

2014 March Path Volunteer Weekend Report

As it turned out, the weather was great, clear & mild(42-58 degrees) for our March volunteer weekend. Utilizing several small crews, we covered most of our 70 miles doing trail assessment, lopping & removing smaller trees from across the trail.

Ed Martin & crew went from Poor Valley(FS-222) south. Ed reports the LARGE tree across Lick Creek above the footbridge is still there & looming large.

Paul Haag & crew swept the trail, north into Knot Maul & also posted the LNT sign at the shelter.

David John & David Faucette took their crew into Crawfish Valley & to the south end of Gullion Mountain.

Jeff Brown & crew went north from VA-617 to the south end of Gullion mountain to clean up the trail & look for water.

Andrew Mitchell & his crew went from FS-644, south to FS-86.

Meanwhile, Dwight Levi took a crew to the north I-81 area for some sidehilling on the sunny slope.

Chris Bracknell & crew went north of I-81 for Sidehilling, lopping & removed 3 blow downs.

Tom Dillon went south from FS-86 to VA-16 with Bill Pruehsner & Mary Ann Pruehsner, measuring & lopping.

Martha & David Emrey worked south from VA-617.

Our new 15 best friends, from Longwood University in Virginia were a great bunch of young adults.

They came prepared & did a wonderful job.

All of them(11 girls & 4 guys) enjoyed the experience & pitched right in on the trail maintenance & doing dishes in the kitchen.

They are anxious to return later this season & we welcome them to join us anytime.

As usual, the Saturday Pot-Luck meal was an all you wanted to eat affair.

Check out pictures in our Gallery @: <http://www.path-at.org/gallery/index.php/>

Attendees:

15 College Student Guest-1 each

James Baum(new member)

Chris Bracknell-2

Jeff Brown-2

Will Burke-2

Tom Dillon-2

David Emrey-2

Martha Emrey

David Faucette

Paul Haag

Jim Houck-4

Ron Hudnell(new member)

David John

Drew Jones

Dwight Levi

Ed Martin

Andrew Mitchell-2

Bill Pruehsner-3

Mary Ann Pruehsner-3

Andrew Sam

Mark Stanley

Daniel Tito

Jim Houck, Club President

Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers (PATH)

PATH March 2014 trail reports from club members.

From: Herb MacDonald.

Tom Dillon and I were up to Sugar Grove yesterday (3/5/14), no snow there and 60 degrees! Both of our sections were in great shape only one blow down in each section (but passable). One inch of snow on the trail sides, but the path was just wet. Met a section hiker. My section only needs the usual water bar cleaning (80% of them) and trimming of the Rotos! I saw several places that now have three blazes in twenty feet of trail? I fixed the shutters on Partnership with eyelets and hooks so they could be secured from the weather. The third bridge top surface netting has come loose on one end, needs more staples added. Kay this is no shelter log at Partnership, but I think the Visitor Center takes care of that.

Herb.

From: Tom Dillon

Just echoing what Herb said. My blowdown is in the rhododendron just upstream from the creek crossing. Its about 12 inches at knee height, but no trouble to step over. I clipped a lot of green briars, but the trail itself is OK; just needs waterbars cleaned out.

There is already a sign at Rte. 670 saying that PATH maintains the trail, so I did not put up the new sign.

Tom.

FROM: Dwight Levi.

3-7-14.

I spent Wednesday and Thursday on my Garden Mountain section. We are ready to go for the Spring backpacking traffic.

I cut quite a few trees off the trail (lost count). There was nothing I couldn't handle with with my hand saw. Both springs at Walker Gap are cleaned out. The big mud hole at the Walker Gap trail head is drained and trash is removed from both trail heads.

Several step over trees and walk around root balls were left in place.

These are the same ones we chose to leave over the last couple of years

Through the season I plan to:

Lop overhanging/encroaching rhododendron and laurel

Continue to replace old water bars with dips

Add a few stone "check steps"

Do minor cribbing below several rock slabs

Refresh blazes and paint out unneeded ones

Chop back green briar (June and September)

I have a topic to suggest for the Agency Partners Meeting. Can we get any help to grade and drain the dirt section of West End road up to the trail head. VDOT contracts local road scraping. This section doesn't get touched I was able to drive up it, but just barely.

Dwight

FROM: Andrew Mitchell.

March trail report.

Friday-14th afternoon - Went to 644 and hiked N. across 3 large stream crossings - all are secure and can be crossed on stones, logs, or other foot support at normal water levels.

Hiked S. up to Chatfield shelter.

- Cleaned out fire ring, reset some stones, extracted burned trash (aluminum items) and scattered ashes in forest.
- Stacked branches, firewood. Reset log bench on stones. Picnic table in place and in good shape.
- Picked up lot's of small trash, including about 4 snickers wrappers.
- Cleaned out leaves from behind & from inside privy. Reset a few stones in barrier wall above privy.
- Shoveled out dirt, leaves, limbs from behind and upper side of shelter. Reset a few stones in barrier wall behind shelter.
- Creek crossings at 644 and at shelter are all secure and can be crossed on stones at normal water levels.

Saturday - Left for 644 with Dan Tito and (3) students from the university volunteer group.

- Hiked into Chatfield shelter.
- Cleaned out all water bars between 644 and Chatfield.
- Did teaching of trail maintenance options, discussed different trail features as we crossed them.
- Reviewed history of Chatfield shelter, and also talked about 1st Summerfest and what all happened from the year before through the shelter/privy rehabilitation event.
- Cleared winter leaves from all sets of steps between 644 and big rock staircase.
- Cleared all waterbars from Chatfield to overlook.
- Cleared leaves, limbs from all stream, spring crossings.
- Clipped and cleared dead branches from trail. Very little needed on rhodies.

Ate lunch at overlook, lot's of sun and blue sky. Students were quite impressed by the view. Spent about 1 hour there taking pictures, eating lunch, talking about trail and life in general.

Got back to 644 at 2:30. I asked the students if they were up for another short hike. I proposed that if they were, that Dan could accompany them from 644 to the Settler's Museum. They'd been asking questions about it, what it was, etc. so I gave them another assignment, to go seek it out. They took us up on it and struck out on the 1/2 hour journey to the museum. I drove around to

the Settler's Museum and hiked up to meet them, doing some lopping of green brier and blackberry along the way. Met them about halfway between the two power lines. Let them walk around the Settler's Museum, also showed them where the trail crossed the road and told them they could continue on to Maine & Katahdin if they desired! No takers, but we returned to 644 and Dan left for Krock with the students & I headed for home.

Dan and I had a great time teaching, working, hiking, laughing, and conversing with the students. They seemed to have a good time, laughing continued from the start of the trip until they reached the museum. One scream occurred just before we got back to Chatfield. The 2nd student in line almost stepped on a snake. As it was a healthy, beautiful garter snake, about 18" long, I picked it up and showed it to them, from afar ;). I took their willingness to participate in light trail maintenance and positive feedback to my teaching as good signs. There was even talk of signing up for their next university outing. Maybe they'll be back to visit again with PATH this year?

Items taken care of or still needed at shelter...

- Register & pens - thanks for putting a new register in place. I added 2 more pens.
- LNT sign - thanks for putting it up. I tapped in the 2 other screws and was going to have one of the students man the screw driver to turn them in, but we got started on something else & I never got back to finishing it. So I still have 2 other screws and will try to get this item completed next trip up (Apr?).
- Broom - plastic handle, plastic bristles - this type normally doesn't get burned in fire ring.
- Privy replacement - needs to be planned for 1 or 2 years out? - We will need to watch how quickly it fills this year. Maybe do some 'preliminary' probing with small iron rod to see if there is a possibility to sink another hole w/o hitting major rock, either to the left or right of the current privy? If yes, then the same steps could be used to get up to that level and then a shelf-treadway cut to get to the new privy. I believe to the right of the current privy will be the best option. But we can check it out this spring and begin planning ahead, asking questions about another collar. Maybe get ATC's "privy expert" to visit the site with us later this year after we've done some preliminary site investigation and generate some proposals/options we'd like to see? Would be nice to have a collar with 1/4" holes in it to allow it to breath worms, liquids, possibly increase rate of decomposition?
- Andrew Mitchell.
- Maintaining 'when possible' 86<>Settler's Museum.

FROM: Martha Emrey.

David and I walked Walt's and Charlene's section, at their request.
The PATH sidehill crew were working hard north of I-81.

We took out a hawthorn that was growing horizontally toward the trail, between puncheons and cemetery. Picked up trash at trail head and along and off trail.
Walt, Charlene & Ann have their section looking good!

Since David wanted to get to Sugar Grove to meet up with folks to install signs, we only worked on Davis' section and scoped out ours.

Martha Emrey

FROM: Will Burke.

Mar 14 2014 trail north from 615 to first sign and a little beyond looked good no blow downs.

Trail south from 615 to aprox. 1/4 mile beyond high water trail intersection. I took out three 4 to 6 inch blow downs. All other trees on the trail looked like they had been there a while.

Mar 15 2014 trail north from I-81. Side hill 8 sections before first farm road. With Dwight Levi and James Baum (new member) and two college students. Had lunch at the bridge and visited the cemetery. Met and visited with David and Martha Emrey who were lopping on this section.

Will from Ohio

Will Burke.

FROM: Jeff Brown.

I took two students from Longwood University, Chris and Mary, with me and we hiked from 617 past Davis Path up to the shoulder where the Desert Dog trail relo will be. We spent the day clearing small blow downs, lopping and cleaning out some of the water bars. The trail is in good condition with the exception of some of the water bars that are rotting out and need to be replaced. I will do a more formal assessment on the next trip and determine the actual number that we need to replace. Some of the blazes are fading and I will take a look at those as well.

Jeff

FROM: Drew Jones.

Jim, I was there last weekend but did not stop at Sugar Grove. Went from Davis Farm Campsite to Walker Gap. Some lopping and small blowdown removal. A few older large blowdowns that are easily stepped over. Only area that needs attention is trail to Campsite. Ground is soft on last few hundred feet (closest to campsite) and has all but eroded.

Drew Jones

FROM: Mark Stanley.

Cleaned water bars between Poor Valley and the pond. Started at the bottom and worked north. Will return to finish.

Mark.

From: Bill Pruehsner.

Report: FSR 86 to Va Route 16.

With regard to this trail section, Tom Dillon did clipping where needed (not too much) and one brushy blowdown was removed by the three of us. Main reason for work trip was to get dropped off at FSR 86 (thanks Jim) and then measure AT to Route 16. Identified tract markers, etc. Otherwise, the work trip was uneventful.

Bill Pruehsner

From: Bill Pruehsner

Subject: Report of Glade Mountain

The winter has been rough on Glade Mountain...there are a number of blowdowns - none completely blocking the trail - and plenty of brushy blowdowns. We removed what we could without taking much away from our main task. The blazing

along here also seems to be getting faint - but the trail is quite easy to follow. We also noted how delightful the trail is on the north face descent of Glade with the turnpiking, etc. The shelter was in good shape, and the Trail from the shelter to the museum was also fine.

Chris and I observed a MASSIVE garbage pile on the roadside where the AT enters the meadow north of I-81. It seems that this pile was left by a state contract road clean-up crew - so it may be gone before long. I'll try to keep an eye on it next time I pass.

Bill Pruehsner

From: Tom Dillon

Subject: March-2014 Trail Reports. FS-86 to VA-16.

Bill and Mary Ann measured from FS 86 to Rte. 16, and I lopped and learned. I think some of you also saw their system in operation on Friday. The trail is in pretty good condition. There was one good-sized blowdown about halfway through the section, but we were able to handle it with loppers and a hand saw. We walked out to Va. 16, and the entire section is clear now.

Tom Dillon

From: Ed Martin

Subject: Trail report, Poor Valley FS222 to Lynn Camp Mountain

Ed Martin, Zoe, Clare and Courtney (3 Longwood volunteers) cleaned waterbars and lopped from FS222 to the top of Lynn Camp Mountain. The section is open and clear. Some blazes need refreshing, but we'll

get that another day. We did not get down to Lynn Camp Creek but a southbound hiker group said they would report any problems in the Knot Maul Shelter register. The beech tree in Lick Creek is 30 to 40 yards upstream from the bridge, about 8 to 10 feet in circumference at the base and the crown is about 50% in the water. There is good flow on the left side of the creek facing upstream . I strongly suggest leaving it alone until it becomes a problem and then call in the Forest Service with a skidder and saw team. I will be glad to help swamp brush at that point, putting a saw on it is beyond my skills. Pictures of the tree are in the 2013 gallery, Page 25 @: <http://www.path-at.org/gallery/index.php/PATH---2013?page=25>

Ed Martin.

From: **Dwight Levi**

Subject: Report: I-81 trail north.

Our intrepid group of volunteers were, Will Burke, Ron Hudnell, Jessica (Hat), Conner (Hoss) and myself. We worked north from I-81, sidehilling to correct where the trail had crept down hill. 8 sections were worked on, 30 to 50 feet each.

My conservative estimate is over 300 feet total.

One dip/dam was installed as well.

I have to brag on this group. They were sculpting trail like experts by the end of the day.

Each section of tread was out-sloped, tamped and naturalized.

In a couple of weeks of weather and walkers and no one will know we were ever there.

Trash from the trail was carried out and trash was picked up from the trailhead out to the off ramp.

We had our leisurely lunch on the puncheon in the sun and walked out to the Davis Cemetery.

This brought to mind the history of the area and the fact that we are only the latest visitors, many have enjoyed this area before us.

I would suggest a future project to be light crib and fill on two or three root filled areas just as you enter the woods.

This will bring these up the the character of the rest of the tread in that area. Also, they can be as slick as owl poop.

Dwight Levi

From: Ron Hudnell

Subject: Hike, South Jenkins section.

The report on the VA623-Jenkins Shelter section is below. I was mostly looking for trees blocking the hiker's path. There were only two that hikers were walking around. There was one downed tree with small branches in the path, but hikers were going through. This one can easily be taken out. Most of the other trees that I noted, could be stepped over so are not as critical. I only saw a couple of water bars and they were blocked, and need cleaning. Lots of blazes need to be redone in my opinion. I did not see any major erosion issues. Most of the work seemed to be on the Jenkins Shelter half of the section.

I walked from VA623 to Jenkins Shelter; supposed to be 3.8 miles; left trailhead at 12:09 and arrived at the shelter at 1:40; 2.82 miles/hr; did not do much stopping on the way down to the shelter as I wanted to get a feel for the pace; did not take any tools as I wanted to concentrate on the condition of the trail.

The Shelter appeared to be in good and clean condition; two trail registers both

with many clear pages; bear activity sign on front and end; LNT sign on

the front; fire pit in the front contained and little-to-no trash.

Shelter water source very close by and seemed to be running well; one tree down in the path but no problem to navigate.

No blazes to get from shelter back to the AT.

Bear activity sign on the AT at the junction for side trail to shelter is coming down at the top; secured by staple in the bottom only; I propped a large branch against the sign to hold the top of the sign up.

1:58 left the junction for shelter trail and AT; walked at or about 2.0 miles/hr back to VA623.

1:59 first water source on trail heading south has some muddy places for standing to fill water containers; possible rock work to improve?

2:22 second water source going southbound; great rock border for the water flow; easy for hiker to collect water.

2:44 third water source going south; this one is almost hidden by rocks but you can hear the water flowing beneath the rocks; with a little rock work believe a pool could be created.

3:09 at the top.

3:28 Davis Farm Campsite Sign defaced; claims there is no water.

3:52 AT sign defaced such that top line cannot be read at all.

I did clean up all the paper/bottle trash at the trailhead at VA623 except the rolls of wire (regular and barbed), the 8-10 metal brackets (appeared to be backing for signs?), and tree debris. I assume this is VA highway responsibility.

Most of the paper/bottle trash appeared to be local but there was some obvious hiker trash mixed in (Power Bar wrappers and Mountain House meals).

Ron Hudnell

From: Herb MacDonald

Subject: Hike Jenkins north Section.

I hiked the section from 615 to Jenkins on 3/21/14. It was a beautiful day Sunny and 60 degrees. From my hike perspective, I agree with where the work needs to be done (at Jenkins). I carried in the replacement privy fork that Chris provided at our Fall meeting and the privy is in good shape for the early hikers. I filled the duff can and put the top on, Someone always leaves it off or uses the can for a trash can! There are two shelter logs (a pen), one I brought last Fall and a new one (unused) from somebody. As Jim suggested last year the shelter (roof has no obvious leaks) needs staining. There is some new graffiti on the outside now, in addition to many years of it on the

inside. Table, fire grill, LNT sign, Bear sign and fire pit are in good shape. I cleaned out the fire pit of foil, cans and bottles and hauled it out. Water source is good, but still need the steps to it, which I was never able to get any help on last year. One of the siding peak boards is missing and needs a replacement piece. A triangular piece about two feet long would work. The Hunting Camp Creek Forest Service bridge foot boards are beginning to show extensive rotting, especially at both ends of the bridge

The surprise was no new blow downs, just the ones we left in last year. I still would like to put in five rock steps near the top of the ridge at the North end this year. There are few water bars or Roto's in this section, so there is little need for cleaning or trimming at this time. There are a few wet spots on the middle of this section that could be given drainage, but Jim keeps telling me it is a "Wilderness" area and should look more "natural".

Herb

DATE: March 14, 2014

TRAIL SECTION: Va-615 (Museum) to US 11

VOLUNTEERS: Chris Bracknell

Andrew Sam

Ron Hudnell

TRAIL WORK: -Cut and cleared three blow downs (old locust 4 to 6 inches).

-Picked up trash at the Va 729 (Kegley Ln.) crossing and at US-11.

- Did some minor lopping.

-Dug side hill in four locations between the old home site south of US11 and the second switchback north of railroad.

-Moved a section of the old railroad crossing ramp to the drainage at US-11 for easier crossing with the mower.