

## **CMC maintainer Shawn Riley has been named the Volunteer of the Month for July for the whole Appalachian Trail by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.**

by Kathy Kyle

Shawn Riley has been a volunteer for the Carolina Mountain Club (CMC) since 2014 and brings extensive trail maintenance experience from his time volunteering on trails in Florida. He currently maintains a 2.3 mile section of the A.T. from Round Knob Springs Rd. to Big Butt, which includes a shelter and a privy. Riley must climb a steep two-mile section of the Trail in order to get to his section. This is the kind of work that Riley enjoys.

After joining the CMC as a trail maintainer, Riley took it upon himself to hike the entire 93 miles that the club maintains with a GPS in hand. While the hike would be a pleasure for most, and certainly for the dedicated Riley, he then spent hours on a computer using GIS software to help improve the clubs existing data of the Trail's location.

With his GIS skills, Riley has become integral in the planning of trail relocations. Riley has mapped Trail reroutes for the Konnarock crew on multiple occasions, with the most recent being a 1.1 mile relocation of the A.T. near Log Cabin Road. When Riley is not regularly working with the CMC Monday Work Crew, he is meticulously scouting various sections of the Trail with his GPS. Riley then provides section maintainers and crews with accurate locations of the work that needs to be done. In tandem to scouting he also performs regular routine maintenance such as removing blow-downs and clearing drainages. CMC Trail Supervisor Paul Curtin states "Shawn Riley makes the whole maintenance responsibility of the club better by identifying issues to help focus our efforts on where the real problems lie."

Riley goes above and beyond the call of a volunteer. He frequently maintains A.T. side trails and helps assist on other sections of the Trail. Curtin explains, "When a Section Maintainer was incapacitated, Shawn stepped in and re-blazed the section and helped with other chores." Riley is dedicated to working on the effective removal of graffiti from shelters. Riley also spends his time making and replacing wooden signs along the CMC section of the Trail. Since becoming a volunteer in 2014, Riley has contributed over 1,554 volunteer hours towards the Trail, averaging 50 hours a month in his first 16 months. Of those hours, 1,053 of them were spent on the Trail. Curtin concludes that Riley "is recognized within CMC as being the strongest contributor to our A.T. maintenance efforts."

