

Trail Talk

Conasauga Ranger District

July - August 2008



...and
sometimes we
even get to
take a lunch
break!!!



**2008 Hemptop Trail Maintenance
Blowout Event**



July – **Gene and Amy Findley** kicked off the month by mowing the trailhead parking lot and access road at Dry Creek using their farm tractor and bushhog... **Savannah Georgia Boy Scout Troop 486** cleaned fire rings at Lake Conasauga for a service project... **Cody Wade** volunteered for an incredible 5 of the first 7 days this month mowing and weedeating, cleaning restrooms, and emptying trash bins at our developed recreation areas... **Jim Holland and Linda Pringle** tag-teamed with the crosscut saw to remove blowdowns on the Jacks River Trail from Dally Gap to the first river crossing... **Tom and Tannis Blackwell** had their own 3-day July 4th celebration on the Hemptop Trail. For the 2nd consecutive year, the Blackwells slingbladed the first 2 miles to give the TEAM a head start on the annual Hemptop weed-wacking party... **Ken Napierkowski** had a productive day at Jacks River Fields Campground cleaning the restroom, emptying the trash bins and doing general maintenance... **Susan Gaddis** helped spruce up the Cottonwood Campground... **Jim Holland, Joan Tipton, Junior Kyle, and Melinda and Lakota Towe** returned to Jacks River Fields to clean the restroom, empty the trash bins, clean out fire rings and do general maintenance... **Jim Holland** returned a few days later to maintain the horse stalls... **Jim Holland and Linda Pringle** were back in the wilderness cutting out blowdowns on the Hemptop Trail... **Fred Pilcher** helped out trimming back limbs from the Pilcher's Pond Road... **Mark Voykovic** removed fire rings and made visitor contacts while on wilderness patrol in the Beech Bottom area. He happened to run up on **Amos Burrell and Troy and Wanda Brown** who were clearing blowdowns from the Beech Bottom Trail... Our outstanding teen **Cody Wade** was hard at it for 4 days doing recreation area maintenance on the west side of the district... **Carol Horsfell and Martha Fillingham** accomplished needed maintenance at Jacks River Fields... The Johns Mountain Overlook looked great after **Fred Pilcher** spent 2 days there removing graffiti and re-staining... **Troy and Wanda Brown** spent a long day dodging yellow jackets and cutting out blowdowns on the Rough Ridge Trail... A crew of eager **Back Country Horsemen of North GA (BCHNG)** members consisting of **Melinda and Lakota Towe, Junior Kyle, Martha Fillingham, and Carol Horsfell** made short work of the maintenance needs at Jacks River Fields... Another **BCHNG** group returned to the campground a few days later to knock out the mowing and weed-eating job. The volunteers included **Melinda Towe, Junior Kyle, Danny Wilson, Sir John Davis, Tommy Burk and Tim Chancey**... Volunteer Wilderness Ranger **Mark Voykovic** returned to the Beech Bottom/Jacks River Falls area to educate wilderness visitors about Leave-No-Trace... **Troy Brown** helped us prepare for an upcoming workday by repairing and sharpening several slingblades... **Cody Wade** assisted with several ongoing maintenance jobs at the Pocket, Keown Falls, Houston Valley, Chestnut Mountain Shooting Range, and Pinhoti Trailheads for 4 consecutive days... Members of the **Benton MacKaye Trail Assoc, Conasauga District Trail Volunteers and the BCHNG** joined forces to tackle the annual slingblading project on Hemptop Trail. The workforce consisted of **Bill Ross, Taylor Slate, Mary and Bob Korch, Gail Milner, Jim Bishop, Steve Bayliss, Veronica Nunley, George Owen, Susan Gaddis, Ralph Hower, Larry Dumas, Bill Edmundson, Amos Burrell, Charlie Crider, Troy and Wanda Brown, Tom and Tannis Blackwell, Jim Holland, Ken Jones, and Doug Kleiber**... **Joan Tipton and Jim Holland** took care of the routine maintenance needs at Jacks



Cody Wade pitches in at the Dry Creek Trailhead

River Fields...the west-side Recreation Areas were well groomed thanks to the efforts of **Cody Wade** over a 3-day period...**James and Beth Underwood** held down the fort at Lake Conasauga performing campground host duties every weekend...and finally, **Fred Pilcher** finished out the month by picking up litter at Pilchers Pond and the Johns Mountain Overlook. **TEAM Conasauga** cranked out **776** hours in July. Great job everyone!



August – This month started with a bang when **Trout Unlimited** members completed work on stream structures in Rock Creek to improve trout habitat. Volunteers included **Dave Parks, Frank Martin, Paul Diprima, Buddy Reece, Andy Edmondson, Ronny Cooper, Mike Prator, David Ferguson, Chandler Reece, Charles Cooper, Grady Edmondson, and Jim Reece**...**Troy and Wanda Brown** finished their work on the Rough Ridge Trail putting the crosscut saw to several blowdowns...**Melinda and Lakota Towe and Junior Kyle** performed the ongoing maintenance tasks at Jacks River Fields. They returned with **Rene Hamby** the following week to continue their work...**Fred Pilcher** mowed the Pilcher's Pond area and access roadsides on a hot summer day...**Wanda and Troy Brown** earned some sweat equity on the Rice Camp Trail reconstructing and maintaining several waterbars. **Troy** returned a few days later to continue the project...**Jim Holland and Joan Tipton** continued the BCHNG's fine work at Jacks River Fields accomplishing routine maintenance chores. **Junior Kyle and Robby Mathis** went back to the campground the following week to clean the restrooms and empty the trash bins...**Boy Scout Troop 87** picked up litter along the East Cowpen Road and other locations in the vicinity...**Cody Wade** had 2 good days helping with Recreation Area maintenance and repair... The third Saturday of the month was awesome thanks to 2 major volunteer trail events. The **Ellijay Chapter of the Southern Off-Road Trail Assoc (SORBA)** with support from the **International Mountain Biking Assoc (IMBA)** and **North GA Chapter of SORBA** gathered mountain bikers from across the state to accomplish some much needed slingblading, trimming, blowdown and debris removal tasks on the Mountaintown Creek Trail. Volunteers included **Paula Johns, Jason Millirov, Brandon Wolds, Satchel Barlow, Gene Whitehead, Sharon Stevens, Larry and Kit Dameron, Michael Horinitz, Kassie and Derek Dahlgren, Kyle Glave, Jim Cullen, Phillip White, Mindy Neal, Rusty Barlow, Gay Rice, Gennie Dasinger, Paul McCort, Patrick Barry, Colin Smith, Robin Allen, Travis Baumberger,**



Fred Pilcher takes special care at Pilchers Pond

Anne Martin, Trev Martin, Gail Kirkman, Jeremy Simpson, Victor Palmeri, and Dondi Fontenot...And, the East Cowpen Trail was the site of this month's scheduled workday where a large volunteer work party composed of equestrians and hikers cleared trailside vegetation from above the 3-Forks Trailhead to the Hickory Ridge Trail junction. Led by **Bob Korch**, weed warriors included **Dalton Early, Conrad Fernandez, Susan Gaddis, Jim Holland, Larry Jones, Scott, Janet and Zack Jordan, Gail Milner, Veronica Nunley, Mary Korch, Bill Semsrott,**

Taylor Slate, Tom and Tannis Blackwell, Jim Bishop, Amos Burrell, and Charlie Crider...James and Beth Underwood spent most weekends this month hosting at the Lake Conasauga campground...The beginning of the school year didn't keep our high school hero **Cody Wade** from volunteering 3 additional days this month with recreation site cleanup...**Gene and Amy Findley and Carolyn Lee** cleared some blowdowns from the access road leading to the Dry Creek Trailhead...And again this month, **Fred Pilcher** finished up August by picking up litter at the Johns Mountain Overlook and the Pilcher's Pond parking lot. Volunteers contributed **695 hours** to the cause this month. Thanks for all the hard work folks.



As we begin to wrap up another (fiscal) year together, it's time to say **“Thank you”** for your continued attention to safety. It is a major accomplishment for this many people, engaged in this type of work and in this environment, to remain virtually accident free. Let's refresh our memories with some simple common sense guidelines to keep you safe in the woods.

- **Always wear gloves and a hardhat**
- **Treat all tools with respect**
- **Work a safe distance away from your trail partner(s)**
- **Carry tools in a safe manner – sheathed and at your side**
- **Be careful when lifting heavy objects**
- **Pace yourself**
- **Watch where you step, sit, and place your hands -- be snake-wise**
- **Keep alert for stinging insects -- particularly yellow jackets**
- **Easy does it -- take your time crossing stream fords**
- **Keep a weather eye -- it can change quickly**
- **Is your first aid/survival kit up-to-date?**
- **Practice good judgment, use common sense, and above all...**



THINK SAFETY FIRST!

2008 Hunting Seasons

The Cohutta Wildlife Management Area (WMA) includes nearly all National Forest lands on the east side of the Conasauga Ranger District north of Forest Road 18, Holly Creek Road, and west of Forest Road 64 and 22. On the west side of the district, the Johns Mountain WMA generally includes all state and federal forest lands on Johns Mountain and points east to I-75. National Forest lands outside a WMA are included within the statewide general hunting season.

There are no restrictions on camping and trail use during hunting season. However, it is a courteous gesture to our hunters to stay out of the woods before 10:00 a.m., particularly during the WMA firearms season. It is highly recommended that you wear some blaze orange if you're out during the firearms season. For more information, go to: www.gohuntgeorgia.com.

Here are the current hunting season dates...

COHUTTA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Archery Season: September 13 – October 7, October 13 – 17; deer and bear
Firearms Season: October 9 – 12, December 3 – 7; buck only and bear
Small Game Season: October 18 – December 1, December 8 – February 28
Special Hog Hunt: February 6 – 12
Turkey Season: March 21 – May 15



JOHNS MOUNTAIN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Archery Season: September 13 – October 17; deer and bear
Adult/Child Hunt: October 31 – November 2; deer and bear
Firearms Season: November 25 – 29; buck only and bear, either sex deer last day
Small Game Season: October 18 – 29, November 3 - 23, November 30 - February 28
Turkey Season: March 21 – 27, March 28 – April 3 (Quota 75)

STATEWIDE GENERAL HUNTING SEASON IN NORTH GEORGIA

Deer Archery Season: September 13 – October 10
Deer Primitive Weapons Season: October 11 – 17
Deer Firearms Season: October 18 – January 1
Turkey Season: March 21 – May 15



A message from your Board of Directors, Conasauga District Trail Volunteers

Elections for Team Conasauga Board of Directors

All volunteers who put in 20 or more hours of work during the past year are granted membership and voting privileges in the annual election of the Board of Directors of our Conasauga District Trail Volunteers organization. Each of you will be emailed or mailed a ballot so that those of you who are unable to attend the Picnic can vote by proxy.

As most of you are aware, this organization was formed in the past year to help us grow the size and capabilities of Team Conasauga. We'll be recapping our success together during the Picnic.

Volunteer Recruitment at REI Kennesaw

Do you have a few extra hours on weekends or evenings to help with volunteer recruitment? Team Conasauga is planning to occasionally set up a volunteer information and recruitment table at REI Kennesaw. To volunteer, contact Bob Korch at bkorch@bellsouth.net.



Conasauga Bits and Pieces

- **Leadership change.** *Liz Agpaoa* has been selected as the new Regional Forester for the Southern Region, succeeding Chuck Myers who recently became Associate Deputy Chief, National Forest System. Liz is coming to us from the Pacific Northwest Region where she most recently served as the Acting Regional Forester.
- **Slide repair on Forest Road 64.** The slide on Forest Road 64 that occurred some years ago as a result of Hurricane Ivan continues to threaten the stability of the road. A repair contract has been awarded with a scheduled starting date of October 20th. During the estimated 90-day life of the contract, the section of Forest Road 64 between Watson's Gap and Dyer Gap will be closed to vehicles.
- **Fannin County Adventure Race.** The Fannin County Chamber of Commerce has been issued a special use permit for an adventure race on November 7th and 8th. The 30-hour event will feature some 90 teams transitioning between mountain biking and trail running. The course includes sections of the Pinhoti Trail, South Fork Trail and Benton MacKaye Trail and Forest Roads 22, 64 and others in the vicinity. All roads and trails normally open to public travel will remain open during the race.
- **Lake Conasauga Closure.** Lake Conasauga Campground and Picnic Area will close for the winter season on October 27th. The lake remains open to fishing year around.
- **Pocket Closure.** The Pocket Campground will close for the winter season on November 3rd. The Pocket Picnic Area remains open year around.



Conasauga Lore . . .



Preacher Hall House. The Preacher Hall Place was one of the most well known mountain homesteads in the Cohutta Wilderness. The Old Wagon Road leading from the East Cowpen Road to the Bray Field on the Conasauga River became known as the "Hall Road." The Hickory Creek Trail follows part of this Old Wagon Road. There was considerable cleared ground at this home site, and much of it was encircled with a split rail fence. There has been speculation that Preacher Hall was not the first person to live at this site, but he was certainly the last, departing sometime in the early 1940s. There is a small cemetery with at least 7 graves on a ridge about 300 to 400 yards west of the home site. It is known that Preacher Hall's first wife is buried there with some of his young children.

* Historical information provided by Shepherd L. Howell





The *18th Annual Conasauga Ranger District Volunteer Appreciation Picnic* is scheduled for October 18th at the Pocket Picnic Area group shelter. On this special occasion, the Forest Service honors those volunteers who have contributed 20 hours or more to the Conasauga Ranger District in the past year. The invitations to this by-invitation-only event will be going out soon. Please RSVP by October 14th to Kim Winkler by email at klwinkler@fs.fed.us or by phone at 706-695-6736 ext 110. The picnic is well known for wonderful food, fun and fellowship. We hope to see you there.

Mark Your Calendars:

October 18 Annual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic.

November 15 Penitentiary Branch Trail. Water bar maintenance.

December No scheduled activities.

**January 23 - 24 East Cowpen Trail. Water bar maintenance.
Working Weekend #52. Car camp at the Cottonwood Campground.**

February 21 To be announced

Note: In addition to these scheduled workdays, we are trying to find some volunteers who are interested in working independently or with a small group to tackle these projects:

- Pinhoti Trail at Strawberry Mountain. Blowdown removal and trimming. Contact Larry Wheat directly at l.wheat@mindspring.com. Proposed work dates are October 2, 7, 14, or 20.
- Volunteer(s) to blaze non-wilderness trails.
- Small crew to remove blowdowns on lower Conasauga River Trail.
- Volunteer(s) to trim and/or slingblade lower Conasauga River Trail from Murray's Lake to the river.

If you are interested, please contact Larry Thomas, phone 706-695-6736 x103 or e-mail lrthomas@fs.fed.us.