



THE CUMBERLAND TRAILHEAD

Friends of the Trails

June 2026

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Cover photo by Anna Groom
Cumberland Forest Friends enjoying Black Mountain

3rd Annual SPRING ULTRA HIKE

Hike 100 miles in 90 days: Feb 15-May 15

Registration numbers were similar to last year, with 280 paid participants. Proceeds from this event support Friends of the Trails in its mission to build, maintain, and promote the use of trails across the county.

Of the 280 participants, 232 hiked at least one mile, 163 completed 50 miles or more, and 144 finished all 100 miles or more! (14 more than last year)

Pat Buckner was the first to finish on Feb 28. Five young ladies—Kyra, Manny, Runa, Thorrin, and Bella—represented the under 17 crowd, and will hopefully carry a love of hiking and nature with them their whole lives. It should be noted that Thorrin, age 3, hiked all 100-miles on her own two feet this year! Meanwhile, four gentlemen in the 80+ age group showed us all that hiking keeps you young. Congratulations to Jack Davis, Ken Messerich, Raymond Myers, and Darryl Wharton on completing 100+ miles.

All finishers were included in a prize drawing during the celebration of National Trails Day on June 6. Prizes included several gift cards to area businesses; a National Trails Day gift package containing a hoodie, cap, bag, and sticker; and two 2-round Fairfield Glade golf prizes contributed by Walter Ford.



Volunteers Michelle Terry, Pam Thomas, Michelle Bayless, and Karen Barton are ready to award prizes to SUH participants.

Friends of the Trails would like to thank everyone who supports the trails of Cumberland County by participating in this event. Hope to see even more of you enjoying this challenge in 2027!



National Trails Day Picnic

by Anna Groom

We celebrated the end of the Spring Ultra Hike on National Trails Day, along with the Cumberland Mountain State Park rangers. There were several guided hikes, amazing music, a delicious meal, info booths galore, and entertainment for the young and young at heart. The YMCA had an axe-throwing target and giveaways. The Horonys had lawn games and showcased their plans to hike the Appalachian Trail next year. Cumberland Forest Friends entertained the littles with arts and crafts and raised funds for field trips.

Thanks to John Conrad, Michelle Bayless and all the others who put it together!



Event presented by Friends of the Trails,
a 501(c)(3) organization.

Proceeds support Friends of the Trails in its mission to construct, maintain, and promote the use of walking and hiking trails throughout Cumberland County.

Free Classes at Obed River Park

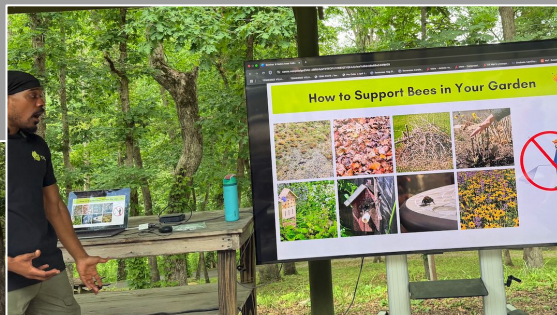
by Anna Groom

Janet Dowlen has coordinated a great variety of classes utilizing the Outdoor Classroom at Obed River Park. My kids and I have attended “How to be a Citizen Scientist” and “All About Pollinators” this year, both led by Copper Jackson who is in the [TN Naturalist Program](#). See the attached flyer for upcoming programs and follow their [facebook](#) to get updates! Want to be added to their email list? Email Janet.Dowlen@tn.nacdnet.net

Below: Janet passes out pollinator plants.

Top Right: Cooper shows us a slideshow about bees.

Bottom Right: Cumberland Forest Friends and TN Naturalists attend a presentation.



OBED RIVER PARK Outdoor Classroom 2026 Events

* Registration Requested *
Call the Cumberland County
Soil & Water
Conservation District
931/484-5442, Ext. 3

June 18 / Thursday All About Pollinators

Lunch & Learn Series

11:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M./FREE

Bring your lunch and learn about the wonderful world of pollinators with Copper Jackson as we celebrate Pollinator Week!

July 14 / Tuesday Did Someone Say Snakel?

Lunch & Learn Series

11:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M./FREE

Bring your lunch and hear a program about Snakes from one of the Seasonal Interpretive Rangers from Cumberland Mountain State Park.

June 23 / Tuesday Moth Night!

8:00 P.M.—9:00 P.M. / FREE

We will have a night class about learn all about Moths with Abby Harris, Seasonal Interpretive Ranger with Cumberland Mountain State Park.

Week of July 20-24 The iNaturalist App

Time and Date TBD

We will learn all about the iNaturalist App form Botanist Eli Harris. **More info coming**

July 7 / Tuesday Tree I.D. Walk

10:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M. / FREE

We will walk the park's woodland trail and do some Tree Identification with Lee Rumble with U.T. Extension *

July 31 / Friday Catoosa WMA Tour

More Info Coming Soon

Come join us for a tour of the WMA and learn more about the plants that live there.

MEET AT THE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

OBED RIVER PARK
24 Obed River Park Drive
Crossville, TN 38555

If there is a subject you would like to have a class on ~ please let us know.

* EVENT CANCELLED IF RAINING

Cumberland Mountain State Park, *Pioneer Short Loop*

I would like to take a few moments to thank Linda Klingerman and her growing group of volunteer workers. About a year ago, Linda decided that the Short Pioneer Trail was badly in need of renovation due to the many years of erosion and general wear and tear. She decided to do something about it. She started working alone cutting back vegetation and clearing rocks and roots to make a level trail-bed that is comfortable to walk on.

Her work inspired other volunteers to join her in what has now become a regular thing. Every Tuesday and Thursday Linda can be found on the trail with a rotating band of volunteers: Ron Jewel, Don Eller, Darla Caswell, Nancy Glaser, Steve Gibbon, Brenda Gibbon, Ron Woodworth, Stella Gonzales, John Partika, Christine Gambil, Carl Justice, Cumberland Trail volunteers, Joe Matlock, Rita Senko, Ken Smith, Nick Reed, Court Weidemeir, Andrew Slobig, Derek Horony and daughters, Walter and Laura Ford, Tyler Flack, Marge Regan, Julie Hays, Tom and Jennifer Bair, to name a few!

The work that all these volunteers have done is greatly appreciated by hikers and park staff alike. The trail that was notorious for causing stumbles and twisted ankles is now a joy to walk on. It is almost complete on one side of the creek from the boat dock to the swinging bridge, and the plan is to continue down the other side of the creek in the coming months.

I think that this project is our community spirit at its best. We all benefit from the hard work of a few selfless individuals.

—John Conrad
(who has not worked on the trail, but has enjoyed walking on the new and improved trail-bed)



*Above: Ron, Tom, Jennifer, Julie, Nick, and Darla admiring their work
Left: Linda Klingerman*

If you would like to join this band of happy workers, just send an email to fott.tcm@gmail.com so that you can be informed of work session details.

Restoring the Gates: A walk of Purpose on the Meditation Trail

by Stella M. Gonzales-Woodworth

Tucked just beyond the everyday rhythm of town, the Meditation Trail behind the St. Raphael's Episcopal Church offers something rare—a quiet, peaceful loop designed for reflection and gentle hiking.

One chilly, sunny day while walking the 1-mile Meditation Trail, my husband, Ron Woodworth, and I noticed a concrete structure when we were about to exit the trail. It was fully covered with branches, roots, and grass. We took a closer look and discovered that these twin structures were actually entrance gates—simple, common, but symbolic. They stood like a threshold between the busy outside world and the stillness within the woods.

It looks like over time the weather and wear had taken their toll; the stone finishing of cemented walls were cracked, broken, chipped, and partially fallen. The supposed-to-be welcoming presence of the trail, unknown to many, had begun to feel neglected.

The trail which we enjoyed as a peaceful walk became a piece of work, purpose, and restoration.



Before and After!

Ron and I decided to carry our tools instead of just water bottles. The same trail that invites reflection also became a workspace. Restoring those gates wasn't just about repair—it was about renewing the experience for every person who steps onto the path.

With the blessing of the Church Administration through Mr. Jeff Molar and supported by Friends of the Trails, we started to restore the gates.

The act of restoration mirrors the purpose of the trail itself. Just as hikers came to clear their minds and restore the sense of calm, the gates, too, were being brought to life.

The return of the gates, even in partial form, reflects a community commitment not just to outdoor recreation, but preserving spaces for quiet thought - one careful repair at a time.



Brenda:

Stella and Ron Woodworth have been hard at work on projects to add improvements to our trails. Many thanks to this industrious couple who love being outdoors and keeping busy!

The Gates at Meditation Trail: After discovering cinder block walls covered with brush and falling apart, they decided to make restoring them their project. They have removed brush, power washed the walls, replaced missing cinder blocks, and rebuilt the cement caps to prevent water damage. St. Raphael's Church members will complete the next steps. They will add mulch and some benches to make these two areas a lovely and convenient place to "meditate."

New Benches for Trails: Two old benches in terrible shape were donated to FOTT by a golf course where Loree Horony's father works. Ron and Stella took the benches and added new wood and some paint to make them look new. The refurbished benches look great and will be placed at the future section of Centennial Park and Woodlawn Loop.

They hike a lot, so when you see them on the trail, give them a big "thank you" for their hard work.

Ron and Stella

by Brenda and Steve Gibbon



Above: Steve, Brenda, Stella, & Ron with their Ultra Hike shirts (More photos on next page)

Steve:

I want to highlight two very special people: Ron and Stella Woodworth. Ron is the current VP of FOTT and works closely with John Conrad on many of the ongoing FOTT activities. He is accompanied by his lovely wife, Stella, who zealously comes out to all these events and digs in with everyone else. Stella started showing up at some of the work sessions last year, then in December they got married! What a lovely couple and great team.

They were tough competitors in the Spring Ultra Marathon, but we managed to tie them in a photo finish in a special competition between the four of us.

When hiking the Cumberland Trail West of Peavine Road they discovered a bridge in disrepair and later made a couple more trips back to improve it until it is replaced at some unknown date.

They assisted with the installation of the new bench on the Airport Trail and later returned to anchor it to discourage its removal.

They have assisted Linda Klingerman a few times on the Pioneer Short Loop restoration effort. That trail is coming along nicely thanks to the volunteers who have faithfully come out to help with that work.

Both have participated in bushwacking efforts for new trails in the Cumberland Mountain State Park. They went back later to get a good map of the new Tower Trail since all previous maps from bushwacking did not provide a good image of the proposed work.

And when they see other issues on the trails, they dig in again. Stella can be seen rolling a tire out of the Maryetta Trail, and Ron can be seen clearing fallen trees from Black Mountain and others.

Again, we are truly grateful to all those who come out and help make the trails better for years to come. Thank you Ron and Stella for being a great team and for offering your services to the community.



Fairfield Glade Trails Update

By Tammy Burns, Chair, Trails Committee



The Fairfield Glade crew spread out their time in the early months of spring by scouting, rerouting and continuing the build of a new trail.

Due to the construction of new homes in the Maple Ridge development, it was necessary to relocate a short portion of the Good Samaritan (Yellow Loop) trail to avoid property lines. The group spent about 120 volunteer hours constructing minor reroutes with the trail complete once again.

We also brought in machine operators, Zach and Randy Conner, with Contour Trails to assist with some major refurbishment that was needed on the McGinnis Trail. Due to the age of the trail and the effects of the elements, several areas needed to be addressed including bringing in dirt to cover many exposed roots. The heavy work has been completed so now the crew will go in and finish the trail to our standards. (Photo #1)

We are also continuing our work on the new White Oak Trail near Lake Pomeroy. This trail, which will be approximately 2 miles in length, includes features such as moss covered rock gardens, ferns and the White Oak Creek. June 16th marked the soft opening of a 1.5 mile portion of this trail (out and back), which connects to the Cumberland Trail. The remainder of the trail and parking lot to follow! (Photo #2)

In April, scouting began on a possible new trail in the Glastowbury Lake area. This trail will feature a waterfall and be a great addition to the beautiful trails that Fairfield Glade has to offer.

This spring we welcomed several new members and are averaging 15-20 volunteers on Wednesdays and 20-25 on Saturdays. There is always room for more!

To join with our efforts, contact Trail Boss, John DeVinney at: trailcrewboss@gmail.com



Above: McGinnis Trail
Below: White Oak Trail



THE CT BUSHWHACKERS COMPLETE THE MAMMOTH MARCH

by Pat Buckner

The Cumberland Trail (CT) Bushwhackers – Jim Darr, Pat Buckner, and Chris Love successfully completed the Mammoth March East Tennessee challenge on Sunday, May 3, 2026, at Fall Creek Falls State Park. This is a one-day hiking event with participants selecting either Saturday or Sunday to complete a 20-mile loop within 8 hours inside Tennessee’s largest State Park. This event hosted over 1800 participants with more than 900 finishers on Saturday and over 800 finishers on Sunday. Lee Vigue joined the CT Bushwhackers during the trek, and the foursome completed the 20-mile challenge in 6 hours, 28 minutes.

In 2025, the CT Bushwhackers hiked the completed segments of the Cumberland Trail. The trio are members of the Tennessee Trails Association Plateau Chapter and trained for the Mammoth March adventure by hiking challenging trails located at Fall Creek Falls, Pickett, & Frozen Head State Parks, as well as trails in the Crossville, TN area. Chris and Pat completed the 2026 FOTT Cumberland Co. Spring 100 Mile Ultra Hike and joined the Happy Hikers Group on several of the designated Ultra trails.



Top Right: Chris, Pat, Jim, & Lee at the Mammoth March

Bottom Right: Happy Hikers Linda, Carole, Donna, Melinda, Jodi, & Jeanne

Left: Derek, Jim, Chris, Pat, & Amanda in front of the Cumberland Trails Conservancy tent at the recent National Trails Day Picnic at Cumberland Mountain State Park



2026 Hiking Marathon

Do you want to be on the planning committee and one of the many volunteers needed to make this event a success? Email hike@hikingmarathon.com

Join the Friends of the Trails Construction and Maintenance Team

If you would like to join our team and experience these adventures, sign up at [Volunteers – Crossville Trails](#). Click on the Join Our Team of Crossville Trail Workers to submit your form.

Trail Repair Requests

To submit a ticket, [click here](#), select the name of the trail, complete the form, and click the Submit button. Please be as detailed as possible. Including the number of the nearest 911 emergency marker and photos will be extremely helpful for the trail crew.

FOTT

Friends of the Trails

Cumberland Forest Friends by Anna Groom

A huge thanks to those who stopped by to support Cumberland Forest Friends. It's my heart and passion to get kids outside exploring, learning, and giving back to the community.

Our group has helped hundreds of kids, parents, grandparents and guardians to get outdoors in a safe, friendly environment.

We do a half marathon every September, hike monthly, pick up trash, teach safety and conservation, and raise money for our favorite spots we visit.

If you'd like to contribute, email cumberlandforestfriends@gmail.com or you may visit the Bean Pot Campground and purchase any item off the Full Circle Library shelf. 50% of all proceeds sold in July will go to Cumberland Forest Friends!



Anna Groom at the Trails Day Picnic

Newsletter Submissions

Have something to share? Email annamargaret.tn@gmail.com 300 words or less, typed directly into an email, with 1-4 labeled images. Title the subject line FOTT and your subject. Please include author credits.