

PATH

Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers



WAYS

Fall 2007

Annual Meeting Scheduled for November 19th.

We have confirmed that we will be using Doc and Vaughn's club house for our end of year meeting on Sunday, November 19th at high noon. There will be a PATH business meeting at 10am at the same location. All are welcomed to attend. It is located in Winston-Salem.

We still have open officer positions in the club. The President, Vice President and Treasurer are all stepping down this year. Anyone who is interested please contact me. These positions are not that taxing and needless to say they are important to the functioning of the club.

--Paul Haag

Directions to the clubhouse in the Breckinridge development in Winston-Salem.

Coming from the east on I-40, take U.S. 421 north. Exit onto Peace Haven Rd.(first exit after Jonestown Rd.). Turn right off the ramp and go 0.3 mile. Turn left onto Ridgehaven Drive, and first right or left into parking lot(s).

Coming from the west on I-40, exit at Lewisville-Clemmons Road. Turn left at light and go to Peace Haven Rd. Turn right and go about 3.3 miles to the entrance to Breckinridge.

Additional Information

These are our current officers for PATH--We need to replace the President,Vice President, and Treasurer. We have 3 Board positions up this year--Karl Kunkel, Valerie Hurt and Steve Yonts. Karl and Steve have both said they would serve another term. If you have any suggestions or would like to have one of these positions please let Paul Haag know. Paul put a memorandum on this a while back but got no response. We have a great organization and we want to keep it moving forward. We need to have our new candidates on board by the November meeting.

Current Officers and Board

President- Paul Haag
Vice President-Keith Morgan
Secretary-John Hartpence
Treasurer-Renee Haag

Special Appointments
Trail Supervisor - Bill Boudman
Assistant Trail Supervisor - Jim Houck
Trail Monitor Coordinators - Barry Hester and Chris Bracknell
Newsletter - Karl Kunkel
Timekeeper - Paul Clayton
PATH Website--Tony Roberts and Leslie Killeen

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Additional Information

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Board Members(3-year terms)

2005-2007-Valerie Hurt, Karl Kunkel, and Steve Yonts

2006-2008-Will Burke, Elliot Haag, Ken Pugh, and Jeff Tysinger

2007-2009-Chris Bracknell, Jim Houck, Amy Roberts, and Will Merritt,

-- John Hartpence

“Ten Million Steps: Nimblewill Nomad’s Epic 10-month Trek from the Florida Keys to Quebec,” by M.J. Eberhart, Menasha Ridge Press, 528 pages, some b/w illustrations, \$16.95. ISBN: 0-89732-979-1

Four of PATH’s landmarks get a mention in *Ten Million Steps*, M.J. Eberhart’s personal account of his 1998, 4,400-mile hike that took him from the Florida Keys to Cape Gaspe, Quebec, Canada, the interconnecting series of trails, including the Appalachian Trail, now known as the Eastern Continental Trail. The feat made him the first person to hike the entire Appalachian Mountain range, according to the publisher’s press release.

Along this “ten-million-step” adventure, Eberhard – trail name “Nimblewill Nomad” – hikes the entire Appalachian Trail and spends a night at the then-newly completed Partnership Shelter at the Mount Rogers Visitors Center. Many PATH members were actively involved in the construction of this comfortable, two-story shelter.

Nimblewill Nomad writes: “Partnership Shelter! What a place! I must tell you about Partnership Shelter, for this

shelter is a work of art, pure and simple. It’s all whiz-bang brand new, constructed from milled logs.”

The author, who goes into further detail on the description of the shelter, was present right around the dedication of it, mentioning meeting some of the family members there to dedicate it.

The following day, May 31, 1998, at Knot Maul Shelter, the author reflects on the day’s hike in his journal, hiking 25 miles, partly in the dark, so he will be able to get to Burkes Garden the following day.

“The day’s hike to Knot Maul is slow – long and deliberate,” he writes. He also mentions experiencing many stiles and bog puncheons – probably around the I-81 area.

The following day, June 1, 1998, Nomad arrives at Burke’s Garden, offering a good description of Chestnut Ridge and the pond and meadows en route. He compliments the newly improved Chestnut Ridge shelter but pines for the structure that, 15 years prior, had a functioning fireplace. While enjoying the scenery of Burkes Garden at the overlook near Va. 623, the author meets a Marion, Va., hiker, one of the descendents of the original settlers of the garden. He then spends three days recuperating in the bowl of the garden, at the residence of his friends Alex and Carol Chamberlain.

Wednesday, June 3, finds Nomad at Jenkins Shelter, north of Burkes Garden, one of PATH’s newer areas of responsibility. There, he reflects on a rainstorm, laced with lightning, he experienced earlier that day at Burkes Garden.

The author originally self-published this book in 2000, and the book eventually went out of print after getting limited exposure. Menasha Press has reintroduced this “vivid and honest account of his celebrated trek to hikers, outdoor enthusiasts and armchair adventurers in a new softcover edition.”

The book, a day-by-day account of the entire trek, will probably rekindle memories of section hikers and thruhikers of the AT and motivate others to get their packs in order and lace up their boots.

The author, an Eldon, Missouri, resident, maintains his own website at www.nimblewillnomad.com.

-- Karl Kunkel

Dawg Days Photographs



It was a big day for Grace – her first day out on the trail.



Katie helped us all keep a positive attitude.



Expert sidehiller Betsy made the dust fly with her pulaski.

More Dawg Days Photographs



Jim made sure everyone was well-fed.



Alex's friend showed off what he learned in life skills class last spring.



None of this fun would have happened without the hostess Marcia.

Natural History

You probably know that oysters are filter feeders that clean the water they inhabit in our estuaries. But did you know that freshwater mussels serve the same purpose in freshwater streams like those in southwestern Virginia?

Mussels were the stars of this year's Mount Rogers Naturalist Rally, which took place May 11-12 at the Konnarock Community Center in Konnarock, Va. Their case was well stated by Mike Pinder, who founded the Aquatic Wildlife Conservation Center at the Buller Fish Hatchery near Marion, Va. Rally participants also got a tour of the hatchery on Saturday, the second day of the rally.

Pinder told the rally that freshwater mussels have been important throughout history. In the past, most buttons were made from mussel shells, he said. (Check some of your old clothes.) Even today, cultured pearls are produced by mussels serving as surrogate mothers.

Mussels can filter from .5 to 1.25 gallons of water an hour, and that's important for the health of rivers and streams, Pinder said. He showed off dozens of mussel shells Saturday night, including one from the Tennessee River nearly a foot long. Their names are fascinating: purple wartyback, snuffbox and spectacle case, for instance. All told, there are 297 mussel species in the U.S. and 81 in Virginia.

But mussels are in peril along many streams, and that's the reason for the work at the Buller Fish Hatchery, which is found on the South Fork of the Holston River several miles downstream from our section of the Appalachian Trail.

The hatchery supplies mussels for the Powell and Clinch rivers and the North Fork of the Holston, Pinder said, and it's low-profile work. "Mussels have a PR problem," he said. "There's no head, and they're not fuzzy."

But there's much more there than you'd think. At their larval stage, mussels are parasites on the gills of a fish, and they've worked out ways of deceiving fish to enable them to reach this stage. "It's a case of the invertibrate fooling the vertibrate," Pinder said.

Much of the threat to mussels comes from loss of habitat and water pollution, Pinder said, but habitat is improving in some streams, including the South Fork. He's hopeful the propagation efforts will return mussel numbers to historic levels.

Pinder and technicians Joe Ferraro and Nathan Eckert offer tours of the Buller Fish Hatchery like the one given rally

participants, and it's a guaranteed interesting morning. To reach the hatchery, take route 670 past our section of trail and continue on South Fork Road to the right turn to the hatchery at 1724 Buller Hatchery Road. But please call first to set up a time. The number is (276) 783-2138.

-- Tom Dillon

Mailbox

Dear Sir/Madam:

Several years ago I decided to start hiking the Appalachian Trail, mainly on day trips. Most of that has been in the Northeast, but I have also been coming down to Virginia twice a year. I got back Wednesday from several days of hiking down there. Overall I have about 980 miles hiked on the AT with about 330 miles of that in Virginia. One stop on this trip was Southwest Virginia where I did some of your section. I hiked from VA 16 near the Mt. Rogers NRA headquarters down to the south fork of the Holston River, the piece at the southern end of your section. On the day before, I had intended to do a couple of miles just south of Route 42, starting at the parking lot near the O'Lystery Pavilion. A thunderstorm came up after I had gone about three-quarters of a mile. I decided that being in the middle of a pasture with thunder booming and lightning crackling overhead was not a good place to be and I beat a hasty retreat to the car.

For the last few years, I have decided to send a donation to the trail maintaining clubs who oversee the sections I have hiked in the past year. After my trip last (continued on next page)

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year I sent you a donation of \$50. Another check for that amount is enclosed. Use the money however you want, but I would hope it would go towards AT-related expenses. Of course that would include buying breakfast or dinner for the trail crews. While it is not required by the IRS that I have a letter of acknowledgement and receipt, I would appreciate receiving one anyway so that I know the money has been received by a real live human being.

Yours
Dave Cullen

Dave, thanks. PATH is one of only two clubs in the ATC that is dedicated solely to trail maintenance, so I can guarantee that every cent went toward maintaining the AT. And now every real live human being in the club knows about your gift. It makes us all feel good to know someone appreciates our efforts!

Two guys who played a major role in the early days of PATH. If you think you know who they are, email me at claytonpm@bellsouth.net and you will get your name in the next newsletter.



Gordon Burgess Photo

Congratulations, Amy!

Amy Roberts FINALLY received her Master of Biological Sciences degree in July. She now works for the Wildlife Diversity division of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. Most of her time now is spent with mussels and fish, instead of lizards.

“Trail DAWG Days” Celebrates Tenth Anniversary

Fourteen DAWGS celebrated the Tenth Anniversary of PATH’s Annual Sidehilling Event August 3-5, 2007 near the Appalachian Trail in beautiful Southwestern Virginia. Two ‘Baby’ DAWGS, three month old Faith and Hope Elmiligy, stole hearts while (four) four-pawed dogs barked with excitement as they frolicked and defended the DAWGS’ base camp on a remote Brushy Mountain ridgeline.

Happy Lady, Trail DAWGS’ mascot since it’s commencement in 1998, was too feeble to attend and was sorely missed as volunteers remembered her quiet, docile disposition and her habit of circling the evening campfire several times per night, stopping at each chair to have the occupant therein to pet her head.

A colourful Tee-Shirt display honouring nine previous events had participants reminiscing about various activities through the years as DAWG Days gradually progressed from a mostly hard-driven sidehilling weekend into the kid-friendly, family-oriented occasion it has become today.

“Trail DAWG Days” founders: Bill Medlin, Barry Hester, Betsy Truscott, and Marcia Cope originally envisioned a ‘Sidehilling Force’ somewhat

resembling the Konnarock crews to repair existing but deteriorating trail on the steepest slopes of PATH's section of the Appalachian Trail while operating from a near-trail base-camp and sharing group meals.

The DAWGS accomplished these goals on four occasions in remote areas of Poor Valley, Brushy Mountain, and Crawfish Valley. These early events presented logistical challenges second to finding and prepping adequate base camp locations; transporting sufficient food and maintaining it's quality during the typical heat of summer's 'dog days'; plus preparing for the possibility of inclement weather for multiple generations of volunteers with varying needs.

In 2002, due to these considerations and ever rising gasoline prices, base camp was established near a cabin acquired by a DAWG Days founder and ever since the Orchard there has become a semi-permanent camp with shuttles taking members to trailheads for the Saturday workday. During the ensuing five years an old 'radio shack' has phoenixed into a Bunkhouse; an 'open-air shed' has morphed into a semi-enclosed Kitchen Pavilion where midnight has occasionally seen both DAWGS and dogs peacefully sleeping; and the 'back porch' has become a fresh air classroom for nature-related crafts.

'The Porch' has also become prime real estate for a Thursday night Spaghetti Dinner prepared for early-arriving helpers who finish-up mowing tent areas, perform minor repairs, clean community areas, gather campfire wood, and stash food and supplies for the three-day affair that officially begins on Friday as vehicles roll in, tents go up, the first group meal is served and a year's worth of catching up begins around the campfire!

DAWGS attending the current event are eligible to obtain the coveted Trail DAWG Days Tee-Shirt and this year a free Ten-Year Anniversary Bandana was available for a nominal mailing fee. Everyone in attendance received a Commemorative water bottle together with several other interesting mementos.

Besides the obvious benefit to the trail of the sidehilling that is accomplished each year, is the gradual shift in Trail DAWG Day's focus from a purely Sidehilling Force toward a more relaxed, youth-nurturing happening that inspires today's teenagers and children to become tomorrow's caring volunteers. Several returning teenagers and even younger kids have begun to bring others with them!

Although many necessary trail maintenance chores (chain-sawing, rock-work, etc.) might be too strenuous for young novice participants, Trail Leader Paul Clayton has seen good work emerge from the hands of teenagers wielding pulaskis and fire rakes ...tools that many had never seen or even heard of prior to their first DAWG Days experience. Betsy Truscott, also a seasoned sidehiller, shines brightly in the eyes of the young girls as she patiently guides and encourages them in what is most frequently their first AT experience. Boys and girls, teenagers and children; all enjoy a short swim in a small pool when they have had enough 'sidehilling' for the day. Jim Houck joined PATH in the spring of 2003 after the untimely death of Bill Medlin the previous fall. Today Jim brings 'The Grill' designed by Bill, pulaskis (Bill's favourite tool) plus other tools, and more importantly his own perennial, sage optimism as he arrives with laden van. Over the past several years Jim has joined Betsy and Paul as a popular mentor for today's 'young DAWGS' on

the Appalachian Trail.

Founder Bill Medlin, who died on the AT (21September02), and long-time PATH Trail Supervisor, Gordon Burgess (also deceased), were fondly remembered as were many other equally colourful DAWGS. Trevor 'Dances with Roots' Cope who designed the 'Inaugural Trail DAWG Days' Tee-Shirt at age eleven, Marie Minor who has brought numerous newcomers to DAWG Days, plus Worrell Campbell, and Emily, Matt and Andy Brown all whom have, together with Katie Floyd and Grace Shuping in more recent years, inspired Marcia Cope to gently steer Trail DAWG Days ever more towards celebrating the natural world we live in while encouraging our youth to participate in it's preservation versus merely focusing on the number of linear feet of sidehill accomplished in a given day!

DAWG Days has meaningful tasks to offer all but the most driven of trail maintainers whether it be wielding pulaskis on the AT, camp-sitting to greet latecomers; driving shuttles; going out for

elusive, forgotten items; preparing hearty dishes for community meals; leading nature-related crafts, talks, or walks; or performing pre/post-event chores. Each task is relevant to the "Pack 'o' DAWGS" that owes it's decade of existence to genuinely caring, dedicated leaders willing to pledge one weekend per year to share the unique Appalachian Trail Maintaining Experience with today's youths at a non-intimidating pace in tandem with a fun-filled camping weekend emphasizing the awesome, intriguing beauty of nature and our personal responsibility toward the preservation of our fragile environment.

"Trail DAWGS 'DIG' the AT" (DAWGS' Logo) and they also welcome everyone who wishes to attend whether a member of PATH, another maintaining club, the ATC or any non-member that wishes to come out and experience the Appalachian Trail in a family type atmosphere.

PATH's next "Trail DAWG Days" Annual Sidehilling Event will be AUGUST 1-3, 2008 and you are cordially invited.

....wyldeflowre