



GET Hiking

Great Eastern Trail Newsletter

Volume 6, Number 1, February 2017

By Timothy A. Hupp

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Kathy Finch Becomes Third GET Thru-Hiker



On October 9, 2016, Kathy Finch, 63, of Waterville Valley, New Hampshire, reached Flag Mountain, Alabama to become the third person to complete a Thru-hike of the Great Eastern Trail, and the first to do it southbound. She began her hike on April 5 near Corning, New York. On her way she spoke with several newspaper reporters. This article quotes and derives from their stories, mostly from the articles in The Daily Home of Talladega, AL and the Dade Planet of Trenton, GA.

"This big dream hit me when I was 14," said Kathy Finch. "In 1967, Lyndon Johnson signed the National Trails System Act. The next year, National Geographic came out with a huge spread, photos and everything, of the old-school early hikers with the canvas backpacks, the tin cups and everything, and I was smitten with that romantic, seat-of-your-pants, old-school hike."

(continued on page 2)

Tenth Anniversary of GET (?)

Sort of. 2017 marks the 10th anniversary for the Great Eastern Trail Association (GETA), the organization overseeing the GET. The actual naming of the trail happened in 2005.

But as 2007 was the year of the organizing the GETA as an organization over the separate trail, we can celebrate 2017 as the 10th anniversary of the GET. How to celebrate? I'd suggest local hikes, but in addition, do some GET hikes outside your area to get a bigger sense of it.

I plan to lead some local GET hikes, do about 5 work trips, and do some sections of the GET in Pennsylvania and Tennessee.

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The AT was new back in those tin-cup days, she said, and on his big trip (in 1948), Earl Shaffer would get lost, ask directions only to find that the locals had no idea where the trail was, get asked in to supper and end up camping for the night in somebody's backyard. "That's the kind of adventure I've been looking for all my life," said Kathy.

Kathy, who turned 63 while on the Great Eastern Trail, grew from an outdoorsy kid into an outdoorsy woman, still with the big dream, but times changed and the dream had to change, too. "It was always going to be the Appalachian Trail," said Kathy. "But it isn't like that anymore. It's a superhighway."

She did in fact end up hiking the AT, not in one trip but in two big chunks 12 years apart, in 2001 and 2013. She enjoyed it but it was not her idea of "seat-of-your-pants"--too well traveled and too many people. "Then along came the Great Eastern Trail and I said, this is it," she said.

So walking the GET in 2016 is an odd pastiche of trails and asphalt, deep woods and towns, roughing it miles from anywhere and sleeping in cheap motels along the highway; but Kathy says the sketchiness of it is the whole *point*.

"This is my version of the 1948 Earl Shaffer Appalachian Trail hike," she said. "I said I'm going to get my seat-of-your-pants, old-school, multi-month adventure, get-yourself-in-and-out-of-trouble, road walk, trails, things-happening-all-the-time, making-new-friends, in-the-moment, things-you-can't-plan, this-is-it! -- and it's worked out that way."

Kathy says on her way from New York she's had no trouble with bears, mountain lions or things that go bump in the night, though she admits, "I've had some snake moments." Nor has she had any trouble with predators of the two-legged variety. "I've been going through good places meeting good people," she said. "Everyone's been very friendly."

The biggest problem she's faced, says Kathy, has been trail conditions. "Trails don't maintain themselves and I've found that out this year," she said. Trails become so clogged with blowdown or

new growth, she said: "There've been times I get so stuck I can't get going, and I have to back out while I can. Then I may have to walk out three or four miles and find a road and go around it. There's been a lot of that."

The weather has also provided an adventure or two. This summer, she spent a rainy day holed up in a three-sided hiker's shelter atop Allegheny Mountain in West Virginia, watching the thunderstorms roll over her and enjoying having good cellphone reception for a change. "It wasn't until the next day that I dropped down and realized that 22 counties in southern West Virginia were declared disaster areas," she said.

She had arrived in West Virginia just in time for the Biblical-level flooding that devastated the state, and she stayed as Army helicopters and relief agencies rushed to the rescue. "It was an astounding experience to watch all that play out and be a part of that," she said.

Kathy has done all this walking in sturdy but lightweight tennis shoes rather than hiking boots, which she says is manageable because she keeps her backpack under 25 pounds. She carries almost no clothes except for the shirt and shorts she was wearing at her interview with The Planet, plus extensions that make the shorts into long pants and an extra pair of socks. She does carry a lightweight rainsuit she wears while laundromat-washing the other things, though she says it turns into a mini-sauna in summer. She also had a sweater she hadn't used all summer but that came in handy in the Dade library's industrial-strength air conditioning.

For Kathy Finch, the Great Eastern Trail has been the trip of a lifetime, the one she's hoped and planned for since 1967, the crazy dream that helped her get out of bed in the morning when she went through periods of depression earlier in life. "I'm in church every day," she said. "This is a joyous celebration for me."

Finch has hiked several long distance trails, including the Appalachian Trail and the Ice Age Trail in Wisconsin.

Her favorite part of the nearly 2,000-mile journey is not the accomplishment itself -- but instead, it has been “striking up conversations with small-town strangers.”

“The whole experience has been a very serendipitous journey,” she said.

Finch said her paths have crossed with several new acquaintances along the way.

According to Finch, the GET isn’t for the faint of heart.

“I recommend beginners hike the connecting trails first,” she said.

She advises to travel as light as you can and to pack items that can serve dual purposes. Finch noted she relies heavily on trail maps and spreadsheets to prepare.

“I try to plan at least five days in advance while hiking,” she said.

Finch said she has enjoyed being able to take her time, traveling the GET at her own pace.

The hiker also expressed that she “hasn’t spent a lot of time reflecting, and that it has been more of a celebration.”

“It’s like going to church every day, this journey has been my worship -- and I know the good Lord and my parents are watching over me,” she said.

“I hope that by completing the hike, I will inspire and help educate others who want to do the same thing,” she said.

Meanwhile, Finch has learned to live more in the moment and truly appreciates the experience each day brings.

“I haven’t thought about it in such a way that I’m ... traveling through a particular city or state,” she said. “I appreciate the land itself more -- and think to myself, ‘I could live here.’”

The GET, she explained, is still very much a work in progress. "There are large sections of the trail that are not built yet, property-issue kind of things, and that's where the road walks are," she said. "The Appalachian Trail is now all trail, off road, but it

took 60 years of development to do it."



High Knob Tower, Virginia

Kathy Finch’s Time Line:

- April 5 – Start
- April 20 – Blackwell, PA
- April 22 – Waterville, PA
- May 20 – Hancock, MD
- June 2 – Bergton, VA (stay at Front Royal)
- June 17 – Hidden Valley, VA
- June 24 – White Sulphur Springs, WV
- July 2 – Narrows, VA
- July 8 – Hinton, WV
- July 13-17 – Mullens, WV
- July 23 – Matewan, WV
- July 24 – Breaks Interstate Park, VA
- August 8 – Harlan, KY
- August 12 – Cumberland Gap, VA/KY
- August 16 – Caryville, TN
- August 22 – Wartburg, TN
- September 8 – Soddy Daisy, TN
- September 10 – Chattanooga, TN
- September 19-22 – Cave Spring, GA
- October 9 – Flagg Mountain, AL (finish)



Kathy on Flagg Mountain, Alabama

And she hopes her trek through the great, unfinished new footpath across America will help others who want to try it. She has been posting faithfully in a GET Facebook journal (which many of the photos in this article came from) that readers can access at

facebook.com/groups/GETHiking

"Not only is this my journey," she said, "the bigger picture is this is the Great Eastern Trail, and the data that I bring to the table is going to help future hikers."

Due to some sections she skipped or walked around, Kathy claims 1390 miles of the GET.

It was one of Kathy's hopes in talking with The Dade Planet to publicize the need for trail volunteers, particularly on the GET. Accordingly, The Planet consulted its source on that matter, the aforementioned Greg "Sardo" Foster.

Sardo works most weeks on the Cloudland Canyon trails and can always use a hand with those, but he says they're in great shape compared to others nearby. He says the Cumberland Trail, which begins in Chattanooga and is part of the GET, hasn't been maintained in three years and is in such an awful condition that Kathy had to get off it. "If somebody wanted to do some work on GET trails locally," he said, "the Cumberland Trail would be a great place to start."

Anyone interested in volunteering on the Cumberland Trail can visit its website, cumberlandtrail.org.

The GET itself also has volunteer opportunities listed at greateasterntail.net.

And to volunteer locally, readers may email Sardo at athruhiker2006@yahoo.com.

Trail Updates

Mid State Trail (Pennsylvania) (S to N)

Section 3 - SR 1004 thru Everett to PA 36 @

Loysburg Gap

Last Updated on July 21, 2016

SR 1004 to PA 36 (lengthened to **30.1 km**) or 2 km shorter via temporary roadwalk, Private Land and SGL 73, Bedford County, Everett Region

Guide: 12th Edition (2012)

Map: 301-306 (2010)

Alerts:

Significant briar growth has been reported near the south end of SGL 73 and going to the cow pasture. Using the alternate route described in the 12th edition, including the orange rectangle blazed Blue Triangle Trail, will avoid some of the worst area. There is now a sign on a tree at the junction of MST with Blue Triangle Trail. SB hikers will need to be especially alert. (9/15)

Section 8 - PA 26 near Pine Grove Mills to Detweiler Junction

Last Updated on July 21, 2016

PA 26 to Detweiler Junction with Greenwood Spur of Standing Stone Trail, also east route of Great Eastern Trail (24.3 km), Rothrock State Forest, Huntingdon/Centre Counties, State College Region

Guide: 12th edition (2012)

Map: 307-310 (2007) and Section 8 Access Routes to State College Area (06/16)

Alerts: Relocation near north end (between NB km 22.97 and 24.05) moved trail off Bear Meadows Rd (NB km 23.73). Negligible change in distance.

(8/15) See temporary map **Section 8 Access Routes to State College Area (06/16)**

Musser Gap access is now open. Temporary map **Section 8 Access Routes to State College Area (06/16)** shows continuing walking route off-road to Whitehall Road at southern limits of State College Borough and unblazed walking route on to the corner of College Ave. and Allen St. downtown, and unblazed on-road route on to the nearest resupply at Hills Plaza. (6/16)

Section 17 - PA 414 @ Blackwell to PA 287 near Antrim

Last Updated on August 31, 2016

PA 414 to PA 287 1st Crossing (**24.0 km**), Tioga State Forest, SGL 268, and Private Land, Tioga County, Tioga Region

Guide: 12th Edition (2012)

Map: Temporary Map T17

(8/8/2016) Temporary Map 414 to 287 High Water Route Around Stony Fork

Alerts:

NO FIRES in Tioga State Forest until further notice due to drought conditions. (7/16)

Clay Mine Rd - DCNR has established a small stone surfaced hiker parking area, marked by a routed sign, 95 m north of (around a curve from) the actual spot where MST crosses this gravel Forestry road. A routed arrow sign now points the way from the parking lot to the invisible trail. There is also now a two-car stone surfaced parking spot, in what was a muddy mess at the south end of the Beer Can trail, close to the Clay Mine Road ford crossing of Stony Fork. (8/14, 7/15)

Section 18 - PA 287 near Antrim to US 6

Last Updated on July 21, 2016

PA 287 1st Crossing to US 6 (**39 km**), Private Land and Tioga State Forest, Tioga County, Tioga Region

Guide: 12th Edition (2012) *and* Partial Guide Revision **Temporary Section 18 (05/12/2015)**

Map: Temporary Map T18 (03/20/2015)

Alerts:

NO FIRES in Tioga State Forest until further notice due to drought conditions. (7/16)

Part of MST Section 18, km 0.92 to 7.13 NB (5.69 KM), on private property in Duncan Twp, Tioga County, is closed indefinitely due to heavy construction activity. (**This is the same section that had the Oct 1-Jan 15 hunting season closure.**) As during hunting season hikers will need to detour along SR 3009 through downtown Antrim, turning at the stone church to continue to follow SR 3009. We appreciate your understanding during this time and it is not known when the trail will be able to be

reopened. The interim road route is blazed yellow and is described in the 12th edition Guide. (07/12)

Gas drilling and pipeline work is under way on private land in this section. At this time we think any interruptions in the route will be short term in nature and able to be detoured using the nearest road. Wimbrough Campsite is again accessible. Any particular concerns contact **tioga@hike-mst.org** (8/11)

Cumulative revisions since 12th edition Guide, for newly blazed and new off-road trail from Tokarz Rd to PA 660, included in current Temporary Map T18 and partial Guide revision, both linked above (5/15):

Tokarz Rd to Haverly Hill Rd - remains unblazed for now

Haverly Hill Rd to past Radar Cliff to Hickory Ridge Rd - new off-road trail (2014), with parking area on Hickory Ridge Rd courtesy of the private landowner

Hickory Ridge Rd to Cherry Flats Rd - interim yellow blazed gravel roads

Cherry Flats Rd to Miller Hill Rd - new off-road trail (2013)

Miller Hill Rd past Johnson Hill Rd to Mudge Rd - new off road trail (2015) with yellow blazed gravel road hunting season detour

Mudge Rd hunting season detour - now yellow blazed to near PA 660

Between Miller Hill Rd and PA 660 - Parts **closed Oct 1-Jan 15** for hunting. (4/09, 5/15) Detour route around hunting season closures now yellow blazed along the road. (8/14)

See 12th Edition guide, and temporary map and temporary guide revision linked above.

Section 19 - US 6 to PA 287 @ Ives Run Recreation Area

Last Updated on July 21, 2016

US 6 to PA 287 2nd Crossing (**24.2 km**), Private Land, Hills Creek State Park, SGL 37, and Tioga-Hammond Lakes, Tioga County, Tioga Region

Guide: 12th Edition (2012)

Map: Temporary Map T19 (05/15)

Alerts: Between Hills Creek SP and US 6 - **Parts closed Oct 15-Jan 15 for hunting.** (4/09)

Gas drilling and pipeline work could be under way on private land in this section. At this time we think any interruptions in the route will be short term in nature and able to be detoured using the nearest road. Please download the current maps.

Any particular concerns contact tioga@hike-mst.org (6/11)

See 12th Edition guide, and temporary maps linked above.

Section 20 - PA 287 to NY Border

Last Updated on July 21, 2016

PA 287 2nd Crossing to NY Border (**29.0 km**), Private Land, and Cowanesque Lake, Tioga County, Tioga Region

Guide: 12th Edition (2012)

Map: Map T20 (06/16)

Alerts: Between Ridge Rd and Smith Hill Rd - **Closed Nov 15-Dec 15 for hunting.** Road detour for thru hikes uses PA 287 for length of Hammond Lake, Elkhorn Rd, Howe Hill Rd, west end of Smith Hill Rd. (10/15)

South side of Scenic View Dr - New home has been built in what was described as certified organic pasture in the 12th edition Guide. The "friendly" bull and his harem of cows have departed. The new owners have graciously allowed MST to remain open on their land with a slight adjustment to the angle the trail crosses Scenic View Dr, staying east of their new driveway. (5/13)

North side of Scenic View Dr - RV's Mt Top/Tioga Heritage Campground has returned to its old name Scenic View Campground. Phone number 570 835-5700. (11/13)

Between campground/Scenic View Dr and Smith Hill Rd - Logging has obscured trail in this area. Detour on Scenic View, Mann Hill, and Smith Hill roads, the former blue blazed bypass route, now orange blazes. (8/14, 7/15, 5/16)

Baldwin/Shepard Creek Rd is now abandoned by

both Lawrence and Farmington Townships. Still passable for hikers, however stick to the blazed trail, do not use the former road compass-south trail-west of the trail in Farmington Twp near Smith Hill Rd. (7/15)

Gas drilling and pipeline work is under way on private land in this section. At this time we think any interruptions in the route will be short term in nature and able to be detoured using the nearest road. Please download the current maps. Any particular concerns contact tioga@hike-mst.org (6/11)

Tuscarora Trail

Section 9 – Licking Creek Section, northern 1.9 miles:

At the north end, Forge Road has been closed to hikers. Instead follow PA 456 and Mill Drive. Follow blue blazes.

Section 14 – *In October 2015 the part of the trail west of VA 600 (Siler Road), including Basores Ridge Shelter was closed.*

Basores Ridge Shelter remains open, on PATC land, but isolated from the TT/GET, 1.6 miles from VA 600 on VA 689, so Southbound hikers need to follow VA 600 from where the trail crosses about 1.1 mile south of Siler at mile 1.3 all of the way to Gainesville.

Going Northbound, at the intersection with VA 689, continue straight on VA 600 another 3.2 miles. So 2.3 miles of trail with a shelter plus 1.6 miles of road walk has been replaced with a 3.2 mile road walk, which is part of a 9.1 mile road walk.

If you wish to hike by the Basores Ridge Shelter, southbound take VA 600 (Brush Creek Road) west from Siler 0.7 mile then VA 689 (Adams Road) south 2.4 miles to the shelter parking, then 1.6 miles more to VA 600 (Siler Road) to pick up the Tuscarora Trail with blue blazes. Northbound, take VA 689 left from VA 600 (Siler Road) 1.6 miles to the shelter parking, an additional 2.4 miles to VA 600 (Brush Creek Road), and go right 0.7 mile to Siler and the blue-blazed Tuscarora Trail.

Monogahela National Forest

The GET goes through Monongahela National Forest at the south end of the Headwaters Section and the north part of the Allegheny Trail. The rangers of this National Forest plan to put up some signs explaining the GET at Lake Sherwood. The maps have been approved the maps, and they should be printed soon. They are going to be 11x17 and will stand alone. Once they are printed, they will be put into kiosks for them, and hope to install them at Lake Sherwood later this spring.

Narrows Now Trails Club Report

The Mary Ingles Trail, part of the GET, between Glen Lyn, VA and Bluestone WMA, WV, across Army Corps of Engineers land has been opened.



A January 1, 2017 hike was held, and 36 hikers plus 10 runners went! A February 11 work trip is intended to fill some low muddy spots with rocks.

Pine Mountain Trail

The Cloudsplitter 100 is an Ultramarathon that uses part of the Pine Mountain Trail in Kentucky. Recently a problem with this run has cause a break in the Birch Knob section of the Pine Mountain Trail.

(From Shad Baker of Pine Mountain Trail Conference)

The Cloudsplitter 100 owner, Susan Howell, had a falling out with a landowner that the PMT/GET crosses on what was long considered a public right-of-way by the USFS. The landowner did not acknowledge that right-of-way and physically barricaded the trail with tank traps, gates, fencing and signage. Since we would have to prove it in court and it would subsequently be open to all users (including motorized), I opted to drop it and just

relocate the trail at two locations (the Doubles and Bryant Gap).

Both places are on the Birch Knob Section and total almost 4 miles. The route has already been scouted, flagged, GPS mapped and brushed at the Doubles. Bryant Gap has been scouted, flagged and the initial route mapped. This is also being sent to Pete. The issue at Bryant Gap is one of topography AND landownership. The relocation onto Jefferson National Forest lands is complicated by the fact that the route requires navigating through and between numerous cliff-lines and dense rhododendrons. The USFS is working towards having both routes approved by July. We will almost certainly have to tweak the Bryant Gap route in order to maintain acceptable standards and because I detest switch-backs unless they are absolutely necessary. I'm getting older and I prefer Shenandoah NP-style trail so that I can hike it into my 90's (;>).

As with many things in life, I have discovered in mid-life that those things which at first appear to be negatives and cause for heart-burn, turn later into positives. In these instances, certainly the difficulties with Susan Howell and the landowner have been trying and a source of constant irritation to us (and me personally). But the resulting trail will be more interesting, more attractive, less accessible to anything but foot traffic, lay more gently on the land, avoid unsightly gates and disturbed ground, and will eliminate the private land issue. In the long-run, it will have been worth the headaches.

(Note – According to the Pine Mountain Trail Guide Map, The Doubles is 20.7 miles from Elkhorn City and 5.7 miles from US 23/Pound Gap and Bryant Gap is 22.8 miles from Elkhorn City and 3.6 miles from US 23/Pound Gap.)

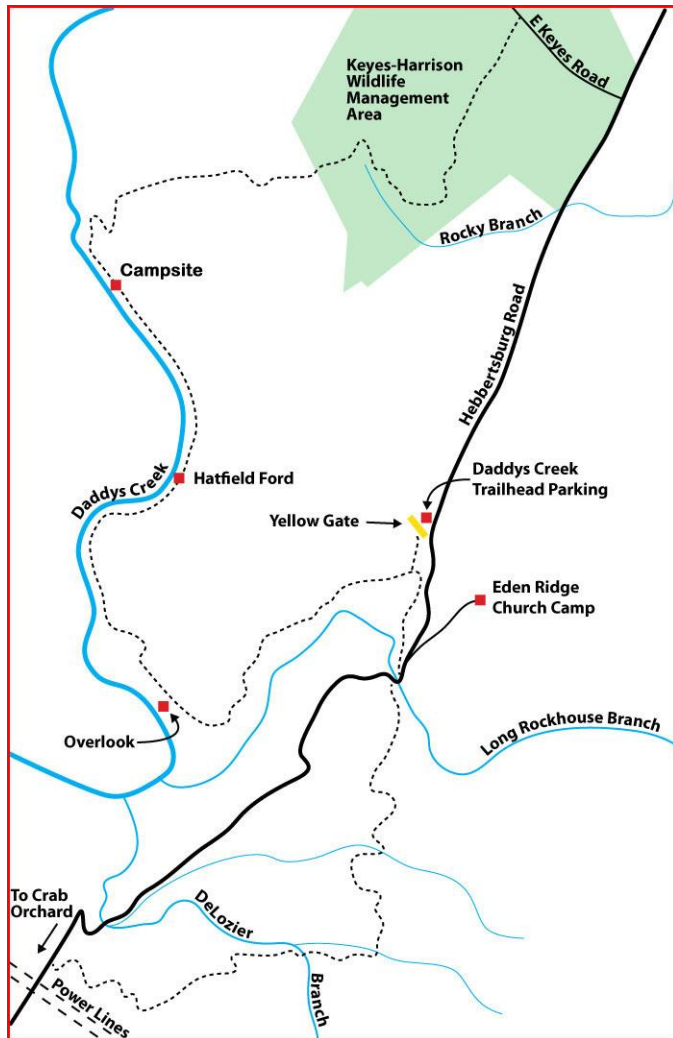
Cumberland Trail

A 7.2 mile section of the Cumberland Trail has been opened in the Crab Orchard Segment, the Daddys Creek Section. This section is north of Wartburg, TN and east of Fairfield Grade.

This is not to be confused with the part that was being built south from Devils Breakfast Table from

the south end of the Obed Wild and Scenic River Segment, as reported in an earlier issue. This is further south, and when the other part is completed, there will still be a 2 mile road walk between these two sections.

This section of trail includes a few “rock houses”, rock ledges, an abandoned mine, a viewpoint, as well as many kinds of large trees and some rhododendron bushes.



Georgia update

The Lula Lake Land Conservancy has allowed a section of trail to be built off the road in northern Georgia, between Cloudland Canyon and Chattanooga, TN. Kathy Finch was brought along that trail as she was doing her thru-hike.

A Thru Hike but not all GET!

Dan Bedore plans to hike south to north in the Appalachians in 2017. His hike is to go from Alabama to New York, but he has chosen a route that is part GET, part AT, and some other trails as well. He has already hiked 472 miles of the GET on earlier expeditions, but he prefers not to do much in road walks.

His plan is posted at:

http://www.bedore.org/2017_Alabama_New_York_Plan.html#Table

He states his plans to include the Pinhoti Trail, Green Ridge State Forest, the Mid State Trail, and the Crystal Hills Trail, parts of the GET.

If Dan goes through with the plans that include the above parts of the GET, he'll end up with 1613 GET miles. But, as you can see from the plans he makes, there are a lot of different possibilities, so it could be different. Just follow to see what he does.

Upcoming Events

The 2017 AHTS Annual Conference and General Meeting is planned for **March 24-26th** at **Camp McDowell** in **Nauvoo**! We have great facilities available and will be arranging the accommodations and Registration Form to be sent out soon. Keep the dates open because it's going to be a great conference.

<http://hikealabama.org/joomla/index.php/2015-10-30-02-25-36>

for more information and to register online.

Or download a printable registration form:

<http://hikealabama.org/joomla/images/documents/2017-Conf-Reg-01-24-2017.pdf>

2017 BreakAway (Cumberland Trail) is March 4 to April 1 near Dayton, TN.

BreakAway / Alternative Spring Break is in our 22nd year! Set aside some time in March to work with over 160 college students on the trail!

To confirm your participation contact the CTC Office 931-456-6259 or ctcoffice2014@gmail.com.

We need to know what days (or weeks) you will be volunteering so we can arrange for accommodations and meals. base camp information below.

We expect to leave camp at 8 AM EASTERN TIME. Work week is Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday for the students. Work will continue on Wednesday for local volunteers and paid crew.

WagonMaster Training at BreakAway

Winter at Roaring Creek

Watch for details for this important opportunity to gain new trail building skills and become a crew leader.

Training will run from 9:00 AM Eastern to 1:00 PM on a couple of Wednesdays. Specific dates TBA. Take your skills beyond trail building!

Base Camp Location:

From Nashville and Points West

From I-40E take the Highway 127 Exit in Crossville. Go all the way through Crossville; at the fork take 127 S into Pikeville. Drive all the way through town; turning left onto Highway 30E for twelve miles to **State Road 443 West** – NOT EAST – (Ogden Road). Turn right and drive one mile to the Fort Bluff Camp entrance on the left and follow the signs to the office.

From Knoxville and Points North

From I-40, take I-75S to Exit #49 (Athens/Decatur). Turn right and drive for 28.5 miles into Dayton to the top of the mountain. Turn left onto **State Road 443 West** – NOT EAST – (Ogden Road). Drive one mile to the Fort Bluff Camp entrance on the left and follow the signs to the office.

From Atlanta and South

Drive north on I-75 to Chattanooga, TN. Take exit #4 (Highway 153) for twelve miles; turn right onto 27N, then drive 28 miles into Dayton. At traffic light #7 turn left onto Highway 30W. Drive for 4.8 miles to the top of the mountain. Turn left onto State Road 443 West – NOT EAST – (Ogden Road). Drive one mile to the Fort Bluff Camp entrance on the left and follow the signs to the office.

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161 students will be with us throughout the month of March. Students arrive Sunday. Sunday evening after dinner is an orientation for students followed by a briefing for WagonMasters and local volunteers.

We expect to leave camp at 8 AM EASTERN TIME. Work week is Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday for the students. Work will continue on Wednesday for local volunteers and paid crew.

The **Standing Stone Trail Club** annual spring membership meeting will be held on Saturday, April 8, 2017 from 8:00 am - noon at the Rothrock State Forest District / DCNR building in Huntingdon, PA. The public is welcome to attend. Details will be forthcoming in March.

The **GETA Board** will be meeting April 21-23, 2017 at Camp Blue Diamond in Central Pennsylvania. The host club will be the Standing Stone Trail Club.



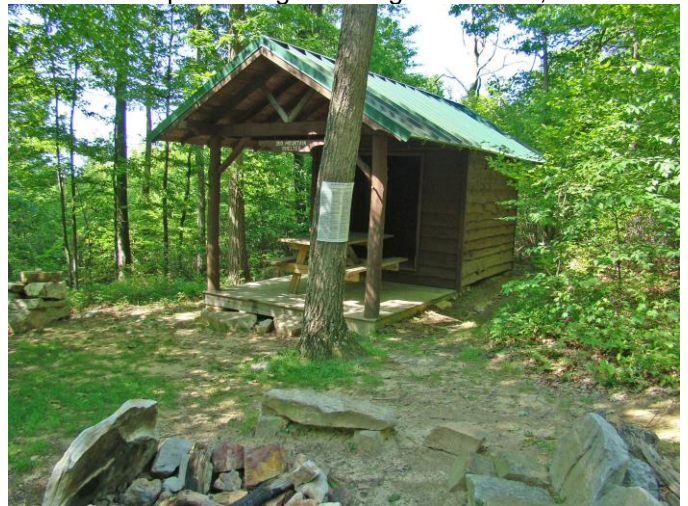
Pinhoti Trail near Cave Spring, GA



Porcupine along Standing Stone Trail, PA



PATC hike over Bother Knob, VAWV



Big Mountain Shelter along Tuscarora Trail/GET, PA

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
Kathy Finch	1390
Mark Sleeper	1033
Stuart Hickey	915
Taylor Pannill	800
Sue Turner	720
John Calhoun	632
Lois Ludwig	561
Bill Shaffer	545
Tim Hupp	502
Dixie Greer “Star Left”	495
Dan Bedore	472
Rick Guhse	437
Tom Johnson	382
Jim Sims	366
David Frye	358
Lloyd McAskill	322
Garrett Fondaule “Shepherd”	258
Burgess Smith	232
Marty Dominy	211
Warren Devine	205
Carol Devine	187
Marcie Schubert	169
Nancy Ruggles	153
Sam Goldsberry	142
Jane Thompson	133
Shad Baker	124
Michael Seth	97
Chad Churchman	95
Bill Amonette	90
Linda Clark O’Brien	90
Malcolm & Lynn Cameron	89
Mary Huffer	73
John Spies	71
Brian Hirt	71
Christa Neher	71

So get out and GET Hiking!

And report your miles!

Mark Sleeper's GET Hiking

Of those who have added up their GET miles hiked, Mark Sleeper has the most miles of those who have not thru-hiked it—1033! Most of it he did in the past year. Here is his report of his GET hiking:

I started hiking in 2005 and I started hiking the trails that comprise the GET in 2008. I was hiking relevant GET trails as part of other goals – first hiking local trails, then hiking the AT (Northbound) and all of the trails in the Shenandoah National Park (worked my way South), then hiking the Tuscarora Trail (Northbound), then hiking all of the trails that the Tuscarora Trail passed through (which added Massanutten Mountain and Great North Mountain trails to my goals), then hiking all of the trails in VA (working my way South) and MD (worked my way first East then West) plus some trails in WV and PA, now trying to hike all the significant trails in the country.

Hiking progression relevant to the GET:

In 2008 I thru-hiked the AT.

From 2009 through 2012 I day-hiked the Tuscarora Trail, all of the Great North Mountain trails, all of the Shenandoah Mountain trails and all of the Maryland state park trails.

In early 2014 I patched up the missing pieces of the Headwaters section of the GET (connecting Great North Mountain to Shenandoah Mountain; connecting Shenandoah Mountain to the Allegheny Trail near Lake Sherwood, WV; and filling in any forest service road walks within Great North Mountain and Shenandoah Mountain that I had not completed as part of walking the trails). In late 2014 I hiked the Standing Stone Trail and half of the Greenwood Trail. I have now hiked 318 AT, Headwater, and Tuscarora trail miles, plus 78 Standing Stone trail miles, plus 3 Greenwood Trail miles for a total of 399 GET miles.

In 2016 I hiked the AL/GA Pinhoti Trail, the PA Mid State Trail (and completed the Greenwood Trail), the NY Crystal Hills Trail, and then the two discontinuous sections of the Allegheny Trail (connecting the AT to the Headwaters section near Lake Sherwood, WV). As of 12/3/16 I have now added 214 Pinhoti miles, 374 MST/Greenwood/Crystal Hills miles, and 46 Allegheny miles for a total of 1033 GET miles.

My first **impression of the trail** was amazement when I found a section of the Tuscarora trail two or three days north of Great North Mountain that had moss and lichen growing right in the middle of the trail – I loved hiking on the AT but you don't often have the experience of feeling that you're the first person to pass through in a long time.

I really enjoyed the navigational challenges of a few flagged but not-yet-blazed trail miles within the Headwaters Section – the Carr Mountain Trail (heading South from VA 259 on the way to US 33) – and Trail 481B heading West from US 220 on the way to Bogan Run Trail [that takes you to SR 600].

In AL, there were some pretty **special sections** of the Pinhoti trail cut high up on the side of some steep hills that looked down on rivers and creeks, sometimes passing by small waterfalls on feeder creeks. I met hikers on this trail that came from as far North as VT and as far South as FL. I also met a triple-crown backpacker (who had also hiked the North Country NST and the VT Long Trail) doing trail maintenance – that was fun and inspiring!

The Southern portion of the PA Mid-State Trail had the most **strenuous terrain** (for the wet conditions that I was in), with some portions of the trail routed near the top of slanted slabs of rock that were jutting up into the air creating the top of the mountain ridge. I met two high school age backpackers that quit after three days of this but then, three or four days later, I met an 80 year old lone backpacker who was still going!

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, although it's hard to keep it up to date.

Only 90 Miles Left to Build !

With the completion of the Daddys Creek / Keyes-Harrison section in Cumberland County, the Cumberland Trail now has over 210 miles open for hiking. In 2017 work continues south of McGill Creek in Hamilton County and north of Peavine Road in Cumberland County toward Devil's Breakfast Table in Cumberland County.

Also in Cumberland County the long anticipated link between Black Mountain and Ozone Falls is in progress. When complete there will be a new, uninterrupted route, from Ozone Falls to the Head of the Sequatchie in Bledsoe County – roughly 18 trail miles.

CTC's Central Crew/Big Dig's/Volunteers are currently committed to construct the 8.2 mile stretch from the Breakfast Table south within Daddy's Creek Gorge linking to the our recently completed 7.2 mile portion in Daddy's/DeLozier Branch (map on web) on the Crab Orchard Segment. August completion is a nice deadline, but this area has closures due to managed hunts and at times we will be unable to build. Back-up work sites include a 1-mile Black Mtn. link towards Ozone Falls (0.1 remains) and the 2.8 mile Holloway Ridge corridor linking the Grassy Cove to Soak Creek Segment SE of Hinch Mountain.

CTC's Southern Crew/BA 2017/Volunteers are currently committed to completing the 3.6 mile McGill Creek Gorge section with approximately 1 mile remaining. They will also complete the last portion, 1.2 miles, of the Graysville Mountain corridor north to Hwy 30 above the community of Dayton. CTC's next organizational commitment in the southern corridor is the 8-mile Piney River Segment, and we expect this to serve as back-up location for spring BA.

As of 2017, land acquisitions were 93% complete for the Cumberland Trail, meaning about 22 miles to go.

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. Daddys Creek	Powerline	Keyes Road	7 miles
E. Ozone Falls	Base of Falls	US 70	~1 mile
F. Black Mountain to Jewett Road	Jewett Road	Black Mountain Road	11 miles
G. Piney River	Rockhouse Branch Campsite	Shut-in Gap Road	6.5 miles
H. Laurel Snow Pocket Wilderness	Richland Creek	Snow Falls	~1 mile
I. Graysville Mountain	Roaring Creek Trailhead	dead end	7 miles
J. 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, 9 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 What was one gap last year has become 3 now. The Daddy’s Creek gap has had trail built but not yet completed. With completion of this part, there will be a 2 mile road walk.

DE This gap is over Crab Orchard Mountain, route still not determined. It’s about 7 miles.

EF The gap between Black Mountain Road and Ozone Falls is reportedly about 6 miles, and only the last mile needs to be built.

FG This gap is about 11 miles. One mile to Head of Sequatchie has been built, and 3 more miles may be added this year. The rest should include Soak Creek, and it may pass close to Little Piney Falls.

GH This gap is about 13 miles. Construction planned from north end, along Piney Creek. 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.

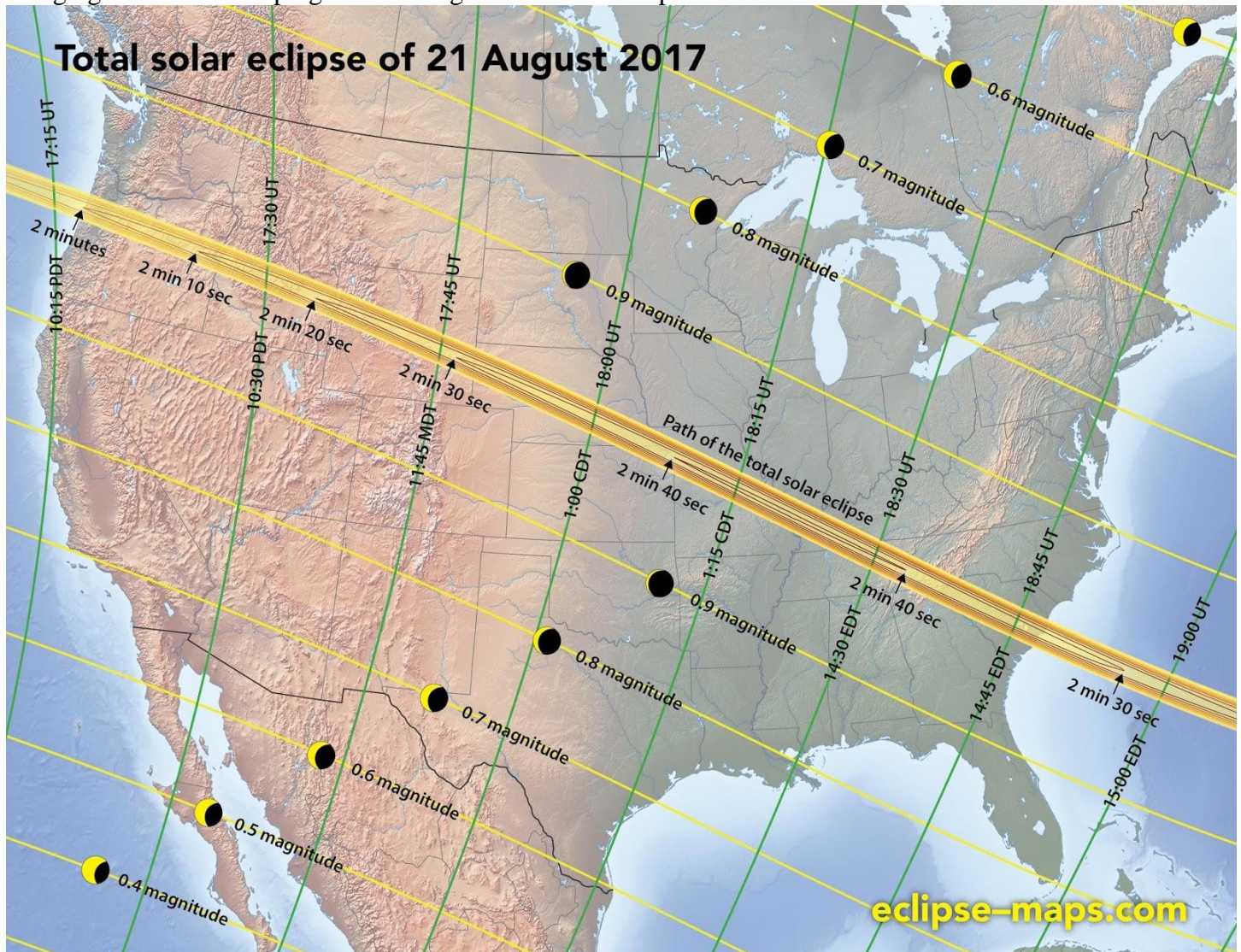
HI This gap is about 3 miles. Construction planned to extend from the Dead End to TN 30. Beyond that, to Snow Falls, I’ve not heard anything.

IJ This gap is about 6 miles. This includes the McGill Gorge, still under construction, hoped to be finished in 2017. That would close the gap.

So if the planned work is completed, 3 of these gaps could be closed.

August 21, 2017 Solar Eclipse

On Monday August 21 the moon will pass between the Earth and the Sun, so as to cast its shadow across North America. The eclipse begins over the Pacific Ocean, comes ashore in Oregon, and continues all of the way to the Atlantic Ocean at South Carolina. The entire contiguous United States will be partially eclipsed, more than 50%, and the strip of totality will pass through Tennessee. The total eclipse in Tennessee will be at about 2:30 pm EDT or 1:30 pm CDT. The areas of greatest totality, just over 2 minutes will include the state capital of Nashville, but will also include popular state parks Cumberland Mountain and Fall Creek Falls, which will be charging double for camping for the 3 nights before the eclipse.



The parts of the GET (Cumberland Trail) that are in the path of totality include everything from the Three Gorges Section to Frozen Head State Park. Greatest totality will fall across Brady Mountain. But you never know what the weather will be! But NEVER look at the sun except during totality. There are some special filters that allow sun viewing, and you can view indirectly with a pinhole to project on the ground. You can also make hole by crossing your fingers, maybe getting multiple images of the partly eclipsed sun on the ground.

Swimming along the Great Eastern Trail

When you're thru-hiking, or any hiking for that matter, during the summer, it's nice to have a nice, cool swim. The Great Eastern Trail has a number of swimming places, especially if compared to the parallel Appalachian Trail. The AT stays on the highest ridges as much as possible. The GET is often up on ridges, but it also follows creeks and rivers a good bit. This gives more opportunity for informal places to swim, but there are also a lot of lakes with swimming areas that are close by, sometimes very close. There are also some parks with swimming pools nearby.

Here are some swimming opportunities along the GET route:

South Shore Recreation Area, PA –
Cowanesque Lake beach
Ives Run, PA – Hammond Lake beach
Hills Creek State Park, PA – beach
Little Pine State Park, PA – beach
Raymond B. Winter State Park, PA – beach
Poe Valley State Park, PA – beach (1 mile away from GET)
Greenwood Furnace State Park, PA - beach
Cowans Gap State Park, PA – beach

Trout Pond, WV (USFS) – beach (3 miles away from GET)
Brandywine Lake, WV (USFS) – beach (3 miles away from GET)
Lake Sherwood, WV (USFS) – beach
Moncove Lake State Park, WV – swimming pool
Bluestone State Park, WV – swimming pool
Pipestem Resort State Park, WV – indoor swimming pool at McKeever Lodge
Cove Lake State Park, TN – swimming pool
Chattanooga, TN (several swimming pools not far from GET)
Desoto State Park, AL – swimming pool
Cave Spring, GA (Rolater Park)
Coleman Lake, AL (USFS) – Pinhoti Trail

It looks like there are more beaches in the north and swimming pools in the south. But be advised, the swimming pools are rarely open for the whole season of swimming weather—one of those pools closed for the season on July 31! Others close in early August. Weather can be good for swimming well into September.

The best swimming area for the Trail I've seen so far is Cowans Gap where the GET route goes between the beach and the snack bar & bathhouse. It's a very nice beach, too.



Photo Gallery



View from Eagle Rock on Tuscarora Trail



2016 GETA Board Meeting at Cave Spring, GA



Cloudland Canyon, GA



Trail staircase at Cloudland Canyon, GA



Detwiler Run area on Standing Stone Trail in Pennsylvania





Standing Stone Trail, PA



Big Mountain view, Tuscarora Trail, PA



Standing Stone Trail, PA near Cowans Gap SP



Monument Rock on Standing Stone Trail, PA

Web addresses & emails:

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

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

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

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