



Nantahala Hiking Club Newsletter

nantalahikingclub.org

1st Quarter 2024

Happy New Year!

“Keep ever clear the trails that lead to mountaintops.”

— Rev. A. Rufus Morgan, Club Founder



Hunter's Moon on Hike to Siler Bald 10/18/23

Photo submitted by Katharine Brown



President's Message

By Victor Treutel

The Spirit of Giving

The amount of time Nantahala Hiking Club members donate never ceases to amaze me and this year was no exception. The NHC recorded over 8,000 hours of volunteerism, equating to over \$250,000 value in volunteered hours. Over 100 individuals devoted time and energy in giving.

We accomplished a lot this past year. We rebuilt the Rock Gap shelter and Wesser Bald privy, logged over 5,400 hours in trail maintenance activities, logged 750 hours in hike leading and trail ambassador activities, established a corporate sponsorship program, reinvigorated our school outreach program, published four incredible newsletters, hosted nine community educational programs, and fed dozens of hikers during our annual Chow Down and Easter on the Trail events. We also held two New Member Orientations with over 60 new members attending and built stairs at the Trail of Tears Memorial at St. John's Episcopal Church. In addition, we attended or held numerous training and certification programs including CPR, chainsaw, crosscut saw, trail maintenance, hike leader and trail ambassador.

At the December 2nd Awards Banquet and Christmas Party, the NHC delivered 50 amazingly wrapped gifts/awards to our members honoring their dedication to the AT and our community.



Below is the complete list of award recipients:

Accumulated Hours	Recipients
50	Bethany Conerly, Jerry Denney, Andrew Graham, Sandi Hawk, Bill Hodge, Sharon James, Karen Martin, Lynn Meyers, Kelsey Orr, Marcia Randall, Paul Tibble
100	Pam Addleton, Christopher Carpenter, Bethany Conerly, Jerry Denney, Andrew Graham, Sandi Hawk, Laura Lauffer, Tim Lindler, Lynn Meyers, Pat Muse, John Randall
200	Jerry Denney, Mark Holmberg, Kelly Motter, Austin Treutel
400	David Addleton, Susan Kettles, Kelly Motter, Kathy Ratcliff, Phillip Rogers,
600	David Addleton, Amber Hornbarger, Phillip Rogers, Hygie Starr, David Stearns, Gayle Treutel
800	Stan Daughdrill, Bill Mandler, Hygie Starr
1000	Debi Gedling, Jerry Novak
1500	Charlee Tisdale
2000	Victor Treutel
2500	Tom Marsh, Victor Treutel
3000	Ed Sams
3500	Gail Lehman

The awards banquet was topped off with special recognition given to Bill and Sharon Van Horn, who have contributed over 20,000 hours to our club and the AT over the past 20 years. Bill and Sharon have been a staple in the club since 2002, and over the years they have accomplished so many things that it is almost impossible to list them all but my attempt is as follows:

- ◇ Together they section hiked the entire AT.
- ◇ They started and organized the annual Hiker Chow Down.
- ◇ Through their efforts, Franklin was designated the very first “AT Community” by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.
- ◇ They started and led the Trail Ambassador program as well as the Visual Resource Inventory initiative.
- ◇ They were the face of our School Outreach program for the past decade, hosting hikes and education.
- ◇ They are Trail Ambassadors and Hike Leaders.
- ◇ Bill was Club President and Regional Partnership Committee Representative.
- ◇ They have served on numerous club, ATC and Forest Service committees and task groups.
- ◇ Bill has been a consistent member of our trail maintenance efforts. He holds numerous certifications and is always the first with a tool in his hand when the call arises.

The Board of Directors felt that their long-term dedication to our club deserved a kind of recognition we never planned for. (In fact, the club's award recognition stops at 4,000 hours, which they surpassed a decade ago.) So we created a new award which we named "The Van Horn" that will be given annually to a club member who has contributed greatly to our club and the AT.



Santa Claus, Sharon Van Horn, Victor Treutel, Bill Van Horn

The plaque is inscribed as follows:



The Van Horn
Award

Presented to:
Bill and Sharon Van Horn

You have created a culture of volunteerism and mentorship that has touched, if not changed, countless lives during your twenty years as members of the Nantahala Hiking Club. You have created a legacy for future generations and provided a rock-solid foundation for which the wonders of the Appalachian Trail will forever exist.

This award, to be known as "The Van Horn", has been created and named in your honor. Future awards will be given to club members who have contributed greatly so that others can experience the wonders of our mountaintops. Although your shoes are impossible to fill, we all strive to be "Van Horns".

You are the legacy of the Nantahala Hiking Club and the Appalachian Trail.

Thank you to Bill and Sharon and everyone who gave of themselves to ensure that we continue to “Keep ever clear the open trails that lead to the mountaintops.” - Rev. A. Rufus Morgan, NHC Founder.

Merry Christmas and a very, very Happy New Year.

Victor Treutel
NHC President



NHC Booth at Pumpkinfest 10/21/23

Photo submitted by Katharine Brown

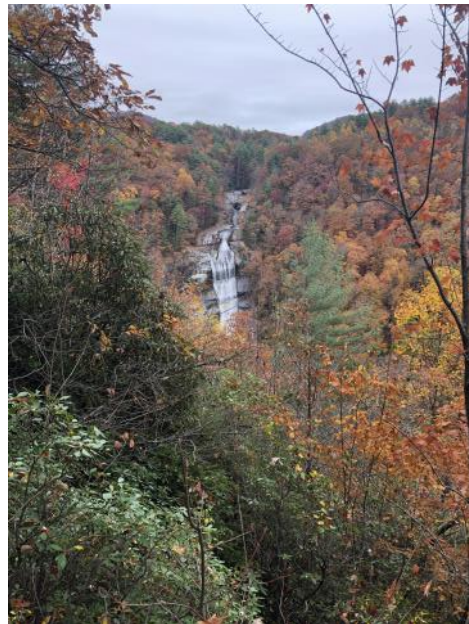
WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Deanise Ramsey
Thayne, WY

Debra & Michael McDaniel
Franklin, NC

Valerie Bennett Queen, Randy Beck & Vivian Bennett Beck
Franklin, NC

Jane Voss
Rabun Gap, GA



Lower Whitewater Falls Hike 11/11/23

Photo submitted by Susan Kettles

NHC HIKES



Fairfield Lake Hike 10/07/23

Hike Leader: Robin Lurie

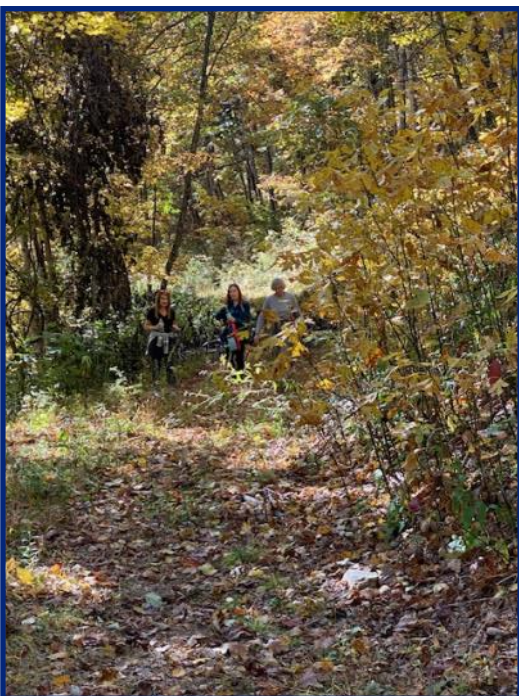
Photo submitted by Robin Lurie



East Fork of Chattooga River Hike: 10/21/23

Hike Leader: Robin Lurie

Photo submitted by Robin Lurie



Winding Stair Forest Road 7131 Hike: 10/22/23

Hike Leader: Sandi Hawk

Photo submitted by Sallie Ellinwood



Panthertown Waterfalls Hike 11/04/23

Hike Leader: Susan Kettles

Photo submitted by Susan Kettles



Long Branch/Blackwell Gap Loop Hike 11/12/23

Hike Leader: Gail Lehman

Photo submitted by Katharine Brown



Larry's Road Hike 11/19/23

Hike Leader: Sandi Hawk

Photo submitted by Sallie Ellinwood



William's Pulpit Hike 11/25/23

Hike Leader: Sandi Hawk

Photo submitted by Martha DeHart



AT North to Panther Gap 12/29/23

Hike Leader: Katharine Brown

Photo submitted by Martha DeHart



*Saw Mill Gap to Rocky Bald Trail
12/30/23*

Hike Leader: Gail Lehman

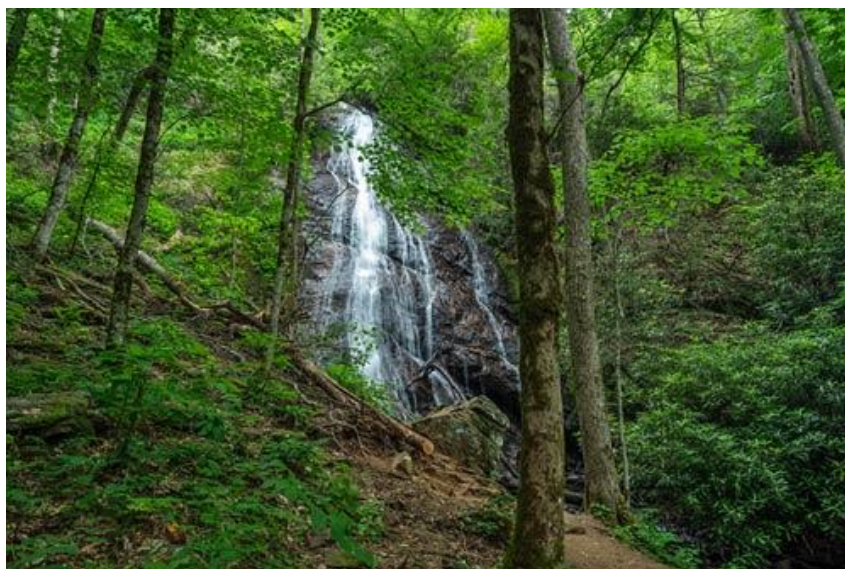
Photo submitted by Sande Lolli

Sad News....,

I regret to inform you that NHC member, Melissa Myers, is suffering from incurable bone cancer and is receiving hospice care. Until fairly recently, Melissa was an active club member. She is our former Membership Chair and, as such, she was present at numerous club events, including board meetings, membership meetings and new member orientations. Along with her time, Melissa contributed her smile, good sense of humor and knowledge to the club.

Melissa REALLY does not want phone calls, visitors, flowers or food. However, cards would be appreciated. Her address is 477 Holly Springs Estates Road, Franklin, NC 28734.

We all will hold Melissa and her family in our hearts and minds.

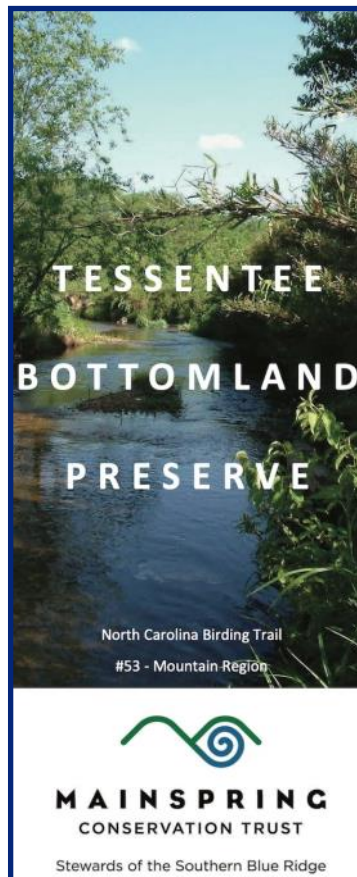


Upcoming NHC Programs

On March 14, 2024 our guest speaker is Skye Cahoon, Mainspring's Conservation Outreach Associate. Skye earned her Zoology B.S. from the University of Maine. She has experience across the country tracking blackbirds, studying quail in Florida's panhandle, monitoring songbird nests in Montana's sagebrush scrub and leading folks on educational adventures.

Bird migration begins in March and lasts through June in our state and specifically in the 70 acres of Tessentee Bottomland Preserve. Habitat diversity in the Preserve provides a great place for viewing wildlife: 129 bird species and 56 butterfly species have been sited. You guessed it: the March program is all about bird migration and ways migration affects local pristine habitats that we call community.

Come join us and learn more about birding and preservation.



In April you will meet Mark Warren, an award-winning writer, naturalist and director of the nationally recognized wilderness school, Medicine Bow. He was named 2022 Georgia Author of the Year. Our program on April 11 is ideal for students, NHC members and interested general public to learn survival strategies. For example, how to survive during a car breakdown in freezing conditions until help arrives, a lost fuel lighter while on a cold overnight hike or where to get needed calories when the only food source has been stolen by a bear. Yes, these life lessons are reality-based!

Mark states: “Most folks today have reduced nature to a backdrop of scenery. The great deficit in this scenario is our lack of understanding that we still depend on nature. Air to breathe, energy to consume for our daily actions. These are commodities that are easy to take for granted, and, if they are, future generations will have no reason to respect and conserve the pieces of the puzzle we call ecology.”



Mark Warren

Join our programs on March 14 and April 11, at 6:00 pm at the Macon County Public Library, 149 Siler Farm Road, Franklin, NC 28734. The general public, including school aged children, are invited to attend regardless of NHC membership.

Pam Addleton
NHC Program and School Outreach Chair



How about becoming a Hike Leader?

ANYONE can be a Hike Leader! Leading a hike as a member/representative of NHC has so many rewards in so many ways! Hikers who join you safely learn about our region and hiking locations. They may become members of the club due to YOU (though they don't have to) and understand the reasons the club exists and the work we do as volunteers. You build relationships with those who come on your hikes. You learn from one another about flora, fauna, geology and the resources all around our area. YOUR example may encourage THEM to become hike leaders! And it is so much FUN; you never know what you will see on a trail!

Simply, here is how hike leading works:

- * YOU pick your favorite hike specific to your knowledge and time. This hike is for the benefit of those who sign up—not for your own workout.
- * You post all needed information about the hike using the form online . We show you how.
- * You use your training to conduct the hike, report your hours and choose your next one to schedule. Hopefully, you will schedule at least six in a year.

On February 3 from 10 am to 1 pm, NHC will conduct a Hike Leader Training at the Macon County Public Library in Franklin. This is for any new or returning Leader. We will use the updated Hike Leader Guidebook to cover all areas of information needed to provide you with safe and proper leadership information. Materials will be mailed to you prior to the training so you can become familiar with the guidelines and bring questions to the session.

Upon completion of the training we hope you will schedule a minimum of six hikes in the calendar year. If this is not possible, you will be dropped from the Hike Leader roster at the end of the year. In 2023, 22 persons appeared on the Hike Leader roster but only five or six actually led a hike by the end of the year. All are invited to this training and we hope all who attend come with the highest intentions of being an ACTIVE Hike Leader. YES, life happens. We are all volunteers and there is a hope that you will maintain frequent communication with the Hike Leader Program Coordinator, Gail Lehman, for changes in your ability to conduct hikes.

There are A LOT of trails in our area! Come on out and be trained to be an NHC Hike Leader.

*****Call Gail or Katharine to register for this event by January 20th.*****

For questions or more information, call Gail Lehman at 828-524-5298 or email at lehman85@gmail.com OR Katharine Brown at 828-421-4178 or email at kbtrailrunner@yahoo.com

How about becoming a Trail Ambassador?

It's almost our favorite time or year again! Yes, you guessed it: thru-hiker season! In order to be prepared for the hikers, we will have a Trail Ambassador orientation at the Lazy Hiker (back room) on February 24 from 1 to 3 pm. Current and new Trail Ambassadors are welcome to join in this orientation. We will cover Leave No Trace, wilderness safety, and communications and reporting.

To sign up for the orientation, please send me an email at: kellylee28@aol.com.

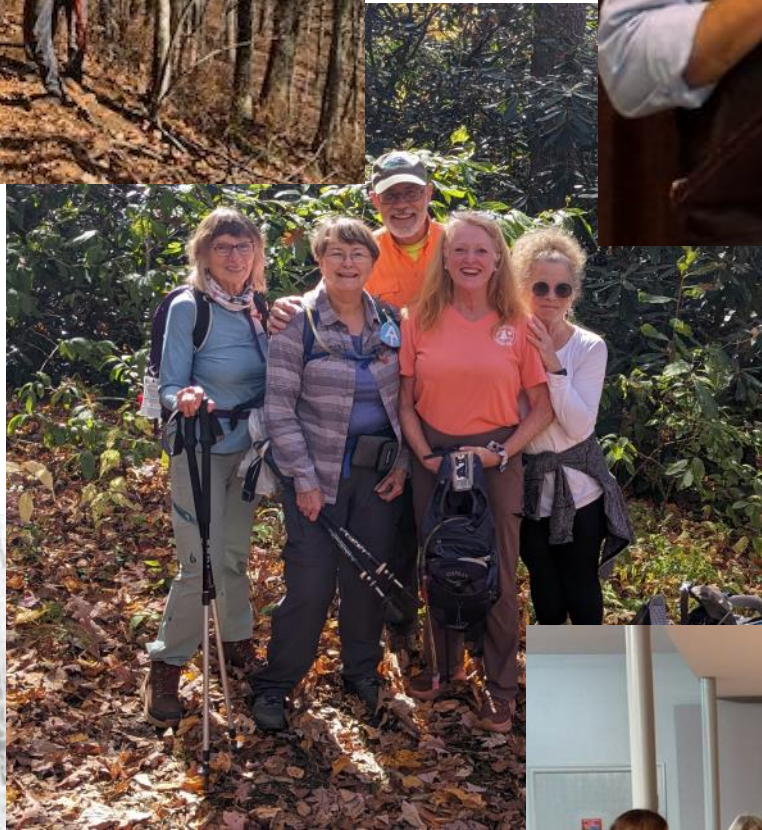
Kelly Motter
NHC Trail Ambassador Lead

How about becoming a Hiking 101 Presenter?

As part of NHC's school outreach program, a 45 minute presentation is given to students before they participate in an Appalachian Trail (AT) hike. The presentation covers three topics: AT history, what you need to have in your day pack and the seven principles of Leave No Trace. Each topic takes about a third of the time allotted. An outline of the information presented in the past is available along with reference materials. The intent is to get the students excited about the hike and help make the hike enjoyable (set the expectations). The presentation time is coordinated with the lead teacher and normally takes place about a week before the scheduled hike. For the past few years, only one school has continued the hiking field trip. NHC hopes to grow the program back to where we have three to four hikes a year. If interested in being a Hiking 101 presenter, contact Pam Addleton, the NHC School Outreach Coordinator, at pamaddleton@gmail.com or Bill Van Horn at airborneengineer20bde@gmail.com.

Sharon Van Horn





A Cautionary Tale.....

By Sam Ferguson

Part of a Vermont Fish and Wildlife report from <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/newsroom/bear-on-appalachian-trail-put-down-after-ransacking-property>:

“Fri, 07/12/2019—12:00

Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is asking the public to be mindful of bears when out camping or hiking in the woods this summer. This morning a bear that had been frequenting the area around the Goddard Shelter on the Appalachian Trail in Glastonbury was put down by Vermont State Game Wardens after it was determined that the bear continued to approach people on the trail and ransack camper property, including two tents. In the effort to find discarded food.”

“The bear had become so accustomed to finding food among humans that it had lost its fear of them,” noted Lieutenant Dennis Amsden, “The bear had taken backpacks, entered the occupied shelter and charged at least one hiker.”

“It’s unfortunate that this bear was killed because of our inability to keep human foods from him,” noted bear project leader Forrest Hammond. “This bear had begun displaying behavior that set off red flags for us for someone eventually getting hurt. The number and severity of calls from hikers and campers had increased in recent days with a call on Thursday that involved an anguished plea for help. We are fortunate that no one other than the bear ended up badly hurt.”

In July 2019, I was section hiking north from the NY-CN border. When I reached the Bennington, VT crossroad on July 12, the trail was closed north for around 18 miles. That day I bus-blazed to Manchester Center to head back south while a bear problem was being resolved. I wish I had a picture of the food storage boxes that were installed on about July 13 at the Stratton Pond shelter and then further south at Story Spring and Kid Gore shelters. The caretaker at Stratton Pond said it took all day to move the humongous approximately 300-pound box (Tahoe Bear Box Company FS type) a mile from the service road. The multiple small about 2x1x1 foot tool boxes, each with multiple hasps, at the next two shelters were almost useless for food storage and one of them could not even be opened by a human. When I got to the Goddard Shelter the bear-raided privy had been set upright and somewhat repaired.

As hard as it is to place a useable, effective food storage locker at a remote shelter, I hope that NHC plans include the larger lockers and NHC can figure out delivery methods.





Wishing everyone a wonderful 2024!