



Nantahala Hiking Club

Newsletter

nantalahahikingclub.org

First Quarter 2023

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



A warm welcome to new members:

Steven Scott & Robin Morgan
Franklin, NC

Judith McGuire & Arther Tsien
Chevy Chase, MD

Martha & Henry Stibbs
Highlands, NC

Diane & Doug Jennings
Fort Myers, FL

Aaron Alexander
Frisco, TX

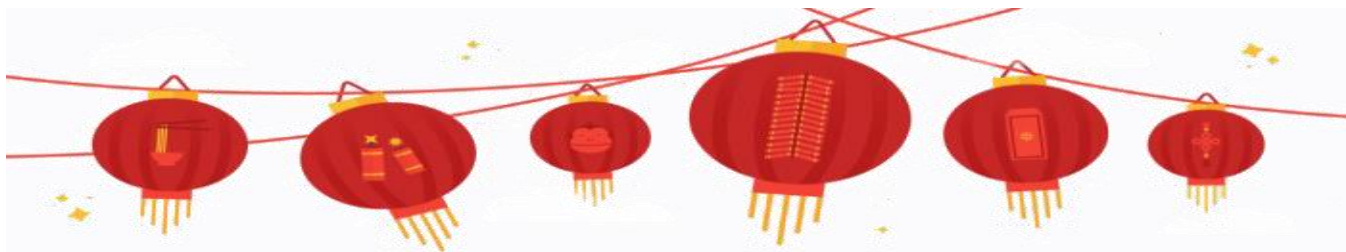
Jeanne Townsend
Topton, NC

Debbie Mason
Franklin, NC

Susan Moore
Franklin, NC

Steve Head
Hayesville, NC

Max Cassady
Fairhope, AL

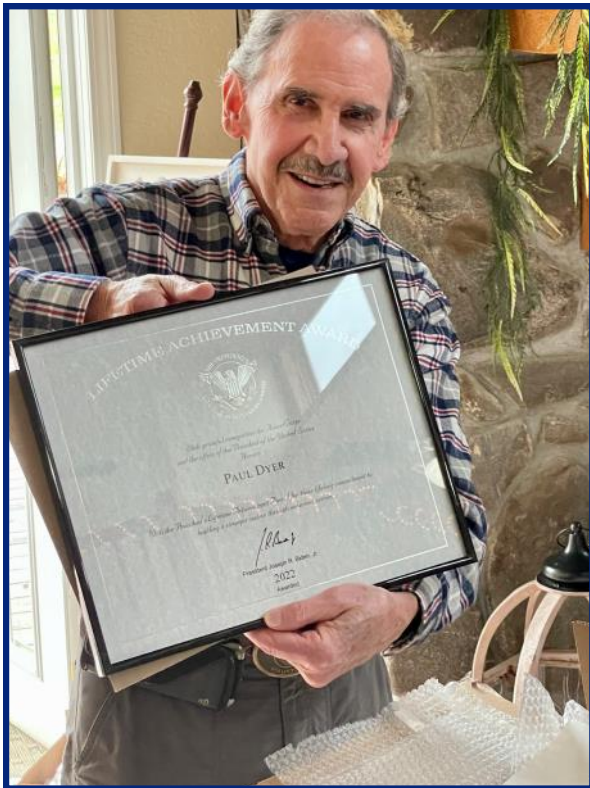


President's Message

By Victor Treutel

The Nantahala Hiking Club's single biggest asset is our volunteers. I've made the joke at each New Member Orientation that I don't want your \$20, I want your soul. It is those members who have become active in our club that provide the most to our community; they help to change people's lives by ensuring one can hike the Appalachian Trail.

A perfect example of our volunteers and their commitment to the A.T. is Paul Dyer. At our December 3rd Award Banquet and Holiday Party, Paul received the *Lifetime Achievement Award* presented by the President of the United States for volunteering over 4,000 hours. Paul has been extremely active in our club as a maintainer and a board member. Congratulations to Paul for this monumental milestone.



Paul Dyer holding his Certificate from President Biden

Awards and recognition were given to many other members, including Rich Corporon (2000 hours), Debi Gedling and Jerry Novak (800 hours), Stan Doughdrill and Bill Mandler (600 hours) and dozens more as noted below.

Accumulated Hours	Award Item(s)	Recipients	Number of Recipients
50	NHC Cloth Patch & ATC Pin	Pam Addleton, Nancy Anaya, Rory Cassidy, John Finnerty, Mark Holmberg, Tim Lindler, Robin Lurie, Kelly Motter, Pat Muse, John Randall, Buddy Sanders, Donna Sanders, Austin Treutel, Tim Winters	14
100	ATC Cloth Patch & NHC Pocket Knife	Rory Cassidy, Mark Holmberg, Kelly Motter, Melissa Myers, Donna Sanders, Austin Treutel	6
200	FS Cap & FS Water Bottle	David Addleton, Robert Barnable, Rory Cassidy, Philip Rogers, Hygie Starr, David Stearns	6
400	FS Pouch w/Pin	Amber Hornbarger, Hygie Starr, David Stearns, Gayle Treutel, Syndie Cassidy	5
600	ATC Cap & NHC Belt Buckle	Stan Daughdrill, Bill Mandler	2
800	Name on Trail Maintainer Plaque & FS Fleece Blanket	Debi Gedling, Jerry Novak	2
1000	ATC Vest & NHC Belt Buckle	Victor Treutel	1
2000	NHC \$200 Gift Card & NHC Water Bottle	Rich Corporon	1
3000	NHC Lifetime Membership	NONE	0
4000	ATC Presidential Letter & Certificate	Paul Dyer	1
25-Year	NHC Letter of Recognition & ATC Silver Service Award	NONE	0

I want to thank and congratulate each of our volunteers, not just those reaching a milestone. Without you and your hard work, our club would not exist and this section of the A.T. would be unpassable.

As a total, our club contributed over 10,000 hours this past year. This threshold puts our small club in the top 4 clubs for hours contributed to the trail. The US Forest Service values our contribution at over \$250,000 in labor. What an amazing accomplishment. I hope you are all as proud of being a part of the Nantahala Hiking Club as I am.

We are already kicking off some big projects that will be completed in 2023, including rebuilding the Rock Gap Shelter, redesigning our website, engaging local businesses in our organization and many more. Please consider either staying involved or getting involved in 2023.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

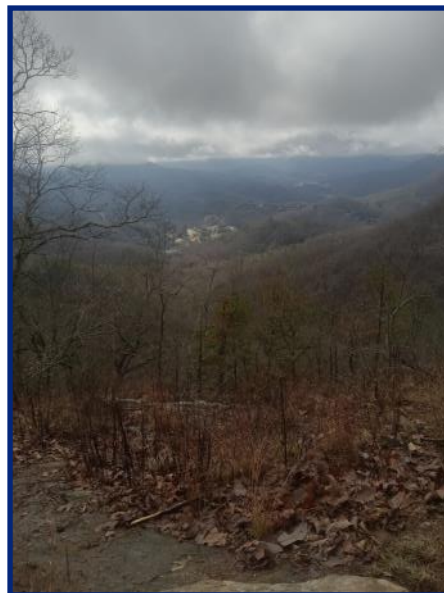


Tribute to Tom Rodgers

By Ken Westmoreland

On November 3rd, the NHC lost a great friend and club worker with the passing of Tom Rodgers following a multiyear struggle with melanoma. Although he had a successful career with the Federal government as an electrical engineer, Tom's true loves were the natural environment and the great outdoors. Upon retirement and moving to Jackson County, Tom began to participate and engage in a variety of environmental and land preservation interests. He did projects with the Macon/Jackson Cooperative Extension Service. He was a beekeeper and was very active in the Beekeeper's Club. He assisted with design and mapping projects for the Bartram Trail Club. He did trail design and construction work for the Appalachian Farm Preservation Project in Cullowhee. And he was a forceful voice on the Jackson County Planning Board working to enforce and enhance the county's Subdivision and Steep-Slope Ordinances. But Tom's main environmental focus was his support and love for the NHC. Tom's wife, Shelia, said that his favorite days were Wednesdays when he could go out with his friends and work on the Appalachian Trail. And work he did. With over fifteen years of service to the club and almost 3,000 hours recorded as a Maintainer, Tom did it all. He was a grunt with a Pulaski but he was also a certified sawyer. He helped with shelter and privy design and construction but he also cleaned out privies. Every so often Tom even painted blazes on off days. Tom cared about the environment but he also cared sincerely about his fellow workers. He was the club's de facto safety officer, always reminding everyone of safe work practices. Tom was also a compassionate helper, sometimes seen sharing his lunch with a newbie who forgot theirs or giving a spare pair of gloves that he happened to have in his backpack to someone who needed them.

Tom's life motto, as seen on all of his correspondence, was "Add Value to Everything You Do". Those of us who knew and worked with Tom over the years know that he truly lived by those words. A summation of Tom's relationship to us and to the NHC is that he did add value to our environment, both natural and personal. He will be missed.



View from William's Pulpit, submitted by Robert Barnable



DUES INCREASE FOR 2023



The club voted at the December 3rd meeting to raise the cost of a Family membership from \$20 to \$30 per year and to create a student membership at \$10. Individual membership will remain \$20 per year. The Board requested this increase to help alleviate the increased costs caused by inflation. The increase will take effect on January 1, 2023. If you desire, you can pay your 2023 dues prior to then and receive the current price:

<https://app.joinit.com/o/nantahalahikingclub/members>

The Board also created a Corporate Sponsor program, something that has not been done previously. The club will provide a window decal to be displayed and a mention in our quarterly newsletter for an annual minimum donation of \$250. If you know any local business owners who might be interested in supporting our mission, please direct them to our website sponsor page:

<https://www.nantahalahikingclub.org/sponsor/>

As a reminder, the NHC now offers an option to give the gift of membership. It's easy: just click the link and select Individual or Family and enter the recipient's information.

<https://app.joinit.com/o/nantahalahikingclub/gifts>



10/16/2022 Hike to Gibson Bottom, led by Chris Federico

Program Update

by Pam Addleton

There will be fresh programs and prizes in the new year! Maybe a 2023 NHC membership or a gift card prize or a private birding guide will be behind a raffle mystery door of your choosing!

Our age-appropriate raffle gifts will be sponsored by our local business members, corporate members, the ATC (Appalachian Trail Conservancy) and/or by the NHC. **The lucky raffle winner at EACH program must show up to be in the drawing to win!**

Jot these meeting dates, times and places down on your family calendar or put them in your phone and make sure to attend. If you don't participate, how can you possibly win a fabulously fantastic prize valued at over \$25.00?

The first 2023 program dates are:

March 9: Our speaker will be Nancy East, hiker and author of "Chasing the Smokies Moon", a true reflection of an audacious 948-mile hike with her daughter fueled by loss, lunacy, laughter and the thread that binds them all.

April 13: Our own Victor Treutel will give us poignant insights about his soon to be released book of historical fiction set in our WNC home.

NHC program meetings and raffles are the second Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at the Macon County Fontana Regional Library.

For program suggestions or general program comments, please contact me, Pam, at 12tree-house@gmail.com.

I will miss seeing you if you choose not to participate in NHC programs or trail maintenance. Remember: 80% of being an active AT conservator is showing up.



HIKE LEADER WORKSHOP

You are invited and we are counting on you to attend!!!

**NHC Hike Leader Meeting and Training
January 14, 2023 from 9:30 am—1:00 pm
at the Clubhouse at 173 Carl Slagle Road, Franklin**

**This workshop is for current leaders and new people.
We will review what hike leaders do and how they do it.
Bring your own lunch and drink**

**Please register by January 4, 2023 by calling Gail Lehman at 828-524-5298.
If there is bad weather, the alternate date is January 28.**

“Google It”!

by Rory Cassedy, Board Member & Trail Ambassador Lead

I had the opportunity to represent the Nantahala Hiking Club during the first cool snap of the fall for the Annual Summit Charter School 8th grade Water Monitoring Quest & Salmon Diversity Study. Bill and Sharon Van Horn were traveling and unable to attend this year. I had worked with Bill on other educational outreach programs and was pleased that he reached out to me for help.

Summit has been conducting water monitoring and salamander study for several years. You may recall seeing the notes and drawings in the former Rock Gap shelter. Those were from a previous class from Summit. Each class at Summit does an environmental study from kindergarten to the graduating class. The seniors were doing a study in the Grand Tetons! They take their environmental study seriously.

Ms. Janis Brannon, Outdoor Classroom Coordinator/Middle School Science Teacher, contacted me and we coordinated meeting at Winding Stair Gap for the first day projects, water monitoring at Winding Stair and Betty Creek and the salamander study at Betty Creek.

I was joined by Sarah Adams, Regional Manager for the ATC, when the bus from Summit arrived and we greeted Ms. Brannon, the chaperones and the students. The students were excited to be

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going on the study and out of the classroom. Mr. Patrick Brannon, Biologist with the Highlands Nature Center, was there to supervise the salamander study.

The students were divided into groups of four for the studies and briefed on the responsibilities for everyone involved, following citizen science procedures. At Betty Creek, I spoke about our club, the AT and what the clubs along the AT are responsible for. Sarah talked about the Conservancy and then we both talked about the importance of Leave No Trace. After the water testing at Betty Gap each group was assigned a nine meter square of the creek for the salamander study by Mr. Brannon. Each student had a task: counting the number of rocks, searching for salamanders, replacing the rocks and a scribe. After the study the students made a graph to show the number of rocks and the number of salamanders found in each plot. It was determined that the average number of salamanders in each plot was seven. The students were excited that they were able to find the salamanders.



In discussing the importance of the salamanders and what they represent regarding the environmental conditions of the streams, Mr. Brannon answered several questions from the students and then asked them a question: "If we found an average of seven salamanders per plot, how would you know if that was a good number?" The 32 students, in unison, responded, "GOOGLE IT"! Sarah and I had to smile and Mr. Brannon, smiling, said, "No, actually you would conduct a study on an annual basis to see if the number was changing and then you would know if the stream was staying healthy."

The next stop was a hike to Albert Mountain tower for lunch and a journal writing exercise. As the students were getting off the bus, Ms. Brannon stopped one of the students to ask him why he was wearing Crocs and not his hiking shoes. "Johnny" responded that they were wet and giving him blisters. Ms. Brannon explained why he needed to wear proper shoes on the AT, but she did not make him change.

After the hike to the tower and during lunch the students took turns writing in the journal. As the students were exploring the tower, the AT and picking up any litter they found I had an opportunity to read the journal. The notes were very interesting pertaining to the salamander study, the view

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from the tower, water testing and the AT. Then I got to “Johnny’s” entry: “Crocs highly recommend, very comfortable.” Yep, I remember students like that!

The class spent the night at Standing Indian Campground and had a “Hobo Dinner” cookout with singing around the campfire. Needless to say, the next morning the students were a little less ram-bunctious than when we met. We hiked from Winding Stair to Wallace Gap, conducting water sampling along the way. The Trail Maintainers had recently been through and I was able to point out blow downs that had recently been cleared and what we do to divert water off of the trail. Again, the students were picking up any and all littler along the way, so they were paying attention to the Leave No Trace talk.

It was a great two days and I hope the students got as much out of time spent as I did. Bill and Sharon do a great job with student outreach and I would encourage all NHC members to participate when they are able.





MARK YOUR 2023 CALENDARS!!!

EASTER ON THE TRAIL: SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 2023 @ 8:30 AM

On Saturday, April 8, 2023, we will continue our club's tradition of spreading "TRAIL MAGIC" to the thru-hikers coming through our AT section. The term "trail magic" was coined by long distance hikers to describe an unexpected occurrence or act of kindness that lifts a hiker's spirits and inspires awe and gratitude. To perform our "trail magic", we distribute small bags of fruits, hardboiled eggs and candy to hikers during the Easter weekend. We would also like to hand out some dog treats to those hikers who have their companions with them.

As in past years, we will continue to concentrate on more fruits, nuts and other healthy treats with a smaller amount of candy.

All club members are invited to participate in this rewarding and fun event!

We will meet at the Clubhouse on Carl Slagle Road on Saturday, April 8 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 preference and the ability to hike or travel to the location. Members are encouraged to work together at each area.

If you are unable to participate in the actual making and distribution of bags for trail magic, please consider dropping off something at the Clubhouse on the morning of April 8.

COLORED HARDBOILED EGGS and FRESH FRUIT can ONLY be delivered to the Clubhouse on Saturday, April 8. This ensures that the items are fresh for hikers to enjoy.

Sign-up sheets will be available at the March 9 general meeting. Contact Elena Marsh at 828-369-8915 or by email at marsh67@gmail.com if you have any questions or would like to sign up.

11/27/2022 Hike to Whiterock off the NC Bartram Trail, led by Laura Lauffer



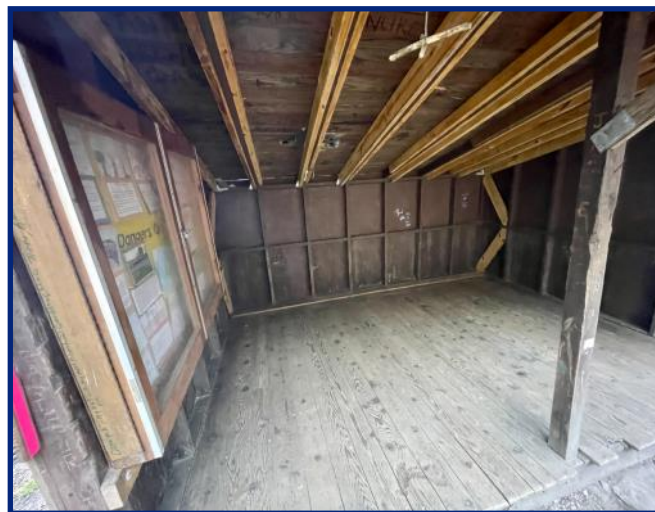
11/06/2022 Hike to Waterfalls off 281 Near Sapphire, NC, led by Robin Lurie



Rock Gap Shelter Rebuild

By Victor Treutel

The Nantahala Hiking Club is responsible for the maintenance of ten shelters along our 60 miles of the Appalachian Trail. Some are in great shape, others are a little tired. Rock Gap shelter WAS the most tired. It had generations of graffiti and a large colony of mice entrenched within its weathered walls.



Rock Gap Shelter as it last stood in November 2022

For years, the NHC planned alongside the ATC and US Forest Service for its demise and eventual rebirth, and in November we received the final go ahead. Our maintainers gathered tools and excitedly hit the trail for one last visit to this decrepit structure that has hosted thousands upon thousands of hikers from all over the world.

The following photos were taken during demolition:



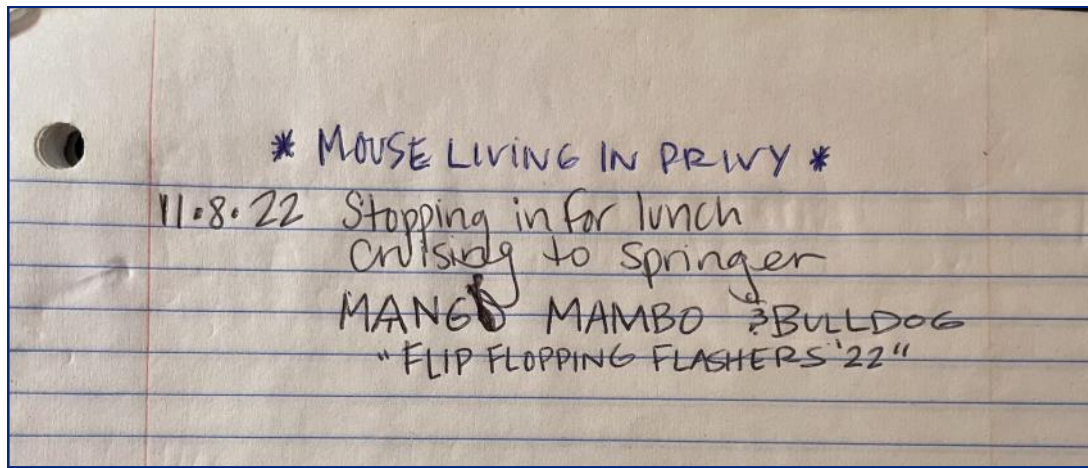
One last photo of the weathered and worn Rock Gap Shelter



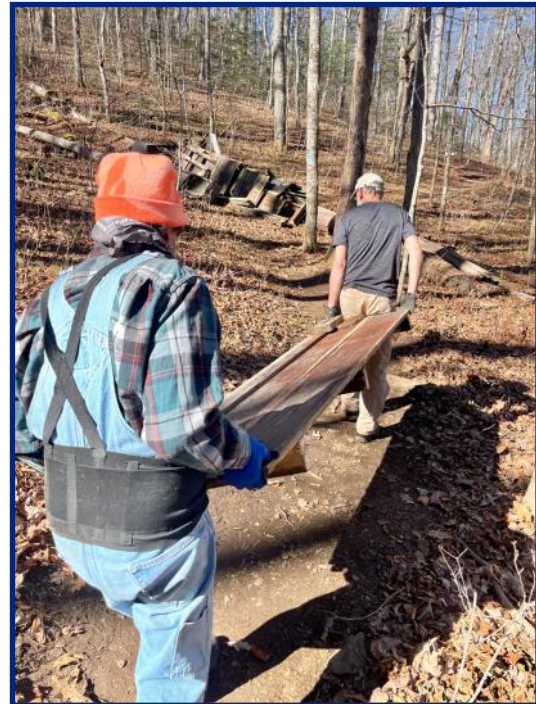
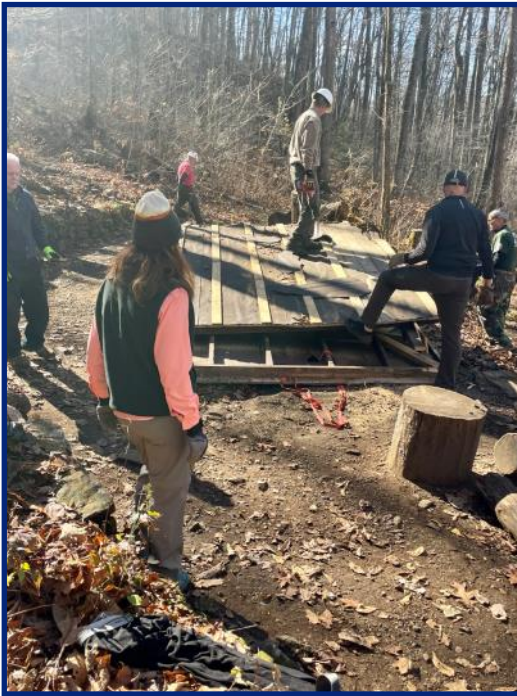
Then the fun began.....



Sadly, we had to evict some unhappy residents who tried to hide, but we were relentless.



The final entry in the logbook made me laugh (poor little privy mouse isn't alone anymore).



We flattened the shelter and dragged off the pieces.



Now, if the weather cooperates, it's on to rebuild!

Trail Manager's Report

by Hygie Starr

Since our last newsletter, we are happy to welcome two more new first-time maintainers who have come back out to work with us on numerous Wednesday work days: Bethany Conerly and Andrew Graham. Bethany was a southbound thru-hiker last year and had her first trail maintenance activity at the Wild East Women's Trail Skills Workshop in mid-September. Andrew heard NHC was working on Rock Gap shelter replacement and wanted to help. Welcome to the maintainer team!

Thank you to David Addleton, Jerry Novak and Kelly Motter for your section maintainer work and reports since the last newsletter!

The maintainer team has spent a lot of time on the Rock Gap shelter replacement over the past few months. See article below.

Rock Gap Shelter Replacement Project

Our large capital project for this year is Rock Gap shelter replacement. Philip Rogers is the lead on this project and Ed Sams is co-lead. Thank you, Philip and Ed! Paul Dyer and Sarah Adams worked to order all of the materials mid-year. The D logs from Trull were expected late July to early August; they finally arrived in late September. It took another two weeks to schedule delivery with the USFS. A cutting pre-work team worked at the USFS on November 7. After shelter out-of-service communications were issued by the ATC and USFS on November 8, the shelter was demoed and the footers were dug by the Wednesday maintainer crew on November 9.



The next big step was getting the concrete to the building site with a USFS UTV, which required the trail to be dry enough to prevent significant damage to the UTV and coordination with USFS and concrete delivery. Pouring of the footers requires temperatures about 30 F for 48 hours. The weather was uncooperative for several weeks on the requirements, except for Thanksgiving week, when the team and USFS were unavailable. A special Friday team of nine met the concrete delivery on Friday, December 2 and moved over eighty 80-pound bags of concrete from Rock Gap parking to the new shelter using UTV, Suzuki, wheelbarrow, hand truck and bodies. Also on that day some of the demo debris was moved behind the trash cans at the parking lots for future pickup by USFS.



The team was hoping to pour footers on the Wednesday, December 7 work day when the weather forecast was warm and “occasional light drizzle”. The rain turned out to be much steadier and heavier than forecast. The team set up tents, carried in water, mixer, generator and sonotubes while slipping and sliding in the mud. We decided not to pour as there was standing water in some of the footer holes. Most materials were left well-covered and anchored for pouring on another day.



Weather and staffing finally allowed column footers to be poured on Saturday, December 10 with a special Saturday work day crew of nine maintainers. Lots of concrete mixing and pouring!

A special Monday crew of five poured the trench footer on Monday, December 19. More concrete mixing and pouring!

The Wednesday crew met the USFS on December 21 to move concrete blocks to the site with UTV. The concrete block support wall was build and the remainder of the demo debris was moved behind the trash cans near the parking lots. More concrete mixing and pouring!



The next big step in the project is to get all the large timber building materials to the site. Several options have been discussed. A discussion with USFS will occur after the New Year's holiday.

Many thanks to everyone who has helped with the project!

PumpkinFest 2022

On Saturday, October 22, the NHC had a booth at Franklin's 20th Annual PumpkinFest. Over 100 visitors talked with NHC volunteers and 50 children tried their hand with the crosscut saw. Many thanks to all of the volunteers who manned the booth and a special thanks to David Sapin for over 20 years of representing the NHC at PumpkinFest!!!



Awards Banquet & Holiday Party

By Victor Treutel

For those who didn't attend, the awards banquet and holiday party was a great success. We had 68 reservations and about 8 cancellations. We did it inside at Cat Creek, which was a little tight but enjoyable. The food from Gracious Plates on Main was fantastic. Thanks to all who helped, including the awards committee, those who set up—Tim, Gwynn, Austin, Nancy, Lynn, Linda—and to all for helping to clean up. And, of course, Gayle. Thanks to Lynn for putting the awards together. We collected \$435 in the drawer thanks, in part, to Lynn for donating her winning share of the 50/50 back to the club.







Wolf Tales Myth and Mystery

Many of you will recall the fascinating program NHC had last April featuring Rob Gudger and Waya the wolf. Earlier this week, the club received an email from Arledge Armenaki, a cinematographer and retired professor at Western Carolina University. During the past few years, he has been making promotional films both nationally and for our local business community. The email we received reads as follows:

From: Arledge Armenaki <arledge@gmail.com>

Date: December 28, 2022 at 10:27:28 AM EST

To: info@nantahalahikingclub.org

Subject: Nantahala Hiking Club & Rob Gudger

Here is a link to my new video, "Wolf Tales Myth and Mystery" featuring Waya and the Wolfman!

But I've never seen a wolf in the wild. If you're like me you're fascinated by wolves. Last year Jane, my wife and I went to a presentation by Rob Gudger. During the presentation Waya, a gray phase timber wolf came up and licked Jane's hand. Jane was hooked and we decided to help Rob and make a video. I meet Rob Gudger at the Macon County Library last year at an event that was hosted by the **Nantahala Hiking Club**.

There was a discussion of the AP trial before Rob's presentation.

Please join me and check out my latest video, "Wolf Tales Myth and Mystery". The Myths and the Mysteries of the North American Wolf. Rob Gudger, aka "Wolf Man" is a superb storyteller, entertaining and informative. He gives you a deeper understanding of the lives and habits of his wolves. This video has been a journey of love and kindness.

Enjoy the Video! Thank you for watching.

Please share the video with family, friends, neighbors, and other wildlife.

"Wolf Tales Myth and Mystery

YouTube Link

<https://youtu.be/LWvp3qn5mZ8>

Please "LIKE" the video on YouTube and make a positive comment.

Thank You

Arledge

For video production services please contact Arledge Armenaki:

<https://www.acefilmmaker.com>

Arledge Armenaki