starting point. We parked at Deep Gap and started heading south, cleaning water bars and cutting low hanging trees and branches that we could use our folding hand saw on. After about a mile and a half we met Cyclops, a thru-hiker, who thanked us for being out there and let us know that he had come upon a seventy-one year-old solo hiker, Late Bloomer, who had twisted her knee the day before and was struggling to get to Deep Gap for a ride to the hospital. Cyclops had downloaded as much of her pack as he could to his and was going to meet her at Deep Gap to make sure she made it to Franklin.

Skeeter and I stopped clearing water bars and headed south to find her. A southbound hiker named Bing (he did look just like Bing Crosby) caught up to us. He had encountered Late Bloomer earlier, hiked to Deep Gap to leave his pack, and he was going back to find her and relieve her of carrying her own pack. In another mile we came upon Late Bloomer. She was moving, but was barely able to take baby steps. A hiker she met that morning had wrapped her knee so that she could put weight on it. Skeeter hiked in front of her to show her the best places to step and I hiked behind her to help steady her when needed and, when we reached somewhere where she needed help, I got in front of her so she could hold on to my pack to steady herself.

Stepping to let hikers pass us, a thru-hiker caught us carrying a twenty pound log and raising funds for Wounded Warriors. Log Man (and Larry the Log) was an Air Force medic at one time and was a Godsend in helping us get Late Bloomer in. Skeeter made sure she stayed hydrated, I got in front of her so she could hold on to my pack and Log Man steadied her from behind by holding on to her jacket which was tied around her waist. Heading north, I finally saw the Forest Service road but I didn't say anything, knowing that we were close to Deep Gap. Late Bloomer saw a car drive by and was almost in tears being extremely thankful that we were almost there. Cyclops had arranged for a shuttle and Bing waited to make sure we made it in. Knowing that it was going to rain, Cyclops, Log Man and Late Bloomer loaded up and headed to Franklin with Late Bloomer going to the ER. Bing and his hiking partner continued north, not concerned about the rain.

Being a club member and Trail Ambassador here in the mountains has been very inspirational. If you are an Ambassador, thank you. If you would like to be an Ambassador, please let me know. It is extremely rewarding.

I look forward to seeing you on the A.T.,

Hop-a-Long, a.k.a. Rory Cassedy

850-361-6189

rcassedy01@gmail.com



02/12/2022 Hike to Ranger Falls led by
Laura Lauffer



02/13/2022 Hike Around Wallace Branch led by Gail Lehman



03/24/2022 Hike on FS4591 off Buck Creek Road led by Katharine Brown

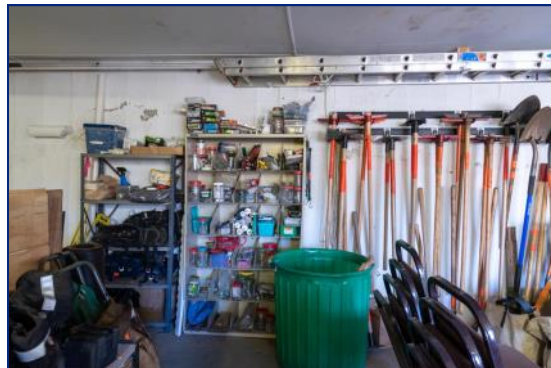
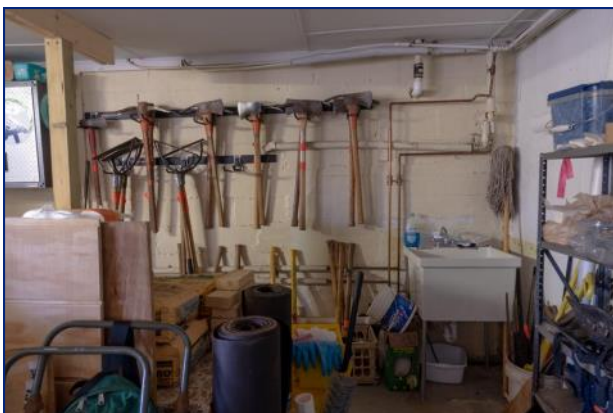
Clubhouse Renovation

By Victor Treutel

president@nantahalahikingclub.org

My first involvement with the Nantahala Hiking Club was in 2016 when my wife, Gayle, and I attended training to become Trail Ambassadors. It was a typical cold, rainy February day as we joined a dozen other members in the unheated clubhouse. We sat on metal folding chairs while two space heaters that appeared to be from the 1950's churned away. The heaters were so loud that we couldn't hear our instructor, Bill Van Horn, so they were turned off and we shivered throughout the day. The clubhouse had drab, concrete walls that were once painted (maybe within the past fifty years), a pocked and pitted concrete floor, a large but extremely dirty window that was hidden behind a massive pile of boxes and a bathroom that was worse than any roadside gas station. Oh, and it smelled like an old basement—that wonderful combination of mildew and dirt. We were surrounded by chainsaws, axes, picks, crosscut saws, rakes and shovels as the rain drizzled outside. It would have made the perfect location for a horror movie.

Here is what it looked like (sorry, I couldn't capture the odor in my pictures):



It was not very inviting and, as new members, we surely didn't want to spend another day in training huddled in the cold, dark, dreary and frankly creepy clubhouse. Following training, after we thawed our behinds in our hot tub, we talked about the club and its history. My wife hiked Mt. LeConte with our club founder, Rev. Rufus Morgan in 1975. He was ninety years old, mostly deaf and blind and she, a spry twenty year old, couldn't keep up with him. It was amazing that after forty years she could talk about that journey like it was yesterday. It clearly changed her life. So we decided to head out on the A.T. (something new to us) and meet some thru-hikers. That season changed my life.

This past July, when I began my journey as president of the club, I vowed to do something about our clubhouse. The Board of Directors agreed with my vision and we started planning and budgeting. It was a long process as there were many obstacles but finally in January the Board approved the plan and I started with a call for volunteers. What an overwhelming response! We started off by taking everything out of the clubhouse and storing it in a trailer. Then we cleaned and cleaned and cleaned.



Oh my, it was so dirty it felt like an archeological dig. But we got it done, thanks to the incredible turnout of volunteers.

The next task was painting. Two coats of DryLock on the concrete walls, two coats of Kilz on the ceiling to begin, followed by a beautiful gray-green paint on the walls and ceiling.



After a few days of dry time, we worked on some upgrades to the bathroom, built-in cabinets and security.



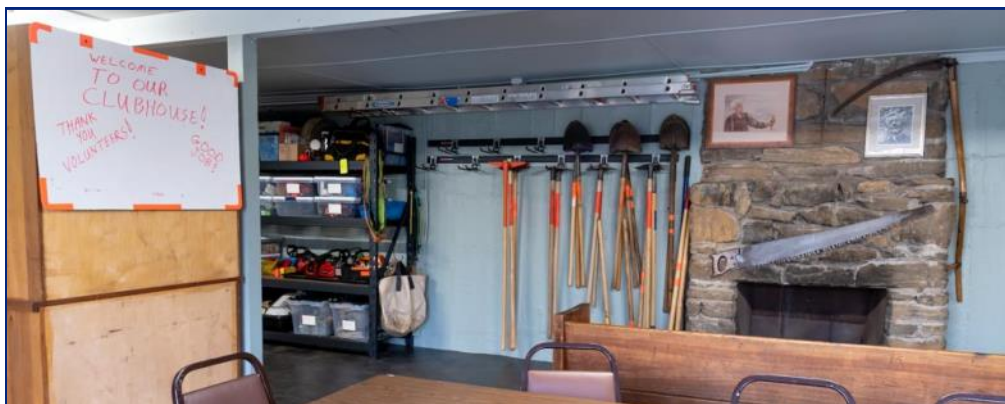
There was an old church pew sitting under the window that had been used as a storage shelf for decades that had so much character. Gayle and I tried to clean it, but it was so filthy that we had to take it home and put the pressure washer to it. Here it is before:



Then it was time for the magic—a new floor to cover the worn out concrete.



Wow! It was coming together and finally we were ready to move everything back in:



After restoring the church pew, we placed it in front of the fireplace. We were able to keep its rustic charm and character:



Rev. Morgan's grandson loaned us some items: his grandfather's scythe and crosscut saw, a beautifully framed photo of him and an art piece of Rufus and his walking stick titled, "The Modern Moses", along with his favorite cross that he wore while hiking. We also replaced the noisy and extremely inefficient space heaters with a new electric fireplace insert. It's a cozy place to hang out and ponder a hard day's work on the trail:



None of this would have been possible without our amazing volunteers. Thirty-five volunteers worked really hard for a couple of weeks to accomplish the end project, spending over seven hundred hours. It was hard work, but we managed to have fun as well.

We will be hosting an Open House/Dedication soon. Stay tuned for the date and please come celebrate this wonderful accomplishment.

A heartfelt thanks to all of our members who contributed incredible photos of the clubhouse renovation project. Space simply precludes my reprinting all of them but please know that you are appreciated!

—Newsletter Editor



Submitted by David Addleton

NHC Board Member Nominations Now Open

Each year NHC opens nominations to our membership for filling next year's Board positions. Nominations are now open. If you are interested or know of someone who would make a good board member, please let us know! Below is a brief job description of board positions. What a great way to give back to your community and to this beautiful place we call home. If interested, please contact Donna Sanders at dsanders@swainmail.org. Final nominations are presented to the Board at the June board meeting and to club members at the July general meeting. Come join us! We would love to have some new faces and voices on our team!

Nantahala Hiking Club Succession Plan 22-23 and beyond

Current Position/intent	Skills technical/soft
President of the Board- To lead the organization and provide guidance to the Board of Directors so that they can make informed decisions on topics important to the club and its direction.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leadership skills 2. Knowledge of the Appalachian Trail 3. Knowledge of the hiker and local communities 4. Teamwork 5. Organization 6. Communication 7. Photographer
Vice President of the Board - Support President and club agenda	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planning 2. Organization 3. Communication 4. Personable 5. Listening 6. Encouraging
Treasurer on the Board– Pay Bills, monitor financial health	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bookkeeping knowledge 2. Communication 3. IT accounting software 4. Attention to detail 5. Ability to follow through 6. Multitasker 7. Foodie
Secretary on the Board – make sure there are written minutes of board meetings and actions; prepare required written communication; prepare documents for recommended bylaw changes; prepare agenda for board and membership meetings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good written communication 2. Flexible 3. Microsoft or other expertise 4. Fortitude 5. Hiker with small dog
Membership Chair on the Board- Maintain membership files and welcome new members.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Basic computer literacy, including basic Excel proficiency 2. Data entry accuracy 3. Basic record keeping 4. Compose responses to member questions. Involve Board when needed. 5. Participate in membership activities such as orientation 6. Volunteer at events/festivals when available 7. Fun and welcoming, Charleston Foodie

Nantahala Hiking Club Succession Plan 22-23 and beyond

Trail Manager on the Board- Lead the maintainer in keeping trails cleared, stay aware of needs of trail maintenance, ensure safety of participants, report to record keeper	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trail Knowledge 2. Record Keeping 3. Training others 4. Team Player 5. Welcoming and inclusive 6. Kind to animals
RPC Lead on the Board- the purpose is to serve as the liaison between NHC and the ATC.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to take notes at meetings and distill them into items that are most relevant for the club. 2. Understanding of the ATC and NHC strategic intent. 3. This is a multi-year commitment
Member At Large (MOL)	We are required to have a minimum of four – this is a great starting place to be on the Board
Trail Ambassador/MOL- To contact hikers and inform and educate hikers to enrich their experience while on the AT.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication 2. Recording/Reporting 3. Implementation of a user-friendly tracking and reporting system. 4. Interaction with hikers and the Ambassador Team 5. Knowledge of backpacking 6. Safety and First Aid
License Plate Grant Manager/MOL- the purpose is to submit a grant request to ATC at the beginning of the year and submit a report on how the grant was spent in early November.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to create a PDF document from disparate files to submit the grant request and grant report to ATC. And to capture and organize information (expenses, volunteer hours, publicity) for the grant request and report. 2. knowledge of who in the club is doing what with regards to outreach and other activities that can be applied to the license plate grant. 3. Solid Communication and writing skills
FATCC/MOL — represent NHC on the Franklin ATC Council	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to take notes and share meeting results 2. Franklin resident 3. Welcoming and friendly 4. Community and ATC minded
Festivals	Pass out NHC information and answer questions.
Community Outreach	Work with school age children and educate them on the AT.
Boothing – constructing	Good with hammer and nails
Programs	Secure speakers, presenters, and guest for monthly NHC meetings
Award Banquet- plan and execute annual awards banquet and holiday party; order awards; plan program for distributing awards	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Event planning experience 2. Data extraction experience for calculating volunteer hours 3. Planning and budgeting experience

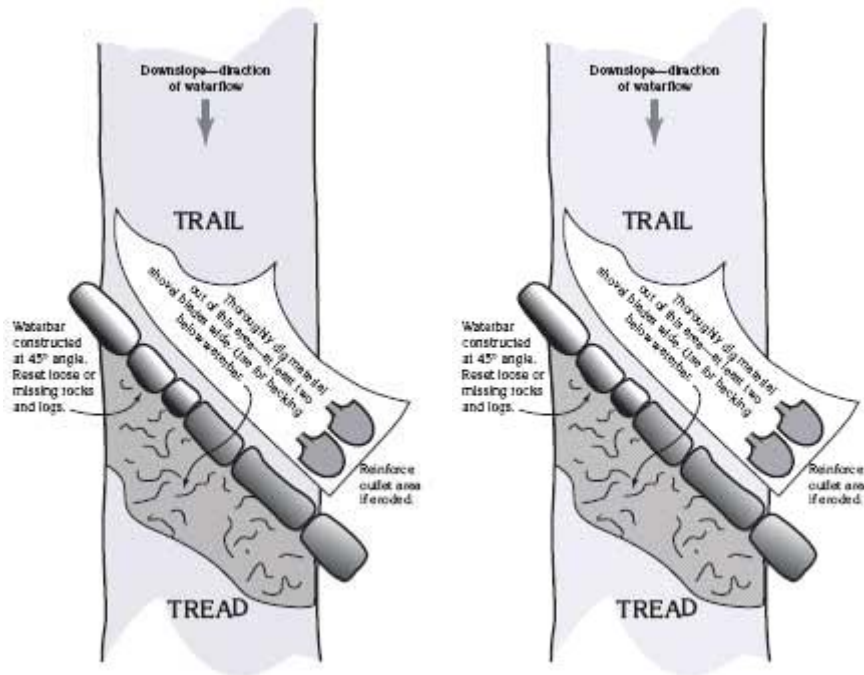
Nantahala Hiking Club Succession Plan 22-23 and beyond

Volunteer Engagement and Maintainer Hours– welcome and gather members and share information on volunteer opportunities Engage new members leading to more volunteers. Succession planning is a documented, transparent process for ensuring leadership roles have successors. Maintainer hours because maintaining the trail is our primary purpose.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Microsoft office, Excel, and Salesforce 2. Experience with Recruiting/HR/Leading others 3. Event planning 4. Friendly and Outgoing
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MAINTENANCE 101

Cleaning Drainage Structures (Water Bars)

Water bars can be constructed of logs, rocks or reinforced compacted mineral soil. They should be cleaned at least twice a year in spring and fall (after leaves have fallen). Proper cleaning is a strenuous activity. Avoid the temptation to clean superficially. A technique is to have two maintainers working together one with a digging tool the other with a fire rake. While one maintainer breaks up the compacted organic and mineral soil that has eroded into the trench, the other maintainer rakes the broken up material out of the trench. Sometimes 4-6 maintainers leapfrog from water bar to water bar.



Downslope – direction of water flow

Water bars are constructed at least 45 degrees (up to 60 degrees) to a line perpendicular to the direction of the trail.

Uphill Side: the trail should ramp smoothly down into the trench. A foot of mineral soil should be on the uphill side of the water bar to prevent water from hitting the bar and undermining it.

The Berm: Mineral soil cleaned from the trench can be placed behind the water bar. The trail surface should be level or above the top of the water bar log or rocks.

Downhill Side: On the downhill side of the water bar the trail should smoothly ramp up to the top of the log or rocks. The trail should form a smooth ramp with a gentle step down into the trench.

The Trench: Thoroughly dig material out of this area at least two shovel blades wide. Use for backing below water bar. The trench (on the uphill side of the water bar) should be 6-8 inches deep and 12-20 inches wide. Dig to the bottom of the original trench. The trench should have a clear uninterrupted path all the way from one side of the trail to the other and beyond. Most water bars require the trench to extend at least 10 feet beyond the edge of the trail. Too often sticks, stones and leaves collect in the outwash trench and, in no time, water floods onto the trail. This is a good reason to remove debris from the upslope side of the trail as you walk along. Be sure the outwash trench is shaped to let water flow freely and well clear of the trail. Keep the trench straight, since curves slow water flow and trigger silta-tion. Check to make sure diverted water doesn't end up on the trail further downhill.

Rocks/ Brush: Hikers may decide to bypass the water bar to one side or the other if there is an inviting path to do so. If hikers are bypassing the water bar close the area with brush or a pile of loose rocks.

Next newsletter: How to clean rolling grade dips and "Thank you, Ma'ams".

See picture of a recently maintained water bar on the next page.



A recently maintained water bar, submitted by Bill Van Horn

Our maintainers dismantling the old Rock Gap privy, submitted by Tommy Smith



NHC Outreach: Union School

Seventeen 11th and 12th graders spent 5 hours on March 11th making improvements at the Rock Gap shelter area. They did side hill trail rehabilitation, put in water bars to improve drainage, painted blue blazes, cleaned out the fire ring and moved materials to support the future construction of 5 new tent sites. The school plans to come out one day a month. If you're interested in supporting the NHC's school outreach program, contact Bill or Sharon Van Horn at 828-369-1983.



The "three legged stool": Nantahala Ranger District Ranger and staff, NHC member and ATC Southern Regional Director. Working together, the sum is much more than three.



Flowering Plants of the Southern Appalachian Mountains

by Alan Zoellner

In the November/December 2021 newsletter, I wrote an article titled, "Do You See the Flowers?", which encouraged hikers to devote time observing flowers that grow in the Southern Appalachian Mountains. In this issue, I write about some common and a couple of lesser known flowering plants. Most will be familiar to our readers while others, perhaps like the Fire Pink, may be new (it was for me). Either way, there is always more to learn, so let's get started.

Trillium (blooms April-May)

There are 39 native trilliums in the U.S., all belonging to the Liliaceae (lily) family. Fifteen species of trillium are considered native to North Carolina and are generally found in the mountains with a few in the coastal and Piedmont areas. They prefer rich, loamy or humus type soils with good drainage in partial to full shade while avoiding the hotter and brighter afternoon sun. I have seen Red Trilliums in rocky and damp areas along the Long Branch Trail near the Standing Indian Campground.

The flowers all have 3 petals and 3 bracts of various colors. When one sees this flower, which can be white, red, purple/lavender, gold/yellow or pink, it's said that spring is right around the corner. By the way, this was the one plant that had me stumped in my previous article when I couldn't identify it. It's a favorite of many hikers.



Catawba Rhododendron (blooms late May to early July)

One of my favorite flowering shrubs is the Catawba Rhododendron (*Rhododendron catawbiense*) which are native to the Appalachian Mountains. They are a medium to large broadleaf evergreen shrub rounded to spreading, multi-stemmed shrub that often forms dense thickets.

Native to the woodland slopes and ridges in the eastern U.S. along the Appalachian Mountain range, they can be found from Virginia to Northern Alabama growing above 3000 feet on exposed ridges. They typically grow from 6-10 feet tall but occasionally reach 20 feet. In unfavorable conditions,

they become sparse and rangy. Its large flower buds appear before flowering resulting in pink to light purple flowers in the late spring to early summer.

Did you know the genus name *Rhododendron* is derived from the Greek words rhodo, which means "rose", and dendron, meaning "tree"? So the translation is Rose Tree.



Rosebay Rhododendron (blooms June through July)

Rosebay Rhododendron, also called White Rhododendron or Great Laurel (*Rhododendron maximum*) is a large, upright, multi-stemmed, late-blooming evergreen shrub that is native to North America from Ontario and Nova Scotia south along the southern Appalachian Mountains to Alabama and Georgia. It typically grows in dense thickets which dominate the understory in some locations and, when matured, can reach a height of 10-20 feet.

In the wild, its flowers range from pink to white with branches that bear large, leathery leaves. In cold temperatures and windy conditions, these leaves will roll up to prevent desiccation damage, which occurs when the ground is frozen and the plant is unable to absorb moisture from the ground.

Great Rosebay recovers easily from mild fires because it spreads by layering and suckering. As such, it is used to reclaim disturbed sites and prevent erosion. They also provide cover and shelter for deer, bears and bird species.



Flame Azalea (blooms spring through summer)

The Flame Azalea (*Rhododendron calendulaceum*) is an upright, loosely branched deciduous shrub that typically matures to 4-8 feet (occasionally 10-15 feet) tall and to 8-10 feet wide. It is native primarily to woodland slopes and mountain balds in the Appalachian Mountains from Pennsylvania to Georgia.

The flower color can range from pale yellow to scarlet red depending on how acidic the soil is. Its beautifully colored blooms sometimes actually appear either before the leaves do, or simultaneously with the leaves. Very few flowering plants display this tendency.

Like many flowering flora, many kinds of wildlife enjoy the Flame Azalea, including bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and small mammals. Also, all parts of the Flame Azalea are considered highly toxic so avoid contact with it or its flowers. Look but don't touch!



Common Bluets (blooms May-August)

Common bluets, a.k.a. Quaker ladies or azure bluets (*Houstonia caerulea*) are tiny blue wildflowers that are native throughout most of eastern North America. There are several other species of bluets that also grow within parts of eastern North America but the common bluet is considered the most widespread and common species. Common bluets grow in open woods with somewhat moist and usually slightly acidic soils.

The growth form of common bluets is very light and airy. The vegetation consists of a basal rosette that stays on the ground and maybe a few small leaves along the thin, green flower stems that emerge from the basal rosette. The entire plant typically doesn't get much more than about 6 inches tall and they tend to grow in small clumps.

The blue flowers with yellow centers first mature in mid-spring and continue into mid-summer. Its flowers are attractive to bees, butterflies and other pollinators and are a common harbinger of spring.



Fire Pink (blooms April-June)

Fire Pink (*Silene virginica*) is one of the most stunning native perennials of the eastern United States, so much that it was named the 2015 North Carolina Wildflower of the Year by the North Carolina Botanical Garden (NCBG) and the Garden Club of North Carolina.

It's an herbaceous perennial that may grow 2-3 feet tall with leaves that are opposite with a smooth margin. The majority of leaves originate at the base of the stem. Scarlet flowers that are notched on the top mature from mid-spring through early summer.

A member of the carnation or "pink" family (*Caryophyllaceae*), fire pink can be found throughout North Carolina and occurs in a variety of habitats from dry, open woods to stream banks to sunny roadsides. The name "pink" refers not to the color but, rather, to the frilled edges of many flowers within the family (think of "pinking shears"). In mid-spring fire pink explodes with an abundance of brilliantly colored scarlet, star-shaped flowers that continue to provide a spectacular display through mid-summer.



I learned a few new flowering plants researching this article and hopefully so did you. The mountains almost always have flowers blooming on a plant, shrub or tree. Keep those eyes open and look for them when hiking. Finally, continue to support the work of the Nantahala Hiking Club to ensure that our wonderful outdoors will be available for future generations.

February New Member Orientation

by Syndie Cassedy

A good time was had by all at the February New Member Orientation. We mingled over libations and charcuterie and enjoyed information shared by the many Volunteer Leaders. Victor Treutel, NHC President, shared the history of the club and our founder, Dr. Rufus Morgan. He also introduced "the drawer".

Elena and Tom Marsh shared information on "Easter on the Trail" and gave attendees an opportunity to sign up and participate. Sharon and Bill Van Horn shared information on Community Outreach and the 4th grade hike to Siler Bald. Sharon also shared information on the annual Chow Down event in April and had a signup sheet for volunteers to get involved. Rory Cassedy spoke on the upcoming Trail Ambassador training, Debi Gedling shared information on submitting articles to the newsletter, Gail Lehman and Laura Lauffer talked about the Hike Leader program and Lynn Meyers filled in for Membership Chair, Melissa Myers, checking in and welcoming attendees.

Stay tuned for the next New Member Orientation scheduled for mid-May.



Walk Shelter Dogs With Us!

Walking dogs at the Appalachian Animal Rescue Center (AARC), Franklin's no-kill humane society, is rewarding and great exercise too! Come Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday from 11 am on. Carean Kaso, the program coordinator, will give you a tour and show you the "ropes". Dog walkers work as a team and look out for each other to ensure a safe and fun experience.

Volunteering at AARC is EASY!

During walking days, volunteers can come any time, any day and any number of days. Walk only the dogs you want to walk, only as many as you want to walk and leave whenever you like. There is no contract or schedule to adhere to. Simply come when you can!

Volunteering feels GOOD!

Some people think: "I can't do that—too painful!" That's what Chris Federico thought. Now she says: "Honestly, it's been the best experience of my life! I think of our dogs as being in "summer camp"—they are warm, well-fed, sleep in cots with blankets and get love from all the workers and volunteers. For sure our dogs are treated way better than many local dogs who spend their lives tied up outside. And so many happy, happy stories when they get adopted makes it worth it! The more people we have walking, the better!"

Want to try? Call Carean Kaso at 828-524-4588 for more information. AARC is located at 851 Lake Emory Road, Franklin, NC.



FREE LITTLE LIBRARY at FROG Quarters

573 E Main St, Franklin

The Friends of the Greenway (FROGs) has a new Free Little Library at FROG Quarters. As a board member of this nonprofit organization, I am asking if any hiking club member would like to donate any used or extra hiking/nature/birding type books to this library. The themes of nature, birding, hiking are our #1 priority while stocking the library box.

If you are interested in donating any books or would like more information about FROGs and our mission, please contact Elena Marsh, 828-369-8915 or marsh67@frontier.com

Thank you very much for your attention to this request.

Wednesday Walking Anyone?

Silver Striders does easy walks every Wednesday morning. We go to various places around Franklin, including Coweeta Lab, Tessentee, Wallace Branch and Jones Creek. The walks are 2-3 miles. Friendly people and (sometimes) dogs are welcome to join us. Contact Jack Blake at ac-b3937jb@gmail.com to be put on the email list.

