

Section Monitor Report June 2014:

From: Ron Hudnell
Sent: June 3, 2014
Subject: VA623 to Davis Farm Campsite

Trailhead Litter: There were approximately 20 gallon-size water, trail magic containers at the VA623 trailhead from some Burkes Garden religious organization. Each had a message along with a note to leave the containers for their later pick-up.

Water Source: Water source at Davis Farm Campsite continues to be pitiful. I did attempt to construct a small pool at the blue-blazed stream so that the trickling water could accumulate into an area that a hiker/camper could dip a small cup. The first large rainfall may wash it out.

Tread: Tread on the AT was excellent. Tread on the Davis Farm Campsite trail was wearing away on downhill so I did some sidehilling in two spots (I believe we identified one of these in our May hike); some more sidehilling could be done in two more spots closer to the campsite.

Clearance: Minimal lopping was done on the AT between trailhead and intersection with Davis Farm Campsite trail. Did a LOT of grass/weed clearing along side of the trail going to the Davis Farm Campsite and to the water source since one of the handwritten comments on the signpost was Badly overgrown. Also completely cleared the campsite of weeds/grass to the best of my tool capability. Packed out the trash from the campsite. The trees blocking the view of the valley are still there so I will wait until the fall to cut these down.

Drainage: I attempted to reduce the mucky areas approximately 15 min in from the AT trailhead by putting in a few small drainage trenches, clearing away the downhill brush/duff so water could drain off, and installing some small stepping stones. We had originally thought that a possible spring in the rocks was causing the mucky area, but I believe it may also be caused by the fact that the ground slopes uphill in both directions of the trail and up to the rocks. Clearing a way for the water to drain off should help. Sorry about the quality of the photo. There were several water bars on the Davis Farm Campsite trail which I cleaned out. I did put in 2 new water bars near the sidehilling projects.

Obstructions: The one large blowdown on the AT (approx. 10 min in from VA623 trailhead) is still there and some hikers appear to be still walking around. Since it is 17 in diameter and a few inches off the ground, I would like to notch the top to create a step. This will be easier/faster than cutting out a section of the tree. Someone had placed a large tree across the path to the Davis Farm Campsite (I suppose to keep hikers from going down) at the AT intersection. I did saw/move this obstruction. There was also one other blowdown on the Davis Farm Campsite trail (approx. 5 min in) which was causing hikers to walk-around. I did saw/move this obstruction and re-created the original trail.

Other: Upon return to the trailhead, there were 5 thru-hikers who asked if I could take out their trash which I collected. One of the thru-hikers reported that the trash bag(s) are still at the pond just before getting to Chestnut Knob shelter. Transported two of the thru-hikers to VA615/AT intersection.

From: Jeff Brown
Sent: Monday, June 16, 2014
Subject: Trail report, 617 to Desert Dog Relo

Yesterday I worked this section of the trail. Beautiful day and a great way to spend Fathers Day! <?xml:namespace prefix = o ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" />

Overall, the trail is in good condition. Obviously, it has seen a lot of thru hikers and I talked to 8 or 9 of them yesterday. They didn't report any problems from the Partnership shelter north.

I knocked the cone down at the privy at Davis Path and it should make it thru the season although it is getting full. I filled the duff bucket as well.

I repaired the fence at the stile where the trail enters the woods after crossing the meadow. Someone had pulled the fence back from the bottom to let dogs through. Since Greg, I and others made dog doors under all of our stiles, people evidently don't know they are there. We might want to post a notice or sign at our first stiles in both

directions letting people know that the dog doors are there and please dont mess with the fences.

We do need to mow the open areas from I-81 north. They are overgrown. North of 617, the grass/hay is taller than my dog Sophie and came up to mid-thigh on me in places. The parking area at 617 is also overgrown. I will be happy to take a weed eater to it in July.

Paul, Please put me down for 10 hours.

Thx,
Jeff

Summerfest 2014

Wednesday, June 18th

We got moved in & set up.

Wednesday afternoon, we checked the re-lo on Tilson-north, the one WJ had laid out.

This proposed re-lo goes trail north from where the old turnpike comes down off Walker Mountain & crosses VA-610.

David John hiked from VA-42, back to camp lopping & flagging sidehill work for Sunday.

Thursday, June 19th,

Jay Martin(MRNRA) stopped by and discussed plans for & what a wonderful area the Tilson Farmstead is for birding. It is habitat for the "Golden-winged Warbler". This bird, & the potential for other varieties has made Tilson Farmstead a really "BIG" deal!! Birders will come from around the world to observe & enjoy.

David John hiked south to Gullion Mountain & back, doing trail maintenance along the way. He reported back the campsites along 'Reed Creek' area are in clean condition.

Late afternoon, Andy Downs(ATC Roanoke) arrived & we did a walk-over of the Tilson-north re-lo, making some adjustments along the way.

Chicken-stir-fry was a big hit with the hungry volunteers.

Friday, June 20th

We had two D.R. Mowing crews. One in the I-81 area & another at the Tilson Cemetery.

We counted 11 grave markers & a few depressions in the ground that may be more graves.

The DR mower developed a problem that would not allow the blade to engage, so we didn't get all mowed as we had planned, so there may be more graves to be found.

The Cemetery, with the many shade trees, will become a nice quiet place to relax & observe.

Tom & Margaret were lopping on the AT, south on Walker Mountain & we tested the two-way radios(\$99 ones), & they worked fine between the Trail & Cemetery.

Burgers anyway you want them...yum-yum.

Friday evening 'Boundary Monitoring' workshop conducted by Josh Kloehn(ATC Roanoke) was informative & well received.

Saturday, June 21st

Crews went north from VA-42.

Paul Haag led workers with cribbing & sidehilling & Karl Kunkel led a crew in to stain the Knot Maul shelter & clean up around the area. We pushed the cone-of-poop down in the privy & stirred to other bin.

Josh & his Boundary Monument Maintenance Crew went to work locating monuments in the Summerfest area.

They returned all smiles and happy after spending the day bushwhacking to locate the monuments. They had learned some basic survey techniques & are ready for more.

The Saturday evening Hot Dog extravaganza was a big success. Trail neighbors came from as far as D.C. & as near as Ceres, VA.

The Kitchen crew did a wonderful job of preparing the Hot Dog feast. Pot-Luck salads & desserts rounded out the meal.

Kathryn entertained new PATH member, Tina Kiehn(Ceres,VA), her 4 friends from D.C.(Anne, Kate, Maya & Stephanie) & the rest of us with stories of her thru-hike & antics along the way. She had us all laughing & made our guest feel right at home.

Sunday, June 22nd:

Will Merritt went to I-81 area and tracked down the 'Tree of Heaven' & served eviction notice to same.
Sweet Willie(aka-Bill Sadler, aka-old B.S. himself, aka-old Geezer Willie, ain't Billy the Kid anymore) & Greg Weaver hiked & did trail assessment from VA-623, south to VA-42.
Margaret & Jim did some sidehilling, north, from the North Fork/Holston River.
Betsy & J.W. Hamm were at the 610 trail crossing when I walked back to camp. We had a pleasant conversation in the shade of those 2 big trees.
"Open Grill", & left-overs finished off our evening meals.
Campfire & schmores followed.

Monday, June 23rd:

French Toast by Greg finished off our Breakfast supplies.
We were packed up & moved back to Sugar Grove by 11am.

The Kitchen crew did a bang-up job serving Breakfast & Dinner throughout Summerfest.
Mostly Clear warm weather. Afternoon Summer showers were well received on Wed/Thur & Fri, to cool things down for the evening.
We had about 20 thru-hikers pass thru & enjoyed the PATH hospitality.

Lighting bugs really put on a evening show. The trees were loaded with flashing white lights. I mean loaded & in 3-D.
The meadows were also full of them.
Clear nights allowed for many stars to be seen.
Cool mornings with fog & clouds draped over Walker Mountain & hot coffee from Sweet Willies grill...don't get no better.

See Pictures @ <http://www.path-at.org/gallery/index.php/SummerFest---2014>

Attendees:

Chris Bracknell-3
Marcia Cope-2
Valerie Cope-1
Tom Dillon-3
Faith Elmiligy-1
Hope Elmiligy-1
David John-2
Kathryn Herndon-1
Paul Haag-1
Jim Houck-7
Ron Hudnell-4
Drew Jones-1
Karl Kunkel-1
Herb MacDonald-3
Will Merritt-3
Bill Pruehsner-1
Bill Sadler-5
Andrew Sam-1
Grace Shuping-2
Betsy Truscott-4
Margaret Wainwright-4
Greg Weaver-6
Steve Yonts-3

Guest:

ATC Roanoke: Andy Downs, Kathryn Herndon, Josh Kloehn.

MRNRA: Jay Martin.

Trail Neighbors: Tina, Maya, Stephanie, Anne, Kate, Kenny, Miranda & Alexandria.

Mark your calendar for next year's 50th anniversary of PATH. June 17-22, 2015.

Rumors are we may have cake w/ candles.

Jim Houck
Club President
Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers(PATH)