

From: Jim Houck

Subject: April 19, 2014 PATH Volunteer weekend.

Good weather greeted our April Volunteers.

Leaves were still off the trees, so we had those nice long views.

Thursday-17th, Steve, Will & Jim removed a blowdown from the trail, just north of Va-42.

Friday-18th, Jim & Ron Hudnell hiked, lopped & cleared from Va-623, north to Jenkins shelter & back(note to self, try to avoid the long, tough, huff & puff climb, south from Jenkins).

Saturday-19th, after a hot breakfast, volunteer crews went out to do a variety of trail duties.

Herb took the rock crew(Chris Bracknell, Ron Hudnell, David Faucette & Andrew Sam) out to construct some rock steps on the Jenkins north section(Join us in May for a walk over).

Kay & Charlotte went to the Partnership section with their two High School students & spent some time lopping, clearing the Rhododendron & cleaning up around the shelter.

Barbara Council, Emily Pletsch & 'Woody' the dog, Lopped south from Settlers Museum.

Ann Ramsey & Daughter, Natalie, mingled with a herd of free ranging cows along the trail north of I-81, near the Davis Family Cemetery.

Tom Dillon, Bill & Mary Ann Pruehsner went about Checking the mileage on some of our trail sections.

The 1 man sign crew erected 'Hiker Ahead' signs on Nicks Creek Road & freshened up Blazes & signage in the Mt. Rogers Visitor Center area.

Martha & David, Lopped, picked up trail head trash, did trail assessment & more.

They skipped the Saturday evening music at Flat Ridge, in order to spend time with Jonan Repass in a Wytheville nursing home.

Blue Plate Pot-Luck Dinner at Sugar Grove, followed with a relaxing campfire built by Ann Ramsey & David Faucette. Natalie too!

Mississippi, Ed Clayton, David Hebert, Konnarock Crew leaders, & a few others were in & out of camp & all seem to be doing fine.

Sleep tight...

See Pictures @: <http://www.path-at.org/gallery/index.php/Path---2014?page=3>

Next volunteer club trip: May 16-18th, at Stony Fork Campground.

Volunteers Present for April.

Chris Bracknell --2

Barbara Council --1

Tom Dillon --1

David Emrey --1

Martha Emrey --1

David Faucette --1

Stephen Fishback --2(on Chestnut Ridge)

Jim Houck --5

Ron Hudnell --2

Dwight Levi --4(on Garden Mt.& Chestnut Ridge)

Kay Laffoon --2

Charlotte Lafon --2

Giles Crooks(guest student) --2

Vincent Martinez(guest student) --2

Herb MacDonald --2

Will Merritt --3

Emily Pletsch --1
Bill Pruehsner --2
Mary Ann Pruehsner --2
Ann Ramsey --1
Natalie Ramsey --1
Andrew Sam --1
Steve Yonts --3

From: Dwight Levi
Subject: Garden Mountain 4/8-11/14

The past four days on Garden Mountain was absolutely fantastic. Early bird Thru hikers are passing through. I met 20 or more enjoying our simple footpath.

Tuesday:

Started out with 140 feet of root grubbing and side hill just north of Walker Gap. Slipped and busted my hind quarters at the stream crossing. Put in three steps that I had been thinking about for years but until I fell, I wasn't sure were necessary. I cut the ugly end off of the over sized water bar just up the 1st hump.



Wednesday:

Dug out in front of the Road Spring cistern. There were several leaks as I had expected, one very large. I filled the leaks with "water-stop" cement, built a stone dam, back-filled with 200 lbs of quick-set concrete, replaced surface stone and naturalized. I did not replace the pipe. It was in better shape than I expected. My semi-scientific assessment: Prior to this work filling a coffee can from the pipe took 10 seconds. After the repair work it took only 4 seconds. This is a nice improvement for spring flow levels. It will be a HUGE improvement when the flow drops to late summer levels. The Old House Spring is also in good shape but has much less water.





After lunch I hiked south past Chestnut shelter to the mud hole site I helped Steven Fishback with last year to check on the drainage. Not good. The cause of this wet area is that the stone slab beneath the road is bowl shaped and will never drain well. I placed stone walkway on the high side to keep hikers out of the mud. Chestnut shelter is in excellent condition.



Thursday:

I hiked north from Walker Gap painting (and erasing) blazes and clearing drains. I spray painted and rubbed dirt over many old blazes that were not necessary or were poorly placed. There is still a concentration of blazes where the trail crosses the stream and road together, where the trail zig-zags up the 1st hump and where rock gardens make the trail direction erratic.

Friday:

I worked south from 623. I replaced an old wooden check dam with a stone step, dug out an old water bar and replaced it with an even larger step. Valerie Hurt helped me with this one. She is doing well and asked me to say "Hi" to all. I hiked on south painting blazes and clearing drains.

Not a bad week, if I say so myself. I curved by Sugar Grove on the way home and left an assortment of felling wedges and the left over "blaze eraser" in the green building. I'm sorry I won't be with y'all next week.

Be safe, enjoy the walk.

Dwight

From: Martha Emrey

Subject: Davis Family Cemetery

Our work consisted of lopping from rte 683 to bridge, walked up to Davis Family Cemetery, picked up trash, checked trail at bridge in Ceres, picked up trash at trailhead and parking on 622. Still lots to pick up at parking (roofing shingles, tire and junk).

Our pleasure to run into Davis family descendants. We gave him a little background on our work at the cemetery, but I'd like to give him a little more. Want to be sure I'm accurate. Did a grant from LL Bean pay for the new fence. As I remember, we had a dozen or more PATH members remove the old fence and install the new fence in August 2012.

He was thrilled to talk to us. He, his dad and his aunt were absolutely thrilled to find the cemetery well maintained. He figured he'd find it overgrown with weeds. His dad didn't remember there being a fence there. (Not sure how long since his Dad was there, but he remembered being there about 15 years ago, his aunt had been more recently.) Nice to know our club's work is appreciated.

Martha

From: Herb MacDonald

Subject: 601 to Partnership.

I worked on & cleaned the water bars from Partnership shelter to the power line, rebuilt broken down rock water bars, and repaired the bridge topping on the third stream crossing.

Herb

From: Steven Fishback

Subject: Big Pond to Walker Gap trail report

April 4-5, 2014

Thru-hiker were out in force early this year. Ran into at least 15-20 hikers that a started at Springer Mnt around Feb 15. Got input from hikers. No major trees down reported. Only input from hikers of note was blazing between I-81 and VA42 was light and confusing at one location. I can only guess the new relo was part he was referring to as he mentioned it split into two directions, took the wrong route for a short distance then had to go the other direction.

Also, ran into about two dozen of Warren Doyles group doing a pre-hike.

Doyle is the founder of the Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association and has hiked the entire AT more than anyone else. The creator and director of the Appalachian Trail Institute has been labeled the Yoda of the trail and was the focus of a 2011 feature in Backpacker Magazine entitled, Madman Walking.

Trail:

Sawed two trees ; one south from walker gap; one between shelter and open ridge.

Water bars cleaned and re-trenched.

Wet between shelter and open meadow but water drainage diversions put in last Fall are working ok.

Installed two posts with blazing in middle meadow near big pond.

Freshened 3-4 blazes between middle and upper meadow.
Spring on Jeep road flowing out pipe well.

Spring at Walker Gap flowing heavily. Cleaned leaves out of box.

Spring, .2 miles north of Walker Gap is flowing heavily. Cleaned leaves out of box.

Spring at Big Pond flowing well. Cleaned leaves out of box.

Privy:

Dug out right side then moved privy from left to right. Moved steps over.
Roof repaired. Removed two older sheets one sheet was missing. Installed three new smoky color sheets on roof.

Ancient old privy wood is gone. The wood must have been used as fire wood. I moved one of the heavier surviving side over to the view as a platform to sit or stand on.

Shelter:

Everything was in good shape. No trash. Door spring still working well. No roof leaks during heavy down pours.
Windows are in good shape. New journal (3 pages filled with entries in the two days I was there).

Steven

From: Bill Pruehsner

Subject: Trai reports

Va 601 to Va 670 (Teas Road)

Bill and Mary Ann Pruehsner along with Tom Dillon hiked and measured this section. Thanks to Chris Bracknell for dropping us off at Teas Road and delivering us up to the Trail where it crossed 601. We hiked the section and found no problems/blowdowns. Tom cleared out a number of water bars. There is a question if a number of them should be replaced - especially those on the lower slopes about 3/4 mile from Teas road just before you reach the old railroad. We have pictures of those waterbars available if you/anyone wants to see them. Note: we did pull down a vine or two along the way.

Va 42 to Va 610

Fine trail the entire distance. A few observations however...1) It would be nice to have a blaze pole indicating a slight right curve in the first field south of 42. A hiker descends through the field (no problem), then when they reach the bottom - before the turn to cross the creek - there is a choice of two roads to follow. A blaze pole positioned along the proper road may be useful. 2) The sidehill "high above the river" is being eroded by cows that use it. The outer lip in a number of places has been pushed down the hill. 3) There seems to be a blue blazed trail around the low-water bridge. We noted blazes on 42, 610, and the road with the bridge. We also noted blazes on 610 towards the Walker Mountain crossing. Is the trail from the low-water bridge to Route 42 parking - and the blazes along 610 towards Walker old blazes? 4) There was a "Trail Magic" chained to "King Stile" - we gathered up all the garbage and notebooks and lit laying around and placed it in one of the coolers. On our return - it had been replenished by whatever group maintains it. 5) There was a dead cow in the pasture near Route 42, but way off the trail.

Va 610 to the lower junction of the Crawfish Trail

Parked on 610 and measured up and over Walker. Returned via the same route. No blowdowns, no overgrowth, no problems - trail is excellent. Noted blue ribbons heading into the woods at the gap proper - assume this to be the reroute starting to be planned.

Bill Pruehsner