

Highland Sojourner

Volume XI, Issue I Newsletter of the Pine Mountain Trail Conference, Inc. Spring 2009

www.pinemountaintrail.com

Bulletin Board

Volunteer Vacations

Group

Host

May 31 – June 6, 2009

PMTC Alumni

Duane Miksch

*If you are interested, contact the PMTC via the website or by e-mail at sbaker@uky.edu or phone at (606) 633-2362

Weekend Getaways

March 21, 2009 Meet at the Letcher County Extension office in Whitesburg. For more information, contact Shad Baker at (606) 633-2362.

(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 or sbaker@uky.edu .)RSVP Required!!

Pine Mountain Trail Conference Meetings

April 16, 2009 *Cumberland Gap National Historical Park in Middlesboro, KY, meeting will begin at 1 pm*

June 18, 2009 *Breaks Interstate Park near Elkhorn City, meeting will begin at 1 pm*



Wild Geranium – Jeremy N. Williams

Words from the Woods **by Shad Baker**

Spring peepers are shouting and maples are blooming, spring is surely on its way. Now's the time to shed the winter fog in your mind and get outside; up Pine Mountain way.

So many things are happening with the trail right now, it is hard to know where to begin. The publicity generated by the article in the New York Times has led to spin-off articles in the local papers and in the Charlotte NC paper. This has meant many, many additional requests for information on the trail. Thankfully, Greg Abernathy, our web designer has been working with Brandon Lewis at Vaughn & Melton to get maps up on the website and we are also updating the site with other relevant information. Greg has also been putting a display board together so that we can present at festivals, conferences and the like.

On the trail front, we have had success getting permission to go in this spring and summer to renovate blazes and install signs on a very remote portion of the Highlands Section. This will help prevent accidents like the one this winter that left 70 + rescuers working to bring a hiker with a compound fracture off the trail.

The Department of Parks is working on getting the shelter approved at Kingdom Come State Park. When completed, the shelter will be the best in the PMT system and will be a welcomed site for hikers. On the rest of the shelter system, we are preparing to install bear poles at the two shelters and metal boxes for the Bible, trail journal, and any other shelter information. This will hopefully take care of a certain curious bruin we've encountered repeatedly at Adena Springs.

Volunteers are always welcome, so join our Yahoo Group and see when the opportunities for volunteering will occur. If you like to hike with a group, you might also want to check out that yahoo group for group hikes that are planned throughout the year. Speaking of which, if you ever have the occasion to join us on the winter-time overnight hike of the Highlands Section and at 1 AM hear a grown-man (not me by-the-way) screaming like a little girl for help, there might just be a mountain lion stalking his dreams.



Hikers take a break on the Highlands Section – Shad J. Baker

Pine Mountain Trail Conference Yahoo Group

The Pine Mountain Trail Conference's Yahoo Group is now up and running. The Group set up by Roy Crawford, PMTC Treasure, allows Pine Mountain Trail users to post photos, trail information, volunteer vacations, and planned hikes. There is no fee to join. Check it out at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PMTC/>.

Pine Mountain Trail Conference Alumni Volunteer Vacation

The annual Pine Mountain Trail Conference Alumni Volunteer Vacation will take place at the Pine Mountain Settlement School on May 31 – June 6, 2009. This is an opportunity for you to visit with those PMT volunteers that you've not seen in a while. During this vacation, trail boss Duane Miksch will lead the group in working on trails in and around the Pine Mountain Trail State Park corridor in Harlan County. Those who are interested in attend need to contact Duane as soon as possible. He may be reached at: (270) 365-5771.

Southeastern Foot Trails Conference by Dennis Crowley

Pine Mountain Trail Conference is co-hosting the 5th biennial conference of the Southeastern Foot Trails Coalition this year. The conference will be held at Pine Mountain State Resort Park in Pineville, Kentucky May 7th – 10th. Additionally, some activities will take place at Cumberland Gap National Historical Park in Middlesboro.

The Southeastern Foot Trails Coalition is made up of nearly thirty hiking, trail building and trail-maintaining clubs from nine southeastern states. The coalition is working together with partners like National Park Service, US Forest Service, state park systems and American Hiking Society to build, connect, promote and protect a system of trails in the region totaling over 5,000 miles.

The conference opens on Thursday afternoon with registration at the lodge at Pine Mountain SRP. It will close on Sunday morning, so that everyone can get home and celebrate Mother's Day with family.

The conference includes hikes, educational sessions, social events and a ceremony at Cumberland Gap. All hikes scheduled at Cumberland Gap will be led by national park service staff. Some hikes at Pine Mountain SRP will be led by state park staff.

Educational tracks will address topics of interest to hikers and trail builders alike. This will be a great opportunity to share ideas and learn from what others are doing. All educational tracks will be held at Pine Mountain SRP.

Social events will include a square dance on Friday evening at PMSRP and a cookout on Saturday evening at Hensley Settlement at CGNHP. It is free and the public is invited to attend.

A ceremony will be held at the Pinnacle Overlook at Cumberland Gap NHP at 10 am on Friday to recognize the importance of Pine Mountain Trail and its connection to Cumberland Trail in the national park.

The Great Eastern Trail, of which, Pine Mountain Trail in Kentucky is a key link, will hold its board of directors meeting at the conference.

To learn how to register for the conference, visit www.southeastfoottrails.org

Great Eastern Trail Regional Summit

The Great Eastern Trail regional summit will be held on June 27-28, 2009 at the Breaks Interstate Park in Elkhorn City, KY. Some of the summit's objectives are to develop a consensus on the primary route of the GET through VA/KY/WV and the development of a local GET chapter. For more information about registering for this event, visit the GET website at: <http://www.greateastertrail.net/>.

Be Bear Aware This Spring by Jeremy N. Williams

After years of nearly being non-existent, black bears are making a comeback across Eastern Kentucky. As the black bear population has increased so has the interest from the public. The American black bear once ranged over most of the United States, including the forested land that covered almost 75 percent of Kentucky. Due to human harassment, population growth and habitat loss the black bear was nearly eliminated from the Commonwealth by the late 1800s. Occasional sightings were common through the 1970s and increased through the 1990s. Recently, bear sightings were recorded in at least 18 eastern Kentucky counties. Most of these sightings have been in counties that border Virginia, West Virginia and Tennessee. Due to our suitable habitat that is provided by the regeneration of forestland bears are naturally coming back into Kentucky from these three bordering states.

During the spring and summer months bears primarily feed on grasses, insects and fruits. In the fall they feed mostly on acorns, beechnuts and other fall mast. The black bear is an opportunistic feeder and therefore are often attracted to non-natural foods such as human food and garbage. Here are some tips to help avoid potential negative interactions with bears. Keep trash picked up around camp and use bear proofing measures such as bear proof cans to store food in. If you do encounter a bear while hiking don't approach it, remain calm and avoid sudden movements, and give the bear plenty of room. Never run from a bear. A black bear can out run, out climb, and out swim you. Also, never feed a bear. It is illegal to feed a bear (KRS 150, 301 KAR 2:300) and dangerous.

Articles for the Highland Sojourner

If you have any article concerning the Pine Mountain Trail or adventures that you've had will hiking the Pine Mountain Trail, please submit them. You may send them to Jeremy Williams at jnwillia@uky.edu.

Membership

***All memberships are based on a calendar year (January-December) *Membership entitles you to a one- year subscription to the *Highland Sojourner*, the newsletter of the Pine Mountain Trail Conference, Inc. and a decal.**

- Student Class** \$20 For those under 24 and in school
- Individual Class** \$25
- Family Class** \$40
- Individual Lifetime** \$1,000 (or \$335 for three years), lifetime members receive a membership card, decal, cap and jacket
- Contribution** \$ _____

Please **check** the membership class you are requesting.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

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Make checks payable to:

Pine Mountain Trail Conference, Inc.

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