



GET Hiking

Great Eastern Trail Newsletter

Volume 10, Number 1, March 2021

By Timothy A. Hupp

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

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Tom Johnson, First GETA President, Passes

Tom Johnson, former president of the Great Eastern Trail Association and of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, passed away on December 5. Tom died doing what he loved — hiking in in the Shenandoah National Park with the South Shenandoah Valley Chapter. He was 80.



Tom Johnson at Celebrate Tuscarora, September 2010

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Steve Prescott becomes Fourth Successful GET Thru-hiker



On October 15, 2020 Steve Prescott reached Flagg Mountain, Alabama, completing his thru-hike of the Great Eastern Trail, the fourth hiker to do so.

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Steve, 56, of Bainbridge, Pennsylvania, started his hike at Moss Creek Shelter on the Finger Lakes Trail/North Country Trail on July 7, and for the first week he hiked with his brother Dave.

Steve Prescott is a very experienced hiker, having thru-hiked the Appalachian Trail in 1999 and 2019 (as well as the Pacific Crest Trail and Continental Divide Trail). He had hiked the Standing Stone Trail and the Tuscarora Trail in Pennsylvania and in September 2018 he thru-hiked the Mid State Trail. In doing so he got a good taste of the Great Eastern Trail. Finding out that only three people had thru-hiked the GET held out that there was a great deal of solitude on the GET, something that appealed to him. That would make it more of an adventure.

Here are some of his observations on trail conditions:

- Crystal Hills Trail was in good shape and well-marked.
- Mid State Trail was worst on the ridges near Everett. There was also a bad section in the northern Tioga region where it leaves a gravel road and goes into a thicket where there was no tread or blazes. Only about 100 meters, but very difficult to find where the trail leaves the thicket.
- Tuscarora Trail had nice shelters, following it was straightforward, no maintenance issues, and it has new signs.
- Headwaters Section: The Blue Hole/Grove Hollow Road seemed longer than the distance given in the guidebook, but it was grown up with grasses. In Bath County, he lost the Piney Mountain Trail, and came out on US 220 south of where he was supposed to.
- Allegheny Trail was well-marked but it had spots that were overgrown.

The southern half had some special issues, largely due to long road walks.

- In the TuGuNu section, he had to road walk the whole way from Mullens to Matewan.

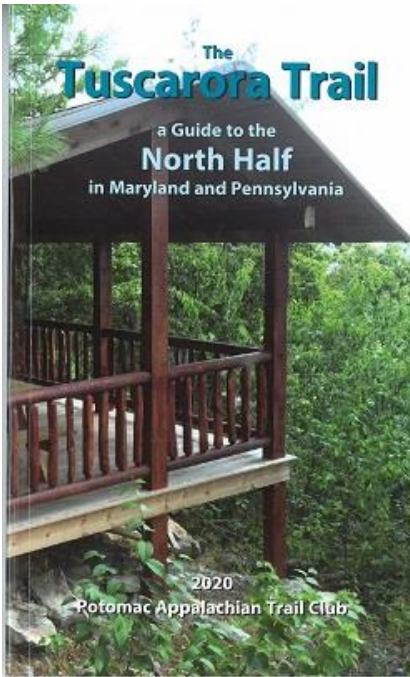
There were no places to camp, so each day he'd hike about 20 miles, and Tim McGraw would drive him back to his house each night.

- The road walk in northern Kentucky was not as bad as endured by earlier GET Thru-hikers. Apparently, there is less coal truck traffic now.
- Pine Mountain Trail was nice!
- Cumberland Trail: still has many disconnected segments. He got on the trail at LaFollette after a long road walk. Some sections were poorly maintained. On Anderson Mountain in a former strip-mining area, it was so overgrown and poorly blazed that he could not find the trail. Fortunately, he had talked with an ATV rider and a backpacker who told him what to expect, and eventually he found his way through.
- The trails on Lookout Mountain were in good shape. But the climb out of Chattanooga was sometimes confusing due to many trails in the area, and the trail through Covenant College could use more signage.
- Pinhoti Trail was in fairly good shape.

Solitude was his life on most of the GET. He reported seeing a total of 6 backpackers on the Mid State Trail and no backpackers between Big Schloss and the Cumberland Trail. He saw 13 bears (2 in Pennsylvania, 2 in Virginia, and 9 in Kentucky). This was the hottest long hike he'd done by far (probably since GET's mountains are not that high, and due to the time of year).

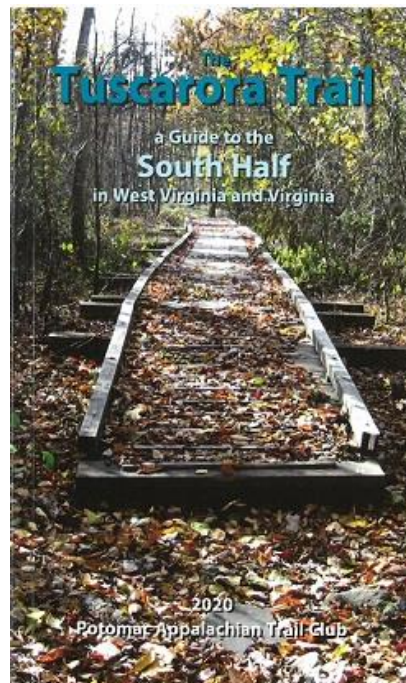
Highlights of the GET? "Solitude—...I met many kind locals along the way (a nice part about road walks), ...I loved the Mid State Trail, ...I really enjoyed the VA/WV portion that your guidebook covers, ...and there were really beautiful areas on the Cumberland Trail in Tennessee".

New Trail Guidebooks for GET Sections



The Tuscarora Trail: A Guide to the North Half in MD and PA

The 7th edition (2020) of this guide incorporates recent trail changes or relocations into the detailed trail descriptions of the 10 sections comprising the north half. In this edition WGS84 GPS coordinates replace the NAD83 coordinates used in the prior edition. WGS84 is the system used on most smartphones and is the default setting for many GPS devices. GPS coordinates for all parking options for each section have been added. The trail guide also includes the very informative sections on the history of the trail and the geology and flora and fauna of the area through which it passes found in previous editions. It is 104 pages with 19 photos.



The Tuscarora Trail: A Guide to the South Half in WV and VA

The 7th edition (2020) of this guide incorporates recent trail changes or relocations into the detailed trail descriptions of the 12 sections comprising the south half. In this edition WGS84 GPS coordinates replace the NAD83 coordinates used in the prior edition. WGS84 is the system used on most smartphones and is the default setting for many GPS devices. GPS coordinates for all parking options for each section have been added. The trail guide also includes the very informative sections on the history of the trail and the geology and flora and fauna of the area through which it passes found in previous editions. It is 136 pages with 11 photos.

For each:

Regular price: \$14.00

Discounted member price: \$11.20

These guides can be ordered at:

[Store \(patc.net\)](http://patc.net)

The Great Eastern Trail follows the Tuscarora Trail from Cowans Gap State Park to Mill Mountain Trail (Sections 7 – 10 in North Half, and Sections 11 - part of 18 in South Half.)

Trail Updates

New York

Crystal Hills Trail

2020 was a very good year on the trails overall for the Finger Lakes Trail and the Crystal Hills Trail (CHT). Hiking and trail use in general was a safe way to get outdoors and get some exercise. Membership and map sales were up for the Finger Lakes Conference. Since some of the users were new to the trail, they created some issues on private property during hunting season. The trail was posted on the ground, to our list serve and in the Trail Conditions section on our website. We nearly lost a landowner/section of the trail because of this issue. Our communication strategies worked for regular hikers but not for new ones.

Trail runners are using the CHT extensively in a few locations near Corning/Painted Post. We also had a trail run scheduled and cancelled due to COVID. It seems this is a new user group/membership group/trail maintainer group.

Pennsylvania

Mid State Trail

A highlight in 2020 was the relocation of MST off the rail trail north of Blackwell (southern Tioga County, south of Wellsboro) to the high route originally envisioned for the northern extension 15 years ago.

To find the location coming northbound out of Blackwell on the Pine Creek Rail Trail, pass a gate, and then look right for the flight of 96 steps that starts taking you up the ridgeline. Southbound from Clay Mine Road, now continue straight at Stone Quarry Run. Distance 0.64 km longer, leading to a viewpoint higher than Gillespie Point. The Stone Quarry Trail (old MST) is now yellow blazed from MST west to Pine Creek Rail Trail.

Three km on the rail trail and an old quarry path was replaced by 3.5 km of new and rehabilitated path offering several campsite possibilities. This was made possible by the hard work last summer of Mason Halpin, Eagle Scout candidate, and his fellow Scouts from BSA Troop 417 of Schaefferstown, PA. Mason's father Chris has a hunting camp near Blackwell, and his skills as a project manager for a large construction firm ensured the work to build 90+ steps proceeded smoothly. This followed several Trail Care outings by Keystone Trails Association (KTA), MSTA, and Standing Stone Trail Club, and work by Tom Oliver, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Recreational Forester. Together they prepared the steep path up to the point of Fork Hill, meeting the as-steep path up the ridgeline resurrected by KTA Trail Crew in 2005 and presumably created by the CCC decades before. In August 2020, Kristin Joivell, Kevin Busko, and Pete Fleszar climbed with Great Eastern Trail Association Founding President up to Johnson Cliff, named in his honor near the summit of Fork Hill, with sign placed in 2019 during Trail Care.

Standing Stone Trail

- New signs have been added, especially along highways for recognition.
- Thousand Steps notoriety has caused problems with parking, graffiti, litter and step migration. Pending are several groups willing to assist on a regular basis.
- A trail relocation is planned on the Borough of Mapleton property to reduce hazards of crossing the three-lane US Route 22 near Thousand Steps. It is planned at the intersection of US 22 and Oriskany Road.
- A new shelter has been built in Mapleton Park on the north side of the Juniata River. This is for

SST/GET hikers. It is now the second shelter along the SST (first was Butler Knob).

- A trail relocation to the popular Throne Room is nearing completion. It uses switchbacks as it cuts out some of the steeper parts from the extension of Jacks Mountain Road almost to the top by the Throne Room.

- A large section of trail on private property has been leased to a hunting club, which has now banned hiker access to the leased land from October through December each year. This is just south of US 522 and Sheepskin Hollow Road, to near Vanderbilt's Folly. Trail relocations are being investigated.

- The Fox Trail (relocation, which connects the SST to the Tuscarora Trail north of Cowans Gap State Park) is complete, affording a 6.5-mile loop hike at Cowans Gap S.P. This has been a 2-year effort, using switchbacks to replace the original very steep trail.

Virginia/West Virginia

The Tuscarora Trail has new signs indicating distances to shelters and other features.

Kentucky

Pine Mountain Trail

A long suspension footbridge is planned at Breaks Interstate Park, linking to the Pine Mountain Trail. All of the funding (\$1.5 million) is in place and construction is to commence this spring. It is believed that will be the longest suspension footbridge in North America, quite the superlative for the GET.

We have added ~11 miles of new trail along the Wildlife Management Area (WMA) /Little Shepherd Trail (road) from US 119 towards Kingdom Come State Park.

Features include:

- Five miles of this section is also horse trail
- There are numerous spectacular overlooks and the trail is very gentle, with few climbs
- It is reminiscent of the Blue Ridge/Skyline Drive in character, with road crossings providing a series of short loops for day hikes
- Lots of wildlife (rattlesnakes)
- The trail is well marked and well-maintained with the exception of the relocation areas at Bryant Gap and the Doubles. These are both marked but partially unconstructed and roughly flagged or blazed but passable and being used as-is. Patiently waiting on USFS approval...
- The Trail has been heavily used during COVID. We saw many out-of-staters.
- We are continuing plans for a hut at Cable Gap. This would be similar to those in the White Mountains in New Hampshire but with a cheaper rate (~\$60/night). Maybe Amish construction of a unique design.
- Ultra marathons have continued to bring increased foot-usage to the trail.
- Birch Knob Section still has ATV issues, but are slowly dissipating due to the Breaks Interstate Park leaders .
- We are preparing to install new signage on the Little Shepherd Section.

Tennessee

Cumberland Trail

Tank Springs Shelter (No Longer Exists)

A fire has destroyed the Tank Springs Shelter in Campbell County roughly 3 miles south of the Tank

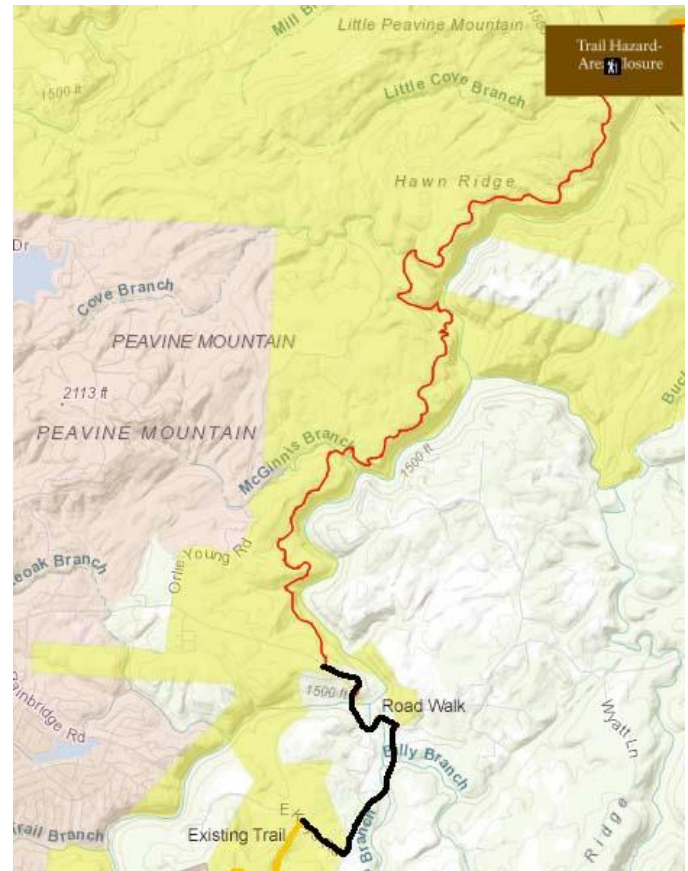
Springs Trailhead in LaFollette towards the Devil's Racetrack in Caryville – a roughly 11-mile stretch. This was the only shelter on the Cumberland Trail.

The Lawson Mountain Section of the CT is in poor condition. Be prepared to use GPS navigation. Please exercise extreme caution, plan your trip, and do not continue (& turn back) if you lose site of the trail or blazes.

Frozen Head State Park Boundary North to Arch Mountain: Downfall has made the trail impassable at several points. Navigating around the obstructions is dangerous. Map of Closure: <https://ctsst.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=ae4ff34c7bc742e7a6c6e5b738f65c2c>

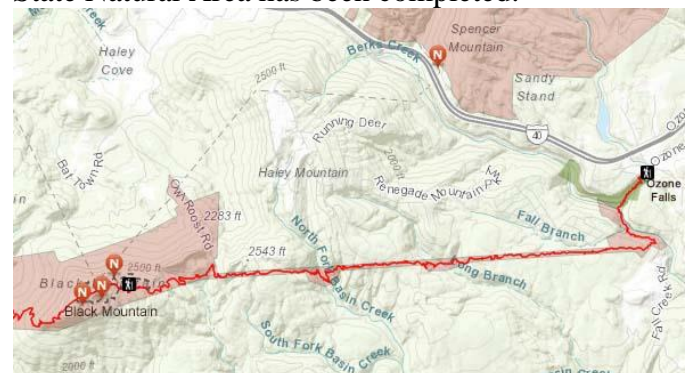
New Section in Catoosa WMA completed: During these uncertain times with COVID-19, the Cumberland Trails Conference has made great strides to continue to bridge the gap in the Cumberland Trails core corridor by completing the trail in Catoosa Wildlife Management Area. The new section goes on the west side of Daddys Creek between Devils Breakfast Table and Peavine Road. Then the trail has a road walk along Peavine Road, Hebbertsberg Road, and Keyes Road from where previously opened trail continues. This section of the Cumberland Trail is part of the Obed Wild and Scenic River Segment and runs from Peavine Road all the way to the beautiful Devil's Breakfast Table in Catoosa WMA.

The 6.3-mile distance crosses Keyes-Harrison Wildlife Management Area with a primitive camping site south of McGinnis Branch. Please look for updates at www.cumberlandtrail.org.



New Section from Black Mountain to Ozone Falls completed:

Finally, the long-awaited section of the Cumberland Trail between Black Mountain and Ozone Falls State Natural Area has been completed.



This section is at the northern terminus of the segment known as the Grassy Cove Segment which begins at the Head of the Sequatchie and ends at Ozone Falls State Natural Area. This section of the Cumberland Trail will run approximately 21 miles from the Head of the Sequatchie, over Hinch Mountain and Brady Mountain, across Hwy 68, past Windless Cave to the top of beautiful Black

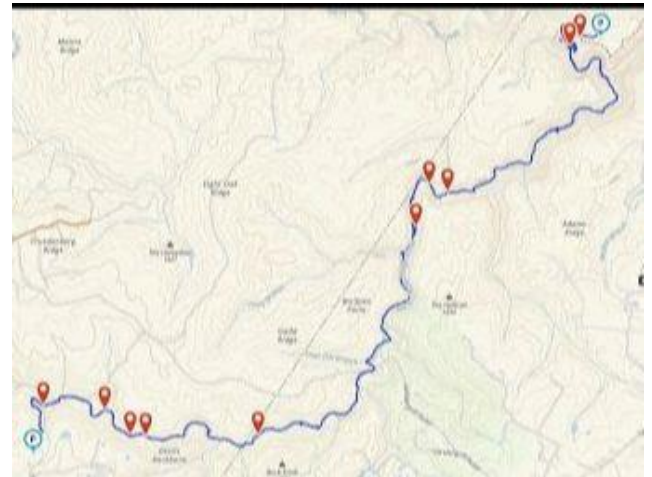
Mountain. From Black Mountain the trail goes along the back part of Renegade or Haley Mountain and ends at Ozone Falls, which adds an additional 6 miles. This section is described as strenuous.

The Tennessee Division of State Natural Areas allowed the Cumberland Trail Conference Trail Crew to close Ozone Falls State Natural Area to rework the rock steps that lead down to the base of the waterfall. Closure began Monday, October 19 and continued through Friday, October 30. The trail crew completed the project on time with great success. Accessing the much-traveled trail in this area is now safer for all who visit.

Cumberland Trails Conference Trail crew reworked rock stairs just above the newly installed Cumberland Trail Bridge System the first week of November to make the trail safer and more sustainable before leaving the area.

North Chickamauga Section

Recently two Cumberland Trails Conference Board Members, Jameson Miller and Jeff Berger hiked the newly completed Hall Rd. (Signal Mtn.) to Barker Pounds (North Chickamauga Segment) in Chattanooga. This is the newest open section of the Cumberland Trail and it has many sights that make hiking this segment a must do, including: the original “Cumberland Trail Bridge System” designed by Gator Bridge, a wooden bridge built and donated by Chattanooga Dock Builders, several blue holes, views of the peak of the Hellican. For a detailed description of this section please look for it at www.cumberlandtrail.org



(Note – The North Chickamauga Section, although part of the Cumberland Trail, is not on the GET.)

Warning: Sections of this segment are still marked with orange flags rather than a white blaze. Total distance is approximately 10.6 miles. Difficulty is mildly strenuous; primitive hiking – 638 feet of ascending; 983 feet descending (west to east direction). Allow ~6 hours with breaks to hike from end to end.

Various News Items

GREAT EASTERN TRAIL ASSOCIATION BOARD MEETINGS

The GETA Board was planning to meet at Wellsboro, PA in April 2020, but had to cancel due to COVID-19 restrictions. Our interim president, John Spies, and our treasurer, Pete Fleszar, had agreed to a one-year term, and the year was up in April 2020.

We had a Zoom meeting on January 30, 2021. After a memorializing Tom Johnson, we elected officers:

President: Tim Hupp
Vice President: Pat Monahan
Secretary: Shad Baker
Treasurer: John Spies

We decided to review the GETA organization membership structure, its bylaws, and more with the goal of keeping the GETA vibrant and welcoming to hikers worldwide. A special task force has been formed, organized by Deb Nero.

MID STATE TRAIL ASSOCIATION NEWS (from Pete Fleszar)

Due to the wonderful generosity of Bob Maguire of McElhattan, the MST Association received in the past year two donations of easements for existing trail on properties of his associated entities purchased from Woolrich, Inc. RAM Gas LLC donated an easement leading north from PA Route 150, recorded on January 21, 2020. RAM Warehouse, LLC, donated (recorded November 13, 2020) on the property of the former Woolrich woolen mill, leading north from Main Street, and also enabling parking off the side of the road where the old coal pile used to be. We have been working with PA Land Trust Association to receive grant reimbursement from DCNR funds they redistribute, for much of the cost associated with the easement documentation.

The Atlas Guides Guthook app (for Android and iOS) has continued to grow in popularity. The 3rd quarter of 2020 showed a 167% increase in downloads of Mid State Trail data compared to prior year. We are continuing to work with Guthook to incorporate updates and revisions to the trail track and waypoint data every few months.

Chad North, principal of North X North outdoor wear company (formerly of Vargo, the titanium king) has assumed leadership of maintenance efforts in MSTA's Everett Region – the southern quarter of the trail, either side of I-70. This rugged, low-traffic but high-briar-growth area offers significant challenge to the hiker and the maintainer. KTA and MSTA are set to redouble their efforts to clear this in the coming year.

STANDING STONE TRAIL CLUB NEWS (from Jim Garthe)

The Standing Stone Trail Club is moving forward at an extraordinary pace. Today, we have many volunteers in leadership positions and numerous young recruits helping to promote the Club while also conducting trail building and maintenance activities. Our officers are extremely proud of our members and what – together – they have achieved.

Major accomplishments in 2020 (despite COVID-19 restrictions)

- Membership has increased to over 100 annual members and many new lifetime members (Smith)
- Currently there are about 3,000 Facebook readers (Conrad)
- Community hiking series: joint with Mid State Trail; good turnout & publicity (Conrad; Joivell)
- Trail is divided into 33 maintenance sections, all filled but one road walk (Garthe)
- Website is continually updated (www.standingstonetrail.org) (Zeisky)
- Thousand Steps parking upgrades are near contractor-ready (PennDOT et al)

- Thousand Steps cleanups have been scheduled regularly (Joivell; Conrad)
- Fundraising continues for Greenwood fire tower restoration (G& S Volgstadt)
- 911 National Memorial Trail / Mainline Canal Greenway connecting with SST (along the Juniata River near Mapleton) (Garthe)
- Continue to have updated on-line, downloadable maps with elevation profiles (G. Garthe)
 - A parcel of property north of Mill Creek near PA 655 has changed hands, and the new owner is receptive to trail use on his land. However, there has been land disturbance on an adjacent property, which is prompting us to consider a relocation onto land owned by a mining company, U.S. Silica. This will likely be a long, drawn-out process.
 - A large parcel of land owned by the Silver Knob Hunting Club (in the area of Jacks Mountain Road) is adjacent to an area popular for day hikers. To alleviate associated land access and parking concerns, we are investigating relocations onto Mount Union Water Authority (wildlife habitat) land managed by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

Notable attributes within our Club

1. The Old Timers are doing outstanding rock work helped by several members of the Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Conference rock crew. Besides step and patio rockwork, the Old Timers meet often to work on the trail.
2. Trail planner Tom Scully is constantly scouting for new routes of beauty, and submitting proposals to Penna. DCNR or the Penna. Game Commission for relocation approval.
3. Here are our officers and representatives:

President: George Conrad
 Vice-president: Jim Garthe
 Secretary: Genny Volgstadt
 Treasurer: Cheryl Shope
 Membership chair: Burgess Smith
 Projects manager: open
 Trail master: Ken Horting
 Assistant trail master: Frank Donlevy
 Map master: Greg Garthe
 Sign master: Jim Savory
 Tool master: Joe Clark
 Web master: Eva Zeisky

GET representative: Jim Garthe; alternate – open -
 Keystone Trails Association representative: Dan Glass

Newsletter editor: Dan Glass (pending)

Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee: George Conrad

3. We desperately need a projects manager to:

- Establish new—and reconfirm existing—landowner agreements
- Eliminate road walk from Meadow Gap to Three Springs (approx. 6 miles)

4. Legalize through-hiker camping on Pennsylvania Game Commission lands

5. Investigate spraying for control of invasive plants, requiring a certified pesticide applicator

6. Formalize a training program for new trail section maintainers, including chainsaw safety

BERGTON GROCERY STORE BURNS DOWN

On Sunday March 21, 2021, a fire destroyed Bergton Grocery at Bergton, Virginia. The fire started about 6 a.m. and at least six fire crews responded and some were on site within 15 minutes. A Bergton firefighter rescued a female resident of the upstairs apartment. It is not known if it will be reopened. The nearest grocery store is in Fulks Run, 9 miles to the south on VA 259.

It is significant to the GET as it was the only remaining grocery store (0.75 miles away) near the GET route between Gore, VA and Mountain Grove, VA, nearly 200 miles.

GEORGE WASHINGTON – JEFFERSON NATIONAL FORESTS NEWS

The Forest Service has closed the comment period on the draft EA for Dominion Power's rebuild of the big power line that crosses the southern end of the Carr Mountain Trail at German River Road. They did not even list Carr Mountain as a trail that would be impacted! The construction, which includes some major upgrades and widening for the roads in the area, will begin this spring.

The documents are at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57708>

There will be temporary access issues for the GET in that area during construction, but also some road improvements that will make access easier in the long run.

The Forest Service plans prescribed burns to reduce risk of wildfire and improve wildlife habitat Harrisonburg, Va. March 1, 2021 — The USDA Forest Service will begin conducting prescribed burns in Augusta, Highland and Rockingham Counties, Virginia, and Pendleton County, West Virginia, between mid-March and late May 2021. Prescribed burns keep the public and homes safe by reducing the buildup of dried leaves and wood in nearby forest land that can lead to uncontrolled wildfires. Prescribed burns can also improve wildlife habitat by restoring open woodlands and grasslands to the forest landscape. Experienced fire managers will closely monitor local weather conditions, such as wind and humidity, and adjust the schedule as needed to ensure the safety of both crewmembers and local residents. Prior to lighting the burn, crews construct and designate firebreaks to ensure the fire does not leave the burn area. The burn will mimic historic natural fire as much as possible. Some individual trees will burn, but the fire should travel mostly across the forest floor. For thousands of years, fire shaped our forests and wildlife and our lands need fire to be healthy. Low intensity prescribed burns create open areas where a diverse mix of grasses, plants and wildflowers grow, and provide valuable food and cover for wildlife such as bears, deer, turkeys and migratory birds. Safety is the Forest Service's top priority and Forest Service fire managers will conduct controlled burns in the following areas only under appropriate weather conditions: Augusta County and Highland County, Virginia; and Pendleton County, West Virginia: The 5,427-acre New Road Run burn area is located on the western slope of Shenandoah Mountain on the West Virginia-Virginia state line, immediately west of the Little River Inventoried Roadless area and north of the Ramsey Draft Wilderness. Reddish Knob Road (Forest Service Road 85-5), Little Stoney Road (Forest Service

Road 61) and Little Stoney Trail (Forest Trail 1027) will be temporarily closed. For your safety, please follow posted signs and comply with road closures when they occur. Residents of Harrisonburg, Briery Branch, Ottobine, Clover Hills, Bridgewater, and Sugar Grove, Virginia, and Brandywine, West Virginia, and travelers on West Virginia County Route 25 and Va. County Route 924, West Virginia Route 32, North River Road (Forest Service Road 95) and Stoney Run Road (Forest Service Road WV 61) may see or smell smoke. Depending on wind direction, this controlled burn may have lingering smoke effects. -More--page 2- Forest Service plans prescribed burns to reduce the risk of wildfire and improve wildlife habitat Rockingham County, Virginia: The 62-acre Slate Lick Fields burn area is located 4.3 miles south of Fulks Run. For your safety, please follow posted signs and comply with area closures when they occur. Residents of Fulks Run and travelers on State Routes 612 and 259 may see or smell smoke. Depending on wind direction, this controlled burn may have lingering smoke effects. Augusta County, Virginia: The 34-acre Moffett prescribed burn area is located 3 miles southwest of Stokesville and east of Hankey Mountain. For your safety, please follow posted signs and comply with area closures when they occur. Residents of Stokesville and Jennings Gap and travelers on the portions of US 250 and Jennings Gap Road (State Route 728) closest to the burn area may see or smell smoke. Depending on wind direction, this controlled burn may have lingering smoke effects. For more information on our prescribed burn program, please contact the North River Ranger District Office at (540) 432-0187. You can also follow us on twitter: <https://twitter.com/GWJNF1>. -USFS

WEST VIRGINIA SCENIC TRAILS ASSOCIATION NEWS (from Doug Wood)

The WVSTA has applied for assistance from the NPS Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program for the filling of the gap of the Allegheny Trail south of I-64, which is also a gap in the GET. GETA has sent a Letter of Support.

Doug Wood completed a history of the WVSTA's first 40 years, and our collaboration with the GETA is mentioned towards the end:

[WVSTA40thHistory](#)

In the February newsletter (Whoop & Holler) there is a brief mention of Tom Johnson's GET work and his passing in that newsletter. There is also an article in there about WVSTA's efforts to open up the southernmost portion of Sect. 4 N, after two wildfires severely damaged it. We have applied for a grant to hire a crew to do the treadwork there.

CTC Board Members:
(from CTC website)

Executive Board

Frank Jamison
CTC Board Chairman

Jameson Miller
CTC Board Treasurer / Secretary

CTC Board Members

Gary Darnell
Nora Beck
Levonn Hubbard
Jim Johnson
Larry Pounds
Rob Weber
Brie Stewart
Lionel Senseney
Dreama Campbell
Jeff Berger
April Dixon
Roger Underwood
Mark Akers
Dawson Wheeler

GET IN CHATTANOOGA PLANS

(from Linda Hixon)

The following is an update on the Cumberland Trails Conference's efforts to help advance the completion of the Great Eastern Trail's "Connector Trail" in the Chattanooga/ Hamilton County,

Tennessee area. This 26-mile section of the Connector Trail will satisfy the Tennessee portion of the needed linkage between the Cumberland Trail and the Georgia-Pinhoti Trail components of the Great Eastern Trail (GET) and enable the Cumberland Trail and the communities along its course to realize the benefits of being a part of this major long-distance trail. The current focus of the Committee's efforts is to complete a map of the Connector Trail's route through the Chattanooga/ Hamilton County, Tennessee area that goes beyond showing the previously identified preferred corridor for the route and shows the actual location of the trail within the completed portion of the route (i.e. the 10 mile segment extending from the south end of the C. B. Robinson Bridge to the Tennessee-Georgia line on Lookout Mountain) and for the partially completed portion of the route (i.e. the 16-mile segment extending from the Cumberland Trail's trailhead at the North Chickamauga Creek Gorge in the Soddy-Daisy area to the C. B. Robinson Bridge), shows the actual location of the completed sections of trail and for the incomplete sections, depicts a proposed trail route that reflects our research, field work and evaluation of trail location options within the preferred corridor. The map will accompany a rough estimation of the cost of completing the Connector Trail that we are preparing and plan to share with potential partners in the effort. With regard to the currently incomplete portions of the GET's Connector Trail in the Chattanooga/Hamilton County, Tennessee area: We anticipate that the State of Tennessee (Cumberland Trail State Park/ Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation) will take the lead in planning and funding construction of a bridge across the creek at the Cumberland Trail's trailhead located on the left bank of the creek at the North Chickamauga Creek Gorge and improvement of the informal foot trail that extends (on State property) along the right bank of the creek from the Gorge to Dayton Pike. Gov. Bill Lee has directed that during his first term, State Parks make the work of connecting the developed sections of the Cumberland Trail a priority. From the State's said tract to Hixson High School, the Committee has focused considerable time and effort on evaluating options for trail location within the creek corridor. The State will be an important partner for

trail development in this area due to its ownership of several large tracts and we are hopeful that Hamilton County will also be a project partner.



During 2019-2020, we participated in the public input sessions held as part of the process of developing Hamilton County’s first comprehensive parks plan and are pleased that the trail connectivity projects recognized as important in the plan include the GET’s Connector Trail. The Cumberland Trails Conference (CTC) has given the GET’s Connector Trail a priority ranking in its Community Connector Trail program and has expressed willingness to assist in its development by participating in building the foot trail sections of the Connector Trail. From Hixson High School southward to the riverfront, the North Chickamauga Creek Greenway Trail will serve as the route for the Connector Trail. The North Chickamauga Creek Greenway master plan that provides for development of a multi-use trail within the creek corridor between Hixson High School and the Greenway’s Lake Resort Drive trailhead near Chickamauga Dam was adopted by the City of Chattanooga in 1989. Development of the trail is complete at the present time from said trailhead northward to a temporary terminus on the

Bethel Bible Village property located on Hamill Road. Much of the land and easements needed to extend the trail from this temporary terminus to Hixson High School has been acquired. The development of the Riverwalk’s Dupont segment along the north side of the Tennessee River below Chickamauga Dam would provide for the GET’s Connector Trail the needed trail linkage between the Greenway Trail’s Lake Resort Drive trailhead and the north end of the C. B. Robinson Bridge. The Riverwalk is part of the Tennessee Riverpark master plan that the City of Chattanooga and Hamilton County have been in the process of implementing for several decades now. Development of the Dupont segment did not proceed in accordance with the timetable initially envisioned due to the Corps of Engineers commencing construction of a new lock at Chickamauga Dam. The lock project began in 2007 and is still underway, lasting much longer than originally expected due to a funding delay that resulted in a 3-year suspension of work. One of the impacts of the lock construction has been the temporary closure of the nearby Lake Resort Drive entrance to the Greenway’s trailhead. The lock project is expected to be completed within the next several years. It would be desirable for the City to proceed to finalize its plans for development of the Dupont segment of the Rivewalk in order to better coordinate with the Corps on its restoration plan for the construction-impacted area. Creation of a multi-use pedestrian pathway on the C. B. Robinson Bridge, linking trails, that will be used by GET hikers, on the north and south sides of the Tennessee River, is part of the Tennessee RiverPark master plan that the City of Chattanooga and Hamilton County began in the 1980s and continue to implement. Funding for development of the pathway has yet to be secured, however, it is part of the “North Chickamauga Creek Greenway to Riverwalk Greenway connection” that is on the illustrative projects list in the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for the metropolitan Chattanooga area. The project is not part of the RTP’s fiscally constrained list of projects for which funding is reasonably expected to be available by 2045, however, the 2045 RTP also includes general programmatic “set-asides” that can fund projects and the Great Eastern Trail project is listed as one

of the examples of bicycle/pedestrian/complete streets projects that could be eligible for bike/ped set-aside funding. The City of Chattanooga will soon be transitioning to a new administration. A run-off election is being held between the two candidates who received the most votes for mayor in the recent primary election, Tim Kelly and Kim White. The Chattanooga area is experiencing considerable development pressures as people from throughout the country, attracted by the scenic beauty, outdoor recreation opportunities and relatively low cost of living, continue to move here. It will be interesting to see what direction the new mayor will take with respect to meeting the City's parks and recreation needs. Hopefully, he or she will see completion of the incomplete portions of the GET's Connector Trail as being one of the parks and recreation priorities of the new administration. We would welcome the GET's Connector Trail project being given recognition as being a State priority – it is certainly deserving of that status given its importance to the Cumberland Trail. The cooperation of a number of the State's departments and agencies is important to the successful completion of the project. In closing, I would like to note that we were saddened by the passing in recent months of Tom Johnson and Jim Schroeder. All who read this will be familiar with Tom due to his longstanding devotion to the GET project and his capable leadership of GETA. For those who do not know Jim, he was a longtime volunteer with the Cumberland Trails Conference, an expert trail planner and builder, and was the first person named to CTC's Hall of Fame. Jim chaired CTC's work group that performed extensive research, both on the ground and through personal contacts, to identify the options and select a preferred route in the Chattanooga/Hamilton County area for the GET's Connector Trail. Both Tom and Jim are greatly missed and we send heartfelt condolences to you and to their family, friends, and trail colleagues. We are grateful to you, Tim, for your willingness to provide leadership for GETA. Tom expressed to us

his confidence in your abilities and dedication when he was last in Chattanooga and met with several of us working on the Connector Trail.

GEORGIA PINHOTI TRAIL NEWS

(from Marty Dominy)

On May 6, 2020 various members of Georgia Pinhoti Trail Association meet with Andrew Schock of The Conservation Fund at The Conservation Fund's High Point tract in Chattooga County (between Holland and Lyerly). While the focus of the meeting was to review a flag line for a relocation on a part of the Pinhoti Trail that is not part of the Great Eastern Trail, access to the site was via the Great Eastern Trail and the importance of the GET was explained at the junction of the two trails. After the meeting, the undeveloped portion of the old Central of Georgia railroad right-of-way between Starling Mill Road and Taliaferro Springs Road was scouted and photographed. The length of this segment was 1.1 miles or approximately one-third of the distance between the Pinhoti Trail and the end of the railroad abandonment in Lyerly.

ALABAMA PINHOTI TRAIL NEWS

(from Jeff Hayes)

In 2019, Callie Thornton became AHTS President, an office she resigned in 2020. Our current Interim President is Nathan Wright.

Hurricane Zeta did incredible damage on the Pinhoti Trail in Alabama, but a massive cleanup effort has cleared the trail, as reported by "Nimblewill Nomad", who is thru-hiking the Appalachian Trail, but starting at Flagg Mountain, AL, connecting by the Pinhoti and Benton MacKaye Trails.

How Many GET miles have you hiked?

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

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

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

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

There are also segments of combined shorter trails:

Headwaters Section	165 miles
TuGuNu Section	100 miles
Lookout Mtn. Section	87 miles

...plus a few others

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

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

Hikers and Total GET miles hiked

Jo Swanson “Someday”	1774
Bart Houck “Hillbilly Bart”	1774
Kathy Finch	1774
Steve Prescott	1735
Dan Bedore	1093
Mark Sleeper	1033
Stuart Hickey	915
Tim Hupp	820
Taylor Pannill	800
Sue Turner	720
John Calhoun	632
Lois Ludwig	561
Bill Shaffer	545
Doug Schubert	528
Marcie Schubert	511
Dixie Greer “Star Left”	495
Rick Guhse	437
John Stein	437
Jim Sims	392
David Frye	386
Tom Johnson	382
Lloyd McAskill	321
Bill Amonette	310
Garrett Fondaule “Shepherd”	258
Meredith Eberhart	
“Nimblewill Nomad”	235
Burgess Smith	232
Marty Dominy	211
Warren Devine	205
Carol Devine	187
Jane Thompson	168
Nancy Ruggles	167
Zac Lawton “Hitch”	146
Sam Goldsberry	142
Faith Schlabach	129
Shad Baker	124
Christa Neher	124
Michael Seth	97
Chad Churchman	97
Linda Clark O’Brien	90
Malcolm & Lynn Cameron	89
Mary Huffer	87
John Spies	71
Brian Hirt	71
Kathy Dickenson	54

And report your miles!

So get out and GET Hiking!

YouTube Video series of hiking the Pine Mountain Trail

Note- there are many YouTube videos of trail hiking. Other sections of the GET are planned to be shared in coming issues.

[Pine Mountain: Highland Section - Backpacking the Pine Mountain State Scenic Trail in KY & VA - YouTube](#)

[Pine Mountain State Scenic Trail- Highlands Section Part 1 - YouTube](#)

[Hiking Birch Knob Section of Pine Mountain Trail - YouTube](#)

[What you need to know hiking Pine Mtn. Trail, Ky. tips/advice - YouTube](#)

[Pine Mountain Trail KY/VA - YouTube](#)

[Hiking Pine Mountain Scenic Trail, Highlands Section in Letcher County, Kentucky - YouTube](#)

[Pine Mountain Trail: Birch Knob Section, Part 2 - YouTube](#)

[Pine Mountain Trail: Birch Knob Section, Part 1 - YouTube](#)

...Plus others!

A New Mid State Trail YouTube video:

[Pennsylvania MID STATE TRAIL End to End Hike - YouTube](#)

In Recognition of the 100th Anniversary of the Appalachian Trail – from Benton MacKaye’s article, and its anticipation of the Great Eastern Trail, we’re re-running this article, previously run in GET Hiking, No. 1 Issue 2 in March 2011.

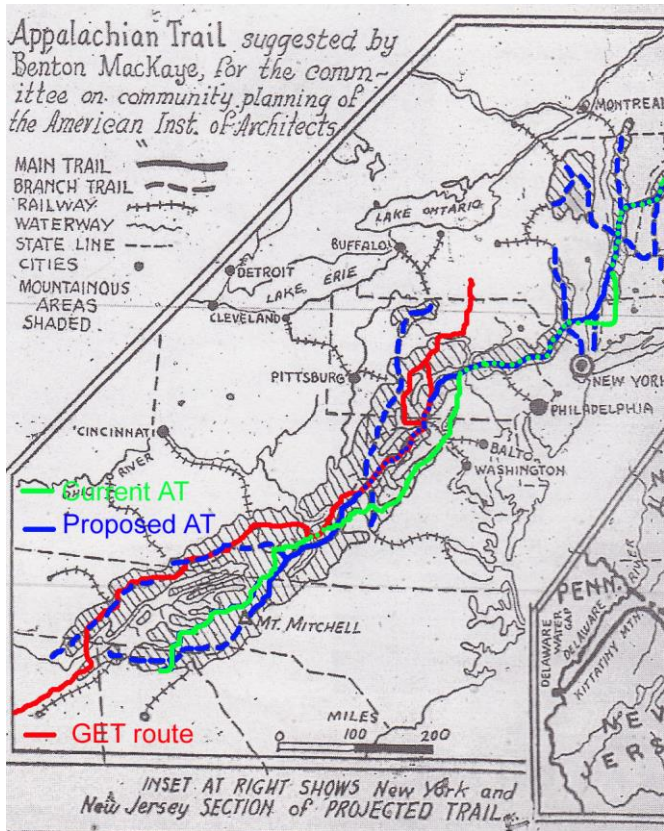
Conception [of the Great Eastern Trail]

In one sense, the Great Eastern Trail was conceived of together with the Appalachian Trail, by Benton MacKaye. In 1921 he put forth a plan for the Appalachians of a system of trails with the central Appalachian Trail running from Mt. Mitchell in North Carolina to Mt. Washington in New Hampshire. But by the time the AT was actually built it followed a different plan, particularly in the southern states.

Today’s AT goes west of MacKaye’s suggestion south of Roanoke, VA, and east of that plan north of Roanoke (on the Blue Ridge) as far as the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania. But if you look closely at this map, you can see that from the Mason Dixon line (PA/MD border) to a little north of Roanoke, the Great Eastern Trail follows the MacKaye plan. Also, the branch trail leading into the edge of Kentucky, and through Tennessee approximates the location of the Pine Mountain Trail and the Cumberland Trail, both parts of the GET. And the branch trail in western Pennsylvania looks a lot like the profile of the Mid State Trail, although it is further west than the actual MST.

For decades after the Appalachian Trail was built (1921 – 1937) there was some thought about a long trail in the western Appalachians, as noted in the GET Concept Plan:

After his legendary hike in 1948, Earl Shaffer, the first Appalachian Trail (AT) thru-hiker, came up with an idea for a new trail. He sent the idea to his brother John in a letter in 1952. Why not create a new trail west of the AT? Trails were already out there – they just needed to be linked together. Shaffer’s idea was first publicly articulated by Stan Murray, the chairman of the ATC Board of Directors, in 1969, at the opening meeting of the Tennessee Trails Association. This new trail took name of the Western Appalachian Alternative (WAA).



The Appalachian Trail became a huge success, and as time went on, became more and more popular (and crowded). In 2000 Lloyd MacAskill of PATC published an article in the *Appalachian Trailway News* calling attention to the existing trails to the west of the AT and saying “Don’t look now, but parts are already in place.” He named some of the various trails that could be linked to provide a western alternative.

In the fall of 2003 the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) proposed to the Southeast Foot Trails Coalition (SEFTC) which had just formed in Chattanooga, that the two organizations begin discussing such a project. SEFTC accepted the proposal and in an executive committee meeting in April of 2004 endorsed it as a central organizing theme and Coalition objective. The idea was to make certain southeast foot trails part of this new trail.

American Hiking Society (AHS) and the National Park Service/Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program, which

had partnered to form SEFTC, offered to assist in the early organizational effort. In the fall of 2004 NPS/RTCA, AHS, and PATC signed a memorandum of agreement.

In May of 2005 a group of representatives from Mid-Atlantic trail clubs, and National Park Service officials, met at a PATC cabin in southern Pennsylvania and formed the Mid-Atlantic Foot Trails Coalition (MAFTC). In November of 2005 representatives from SEFTC and MAFTC selected the name, Great Eastern Trail.

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Recent Deaths

(Tom Johnson, continued from page 1)

According to SSVV president, Jean Stephens, Tom participated in a hike on the Doyles River Falls Trail to commemorate the chapter's 35th anniversary. Tom had given a short talk on the history of the Doyles River cabin. After that, Tom had a heart attack and died as he walked along the trail. Efforts to revive him were unsuccessful.

Tom Johnson was a major force in the PATC. He served two terms as president and in many other positions. Tom had become an elder of the club as the keeper of its story in his work as the archivist and historian.

Tom was born in Longview, Washington. He served in the Air Force and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel. He then worked at the National Security Agency where, among other things, he wrote a [History of Cold War Intelligence Activities](#) that was originally classified but released publicly in 2008. He was married to his wife, Sharon, for 62 years. Tom recruited Sharon into running a shuttle service for AT hikers. Tom was a great recruiter.

It is difficult to list everything Tom did. Besides his terms as president, he served in both vice president positions—for operations (2000) and for volunteerism (1998). He was supervisor of both trails and lands. He also was the chair of the communications team in 2003.

Most current club members knew Tom as the archivist and librarian. Few had seen the archives or the library at headquarters in Vienna. They are fascinating. For example, they have Myron Avery's "chron" files from the '20s. Tom knew and cared for this great resource with his usual attention to detail. He had recently made an index of the files with the help of his daughter, Nina--yet another recruit by Tom. Like her mother, Nina also runs a hiker shuttle service.

Tom was involved in many other trail groups. He was a founder and early president of the [Great Eastern Trail Association](#), on the board of the [Appalachian Trail Museum](#), and on the board of

the [American Hiking Society](#).

Tom's recent work involved the histories of both the Appalachian Trail and of the PATC. He completed his *History of the Appalachian Trail* recently, and it should be published soon. His [History of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club](#) is now on the PATC website for download and reading.

Tom will be missed. He was smart, hardworking, and fair. Most importantly, he was a kind and good friend to all.

Happy trails, Tom.

A Photo Gallery of Tom on the GET and at GETA meetings can be seen at:

[Tom Johnson, GETA President 2007-2019 - Google Photos](#)

Carl E. Lorence, 90, of Harrisburg, passed away Friday, December 18th, 2020. He was born in Ford City on August 25, 1930 to the late Michael and Josephine (Laskowska) Lorence. Carl retired from the Army as a Chief Warrant Officer serving during the Vietnam War and later retired from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania working as a Supervisor for the Bureau of Financial Management, CDIC. He was a member of St. Margaret Mary Roman Catholic Church, the former Steelton VFW, American Legion Post 272, Vietnam Veterans Helicopter Association, Polish National Falcons, Ford City and he was the former president and member of the Capital Area Greenbelt Association. Carl was also a member of the Appalachian Trail Association (ATA), Keystone Trail Association (KTA) and helped to create and build the PA Standing Stone Trail. He is preceded in death by his wife, Erika, sisters, Caroline Lorence, Stella Lorence, Kathryn and Henry Blondeaux, Eleanor and James Cravener, Valeria and William Oleksak, Mary and John Barker, Bertha and Stanley Pzausky; brothers, Walter and Argida Lorence, Adolph and Mildred Lorence, Frank Lorence. Surviving are his son, John Michael Lorence of Lansing, MI; three grandchildren, Michael, Cordelia and Kai.

James (Jim) J. Schroeder, age 87, of Murfreesboro, TN, loving husband of Joan E. Schroeder for 67 years, was called to his eternal home on September 2, 2020. He is further survived by daughter Sherrie L. (Norbert) Howell of St. Louis, MO, Debra A. (Greg) McKinney of Avon, IN, Cynthia M. Schroeder of Indianapolis, IN, John J Schroeder of New Port Richey, FL, and Jeffrey J. (Irsema) Schroeder of Chula Vista, CA, along with 12 grandchildren and 15 great grandchildren.

Mr. Schroeder was born and raised in Milwaukee, the son of John and Alma (Knetzger) Schroeder. He attended Custer High School and shortly thereafter served in the U.S. Army during the Korean Conflict. He was stationed in Japan and Korea. After his military service he was employed at the Wisconsin Electric Power Company, simultaneously attending night classes at Marquette University where he earned a degree in Electrical Engineering. Upon graduation he was employed for 30 years with the Pillsbury Company in various engineering positions in Minneapolis MN, Hamilton OH, Terre Haute IN, and Murfreesboro TN, retiring from the latter location in 1994.

Mr. Schroeder was a member of Grace Lutheran Church where he served as an elder for 10 years and was work coordinator for two local youth servant events. Jim was a staunch supporter that the Bible was the true word of God, and maintained that it should be the foundation of the American way of life.

Upon retirement, he enjoyed 23-years as a volunteer at the Stones River Civil War National Battlefield in Murfreesboro in the living history programs, visitor services, maintenance area, as a group tour guide, and diligent researcher.

Mr. Schroeder was an avid hiker, trail designer and builder. He was in awe of God's hand in the majestic sky, colorful landscapes, the vastness of the ocean and the mountains he loved to hike. He was recognized throughout Middle Tennessee for his trail design skills in many areas, including Barfield Crescent Park, Edgar Evins State Park, Walls of Jericho, the Cumberland Trail and many other locations.

Gary Grametbaur Memorial Walk

On May 30, 2020 about thirty people gathered on Peavine Road to remember Gary Grametbaur who passed away in late January. We walked a section of the Cumberland Trail that Gary had put a lot of himself into. He had laid out the trail from the point of view of his great interest in nature and his care about how future hikers would experience the trail.

Walkers were divided into three groups lead by Tim Bigelow, Jimmy Groton and Larry Pounds following virus guidelines.

All three groups stopped at a fossil along the trail. At this spot Carol Grametbaur scattered some of Gary's ashes. Gary loved to study fossils.

Everyone chose their own distance to walk with many eating lunch on the shore above a small delightful waterfall. Some walkers reached the Twin Towers and others got all the way to Moonshiners Bluff.

If you get a chance someday to do a car shuttle between Peavine Rd. and Devil's Breakfast Table, take it. Gary left us many things to enjoy on this section of the CT.

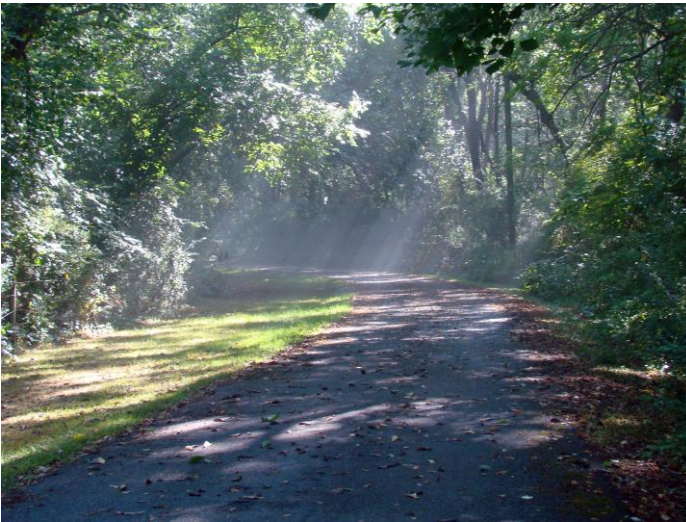
Photo Gallery



Trimmed Trail on Shenandoah Mountain



Tom Johnson at Johnson Cliff



Lower Trail/MST/GET near Williamsburg, PA



Etna Station Shelter



Thick growth on MST/GET near Everett, PA



Trail on dike by Juniata River at Everett, PA



Pipeline view from Tussey Mountain on MST



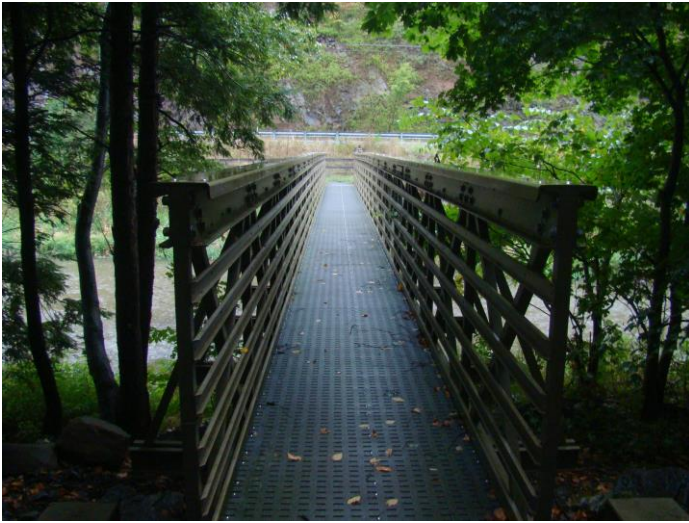
MST/GET near Maple Run



MST/GET hiker going over rocks on Tussey Mtn.



Rocky section of MST on Tussey Mountain



MST bridge over Yellow Creek



Hall Spring Road, Shenandoah Mountain



Tuscarora/GET on Great North Mountain



Gerhard Shelter

Web addresses & emails:

GET website: <http://www.greateastertrail.net/>
GET Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GreatEasternTrail/>
GET Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Gethiking>

Email: GET Newsletter: Hupp_Tim@msn.com

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