

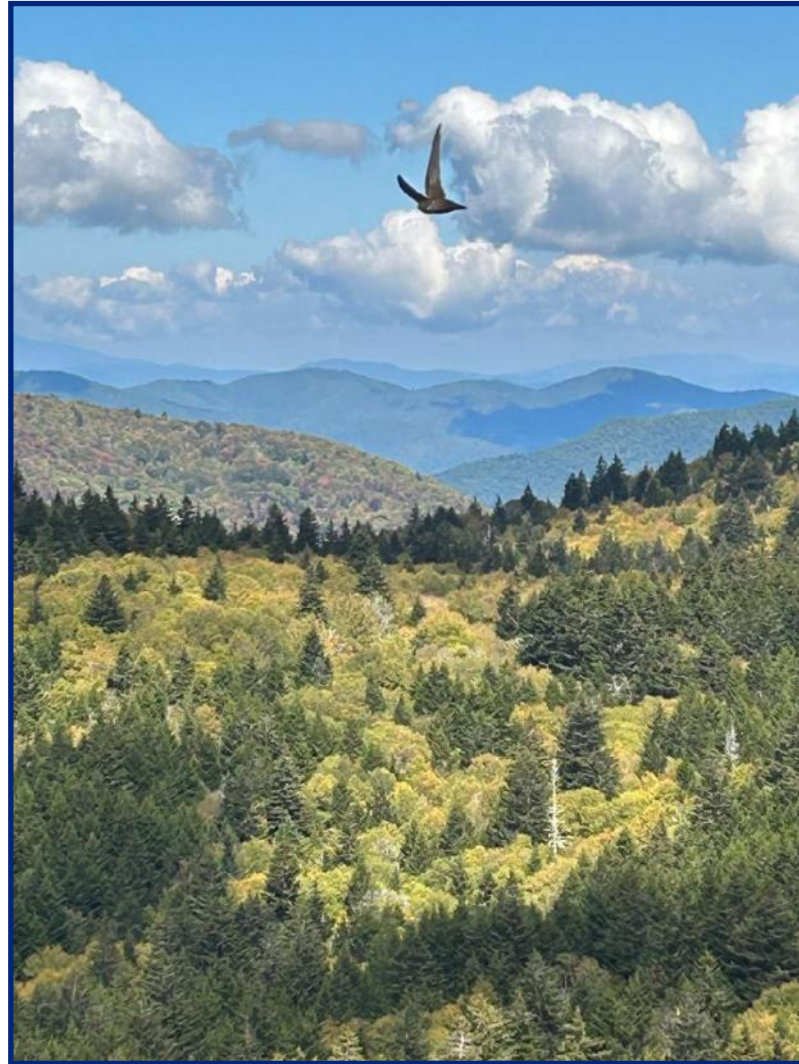


# Nantahala Hiking Club Newsletter

[nantalahikingclub.org](http://nantalahikingclub.org)

Second Quarter 2024

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



## HAPPY SPRING

Spring is the season for peregrine falcon nesting. Although there are a variety of nesting sites, Pickens Nose is the most well-known one in Macon County. To protect the falcons during this time, the U.S. Forest Service closes the rock faces in that area. Pay attention to signage when hiking!



# President's Message

By Victor Treutel

## Spring in the Smokies

Since the end of October our mountains have looked somewhat lifeless—barren trees, dead leaves, silhouetted by gray, cold skies. Yet in the coming weeks, after the dogwoods bloom, our mountains will explode with life. Leaves will unfold, bushes and trees will flower, the air will warm and our trails and town will be filled with energetic hikers on their journey from Georgia to Maine. It is my favorite time of year.

The Nantahala Hiking Club puts it into high-gear this time of year to support the hiker community. We host the Thru-Hiker Chow Down at Lazy Hiker (Saturday, April 6 at noon), where we feed and entertain hikers (everyone is welcome), We also have dozens of Trail Ambassadors on the Appalachian Trail meeting as many hikers as possible and offering advice and/or a pat-on-the-back. And, of course, our maintainers continue their weekly work on the trail “keeping ever clear the open trails that lead to the mountaintops.” — Rev. A Rufus Morgan, NHC Founder

On March 20, the NHC accomplished a milestone: placing our first “Bear Box” on the AT. With a trend of increased bear-human interactions along the entire length of the AT and the Nantahala National Forest, the club has teamed up with the U.S. Forest Service and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy to purchase and place the first bear-proof storage locker at Betty Creek camping area. This is the first placed on the AT in the Nantahala National Forest and will be monitored for its success. If we see a reduction in bear-human interactions, we will begin the process of purchasing and placing additional boxes.

Each box costs over \$1,000 and because they each weigh in at 150 pounds, they are very difficult to haul to their needed locations. A single box should accommodate dozens of hikers' food storage needs and should last for a decade or more. Although these boxes are not scent-proof, they are impossible for a bear to get into if properly used. A bear might be attracted to the scent, so the boxes are placed a safe distance from the camp/shelter. Witnessed behavior indicates that after they attempt to get in and fail, they do not return. These boxes, although unsightly, expensive and difficult to place, should stop our bears from equating people with a source of easy food.

There are photographs of the installation of this first bear box later on in this newsletter.

I look forward to seeing you on the trail this spring!

Victor Treutel  
NHC President

# Welcome to our newest members.....

Jim Clinton  
Topton, NC

Norma Zeman  
Andrews, NC

Joel Allen  
Dacula, GA

Nicole Riley  
Franklin, NC

Randy Irwin  
Cullowhee, NC

John & Carol Harper  
Franklin, NC

Debra Lewis  
Franklin, NC

Sean Suskind  
Highlands, NC

## Upcoming NHC Programs

By Pam Addleton

April 11, 2024

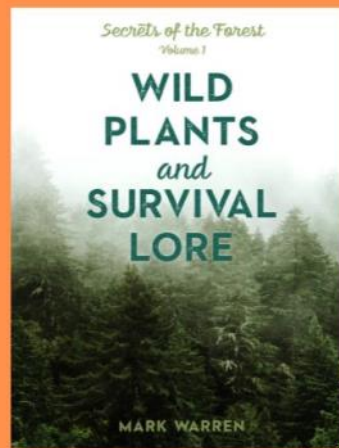
### Award-Winning Author and Naturalist

### Mark Warren

Presents

### Survival Tricks of the Trail

Join us to learn about native  
plant medicines and practical  
materials for trail hikers and all  
lovers of the great outdoors.



Meet Mark Warren, an award-winning writer, naturalist and director of the nationally recognized wilderness school, Medicine Bow. He was named 2002 Georgia Author of the Year. Our program on April 11 at 6:00 pm at the Library is ideal for students, NHC members and interested members of the general public who aspire to learn survival strategies.

Mark has written extensively for regional and national magazines, including: Guernica, Blue Ridge Highlander, North Georgia Journal, Georgia Backroads, Camping, Paddle and Survivor's Edge. He has written multiple books on western history.

Mark is a lifelong student of Native American and Western Frontier History. He is a member of the Wild West History Association and Western Writers of America and has presented at top western museums around the country.

Mark has been featured on many radio shows and podcasts. He's packed 50 years of teaching and knowledge about Native Americans' everyday life skills into a four-volume series, *Secrets of the Forest*.

Mark Warren wrote, "Most folks today have reduced nature to a backdrop of scenery. The great deficit in this scenario is our lack of understanding that we will depend on nature. Air to breathe, water to drink, 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.

### **May 9, 2024**

There is no program at the Library in May. Instead, get ready to enjoy a spaghetti dinner fundraiser event with members and nonmembers at the Frist Presbyterian Church in Franklin. Details to be announced.

### **June 13, 2024**

Paul Dyer presents his photography and recordings, "Lower Grand Canyon: Side Hikes from the River". Paul shares his personal hiking and rafting experiences in the Grand Canyon. Join us for Paul's photographic and athletic adventure of a lifetime. Additional adventures in Paul's list of experiences include the Galapagos, Southern Patagonia, Alaska, Hawaii and the Tetons.

Paul has been an NHC volunteer trail maintainer and/or manager for over nine years. He shares that trail maintenance is his third career. His first career was as a musician and his second was as a computer programmer.

Thank you, Paul, for being a leader year after year!



Hike at Jones Creek, March 17, 2024  
Hike Leader: Gail Lehman  
Photo submitted by: Martha DeHart



## IT'S CHOW DOWN TIME AND VOLUNTEERS ARE STILL NEEDED THIS SATURDAY!

This is an unusual situation—we usually have more than enough volunteers! We have a new lead volunteer this year—Gail McDiarmid—let's show her how we turn out for this event. She still needs the following:

- Someone to provide one crock pot of chili
- 3 volunteers to bring small fruits
- 5 volunteers to bring handheld desserts
- 1 grill master from noon to 2:00. Debi Gedling has said that she will do this but says that she has no idea what she is doing and could use some guidance!

If you can bring fruit or dessert, you do not have to stay unless you want to. We will have two people in the back of the Lazy Hiker to collect the food from you. You can just pull up in the back and you will be greeted by an NHC member to take the food.

**If you can help, PLEASE email Gail right away at [gail.mcdiarmid@furman.edu](mailto:gail.mcdiarmid@furman.edu)**

**REMEMBER: THE CHOW DOWN IS THIS COMING SATURDAY!!!!!!**

# The Bear Box Installation

By Natasha Sebring

Wednesday, March 20 marked a big achievement for the Nantahala Hiking Club (NHC). As pointed out in this month's President's Message, in coordination with the Nantahala Ranger District and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, a small group of maintainers installed the very first bear box in our section of trail. The bear box was installed off of the blue blazed trail at Betty Creek Gap (mile 97.4). The box is conveniently located across the blue blazed trail from one of the many camping areas at the gap.

The NHC has been pursuing this project for some time and brought in various experts for advice, along with hosting programs by bear experts with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and the U.S. Forest Service. The project was funded by a grant through the A.T. License Plate program.

Betty Creek was the chosen location due to its proximity to road access which made it easier to avoid logistics issues. Bear activity has been increasing in this area over the past few years. Although there is no way to track each incident, several reports have been made and there has even been advice not to camp at Betty Creek Gap at all.

The NHC is excited to see what impact this box has on the area and, of course, hopes it does not turn into a glorified trash can! Time will tell if this may be the beginning of many more bear boxes to come.



# 2024 Trail Ambassador Training

By Kelly Motter

We had a full house at the Lazy Hiker on February 24 for our Trail Ambassador training. Victor Treutel kicked off the agenda with a history of the Appalachian Trail and Nantahala Hiking Club. He then gave us the background to the start of our Trail Ambassador program. Bill Van Horn gave us the “finger’s guide” to Leave No Trace principles. We should now be able to engage hikers with a friendly Leave No Trace visual. In addition, Bill shared with us the process of “Authority of the Resource”. This is a method to (1) build rapport, (2) give an objective observation, (3) interpret and educate and (4) guide an alternative. In short, this is a method to discuss with our visitors on trail in a non-threatening manner and engage and educate the Leave No Trace principles. Finally, we got into the weeds of the Trail Ambassador training! Many topics were covered, including weather on trail, water sources, available apps, wilderness safety, communication and reporting. In addition, we discussed what to do when on trail, from minor trail maintenance to checking shelters, privies and refurbishing fire rings. Following the training, two on trail training hikes were scheduled from Rock Gap in March.



On March 8, a very enthusiastic group of Trail Ambassadors met on a cloudy morning at Rock Gap to share ideas and talk about best practices of being Trail Ambassadors. The first step was to check our gear and ensure that we had everything needed for a full day on trail. We checked out the Rock Gap parking/camping area, picked up a small amount of trash and refurbished the fire ring. This included discarding the large branches and logs that hikers had tried to burn. We removed the ash, restacked the rocks around the rim and then we were off to Rock Gap shelter. The shelter was in great shape. We removed a small amount of trash and refurbished the fire ring. A note was sent to the Trail Maintenance Director on some graffiti noted at the shelter. The leaf buckets were filled at the privy. During our time at the shelter two backpackers hiked by us. They were from the U.K. and were about to take their first zero day.

# Call for Volunteers

Nantahala Hiking Club (NHC) volunteers, in coordination with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), maintain, protect and manage and world's longest hiking-only footpath, the Appalachian Trail (AT).

Volunteering is a critically important and fulfilling job! NHC — and the AT — need YOU! All are welcome!

The NHC offers fun, exciting and rewarding volunteer roles. To volunteer, ask about these roles from the listed NHC contacts who will appreciate your help. As a volunteer you will receive hands-on mentoring. Currently, we are searching for:

<u>Volunteer Role</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Trash pickup at trailheads	Kellylee28@aol.com	Kelly Motter, Trail Ambassador
Shuttle drivers, especially during thru hiker season	franklinatcc@gmail.com	Natasha Sebring, FATCC
Deliver (March 1) & pick up (May 31) 5 hiker boxes at local hotels & outfitter stores	Airborneengineer20bde@gmail.com	Bill Van Horn, NHC Mentor
Restock NHC hiker boards at 4-5 community locations	Airborneengineer20bde@gmail.com	Bill Van Horn, NHC Mentor
Chaperones for school outdoor classroom events	12treehouse@gmail.com	Pam Addleton, School Outreach
Speakers for club meetings (2025)	12treehouse@gmail.com	Pam Addleton, Programs
Newsletter quarterly publications	nhcnewseditor@gmail.com	Debi Gedling, Newsletter Editor

## About being editor of the newsletter.....

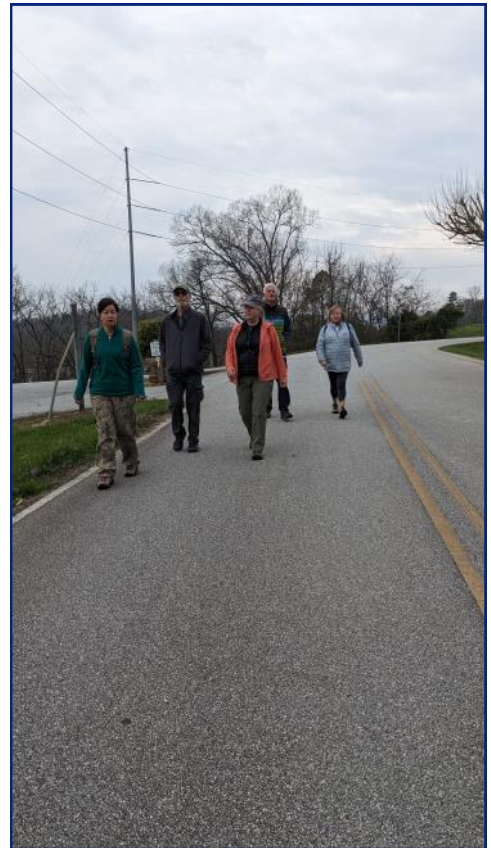
I fell into doing a form of the newsletter sometime in 2021 when no one else was doing it. At that time, I was doing an email newsletter because I had no idea how to use Publisher, the format used by my wonderful newsletter editor predecessor, John Hagdorn. He helped me as best he could and by the beginning of 2022, I was editing and formatting our regular, now quarterly newsletter. It's been fun, although probably much more work for me than it would be for someone who is more computer savvy than I am (which is most of the world!). After almost four years, I'm ready to turn it over to someone else. I'll spend as much time as needed mentoring whoever volunteers. It's a great way to learn what's happening in the club. It's also a way to be as creative as you want to be in terms of formatting. It would be fabulous if someone wanted to be more aggressive in terms of getting more newsletter content. Perhaps biographies of current members to introduce them to the larger membership? Perhaps stories about specific local hikes that are not well-known but which might be of interest to our members? It also helps if you're decent at spelling and grammar.

If you are interested in talking about this volunteer opportunity, please get in touch with me. Talking about it commits you to absolutely nothing! I would also appreciate hearing from you if you would be interested in a co-editor situation. You can reach me at [debgedling1227@gmail.com](mailto:debgedling1227@gmail.com) or by phone at 513-293-8015.





Willis Cove Hike, 02/23/2024  
Hike Leader/Photographer: Katharine Brown



New Portion of Bartram Trail Hike, 03/22/2024  
Hike Leader/Photographer: Katharine Brown



Happy maintainers, 01/31/2024  
Photographer: Leanna Joyner



Removing graffiti at Carter Gap shelter, 02/07/2024  
Photograph submitted by Hygie Starr

# A Sixth Grader's Outdoor Classroom

By Pam Addleton



For the children of today to become tomorrow's scientists, hikers, trail maintainers, stewards and guardians of our lands, someone must introduce young minds to nature. Cultivating young stewards today can help guide our future stewards. This story is about steps toward the goal of inspiring young stewards of the land.

“We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.”

Native American Proverb

March was packed with outdoor activities for sixth graders of the Macon County Public Schools. Hosts to the outdoor experience were the research science staff of USFS Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory (CWT), STEM teachers and educators (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math), Nantahala forest rangers and NHC volunteers. The multiple day experience was on the pristine outdoor campus at Coweeta. 60 to 80 students participated each day over multiple days. Imagine if you will, the range of student activity, emotions, organized safe chaos and discovery that was experienced by all, including the *always-learning* adults! The research scientists kept all calm and collected, and safely sent us back to our respective environments by late afternoon.

### **What was the purpose of an outdoor field experience for children?**

To encourage children to interpret the natural environment and its effects on ecology. Ecology is the study of the relationships between living organisms, including humans, and their physical environment; it seeks to understand the vital connections between plants and animals and the world around them.

### **Why is an outdoor classroom for students at CWT a learning experience?**

Because the focal point of CWT is its outdoor living laboratory.

The Forest Service Hydrologic Laboratory itself was established in 1934 and much of the infrastructure was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Research at the Laboratory was originally focused on questions in forest hydrology, for which the site was world-renowned. In 1948, the site was renamed Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory, the only Forest Service outdoor site to carry the "Laboratory" title. In 1968, the Laboratory's research mission was expanded to include forest and stream ecology, including factors regulating biogeochemical cycling and exports, organic matter production and turnover and ecosystem responses to climate change. The original partnership between the University of Georgia and CWT was signed in 1968. CWT has been dedicated to developing process understanding of long-term ecological dynamics in deciduous forests of the southern Appalachians. CWT's commitment to sharing its research worldwide has been recognized by its inclusion in the International Biological Program, the International Hydrologic Decade and UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere project.

### **In what ways did the educators inspire new learning during the field trip?**

The students were actively touching, measuring, documenting, drawing, assessing, questioning, walking in the woods and streams and engaging with discovered plants and critters. The scientists led student research activities on topics of:

- \* Stream Hydrology — learn about watersheds, how much water a forest sheds to evaporation and also "drinks" from the soil. A *math connection* measures volume.
- \* Stream Ecology — collect macroinvertebrates, fish and salamanders in the stream.
- \* Wildlife Habitat — participate in a game where they related to ways wildlife uses the forest for water, food and habitat. They learned about how urbanization shrinks habitat.
- \* Reflection — time to reflect on how they value the forest and were allowed to sketch, write poetry and write down their observations in words.
- \* Forest Values — measurements of trees to determine how many board feet are in the tree and other "uses" of the tree (carbon dioxide, water usage, canopy, habitat, safety, etc.). Students

also participated in taking tree cores to understand how to learn a tree's age. <https://www/itreetools.org>.

**Where are resources to share with youngsters in my family and community in order to raise the next generation of forest stewards?**

<https://www.wildernessstewards.org/copy-of-what-we-do>

<https://volunteer.appalachiantrail.org/s/volunteer-project-search>

<https://Int.org/about/history/>

<https://www.mainspringconserves.org/what-we-do-programs-for-kids>

<https://appalachian.org/get-connected>

[https://she-explores.com/podcast/where-we-walk-youth-the-trail/?doing\\_wp\\_cron=1711474779.7756750583648681640625](https://she-explores.com/podcast/where-we-walk-youth-the-trail/?doing_wp_cron=1711474779.7756750583648681640625)

**I'm interested in volunteering for fun experiences like this. How do I volunteer with the NHC?**

Go online to volunteer:

—<https://www.nantahalahikingclub.org/volunteer/>

—then select the option that applies to you

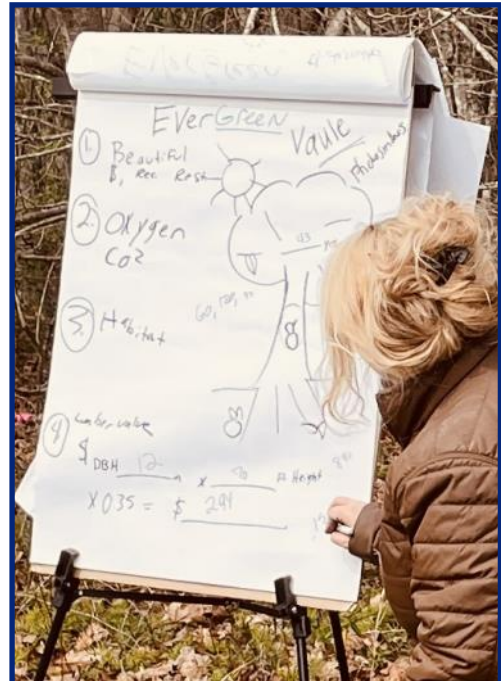
—submit

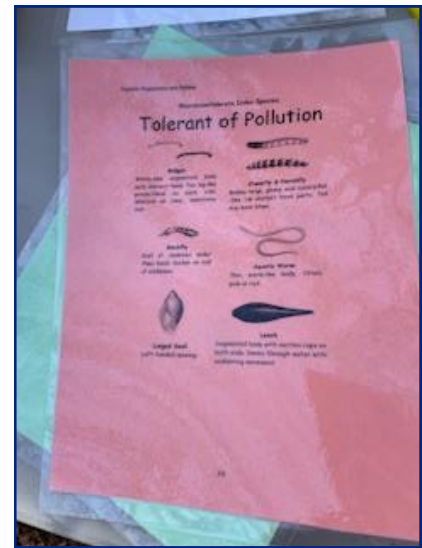
—talk to a human being by calling Pam at 828-500-7266

My sincere thanks to each volunteer who was patient with the rainy weather cancellations, available and engaged in learning as much as the students! I appreciate our "A Team" School Outreach Volunteers: Sharon B., Natasha S., John R., Sandi H., Nicole R., Adam A., Gwynn L., Debi G., Martha D. and David A.!

*"Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose."*

*—Zora Neale Hurston*





This is an event organized by the Friends of Panthertown but all people interested in trails are invited, including the Pinnacle Park Foundation, the Carolina Mountain Club, and the Blue Ridge Bartram Trail Conservancy. It will be a casual event but you are asked to RSVP to the link below so that they can have an estimated headcount. For this gathering, they will have a reserved section at Innovation Station for everyone to connect, network and build relationships. They will also have a tent and table and all should feel free to bring organizational brochures to fill the table space.

RSVP: <https://forms.gle/MKAPbEHMqLmmfVCV8>



The poster features a dark blue background with string lights. On the left, there is an illustration of a blue map with a red location pin and an orange compass rose. In the top right corner is the circular logo for Friends of Panthertown, which shows silhouettes of hikers and a dog. The main title 'TRAIL FOLKS GATHER' is in large, bold, white letters with a yellow drop shadow. Below it, the location 'INNOVATION STATION' and '40 Depot Street, Dillsboro' are listed. The date and time 'Friday April 12 5-7PM' are in white and yellow. A green box contains the invitation text. An orange box at the bottom right contains the website information. The Innovation Brewing logo, a gear with a 'V' inside, is in the bottom left.

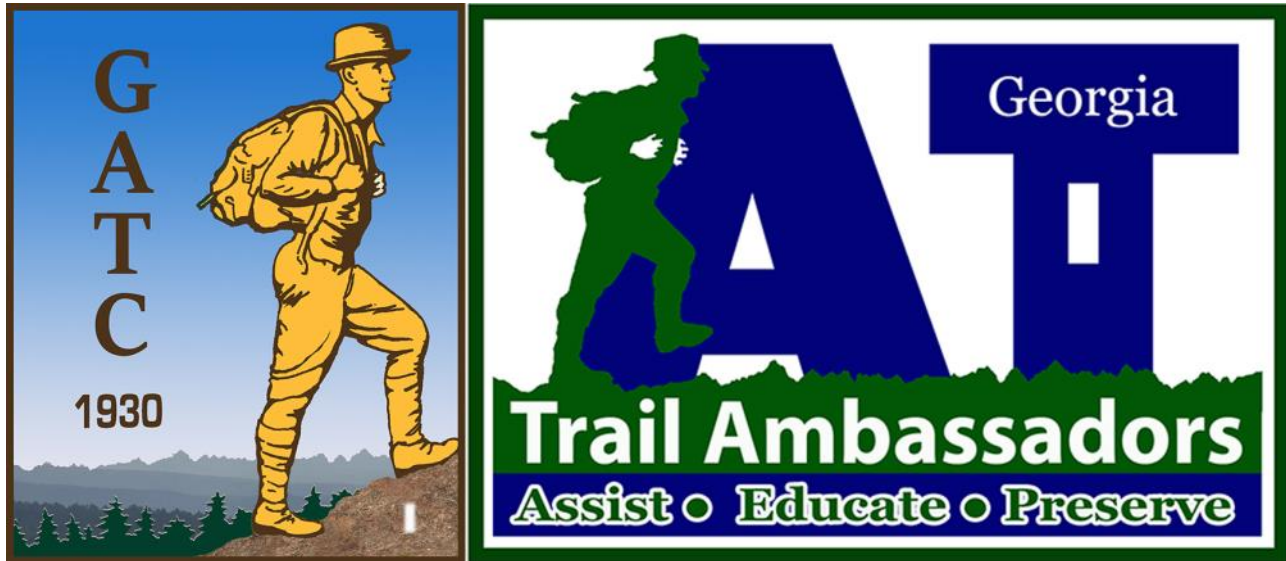
**TRAIL FOLKS GATHER**  
INNOVATION STATION  
40 Depot Street, Dillsboro

**Friday  
April 12  
5-7PM**

Anyone interested in trails, trail work, and sustainable recreation is invited to join us after work at the brewery for a friendly, casual, and social way to connect with each other. Bring your friends and let's talk trails.

**For more Information**  
[www.panthertown.org](http://www.panthertown.org)

**INNOVATION  
BREWING**



## Trail Skills Workshop

**Save the Date: September 14-15, 2024**

Make plans to attend the annual Trail Skills Workshop on September 14-15, 2024 at Lake Winfield Scott (Suches, GA). This is a great opportunity for anyone to learn or update their trail maintaining skills and network with friends.

The Trail Skills Workshop (TSW) is a training event focused on teaching the most current trail construction and maintenance methods applicable for Eastern landscapes. These classes are for new and experienced trail workers. Skilled instructors are provided from the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club (GATC), the United States Forest Service (FS) and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC).

The \$35.00 fee (\$25.00 GATC members) covers all programs, camping for two nights, Saturday dinner and a T-shirt. Registration will open on July 11.

For more information contact: [tsw@georgia-atclub.org](mailto:tsw@georgia-atclub.org).

All in a day's work.....Maintainers work on a massive blowdown removal this past February. Nice work!

