



# GET Hiking

Great Eastern Trail Newsletter

Volume 2, Number 1, February 2012

By Timothy A. Hupp

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

## How Many GET miles have you hiked?

An awful lot of people 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	45 miles
Mid State Trail	313 miles
Standing Stone Trail	76 miles
Tuscarora Trail	135 miles
Allegheny Trail	41 miles
Appalachian Trail	21 miles
Pine Mountain Trail	44 miles (trail only)
Cumberland Trail	114 miles (so far)
Pinhoti Trail	215 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 Crest Section	60 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. I haven't got much response from the last 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.

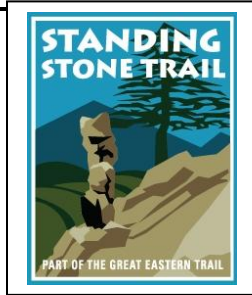
Sue Turner	720
Tom Johnson	365
Lloyd McAskill	321
Tim Hupp	304
Jim Sims	224
David Frye	198
Sam Goldsberry	142
Marty Dominy	130
Nancy Ruggles	95
Michael Seth	91
Shad Baker	90
Malcolm & Lynn Cameron	89

## So get out and GET Hiking!

*And report your miles!*

## Featured Section: Standing Stone Trail

by Jim Garthe



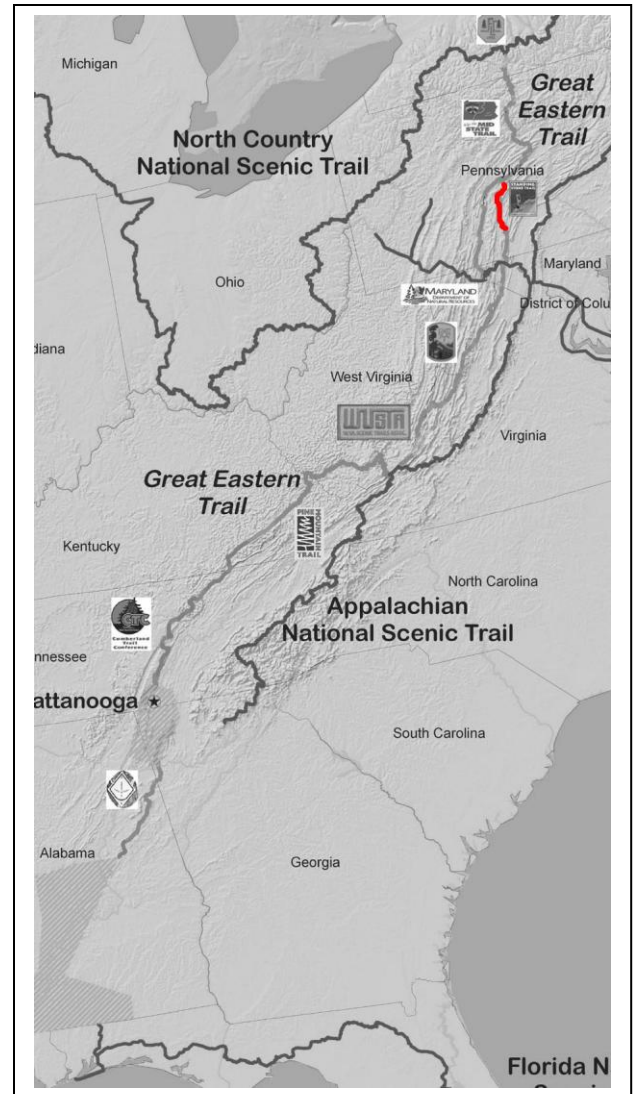
For an enchanting hike, try the Standing Stone Trail (SST) in the ridge and valley province of central Pennsylvania. You will be rewarded with a trove of vistas, and while perched way out on a jagged rock, you can experience rugged mountains and wild forests as far as the eye can see. You can reflect on this nation's past as you take in centuries old farmlands nestled within deep river cuts.

The SST is part of the Eastern Branch of the Great Eastern Trail footpath network stretching from Alabama to New York. This section of the GET is a 76-mile stretch connecting to a spur of the Mid State Trail at Greenwood Furnace State Park in the north, to the Tuscarora Trail in Cowans Gap State Park in the south. Both bucolic parks feature a lake, camping, and day use amenities. Although this path traverses through three rural counties, it's still quite accessible—within four hours or so from anywhere in Pennsylvania, and less than three hours from the Washington D.C. area.

The SST is undergoing revitalization. A master plan for the trail was completed a few years ago, with relocations and improvements now being systematically implemented by an energetic cadre of volunteers. The first trail shelter at Butler Knob in the trail's mid-section was completed in 2010.

Opened in the 1980s and initially named the Link Trail, its name was changed to 'Standing Stone' to recognize local Native Americans who revered the many vertically-oriented rock outcrops appearing in the region. The 100-member Standing Stone Trail Club's logo depicts one unique vertical formation of fractured quartzite, known as Monument Rock, which is located just off the main trail along the SST's mid section.

The trail has distinct 'flavors' along the way. In the north, Stone Mountain offers miles of narrow tree-shaded ridgeline with frequent views from



around 2,000 feet. Along this stretch, be prepared to enjoy some challenging but basically level rocky terrain along the way.

Moving south, you enter the Rocky Ridge zone at lower elevation where the route twists for several miles past intermittent strange rock outcrops that will pique most everyone's curiosity. You'll see large weathered piles of rounded sandstone jutting skyward, interspersed with deep funnel-shaped sinkholes lined with trees. If you skip off the trail a few hundred feet, you'll discover you can scramble atop these massive pinnacles to treetop level and a terrific view. Great place to stop for lunch! The geology of this area also produces a rich soil that favors carpets of wildflowers in April and May, including hepatica and yellow and pink lady slippers.

As you continue south, be alert for Clark's View, one of the most spectacular views in the State. The trail then descends along historic 'dinkie' railroad grades as you soon come upon a panoramic view, Jacks Narrows, the deepest water gap in Pennsylvania.

A short hike past a stone building perched high above a boulder field and you're at Thousand Steps. The steps were built in mid-1900s by energetic employees of a brick company, who on a daily basis had to access the quarry and boilers within the stone building. The boilers powered machinery to move ganister stone across the Juniata River to be made into fire bricks. You'll delight in an almost dizzying journey down the thousand (actually 1,201) meticulously placed stones, recently realigned by Club members.

For transportation buffs, the southern section passes through a Mecca. Of note are the ruins of Vanderbilt's Folly, an aborted South Pennsylvania Railroad scheme of the late 1800s that went belly up after William Vanderbilt's railroad couldn't compete with the powerful Pennsylvania Railroad to the north. You'll be enthralled by cut stone arch

drainage tunnels, plus deep fills and cuts long since reforested. In the 1950s, several of the longest tunnels ever built were taken over by the nation's first high speed limited access highway, the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

The finale of the southbound hike is several miles of Cove Mountain within Buchanan State Forest, a very narrow ridgeline with dramatic rock outcrops, sporadic vistas of varying scenery, the aroma of white pines, and boulders with raised serrations known as the "dinosaur teeth."

The Standing Stone Trail Club has installed trail head signage and freshly painted orange blazes. GET signs are posted along the trail. Incidentally, if you're into loop hikes and want to discover more of Pennsylvania's natural beauty, you may want to consider combining sections of the Tuscarora Trail with the SST.

For more information including maps and pictures, check out the Club's website: <http://www.hike-sst.org/>

*Next issue: Pine Mountain Trail*

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Throne Room



Butler Knob

See more SST pictures in the Photo Gallery, page 8

## Upcoming Events

February 26-March 31, 2012: **Cumberland Trail Conference's BreakAway** Hamilton/Rhea Counties, Trail construction and maintenance on various sections of the Cumberland Trail State Scenic Trail, volunteers needed to help with trail construction/ maintenance, and help in the kitchen. Base camp will be at the Dogwood Lodge near Soddy-Daisy, Tennessee. For non-student volunteers requiring lodging/meals and who are not TTA or CTC members a \$25/night fee is charged. Please contact the CTC to register for this event and further details, [cumberlandtrail@rocketmail.com](mailto:cumberlandtrail@rocketmail.com), [tony.hook@frontiernet.net](mailto:tony.hook@frontiernet.net), or 931-456-6259.

The **Spring Trail Work Week** (of Alabama Hiking Trail Society) is Saturday, March 3rd - Wednesday, March 7th, 2012. Co-Leader is Kent Cooper. We'll focus on the new Coosa Trail in the Coosa WMA. We'll also look at other work that may need attention in the area. Work for a day, a weekend, or all five days and then go to the Annual Conference! If camping, bring tent, sleeping bag, snacks, drinks, sturdy boots, lawn chair, bath towel and several changes of clothes. We have a great deal fun renewing old friendships and making new ones. Contact either Rick Guhse [rquhse@hotmail.com](mailto:rquhse@hotmail.com) or Kent Cooper [howard35183@gmail.com](mailto:howard35183@gmail.com). A second week of Trail Work is planned for the first or second week of April. Contact Rick Guhse to be put on the group Trail Worker Notification List as we'll update you in March. Rick Guhse [rquhse@hotmail.com](mailto:rquhse@hotmail.com)

March 9-11, 2012, **Alabama Hiking Trail Society Conference** at the Alabama 4H Center in Columbiana, Alabama! IMPORTANT INFO: The deadline to order our Complete Weekend Package has been extended but rooms are going fast! The package includes lodging, all meals for your stay AND conference admission! And AHTS members can save EVEN MORE (see below for details. Visit the [4H Center](#) to view lodging options.) And yes, there a single day and weekend admission and meal plans available (view a complete [menu](#) of what the 4H Center serves up.) For more details or to register securely online or by mail visit at <http://con2012.hikealabama.org>.

March 17, 2012 **Hike on Mid State Trail-PA 326** to Everett. This section of the Mid State Trail runs along Tussey Mountain with views that have been compared to ones seen from North Fork Mountain in WV. We will pass several views and walk along a couple of knife edges of rock. This hike has an 800 foot elevation gain/loss. INFO: Susan Bly 304/258-3319 or 910/495-3820.

March 24, 2012 **Tuscarora Relocation Worktrip**. We'll continue work on the Capon Springs Relocation in the Tuscarora Trail Central District. Meet at the Shawneeland mailboxes at 9:30 am, 8 miles west of Winchester, Va. Overnight at John Spies's house in Berkeley Springs, WV w/happy hour, potluck dinner and breakfast. Sunday we will work on trails in Sleepy Creek WMA. Click the web link for the Cadillac Crew Community page for additional details and to sign up. Contact John Spies at [jspieslp@gmail.com](mailto:jspieslp@gmail.com)

April 7-8, 2012 **Carr Mountain Worktrip**. Join us on Saturday and Sunday for the first work trip of 2012 on Carr Mountain. We'll be finishing a couple of sections on the western end, and moving on to Beech Lick Knob, the last section that still needs work. The ever-inviting Dogwood Cottage at Highland Retreat is reserved for Friday, April 6 and Saturday April 7 for those who want to stay over. Meet at 8:30 am at the park and ride at VA 259 & 820 near Bergton, VA. Potluck dinner Saturday evening at the cottage. Contact Tom Johnson at [johnts25@gmail.com](mailto:johnts25@gmail.com)

April- July, 2012, dates & camp location TBA: **New River section trail construction and maintenance**, volunteers needed to help construct and maintain trail in the Cumberland Trail State Scenic Trail's New River segment in Campbell, Scott, and Morgan Counties. This will be a camping outing with camp meals/ water provided by the Cumberland Trail Conference. Volunteers will need to bring their own tent, sleeping gear, and personal items. The base camp will have a kitchen tent equipped with cook stoves, plates, silver wear, etc. Please contact the CTC to register for this event and further details, [cumberlandtrail@rocketmail.com](mailto:cumberlandtrail@rocketmail.com),

[tony.hook@frontiernet.net](mailto:tony.hook@frontiernet.net), on-line registration at [www.cumberlandtrail.org](http://www.cumberlandtrail.org), or 931-456-6259.

Volunteers requiring meals and who are not TTA or CTC members will need to help with food cost by paying \$8/day (3 meals) or provide their own meals.

May 26-29, 2012 **Backpack – Shenandoah Mountain Trail** south of US 250. You may have explored the northern section of this trail in Ramsey's Draft. Here's your chance to investigate the southern side. This trail covers rock outcroppings into scenic views into the Cowpasture and Jackson River Valleys. For further information on this trail, peruse through [The Trails of VA – Hiking the Old Dominion](#) by Allen De Hart. This trail is strenuous with 2000 foot overall elevation gain/loss over a 3 day period. INFO: Susan Bly 304/258-3319 or 910/495-3820.

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## News:

### Coosa Trail

By Kent Cooper

The Coosa Trail wasn't a trail that was developed through a single individual's vision, but by several people and groups coming together and developing a plan for a trail that would benefit all. The land on which the Coosa Trail lies belongs to the State of Alabama through the Forever Wild initiative. It is located in the central part of the state on Coosa Wildlife Management Area in Coosa County. The Coosa River borders on the west and Hatchett Creek on the south. The eastern boundary is County Road 29.

As the Alabama Hiking Trail Society (AHTS) continues to cooperate with federal, state, and local agencies through volunteer efforts, we find opportunity to share our vision with them in hopes that our efforts establish a hiking trail system throughout Alabama. Working with Forever Wild at Coosa has helped form a very trusting relationship. As Forever Wild's Chris Smith and Doug Deaton continue to develop Coosa, they have allowed us to help develop, route and build the first section of this trail in hopes that one day it will become part of the

connector trail between Flagg Mountain and The Alabama Trail. Forever Wild also, intends to establish a 9 mile loop trail on the western portion of the property. This would allow hikers to park at Hatchett Creek on County Road 29 and hike out and back for approximately 30 miles from a single parking area with campsites at strategic locations along the trail.

Our Fall work week consisted of cutting in tread way, painting blazes, and lopping brush. Edwin Martin brought his DR mower and mowed certain sections of the trail. Participants were Pete McElrath, Doug Deaton, Marion Campbell, John Calhoun, Hayward Warren, Andy Baril, Edwin Martin, Angel Cooper, and Kent Cooper. Thanks go out to Rick Guhse', Mike Leonard and Joe Cuhaj for their continued efforts to help make our vision a reality.

AHTS has work weeks planned for the spring and encourages anyone who would like to help to contact us by email at [ahts@hikealabama.org](mailto:ahts@hikealabama.org) or by phone 251-279-0801.

The next time you enjoy one of our hiking trails in the state think about offering some volunteer time yourself. After all, someone took the time to build the trail your hiking on.

### Alabama Trail / Perdido River Update

by [Joe Cuhaj](#)

The Gulf Coast Chapter had word from Forever Wild about the first section of the Perdido we surveyed last year from just north of Hwy 112 to Barrineau Park. To quote the head biologist who led the survey, "it is a particularly well-scouted/laid out trail" and described the route we planned using existing trails and logging roads are "highly desirable" for the remaining sections. The chapter is one step closer to opening that section. The state biology team will scout it one more time in March. They believe that this will be their last survey and then trail blazing begins. The Gulf Coast Chapter is scheduling a series of walk-thru of the final section of the Alabama Trail along Forever Wild property on the Perdido River. If members would like to join them, contact Joe Cuhaj at [jcuhaj@gmail.com](mailto:jcuhaj@gmail.com) and he'll pass your name on to the survey crew.

## TuGuNu Trail section opened

By Joanna Swanson

This fall we got 3 miles of GET blazed through Twin Falls State Park (as seen in Trailblazing folder). We also had Tom Johnson visit last month to discuss the future of the GET in the area. Some members of the Pine Mountain Trail also came up to meet during that time.

TuGuNu Hiking Club is seeking members! We are working to complete the GET in southern West Virginia. Our greatest challenge is getting landowner permission to blaze the trail. Anyone interested in getting involved can contact GET VISTA Coordinator Joanna Swanson at [joannamswanson@gmail.com](mailto:joannamswanson@gmail.com) or at 304.250.7053. TuGuNu Hiking Club updates can be found on Twitter @TuGuNu.

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## GET Websites

I've taken upon myself to examine the websites of the Participating Clubs of the Great Eastern Trail, as well as the central web site. What I was checking was how current the news items are (are there "Upcoming Events" long past?) and are the sites that the GET site are linked to linked back? Or do they even mention the GET? Here's what I found:

### *Alabama Hiking Trail Society:*

Was off-line when I first searched. It is currently on line. Upcoming events are current, but newsletters are not posted. There is a GET link on the FAQ page, but the address is wrong.

### *Alabama Trails Association:*

Not up-to-date: latest newsletter dated Winter 2004, and a "New!" item is to be completed by May 2009. It has a Links page, but none to GET.

### *American Hiking Society:*

Is current. It has a link to GET under Partners>List of Organizations>Virginia.

### *Chattanooga Hiking Club:*

No longer on line.

### *Cumberland Trail Conference:*

Latest newsletter is July 2011, Calendar of events has events from January to July, 2012.

### *Finger Lakes Trail Conference:*

Almost current, Calendar included events in late 2011. The Links page has links to other trails, but not GET.

### *Florida Trail Association:*

Events up to January 21, 2012. GET link under Learn More>Links

### *Georgia Pinhoti Trail Association:*

Latest news item is from May 2011. There is a link to GET under "Resources", but not under "Trail Users" on home page.

### *Keystone Trails Association:*

Latest Trail alert is August 18, 2011; latest newsletter is February 2012. No GET link found.

### *Mid State Trail Association:*

Latest news item was in 2008. Latest newsletter is Fall 2011. Links page does not link to GET.

### *Pine Mountain Trail Conference:*

Had been hijacked at first search. Now back on line, but latest news items are from May 2011. Latest newsletter is Winter 2011. Link to GET on home page. *GET website incorrectly links to PMTA, in Georgia on Supporting Clubs page, but still correct on the Maps page.*

### *Potomac Appalachian Trail Club:*

News current, but no link to GET. Lots of information, but not about individual trails (as Tuscarora).

### *Potomac Heritage Trail Association:*

Most recent newsletter is Summer 2011. No links found.

### *Standing Stone Trail Club:*

Latest newsletter is Spring 2011. Link to GET on home page.

### *West Virginia Scenic Trails Association:*

Events to February 2012 only. Has GET tab & link.

# Parallels

As the Great Eastern Trail is a second long trail in the Appalachians, there are automatically parallels between it and the Appalachian Trail. This is a series of articles discussing similarities and differences between the GET and the AT.

## Building the Trails

Once the Appalachian Trail was proposed by Benton MacKaye in 1921, there arose a number of people throughout the Appalachians who enthusiastically supported such a trail and went out and started building it. In the early days of the PATC, about 1927, Myron Avery and some of his friends in Washington DC would go out on weekends, chop a way through the brush on the mountains near Harpers Ferry, and call it the Appalachian Trail. They would go out almost every weekend, and in just a few years had hundreds of miles of trail open.

The Appalachian Trail was completed in only 16 years, a testament to Myron Avery's determination and leadership. He led the Appalachian Trail Conference, as well as the local clubs in Virginia (PATC), Georgia, and Maine. During these years the Appalachian Trail was his second job, and he probably put in more hours on it than his day job as a lawyer.

In the 1930's the Civilian Conservation Corps helped build some parts of the Appalachian Trail, to finish it up in areas where volunteers were taking longer. It gave an impression of a Federal Project so much so that in 1948, when Earl Shaffer was doing the first AT thru-hike, some locals referred to it as "the Government Trail".

Although the AT had to be put along roads in many places—Myron Avery liked to put the trail in the roughest, steepest ground he could find, but if a road was all that was available, he had no problem using that for the AT route. But what roads were has changed over time. In those days, few roads were paved or had heavy, high speed traffic. The population density in the Appalachians was light, and the hiking trail, though novel to the locals, was not impacted too much by the people that lived by there—after all, the trail was built away from the houses, or near to people who were OK with it.

But over decades, commercial, industrial, and residential development moved from the eastern seaboard cities into the Appalachians. Often private

land the AT was on was sold to new owners who would not continue to allow the trail to cross their property. Road walks on busier roads became more and more commonplace for AT hikers. New strategies and government action nationalized the AT into a protected institution. Land was bought up for use of the trail, and getting it off roads. Now 99% of the AT is off roads, and most of the remaining roads are in trail towns.

As far as graded trail, initially the AT was just an open way through the forest, often the shortest way, over very rough ground. Building graded trail was a novel thing when the National Park Service did it in the 1930s. It caused a lot of contention among the AT builders. A lot of the wilderness people, such as Benton MacKaye looked askance at such an abomination! But that is the way trails are built now.

The Great Eastern Trail work is being done in the new paradigm of trail building. Trail clubs buy up whatever land or easements they can to facilitate trails. Trails are built graded. We try to get things right first; then have a trail. So progress goes much slower than in the 1920s and 30s.

There is another thing that makes things slower for trail progress, and that is the busy-ness and pace of life nowadays. There are so many more distractions and entertainments that hiking and trail work are not as appealing as it was then. While in the 1930s, they could go weekend after weekend to build trails, one work trip a month is regarded as a lot now.

Also, it has been my experience that most of the trail workers now are in their 50s and 60s. Back in the early AT days, it looks like they were in their 20s and 30s. We have a lot more experience and make better use of our time, but we probably don't have the strength and endurance for such work that they did.

The GET has the advantage that most of its length is on trails already built. But there are major gaps of trail needed to be built that amount to hundreds of miles. Some may be opened surprisingly quickly, as maybe just a breakthrough is needed, but some parts will get progress slowly and be hard-earned.

It would be nice if we could open the whole GET to hikers within 16 years (by 2023) or sooner, but it could take much longer. I think it may be helpful to offer inter-club support, but not pressure. Help with building trails would be appreciated; pressure to complete it faster would not.

## Photo Gallery



One of Many Sweeping Viewpoints on Stone Mountain



Thousand Steps



Winter shows off the dinkey grades in Jack's Narrows



Hall of the Mountain King

### Web addresses & emails:

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

GET Guidebook (Hancock, MD to White Sulphur Springs, WV):  
[http://brownmtnphotog.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=122](http://brownmtnphotog.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=122)

Email: GET Newsletter: [Hupp\\_Tim@msn.com](mailto:Hupp_Tim@msn.com)

Email GETA President Tom Johnson about Great Eastern Trail: [johnts25@gmail.com](mailto:johnts25@gmail.com)