

Trail Talk

Conasauga Ranger District

September - November 2007



AND THE WINNERS ARE...



Congratulations to *Volunteer of the Year Troy Brown* and our "Top Guns", Left to right: Bob Korch, Troy Brown, Wanda Brown, (Larry Thomas), Amos Burrell, Tannis Blackwell and Tom Blackwell. Not pictured Jim Bishop.



September - **Jim Holland, Melinda Towe and Joan Tipton** kicked off the month with a campground maintenance workday at the Jacks River Fields campground. **Troy and Wanda Brown** spent time constructing grade dips and trimming the Bear Creek trail in preparation for a SORBA workday. The following day the **SORBA Ellijay Chapter** hosted a trail maintenance workday on the Bear Creek trail...some 48 volunteers led by crew leaders **Mike Plochinski, Conrad Fernandez, Rick Moon, Troy Brown and Wanda Brown** had an awesome day constructing 60 new grade dips on a 1.8-mile section of heavily worn trail. A week later, **Melinda, Lakota, and Kelly Towe with Junior Kyle** returned to Jacks River Fields to service the restroom and empty the trash bins. On one weekend we saw 32 volunteers dedicating time to 3 different projects: **Joan Tipton and Jim Holland** paid the weekly service call to Jacks River Fields; **Boy Scout Troop 73** out of Chatsworth did a great job trimming and slingblading the Chestnut Lead trail; and, Working Weekend #48 volunteers tackled some much needed maintenance in the gorge on the upper Jacks River Trail - over a 2 day period, 12 volunteers improved one river ford, repaired about 200 feet of trail tread, and performed blowdown removal, trimming and slingblading on about 3 miles of trail. Participants included **Jim Bishop, Amos**



Amos Burrell and Jim Bishop – Working Weekend #48

Burrell, David Tanner, Larry Wheat, Tom and Tannis Blackwell, Tom Owens, Gail Milner, Bob and Mary Korch, and Troy and Wanda Brown. **Fred Pilcher** enjoyed a day mowing and grooming the Pilcher's Pond area while **Michelle Starnes and Elizabeth Taylor** picked up litter from the Johns Creek dispersed camping sites. A big Thank-you goes out to the 37 volunteers who contributed a tremendous **801 hours** to the cause in September.



October - SORBA member **Phillip White** started things off cutting blowdowns on the Pinhoti Trail at Pilcher's Pond. **Troy Brown** worked a long day with district employees designating campsites within the lower Jacks River trail corridor. **Troy** returned with **Wanda Brown and Amos Burrell** to the Jacks River trail the following weekend to take out all blowdowns between the bridge and Horseshoe Bend with their trusty crosscut saw. **Jim Holland and Joan Tipton** performed maintenance on their favorite campground, Jacks River Fields, over a 2-day period. And, **Bob Korch** removed fire rings from the lower Jacks River trail in support of the campsite designation project. The next week was huge when volunteers picked one day to take on five separate projects: **Larry Wheat and Jim Holland** tag teamed the removal of blowdowns from the Pinhoti trail at the

Narrows; **David Cross** donated time to litter pickup on the Lake Conasauga trail; **Fred Pilcher** continued his mowing and litter cleanup work at Pilcher's Pond while **Rodger Atkins** began cleaning up the Johns Mountain Overlook; and, 17 scouts with **Boy Scout Troop 7777** out of Woodstock, Georgia cleared the vegetation off the Emery Creek overlook and completed several service projects at the Lake Conasauga campground. The following weekend **Wanda and Troy Brown** cleared blowdowns on the Hickory Creek trail to the beaver pond...**Bob Korch** joined them the next day as they removed blowdowns and completed the multi-day, multi-volunteer trimming project on the Rough Ridge trail. **Jim Holland and Linda Pringle** made short work of the Jacks River Fields maintenance job. Then, 11 members of the **Backcountry Horsemen of North Georgia** began work on an involved horse corral construction project at Jacks River Fields...volunteers included **Jim Holland, Larry Wheat, Joan Tipton, Carol and Robert Horsfall, Lee Davenport, Melinda Towe, Junior Kyle, Robert Goggins, Ava Lambert and Kate Talmage**. Several volunteers attended a 1-day chainsaw operator recertification class at the Villanow Work Center...participants were **Bill Hester, Rick Moon, Marty Dominy, Charles Aiken, David Stelts, Jerry Carnes, Amos Burrell, Chris Hohol and Larry Vanden Bosch**. **Bill Hester** went right out with his new recertification card and sawed out blowdowns from the Pinhoti trail at Johns Mountain. **Amy and Gene Findley** spent several hours over the month removing litter and using their own equipment to bushhog and mow the Pinhoti trailhead and access road at Dry Creek. The **Benton MacKaye Trail Association** checked in with several hours of trail maintenance by volunteer section maintainers. And, **Fred Pilcher** repaired a gate going into the Pilcher's Pond area. October was another outstanding month for TEAM Conasauga as we racked up 483 hard-earned hours.



November – **Fred Pilcher** ended last month and began this one by spreading gravel at the gate access into Pilcher's Pond. **Conrad Fernandez and Steve Sharp** chainsawed blowdowns off of the Pinhoti trail from Stover Creek to the Hurricane trailhead. The



SORBA Ellijay Chapter returned to the Bear Creek trail one pretty fall day to finish the grade dip construction project...Crew leaders **Amos Burrell, Mike Plochinski, and Troy and Wanda Brown** joined our mountain bike friends **Marco Falgiano, Donde Fontenot, Larry and Kit Dameron, Mary Keller, Gail Kirkman and Tyler Davenport**.

SORBA members construct grade dips on the Bear Creek Trail

Bob Korch and employee Larry Thomas gave a public presentation to 55 people at R.E.I. in Atlanta one evening to discuss both “Exploring the Cohuttas” and “the Conasauga District Trail Volunteers program”. **Wanda and Troy Brown** spent a long day helping to complete the campsite designation work within the lower Jacks River corridor between the bridge and Rice Camp. The Johns Mountain overlook and access road looks much better thanks to the efforts of **Rodger Atkins** who spent 4 days picking up litter, clearing brush, mowing and painting over graffiti. **Troy and Wanda Brown, Bob Korch, Jim Bishop and Mike Plochinski** attacked blowdowns on the Rice Camp trail and part of the Hickory Ridge trail all in one day. **David Cross** spent a lot of time on Holly Creek removing some 20 pounds of litter. The Iron Mountain and East Cowpen trail are now blowdown-free thanks to the efforts of **Charlie Crider and Gail Milner** who spent 3 days in the area...this dynamic duo also sawed out a massive scarlet oak from the Horseshoe Bend trail. Speaking of awesome couples, **Troy and Wanda Brown** returned to the Hickory Ridge trail to finish the blowdown work all the way to the Rice Camp trailhead. The Pinhoti trail is all clear where **Rick Moon, Gennie Dasinger and Gay Rice** expended some sweat equity removing debris. **Jim Holland** was hard at work on the horse corral project at Jacks River Fields over a 3 day period. He was joined one day by some great workers including **Lee Davenport, Melinda and Lakota Towe, and Carlos and Carol Martel**. The Hickory Creek trail was the scene of the monthly scheduled volunteer workday...several folks gathered on a crisp, sunny morning to hike in to the worksite and knock out the maintenance of some 70 water bars and dips. Participants included **Mike Plochinski, Tom Owens, Amos Burrell, Larry Jones, Tim Goudie, Helen Chamberlein, Tom and Tannis Blackwell, Troy and Wanda Brown, and Scott, Janet and Zack Jordan**. Finally, **Rodger Atkins** rounded out this month’s volunteer work by repairing the deck, removing graffiti and picking up litter around the John’s Mountain Overlook. We tally 457 hours this month. That’s something to be proud of. Do the math and we have amassed **1,741 hours** the past 3 months. Now that’s some BIG numbers...Thanks TEAM, you’re the best!



Your normal body temperature is supposed to be 98.6°F. Here is how to keep it that way while on the trail in the next couple of months. In a word... “layering”.

Remember: A lot of heat leaves the body from the head, neck, hands, and feet. So keep those caps, insulated hats, toboggans, and balaclavas around on cold days. Carry liner gloves or another pair to wear if needed along with your leather work gloves. High collars on vests, jackets or turtlenecks can cover the neck area. Wool socks or wool blends, not cotton are the best for feet. Consider liner socks as well that can wick away moisture.



Cotton t-shirts tend to soak up perspiration and leaves it against the skin. Today’s materials such as capilene and polypropylene will wick away the moisture from your skin allowing you to be less likely to become chilled. These shirts and underwear come in

various weights – lightweight, mid-weight, heavy or expedition. Styles include zip-neck turtlenecks that work well if you need to ventilate the shirt during high exertion activities.

What's next? A long sleeve shirt, maybe a wool sweater or other blend, then possibly some type of insulated or polar fleece vest. A jacket might be in order that is windproof and/or waterproof. Pants could be insulated as well with flannel lining or could be wool for those truly “raw” days. Or you might consider wind resistant Gore-Tex rain pants.

Would you wear this all at once? Depends on what you are doing and the severity of the weather. Whatever the case, layering will meet most of your trail work needs and keep you safe and comfortable from the elements as well. One other thing though, you'll need to stay as dry as possible on those inclement days.



Work proceeds on the corrals at Jacks River Fields



THANKS Backcountry Horsemen!

TEAM Conasauga bits and pieces...

This month we welcome four new volunteers and a new district employee to TEAM Conasauga.

We are pleased to announce that **Nick Walendziak** has accepted the Forestry Technician - Wilderness/Trails position (vice Mike Davis) here on the Conasauga R.D. Nick comes to us from the Daniel Boone National Forest in Kentucky where he served as the Wilderness Ranger for the Clifty Wilderness. His reporting date is January 7th so he will be here in time for our January Working Weekend.

Tim Goudie, our newest TEAM member, comes to us from the Atlanta area where he learned of our volunteer program through a REI presentation. Several of you have already met Tim as he joined us on the scheduled November volunteer workday on the Hickory Creek trail.

Rodger Atkins came to us initially with a request for prospective Eagle Scout projects for some area Boy Scouts. Rodger thought he might like to do some volunteer work himself, so he signed up. Since then, this Dalton resident has been a ball of fire taking on the grooming of the John's Mountain Overlook site and access road and making plans to reconstruct the overlook deck.

National Forest neighbors **Amy and Gene Findley** live in the Strawberry Mountain area basically having the Pinhoti Trail out their backdoor. Their special relationship with the Pinhoti has inspired the Findleys to take over bushhogging, mowing and trash pickup duties at the Pinhoti trailhead at Dry Creek.

Fred Pilcher and his family have been tending a family gravesite at the old family homestead in the Pilcher's Pond area of the national forest for many years. Fred made his volunteer activities official this year and he has been regularly mowing and grooming the area around Pilcher's Pond ever since.



Thanks to all of you who attended our 17th Annual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic at Sloppy Floyd State Park. We had beautiful weather and a great time of fellowship.



We all pitched in (as always) with a carry-in dish for the volunteer picnic. It was quite a spread! (Gail Milner & Tannis Blackwell)



Special thanks to North Georgia SORBA for donating the main course... fried turkeys and to our chef, Rick Moon.



As the holidays approach we know that everyone's schedule becomes increasingly busy. For that reason we do not schedule a formal workday in December. Come the New Year though, we plan to crank it up again. We have a number of people that show an interest throughout the year in our volunteer program. Many leave us an e-mail address and receive the newsletter. If you're one of those folks, consider joining us in January. The winter Working Weekend is often one of our best trips of the year. Be careful though, if you try it you'll likely be hooked and you'll wonder why you waited so long to get involved.



Mark your calendars for the upcoming work dates:

January 19 – 20

Working Weekend #49 – Hickory Creek Trail, grade dip construction / water bar maintenance and car camp at the Cottonwood Campground

February 23

Pinhoti Trail at Strawberry Mountain, grade dip construction and trimming

March 22

To be announced



Merry Christmas

