

# Trail Talk

Armuchee-Cohutta Ranger District

January 2007



Happy New Year TEAM!

*This photo, contributed by Bob Korch, of a very icy Jacks River reminds us that contrary to the spring-like temperatures we've seen lately it is winter in the North Georgia Mountains.*



Working Weekend #46  
Pinhoti Trail  
February 2-3, 2007





December saw **Troy** and **Wanda Brown** tackle blown down tree removal along the Beech Bottom Trail for a day... the next day **Troy** and **Wanda** were joined by **Amos Burrell** and **James Marks** for more blowdown removal on Rice Camp Trail... Bob Korch scouted East Cowpen and Hickory Ridge Trail for wind damage and cleared the trail of a number of limbs and various debris... Equestrian **Jim Holland** removed trash from an abandoned campsite on Penitentiary Branch Trail... **Troy** and **Wanda Brown** began blowdown removal along East Cowpen Trail at Three Forks... the day after this they were joined by **Bob Korch** and **Jim Bishop** back on Rough Ridge as the group continued the debris removal from recent winds associated with strong cold fronts... several volunteers participated in the annual Christmas Bird Count. Thanks for all of the hard work folks, we appreciate those sore muscles.

### *Volunteer Spotlight*

This month our spotlight shines on a couple who signed on with us in November, 1991. They are without a doubt a couple of our most recognized volunteers on the TEAM. **Troy and Wanda Brown** of Varnell, Georgia have been the anchor for our volunteer program for a number of years now. They live close enough to the district to be able to spend a lot of time in the woods. As of this writing Troy has accumulated over **6,500** Volunteer hours, Wanda over **5,900**. Talk about power hours. Looking back over the records reveals that the Browns have been involved in a variety of projects including serving as campground hosts, wildlife related work, recreation maintenance, search and rescue efforts, they've served as crew leaders on countless occasions, and they participated on the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) task force. They have spent most of their time on trail maintenance. Truly their claim to fame would be blowdown removal on the trails of the Cohutta Wilderness. In the early 1990's Troy and Wanda began working with district employee Mike Davis using crosscut saws and axes. Eventually Troy began to purchase his own saws and Mike taught him how to recondition and sharpen his saws. Since then Troy has developed a great appreciation for these tools and the lost art of the use that comes with them.

These days the Browns are a force to be reckoned with when it comes to blowdown removal. Their work on the Armuchee-Cohutta almost seems like having extra employees because of the amount of time they put in and the number of trails they work.

The Browns have a connection with the local carpet industry. Troy retired as a tufting machine mechanic. I know many of you are amazed at his relentless work ethic but he works in a great deal of pain and discomfort some days. Wanda works in quality control for Shaw Industries. They are very active in their local church. Over the last several years when they want to take a break from the Cohuttas, they hike and camp in the Great Smokies National Park in Tennessee. They have hiked all of the parks' massive trail system.

In 1991, Troy and Wanda heard a Forest Service Ranger District seeking Volunteers on a local FM radio station broadcast. They came to us as rookie hikers. Since then they have become outdoor veterans. It has been a joy to watch them give and grow with us since that sign up day in 1991. The Browns continue to set a great example with their hour production, work ethic, and leadership. So this month we celebrate the Browns as not only our top Volunteers, but also the Volunteer's Volunteer.



## Mountain Driving – Know Before You Go



At some point this winter snow, ice and freezing and thawing roadways will force the closure of some of our higher elevation Forest Service Roads. Always call ahead to see if roads are open and to check on conditions. Some reminders for safe driving practices are:



Always wear your seatbelt.



Consider driving with your headlights on in the daytime. Often other drivers who may be on your side of the road as they come around a curve will react quicker when they see the headlights. It's a fact, we see it happen often.



Watch for... ice that can last for days in shady areas.



**SNOW.** It is absolutely beautiful to see. The problem is it doesn't take many vehicles traveling over the roadway before it becomes like a sheet of glass. We've rescued numerous vehicle operators after they've slid off the road and crashed their rides.



Freezing and thawing roadbeds. When this happens the roads can become impassible due to mud. Deep ruts can occur and vehicles will get stuck and often slide out of the roadway.



What is the best advice when you encounter some of the above situations? First, be prepared. A cell phone could be valuable, plus blankets, food and water in case you become stranded. Second, if you see these situations ahead of you – stop and turn around. It is not worth the risk of an accident.



### January blowdown removal featuring TEAM Armuchee-Cohutta Volunteers





This and that... we welcome Michele Jones as our new Armuchee-Cohutta District Ranger. We'll introduce her to you in next month's newsletter... speaking of newsletters this is the seventeenth year of "Trail Talk"... Emery Creek Trail is now clear of the heavy concentration of blowdown that has blocked a portion of it for over a year now. This was along a stretch of the upper section. A trail contractor recently cleared it and reconstructed some of the upper reaches of this great trail.

**Mark your calendars for the upcoming work dates:**

<b>February 2 – 3</b>	<b>Working Weekend #46</b>
<b>March 24</b>	<b>Location to be announced.</b>
<b>April 27 – 28</b>	<b>Working Weekend #47</b>
<b>May 19</b>	<b>Location to be announced.</b>
<b>June 2</b>	<b>National Trail's Day</b>

Start the new year out right – *Volunteer on YOUR National Forest*



*Winter view from Grassv Mountain Tower*