

# PATH WAYS

Of the Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers

PATH Year 55, No. 3

Autumn, 2019

## Something green, hairy and best avoided

Good Housekeeping Magazine

What's 14 feet tall, green, hairy and covered in toxic sap? This scary beast is giant hogweed, a towering, invasive plant whose sap can cause burns, scarring and possibly even blindness.

Originally from the Caucasus mountains of Eurasia, the plant was identified last year, for the first time, in Virginia. The state joins Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, North Carolina (Watauga County), Michigan, Illinois, Washington, and Oregon as hosts.

Naturalists brought the species here in the early 1900s for ornamental planting. However, the average giant hogweed produces a whopping 20,000 seeds that can fall 30 feet from the plant and travel even farther through wind or water. It didn't take long for the species to spread out of control — and start injuring gardeners.

Giant hogweed's danger is in its sap, which is present on all parts of the plant. Toxic chemicals in it cause severe burns, then scars, when exposed to UV light from the sun.

"The more sap you touch, the greater damage it causes," said Naja Kraus, the Giant Hogweed Program Coordinator in New York State. "Once you get it on you, it makes your skin unable to protect itself from the sun." The reaction is similar to how some antibiotics you take make your skin more sensitive to UV light, she said.



One 17-year-old went to the hospital last year with second- and third-degree burns after he accidentally chopped down a giant hogweed plant as part of his summer landscaping job. Alex Childress of Spotsylvania County, Va., didn't notice anything unusual until he went to take a shower that evening.

"I started rubbing my face," he told People magazine "I thought it was just a little bit of skin at first, but then big chunks of my face were falling off." Childress stayed in the Virginia Commonwealth University's burn center for two days and had to avoid the sun for up to six months.



While other news reports warn of blindness as another side effect, Kraus said she hasn't encountered a verified case in her 11 years, but their hotline has received more than enough calls reporting the painful burns.

Giant hogweed doesn't grow to 14 feet overnight. It's only after three to five years that it spurts in growth and begins to produce early summer white flowers one to two feet across, as well as five-foot-wide lobed leaves. (See pictures from Virginia Tech.)

Anything with smaller blooms (like Queen Anne's lace) is probably an imposter. Two other similar looking species include the benign native plant cow parsnip, which only grows to about six feet, and Angelica, with compound leaves and smooth stems.

The easiest way to identify giant hogweed is to look for purple blotches and white hairs on the stem. If the plant has those qualities, it may well be the real thing. Keep an eye out in open sites with light and moist soil, partially shaded areas along streams and roads or sites in fields, forests, and yards.

If you inadvertently brush up against any part of giant hogweed, you might notice the skin reaction within 15 minutes. Dark, painful blisters will form within two days, and the purplish or brown scars and sensitivity to sunlight can last for years.

To minimize the damage, immediately wash the affected area with soap and water and contact your physician ASAP if you experience a reaction. A GP may prescribe topical or oral steroids to reduce the severity and help it heal faster. Cover your skin to protect it from sunlight for the next few days.

"Just wearing a long-sleeve shirt isn't enough," Kraus said. "You actually have to wrap it with an ace bandage or wear sun-protective clothing. You can't get any UV rays on it at all." You'll want to protect the burned area from sunlight for the next few years.

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This is a newsletter for the Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers, a trail work club that maintains approximately 70 miles of the Appalachian Trail in Southwest Virginia. This newsletter comes out four times a year, as long as we have enough material and contributions. It is sent by email to the PATH List and others, or by U.S. Mail to members who don't have email. Feel free to print and post in your local outdoor store. WINTER DEADLINE NOV. 15, 2019. Web site:

[www.path-at.org](http://www.path-at.org). Or for info: [PiedmontATHikers@gmail.com](mailto:PiedmontATHikers@gmail.com).

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# PATHers leave mark on High Point Preserve

Story and photos by Karl Kunkel

High Point's newest recreational park has a close connection to two of PATH's former members: Susan Andreatta and Robert "Bob" Conner. The 115-acre Rich Fork Preserve in northwest High Point was recently established as a nature preserve that can be shared by recreational hikers and mountain-bike riders.

Guilford County Parks & Recreation, which manages the new park, held a ribbon-cutting for its opening in late June. On hand was former PATH member Susan Andreatta, who lives within walking distance of the preserve and had been instrumental in working with the county officials to buy the former tobacco farm and four adjacent properties. She did not want the land's hills and woods to turn into a subdivision. The property was already surrounded by suburbs, and Susan felt residents needed a green and peaceful downtown oasis.

Footage of the ribbon-cutting, including comments by Susan, aired on FOX8 News and is available online.

The new preserve's network of trails was created by volunteers from the Triad Fat Tire Society and area hikers and nature lovers. Some trails are sign-designated as hiking-only, some for biking-only and some are shared trails. Traditionally, hikers and trail-bikers are rivals, competing for the same space. But in this case, they worked together for a common goal.



Two of the connecting hiking trails near the main house of the former owners, the Hedgecock family, are named for Robert “Bob” Conner, a noted High Point architect and environmentalist. Bob and his wife Lib were early members of PATH, joining in the 1960s and helping the club grow, drawing primarily from Piedmont Triad students and residents. Bob died in 2007 at age 93, and Lib died in 2016 at age 97. She and Bob had also been active in the creation of North Carolina State Parks. Before Lib died, she made a substantial donation to the cause, stipulating that her husband have a trail named after him.

The on-site farmhouse and buildings will eventually be converted to an educational center reflecting the history of the farm.

## Flowers of the Forest



**Doris Lee Wood Ford**, 91, widow of Henry Ford, died June 11 in Independence, Va. Doris and Henry were long-time PATH members and trail maintainers, and end-to-enders on the Appalachian Trail in 1986. Henry was one of three people, also including the late Ken Rose and Gordon Burgess, who were most important to trail maintenance in the 1980s and 90s.

Doris was born January 30, 1928 in Guilford County to the late Frank Thomas and Beulah Davis Wood. She was salutatorian of Randleman High School, class of 1944, and a graduate of God’s Bible School in Cincinnati, Ohio. Doris helped establish the Randleman Friends Church and was a member of Shady Grove Wesleyan Methodist Church in Colfax. She was retired from Belk’s Department Store.

Doris’ “Celebration of Life” took place June 15 at New Hope Missionary Baptist Church in Laurel Springs, N.C. She is survived by two daughters, Janice Robinson of Sparta, N.C., which whom she had lived in recent years, and Kathryn (Jane) Trane and husband Fred of Athens, Ga.; a son Scott Ford and wife Helen of Walkertown, N.C.; a brother, Bobby Wood and wife Betty Jo of Climax, N.C.; and a sister-in-law, Ruth Ann Wood of Sophia, N.C. Also 13 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren and several nieces and nephews. Two sons, a grandson and great-grandson predeceased her.

Memorials for both Doris and Henry, who died last year, may be made to New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, 6522 US Hwy 221, Laurel Springs, N.C. 28644.

# 2019 Calendar

*Here is the rest of president and trail master Jim Houck's schedule for 2019, along with other events. More events will be added as we know about them. Contact us if you have questions.*

## **September 7                      ATC Membership Meeting                      On the Web**

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy will hold its annual membership meeting at 10:30 a.m. Sept.

7. For candidate profiles, the meeting agenda and information about how to participate, visit [www.appalachiantrail.org/membershipmeeting2019](http://www.appalachiantrail.org/membershipmeeting2019). Voting opened Aug. 24.

## **September 20-22                      September Volunteer Weekend                      Stony Fork, Va.**

Base Camp at the Stony Fork Campground off U.S. 52 north of Wytheville, Va. General trail maintenance, with a pot-luck meal Saturday evening.

## **October 18-20                      October Volunteer Weekend                      Sugar Grove, Va.**

Base Camp probably back at the Forest Service Volunteer Work Camp at Sugar Grove. General trail maintenance, with a pot-luck meal Saturday evening.

## **November 16                      PATH Annual Meeting                      TBA**

To revisit our year and what we've accomplished. The meeting will be held somewhere in the PATH membership area in Virginia or North Carolina. Hopefully it will be on time this year. Keep an eye on your email for the annual meeting location.



## Bits and Pieces

■ We were hoping to splash this issue of the newsletter with stuff about the relocated trail at Davis Path and plans for the rebuilt **Davis Path Shelter**, but then in June, we got news that Konnarock had had to postpone two weeks of work on the relocation because the feds hadn't finished the NEPA study. We still have plans for the new shelter, and **Hunt McKinnon** in Greenville, N.C., has even built parts of a mockup. So it will get done, just not this year. We hope the trail relocation can take place next year; we do have a Konnarock commitment for at least a week's work on that relo in 2020. Konnarock instead worked on steps at Va. 670, finished product shown here, and near the Chatfield Shelter in July this year; PATH

members **David Atkinson** and **James Baum** were part of the crew. And they did really nice jobs on sections of trail that have needed some help. More of their pictures are on Page 7.

■ PATH member and seniors leader **Hollyce Highfill Kirkland**, 99, was again a part of the national Senior Games, which took place in June in Albuquerque, N.M. She suffered a jaw injury in a fall, which necessitated a trip to the emergency room, but she was able to carry the Tennessee flag for the closing ceremonies. Hollyce was one of the original members of PATH at its formation in 1965, and was for many years an advisor to Appalachian Trailway News, the original ATC magazine. She and husband Marvin live in Sevierville, Tenn., and still get to an occasional worktrip.

■ **Shameless commerce division:** There are about 20 of those “More Walk, Less Talk” bumper stickers left, and the creator of them has retired, so unless there’s an outcry, there are not likely to be anymore. The charge to create them was \$2 apiece, and we’re selling them for \$3 with the extra dollar going to PATH. Contact the editor if you’re interested. Here’s a picture of the bumper sticker on **Karl Kunkel’s** truck.



■ PATH worker **James Baum** has begun a several-month assignment with the Randolph Mountain Club in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. He started a shift at the Gray Knob Cabin there Aug. 8. And for all you people tired of hot weather, he reported a few days ago that there was a trace on snow one morning on Mount Washington. So be patient! Fall is coming.

■ We’ve been running information recently on the first **AT Vista** event, which was scheduled for next summer at Ramapo College in New Jersey, hosted by the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference. Unfortunately, unforeseen location and management issues have caused the event to be pushed back to 2021. More information is available at [www.atvista.org](http://www.atvista.org), but it’s a bit skimpy so far. The event sounds like it is the successor to the late lamented ATC biennials. Don’t know if it is annual or biennial.

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# Stepping Forward

Here are more pictures of the rock and log steps the Konnarock Crew built on the PATH miles of the Appalachian Trail during July. Below are steps above Va. 670, at the southern end of our section. At right are new steps near the Chatfield Shelter. Thanks to crew members James Baum and David Atkinson for the pictures (and for their work).



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# Want to Join?



We still have some trail work scheduled on the Appalachian Trail in 2019, and it's not too late to get enrolled. You may join PATH (or renew) at our Web site, [www.path-at.org](http://www.path-at.org), with PayPal, or print and mail this form with check or money order. You can also attend work weekends/meetings and join or renew there. Please don't mail cash!

Name (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Annual membership dues are \$20 for an individual \_\_\_\_\_, \$25 for a family \_\_\_\_\_ or \$15 for a student \_\_\_\_\_. Donations are also accepted. Donation total \_\_\_\_\_

Send payment to PATH Treasurer, P.O. Box 4423, Greensboro, North Carolina 27404. Total amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

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