

Footnotes

Newsletter for the Foothills Trail Conference . www.foothillstrail.org

BOARD MEMBER BEGINS NEW ROLE WITH FTC

Your FTC Board has been busy on many fronts this season. When Maija resigned her position as Executive Secretary of the FTC last summer it left a lot of work to be done. Thanks go to the many Board members and FTC members who have chipped in to help keep things organized and operating. But this opening for the FTC created an opportunity for the Conference Board to do some real thinking and strategizing about the Foothills Trail, the Conference, and what needs to be done to keep the Foothills Trail the best footpath in the Southeast. The outcome of this effort was to recognize that the Conference needed more than a staff person for administrative duties, but also needed a person that could do more to promote the Foothills Trail and the work of the Conference to Upstate organizations, businesses, and individuals. We want the Foothills Trail to be recognized as the magnificent resource that it truly is so it will be used and maintained for years to come. So, to this end, the Board developed a job description for an Executive Director, interviewed some candidates, and then realized we had the best person for the job right in our midst! None other than Mr. Foothills Trail himself, Heyward Douglass! Heyward has assumed the duties of Executive Director of the Foothills Trail Conference effective June 1, 2012. Among his many duties, Heyward will be responsible for the administrative functions of communicating to hikers, FTC members, and stakeholders; processing merchandise orders and memberships; maintaining the Conference books; as well as working to increase our membership and member relations; improve our relationships with the stakeholders who manage the land the trail passes through; promoting the Trail in Upstate business, recreation, and visitor organizations; and raising funds to support the efforts of the FTC and keep the trail maintained. Obviously, a tall order, but one which Heyward is so uniquely qualified to fill. We are thrilled with Heyward's decision to continue serving the Foothills Trail Conference in this capacity, and look forward to seeing the results of his efforts. We know you, our membership, will also support and encourage him in his efforts.



2012 SPRING PICNIC

The FTC held their annual spring picnic on April 21 at Table Rock State Park's White Oaks shelter. Despite the chance of showers, all 40 in attendance stayed dry and enjoyed grilled burgers, hotdogs, and chicken with an assortment of salads and desserts that participants provided. After the meal, Heyward Douglass shared interesting photos and highlights of his 2011 through-hike on the AT (starting at Table Rock). Unknown to all of us, a few other guests were present on the picnic grounds that day. A pair of Red-Tailed Hawks had a nest in place in the fork of a big oak that contained at least two fuzzy chicks. The parents were seen feeding the nestlings on May 1 but sadly, a few days later the birds mysteriously disappeared. No telling how many thousands of wildlife stories are being carried out unnoticed as we pass by on our hikes along the Foothills Trail and elsewhere. The ones we do happen to notice can be quite rewarding.

NEW ON THE FTC CALENDAR 2012 FALL PICNIC AT GORGES STATE PARK BE SURE TO PUT THIS ON YOUR CALENDAR!



Gorges State Park in NC will be the gathering place for a new FTC event this Fall. Reserve Saturday, September 8 on your calendar for an FTC Picnic at Gorges. The Foothills Trail passes through Gorges State Park on it's way from Laurel Fork Falls to Whitewater Falls. Many of you have attended some of the Conference sponsored outings led by Gorges Park Superintendent, Steve Pagano, in this wonderful and rugged area. Gorges is constructing new facilities that we will use for our picnic. Also, we'll have as our special guest and speaker, "Odyessa". This is the trail name used by Jennifer Pharr Davis, holder of the all time speed record for the Appalachian Trail, at just over 46 days. She set this in 2011 (as she whizzed by Heyward) and will be telling us of her hiking adventures, including completing the Foothills Trail. Jennifer is a national sensation and in great demand as a speaker. We are very fortunate to have her at our event. Just Google her name, or go to www.blueridgehikingco.com to learn more about her.

BOARD MEMBERS COMPLETE HIKING CHALLENGES

« Foothills Trail and Appalachian Trail Thru-Hike »

In 2011, Heyward Douglass, set out to demonstrate that one can start hiking at Table Rock State Park and end up in Maine! Yep, the Foothills Trail intersects with the Chattooga River and Bartram Trails that lead to the AT. In Heyward's words: One of the things that made my hike unique was the fact that during the month before I departed from Springer Mt., I hiked the Foothills Trail to the Chattooga River and the Bartram Trail through GA and NC to Wayah Bald where I connected with the AT. The hike of the Appalachian Trail began at Springer Mt., GA, on March 12, 2011, and I summited Mt. Katahdin in Maine on September 20. One of the highlights of my journey was experiencing an incredible sunset and sunrise on Mt. Washington in New Hampshire. The sunrise was preceded by a hike in the moonlight to the top of Mt. Washington ! Another great time was spending several days with Virginia and Dave Hawkins when I hiked through Pennsylvania. That was a special time, indeed. Hiking a hundred miles in the White Mountains of New Hampshire with my son, Thomas, was also a special time for both of us. My knowledge and love of nature was actually a big factor in my being able to complete the Trail, in that I never grew tired of the hiking because there was always something natural to enjoy - from birds, to plants, to insects - along with the incredible scenery that was spread over 14 states !! Relaxing for several days at Bar Harbor with Carolyn and daughter, Elisabeth, was a great way to wind down from 6 months on the Trail !!



Heyward on McAfee Knob

« P400 Challenge - 400 miles of trails in Pisgah Ranger District »



Board chairman, John Park, goes by the trail name “happyhiker” because he says when he’s hiking, he’s happy. His happyhiking turned into a several years long effort to complete the Carolina Mountain Club’s Pisgah 400 hiking challenge, hiking all 400 miles of trails in the Pisgah Ranger District. After 40+ trips, dayhikes and overnights, solo and with friends (and yellow lab Kate) John completed the last of the trails as seen in the photo at left. And as a way to give back to the hiking community, John made his challenge a fund raising event he called a HikeForGood event, raising \$1,800 for the FTC! In John’s words: I had hiked and camped in Pisgah many times before, mostly going to the same places. This challenge got me out to more areas of Pisgah where I found fantastic trails, views, and rivers that I didn’t know were there. I also got out more because it was so easy to decide where to hike, there was always another trail to be

completed. I highly recommend this area to everyone looking for a good place to hike, at least after they’ve hiked the Foothills Trail!

FOOTHILLS TRAIL CONFERENCE MEMBER

Participants must be members of the Foothills Trail Conference. Notifications will be sent through the FTC's online registration system. Please sign up to receive outing notification by providing your e-mail address to the Foothills Trail Conference mailing list on our Web site www.foothillstrail.org. The number of registrants per hike is at the discretion of the hike leader and will be limited. Registration is available on a first-come, first-served basis. You will be asked to sign out an Acknowledgement of Risk form prior to your hike. The Foothills Trail Conference does not permit dogs on group hikes.

Saturday, February 18—**Winter Views Hike**. While the leaves are off the trees, drink in the beautiful views on the Foothills Trail from Sloan Bridge to Upper Whitewater Falls on a one-way, moderate 5.5-mile hike with trip leader Heyward Douglass, FTC board member. Meet 9 a.m. at Upper Whitewater Falls parking lot on NC 281. (U.S. Forest Service parking fee required.) Bring lunch, snacks, water and appropriate clothing and footwear.

Friday, March 16—**Dusk to Dark Night Sounds Walk**. Join John Garton, Ben Sill and Heyward Douglass on an exploration of night sounds in the Clemson Forest, including frogs, owls and who knows what else?! Bring a flashlight and shoes that may get damp. If the weather is good, this outing will last about three hours and include a small amount of easy walking. Meet at the Clemson DNR office, 311 Natural Resources Drive, Clemson, SC 29631, at 4:30 p.m. Bring binoculars, snacks, water and appropriate clothing and footwear.

Saturday, April 7—**Nature Through The Eyes of An Herbalist: Everywhere I Look I See Medicine**. Join us for a plant identification walk led by herbalist Robin McGee at the George Aull Natural Area in Pendleton. Learn how many of our abundant "weeds" and trees can be used for food and medicine. We'll explore the fields and woods on an easy walk, paying special attention to the "edgy" plants growing in the transition zones. Meet at 10 a.m., and this outing should last until 1 p.m. From Clemson take SC 28/US 76 toward Anderson. Turn right onto SC Highway 187 in Pendleton at the old Milliken Plant. As soon as you pass the Milliken entrance road on the right, Dalton Drive, you will see a dirt road on the right. That's where we're going. Boscobel Road is directly across the street from the dirt road. If you pass Pendleton High School on your left you've gone too far. Robin's cell number is 864-245-0837 in case anyone gets lost. Drive down the dirt road as far as you can and park along the edge of the road. Bring water, snacks and appropriate clothing and footwear.

Saturday, April 14—**Whitewater Falls Wildflower Walk**. Led by Steve Hill, former Clemson University herbarium curator and currently a botanist with the Illinois Natural History Survey, this annual rite of spring will get your spring season started off right with a lovely display of wildflowers. Hill, who returns frequently to the South Carolina mountains, is also the plant identification expert for the S.C. Native Plant Society. This will be about a 3-mile walk to the Bad Creek Hydro Project parking lot, mostly easy and much of it along the Whitewater River, although if hikers need to return to the Whitewater Falls parking area, remember that it is a steep climb back to the top!. Meet at 10 a.m. at the Upper Whitewater Falls parking lot on NC 281. (U.S. Forest Service parking fee required.) Bring lunch, snacks, water and appropriate clothing and footwear.

Saturday, May 12—**Birds of Pray!** Join Master Naturalist Tom Pray as we look and listen at Eastatoe Creek Heritage Preserve for neotropical migratory birds arriving here from Central and South America. This outing will begin earlier than most FTC outings, to take advantage of early bird songs. Meet 7:30 a.m. at the Foothills Trail parking lot on Horsepasture Road, off US 178 at Laurel Valley. Bring binoculars, bird field guides, snacks, water, and appropriate clothing and footwear. This field trip will last until around 10 a.m. There will be a very small amount of easy walking, as this is a birding trip, NOT a hike.

Saturday, May 19—**Pantherstown Adventure**. Join Cathy Foster, geologist and Foothills Trail Conference board member, as she leads another exploration of the "Yosemite of the East." Pantherstown is a 6,300-acre bowl perched at an elevation of 3,600 feet in North Carolina's Nantahala National Forest. It is, arguably, one of the East's most unusual wild treasures. A collection of rounded granitic domes rim the valley where the rugged Tuckasegee River

RS - 2012 HIKES AND OUTINGS FOR YOU!!

is born amid a blend of waterfalls and high-elevation bogs. This is also prime bloom time for pink lady's slippers! A strenuous hike of about 11 miles from the Cold Mountain trailhead, the Panthertown outing will include spectacular waterfalls, mountain vistas, and forests. Meet at 9 a.m. at Upper Whitewater Falls parking lot on NC 281 (U.S. Forest Service parking fee required), and carpool from there. Driving time from Upper Whitewater Falls to the trailhead is about 45 minutes. Bring lunch, snacks, water, binoculars and appropriate clothing and footwear.

Saturday, May 26—**Bat Foray**. Join Mary Bunch, DNR biologist and former Foothills Trail Conference board member, for a look at the newly erected bat roost on Abner Creek near Sassafras Mountain. This 16-foot-tall concrete bat roost was designed to help the state-endangered Rafinesque's big-eared bat but may also be providing habitat for some other uncommon bats as well as chimney swifts. Rafinesque's big-eared bats, a state endangered species, require large open structures for roosts, and natural roosts tend to be massive hollow trees now in short supply. There will be a small amount of easy walking. Meet 10 a.m. at Holly Springs Country Store at intersection of SC 11 and US 178 in Pickens County. Park in the upper parking lot closest to the volunteer fire department. Bring lunch, snacks, water and appropriate clothing and footwear.

Saturday, June 2—**Bald Knob Overlook**. Take a hike on National Trails Day with Table Rock State Park Naturalist (and FTC board member) Scott Stegenga up Pinnacle Mountain Trail to take in a stunning view from Bald Knob of the landscape as it unfolds below. This route along one end of the Foothills Trail is strenuous at the upper section and will be about 7 miles round trip. Meet 10 a.m. at the Carrick Creek Nature Center deck at Table Rock State Park. Bring lunch, snacks, water, binoculars and appropriate clothing and footwear.

Saturday, June 9—**Lower Bearwallow Falls Adventure**. This adventure will start at 9 a.m. from the Grassy Ridge Parking area of Gorges State Park near Sapphire, N.C. Beginning with a 5-mile 4x4 ride to the heart of Gorges State park, this trek will be followed by a short but extremely strenuous hike to Lower Bearwallow Falls. Limited to 12 participants, this is a rain or shine event! Everyone will want to remember their cameras, snacks, water and appropriate gear for weather conditions. For more information, contact Gorges State Park Superintendent Steve Pagano at (828) 966-9099.

Friday, July 6—**Wintergreen Falls Trek**. This trek begins at 9 a.m. from the Frozen Creek Parking area of Gorges State Park off of Frozen Creek Road outside of Rosman, N.C. The outing will begin with a 4-mile 4x4 ride to the heart of Gorges State Park, followed by a 3-mile moderate to strenuous hike to Wintergreen Falls on the Toxaway River. This adventure is limited to 12 participants and is a rain or shine event! Everyone will want to remember their cameras, snacks, water and appropriate gear for weather conditions. For more information, contact Gorges State Park Superintendent Steve Pagano at (828) 966-9099.

Friday, October 12—**Bearwallow Bushwhack**. This hike, crawl and wade adventure will start at 9 a.m. from the Grassy Ridge Parking area of Gorges State Park near Sapphire, N.C. The adventure will head to the interior of Gorges State Park, along Bearwallow Creek, and then a moderate to strenuous hike will take participants OFF TRAIL to several falls along the Bearwallow Creek. This bushwhack is limited to 12 participants and is a rain or shine event! Everyone will want to pack light and remember their cameras, snacks, water and appropriate gear for the weather. For more information, contact Gorges State Park Superintendent Steve Pagano at (828) 966-9099.

Saturday, October 13—**Hemlock woolly adelgid field trip**. Join LayLa Burgess from Clemson's School of Agricultural, Forest, and Environmental Sciences as we walk to Virginia Hawkins Falls in Laurel Fork Heritage Preserve and learn about the hemlock woolly adelgid and what it means for the future of Eastern and Carolina hemlocks in the Jocassee Gorges region. This hike will be about 2.5 miles round trip, easy to moderate. Meet 10 a.m. at Holly Springs Country Store at intersection of SC 11 and US 178 in Pickens County. Park in the upper parking lot closest to volunteer fire department. Bring lunch, snacks, water and appropriate clothing and footwear.

FOOTHILLS TRAIL USE REPORT

Compiled by Scott Stegenga at Table Rock State Park

Some interesting figures about the use of the Foothills Trail as compiled from Rock State Park.

FOR THE PERIOD 1994 – 2011 (18 YEARS)

Average # hikers registered at Table Rock State Park on all trails per year – 19,190

Number of hikers registered for Foothills Trail at Table Rock State Park –7067

Average # hikers on Foothills Trail per year – 393

Number of FT hikers starting at Table Rock and exiting at another point – 2844

Percentage of FT hikers starting at Table Rock and exiting at another point – 40%

Percentage of registered hikers at Table Rock that register for the FT – 2%

Foothills Trail monthly averages; 1994-2011 (highest to lowest)

1. March	55	7. July	31
2. April	46	8. August	22
3. October	45	9. September	22
4. May	41	10. December	22
5. November	36	11. January	21
6. June	34	12. February	18

Highest number of FT hikers for each month and the year recorded

January	55 / 2010	July	63 / 1994
February	52 / 2011	August	55 / 2009
March	152 / 2011	September	42 / 1996
April	103 / 2011	October	81 / 2009
May	83 / 2010	November	64 / 2011
June	64 / 1996	December	54 / 2011

<u>Foothills Trail Hiker data</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
Registered hikers at Table Rock State Park	31,391 (record high)	28,588
Registered FT hikers	582	694 (record high)
Hikers starting at Table Rock but exiting at another point	186	256
% of FT hikers starting at Table Rock, exiting at another point	32%	37%
% of registered hikers at Table Rock that registered for FT	2%	2%

2011 Hiker Data from registrations, notes and personal contacts:

*Starting at TR: 256 total

113 TR to Oconee
38 TR to Sassafras
22 TR to Laurel Valley
21 TR to Bad Creek
19 TR to Palmetto Trail
18 TR to Gorges State Park/Frozen Creek
9 TR to Caesars Head
7 TR to Whitewater Water Falls
5 TR to Chimneytop Gap
2 TR to Hwy 107 (Sloan Bridge)
1 TR to Chattooga
1 TR to Bartram Trail/AT

*Ending at TR: 223 total

74 Sassafras to TR
73 Oconee to TR
30 Laurel Valley to TR
21 Caesars Head to TR
8 Whitewater Falls to TR
6 Canebrake to TR
4 Bad Creek to TR
2 Chimney Top Gap to TR
2 Sloan Bridge to TR
2 Rocky Botton to TR
1 Gorges State Park to TR

ON THE TRAIL



Winter views are a special treat of the Foothills Trail and were enjoyed by a Greenville Natural History Association hiking group on a cold, 'sunny turning to cloudy, with rain on the way', day in February. The group, led by Cathy Foster, FTC Board Member, hiked 12 miles starting at the Burrell's Ford trailhead, trekking up the dry, pine ridge of Medlin Mountain and having north and south views of mountains and ridges. The views shifted to the northwest towards Whiteside Mountain as the hikers walked through a lush, heath forest along the East Fork of the Chattooga River to Sloan Bridge for a prime lunch spot beside the creek. After lunch, the hikers continued on to Round Mt. and Hwy 281 crossing the SC/NC state boundary all the while enjoying hazy blue-grey views of Jacks Creek valley to the northwest and the spectacular Jocassee Gorges with Bad Creek Reservoir and Lake Jocassee to the southeast.



Hikers enjoyed an outing at Panthertown Valley on one of the many outings planned by the FTC (see center section for a complete list). The group pictured above was treated with large beds of blooming Pink Ladyslippers, even though it was late May! We also took in grand views, waterfalls, and fellowship. We even walked behind one of the falls! This is a place you will want to go!

!!! E-MAIL ADDRESSES NEEDED !!!

The FTC is working to improve communications with our members, and we need your e-mail to do so. If you DO NOT already get FTC announcements via email, it is because we don't have your address. Please send us a message to info@foothillstrail.org

2012 ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE

The 2012 Foothills Trail Conference Annual Meeting will be held Friday - Sunday, November 2 - 4, at Oconee State Park. Mark your calendars and plan to join us for speakers, hikes, great food, and great fellowship. Our Saturday night speaker will be Winton Porter, owner of Mountain Crossings, a AT hiker stopover, gear shop, you-name-it, near Blairsville, GA. Winton is the author of "Just Passin' Thru" which highlights the stories and personalities of hikers and locals as they meet at Walasi-Yi. Go to www.mountaincrossings.com for more info on Winton and his stories.

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DATES TO REMEMBER



NEW + NEW + NEW

FTC Fall Picnic - Saturday, September 8,
at Gorges State Park

FTC Annual Meeting
Oconee State Park

Friday, November 2 - Sunday November 4

SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks to Footnotes contributors
Heyward Douglass, Cathy Foster, John Park,
and Scott Stegenga

