

THE CUMBERLAND TRAILHEAD

The voice of the Friends of the Trails

Spring 2022

Cumberland County, TN

A Message from FOTT President John Conrad

I am excited about all the activities associated with local trails in Cumberland County. We have reorganized the structure of the Friends of the Trails (FOTT) and that appears to have injected new life into the organization. We agreed to increase the Board of Directors from seven to nine members, and we created three new committees by adding planning, construction, and administration committees. The new board is grappling with the strategic direction and priorities for FOTT.



The Planning Committee is keeping very busy exploring possible new trails to add to the Crossville Greenway. In addition to those already publicized, we are considering a connection from downtown to the state park, assisting the state park with an extension to the Pioneer Trail, and adding a short loop on TCAT property. A priority is to support our local government in finding a way to create a paved trail all the way from Centennial Park to the Obed River Park. This project looks like it may become a reality in the not-too-distant future.

As Brenda Gibbon describes elsewhere in this newsletter, the Trail Construction Committee is making good progress with the construction of the new Habitat Trail while working steadily on the maintenance of numerous trails by removing fallen trees, etc.

The new Administration Committee is taking shape. Michelle Bayless has assumed responsibility as chair of this committee and we have recruited Donna King and Christy Dolinich to bolster our marketing and publicity efforts for the Crossville Greenway.

Finally, after much discussion, the Board of Directors has decided to end the FOTT membership program. Ever since its inception a few years ago, we have struggled to define its purpose and mission. We have always been grateful for the \$25 membership fees which we put to good use, but many non-members make larger donations. We have failed to define any benefits specific to members other than pride in belonging to a vibrant organization. Because of these limited benefits and the significant costs in volunteer time to maintain a membership program, we have decided to terminate the program. Donations are still encouraged and appreciated.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our volunteers. I am constantly in awe at how generous you are with giving your time for the benefit of our community. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

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Progress on the Habitat Trail

Submitted by Brenda and Steve Gibbon, Trail Construction Committee

We are making good progress on the Habitat Trail! Our teams of hardy volunteers have been on-site and ready to work regardless of the freezing weather.

The volunteer crews completed the rough-in for the loop end of the trail just in time for Valerie Naylor's excavation work in February. Despite the bad weather, Valerie completed nearly half of that end of the trail.

To complete the full portion of the loop end of the trail, additional excavation work will begin in early April. Along with the excavation, our volunteer teams will clear the way to Spiers Branch where a bridge will cross over from the Habitat Trail. The bridge, and an additional trail, will provide access to a planned parking area on Deerfield Road. The Crossville Engineering and Road Departments completed the assessment for the installation of the donated Hilltoppers bridge and construction of the parking area.

If you would like to join our work sessions, please send us email at fott.tcm@gmail.com with your name and preferred email address.



Hardy volunteers braved cold and snow during this winter's work sessions to make steady progress on the Habitat Trail in Crossville.

Above: Darla Caswell and Brenda Gibbon. Left: John Partyka.

Below: Tom Parker, Doug Turner, Danny Terry, and Joe Lucas.



4th Annual Hike for Health Kicks Off April 4

Submitted by Norm Brinsley, TTA

May 17, 2021 was a bright and cheerful Monday morning that promised good things for people who were out and about. And, out and about some 30 people were, as participants in the Covenant Health/Cumberland Medical Center's third annual Hike for Health. This program, begun in 2019, gives people of all levels of fitness a chance to engage in an activity that is conducive to improving one's quality of life by reducing stress and anxiety. The Hike for Health is a series of 13 weekly hikes that take place on either paved, groomed, or a combination of both types of trail surfaces. Each hike is approximately one mile in distance and allows those who partake in each one to complete a half marathon.

Each hike requires a hike leader, and Plateau Chapter members took on this responsibility for 10 of the 13 hikes last year. Cheryl Heckler, John and Carol Conrad, John and Deb Martin, and Connie Obohoski all led hikes in 2021. Connie led the May 17 hike along the Cumberland Mountain State Park's ADA trail, beginning at the park office parking lot and progressing to the wooden bridge before returning. It was an enjoyable walk for everyone, and some people elected to go beyond the officially prescribed distance.

From the sign used to designate the hike's starting point, it is evident that the Tennessee Trails Association (TTA) is a full partner and strong supporter of the program. John Conrad, president of Friends of the Trails, an organization engaged in trail building, maintenance, and promoting hiking, is passionate about the Hike for Health program and lends his support to the event as much as possible. Connie Obohoski, a retired Air Force nurse, knows the value of moderate but regular exercise as a way of sustaining a healthy outlook on life. "Starting your day with a walk helps keep the rest of your day full of sunshine." Connie's husband, Bob, a hike leader, trail builder, and the Plateau Chapter's TTA Board Representative, supported the day's hike by walking as the "sweep" at the end of the group to ensure everyone finished safely.

This year's Hike for Health series will kick off on April 4 and run every Monday through June 27. Each one-mile paved trail hike begins at 10:30 a.m. Registration is not required to participate, and anyone interested is welcome to join at any time. For more information, including maps of trail locations and routes, visit www.crossvilletrails.com/health-walks or call (931) 459-7019.



Norm Brinsley and Connie Obohoski pose at the trailhead for the May 17, 2021, Hike for Health.

2022 Hike for Health Schedule

April 4	Centennial Park #1
April 11	Downtown Crossville
April 18	Fairfield Glade CMC Wellness Complex
April 25	Obed River Park Trail
May 2	Fairfield Glade Sculpture Trail
May 9	Cumberland Mountain State Park ADA Trail
May 16	Centennial Park #2
May 23	Centennial Park #1
May 30	Downtown Crossville
June 6	Fairfield Glade CMC Wellness Complex
June 13	Obed River Park Trail
June 20	Fairfield Glade Sculpture Trail
June 27	Cumberland Mountain State Park ADA Trail

LECTURES FOCUS ON CUMBERLAND TRAIL

Submitted by John Martin

The final two lectures in the Plateau Chapter's four-part Lecture Series will focus on the Cumberland Trail. The Cumberland Trail, established in 1971 as a State Scenic Trail, follows a line of pristine high ridges and deep gorges lying along Tennessee's Cumberland Plateau, linking state park lands, state natural areas, wildlife management areas, and national parks. Partnerships with the Cumberland Trails Conference, the Friends of the Cumberland Trail, and other 501(c)(3) organizations and volunteer groups support the acquisition of land and the construction and maintenance of the trail. The completed trail corridor will encompass the largest acreage within a Tennessee State Park unit, and extend 300 miles from Cumberland Gap on the Tennessee, Virginia, and Kentucky border to the Tennessee River Gorge, near Chattanooga.



The third lecture, to be held on April 14, will be on *The History and Status of the Cumberland Trail* by Bobby Fulcher, nationally recognized folklorist and park manager of the Justin P. Wilson Cumberland Trail State Park. Fulcher has worked in Rhea County, securing portions of the trail that run through Dayton's Laurel-Snow State Natural Area, formerly Pocket Wilderness. He has dedicated his entire professional life to Tennessee state parks, spanning 40-plus years from his first job as a seasonal employee at Pickett State Park in 1976 to his current role as park manager at Justin P. Wilson Cumberland Trail State Park. As leader of the park since 2000, he has guided the vision for the Cumberland Trail. Fulcher has received numerous accolades for his time, effort, and dedication to the natural and cultural heritage of the Cumberland Plateau and Appalachian region.

The fourth lecture, scheduled for May 12, will focus on *The Cumberland Trail Building Plans* by Shauna Wilson, Trail Building Chief, Cumberland Trail Conference. Wilson, as chief trail crew supervisor at the Cumberland Trail Conference, leads a trail building crew which has built close to 50 miles of the trail over the last six years. She began working as a volunteer on the Cumberland Trail from 2013 through 2015 before becoming a full-time trail builder in January 2016. Wilson is a certified Master Trail Builder and certified Mechanized Trail Builder, certificates she received in 2017. In her own words, "I am dedicated to my craft and helping to complete the Cumberland Trail."

For those interested in attending either of these lectures, please RSVP to Norm Brinsley, Chapter Chairperson, via email at plateau@tennesseetrails.org.

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We want to hear from you!

If you have something to share with FOTT members in a future issue of **THE CUMBERLAND TRAILHEAD**, please email your submission to Michelle Bayless, editor, at dreaminofobx@gmail.com

SOMETHING NEW IS AFOOT

The people have spoken and the Friends of the Trails organization has listened! This spring, FOTT will host a new hiking challenge, HIKE FEST. This week-long event will allow hikers to set a personal distance goal from 3 miles to 18+ miles, to be completed on designated trails. HIKE FEST will culminate on June 4, National Trails Day, with a guided hike on Soldiers Beach Trail followed by a picnic at Meadow Park Lake. Registration begins May 1.

Watch your email and the [FOTT Facebook page](#) for further information. Join us for HIKE FEST 2022—where all trails lead to lunch!



#cchikefest22



Paved Extension of the Stonehenge Trail

In Fairfield Glade, a long-planned extension of the Stonehenge Trail to the second Forrest Hill Drive intersection with Stonehenge Boulevard has been flagged and should be paved by the end of the summer. The half-mile paved path will run from the north side of the lower Dorchester GC parking lot up Stonehenge Boulevard on club property in the tree line.

The Trails Committee perceives the project to have two major benefits for the community. First, it will provide over fifty homes with a safe way to walk from the second Forrest Hill and Thames Drive areas to Dorchester GC and provide access to first Forrest Hill Drive and the Stonehenge Trail south. Secondly, the paved path will allow golfers an easier shot gun start and, in the event of a weather warning, a quicker return to the club house.



You Could Be One of Us!

Tired of pickle ball? Golf isn't working out? Tennis isn't your thing? Mornings at the gym are getting old? Two hours a week of trail work just might be of interest.

Work outside. Breathe the fresh air. Move LOTS of rocks and dirt. Make a contribution to your community. Work alongside certified trail builders to expand and maintain Fairfield Glade's 25-mile trail system. Training and tools provided. Contact Mark Richie at xmedia2@frontiernet.net for details.

Winter Weather Didn't Deter FG Trail Crew

Submitted by Mark Robinson, FG Trail Crew Boss

Photos submitted by Mark Richie

Unlike past years, the Fairfield Glade Trail Crew has worked throughout this winter. Scheduling work sessions on Wednesday and Saturday mornings, unless rain, snow, or freezing temperatures forced a cancellation, the Crew has begun building an extension of the Overlook Trail south of the existing trail. The extension will pass under The Overlook and another rock escarpment before a series of switchbacks takes the trail down to Daddys Creek. Overall, the extension will be approximately two-thirds of a mile and add about a thousand feet of trail along the creek.

However, the steep, rocky terrain makes this loop a very difficult stretch of trail to build. It has been referred to, only half-jokingly, as "a black diamond trail." While most of the extension will be built by hand, we did have expert machine trail builder Valerie Naylor here in February. She completed about five hundred feet of trail before rain cut her scheduled two weeks short. The extension project is expected to take a couple of years to complete.

In addition to trail building, the Crew spent a Saturday morning gathering trash at the base of The Overlook, including four large trash cans and lids, two picnic tables, railing dislodged from above, and three large trash bags filled with everything from beer bottles to a VCR. The Crew will coordinate with Maintenance Services this summer to haul the trash up to The Overlook and properly dispose of it.

While the extension will be the primary focus of the Crew, we will not ignore other projects. One trail we have been working on is a connector from the Library Trail to Cromwell Lane. A new bridge has been constructed, and the connector should be opened this spring. Also, the Crew will continue improvements and maintenance along existing trails.



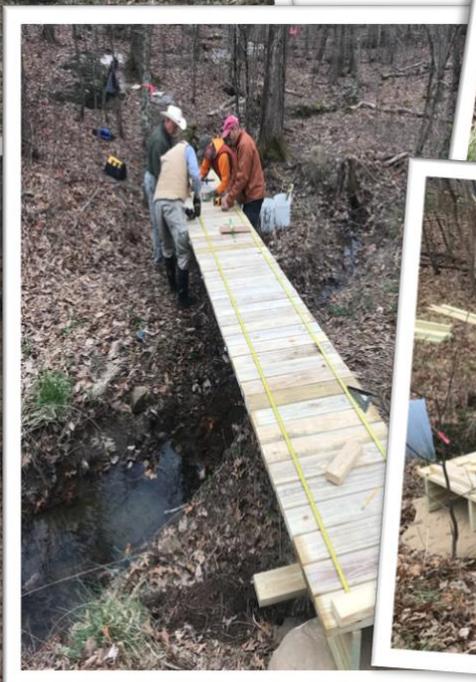
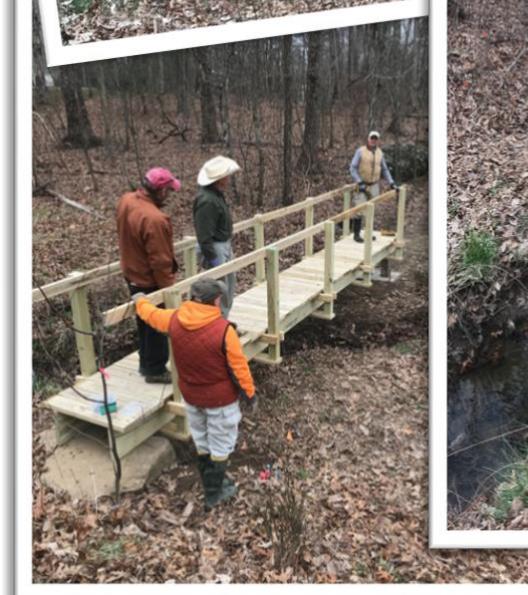
ABOVE: Before work could progress too much farther on the extension of the Overlook Trail, an accumulation of nearly fifty years of trash had to be gathered and bundled. Trail Crew volunteers invested over fifty hours gathering broken bottles, cans, tires, and food boxes mindlessly thrown over the cliff. Among other things were two VCRs with remote controls, a boom box, the original steel pipe handrails, two picnic tables, several tires, and three 50-gallon drums.

LEFT: Work continued throughout the winter on the Glade trails. Here the crew takes a break from moving rocks on the Overlook Trail extension project.

Bridging the Gap — The Cromwell Connector

Submitted by Jerry Brown

There will soon be a new, short, trail extension in Fairfield Glade. Six years ago, Don Hazel had the idea to give residents living on Cromwell Lane direct access to the Library Trail by building a short connector link. The build has to contend with large sections of bedrock that are exposed at ground level. There is also the problem of the very short, 10-foot road frontage access to the trail along Cromwell that requires a bridge to traverse a culvert and drainage ditch. On March 25, one of the major hurdles to completing the project was accomplished when five members of the bridge crew completed the main span of the 24-foot long bridge. Look for this trail to be officially opened in the next few months.



Report from the 2021 Annual Meeting

Introduction

At the end of 2021 we realize that we have had a pretty good year from a trails perspective. This is an Annual Report summarizing the year's activities. It always surprises me how much gets done on the trails even though we all lead such busy lives. Once again, I think the trails were appreciated more than usual this year as hiking is a safe and healthy activity even when there is a pandemic.

Trail Activities

New Trails - The only new trail that was completed this year by FOTT was the Little Obed River Trail extension to the Woodlawn Loop. We did, however, add a couple of sections of the Cumberland Trail to the marathon this year so Ozone Falls and Head of Sequatchie will be added to the inventory of trails in Cumberland County. We have started construction of the Habitat Trail near Deerfield Road in Crossville and expect to make more progress in 2022. Valerie Naylor, the trails specialist from North Carolina, assisted with the design of the trail and started construction.

Plantation Trail Maintenance - We continue to have major problems keeping this trail open for hiking. It was closed for much of the year. We are trying to get this trail paved to solve this ongoing problem.

Fairfield Glade Trails - The FG Trails Committee continues to do an excellent job maintaining and improving their trails. A number of trails were rerouted this year due to proposed new housing construction and just to enhance the trails such as the Overlook Trail.

Trail Maintenance - This continues to be an ongoing issue, but Tom Buckley and his team have done an outstanding job keeping all the trails in the county clear of downed trees and other obstructions. Hopefully the new FOTT Trails Construction Committee will work cooperatively with Tom to keep the trails open.

Other Trail News - Don Hazel and Danny Terry led a team to install E911 markers on the Overnight Trail in the Cumberland Mountain State Park. Early in the year, Chip Hillis requested help in extending the Pioneer Trail at the park. We offered to assist but the project never got started. Cliff Wightman, the Director at TCAT, gave the go-ahead for us to plan a trail and get the boundaries surveyed by the city engineering staff. Due to other priorities, this activity was postponed until 2022. Once again, the Fairfield Glade volunteers helped with the construction of the trails in Crossville and we appreciate all their efforts.

Events

Hiking Marathon - The Hiking Marathon, with its new and improved committee structure, was an unqualified success. Thanks to all who make this special event happen each year. It continues to grow in popularity (over 2,400 hikers this year – 300 more than last year) as word spreads even to those who do not normally hike, being a welcome distraction during the pandemic. Financially, the event broke even with the sponsors and personal donations covering all the expenses.

Trails Festival - Mary deWolf did an excellent job on the Trails Festival with the help of Abby Julian from the Community Club and a bunch of volunteers. The T-shirt distribution went smoothly once again, and the weather cooperated to make this an outstanding event.

Virtual 5K - Mary deWolf decided to try something different. She organized a virtual 5K hiking event. With a \$25 fee for adults and \$5 for kids she raised enough so that after expenses were paid we were able to split \$700 between FOTT and the Peavine Food Bank.

Health Walks - FOTT partnered with TTA and CMC/Covenant to put on a series of one-mile health walks that were very popular this year. Thanks to all the volunteers who made this happen.

National Trails Day Picnic June 5th - The Meadow Lake Park picnic has become an annual tradition with 75+ hikers and volunteers enjoying lunch prepared by Marlene Potter and the park staff. The rain stayed away and everyone had a good time. (Marlene is retiring early next year so we will need new arrangements in 2022.)

Tuesday Hikes & Thursday Walks - These are now both year-round events. We recognize that they are Fairfield Glade activities and we have agreed that the FG Trails Committee will be responsible for all aspects of these activities in the future.

Organization and Administration

Annual Meeting and Board Member Election -We have decided that due to Covid it is not wise to hold a large Annual Meeting with elections, so we are going to suspend the bylaws that address these activities. This report describes the main activities and accomplishments of the year including our strong financial position. We are appointing an expanded Board of Directors and expect to ratify them sometime in 2022.

FOTT Organization - FOTT was created as a 501(c)(3) organization in 2015 and a great deal has been accomplished in that time. However, as the organization matures, its role is changing from predominantly a trail-construction organization to one that is much more broad, covering the Hiking Marathon, Greenway planning, trail access negotiations, finding funding sources, etc. etc. We are therefore expanding the organization from just a Board of Directors with seven directors to a Board with nine members and four committees. The proposed committees are:

- 1) Hiking Marathon Committee,
- 2) Trail Construction Committee,
- 3) Planning Committee
- 4) Administration Committee

We think this larger organization will be more effective at getting things done. We had just two Board of Directors meetings this year, but the new expanded Board is expected to meet four times in 2022. We will continue to recruit volunteers and identify leadership roles.

New Trail Websites - We launched two new websites for our local trails this year. The Friends of the Trails website www.crossvilletrails.com includes information on all the trails in Cumberland County, all hiking opportunities in the county, and information on how you can help with your, time, talents, or donations. The second website www.gladetrails.com is focused on providing the same information for the Fairfield Glade community and is now maintained by the Fairfield Glade Trails Committee.

Trail Maps - I continue to create and maintain the trail for the Crossville and Cumberland County trails and the marathon trail maps but Michelle Bayless has now taken on the responsibility for all trail maps in Fairfield Glade.

Newsletter - Michelle Bayless continues as our Newsletter Editor producing four excellent newsletters each year.

Partnerships - We do not have any formal agreements, but we work cooperatively with the TTA Plateau Chapter and the FG Trails Committee. We also work occasionally with the Cumberland Mountain State Park, the Cumberland Trail State Park and Uplands in Pleasant Hill. We are also working more closely with the Chamber of Commerce and holding meetings in their conference room.

Shows - We normally attend a variety of shows and health fairs in order to raise awareness about FOTT and the work we do. Covid restricted these activities this year and we just attended one FG Volunteer Expo and no health fairs.

Finance - We changed the way we do our financial record keeping this year. We changed from using QuickBooks to QuickBooks Online to make it easier to share the workload. We are also taking on a volunteer bookkeeper. Mike Durnwald will be doing all the financial record keeping and reporting in 2022 under the supervision of our treasurer.

We had \$25,700 income this year to the end of October (\$3,300 in donations, \$8,600 from sponsors and \$10,000 from the City, \$1,000 FG Community Club, \$625 in membership fees and \$1,300 in various items such as T-shirt sales, the 5K entry fees., etc.) and \$26,800 expenses (\$13,900 on the trails, \$11,400 on the marathon & events and \$1,300 on administration). We have a strong balance sheet with \$25,900 in the bank ready to spend on building trails when the weather improves in the spring.

Planning

Greenway Master Plan - Early in the year we conducted a trail user survey and received 550 responses. In April we published the Crossville Greenway Master Plan and on April 6th I briefed the City Council on the plan during their monthly workshop. This plan has been very well received and I would like to thank the FOTT Advisory Board for all their hard work in putting together the plan that documents our plans for building a network of trails in the City of Crossville. We have already seen a benefit as the City used the plan when they applied for a grant to do the engineering design for a bridge across the Little Obed River to connect the Woodlawn Loop to Centennial Park. The application was successful and the City has received \$50,000 for the work. The county is also using the plan as they prepare the county Parks and Recreation Plan.

Planning Committee - We have renamed the Greenway Advisory Board so that it is now the FOTT Planning Committee. The primary purpose of the committee is to ensure that the next segment of the Greenway trail route, as defined in the Master Plan, is ready when the Trails Construction Committee is ready to start work on a new section. This requires decisions on the route, discussions with property owners, and ensuring the necessary legal agreements are in place. The Master Plan is available for download on our website at <https://crossvilletrails.com/plans>

Conclusion - We think that all these activities combine into a very successful year for the Friends of the Trails organization.

John Conrad, President, Friends of the Trails

