



Winter 2024 · Cumberland County, TN

## THE CUMBERLAND TRAILHEAD

The Voice of the Friends of the Trails

### January Happenings

January 11 - Ranger Anthony Jones, Park Manager, Justin P. Wilson Cumberland Trail State Park.

Topic: Progress on building the Cumberland Trail

*See Free Speaker Series on page 2.*

January 12th - trail maintenance in the Piney River Management Area with Cumberland Trails Conference, *see page 4.*

January 27th – Appreciation hike to Strip Mine Falls at North Chick Creek with Cumberland Trails Conference, *see page 4.*



It took 15 buckets of gravel to fill the interlocking panels to create a stable walking surface. Performance of the test section will be monitored this winter. It is expected that the 320 feet of trail from the parking lot to the Hemlock kiosk will be covered with the new panels this spring.

#### Muddy Situation

BY MARK RICHIE

On January 3 the Glade Trail Crew did a test installation of a plastic grid system intended to mitigate the problem of a constantly muddy section of the Hemlock Trail near the Rotherham Drive parking area. Once the trail surface was smoothed over, Tom Parker, Dale Butson, Tom Buckley, and David Tilk installed a 16' test section of pavers across the muddiest section.



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# Free Speaker Series Offered by The Plateau Chapter of the TTA

BY JOHN MARTIN, FOTT AND TTA MEMBER

Starting in January, members of the public and the Chapter alike are invited to hear a series of speakers selected as a part of The Plateau Chapter's community outreach efforts. These presentations will precede the monthly business meetings, but people are welcome to stay if they choose to do so.

*Second Thursdays, 6pm  
First Methodist Church Annex in Crossville*

January 11 - Ranger Anthony Jones, Park Manager,  
Justin P. Wilson Cumberland Trail State Park.

*Topic: Progress on building the Cumberland Trail*

February 8 - Christie Henderson, Deputy Director and  
Nichole Hidalgo Jordan, Development Officer,  
TENNGREEN Conservancy.

*Topic: TENNGREEN land acquisition in Cumberland  
County and the annual Hike-a-Thon*

March 14 - John and Dale Stokes – Members of Wings  
to Soar, a 501(c) 3 non-profit dedicated to creating  
awareness about the vital role Birds of prey play in  
the natural world through their interactive outreach  
program.

*Topic: Birds of Prey presentation with live birds flying*

April 11 - Isaac Zuercher, Co-founder and Fairfield  
Glade Division Head of Zurich Homes

*Topic: Mountain Climbing in the Himalayas*

RSVP to John Martin, Speaker Series Coordinator  
jr.dmartin77@gmail.com.



## Bee! I'm Expecting You

Bee! I'm expecting you!  
Was saying Yesterday  
To Somebody you know  
That you were due—

The Frogs got Home last Week—  
And settled, and at work—  
Birds, mostly back—  
The Clover warm and thick—

You'll get my Letter by  
The seventeenth; Reply,  
Or better, be with me—  
Yours, Fly.

*Emily Dickinson*

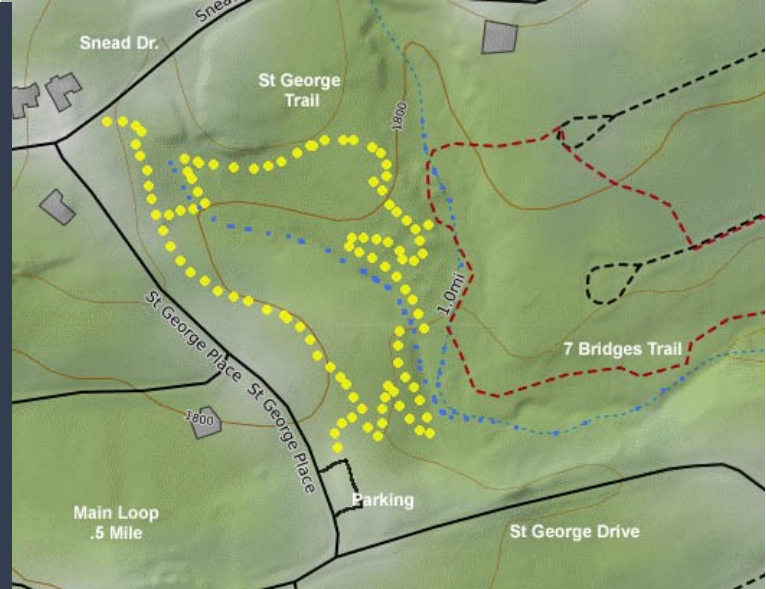
## Happy Trails Popcorn Mix

4 cups fat-free popcorn  
1 ½ cups trail mix  
1 ½ cups freeze-dried strawberries  
1 ½ cups freeze-dried apples

1. Pop microwave/air popcorn, let cool.
2. Mix all ingredients in a large bowl.
3. Divide evenly between six bags.
4. Text five friends to meet on the trail.
5. Disperse to said friends, begin hike.
6. Find a mossy boulder overlooking a stream or wide vista.
7. Enjoy while you swap stories and plan adventures.

## St. George Trail

The St. George Trail which has been officially declared open, though not complete. A pleasant half-mile loop crosses Songbird Creek twice and runs along some beautiful rock outcrops. While the trail, including two bridges, and the connector to the parking lot at the corner of St. George Place and St. George Drive has been completed, the connector to the Seven Bridges Trail is in progress and the connector to Snead Drive work has not begun. Construction began in March this year.



## Fairfield Glade Trail Crew Updates

BY MARK ROBINSON, PHOTOS BY MARK RICHIE

The Crew will return to the Moss Creek Trail (cover photo) to build the sections of the trail machine-builder Valerie Naylor was unable to complete, including a rock stepover across Moss Creek to connect the trail to Wilbourn Drive. The trail will also be accessible from the end of Lechmere Drive.

We have also started scouting a new trail on Mondays in south Fairfield Glade around Camp Branch. The new trail will be a series of loops between bluffs and Daddys Creek. Due to the very difficult terrain, completion of the entire trail will take several years to complete. Fortunately, the 18 months spent building the 0.6-mile Overlook Trail extension has given the Crew experience which will be useful when building the Camp Branch Trail. As one Crew member noted as we were setting a rock paver weighing a couple of hundred pounds, "We couldn't have done this five years ago."

The Crew has begun working with the State Park Rangers organizing construction of a section of the Cumberland Trail along Daddy's Creek which will connect to the Overlook Trail. The Crew plans to assist the Rangers one



### In it for scale

Danny Terry and David Tilki give a sense of scale to one of the smaller bluffs that will be a feature of the Camp Branch Trail. The area has been explored several times in the last few years for a potential trail, with actual design work began in December this year. Planned in two phases, it is expected to be an adventurous three-mile trail!

### Valerie Naylor

has worked for the Glade almost every year since 2015. She has a global reputation, having worked in Austria, Germany, and Japan transforming cross country ski trails into mountain bike trails.

The cover photo is of Moss Creek Trail. The picture says it all! Because of the rocky ground, it will be mostly machine-built. Valerie Naylor worked on the trail with a mini excavator for most of December.

Designed as a "Neighborhood Trail," it opens walking opportunities for residents on Lechmeir and Wilbourn Drives and surrounding streets.



# Cumberland Trails Conference

BY BRITTANI WODICKA  
OPERATIONS COORDINATOR



Get ready to embark on an exhilarating journey with us as we continue to add miles to the Cumberland Trail in 2024! As we document another year in our record books, we want to express our deepest gratitude for your generous support. Your commitment and unwavering belief in our mission fuel our success and inspire us to keep moving forward.

## Piney Falls

Want to put your efforts into something worthwhile? Help us build the Cumberland Trail during our monthly volunteer events! We are currently in a section of Upper Piney River that is inaccessible to volunteers, so this month's event will be trail maintenance in the Piney River Management Area on **January 12th**. Recent storms created a lot of havoc on that trail segment, so maintenance is much needed!

Cumberland Trails Conference wants to show our appreciation for all our supporters with an appreciation hike on **January 27th** to Strip Mine Falls at North Chick Creek. We post all our events on social media and in our newsletter if you would like to join us!

With the rainy season upon us, the waterfalls will be revived soon! Check out these wonderful waterfalls along the Cumberland Trail: McGill Creek Falls, Piney Falls, and Bruce Creek Falls. Tag our social media page if you take photos! We would love to see them.



We are proud to announce our second annual Wildflowers and Wonders Art Auction on April 13th, 2024. Tickets are available now! Last year was filled with good times as we ventured into the art world. We learned a lot and hope this year will be even better! We are featuring local artists to bring you nature-themed paintings, photography, and sculptures. Follow us on social media as we showcase some of the beautiful pieces that will be in our art auction, like this Plein Air oil painting of the Kemmer Farm in Grassy Cove by Michael Stiffler.

Do not forget to check out our newly designed website [cumberlandtrail.org](http://cumberlandtrail.org) to keep up to date with our progress and all our upcoming events, including our volunteer events and art auction fundraiser.



# FOTT Annual Meeting Minutes

BY MARY DEWOLF

Wednesday, December 13, 2023, 5 p.m. TCAT

## FOTT Board Elections

Current terms are ending for Ethan Hadley and Mark Houston. Ethan agreed to serve another term. Mark will step down from his position. Heather Mullinix has agreed to join the board. The board unanimously approved the election of Heather and Ethan to the board for 3-year terms.

## Additional board members and terms:

Valerie Hale, Ethan Medley, John Conrad – expiring 12/24

Levonne Hubbard, Beth Davis, and Mary deWolf – expiring 12/25

## 2024 Slate of Officers:

John Conrad (President), Ethan Hadley (Vice President), Mary deWolf (Secretary), Valerie Hale (Treasurer). All were re-elected for another 1-year term.

A link to John's PowerPoint presentation can be viewed on the FOTT website at <https://crossvilletrails.com>



Above: Mark Richie updated the group on the activities of the Fairfield Glade trails committee and current projects and maintenance in Fairfield including the concept of “neighborhood” trails. These trails are intended to provide walking opportunities for Fairfield Glade residents as an alternative to walking on the streets.



Left: John Conrad reported on completed trail activities for 2023 and plans for 2024. He introduced John Martin who shared a statistical analysis of the 2023 Marathon participation.

Below:

**Anthony Jones**, lead Ranger for the Cumberland Trail State Park, shared information regarding the current status of the Cumberland Trail in Cumberland County, including the plans for the bridge over Daddy's Creek and the extension of the trail to Peavine Road.

## Not pictured:

Marshall Scott offered an update on trail building activities in Uplands, noting the popularity of the new Frey Branch trail during the 2023 Marathon and the new ADA trail. An active group of volunteers continues to maintain and extend the trails in Uplands.

“Meteorologist Mark” Baldwin, creator of the Big Foot Festival, presented a check to FOTT, proceeds from the showing of Harry and the Hendersons at the Palace Theater associated with the festival.



# Do You Geocache?

BY JOHN CONRAD  
INTERMITTENT GEOCACHER



Geocaching is the recreational activity of hunting for and finding a hidden object by means of GPS coordinates posted on a website, but it can also include hiding objects. And it is a great way to spend time outdoors with the grandkids!

About 10 years ago, I was an enthusiastic geocacher and I hid about 25 caches, mainly along the newly constructed trails in Fairfield Glade. I did it to encourage people to hike the trails, and I guess it worked! Surprisingly, ten years later, about 15 of those caches are still in place and are found sporadically by timeshare visitors. I receive an email every time someone logs a “find” of one of my caches.

A cache is a waterproof container that usually has a log sheet and a few trinkets to entertain kids. It can be as large as a sandwich box or as small as a button. It can be as boring as a sandwich box or as interesting as a fake pinecone!

Searchers use an app on their phone to identify the general area of the hide and then search under a bush, behind a rock or in whatever creative location the cache owner came up with when hiding the cache. When you find it, you sign the log sheet, if there is one, and record your find on the website at [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com). During the two or three years I was active, I found over 200 caches. Some people find thousands as they travel around the country.

Pictured: A very creative and sophisticated hide in Georgia. We came across this fake electric box attached to a utility pole as we were driving down to Florida a few years



Header Picture:  
A creative hide in  
Fairfield Glade

## Tennessee Trails Association Award

BY JOHN MARTIN  
FOTT AND TTA MEMBER

Cheryl Heckler was recognized at this year's TTA Annual Meeting with the Tennessee Trails Award. This award recognizes the accomplishments and contributions of individuals and organizations toward the furtherance of TTA's objectives.

Cheryl has been a member of the TTA since 2009 and is a Friends of the Trails Marathon Committee Member. In addition, she held the position of Plateau Chapter Chair for seven years and was awarded the TTA's Bill Stutz Award in 2016 for her contributions. In 2017, Cheryl took on a new responsibility with the TTA, becoming the State's Membership Director. She held the position for seven years before relinquishing it at the end of 2023 to focus on her retirement and more hiking adventures. Cheryl has been a tireless worker at all levels to further the great outdoor activity of hiking. The hiking community, collectively, would like to congratulate her on again being recognized for all her efforts.



If you think that you may be interested in learning more about this gigantic scavenger hunt, let me know! If there is enough interest, we could get together socially over coffee (or a beer) and talk about it. We could learn how to search for a cache, do group searches, share our experiences, learn how to hide a cache. (There are very specific rules.) If there is enough interest, we can hide lots of caches along all the new trails in the county. [john@time2meet.com](mailto:john@time2meet.com)



# Trail Construction and Maintenance

BY BRENDA AND STEVE GIBBON



Left:  
Danny Terry (L) and Tim  
Case (R) delivering lumber  
to the Meadow Park trail  
bridge sites.

## Meadow Park North Trail

The first phase of excavation is complete for our current project - the Meadow Park North Trail. The first pass of excavation is near completion and will resume after the first of the year. Once that work has been completed, the contractor will make another round with a smaller excavator to clean up rough spots and areas where the slopes need touch up.

On December 16, eight volunteers joined our work session to start cleaning up the trail sides and tread. This was the first of several work sessions we will need to refine the trail. This work includes removing leaves and duff (decomposed organics), clipping roots, smoothing the sides, and moving small rocks.

Three bridges have been installed at creeks or drainage crossings. Tim Lynch does the lumber cutting for our bridges. Once the lumber was cut, he and a group of volunteers used a Gator to deliver the lumber to the crossings. On December 18 the group returned and assembled all three bridges in just a few hours.

## Airport South Trail

The next new trail for Crossville is the Airport South Trail. The trail is mapped and ready for us to begin clearing the way for the excavator. We plan to begin working on the trail in the Spring.

Below: John and Deb Martin working on  
Meadow Park trail - Meadow Park North

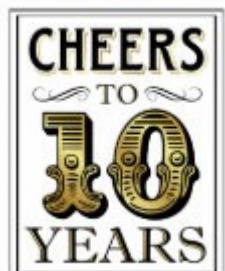


CAN YOU BELIEVE IT'S ALREADY BEEN 10 YEARS?

THIS YEAR WE WILL ENJOY THE 10TH ANNUAL  
CUMBERLAND COUNTY MARATHON. LET'S CELEBRATE!

The Marathon Committee is looking for a few folks who are interested in planning activities to celebrate this special event.

If you would like to help,  
contact John Conrad at  
[john@time2meet.com](mailto:john@time2meet.com)



If you would like to join our team of volunteer trail builders to help with trail construction and maintenance, send an email to [fott.tcm@gmail.com](mailto:fott.tcm@gmail.com) with your name and phone number. Your information will not be shared for any purpose other than notifications about upcoming or canceled work sessions.





## County Trails with a Past, pt 2

BY MARY DEWOLF

The trails at Uplands in Pleasant Hill have a varied and rich history. Cheryl Heckler, who is the manager of village services for Uplands, shared that Lake Alice originally was a path created by fishermen and improved in 2009 by the family who owned Camp Nakanawa in honor of an aunt who lived at Uplands. Frey Branch was created years ago by a couple of Uplands residents. The Lake Laura ADA trail was recently added to give people who cannot walk on dirt trails access to nature.

Other trails to experience at Uplands include the Adshead Wilderness Trail which was originally a path created in the first half of the twentieth century by Dr. May Cravath Wharton and Alice Adshead, RN, for walking from their residence on Yonside to the Uplands Sanitorium and the Van Dyck TB Sanitorium. Dr. May was the founder of the first county hospital which was at Pleasant Hill and in 1950 founded the Cumberland Medical Center located in Crossville. Wildflowers along the trail were initially planted by Nurse Adshead. Eventually a stone archway was built at the entrance from the Van Dyck area with stone steps down to a path which in one direction goes to the outdoor amphitheater. When the archway collapsed many years later, it was rebuilt. Later a stone bench and a bridge were added. The bridge eventually collapsed but the bench, a pillar, and a memorial plaque remain. A grant by Obed Watershed Community Association for restoration of the wetlands provided an observation deck and signs about the beavers, wetlands, and native wetlands plants on the shore of Lake Laura.

The 2015 ice storm devastated many of the Uplands trails. The downed trees and other debris were cleared by volunteers from FOTT and a contractor hired by Uplands. FOTT also brought Andrew Ingram to recut one section of the Lake Alice trail that needed rerouting.

In 2018 an Uplands Village Trail Committee was established to provide ongoing maintenance and improvements to the Uplands trails. Several footbridges, boardwalks, kiosks, benches, etc. have been added to the trails. Grants have provided tools, trail markers, bridge-building materials, and gravel. The Pleasant Hill Boy Scout Troop 170 performs trail maintenance at times. Its Eagle Scout projects have included adding a history kiosk, among other improvements.

BY ANNA GROOM  
CUMBERLAND FOREST FRIENDS  
CUMBERLAND TRAILHEAD EDITOR

Every step I take into the woods, my imagination takes a step into the past. I wonder who has come before, what sights the rocks and trees have seen. A vision paints itself in my mind's eye of a land untouched, animals abounding, indigenous peoples foraging, settlers hunting, wars waged, lands claimed and forgotten.

I feel connected through the earth, the dirt that affects no change. All at once distanced and small, insignificant as a leaf fallen, soon to be replaced. Somehow there is comfort in this. Comfort in the knowledge that time moves forward, with or without me. I can rest here and set down the burdens of civilization and just be.

