



GET Hiking

Great Eastern Trail Newsletter

Volume 13, Number 1, March 2024

By Timothy A. Hupp

Please feel free to print out or copy and distribute this newsletter

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New Section of Cumberland Trail Opened

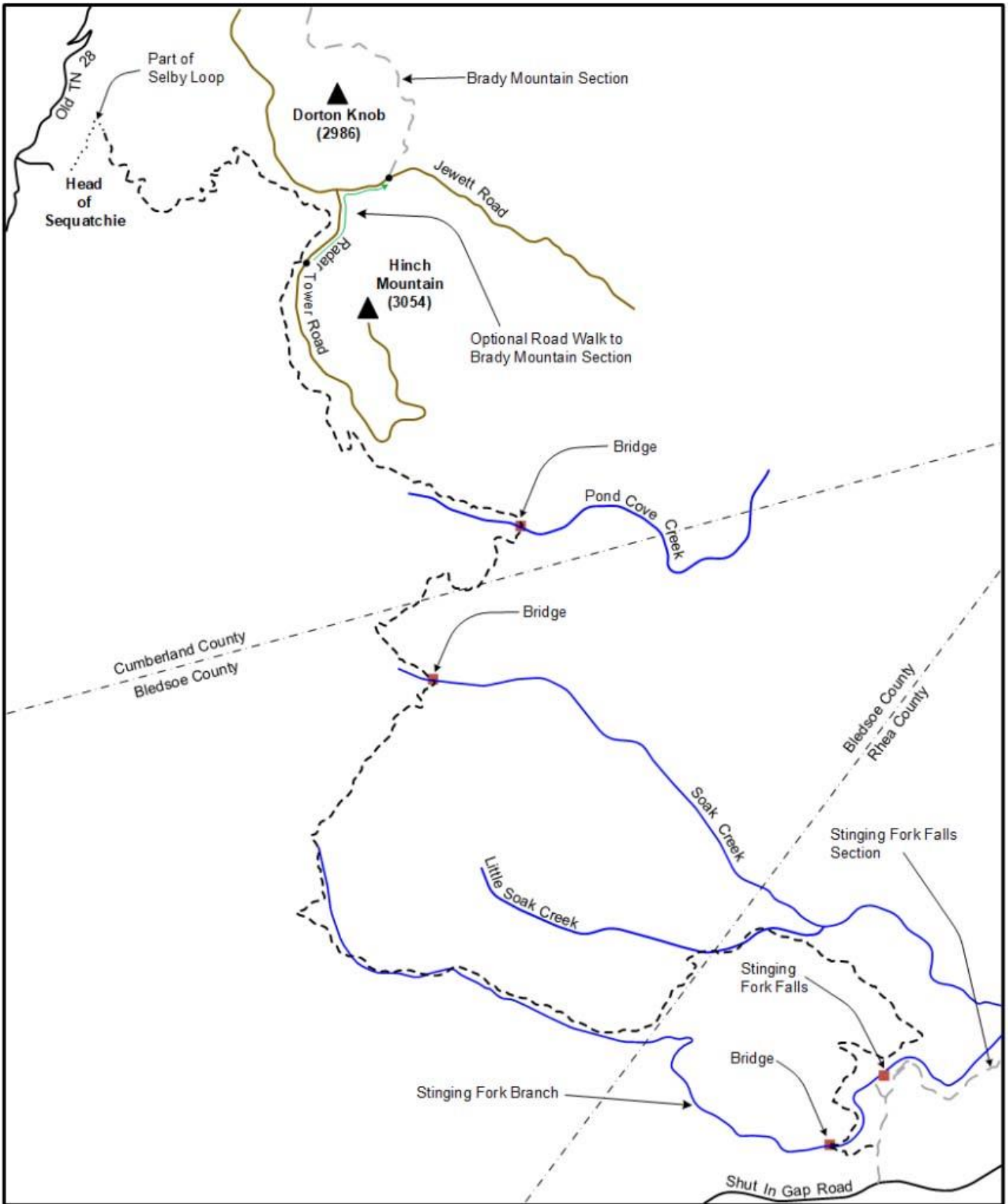
Cumberland Trails Conference and Justin P. Wilson Cumberland Trail State Park are proud to announce the official opening of the Hinch Mountain Segment of the Cumberland Trail. This 17.3-mile segment is ranked highly strenuous for its distance and elevation changes. This connects Stinging Fork Falls to Head of Sequatchie! With waterfalls and wildflowers, this section of trail is well worth the struggle. Please visit the CTC website to read the mile-by-mile trail description. We would like to thank Gary Stephens for volunteering his time and effort to do our trail write-ups and photo for this section and many other segments.

On this new section of trail is 13.7 miles from Stinging Fork Falls trailhead to the Radar Tower Road and another 3.6 miles to Head of Sequatchie State Park. The Cumberland Trail continues another 3 miles that loops back toward then under the Jewett Road to a dead end. The plan is to continue the loop back to the Radar Tower Road. Meanwhile, thru-hikers of the Cumberland Trail and/or Great Eastern Trail can walk the Radar Tower Road and Jewett Road to connect to the Brady Mountain Trailhead, about 0.8 mile total.

(The Jewett Road is very rough, not suitable to most cars).

This new section fills in a gap, and now it makes for a section of 41.4 miles of hiking trail for the Cumberland Trail, from Ozone Falls to Piney River. It also reduces a road walk of about 14 miles for thru-hikers. It might be noted, though, that this section of trail, although off-road, has 36.3 miles between designated campsites. We can hope new campsites may be developed along this section.





2024 Upcoming Events

April 6: PATC North Mountain Brigade Trail work (VA/WV). Contact Mike Allen at michael.allen@mallenpe.com

April 27: **Celebrate Trails Day** on the Chief Ladiga Trail and the Pinhoti Trail! Trail organizations in east Alabama are teaming up with the communities of Anniston, Jacksonville, and Piedmont to host **Celebrate Trails Day** for the second year in a row. A list of planned biking, hiking, and walking activities can be found below. Everyone is encouraged to get outside and enjoy trails.

May 2-5: **KTA Trail Care on Mid State Trail** (Pennsylvania). MST State College Region, based at Rimmey Cabin (Seven Mtns Scout Camp), led by Jason Davis/Kevin Busko (statecollege@hike-mst.org).

May 4: PATC North Mountain Brigade Trail work (VA/WV). Contact Mike Allen at michael.allen@mallenpe.com

May 4: SPRING FAMILY FRIENDLY HIKE – 10:00 AM at Alan Seeger Natural Area Picnic Pavillion at the SST crossing of Seeger Road (Pennsylvania). A one-way, shuttle back, 2.2 mile, family friendly hike from Alan Seeger Natural Area to Bear Meadows Road along Detweiler Run. This hike is relatively easy as it follows a level path although it is rocky at times. Along the way, we hope to find signs of Spring as wildflowers bloom and the first buds appear on the trees. Hikers should wear sturdy footwear with traction equipment and are encouraged to bring water and snacks. Some may find hiking poles to be helpful. [Click here for Strava Route](#)

May 16-19: **KTA Trail Care on Mid State Trail** (Pennsylvania). MST Woolrich Region, based at Ravensburg State Park, led by Tony Robbins (trobbsins@hike-mst.org/570-939-2244)

June 1: PATC North Mountain Brigade Trail work (VA/WV). Contact Mike Allen at michael.allen@mallenpe.com

June 6-9: **KTA Trail Care on Mid State Trail** (Pennsylvania). MST Everett Region, based at Tenley Park, led by Chad North (chadnorth@gmail.com/570-238-3591)

June 13-16: **KTA Trail Care on Mid State Trail** (Pennsylvania). MST Tioga Region, based at Hills Creek State Park, led by Pete Fleszar (tioga@hike-mst.org/717-576-3112).

July 20: **Tri State Festival**, at Cumberland Gap, TN. Contact: Mary Mars at marymars16@gmail.com

August 31: PATC North Mountain Brigade Trail work (VA/WV). Contact Mike Allen at michael.allen@mallenpe.com

August 31, 2024 – **NIGHT Hike: 7:00 PM at Butler Knob Shelter to the Throne Room** at Butler Knob Shelter (Pennsylvania). From Rt. 747 turn onto White Road, in .2 mile turn right onto an unmarked road, continue forward for 1.4 miles and turn bear right, continue straight following the main road for 1.5 miles. Butler Knob Shelter is on the left. *Please note that the game lands road to the shelter can be rough [*Click here for GPS Directions](#)

A 5.7 mile out-and-back hike. This hike will start just before sunset and continue into the night as we make our way to the Throne Room and Hall of the Mountain King to observe the night sky. This hike is generally moderate with gently climbs and some rocky terrain as we approach the large rock field known as Hall of the Mountain King. A headlamp is mandatory, and you are encouraged to

carry extra batteries. Hikers should also wear sturdy footwear and are encouraged to bring water and snacks. Some may find hiking poles to be helpful. [Click here for Strava Route](#)

OCTOBER 19, 2024 – FALL FOLIAGE HIKE – 10:00 AM at Locke Valley Road Parking Area located approx. 1 mile from Rt. 475 (Pennsylvania) [Click here for GPS PIN](#). A 5.7 mile one-way, shuttle back hike. This hike is moderate with a few long climbs and very rocky sections. Come see the fall foliage near its peak color during this hike in Rothrock State Forest along Locke Valley Road and across State Game Lands 081 to Ramsey Path.

Hikers should wear sturdy footwear with traction equipment and are encouraged to bring water and snacks. Some may find hiking poles to be helpful. [Click here for Strava Route](#)

Trail Updates

Pennsylvania

Mid State Trail

- Tioga Region –

- Additional volunteer overseers, especially folks who could take an evening or two or three each spring to mow the path in the Route 6 and Route 49 areas, remain needed! We have mowers, you hopefully have a truck/trailer and a bit of time to make a big difference. Email tioga@hike-mst.org
- In 2023 a relocation was completed in Section 20, Lawrence Twp, Tioga County, north of the beach house at Cowanesque Lake South Shore, moving the trail out of an abandoned parking lot that had become a wet morass. Special thanks to Maddie Erickson who spent a weekday volunteer release day from her employer clearing the relocation, finished later in the spring by KTA Trail Care.
- An additional relocation in Section 20, Farmington Twp, Tioga County, north of Elkhorn Rd/south of Scenic View Campground completed by

2023 KTA Trail Care moved MST off a paved road sooner.

- Section 19, in SGL 37 north of Firetower Road, Richmond Twp, Tioga County, MST relocated onto management roads around new deer exclosure fences. KTA Trail Care took care of reblazing and relocating a trail register, and the local PGC food and cover crew moved sign posts.
- Section 18, Tioga State Forest, near Sand Run Falls, PA Outdoor Corps placed a bridge over Babb Creek last summer.
- Section 17, Morris Twp, Tioga County, Haunted Mine Trail map was placed in the kiosk along Route 287 [ask Jason for more details on the Scout who was responsible].

- Everett, successfully hosted the Pennsylvania Lincoln Highway Association hike during their Bedford County in late August 2023, following up on a historic article placed in the summer 2023 national *Lincoln Highway Forum* magazine about the road and rail history through Aliquippa Gap. Deb Dunkle and other local folks mowed and cleared the Mt Dallas Historic Trail beforehand. The local Bloody Run Historical Society led several hikes on

it afterwards in the fall season, they anticipate continuing into 2024.

- Section 0, Aggie Trail (District 3, Allegany County, Md.) – in 2023 a Dollar General opened some months after Helmick’s Grocery, the old crossroads store, closed. The old crossroads store had beer, though; not something that could be obtained at the DG, or the Mennonite store down the street. The former Flintstone Hotel was demolished by Allegany County as a health hazard late summer, it had dated from the National Pike era pre-Civil War, with a wing for its enslaved staff.

- Guide book – the January 2024 MSTA Meeting voted to produce a 14th edition printed guide book. Suggestions and corrections should be emailed to gis@hike-mst.org

West Virginia

Mary Ingles Trail

A new section of the Mary Ingles Trail was opened on the west side of the New River between Hinton and Bluestone State Park. This 2 mile section of trail is between the river and WV 20. It can serve as the Great Eastern Trail route between Hinton and the Bluestone State Park.

Tennessee

Cumberland Trail

(See new section open, pages 1 & 2.)

Here is a video of a first-time worker on the Cumberland Trail:

[Volunteer Cumberland Trail Build - YouTube](#)

Month by month reports:

In July, our trail crew constructed over 1500 feet of new trail! This trail consisted of 152 stone steps and pavers. There are also several areas of crushed rock gravel, pictured above, to aid in moisture control. There are now over 570 stone steps and pavers that have been placed and leveled to make this segment possible. Our crew is working hard to make your hiking experience on the Cumberland Trail the best it can be. We are currently making our way down the gorge to the creek.

In August, our trail crew constructed over 2870 feet of new trail! This trail consisted of 100 stone steps and pavers placed in a month. There were also several areas of crushed rock gravel and grade dips to aid in moisture control. The crew built 2 large switchback systems coming out of the gorge. With this portion completed, over 700 stone steps

and pavers have been placed and leveled to make this segment possible. Our crew is working hard to make your hiking experience on the Cumberland Trail the best it can be. The heat index this month did not make it easy for them.

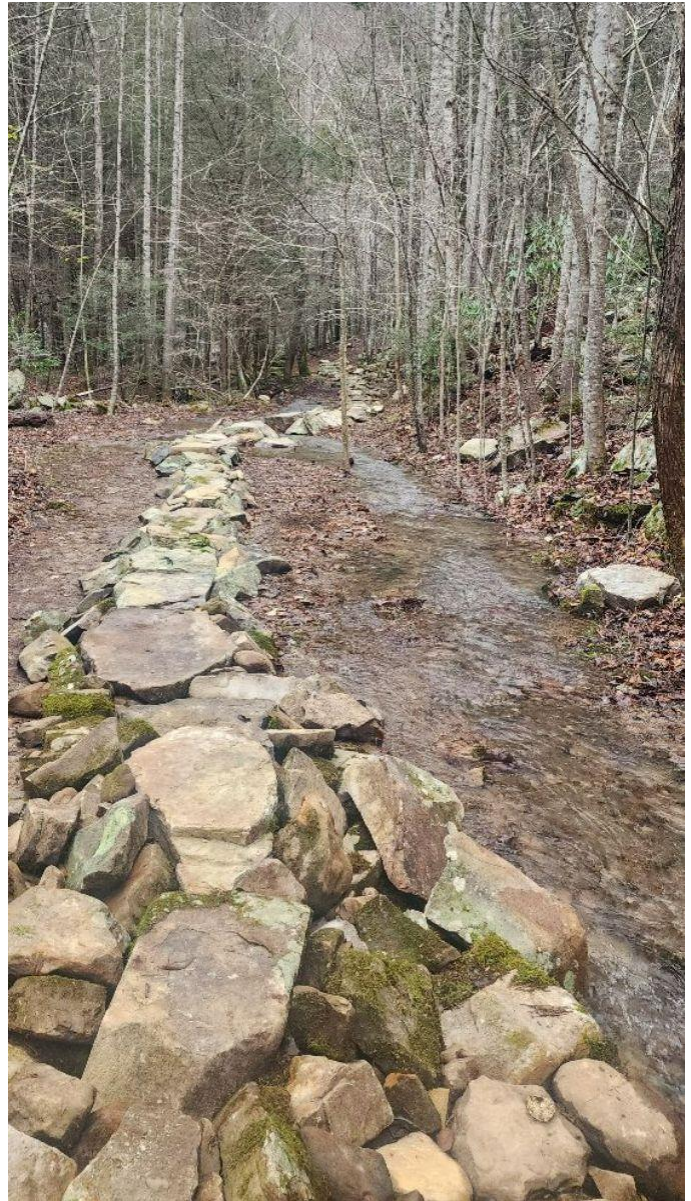
In December, our trail crew constructed over 4,000 feet of new trail! This trail consisted of 132 stone steps and pavers placed in a month, multiple crushed rock areas, and several drainages. Our Field Coordinator, Dusty, has been learning how to build trail with a mini excavator to speed up production and, with the help of the trail crew, completed almost 1000 feet of trail in one week!

The terrain of this segment has proven to be a challenge, but our trail crew is working hard to try to get the Cumberland Trail constructed in its entirety so you can attempt a thru-hike! We have finished 3.57 miles of trail in the Piney Section in 2023, completing one of the sections that connects to what we built last year. We hope the Piney River Segment will be finished and open by this time next year so you can see all the amazing rock work we did!

January was a tough month for the trail crew. Roughly half the month had inclement weather that halted trail construction. Rain, snow, and ice challenged us this month. Regardless, our trail crew toughed out many days of frigid temperatures to build 1,435 feet of trail with over 100 stone steps and pavers. There were three old roads that the trail crossed and/or followed within the trail they built. The image above shows part of one of the old roads that had turned into a giant drainage. The trail crew placed huge stone pavers (some over 3ft long and 2 ft wide) to traverse above the water. The trail continues towards Piney River, where it proceeds beside the river for a couple hundred feet before heading back uphill. The current location is very steep and dangerous. The trail crew had to tie off to some of the trees in order to safely build trail on the mountainside!

Trail Closure

The Cumberland Trail between Devils Racetrack and Eagle Bluff (2.26 miles) near Caryville, TN is temporarily closed.



Rock work along Piney River section of Cumberland Trail.

VARIOUS NEWS ITEMS

Business is Booming on the Pinhoti Trail

Congratulations to the Pinhoti Outdoor Center for being awarded the 2023 Alabama Small Business of the Year Award! The

Pinhoti Outdoor Center has been supporting hikers since January of 2019, and their main goal is to get people outside. They provide planning, support, shuttle, and hostel services to hikers, bikers, runners, and paddlers looking to explore the outdoors around the Pinhoti Trail corridor and east Alabama region.

Owners Kimm and Nathan Wright are long standing members of the outdoor recreation community with many years of experience on long-distance trails. Their mission is to encourage, educate, empower, and facilitate people of all skill levels to enjoy Alabama's outdoor spaces with confidence. The Pinhoti Outdoor Center promotes the benefits of outdoor recreation by attracting tourism, supporting local businesses, and creating awareness and appreciation for the region's natural resources.

The Pinhoti Outdoor Center is located in Coosa County near the city of Sylacauga, Alabama. Check out more information [here](#).

New Hiker-Owned Business

Coddiwomple Hiker Trash and Treasures is an outdoor recreation outfitter located in Piedmont, Alabama. They will be celebrating one year of operation in early February. The owner, Bethany Deakyne, put a lot of thought into naming her business. "Coddiwomple" is a verb meaning to travel with great purpose in a vague direction; something many adventurers are familiar with. Bethany is a seasoned hiker and has hiked many miles on the Pinhoti Trail. She has a keen eye for what hikers and bikers need because she is one herself. She provides a hiker box inside the store, a place to refill water bottles, as well as offering used gear at discounted prices.

Learn more about Coddiwomple Hiker Trash and Treasures [here](#).

Bobby Fulcher Retires

Bobby Fulcher, long term Chief Ranger of the Justin Wilson Cumberland Trail State Park, retired on November 17, 2023. He is succeeded by Anthony Jones.

Willa Cather Birthplace Sold

Not far from the Tuscarora Trail/GET, along one road walk near Gore, VA, is the birthplace of Willa Cather. She is known for her novels about life on the prairie. Her birthplace is marked with a historical sign, which states, "Here Willa Sibert Cather, the novelist, was born December 7, 1873. This community was her home until 1883, when her family moved to Nebraska. Nearby on Back Creek stands the old mill described in her novel [Sapphira and the Slave Girl](#)"

It had been offered for sale in April 2023, and it was bought in May by Katherine Solenberger, a local realtor known for her work preserving historic sites. She had help from local relatives of Cather and the National Willa Cather Center in Nebraska.

New Campground at Bergton, VA

In 2023 a new campground opened along the GET route, not far from the new convenience store that opened recently (see previous newsletter). Its name is "River Bend Campground" and its entrance is on VA 820 (Bergton Road) 0.3 miles from the junction with VA 259. At this writing it was closed for the season.

Let the Blazes Guide the Way – By Heather Houskeeper

Sweat poured from my brow, down my limbs, my hands so sweaty I struggled to keep hold of my trekking poles. Despite the heat, Amos, with the advantage of four strong legs and padded paws, was in the lead. We clambered over rocky trail through woods lightly brushed with autumn. Mitten-shaped leaves of sassafras waved gently as we passed, and birch offered a minty twig that I clenched between my teeth. If only a strong breeze would give us reprieve. If only a creek would run, I wouldn't have to carry these seven liters of water for the both of us. My legs still ached from a dozen or so stings I'd incurred on our first day when I'd stirred up a yellow jacket nest. When finally, we crested a grassy ridge decorated with boulders, we snagged a sundrenched view, and then coasted down an old

wagon road, stopping to fill more reserves at a slender pipe from which water barely trickled.

Last September, by way of the 250-mile Tuscarora Trail, I returned to the Great Eastern Trail. The Tuscarora Trail begins near Hogback Overlook in Shenandoah National Park and finishes in central Pennsylvania atop Blue Mountain, connecting to the Appalachian Trail at both ends. For 130 miles it runs concurrently with the Great Eastern Trail, from Mill Mountain Trail in the south to the Standing Stone Trail in the north. It was a hot end to summer, with temperatures in the eighties and nineties most days. Below the Mason-Dixon line it'd also been severely dry, with much of the south in a drought. It hadn't been an ideal time to begin a thru-hike, but I had my plans. And as I'm sure my fellow hikers can relate, once you've got a goal in mind it's near impossible to shake it.

The shelters were a godsend – shade in the sun, dry in a storm, a place to make home for the night - and shelters like Pinnacle, Spruce Pine Hollow, Shockey's Knob, and Basore Ridge aren't just lean-to's. Envision exquisitely crafted, pristinely maintained three-walled cabins in the woods. They provided the perfect place to map miles with my hiking buddy and dear friend, Star Left. Star Left and I first met when our paths literally crossed on the Finger Lakes Trail. On this journey, she met me most weekends and stepped up to be my one-woman support team while knocking out some of her own GET miles. The shelters also provided a cozy place to reflect on the multitude of plants I encountered daily.

On the ridges, I brushed shoulders with black cherry and cherry birch, each with glossy dark bark lined with lenticels (the pores by which trees breathe through their bark). On a few blessed occasions, hawthorn stood along my path, laden with ripe scarlet fruits. Hawthorn berries can taste astringent, but on these hot days, their subtle sweet and sour flavor popped! I was mindful not to prick a finger on the branches' long sharp spines as I plucked. As I journeyed north, the forests were filled with fragrant paw paw trees – I spied not a single fruit – but crushing and breathing deep their spicy-scented leaves fueled me along. Wands of black cohosh, a medicinal plant much employed by indigenous,

stood tall amidst powdery-leaved mountain mint that provided an invigorating nibble. Along the grassy roadways I met some entirely new-to-me plants. Among them, the native golden-flowered wingstem, which I observed are much appreciated by the bumblebees and fellow pollinators. There was also the lesser appreciated shiso, a non-native invasive plant, that tastes of fennel and oregano and made a good addition to less-than-exciting instant rice and pasta dishes at camp.

By the time we reached the northern portion of the GET, creeks were rushing, and temps were cooling. I incurred no more yellow jacket stings. My miles on the GET conjured adaptability, flexibility, and a willingness to surrender come what may. But can't the same be said of most good hikes, or journeys in

general? Buoyed by beauty, and with the help of friends, we went with the flow and let the blazes guide the way. Now, on these winter nights, I lay in bed and dream of my coonhound and I cocooned in a cozy shelter in a dark wood somewhere along the GET.

Heather's Bio:

Heather Houskeeper, aka The Botanical Hiker, is an herbalist, long-distance hiker, and author. Beginning with a thru-hike on the Appalachian Trail, Heather has since thru-hiked thousands of miles on lesser traveled long-distance trails. Heather is the author of three trail-inspired books about wild edible and medicinal plants and the Wild Food columnist for Dirt Magazine. For over a decade, Heather has guided others into the natural world through seminars, workshops, and plant walks, striving to deepen their relationship with the natural world and its botanical inhabitants. She is the founder of the School of Plant and Place Connection, offering in-person herbal education in Milford, Pa. Learn more about Heather at: www.TheBotanicalHiker.com and www.SchoolofPlantandPlaceConnection.com

Socials @ The Botanical Hiker

How Many GET miles have you hiked?

An awful lot of people still have **not** reported their GET miles—unless no one has hiked much of the Mid State, Standing Stone, Tuscarora, Pinhoti, and other constituent trails that make up the GET.

Here’s the breakdown of the constituent trails, GET miles only:

Crystal Hills Trail	48 miles
Mid State Trail	322 miles
Standing Stone Trail	84 miles
Tuscarora Trail	132 miles (now 125)
Allegheny Trail	41 miles (plus gap)
Appalachian Trail	21 miles
Pine Mountain Trail	44 miles (trail only)
Cumberland Trail	138 miles (so far)
Pinhoti Trail	214 miles

If you have thru-hiked any of these trails, you have this many miles of the GET.

There are also segments of combined shorter trails:

Headwaters Section	165 miles
TuGuNu Section	100 miles
Lookout Mtn. Section	87 miles
...plus a few others	

I’m trying to give credit for those who have hiked significant miles of the GET. If you have hiked at least 50 miles of the GET, please report it to me at the email address given at the end of the newsletter.

You may include miles of exploring for GET routes, and if it has two branches, you may count the miles hiked on both. Count only the trail miles—if you’ve done a section twice, you don’t double the miles. Also, do not count side trails, but if you hike a close parallel trail, you may count that if you go that way instead of the main trail.

So get out and GET Hiking!

And report your miles!

Hikers and Total GET miles hiked

Jo Swanson “Someday”	1774
Bart Houck “Hillbilly Bart”	1774
Kathy Finch	1774
Steve Prescott	1735
Dan Bedore	1093
Mark Sleeper	1033
Tim Hupp	943
Stuart Hickey	915
Taylor Pannill	800
Ethan Oppenheim	774
David Oppenheim	774
Sue Turner	720
Doug Schubert	681
Marcie Schubert	633
John Calhoun	632
Lois Ludwig	561
Bill Shaffer	545
Dixie Rainey “Star Left”	528
Rick Guhse	437
John Stein	437
Laverne Beachy	398
Heather Houskeeper	397
Jim Sims	392
David Frye	386
Tom Johnson	382
Bill Amonette	376
Lloyd McAskill	321
Garrett Fondoules “Shepherd”	258
Meredith Eberhart	
“Nimblewill Nomad”	235
Burgess Smith	232
Zac Lawton “Hitch”	224
Marty Dominy	211
Warren Devine	205
Carol Devine	187
Nancy Ruggles	178
Jane Thompson	168
Sam Goldsberry	142
Christa Neher	137
Faith Schlabach	129
Thomas Coffelt	127
Shad Baker	124
Jeff Monroe	119
John Elwood	105
Michael Seth	97
Chad Churchman	97
Mary Huffer	94
Linda Clark O’Brien	90
Malcolm & Lynn Cameron	89
John Spies	71
Brian Hirt	71
Kathy Dickenson	54

Youtube videos:

A family hikes on Cumberland Trail (“Aerial Hiking”):

[Camping at Laurel Snow \(April 2018\) \(youtube.com\)](#)

[Laurel-Snow Swimming Hole / music by SLOW DANCING SOCIETY - YouTube](#)

[Laurel Snow Pocket Wilderness with Aerial footage - YouTube](#)

[March 2019 Hike to Laurel Falls / Laurel-Snow Pocket Wilderness - YouTube](#)

[Summer Hiking at Laurel Snow and Graysville Mountain. - YouTube](#)

[Exploring Rock Creek and Laurel-Snow \(music: MOTIONFIELD\) \(youtube.com\)](#)

[Summer Hiking at Stinging Fork Falls and Soddy Daisy \(youtube.com\)](#)

[Soak Creek Swimming Hole \(youtube.com\)](#)

[Possum Creek Gorge \(music: PHAELEH\) \(youtube.com\)](#)

[Piney River Segment / Three Swimming Holes \(youtube.com\)](#)

[Hike to Big Soddy Creek Bridge \(March 2023\) \(youtube.com\)](#)

Photo Gallery



Pinhoti Trail in Alabama



Pinhoti Trail at Alabama/Georgia border



Chocolocco Creek Shelter



Pinhoti Trail along Shoal Creek



Campbell Falls, Camp Creek State Forest, WV



GETA Board meeting, Mullins, WV



Mash Fork Falls, Twin Falls State Park, WV



Shenandoah Mountain Trail, VA



View W from Shenandoah Mountain



View from Pine Mountain Trail, KY



Rosebay Rhododendron along Pine Mountain Trail



Great Eastern Trail booth at Tri State Festival, TN

Web addresses & emails:

GET website: <http://www.greateastertrail.net/>

GET Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GreatEasternTrail/>

GET Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Gethiking>

Email: GET Newsletter: Hupp_Tim@msn.com

Email GETA President Tim Hupp about Great Eastern Trail: Hupp_Tim@msn.com