

THE CUMBERLAND TRAILHEAD

The voice of the Friends of the Trails

Summer 2023

Cumberland County, TN

Crossville's Trail System Continues to Grow

*Submitted by Brenda & Steve Gibbon
Trails Construction and Maintenance Committee*

Airport North Loop

We are welcoming another new trail to the Crossville area! The Airport North Loop is located adjacent to the airport. It is a very pretty and diverse trail location. This 2.5-mile trail will provide a moderate trek through the woods and across some bare "desert-like" sections.

Zach Conner started excavation work on Monday, June 12. We have already had two work sessions to clear roots on the trail bed.

On June 28, the City of Crossville began work on the Airport trailhead parking lot. After installing a



Sue Heritage performs slope work (left) while Don Eller and John Partyka (right) lop roots on the Airport North Loop in Crossville.

culvert, the remaining construction is expected to occur the first week of July, weather permitting.

Frey Branch – Uplands at Pleasant Hill

The Frey Branch reroute work was delayed and not completed as planned in the spring. However, excavation work is now underway and should be completed during the week of July 3. Tread grooming tasks will begin as soon as the machine work has finished.

We are working hard to have both of these trails ready to debut for the 2023 Hiking Marathon in September. Hopefully, Mother Nature will cooperate with our plans!



City crews prepare to install a culvert at the site of the Airport trailhead parking lot.

If you would like to be notified about upcoming volunteer work sessions on the Crossville trails, send an email with your name to fott.tcm@gmail.com. You can also sign up at [Volunteers – Crossville Trails](#). Previous experience is not required, and we will furnish tools if you do not have them!

New Trails Set to Open Next Year in Fairfield Glade

Submitted by Mark Robinson, FG Trail Boss

Photos by Mark Richie

The Fairfield Glade Trail Crew celebrated the completion of the Overlook Trail extension with a volunteer appreciation picnic before quickly jumping into its next projects: two community trails based on the Glastowbury Trail model. These will be loop trails that are less than a mile long, and while they will be open to all hikers, primary users are expected to be residents of the surrounding neighborhoods. Both trails are expected to be completed next year.

The northern trail will be in an area between Wilbourn Drive and Lechmere Drive. Valerie Naylor, the machine trail builder who has worked on many trails here in Fairfield Glade over the years, walked down and established the trail route in early April. She will return for three weeks this fall to work her trail-building magic. One area where she cannot work is a floodplain that has been caused by rainwater from a culvert overflowing its drainage channel and rainwater running off Stonehenge Drive. The Trail Crew has begun working to clear debris before widening and straightening the runoff channel, hoping to minimize water overflowing the channel and flooding the surrounding area. The crew will then build a cobblestone path across the floodplain with rock stepovers as needed.

The southern trail will be between the western section of the Seven Bridges Trail loop and St. George Place. In fact, if you have hiked the Seven Bridges Trail on a recent Saturday morning, you may have noticed through the trees people in orange shirts hard at work building this new trail. So far, the Crew has completed approximately 900' of the trail, including crib walls and steps. Once completed the trail will feature two bridges across a runoff stream with many cascades, and a close-up view of a line of bluffs. When the new trail loop is finished, the Crew will build a connector to the Seven Bridges Trail.



Clockwise from top left:

Trail crew volunteers celebrate the opening of the Overlook Trail extension with a picnic lunch. Tammy Burns and other volunteers work on a full bench cut on the new southern trail. On the northern trail, Joe Lucas and Dale Butson clear logs, branches, and other debris from the path that the machine excavator will work this fall.

Cumberland Forest Friends— Nurturing the Next Generation of Nature Lovers

Submitted by Anna Groom

The Habitat Trail in Crossville has been adopted by a local nature group for kids, Cumberland Forest Friends. The group's mission to get kids more involved in the outdoors can be summed up in its motto: Conserve Nature, Learn in Nature, Play in Nature.

This spring, CFF participants took their first trek down the hidden gem known as the Habitat Trail, discovering treasures along the way. From flowers to rocks, fairy homes to footprints, mushrooms to poison ivy, crawdads to water bugs, rare native plants to invasive, there was something found by all.

The kids collected two bags of trash and snapped back a few pesky briars. By far the highlight of the day was exploring the creek! At first, a few kids

were hesitant to get wet, but soon everyone from toddler to pre-teen was flipping rocks, trying to catch bugs, stacking little rocks, balancing on wobbly ones, and getting thoroughly soaked.

In this digital age, it's more important than ever to get kids outside and moving, not only for physical health, but for mental and spiritual health as well. It's through observing nature that the mind grows, the emotions calm, the body is strengthened, and spiritual connections are made.

Find us on Facebook, shoot us an email, or wave to us on the trail! We are glad to be pouring into the next generation of Friends of the Trails!

facebook.com/groups/cumberlandforestfriends/

CumberlandForestFriends@gmail.com



Clockwise from top left: The Cumberland Forest Friends hike with bags to pick up any trash they find along the Habitat Trail in Crossville.

Several young nature-lovers study the stream flowing beneath their feet from the dry safety of a bridge. One young Forest Friend makes a new friend of his own when a lightning bug perches on his finger.

CTC—Lower Piney Section Update

Submitted by Savana Keeton

The Cumberland Trails Conference has been busy the past few months. New Executive Director, Savana Keeton, has been working hard to develop new ways to raise money for our non-profit. We had a fundraising art auction at the end of April. It went so well that we plan to make it an annual event! Our current fundraising project includes the Cumberland Trail Summit, an outdoor recreation retreat for all ages. Keep a look out for this event rollout. It will be a weekend vacation for anyone and everyone who loves the outdoors. This event will take place in October, so sign up for our monthly newsletter for updates.

As for our trail construction, we have started connecting the Lower Piney segment of the Cumberland Trail to what our crew built last year. This segment will conjoin Evansville to Spring City through an 11-mile hiking trail. Construction started off rough, with a 300-foot descent into



the gorge that resulted in one of the most difficult rock staircases we have ever built! This staircase ends at the bottom of a beautiful waterfall where the trail leads behind and eventually all the way down to the river. Pictures of this waterfall and the work we have done can be found on our social media accounts or our [website](#).



A view from the bottom of the newly constructed staircase on the Lower Piney section of the Cumberland Trail, where the trail continues behind the waterfall.

If you are interested in learning more about how to build trails, we host monthly volunteer events. During these events, we take you out on a portion of the Cumberland Trail that is under construction and show you a little bit of what we do. This can entail duff removal, trail maintenance, or finish work, depending on where in the crew is in the construction process. Information regarding our volunteer events, updates on trail construction, and other news regarding the Cumberland Trails Conference can be sent right to your email once a month if you subscribe to our newsletter. You can sign up by scrolling to the bottom right corner of our [website](#) homepage.

DO YOU HAVE A COMPUTER? CAN YOU TYPE? CAN YOU MODIFY A PHOTO?

If you answered yes, then you have what it takes to help maintain the Friends of the Trails website. Wordpress makes it easy for even the most novice user to maintain a professional looking webpage. FOTT is looking for one or more enthusiastic individuals who can keep the current website up-to-date with news and events. No previous experience is required for this volunteer position—training will be provided.

Please contact John Conrad at john@time2meet.com

Plans Underway for 2023 Hiking Marathon

Submitted by Mary DeWolf

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
POLISH YOUR BOOTS!
SHINE YOUR POLES!**

The 9th annual Cumberland County Hiking Marathon starts Friday, September 1, 2023. Once again, this event offers new trails and vistas for novice and seasoned hikers. There will be guaranteed fun for the whole family (including the dogs). Hikers get free t-shirts and bandanas for the pups. Kids under age 12 can enjoy special activities and earn a backpack filled with hiking items.

The first marathon in 2015 hosted 400 hikers. In succeeding years, participation grew by leaps and bounds with nearly 2,700 people registered in 2022. People from all over Tennessee, and as far away as Oregon, have enjoyed the month-long event, sponsored by the Friends of the Trails (FOTT).

The marathon is free to all who sign-up, but it costs around \$10,000.00 to put on the marathon. The FOTT seeks sponsorships and donations to cover expenses. Any hiker who finishes at least one hike will get a t-shirt, but hikers are encouraged to challenge themselves to complete either the full 26.2-mile marathon, a 13.1-mile half marathon, or a 10K choice on paved trails.

Preparation for the marathon never ends. As you read this article, trail volunteers are out building new trails, rerouting existing trails, and maintaining all the trails for hikers, not only for the marathon, but all year long. Cumberland County has over 75 miles of hiking trails, with more under construction and others in planning stages. Trails are throughout the county including Pleasant Hill, Fairfield Glade, the Cumberland Mountain State Park, and even downtown Crossville. Each year's marathon includes newly-built trails and old favorites.

Registration for hikers and their dogs begins online August 15. Watch for information in local

newspapers, posted fliers, and at the FOTT website, crossvilletrails.com. Participants can log their progress online. The [Friends of the Trails](#) and [Hiking Marathon](#) Facebook pages offer opportunities for hikers to connect and share their experiences on the trails. #cchikingmarathon.

The 2023 Cumberland County Hiking Marathon will end on September 30, 2023. Hikers can celebrate their efforts and pick up their gifts at the always popular Hit the Trails Festival, held this year on October 7 on the Square in Fairfield Glade, 10-2. Then they have the rest of the year to go back out and enjoy the trails again and again – until the 2024 marathon.



IN MEMORIAM—KEN LAMONDA



It was with great sadness I recently learned that Ken Lamonda had died. Ken was one of the first friends we made when Carol and I moved to Fairfield Glade eleven years ago. We probably first met in Naiad Kuhlman's "Rocking with Oldies" exercise class or it could have been at one of the many beer-tasting sessions we attended at Legends.

I believe Ken attended the first work session we had on the trails in April 2012, and continued to be passionate about the trails for many years, spending hours on his hands and knees snipping roots as we groomed the trails. Many bridges were painted by Ken with non-slip paint, and he worked with Harold Schultz on building numerous benches for the trails and more recently upgrading benches from wood to Trex.

Ken was one of the most sociable people I have ever met. He always had a smile on his face and never hesitated to talk to strangers in a most engaging way. His love of beer was legendary and he had a special relationship with the Sergio brothers at the Calkiller Brewery. He loved making bread and pizza and he loved sharing everything with his friends at the many parties that he and Martha hosted.

The community will be a little emptier without Ken.

John Conrad
President, Friends of the Trails