



Trail Talk

2015

Wrap-up Edition

Dear Volunteers:

As we end 2015 and look forward to 2016, the CDTV board would like to ask you for your help. Our volunteer numbers and hours have dropped significantly over the last couple of years. Many of our long-time folks have not been able to make it out to the wilderness as much as they used to, and many of the volunteers we've seen with some regularity over the years have been absent from recent workdays. We are in urgent need of help from you all. Few of our volunteers make it to every monthly workday of the year. However, if we had a larger pool of volunteers who worked two to six workdays each year with regularity, we could accomplish most, if not all, of our maintenance goals.

Some of our highest turnouts over the last couple of years have been for workdays that are not in the wilderness, but closer to major roads. We understand that navigating the Forest Service roads around the wilderness can be challenging, and sometimes confusing. The board would like to offer assistance coordinating carpools into the wilderness for our upcoming workdays. If you are interested in a workday in 2016 and want to carpool, please contact Robert Edmondson (raehiker@gmail.com) or Larry Thomas (lrthomas68@gmail.com). Either of these board members can assist you with a carpool to the trailhead from the city/town where you live or a town near the wilderness that is on the way to the trailhead. We hope that our efforts to assist with carpools might make the travel to/from our workdays a little easier.

On behalf of the CDTV board, we wish you and your families a happy start to 2016. We hope that you will consider taking a weekend or two (or more if you can) to help us maintain the wilderness trails that we all enjoy. Those trails need our attention, and in turn, WE NEED YOUR HELP.

Warm Wishes,

Robert Edmondson
Vice-President of CDTV





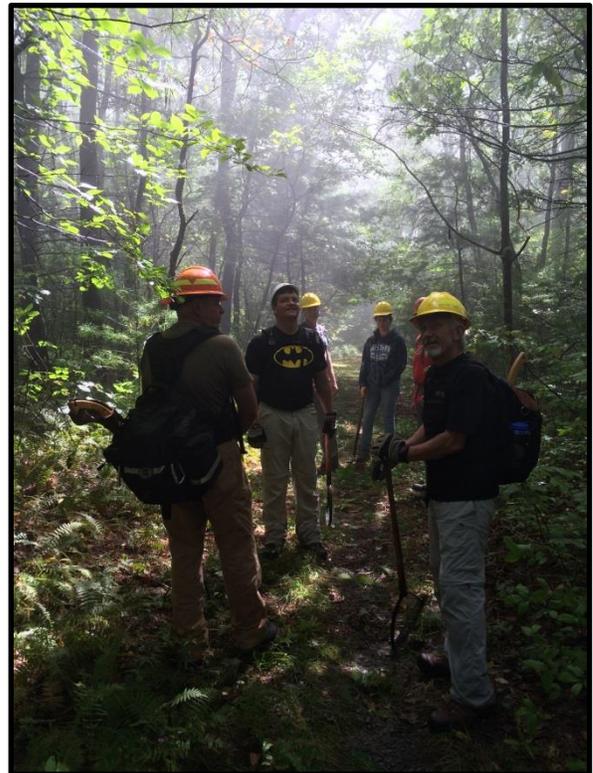
CDTV on the Big Ridge

It was time to sling blade the top of East Cowpen again and **CDTV** was there to answer the call. A good sized group was gathered in the Three Forks parking lot the morning of September the 12th. **Robert Edmondson, Carey Mitchell, Jim Bishop, Jim Leatherwood, Amos Burrell, John Franetic, Larry Thomas, David Tanner, and Jensen Tanner** were all waiting for me and for the clouds to lift on that misty morning.

We started working our way to Buckeye Mountain. Some patches of vegetation on the side of the trail were thicker than others but we worked at a steady pace across the ridge. The clouds still hadn't lifted when we made it to the Panther Creek junction. A small group lead by Larry worked the top half mile of Panther Creek trail, beating back some kind of flowering plant that grew nearly head high and had closed the trail to a few inches wide. I was glad to see that plant wacked down. I had hiked the Panther Creek trail many times this summer supporting the SECC crew that was working below the falls. It had rained most of the days during those three weeks and the first half mile section of Panther Creek trail with that head high thick vegetation would always get me soaking wet whether it was raining or not.

After lunch, the clouds finally lifted and the sun came out. We continued working, making it about a mile shy of the big switchback below Buckeye Mountain. With the sun shining bright we made our way back to the trailhead for snacks and laughs.

Thanks for all the hard work and the fun day.



The Dry Creek Trail System Benefits From Collaborative Maintenance

Larry Wheat, CONF Trail Crew Leader



Another successful trail improvement day was completed on September 12th at the Dry Creek Trail System. Ten volunteers participated on the 12th plus the Henson family of three came out the next day and trimmed weeds and brush around trail and road signs and other spots. The volunteers contributed 77.5 hours (work and travel) to keep this trail system in good condition. Volunteers were from the Back Country Horsemen of Northwest Georgia (BCHNWG), the Northwest Georgia Chapter of the Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association (NWGA SORBA), and other individuals. One thing that always pleases me is to see the continuing support from all three user groups (bikers, hikers, and equestrians). These trails are shared by all three user categories and it is wonderful to see all groups cooperating to maintain the trails and trailhead. **Thank you to all of our volunteers.**

We also thank the **Conasauga Ranger District personnel** for using funds received from timber thinning at Dry Creek and hiring a contractor to cut down hundreds of dead snags along the Yellow Trail (#237) where fire many years ago had killed those trees. This will ease our deadfall clearing effort in that portion of the trail system.

Volunteers who worked for this activity were **Joe Schoech, Louis Bondurant, Bill Hester, Gay Rice, Gennie Dasinger, Debbie Parks, Larry Parks, Ilona Hester, John West, Eddie Henson, Kathy Henson, Andrew Henson, and Larry Wheat.** Larry and Debbie Parks brought their bush hog and a grass mower for trailhead grass mowing. Joe Schoech brought his UTV and saw gear for deadfall cleanup. Others brought trimmers and hand tools.



Deadfall across Wheat trail



Joe clearing deadfall on trail

The primary completed tasks included:

- mowing all grass at the trailhead
- trimming brush and weeds encroaching on parts of Trails #240 and #244 (Red and Bridle) where timber thinning allows sunlight to flood the area and stimulate plant growth
- trimming around many road and trail signs, and
- making a complete cleanup loop on the Wheat trail (#239), clearing deadfall including places where deadfall covered only part of the trail path.



Larry Parks bush hogging, and photographer's finger



Debbie trimming at trailhead



Ilna, Louis, and Larry Parks mowing trailhead



Eddie trimming around signs

We thank all of our volunteers and supporters for their help.



October



On October 24 we held our annual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic. There was a very nice turn out of folks and it was by far the warmest day we had for the picnic in a few years. I would like to personally thank all of our volunteers; it is truly telling how vibrant our volunteer community is by the massive amount of work that is accomplished each year by you. This was eloquently described by Karen Larsen, District Recreation Manager, in her speech to open up the award presentation. So instead of reinventing the wheel, here is an abstract of that speech. I hope you enjoy reading about all of the wonderful accomplishments and I am looking forward to seeing all of you at next year's Volunteer Appreciation Picnic.

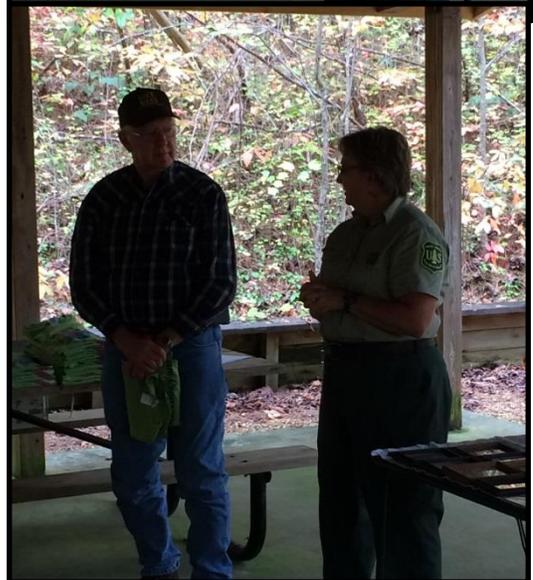


Welcome Everyone and Happy 25th Anniversary

“Since my arrival to the Chattahoochee in 2012, the dedicated volunteers of the Conasauga Ranger District have consistently contributed between 5,000 and 7,000 hours of work each year, and this year is no exception. In total, our partnerships have resulted in 6,621 hours of volunteer work completed. Recently, our emphasis has been on bringing youth to the outdoors, and the results have been phenomenal win-win situations where we get an amazing amount of project work accomplished and aspiring youth have gained a hard-earned appreciation for our natural resources.

This year we had multiple Boy Scouts of America troops contributing nearly 300 hours completing vegetation work on the Tower Trail, rehabilitation of all the picnic tables at Lake Conasauga Campground and Day Use areas, and clean-up and decommissioning of numerous campsites along the lower Jacks River Corridor.

Apparently the word of our fun Spring Break volunteer work weeks has spread, resulting this year in us hosting a 12 person crew in early March who contributed over 480 hours, completing various projects on the Armuchee



Valley area of the district. Next year they will be sending two crews.

This year we also had the pleasure of hosting an awesome crew from the Southeast Conservation Corps for over two months. They spent the majority of their time in the wilderness, contributing 2,320 hours to the district program.

Although we did not have a host at the Pocket Campground this summer, we did have a new campground host at Lake Conasauga this year, Jimmy Sluder, who donated over 700 hours as our camp host.

And of course, the combined efforts of our horsemen, mountain bikers, and hikers of Team Conasauga once again proved to be a reliable source of enthusiastic trail maintenance activities, contributing 2,826.55 hours. This brought the overall effort on the Conasauga District this year to 6, 621 hours.

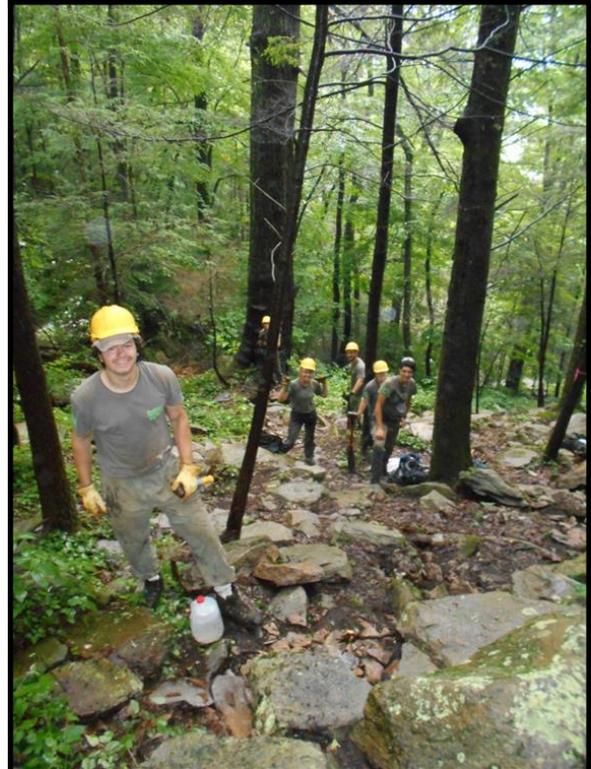
Highlights of this year's accomplishments include: Approximately 67% of total trail miles had some type of maintenance completed on them.

Houston Valley OHV trail system had a much needed re-route, size-limiting gates installed and a complete re-work of the trail signs and loop designations.

Keown Falls had .1 mile of trail widened from a deer path to a nice 2.5 foot width near the falls. Construction of the new reroute, which will address the long-standing issues with short-cutting up to the falls, began last week. The bottom half mile of the trail where the CCC era rock work lies, had check dams installed and several inches of new gravel spread.

Panther Creek had a re-route above the falls completed and a meandering staircase created through the rock scree area. Heavily impacted Beech Bottom closure area had around a dozen illegal campsites decommissioned and illegal vehicle access to the Pinhoti trail in the Manning Mill area was affected through construction of guardrail fencing.

So, in honor of Team Conasauga's 25th anniversary, we had tee shirts with the Team Conasauga logo made up, which will be awarded to each volunteer who contributed 20 hours or more this year. "



By Karen Larsen - District Recreation Manager



December



Planting Trees with CDTV

I met **Jim Bishop** at the Beech Bottom parking lot on the chilly morning of December 5th. He was concerned that no one else had arrived yet but just shortly after nine the rest of our group arrived. **John Franetic, Travis Sanchez, Justin Sanchez, David Tanner, and Jensen Tanner** all showed up at once. With it being too cold to linger, we all grabbed our shovels and headed down towards the Jacks River. By the time we hit One Mile Creek, or Long Branch as it is properly known, we were shedding layers. The day was warming up quick. By the time we all made it to the river, it was a gorgeous day. The illegal



campsites we were to plant trees in had already been tilled up and obliterated by the great work of the South East Conservation Corp earlier this year. The next step in recovering the area is revegetation. On the stony beach just up river from the trail junction is a thicket of white pine saplings growing through loose gravel, making them excellent candidates for transplanting. We broke into groups; Jim and John worked the stony and sandy beach; Travis and Justin worked on the twin sites; and David and Jensen worked on Beech Bottom proper. In total we planted 60-70 trees and, wow did it make a huge difference. After the planting was done, we moseyed down to the falls for a late lunch. We took a few classic group shots and headed up the mountain to finish out what became a beautiful day.



The Jacks River Falls area has become very personal to me over the last three years. Not just because it is the location in the wilderness I spend the most time in or the amazing beauty of the area, but because of the management challenge it presents. I just want to express how appreciative I am to any and all help folks give to this area.

So for the Cohutta and me

Thank You...



Dates for 2016



January 9, 2016 – CDTV, Hickory Creek Trail
North End (waterbar)
contact Larry Thomas
lrthomas68@gmail.com

January 9, 2016 – Pinhoti Work Day,
contact Larry Wheat
l.wheat@mindspring.com

February 6, 2016 – CDTV, Cohutta Work Day (TBA)
contact Larry Thomas
lrthomas68@gmail.com

February 6, 2016 – Pinhoti Work Day,
contact Larry Wheat
l.wheat@mindspring.com

March 5, 2016 – Dry Creek Work Day
contact Larry Wheat
l.wheat@mindspring.com

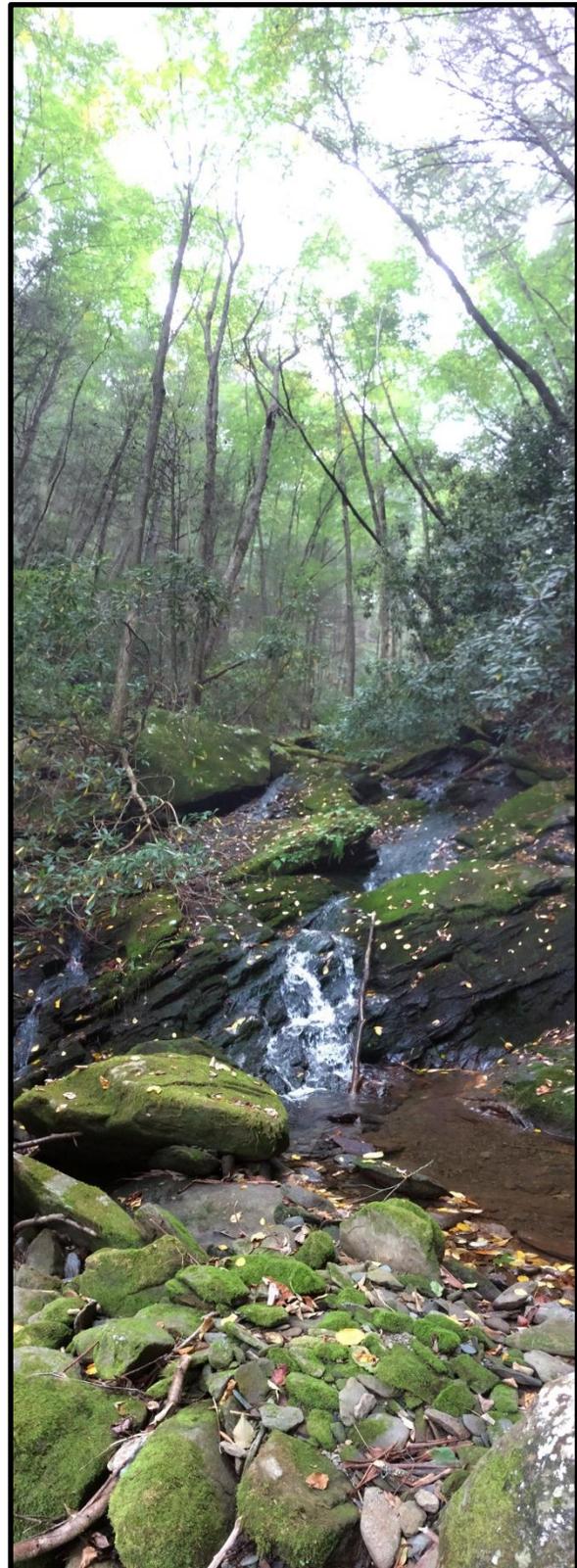
March 12, 2016 – CDTV, Rice Camp Trail (waterbar)
contact Larry Thomas
lrthomas68@gmail.com

Conasauga Ranger District Volunteer Training Opportunities

February 20, 2016 - CPR and 1st Aid
Contact Karen Larsen
kalarsen@fs.fed.us

April 9, 2016 – Chainsaw
Contact Karen Larsen
kalarsen@fs.fed.us

May 21, 2016 – Crosscut Saw and Traditional tools
Contact Karen Larsen
kalarsen@fs.fed.us





For more information on activities and events happening on the Conasauga Ranger District, please check out the following links to the various associations who are committed to helping us provide a safe, enjoyable trail experience for our forest users...

Team Conasauga: www.teamconasauga.org or www.facebook.com/teamconasauga

Friends of Dry Creek: www.facebook.com/groups/DryCreek/

Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA): www.bmta.org

Backcountry Horsemen of Northwest Georgia (BCHNWG): www.bchnwg.org

Backcountry Horsemen of North Georgia (BCHNG): www.bchng.org

Northwest Georgia Southern Off-Road Bike Association (NWGA SORBA): www.nwgasorba.org

Georgia Pinhoti Trail Association: www.pinhoti.info

Appalachian Trail Association (GATC): www.georgia-atclub.org

Ellijay Mountain Biking Association (EMBA): www.ellijaymountainbike.org

Southern Off-Road Bike Association (SORBA): www.sorba.org or www.ngwasorba.org

Co-Trails: www.cotrails.org

Any interested people, please contact me at kvasalinda@fs.fed.us. Thanks and see you on the trail.

~Kevin~

