



## So Long, 2012...It was another Great Year!

As we prepare to ring in a new year, we reflect on the great accomplishments our cadre of amazing volunteers made in 2012...

- Nearly 6,000 hours of volunteer labor was recorded for the fiscal year. This is equivalent to 3 full-time employees!
- 15 volunteers donated over 100 hours each
- 63 volunteers donated at least 20 hours each
- Over 100 miles of trail received maintenance of some kind

With so many people contributing to our successes this year it was a hard task to hone down the list of people who deserved special recognition for their efforts! Out of all our dedicated volunteers, we decided to honor 8 people as "Top Performers" this year...

- Our Volunteer of the Year once again went to Wanda Brown with 405 total hours recorded for the year, and a total of 8607 hours volunteered since Team Conasauga's inception. Wanda was awarded a framed "Falling and Bucking – The Way it Was" art print by artist Ken Brauner. The Co-Trails organization also honored Wanda by presenting her with a hand-crafted, one-of-a-kind wooden hiking pole.

The following seven individuals were honored as our “top Guns” on the Conasauga Ranger District:

- **Troy Brown** – 361 hours for 2012, 8610 hours “lifetime”
- **Jim Leatherwood** – 178.5 hours for 2012, 517 hours “lifetime”
- **Jim Bishop** – 165 hours for 2012, 1588 hours “lifetime”
- **Amos Burrell** – 157 hours for 2012, 1351 hours “lifetime”
- **Mark Voykovic** – 151 hours for 2012, 678 hours “lifetime”
- **Larry Wheat** – 149 hours for 2012, 1240 hours “lifetime”
- **Carlos Martel** – 139 hours for 2012, 406 hours “lifetime”

These folks received REI shocklight telescoping hiking poles for their efforts from the USFS and fleece vests embroidered with the Co-Trails logo from the Co-Trails organization.

Congratulations and thanks to all these dedicated volunteers! They'll definitely have to keep on their toes this year because there were lots of other folks close on their heels!





2013 is off to a roaring start!

In November we kicked off the new fiscal year with a tremendously successful work weekend on the Tearbitches and Chestnut Lead trails. 25 volunteers, including several “first-timers” plus 6 members of the regional Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS) crew made this event a huge success with over 175 waterbars cleaned and repaired, and around six miles of trail cleared of blowdowns. The crew was comprised of many of our “regulars” including **Tom and Tannis Blackwell, Jim Leatherwood, Nicole Warren-Miller, Troy and Wanda Brown, Amos Burrell, Carlos Martel, Gail Milner, Charlie Crider, Jeff Krivo, Tom Owens, Dan Newman, Jim Bishop, David and Charlie Tanner, and Rob and Robbie Edmondson.** We also welcomed back **Michael Richter** and six “first-timers” **Miles Wise, Mike Heninger, Josh Foster, John Salmon, Charlie Mower, and A.J. Baldwin.** The SAWS crew members in attendance were **Bill Hodge, Aaron Sanford, Bobby Berry, James Lautvenheiser, Rick Foster, Brenna Kenney, and Peter Reber.** Some of the hardier folks braved the colder temps and had an enjoyable evening of fellowship around the campfire at the Ballfield dispersed site near Lake Conasauga. The SAWS crew spiked out near the Conasauga River for a true winter wilderness experience! No one at the event could ever remember completing the Tearbitches Trail in just one day, so hats off to all who participated!

The Benton-MacKaye folks have also been quite busy this fall, completing new construction of a much-desired .6 mile re-route in the Dyer Gap area, which has now successfully relocated the trail from a forest road to a beautiful trail bed through the woods! Initial clearing of the trail was completed in November by a crew of twelve, and the tread construction was completed on December 8<sup>th</sup> on what George Owen claims was one of the most successful construction trips ever! All total, 32 volunteers contributed 318 hours towards completion of this project. Volunteers who worked on this project include the following: **Barry Allen, Jeff Anderson, Kyle Atkins, Ralph Artigliere, Jon Barker, Scott Barker, Hank Baudet, David Blount, Connor Bayliss, Steve Bayliss, Claire Broadwell, Mike Christison, Wes Clonts, Walter Cook, Bob Danzinger, Steve Davis, Darcy Douglas, Dick Evans, Vic Fredlund, Ralph Heller, Tom Keene, Doug Kleiber, Sue McConnell, Gene Nix, George Owen, Kay Reissing, Ted Reissing, Bob Ruby, Richard Sullivan, Tom Shillock, Del Yoder, and Mark Yost.** Way to go BMTA!

Smaller but no less significant work parties have also occurred involving **Fred Pilcher, Rick Moon, Bill Hester** and other **GPTA members** (who haven't turned in hours yet) over in the John's Mountain/Dry Creek area. **Kathleen Corcoran and Hanley Rose** have been working on clearing the Iron Mountain trail, and after recently attaining her cross-cut certification in early December, **Zoe Zardis** has been hard at work with **Jim Holland** tackling numerous blow-downs on the Penitentiary Branch trail in the Cohutta Wilderness. You go girl!



Although it wasn't a work event, Backcountry Horseman of Northwest Georgia (BCHNWG) sponsored a successful Familiarization Ride in early December to show off all the work that has been done on the Dry Creek trail system and generate more interest in volunteering. There were 29 riders in attendance including **Kimi Gregg, Cindy and Jim McGarvey, Kathy Henson, Debbie and Jessica Crowe, Nancy Krause, Gene Findley, Susan Waldron, September Muse, Janet Brooks, Carol and Gary Cross, Gene and Christy Johnson, Walter Johnson, Betsy Richards, Bryant Smith, Greg Hall, Dianne Adams-Koehler, Mechelle and Nixxie Price, Caitlin Hagin, Julie and Dara Bage, Craig Waldron, and Larry Wheat.** Forest Service personnel were graciously invited to this event as well. **Jeff Gardner** (District Ranger), **Karen Larsen** (District Recreation Program Manager), **Debbie Caffin** (Region 8 Trails Program Manager) and **Rachael Larsen** (Karen's daughter) welcomed the chance to get to know the trails from a different perspective and send thanks to Cindy and Jim McGarvey for "loaning" them their transportation! What a fun and memorable day!

## Lots planned for the upcoming year so mark your calendars!

- January 12  
Team Conasauga Presentation at Atlanta REI store
- January 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>  
Beech Bottom Re-route. Camping either on site or at  
Cottonwood Patch
- January 26<sup>th</sup>  
Co-Trails Annual Kick-Off Meeting at Chattahoochee National Recreation  
Area
- February 2  
Crew Leader training course – Conasauga Ranger District
- February 9  
Team Conasauga Presentation at Kennesaw REI store
- February 16  
Beech Bottom Re-route completion or TBD if it's already done!
- March 2  
CPR/First Aid Course – Conasauga Ranger District
- March 16  
Hickory Creek – Rice Camp TH to Bray field- waterbars
- March 23  
Chainsaw Course – Blue Ridge Ranger District

Thanks again to everyone who came out this year to support our trails program! We hope to see you out on trail in 2013!



A retirement party for USFS employee extraordinaire Larry Thomas is planned for January 17<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 p.m. at the Chattahoochee NF Supervisor's Office in Gainesville. Don't miss this chance to tell your favorite "Larry" story and wish him well on his new endeavors!

Co-Trails will be hosting an annual kick-off meeting at the Island Fords Visitor Center on the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area. The meeting will be pre-empted by a guided hike along the river and a cook out. Please see the Co-Trails website for more details!

For more information on upcoming work events follow these links:

[www.teamconasauga.org](http://www.teamconasauga.org)



**HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND MANY BLESSINGS IN 2013!**