



GET Hiking

Great Eastern Trail Newsletter

Volume 5, Number 1, February 2016

By Timothy A. Hupp

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

GET Thru-hike attempts

This past summer another pair of long distance hikers set out to thru-hike the Great Eastern Trail, this time starting from the north end. Garrett Fondaule “Shepherd” and Dixie Greer “Star Left” set out to do this. Shepherd went through months of careful planning, including what route they would take. His route plan could be profitable to future thru-hikers. They were trying to coordinate their hike with Contra Dances they would try to attend as they hiked into an area. See <http://www.trailjournals.com/greateastertrail2015> for Shepherd’s plans and hike.

They started at Niagara Falls on June 8, 2015 and hiked along the Conservation Trail and the Finger Lakes Trail (part of the North Country

Trail) until they got to Moss Hill Shelter, the northern terminus of the GET on July 3. They started on the GET the next day.

They got as far as US 322 in Pennsylvania, a little south of Poe Paddy State Park when Shepherd’s trail journal stops on July 24. Star Left continued on the GET on July 26, using the west branch of the GET in the bifurcation, and south from Hancock, MD until she got to Gore, VA on September 1, with injury or health issues.

In recent emails, I found Star Left has since gotten married. She would like to hike more GET, probably in sections, hoping her husband will join her.

In addition, another long distance hiker, Kathy Finch, has plans to thru-hike the GET, starting from the north end.

Trail Updates

Pennsylvania: Mid State Trail – State College Region:

May 26, 2015

The bridge crossing Cherry Run has recently collapsed. DCNR has signed as **off limits to the public**. DCNR and trail crew members will be assessing the bridge to determine whether to proceed with a repair or completely rebuild the bridge. You can find more information about the location in the 12th edition guidebook section 10 at 29.3km northbound.

Contents, this issue

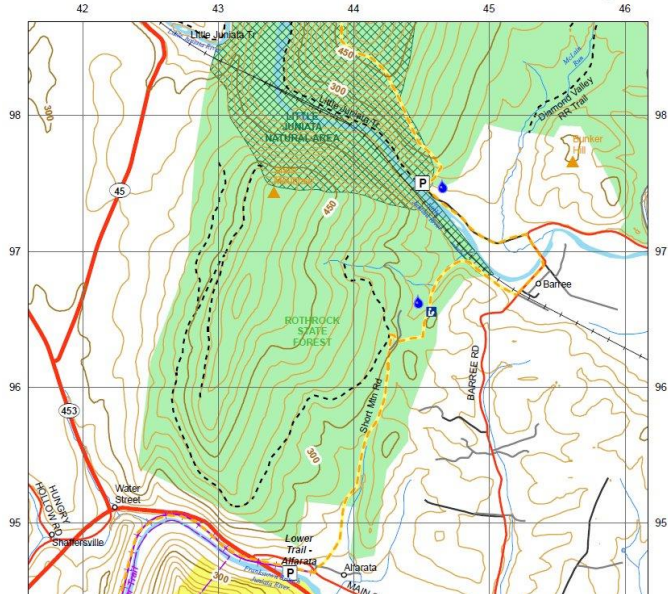
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Southern End Reroute at Southern Terminus (of State College Section)

April 16, 2015

Mid State Trail - Short Mtn. Relocation

Revisions to MSTA Maps 301-306 and 307-310
April 2015 - gis@hike-mst.org



"The Mid State Trail has been re-routed at the southern terminus of the State college Region near Williamsburg, PA. Previously, the trail northbound from the Lower Trail parking area followed the paved road out toward US 22 where it climbed an embankment and entered the forest. The new route crosses the paved road at the Lower trail parking area and follows gravel roads Freedom's Way - Brickyard Rd. - Short Mtn. Rd. about 2 km to the point where it junctions with the original route at a switchback turn on Short Mtn. Rd. The new route has been blazed orange and there are temporary notices/maps at either end of the new route. The register has been relocated to a new location along the trail north of Short Mtn. Rd. Other improvements to this section of the trail include repairs to the sidehill section descending into the glen and removal of the blowdown obstructions just south of Barree"

Collapsed Tunnel Near Poe Paddy State Park



(as of April 16, 2015)

In preparations to repair the partially collapsed tunnel near Poe Paddy State Park, the foot bridge over Penn's Creek was temporarily closed. Beginning April 6, 2015, construction crews began repairing the bridge to allow construction vehicles to cross Penn's Creek to repair the partially collapsed tunnel. The bridge remained closed for approximately one month with no plans of a bypass route.

(no date given)

The Poe Paddy Tunnel has been reopened. The reroute over the mountain is scheduled to be removed next week. The contractors have a little cleanup to do, but hikers are welcomed to resume using the tunnel.

2015 Accomplishments of the Standing Stone Trail Club

December 30, 2015

James W. Garthe

Old Timers trail team (Ken Horting, O.T. master) Performed rock work along 1.5 miles of trail atop Stone Mountain. Conducted numerous trail revisions (see below).

Trail relocations / additions

All work was conducted with DCNR Bureau of Forestry & PA Game Commission (PGC) approval.

1. Locke Valley Road SGL 81 relocation approved by PGC and DCNR; completed mid-year.
2. Relocation in SGL 99 Hoopers Gap bypass approved; completed early in 2015.
3. Relocation south of Butler Knob shelter approved; completed mid-year.
4. Richard Wagner property agreement and trail relocation was reconfirmed verbally.
5. Nearly seven miles of Greenwood Spur trail was taken over by SSTC.

Six relocations proposed by Tom Scully; five accepted by DCNR. Relocations were reviewed on foot with DCNR recreation forester (Jake Mazzei). Five relocations were started, three of these were completed.

Two relocations awaiting May 17-22, 2016 five-day trail care event at GFSP.

1. Rebuilt two Detweiler Run bridges destroyed by mountain bikers.
2. Bypassed soggy area at Alan Seeger Natural Area.
3. Reviewed Scrub Gap relocation with PGC land manager (Chris Skipper). Decision pending.
4. Reviewed Scrub Gap twin foot bridges with PGC. Scrub Gap twin bridges were accepted by PGC as reconstructed (by unknown group).

June 23-28, 2015 SSTC & KTA five-day trail care event at Greenwood Furnace State Park (GFSP)

GFSP Manager, Mike Dinsmore has been very cooperative and helpful. GFSP Kubota RTV has been loaned for trail work. We have two licensed operators (Garthe & Horting). Campsites 14-18 donated free with restrooms & showers nearby. From 10-18 volunteers per day; Jim Catozzi, cook.

Signage (Jim Savory, sign master)

Dozens of new signs have been erected along entire trail. This includes new signage for Greenwood Spur, including large boards at junction with Mid State Trail and new signage at Greenwood Furnace State Park, some placed by GFSP personnel.

Thousand Steps

Rock crew from SATC reworked 15 steps and 1000 feet of cribbing on Thousand Steps.

Kiosk completed as Eagle Scout project (Darin Dunkle).

Website (Sam Fortna, web master)

Maps (Greg Garthe, map master)

Completely new set of nine trail maps & elevation profiles were posted on SSTC website. Maps were posted south-to-north to better suit northbound Great Eastern Trail hikers.

New Greenwood Furnace State Park area trail map & elevation profiles are on GFSP website.

1:50,000 scale map is complete; working on for-sale details. Parking areas and water resupply points added.

Rails-to-Trails of Central Pennsylvania

Camping / facilities at Riverside Park in Mapleton approved. Construction pending.

Miscellaneous accomplishments

5,000 SSTC tri-fold brochures distributed and 1,000 more being reprinted currently.

April 18 SSTC spring meeting was held at DCNR regional office. 15 members present.

Eight tent sites were added near Frew Road.

Fox trail twin bridges are being planned with Cowans Gap State Park manager (Ryan Donovan). SSTC increased our trail maintainer sections from 27 to 33 sections.

Greatest challenges for future

1. Eliminate six-mile road walk from Meadow Gap to Saltillo.
2. Improve crossing of US 22 near Thousand Steps.

Club officers and representatives to date

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| President: | James Garthe |
| Vice-president: | George Conrad |
| Secretary: | Dan Glass |
| Treasurer: | Frank Donlevy |
| Membership chair: | Burgess Smith |
| Projects manager: | open |
| Trail master: | Ken Horting |
| Map master: | Greg Garthe |
| Sign master: | James Savory |
| Tool master: | Joe Clark |
| Web master: | Sam Fortna |
| Great Eastern Trail representative: | Jim Garthe; alternate Dan Glass |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Keystone Trails Association representative: | Dan Glass |
| The Rock Hopper newsletter editor: | Dan Glass |
| Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee: | Dan Glass |

Tuscarora Trail Relocation Open

The Tuscarora Trail has been relocated onto the ridgeline of Great North Mountain, replacing the section that dropped off to the west of the mountain and west of Capon Springs Resort.

The new trail is 8.6 miles long, replacing 15.9 miles of old trail, thus making the Tuscarora Trail and the GET 7.3 miles shorter.

We will be losing the Hawk Campground, Hawk Falls, Jemima tombstone, Lucas Campsite, and miles of road walk. We gain a ridge walk with great views at Eagle Rock and at viewpoints near the north end of the relocated trail. Lucas Campsite and Hawk Campground will still be available to GET hikers, but they are 1.4 and 1.7 miles, respectively, off the main trail.

Narrows Now Trails Club Report

“Everything a hiker needs is within a stone’s throw,” stated Tom Johnson, President of GETA, about Narrows. That includes camping and an inn, grocery with ATM, laundry with large tubs, restaurant with buffet, library with wi-fi, and a local artisan’s co-op gift shop across the street from the post office. Across New River is a general store and fast food. Shuttle service is available as well.

In the two years since its inception, NNTC now has over 200 members in person and on Facebook. There are no officers, no rules, no dues, no age limits. “There are no have to, ought to, shoulds”, according to Jo Martin, “and Robert and his Rules are not invited. The freedom of this is very appealing to folks who, generally, are meeting to distraction but they want to be kept up to date on information.”

The group is motivated to get out there, both working and hiking the trails. Martin has a determination for communication, information and encouragement so anyone, including families, can feel comfortable taking part on a "want to basis".

NNTC’s intention to be a flexible group, beholden to none, but focused on aiding each of The Three Trails of Narrows has worked well. These trails are GET, AT, and Mill Creek Nature Park (with its 145 acres which borders and is owned by

The Town of Narrows). NNTC works with each trail on the as-needed basis, following the guidelines for each trail, yet maintaining its unique ability to work with each entity without "infringing". The GET is an especially exciting asset with the other trails and New River and Wolf Creek which flow through the town.

Great Eastern Trail Association President Tom Johnson, Front Royal VA, has often joined the group, discussing the GET progress in connecting existing trails. GET travels through downtown Narrows, then Lurich Rd to Glen Lyn before heading into West Virginia. There is a possible addition to GET if plans come to fruition. Those plans have been a major undertaking since February 2015. Martin has been in discussions with the US Army Corps of Engineers toward an agreement for NNTC to develop and maintain a 6-mile stretch across USACE public lands for a trail from Lurich Rd (at Rt.460/Glen Lyn) to the WV-VA border. Although there have been tentative maps of the proposed trail, they are now obsolete. A new official map is being created and will be forthcoming if the proposed trail is approved.

This new trail would be designated “Mary Ingles Trail”. There are books and films telling the true historic tale of Mary Draper Ingles, abducted by Shawnee from her home near Blacksburg VA in July 1755. When she escaped in September, Ingles crossed at least 145 creeks and rivers and traveled five to six hundred miles, finally being found close to home in November 1755. Part of Ingles’ journey was from the WV-VA border down to Glen Lyn. This is the area NNTC would like to develop. The staffs of the USACE and Bluestone Project are poised to approve development of this trail. Martin is also a GET Director, and NNTC was tasked with and confirmed GET routing from Glen Lyn to Pearisburg VA. This includes progress toward securing permission from AT, RATC, and NFS for a connecting trail through Mill Creek Nature Park and the Forest Service lands up to the AT. Although not yet finalized, Martin states, “We’re way past the midway point. The yearlong biologic study has been completed.

And if authorized, this would become the official GET route as it then co-aligns with the AT for sixteen miles.” *(note – it is 16 miles on the AT north of Pearisburg that the GET co-aligns with. If you*

include the part south to the trail up from Narrows, the total is 21 miles.)

Cumberland Trail: Big Soddy Creek Bridge. . . It's Finished and Open !

After almost four years of planning, moving material and construction, the 100' long suspension bridge over the Big Soddy Creek is open for business!



Big Soddy Bridge Opens November 2015 (photo Shauna Anschuetz)

Located at 35° 17'56.64" N 85°11'50.15" W in the [Soddy Creek Gorge Section \(north\)](#) of the CT, it represents a significant advance for hikers in one of the most remote areas of the 300 mile Cumberland Trail. Big Soddy Creek is subject to large variations in water height. The new bridge keeps the segment open no matter what the water level. Existing bridges had been washed away making the scramble across the boulder filled creek bottom, even at low water, both challenging and hazardous. The Jewel of the Cumberland Trail is a testament to the joint efforts of several state agencies, the CTC and volunteers who worked hundreds of hours next to the paid crew to bring the bridge to life. The full story can be found here: [Big Soddy Bridge Story](#). Many thanks to all who worked on her.



Above: Volunteers and paid crew work together to control the derrick and load line. Care was taken to create a series of block and tackle lines to ease the material over the side. Hundreds of board feet of lumber, 8,000 pounds of concrete and all the other materials needed for a 100 foot suspension bridge were lowered into the gorge using only muscle power to control the pull of gravity.

CTC News for 1 November 2015

Final Week of Big Dig Hits 2 Mile Mark

As of Saturday, October 25, the last official day of Big Dig 2015, there were 2.2 miles of finished trail on the Daddy's Creek Extension. Work continued into November.



CTC Crew Member Red Young works doing initial brush and blow down clearing just yards from Hatfield Ford.



CTC Construction Manager Mitch Wolfe, seated, works at his portable office along Daddy's Creek. Paperwork, always paper work.

Georgia updates

From Marty Domini



CTC Life Member Mark Richie takes a break to enjoy the beauty of Daddy's Creek and the fall colors.



CTC Crew Member Pete Bernsten leads a finishing crew at the 10,000 foot mark along the Daddy's Creek extension. Pete has logged over 3,000 trail hours with both the CTC and the AT.

The Georgia Pinhoti Trail Association is on the verge of opening another 1.3 miles of trail to replace a road walk of roughly the same length. This relocation is on Section 14 of the Pinhoti Trail in western fringes of Georgia and only about four miles from the Alabama state line. As soon as the bridge near Georgia Highway 100 is complete, the section will be opened. A picture of showing progress on the bridge as of last week is attached. I may be able to get you a picture of the completed bridge if I finish the deck this week. Unless there is some unforeseen problem, the new segment of trail will be open by the end of January. There is

another 1.3 miles of trail to be built this year linking our new segment to an existing long segment leading southwest into Alabama. Building the trail will not be very difficult, but there are a number of bridges to build in the new segment.

We have already had a Pinhoti Trail thru hiker complete all of the Pinhoti in Alabama and Georgia this year. He started at Flagg Mountain and finished at the junction with the Benton MacKaye Trail. Another group is underway hiking from Flagg Mountain to Katahdin via the Pinhoti Trail, Benton MacKaye Trail, and the Appalachian Trail. While those hiking all of the Pinhoti diverge from the Great Eastern Trail near Holland, Georgia, they have completed 214 miles of the Great Eastern Trail before leaving it.

Heavy rain over the course of a week at the end of December flooded much of north Georgia, including parts of Cave Spring, Georgia. The waters subsided in a few days, and we've received no reports of emergencies involving trail users trapped by high waters. However, we are certain there were a few hikers that were soggy for days at a time during the period. The consolation to these rains was that temperatures were unseasonably mild to warm.

From Linda Clark-O'Brien

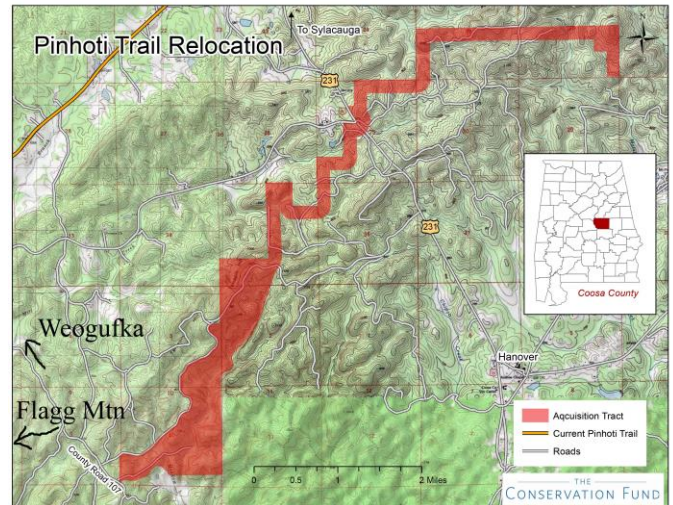
Update in Georgia: The Lula Lake Land Trust in GA completed the Cloudland Connector Trail between Lookout Mountain and Cloudland Canyon State Park. The GA Pinhoti Trail Association is finishing up the Santa Claus trail across GA-100 south of Cave Spring Spring GA. Crockford-Pigeon Mountain WMA also completed the Bluff Trail along the Tennessee Divide from GA-193 to GA-157 inside the Conservation Fund lands.

Alabama updates

From John Calhoun

The Pinhoti Trail has had lots of work done to keep it open to hikers. Major sections were brushed, in Sections 1 and 3-13 (Section 2 is road walk). But there are still parts in Sections 4,5,11, 12, and 13 that need brushing.

A new trail corridor has been acquired which will start at CR 107 (southeast of Weogufka). It will continue northeast. The new trail on the west side of US 231 will be about 5 miles long when finished (this will be part of Section 1). East of US 231 should be about 4 miles long (this will be part of Section 2).

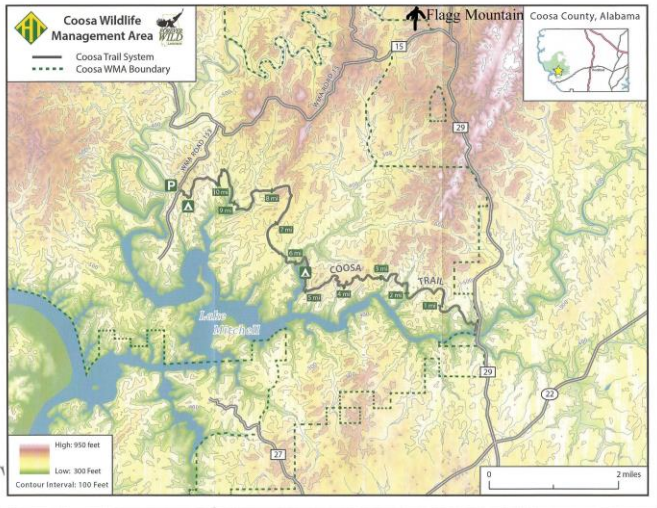


Other things to consider: Proposals for new shelters between Blue Mountain and Lower Shoal shelters and south of the Cheaha Wilderness, bridges for potentially dangerous creek crossings, placing "Pinhoti Trail" brown info signs at all Alabama, US, and county highway crossings (*don't forget to put GET signs!*), plus some distance signs to Springer Mountain, Maine, and Newfoundland.

The Coosa Trail

From Linda Clark-O'Brien

Update in Alabama: Alabama Hiking Trail Society has been very busy. They finished the Coosa Trail south of Flagg Mountain with camping sites and at least one trail shelter. They have also completed the last 5 miles of trail to the southern Terminus of the Pinhoti Trail at Flagg Mountain with one trail shelter and one tent platform site. They also separately created the Yellow and White Trails around the summit of Flagg Mountain.



As a side note, they have also extensively blazed the Alabama Trail in Gulf Shores AL and planning a new extension out to Fort Morgan along an old railroad bed. In the Perdido River WMA area, they completed the Perdido River Trail in the Forever Wild Lands area, with new bridges and trail shelters going up soon.

The Coosa Trail is south of Flagg Mountain, thus in the Phase 2 part of the GET.

Upcoming Events

March 11-13, 2016 – Alabama Hiking Trail Society Hiking and Outdoor Conference – Gulf State Park, Gulf Shores, Alabama. Keynote Speaker: Richard Judy, author of “Thru: An Appalachian Trail Love Story”. Email gulf@hikealabama.org or call Joe Cuhaj at 251-533-1812.

March 6- April 2, 2016 Breakaway Event, near Dayton, TN. Work continues on the Graysville Segment and south from Mobray Road. This is the premier volunteer activity on the Cumberland Trail. For four weeks in March nearly 200 college students, along with dozens of local volunteers, arrive to work on building the CT during their Spring Break. Local volunteers are needed to work in small crews helping to extend the trail one yard at a time. Contact the CTC Office at 731-456-6259 or ctcoffice2014@gmail.com.

May 17-22, 2016 Standing Stone Trail five-day trail care event at Greenwood Furnace State Park. Contact: Address: Standing Stone Trail Club, Inc., c/o Frank Donlevy, Treasurer
1203 Musket Lane, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050 or call: George Conrad (vice president) 814-643-4111

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 | 78 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 | 131 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 Crest 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.

Hikers and Total GET miles hiked

| | |
|-----------------------------|------|
| Jo Swanson "Someday" | 1774 |
| Bart Houck "Hillbilly Bart" | 1774 |
| Stuart Hickey | 915 |
| Taylor Pannill | 800 |
| Sue Turner | 720 |
| John Calhoun | 632 |
| Lois Ludwig | 561 |
| Bill Shaffer | 545 |
| Dixie Greer "Star Left" | 495 |
| Tim Hupp | 445 |
| Rick Guhse | 437 |
| Mark Sleeper | 399 |
| Tom Johnson | 382 |
| David Frye | 329 |

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Lloyd McAskill | 321 |
| Jim Sims | 296 |
| Garrett Fondaule "Shepherd" | 258 |
| Burgess Smith | 232 |
| Marty Dominy | 211 |
| Warren Devine | 205 |
| Carol Devine | 187 |
| Marcie Schubert | 169 |
| Nancy Ruggles | 146 |
| Sam Goldsberry | 142 |
| Barbara Quinn | 142 |
| Jane Thompson | 133 |
| Shad Baker | 124 |
| Michael Seth | 97 |
| Chad Churchman | 95 |
| Linda Clark O'Brien | 90 |
| Malcolm & Lynn Cameron | 89 |
| Mary Huffer | 73 |
| John Spies | 71 |
| Brian Hirt | 71 |
| Christa Neher | 62 |

So get out and GET Hiking!

And report your miles!

Featured Section:

Maryland

by Tim Hupp

In Maryland, the GET splits into 2 segments. The southern border of Maryland is the Potomac River, and Hancock, MD sits on that river. From the south, the GET rides the Tuscarora Trail across the US 522 bridge over the Potomac River, then down onto town streets to the C&O Canal Trail. Here the split begins (aka the "bifurcation"). The east branch goes east on the C&O Canal Trail with the Tuscarora Trail for 8 miles, then continues as road walks an additional 6.5 miles to go into Pennsylvania. There is one hiker/biker campsite, "Little Pool" in this segment.

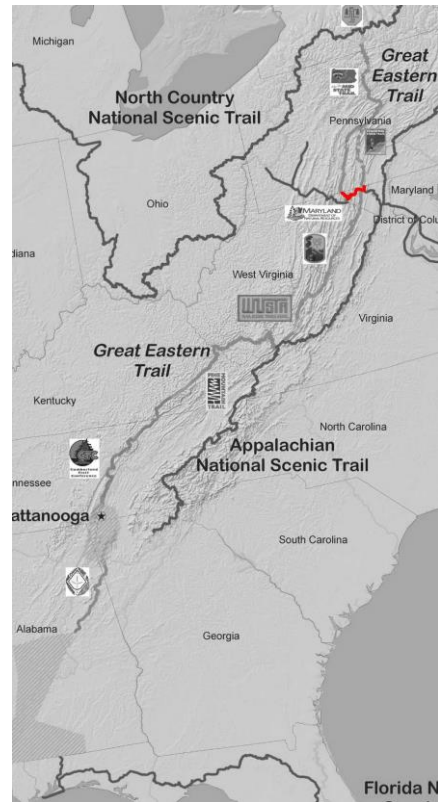
The west branch goes west on the C&O Canal Trail for 30 miles to the Green Ridge State Forest, exiting on a short trail leading to Outdoor Club Road. Along the C&O Canal Trail there are 5 hiker/biker campsites. Through the GRSF it follows gravel roads, then some hiking trails,

passing one Adirondack type shelter (unnamed) on the Deep Run/Big Run Green Hiking Trail. Before passing out of the state forest, the GET follows more gravel roads, a bike trail, then finally a trail out to MD 144. It makes a very steep drop down a bank over a guard rail from Gilpin Road. Once it comes out on MD 144, it follows that road, turns on Dry Ridge Road and then Gap Road on to the Pennsylvania border. At that point is the south terminus of Pennsylvania's Mid State Trail. There are GET signs through Green Ridge State Forest, but not on the C&O Canal Trail or the road walks between GRSF and the Pennsylvania line. Altogether, the west branch of the GET has 50 miles in Maryland.

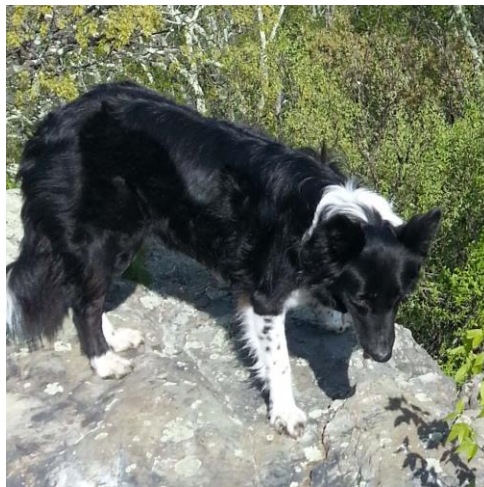
There are alternative ways through the GRSF that use less gravel roads. The shorter way would exit the C&O Canal Trail near Lock 58, 20 miles from Hancock, and follow the Long Pond Red Hiking Trail, then take the Deep Run/Big Run Green Hiking Trail south from its north end and rejoin the GET where it goes up to Mertens

Avenue/Green Ridge Road intersection. This way has one shelter (different than the one on the main GET route), and is about 8 miles shorter.

The longer way would stay on the C&O Canal to Lock 67, an additional 8 miles, which includes the Paw Paw Tunnel (bring a headlamp) and 2 additional hiker/biker campsites. From Lock 67 take the Log Roll Orange Hiking Trail, then the Deep Run/Big Run Green Hiking Trail from its south end. It rejoins the main GET route at Mertens Avenue. This way includes a shelter in addition to the one on the main route. This route is about 13 miles longer.



A Loss - A trail dog



Sam, Tom Johnson's Border collie (7/14/2004 - 3/31/2015). She was full of energy as she accompanied us on many hikes and work trips. A lot of times she made the impression that she was the one in charge.

Cumberland Trail Progress

The Cumberland Trail is one of the most interesting sections of the Great Eastern Trail, with its waterfalls, gorges, mountain tops, views---and the fact that it's being built with more added each year. It is a little difficult to tell exactly what is being built, due to the different things said in the different sources of the CTC website (which overall is a very good one!). The site includes an overall map, descriptions and maps of each section, and news items. The overall map shows which parts of the Trail are completed, which are under construction, and which are proposed.

As of 2015, land acquisitions were 91% complete for the Cumberland Trail with an additional 5-6% "in the works". In other words, 29 miles still required acquisition and 22 of those were in active negotiation.

(One other note---there will be a solar eclipse that crosses the CT on August 21, 2017)

The Cumberland Trail has segments of completed trail and gaps without completed trail. Here is a table of the completed segments:

| <u>Segment (N to S)</u> | <u>south end</u> | <u>north end</u> | <u>length</u> |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| A. Cumberland Gap | dead end | Cumberland Gap NHP | ~2 miles |
| B. LaFollett to Frozen Head SP | Ross Gap | LaFollett | 51 miles |
| C. Obed Wild and Scenic River | Daddys Creek Trailhead | Nemo Trailhead | 14 miles |
| D. Black Mountain to Jewett Road | Jewett Road | Black Mountain Road | ~10 miles |
| E. Piney River | Rockhouse Branch Campsite | Shut-in Gap Road | 6.5 miles |
| F. Laurel Snow Pocket Wilderness | Richland Creek | Snow Falls | ~1 mile |
| G. Graysville Mountain | Roaring Creek Trailhead | dead end | 6 miles |
| H. Three Gorges Section | Leggett Road | Mowbray Pike | 31 miles |

(this does not include the parts of the Cumberland Trail that are not part of the GET)

This leaves the gaps, 7 in fact:

AB 24 miles of trail on Cumberland Mountain are described from LaFollett north to Carr Gap; this is described as "under construction" on the overall map. It was actually some of the early CT built in the 1980s, but hasn't been maintained or recleared. This leaves about 10 miles to Cumberland Gap (majority of which is in Cumberland Gap NHP).

BC From north end, Ross Gap, constructed trail leads 0.7 mile south to a dead end. The overall map shows "under construction" down the mountain toward Wartburg. The proposed route goes through Wartburg on to the bridge over the Obed River, just before the Nemo Trailhead. But the description has 1.3 mile of trail built from the south end that crosses the Emory River and is known as the Emory River Gorge section. It dead-ends at a waterfall. Between these dead end points is a 9 mile gap.

CD The gap between Black Mountain Road and Daddy's Creek Trailhead is about 21 miles; currently a 6 mile section along Daddy's Creek is being constructed from the north end. This section passes by Ozone Falls, which brings it further east than either end of the gap is.

DE This gap is about 11 miles. No construction known here. It should include Hinch Mountain, Soak Creek, and it may pass close to Little Piney Falls.

EF This gap is about 13 miles. No construction known here. The Laurel-Snow section offers this: Long-range plans call for the CT to continue north from the 150-foot bridge via the Henderson and Hazelnut Creek watersheds to Liberty Hill Road. The exact route of ~5 miles is still to be determined. A trailhead on Liberty Hill Road will also mark the beginning of the Uplands Section, which will travel ~5 miles northeast to Wash Pelfrey Road; route yet to be determined.

FG This gap is about 3 miles. No construction known here.

GH This gap is about 6 miles. This includes the McGill Gorge, which is where work was to be done in 2015, but I have no report on it.

Editorial

Although the direct damage to the forest caused by Gypsy Moths has been averted—a fungus has greatly reduced their numbers, and trees are not dying as they were 20 years ago—we are still left with the aftermath of dead trees and undergrowth. Particular in the undergrowth is blackberry patches. While blackberry fruits make great summer picking and eating, their thorny stems make hiking overgrown trails difficult and sometimes hurtful.

This was obvious last August when I hiked the Tuscarora Trail in Pennsylvania on Tuscarora Mountain. As we started out, we admired the thorough clearing of extensive blackberry patches. The trail wasn't just clear—it was wide! Eight to 10 feet wide. This hike would be easy! But then the clearing came to an end, and the trail became grown in. Not terribly, but not too recently. This hike was going to be tough! Before long, though the trail was all cleared again. For a while, then it was grown in again. This time it really was bad. But there would be 2 more cleared sections. These three cleared sections were due to the fact that there are 3 side trails that connect to the Tuscarora Trail. Trail workers clear those trail and sections of the Tuscarora Trail north and south for a ways. Unfortunately, these three sections didn't connect, leaving gaps of uncleared trail.



Parts of the Tuscarora Trail were thoroughly cleared...



... while other nearby parts were completely grown in.

I know the difficulties of clearing blackberry patches, having been dealing with them on Shenandoah Mountain. My first GET hike as such was doing Section 5c in 2009. I remember it being badly grown in at the north end, becoming more and more open as we went south. The next summer I went up to clear that trail's north end. After taking hours to get to the top of the first hill, I thought the work might start getting easier only to find extensive blackberry patches. From there it took me an hour to clear each 0.1 mile! Then I came back just 2 months later and found it all grown in again!

I have been going back each year, and fortunately it gets easier. Cutting back year after year does make blackberry plants grow back smaller. But they do need to be cut back. And they have to be cut back well away from the trail. When I found cleared trail grown in again in 2010, it wasn't because cut plants had grown back that much; instead it was plants behind them that leaned over into the trail—yes, they do that!

Once I had that going, I found that in Section 5a, on Bother Knob there is a field on the top, and it is difficult to even tell where the trail goes. In addition, on the ascent there are a number of blackberry patches. So in 2012 I started, with help, to clear this section of trail, too. These are in a sunnier section, and they do grow back more.

Blackberry plants have two-year canes. The first year are they called leafing canes, which grow quickly, but don't produce flowers or berries. The second year they are called fruiting canes, which

flower and produce berries, but don't grow much. If you clear a blackberry patch along the trail during the winter or early spring, you only remove the fruiting canes, which won't grow the following summer, anyway. It's mostly the leafing canes which grow into the trail during the summer. So when's the best time to cut them? There are tradeoffs. If you do it early in the summer, they will have time to grow back into the trail, especially if it is wet or the plants are in a sunny area. If they are mostly under trees, early July is good, especially if it is done every year. This is when I work Section 5c. For sunny spots, such as on Bother Knob, I try late July, but even so I find some canes grow back as much as 30 inches. The later it's done, the less it grows back, but the longer in summer the trail will be grown in with the blackberry plants.

Tools? My preferred weapon is hedge trimmers, which are good for cutting all sorts of plants, including woody stems. They have always been sufficient for Section 5c. But Section 5a, especially across Bother Knob, has lots of high grass and other tall weeds, and I prefer to use a Weed Whacker. Sometimes to cut blackberry plants, as well as other thorny plants you need

blades instead of string on the Weed Whacker. This is sometimes called a Brush Cutter. String may work OK earlier in the season, particularly if the summer is wet, making the canes more succulent.

Shape of the cut? Often trail maintainers cut a hallway through the plants, cutting the sides vertically. I find it better to cut with "walls" leaning out, so there is less ingrowth from the outside of the cut part.

There are other briery plants that need to be cleared from the trail: Black Locust, Roses, Greenbrier, and Hawthorn. Most of these, especially the Hawthorn, do not cut well with Weed Whacker string.

So because of the nuisance of briery plants, I think it is important to clear the trail of these plants, at least once per year. I urge trail maintainers all along the GET to be on the lookout to clear away these annoying and fast-growing plants. It's more of an issue on lightly used trails, as hiker traffic does not trample them as heavily used trails do. It's hard work, but it needs to be done if we want to have a trail that people will want to hike.

Threats to the GET

GWJNF does not renew Agreement with WVSTA

West Virginia Scenic Trails Association maintains the Allegheny Trail, which is mostly in West Virginia and the Monongahela National Forest, but parts of the southern end are in the George Washington-Jefferson National Forests. This includes much of the GET route, and the Allegheny Trail Gap, which the WVSTA is trying to fill in. But the Newsletter of the WVSTA reported that the retiring Forest Supervisor of the GWJNF, Tom Speaks, decided not to renew the agreement.

When asked what this means, Doug Wood responded, "Despite efforts on the part of WVSTA and Monongahela NF staff to convince Tom to develop an updated agreement, he refused to do so.

I don't know why. The portion of the Allegheny Trail that was already developed in GWJNF is still recognized as official trail, but the GWJNF has nobody working with us on further development in the gap."

Atlantic Coast Pipeline Route controversy

The Atlantic Coast Pipeline route has been a concern to the Great Eastern Trail community as it was proposed to go over Shenandoah Mountain about 3 miles south of US 250, in Section 6a. Of course there are many, many other concerns by landowners in the mountains, in the Shenandoah Valley, and areas east. Not only are there many environmental concerns, as the pipeline requires an open corridor hundreds of feet wide, erosion, and concern about Karst geology in the Shenandoah

Valley which could produce sinkholes, but also the builders run roughshod over property owners' rights.

Part of the route was blocked by the Forest Service, as this article indicates:

Forest Service Rejects Atlantic Coast Pipeline Route over Shenandoah Mountain



Aerial View of Shenandoah Mountain taken from above the pipeline route looking north into Ramsey's Draft Wilderness and the proposed Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area. Photo by Rick Webb, Dominion Pipeline Monitoring Coalition

The US Forest Service has rejected the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) route over Shenandoah Mountain, citing a need to protect sensitive resources, such as the Cow Knob Salamander in Virginia and the Cheat Mountain salamander, Northern flying squirrel, and Red Spruce restoration area, all in West Virginia.

The imperiled Cow Knob Salamander is found in higher elevations of Shenandoah Mountain, both in our proposed Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area (SMNSA) and also south of Rt. 250 where the pipeline route would cross.

The USFS decision is welcome news to Friends of Shenandoah Mountain as the proposed ACP route would cross Rt. 250 near Ramsey's Draft and graze the southern edge of our Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area proposal near Braley Pond. Rt. 250 is a scenic corridor and serves as one of the main gateways to the proposed Scenic Area. The construction and maintenance of a permanent,

highly visible linear clearing would have a negative effect on the outstanding scenic, recreational and natural values that Friends of Shenandoah Mountain has been working hard to protect. It could also harm the viability of our proposal. In addition, the high pressure 42" pipeline would pose safety concerns to campers, hikers, mountain bikers, fishermen, hunters, and horseback riders.

The Forest Service stated in its Jan. 19, 2016 letter that in order for the ACP application to receive further consideration, Dominion must develop route alternatives that completely avoid Shenandoah Mountain and Cow Knob Salamander habitat. The FS also said Dominion must consider special species and unique ecosystems in any new alternative(s). Although this route rejection is a major setback for Dominion, their spokesman Jim Norvelle announced that they hope to find an acceptable alternate route elsewhere through the two national forests. Friends of Shenandoah Mountain is extremely grateful for the Forest Service's responsible stewardship of irreplaceable resources on our public lands.



The imperiled Cow Knob Salamander. Photo taken on Reddish Knob by Steven David Johnson

In response to the National Forest rejection of the pipeline route, an alternative route was produced:

Atlantic Coast Pipeline to adopt alternative route through national forests

February 12, 2016

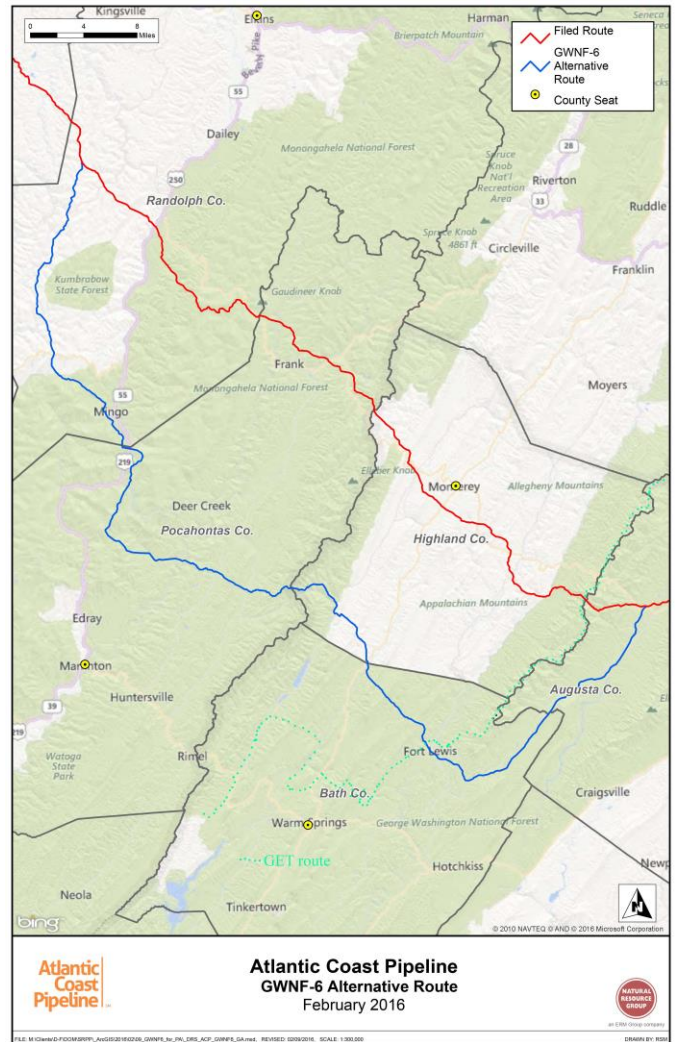
Atlantic Coast Pipeline, LLC (Atlantic) has worked with the U.S. Forest Service over the last several months to find an alternative route that avoids sensitive areas in the Monongahela National Forest and the George Washington National Forest.

As a result of these extensive consultations, next week Atlantic will formally adopt an alternative route that we believe will meet the Forest Service's requirements and provide a viable path forward for the project. Finding a viable route through the national forests is an important milestone for the project and would allow the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to continue its environmental review.

The alternative route was selected to avoid Cheat Mountain and Shenandoah Mountain because of certain species that inhabit those areas, as specifically requested by the Forest Service. The route will reduce total mileage in the national forests by more than one-third, from 28.8 miles to 18.5 miles.

The alternative route will impact approximately 249 new landowners in Randolph and Pocahontas counties in West Virginia, and Highland, Bath and Augusta counties in Virginia. The alternative route will add approximately 30 miles to the total length of the project. A map of the alternative route is attached to this email.

We are contacting landowners along the alternative route to request permission to survey their properties so the route can be thoroughly evaluated. Atlantic will submit a preliminary analysis of the route to the FERC next week, and plans to hold a series of public informational open houses along the route in early March.



This alternative route would still cross the GET route, but south of Shenandoah Mountain, crossing it where the GET has a road walk on Westminster Road, south of Fort Lewis. It would also cross Tower Hill Mountain, where some of us hope to eventually run the GET, but that is likely years away. Nearly all of the other concerns about the pipeline route still remain.

ATVs and Pine Mountain Trail controversy

It appears that a Kentucky state senator acted a little too quickly in favor of ATVs, and has backpedaled on it.

END OF THE TRAIL

Proposed in the 2016 Kentucky General Assembly by the Democratic Senator Ray Jones II from the 31st District, is KY SB 102. Legislation that would amend existing KRS legislation to allow ATV's to use the Pine Mountain Trail. The existing legislation establishing the Trail prohibits motorized vehicles in the effort to protect the unique environment of the Pine Mountain ridgeline, thereby preserving for future generations these untrammeled fragile areas. Penalties for violating these statutes are as high as \$500.00 per day. Senator Jones spent January 2nd traversing many miles of the Trail on an ATV along with some 20 other ATV's and riders and then introduced SB 102 on January 15th, 2016.



Proposed without any prior consultation, SB 102 would require The Pine Mountain Trail to grant usage rights to ATVs. The reality is the Pine Mountain Trail possesses no ATV usage rights. The Pine Mountain Trail owns no property. The Pine Mountain Trail is merely a complex arrangement of agreements, easements, understandings, even handshake agreements to allow a foot-trail across properties owned and administered by others, both private and public, across 8 counties in two states. The PMT's usage as a hike trail was the only crossing rights ever negotiated with these various entities. The PMT does not possess any motorized vehicle passage rights and the PMT cannot give or grant those rights to anyone wishing to use the trail on an ATV. Indeed all of our agreements expressly forbid motorized vehicles and none of our agreements would be legal or viable if SB 102 is enacted. In violation of all of our agreements the Pine Mountain Trail ceases to exist. Without the Trail and without property owners permission, ATV users would be

subject to KRS 189.575 section (2) A person shall not operate an all-terrain vehicle on private property without the consent of the landowner, tenant, or individual responsible for the property, and, section (3) A person shall not operate an all-terrain vehicle on public property unless the governmental agency responsible for the property has approved the use of all-terrain vehicles. Without approvals, ATV use would be illegal on what was the Pine Mountain Trail. And the ATV riders gain nothing from this legislation....an outcome preferable to the Pine Mountain Trail ever being a party to the destruction of the environment along the Pine Mountain ridgeline.

SB 102 has catastrophic consequences for the Pine Mountain Trail and its use as a hiking trail. There is zero compatibility between hiking and ATV usage. They cannot coexist. The viability of the Pine Mountain State Scenic Trail as an attraction to bring hikers and tourists into our area has no future if ATV's are allowed continuing use of the Trail.

This precedent-setting legislation is little more than the confiscation of public and private properties for a personal ATV playground. Do we have to give the Senator access to the Pine Mountain State Scenic Trail just to protect Kentucky's other state parks? How far can you tow an ATV?

As the Pine Mountain State Scenic Trail follows the ridge boundary between Kentucky and Virginia, the Trail frequently moves from one state to the other and back and forth continuously. Of the 13.2 miles of the Trail from the Carson Island trailhead to the Birch Knob Observation Tower, more than 8 miles, some 61% of the trail is in Virginia. On the Senator's trek, he spent most of his time riding illegally on an ATV in the protected Jefferson National Forest in Virginia.

It is ironic that the young state senator that authored the legislation to bring the Pine Mountain Trail into existence is the same state senator authorizing the legislation to terminate it. For nineteen years the PMTC has built and maintained the trail, secured agreements, constructed shelters, spring boxes and signage. Countless volunteer man-hours, grants,

gifts, and assistance would in an instant all be wasted. The Senator's legacy and our legacy trashed with a piece of legislation designed to get a few votes in the coming election.

HISTORY OF THE TRAIL

The Trail began as a community development project in 1998 with Kentucky's Cooperative Extension Services. In 2000, a 501(c)3 chartered as the Pine Mountain Trail Conference, began constructing trail on lands managed by the Jefferson National Forest. Kentucky's governor, Paul Patton, supported and pushed for the creation of the Pine Mountain Trail State Park in 2002. The projected trail, covering some 110 miles from the Breaks Interstate Park to the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, may be the most complex legal entity ever proposed as a Kentucky State Park. Spread across 2 states and multiple Kentucky and Virginia counties, numerous private property owners, and even more public tracts of land requiring countless agreements with the Breaks Interstate Park, US Army Corps of Engineers, Jefferson National Forest, Bad Branch State Nature Preserve, Nature Conservancy lands, Pine Mountain-Hensley Wildlife Management Area, Kingdom Come State Park, Blanton Forest State Nature Preserve, Hi-Lewis Pine Barrens State Nature Preserve, Kentenia State Forest. We have agreements with the Letcher County Fiscal Court, the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, the US Fish and Wildlife, the Kentucky Department of Parks, the Southeast Community College, and the Kentucky Division of Forestry.

We have made countless concessions to gain a hike trail on some of the most pristine and scenic highlands in Kentucky and Virginia thru negotiations with some of the most dedicated, hard-headed property and resource managers and owners, public and private, that were determined to protect and preserve their part of our natural resources as a legacy for future generations. That you would, and could legally, put an ATV on a foot of this trail is legislation that is incomprehensible in its disregard for the natural environment.

Trail legislation.....Revised

The Pine Mountain Trail Conference wishes to thank Kentucky Senator Ray Jones for his recent consultations aimed at jointly arriving at legislation that could be supported by the Pine Mountain Trail Conference and those advocating for increased locations for ATV use. In its revised form, SB 102 calls for a feasibility study of ATV recreational vehicles on the Pine Mountain State Scenic Trail and the Kentucky sections of the Breaks Interstate Park. This study, to be conducted by the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet, would be completed and the results available to the LRC by December, 2016. This will provide both parties with the additional time needed to quantify and present their best reasoned arguments both for and against ATV use on the Trail and on Breaks Park properties. We look forward to using this opportunity to rally support for continuing to use the Pine Mountain Trail solely as a hiking trail.

It is important to note that ATV use in a controlled, safe manner that is non-destructive to the natural

environment is supported by the Pine Mountain Trail Conference. And, the Conference will aid Senator Jones efforts to gain legal, commercial venues for their use.

Those advocating for the Trail have in recent correspondence with Senator Jones received a better understanding of his position and the need for legislation.

Photo Gallery



Judge Rye Road on Great North Mountain



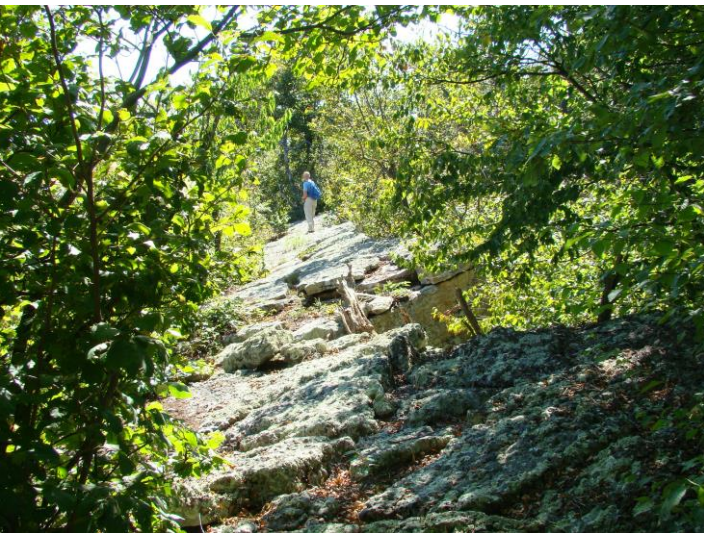
At Big Schloss



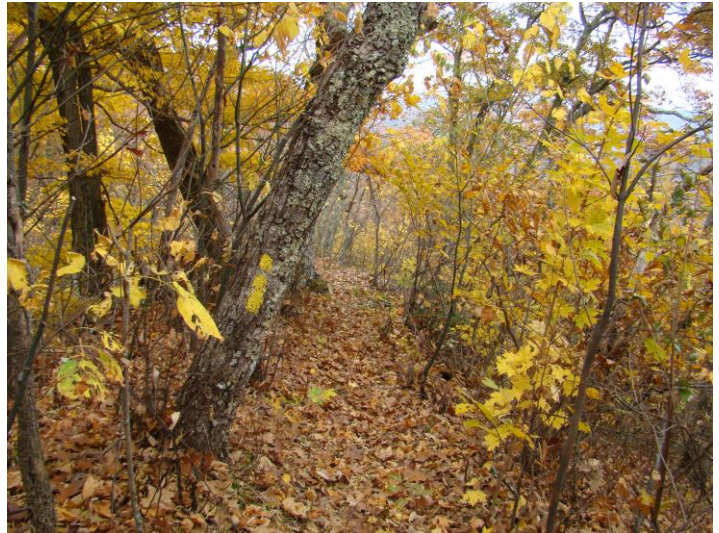
Boardwalk on Tuscarora Trail near Halfmoon Trail



Climb up Tibbet Knob



Tuscarora Trail on Tuscarora Mountain, PA



Shenandoah Mountain North Trail

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

Email: GET Newsletter: Hupp_Tim@msn.com

Email GETA President Tom Johnson about Great Eastern Trail: johnts25@gmail.com