

# THE CUMBERLAND TRAILHEAD

The voice of the Friends of the Trails

Winter 2021

Cumberland County, TN

## *Fairfield Glade Trail Crew on Winter Break*

*Submitted by Mark Robinson, Trail Boss*

The godfather of trail bosses, Mike Durnwald, came to the conclusion that scheduling trail work during the winter was futile. I recall a couple of years ago we tried to rework the staircase section of the Glastowbury Trail to the right of the split. The temperature was subfreezing, and the ground was made up of ice/mud pinnacles. Don't know for certain, but I suspect that is when Mike decided to cancel winter trail work.

When I took over as trail boss at the beginning of this year, I returned to the weekly work session notices. I spent two months sending a "we're not going to work this Saturday" email every Friday. Well, live and learn.

So from now till March 2021, assume we won't be working on the trails in Fairfield Glade on Saturdays. If weather conditions permit, I'll send a midweek email detailing where we will work. Plus, we'll still assist trail work in Crossville every third Saturday of the month (weather and COVID permitting).

I want to thank everyone who has taken the time to assist in making the hiking trails in Fairfield Glade the best around. Despite the COVID break this spring, we've managed to significantly upgrade the upper switchbacks of the Rotherham Trail, mitigate water runoff damage from the Chestnut Ridge development along the Canyon Trail, and improve

the Seven Bridges and McGinnis Trails prior to the Hiking Marathon, including a 120-foot reroute along the McGinnis Trail.

Oh, yeah, then there's that 800-foot extension of the Library Trail around the mini golf course. All done by hand, and a useful training site for our new cadre of Master Trail Builders.

I know I've left out some of the work we've done, but you know where you were and what you helped build here. Again, thank you.



*In the first work session of 2020, icicles hang from the Rock House on the Canyon Trail as Glade Crew members work in close to freezing weather to make the reroute around the low hanging rocks ready for hiking season.*

**CANCELLED**

**Since an in-person FOTT Annual Meeting was not held this year due to COVID, please see the Annual Report on pages 11-12.**

# Glade Volunteers Earn National Trail Builder Certification

*Submitted by Mark Richie*

In October, Fairfield Glade hosted a four-day trail school, resulting in fifteen residents becoming certified Master Trail Builders. This nationally recognized certification comes after a rigorous thirty hours of classroom and field instruction, three written tests, and a hands-on evaluation. Fairfield Glade now has the distinction of the most course graduates in a single community, with twenty-two Certified Trail Master Trail Builders.

Students are exposed to the science behind sustainable trail construction, which results in a safe and quality experience for the hiker while minimizing maintenance. The course includes a full day of trail design. Skills include reading slopes, looking for features of interest, and calculating final placement of the trail. Students learn that understanding the population most likely to use a trail is a major factor in trail design.

Other topics include an understanding of how water behaves on slopes and impacts a trail. Formulas for slope and trail grade determine how and where a trail is built. Students learn specific techniques for turning a line through the woods into a stable trail that can withstand forces of nature and hikers. In the culminating activity, each student must take over as crew leader. Under the grilling of the instructor, students must demonstrate a construction technique, answer questions, or explain how a specific construction problem should be handled.

Glade residents who graduated from the program this year include: Tom Buckley, Dale Butson, Pat Gundy, Frank Harkins, Donna Lauzon, Joe Lucas, Jane Messerich, Bob Oboboski, Tom Parker, Danny Terry, Doug Turner, Darryl Wharton, Mike Westfall, Dale Yeager, and Adam Zaleski.

Since 2012, volunteer crews have constructed over 15 miles of natural surface recreational trails in the Glade and assisted with trails in Crossville and on the Cumberland Trail.



*Left: Dale Butson uses a digital level to check the out slope of the trail tread just built by Pat Gundy.*

*Right: Joe Lucas and Tom Buckley work a section of trail under the scrutiny of instructor Mike Riter, while Danny Terry looks on.*

# Monthly Work Sessions on Crossville Trails

Fall and winter trail maintenance sessions on the Crossville trails kicked off in October and have been well attended. Upwards of 35 volunteers from different parts of the community attended the October session and helped perform some finish and maintenance work on the Maryetta trail. The work they performed was absolutely amazing.

Over the past few months, a local trail contractor has been working on a new trail section in Crossville. The contractor started in July and has completed approximately 3500 feet of trail. The new section of trail is a spur off the western end of the Woodlawn Loop Trail and runs along the Little Obed River, ending near the Old Jamestown Highway. During the November 21<sup>st</sup> trail workday, a group of volunteers built another portion of the trail to allow access across a seasonal stream. Another group blew leaves, moved debris and performed maintenance on the Woodlawn Loop.

In addition to the trail work done on the new section, the FFG bridge team constructed two bridges over seasonal streams. It was a rather balmy morning with the temperature being about 35 degrees when they started. The team split up into two smaller groups to tackle each of the bridges. By the end of the day the teams had completed the construction of each bridge and both are now ready for service.

Weather permitting trail maintenance will continue on the Crossville area trails throughout the winter and into early spring. We thank all those who have come out and provided assistance



# FAIRFIELD BENCHES GET A NEW LOOK

*Submitted by Mark Richie*

Shortly after the Fairfield Glade trail system began in 2012, it became apparent that benches would be a nice addition. Enter the volunteer efforts of Ken Lamonda and Harold Schultz, original members of the Glade Trails Committee. The first benches were a simple flat bench design constructed with landscape timbers. Many of them can still be found on the trails. Not long after the first benches were built, Ken and Harold hit upon plastic end kits that could be made into “park” benches with arms and a back.

A custom evolved that park benches would be available along paved paths and the flat, or rustic, benches would be placed in strategic locations on the grass road and woodland trails. At some point, non-profit organizations asked if they could sponsor a bench or two. The name of a sponsoring club plus Friends of the Glade Trails can be found on most of the park benches.

While the wood park benches have held up well after seven years, eventually they will begin to need repair and replacement. In September, Harold and Ken decided the benches needed a facelift with material that would not age or need painting. After a good deal of research, they made an initial purchase of nine 2 x 4 boards made out of recycled high-density polyethylene (think recycled milk bottles).

After success with the first rebuilt bench, the decision was made to rebuild all 16 benches and add two new ones, requiring 169 six-foot boards. Two boards on each bench required a recess to be routed out for the sponsor and Friends of the Glade Trails signs. Fortunately, Harold is a long-time volunteer with the Maker Space at the Cumberland Business Incubator. Using a laser system, he made new and replacement signs. Steven Mika helped in the bench placement and power washing of the old boards.

Seventy-five of the original wood boards have found a new home as decking on a bridge on the Woodlawn Trail in Crossville. The remaining 69 are waiting to be repurposed into a new bench design for placement on trails in the Glade and Crossville.



*Ken Lamonda poses on one of the many benches he has built and rebuilt over the years. Since 2012, Ken has invested well over 500 volunteer hours in the Glade trail system.*

# Fairfield Glade Experiencing an E-Bike Boom



*Submitted by Andre LaCombe, FG Cycling*

In 2020, there has been little that the COVID-19 pandemic has not significantly affected.

Hiking and biking leaders have had to deal with numerous challenges while trying to maintain some sort of normalcy when planning group hikes or group bike rides.

In spite of these obstacles the show has gone on, albeit not with everyone's approval. The end result has been that hikers got in their social group hikes and bikers got in their social group rides. It did not feel the same; however, it was better than nothing. And many chose to go it alone.

As the virus encouraged more outdoor activities, people across the U.S. discovered or rediscovered the joy of bicycling. Since March of this year, bicycling has increased in popularity and e-bikes have really burst onto the scene.

Actually, the growth of e-bike popularity has been happening for the past five years and in this pandemic year we have witnessed quite a spike.

While the Glade's bicycling group has seen increasing yearly numbers of members, it is the increase in e-bike ownership that really catches one's eyes. Today, a typical group ride will consist of at least 50% e-bikers. E-bikes were rare in the Glade just five years ago.

So, other than the effects of the pandemic, what's been going on?

Well, for one thing, costs are down significantly thus making it affordable to a larger segment of bikers.

There are also more models to choose from, thus providing more options to fit one's riding style and needs. People have come to realize that anyone who still wants to be mobile "in a bicycle-type of way" can do that. Affordable e-bikes are making that happen.

E-bikes are also making different types of rides possible. You may have reached that age range where you can't do the hills you once did, or you can't do hills at all because there were no hills where you rode your bike before you moved to the Glade. E-Bikes can make all those rides possible again.

Not only can e-bikes help you handle hills, they can extend your rides and provide you with the workout you need or want. You can determine how hard you want to pedal, how much you want to pedal, and how sore you want to be the next day. And you can answer the question, "Am I doing this for exercise or am I doing this to get outside and feel the breeze?" So, what are y'all waiting for?

If I've piqued your interest, please feel free to contact me at [andrerx@comcast.net](mailto:andrerx@comcast.net).

# A Perfect Festival for a Pandemic

*Submitted by Mary deWolf*

October 3, 2020 dawned crisp, cool, and clear. As the day started, folks arrived at The Square in Fairfield Glade to set up tents and displays for the day's "Hit the Trails" Fall Festival. This was the 9<sup>th</sup> annual event and proved to be one of the most enjoyable.

Sunny skies persisted as the displays took shape. Food vendors started cooking and the band arrived to provide live music. Before long, beehives, horses, model sailboats, bluebird houses, and trail building tools were displayed for all to enjoy.

The first festival was held in 2012 when the Fairfield Glade Trails committee described trails that were either finished, under construction, or in the planning stages. That year folks could enjoy guided hikes on local trails. Soon organizers realized that this could be so much more. People wanted to get outside, so the festival became a celebration of numerous outdoor activities, with non-profit organizations invited to share their opportunities.

With the first annual Hiking Marathon in 2015, the festival took on a new purpose as the venue for marathoners to pick up their shirts and patches. Soon, dogs who did the marathon received bandanas. This year, the prizes included dog tags, and the kids got a backpack of hiking "stuff" for participating in the marathon's kids' activities. The



always-popular photo-op site gave all a chance to memorialize their success.

This particular element of the festival provided a challenge in 2020. Over 2000 hikers registered for the marathon. Hundreds would come to the festival to pick up their prizes – in the middle of a deadly pandemic. Volunteers carefully arranged the prize distribution site in a safely spaced manner and staffed it with the safety of all in mind.

Children enjoyed pony rides, and attendees learned about Cumberland Plateau weather – so important for those outdoor activities. Displays offered information about activities throughout the county that would appeal to a wide range of interests.

A huge thank you to all the volunteers who helped make this event successful. Again, the Fairfield Glade Community Club staff provided essential assistance. In a year like 2020, to celebrate the outdoors with an outdoor event was truly a delight.



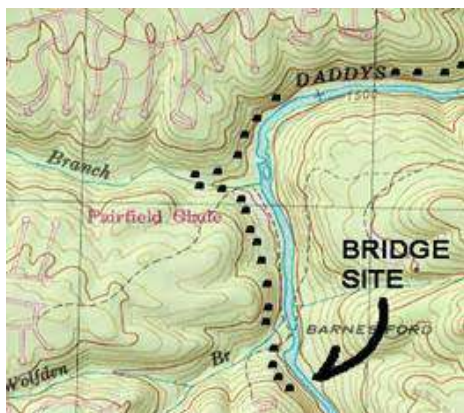
# Daddy's Creek Bridge Project in the Works

## *Submitted by Mark Richie*

Pending land arrangements between Wyndham and the State of Tennessee, it appears that there is a suspension bridge in the works over Daddy's Creek for the Cumberland Trail State Scenic Trail. The location is tentatively set for just south of Wolf Den Branch, which drains Lake Glastowbury. When complete, the bridge will become a hiking destination for the Overlook Trail.

Bridging Daddy's Creek is no easy project. Bank to bank, the creek averages sixty feet. Add to that another forty feet during flood stage. There is only one other bridge of this magnitude on the Cumberland Trail, and it is located in Big Soddy Creek Gorge. Opened in 2015, the Soddy Gorge Bridge has a 90-foot center span. The towers are thirty feet high.

Crossing Daddy's Creek will eliminate a dangerous road walk of nearly two miles from Keys-



*The proposed bridge across Daddy's Creek will be similar to the 90-foot Big Soddy Gorge suspension bridge on the Cumberland Trail.*

Harrison Road to the next trail head to the north at Peavine Road. Once the trail crosses the bridge, it will turn north along the creek, staying entirely in the woods, then emerge on Peavine Road across from the Devil's Breakfast Table section trail head. The long awaited 7.2-mile section from Peavine near Antioch Bridge north to Devil's Breakfast Table opened in July of this year.

The bridge is a lynch pin to an expected 45-mile, uninterrupted segment of the 300-mile Cumberland Trail through Cumberland and Morgan Counties. Beginning at Head of the Sequatchie, the trail passes over Brady Mountain, next to Black Mountain, then to Ozone Falls SNA. From there the trail will cross over newly acquired

land on Smith Mountain and connect to the existing trail on Hebbertsburg Road. From Hebbertsburg Road, the CT will continue north, over the new bridge to Peavine Road, then to Devil's Breakfast Table. Once the bridge at DBT is replaced by the state, the final 14 miles is in Morgan County, ending a mile past Nemo Bridge.

The original track of the FG Overlook Trail ends about 300 feet from the intended bridge site. Expectations are that the Overlook Trail will join the Cumberland Trail at that point. The Cumberland Trail, when complete, will be a 300-mile hiking only route from Georgia to Kentucky, and an integral part of the Great Eastern Trail. Over 240 miles are complete, of which 31 miles are in Cumberland County.

# Fall Hiking Adventure in Linville Gorge

*Submitted by John Martin*

Seventeen Tennessee Trails Association Plateau Chapter members and guests departed for the Linville Gorge area of North Carolina on October 9. Participating hikers were Deb Westervelt, Fred Mayheau, Clark and Gretchen Zedrick, Deb and John Martin, Bruce Whitehead, Cheryl and Mark Heckler, Marcy Tucker, Melissa Love, Diane Vaughn, Carol Quattrociocchi, Judy Fries, Ronda and Sara Padgett (Ronda's daughter), and Peg Valentine.

The participants departed for North Carolina early on the 9<sup>th</sup> with a rendezvous at Mountain Crossing Mercantile in Jonas, NC for lunch and to meet with Ronnie Greer, who lives nearby and knows all the trails. Ronnie was our guide for this hiking adventure. Ronnie was also one of the guides on the Big Bend National Park trip. Along with a rendezvous with Ronnie, the hikers were also rendezvousing with the remnants of Hurricane Delta. More about that later.

Linville Gorge is the deepest and perhaps most rugged gorge in the eastern United States. Nicknamed the Grand Canyon of the East, it is protected by the 12,000-acre Linville Gorge Wilderness Area, one of the first areas to be included in the National Wilderness System with the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964.



The original plan had the hikers doing three separate hikes after arriving and having lunch. However, due to the logistics of getting to the gorge area, and the time it took for all to get lunch, as well as the requirement to be checked into the lodge by 6 pm, Ronnie had us do one hike then visit another, just to get an idea of what was available.

Our hike for the day was Hawksbill Mountain, which is a 2.1-mile out and back hike with a 685-foot elevation gain. The hike had some serious slopes in some places, but all hikers successfully managed to reach the top, and the view was well worth the effort. There was a 360-degree view of the Linville Gorge Wilderness Area from the top of the mountain.

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**Above:** *Map of Linville Gorge, NC*

**Left:** *Fall colors shine in a view from Hawksbill Mountain*



# Hiking Linville Gorge

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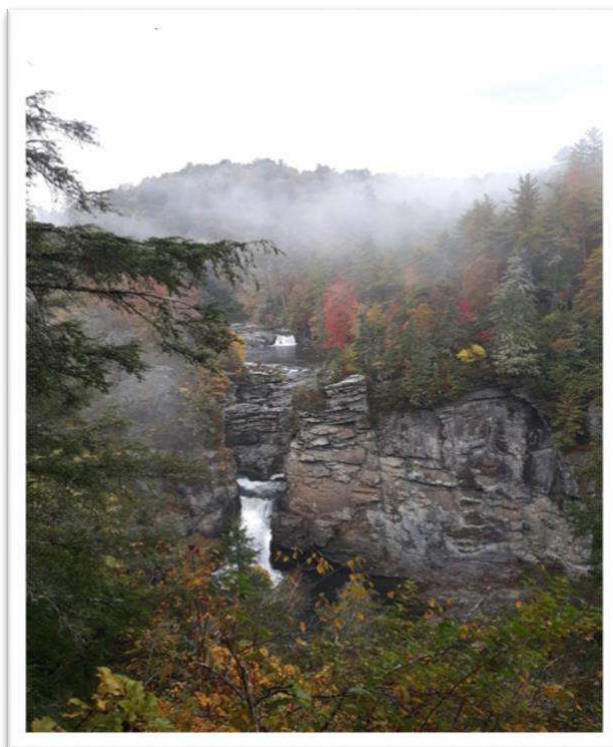
After descending the mountain, Ronnie guided us over to the trailhead junction for two trails, Table-Top Summit and Big Flat Rock Overlook. At that point, after some discussion of the expected hike times and the required check-in time to our overnight lodging, the group opted to end hiking for the day.

Day 2 began with the weather from Hurricane Delta arriving. This meant the day's hiking would be in wet weather gear which always makes for some interesting and at times precarious hikes.

**Right:** *An overlook along the Linville Falls Trail*

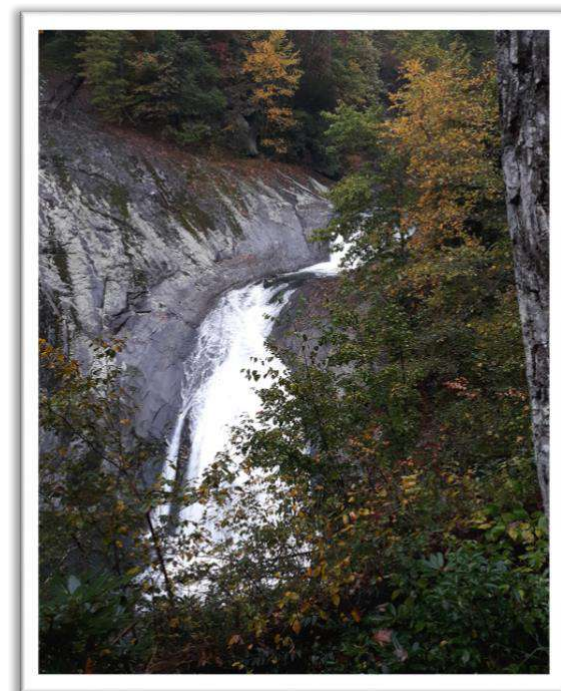
**Below left:** *Hikers pose for a group photo on the Linville Falls Trail.*

**Below right:** *Harper Creek Falls*



The first hike was on the Linville Falls Trail to three overlooks. Our next hike was on the Harper Creek Falls Trail for a view of Harper Creek Falls. During this hike, the rain became much more intense. After returning down the trail from the falls, we convened a group meeting to discuss our future activities. All agreed that we were done for the day. Ronnie then indicated that the weather forecast for the next day was predicted to be worse. Given that information, the group decided that our hiking adventure was complete.

Even with the weather complications, the group agreed that the Linville Gorge would be a good place to return to for a future out-of-state trip.





# WALK THE BRAE



## Thursday Morning Walks in Fairfield Glade

We will be offering a group walk along the cart paths at Heatherhurst Golf Club every Thursday morning starting Nov 19th, and continuing during the winter months of December, January and February, while the Brae golf course is closed. (The Heatherhurst Golf Club is on Stonehenge Drive about two miles north of the Peavine 4-way stop.)

We will meet on the front porch of the Clubhouse at 8:45am for a prompt 9am departure each Thursday. Please park in the lower parking lot on the right as you turn in to the golf club. A guide will be there to welcome you and will lead the walk around the front or back nine holes for a distance of about 2.5 miles.

No reservations are needed and it is a FREE event that is open to everyone. Bring your friends. This is a great opportunity to meet people and stay in shape during the winter.



# 2020 Annual Report of the Friends of the Trails

*From the Board of Directors*

## **Introduction**

As we come to the end of 2020, we realize that we have had a pretty good year from a trails perspective. However, we were unable to have our Annual Meeting this year due to COVID so here is an Annual Report summarizing the year's activities. It always surprises me how much gets done on the trails even though we all lead busy lives. I think the trails were appreciated more than usual this year as hiking is a safe and healthy activity even when there is a pandemic.

## **Hiking Marathon**

Once again the Hiking Marathon, with its new and improved website, was an unqualified success. Thanks to all who make this special event happen each year. It continues to grow in popularity (over 2,000 hikers this year) as word spreads even to those who do not normally hike. It was an especially welcome distraction during the pandemic.

## **New Trails**

We added the 1.7-mile Maryetta Trail on Sparta Highway to our portfolio of hiking opportunities. Thanks to the hard work of Tim Case and the other volunteers who created this instantly popular trail. I am sure the trail's proximity to the city will ensure that it is well used. We are also excited to announce that a new one-mile section of trail will be opening in January along the Little Obed River, connecting the Woodlawn Loop to Old Jamestown Highway. We are opening it as an in-and-out 2-mile trail until we can continue the trail beyond Old Jamestown Highway.

## **Plantation Trail Maintenance**

We had major maintenance issues with the Plantation Trail during the year. In May, flood waters brought down a large tree right next to the trail. The root ball of the tree took a 20-ft section of trail into the river. We also had the usual strong growth of huge weeds that made the trail virtually impassable in many places. Fortunately, we were able to correct both problems and the trail is open to hikers once more.

## **Greenway Master Plan – Community Support Survey**

The Friends of the Trails decided this year to take a more organized approach to its work on the Crossville Greenway. We formed an Advisory Committee to consider all aspects of impact on the community of building this major piece of infrastructure. We decided to create a Master Plan detailing the current state of trails throughout the county and explain how we expect to implement a Greenway and its benefits to the community. The advisory committee has regular Zoom meetings and has injected an air of urgency into the project. We hope to publish the plan sometime in the spring. As part of that effort we will be conducting a survey in January to assess community support for this project.

## **New Trail Websites**

We are pleased to report that we have been working on two new websites for our local trails. The Friends of the Trails has a new website [www.crossvilletrails.com](http://www.crossvilletrails.com) that includes information on all the trails in Cumberland County, all hiking opportunities in the county and information on how you can help with your, time, talents, or donations. The second website [www.gladetrails.com](http://www.gladetrails.com) is focused on providing the same information for the Fairfield Glade community. Dale Butson has volunteered to maintain the Fairfield Glade trails website. Both websites are being "launched" on January 1<sup>st</sup> and the old "time2meet" websites will be phased out over the coming weeks. The new sites are still missing a few items but hopefully we will get them done before you notice.

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### Trail Boss Changes

We are sad to say that Tim Case has decided he will no longer serve as Trail Boss for the work on trails in Crossville. We thank him for all his leadership efforts over the last few years and we are grateful that he has agreed to a “soft” transition over the coming weeks as he divests himself of the responsibility. If you are interested in finding out more about what is involved in being a Trail Boss send me an email: [john@time2meet.com](mailto:john@time2meet.com). The job basically covers all hands-on work on trails in the county not covered by Fairfield Glade, Cumberland Mountain State Park, or the Cumberland Trail. Although this sounds like a big area it really just means the trails in Crossville as there is not much activity elsewhere for the Friends of the Trails.

### Crossville Monthly Work Sessions

After the Marathon, we restarted the monthly work sessions in Crossville and we were thrilled by the volunteer response. The Fairfield Glade trail crew have agreed to work on a Crossville trail once each month on a Saturday morning. We had an excellent response with about 35 workers showing up in October and November. We got a lot done under Tim’s direction and everyone had a good time. Hopefully these sessions will continue in the spring.

### Cumberland Trail

The folks working on the Cumberland Trail have been making great progress locally. In the spring the section of the CT all the way from Peavine Road in Hebbertsburg to the Devil’s Breakfast Table was opened. In the fall the section of the CT from the top of Black Mountain down to Ozone Falls was opened. This offers a number of new hiking opportunities to local hikers.

### CLL Hiking/Trail Building Classes

The Fairfield Glade Trails Committee arranged for another 4-day Certified Trail Builders course in October. Fifteen students graduated from the course, adding to our pool of certified trail builders available to design and build our local trails. We are very fortunate to have such dedicated local volunteers.

### Finance

We had **\$27,959** income this year (\$7K in donations, \$10K from sponsors and \$9K from the City and FG Community Club) and **\$26,542** expenses (\$15K on the trails, \$10K on the Marathon and \$1.5K on administration). We have a strong balance sheet with **\$26,845** in the bank ready to spend on building trails when the weather improves in the spring. If you would like to see all the financial details send me an email: [john@time2meet.com](mailto:john@time2meet.com)

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with FOTT members  
in a future issue of  
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[dreaminofobx@gmail.com](mailto:dreaminofobx@gmail.com)