

Highland Sojourner

Volume VII, Issue I

Newsletter of the Pine Mountain Trail Conference, Inc.

Sept-Nov 2006

www.pinemountaintrail.com

Bulletin Board

Volunteer Vacations

September 17-23, 2006

October 8-14, 2006

(Contact Shirley Hearn at the American Hiking Society (301) 565-6704 or at www.americanhiking.org The PMTC can waive the fee for those volunteering directly thru the PMTC. **RSVP Required!!**)

October 15-21, 2006 Sierra Club Volunteer Outing

Weekend Getaways

September 23, 2006

October 21, 2006

November 4, 2006

December 16, 2006

(Weekend Getaways are designed for those who work a full time job. In warmer weather, volunteers can come in on Friday evening; camp at a site we have prepared, work on Saturday, and return home on Sunday. For more information, contact the PMTC, P.O. Box 784, Whitesburg, KY 41858.) **RSVP Required!!**

Pine Mountain Trail Conference Meeting

October 26th, 2006 at 1 PM at the Pine Mountain State Park Lodge. For more info, call (606) 633-2362. Meet at 10 AM for the hike. **Pack your own lunch and drink!**



Greg Farley and Scouts at the new Adena Spring Shelter

Words from the Woods by Shad Baker

This morning as I was driving to work, I stopped to talk to guy I grew up with. We were talking business, but as I drove away, I started thinking about the trail. It occurred to me that my first introduction to trail building actually happened when I was about ten years old. Several neighborhood kids, including my friend, used to play at the end of a dead end street everyone called “the turning place”. Cars used the wooded street end as a place to turn around, hence the name. The cove teamed with spotted touch-me-nots, stinging nettle, bloodroot, and all kinds of moisture-loving plants. This place was magical; always shady, always cool, and always lush.

Above the turning place was a grove of large diameter (4 foot +) beech trees. One large beech had a water spring coming out from under its roots. It had been dug out for collecting spring water to drink. At one put, someone thought it would be fun to put some bluegill in it. I recall that they survived until the spring froze up that winter. Eventually the spring was concreted and a pipe was added. As far as I know, it’s still there.

Beyond the turning place, a primitive path connected the end of Brick Yard Hill with Cove Avenue. Dogs and kids where the only ones I ever saw use it, *but it gave us a way to get from one place to another and to have fun along the way.*

One lazy summer, it occurred to several of us that the path would be much better if it were wider and the start was gentle enough to allow us to ride our bikes out it. In this way, we could short-cut to town without hitting the main road and losing elevation just to have to regain it before town. With borrowed mattocks, shovels, and hoes, about four of us went to work sloping the entrance and widening the path. Within about four hours, we had finished and started to ride our bikes back and forth. It was truly great.

Now I go back to that early thought; trails can be viewed in one of three ways: 1) Something to get us from here to there, 2) Something to have fun on, or 3) A combination. I like the last best. I have been on trails that were bland. Yea, they were paths in the woods, but they were boring; no scenery, no diversity of habitat, no neat rock formations or unusually large trees or anything to make you want to walk them. These trails are utilitarian, but they lacked the allure. This is certainly NOT a description of the Pine Mountain Trail. Every chance we get, we swing past odd rocks, big trees, gentle benches, lofty cliffs, hidden rock-shelters, running springs, and anything else interesting. Go hike it and you’ll see.

New Trailhead at US 23 Soon to be Started

For much of the past five years, the PMTC has been working to both build the trail and build the access. Trails that can’t be easily gotten on are not frequently used. Trails that aren’t frequently used are expensive to maintain and quickly grow over in dis-use. No such plans for us.

The USFS was the first to bring access to our attention. From the draft Management Plan they began, we have adopted a policy of building a trailhead access at every road crossing. The state put a very nice trailhead in at US 119 and we hope for something similar at US 23.

The work on this particular property started four years or so ago when a former Board member, Ross Kegan, began contacting the owners of the land. At the time, they were uninterested in selling. Or so it seemed. The price they asked was very high, too high for us to acquire. Over the next couple years, we stayed in touch and let them ponder life with land but no money. Soon, the price came down and we began to seek funding in earnest. Unfortunately, we weren’t the only ones playing poker. They decided to place the land for sell with Century 21. This put pressure on us to try very hard to find funding.

Ross decided that if we waited, we could lose the land. He took a leap of faith, and bought the land himself, with the aim of holding the land until we could reimburse him at some undetermined future time. No the pressure was personal. We had to get Ross’ retirement money back!

We decided on a Virginia T-21 grant in partnership with the USFS, but just as the deadline approached, we were told the ranger was transferring and the USFS would not be able to sponsor the grant. We had a week to find

another government helper. This is where Skip Skinner and the Wise County Board of Supervisors entered the picture. They agreed to help and as a result, funding totaling \$210,000 was approved. The funds are to go to cover land acquisition, and site work to improve the lot with signage, fencing and the like. The start date for the construction is likely to be around the middle of October. We'll keep you posted.

Another grant, a KY RTP grant totaling \$50,000 was also funded. The grant was obtained through the help of Harold Rogers and State Rep. Howard Cornett. These funds will be used to build the trail (with signs, kiosks, shelter, etc.) from US 119 to Kingdom Come State Park.



A Sight Like this Could Soon be at US 23

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Found on Pine Mountain

We knew it was a matter of time before Hemlock Woolly Adelgid was found in Kentucky. Unfortunately it was found right in the middle of Pine Mountain, less than a quarter of a mile below where the Pine Mountain Trail will pass. This is bad news for Kentucky, the PMTC, and hikers. The small, aphid-like insect sucks on tree fluids and multiplies until the tree is finally starved. They tend to colonize the bottoms of branches, which they gradually defoliate. Infestations, left un-treated, usually kill mature trees in 4-8 years. The Exotic insect can be easily identified in spring and fall by their white, cotton swab appearance. The adults have a waxy, white covering that resembles tufts of cotton (seen below).



The immature crawlers are tiny reddish-brown worms. The pest is spread at this stage and can be carried by equipment, animals, humans, and most importantly song birds. The crawlers latch onto the bird's feet and then are carried along from tree to tree. Since birds frequently use roads, streams, and other openings as flight paths, these are the best places to look. Keep your eyes open and if you detect what you think to be an HWA, call your County Extension Office.

Membership

Volunteer Class	\$0, at least one day spent doing trail work
Individual Class	\$25-49
Trailblazer Class	\$50-99, free cap
Highlander Class	\$100-499, cap and fleece jacket
Pinnacle Class	\$500-999, cap, fleece jacket, & button-up shirt
Legacy Class	\$1,000-4,999, 2 caps, 2 jackets, & 2 shirts
Foundation Class	\$5,000+

*Membership entitles you to a one- year subscription to the *Highland Sojourner*, the bimonthly newsletter of the Pine Mountain Trail Conference, Inc. and an embroidered patch.

Please *circle* the membership class you are requesting.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____



**Make checks payable to:
Pine Mountain Trail Conference, Inc.
P.O. Box 784, Whitesburg, KY 41858
(606) 633-2362**