

KENNESAW MOUNTAIN TRAIL CLUB

FY 2019 TRAIL DIRECTOR ANNUAL REPORT

Bill Gurry, Acting Trail Director

2 September 2019

I took over the Trail Boss position from Bruce Rugg in the fall of 2018 as Acting Trail Director for the rest of the fiscal year. The following is a summary of trail work for fiscal year 2019 to date. For details, please see quarterly reports and the newsletter articles.

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WORKDAY 10/14/18

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- Stacked the old fence at CCC Camp Brumby.
- A large crew removed berms for drainage, restacked fence, and did other good trail work on the 24 gun battery Trail.
- A very large crew trashed scarred areas and constructed some drainage on the lower Mountain Trail.
- The invasive plant crew built small fences to protect the earthwork from the Mountain Road to the Brumby Trail and re-trashed the social trail that keeps appearing on the earthwork, then disappeared into the wilderness to kill evil plants.
- On Friday, Crew Leaders staged material and met with Doug B. and Adam to prepare for the big day on Saturday. Meanwhile, Danny was out with his sprayer destroying unsightly weeds.

NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2018 WORK DAY RAIN OUTS

The November and December workdays were cancelled due to cold, wet, or rain conditions. However, in November, several crew leaders assisted on an Eagle Scout project in the meadow in front of the Visitors Center by hauling old fence to the CCC Camp Brumby, by assisting with construction of the new fence, and by trashing a social trail on an earthwork.

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To start this large project, work consisted of building water diversion structures and removing the large rocks, filling in the holes left by the removed rocks with soil at the edge of the trail creating ditches to keep the water off the trail.

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On March 16, 10 soldiers cleared out drainage culvert inlets on the Mountain Road as requested by maintenance. This work was completed under the maintenance staff and some service hour people.

KSU DAY OF SERVICE MARCH 23, 2019

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The American Battlefield Trust sponsored “Park Day” was held in conjunction with our regular workday on April 13. Adam Strotman welcomed our volunteers at 8:30.

Work this day included cleaning out water diversion structures and the culvert at the base of Big K, rebuilding and cleaning up the fence, building some water diversion features on the environmental trail, rebuilding the stone steps at the last place where the Mountain Trail cuts through the earthworks toward the top of Big K, trashing the social trail on top of the earthwork, placing a stack rail fence on either side of the trail to protect the earthwork, cleaning up the steps and the water diversion features at the grand staircase, and building a new stone step. Other work included fighting the huge privet grove near Kennesaw Ave, doing the annual ditch clean out on the Mountain Road and completely rebuilding the French drain at the curve, which was working really well during the 3.5” rain event on 4/19. More work included cleaning out the foundations at the CCC Camp Brumby, doing maintenance on the lower Mountain Trail, and rebuilding.

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In accordance with KMNBP procedures, the May 11 was cancelled due to forecast bad weather.

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JUNE 15, 2019 WORK DAY PLUS “PREP” DAY

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The work day consisted of drainage control, rock work, and fence work on the Noses Creek Trail north of Noses Creek at and the trail heads for the Hardage Mill Trails north of Noses Creek. Specifically, the following work was performed:

- The trail head on the Hardage Mill Trail just north of Noses Creek was rebuilt.
- The fence at the trail head to the Hardage Mill Trail was rebuilt and enlarged.
- A large dip that gathered water for days after heavy rains was mucked up, fill material laid down in layers then compacted, and crusher run placed to act as a tread.
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On Saturday, July 13 approximately 36 volunteers joined a dozen Crew Leaders and several Trail Ambassadors to continue work on the Noses Creek trail.

Volunteers and Crew Leaders removed the last of the buried rocks in the trail and built drainage. Others completed the rebuild of the trail at the big puddle and started work at the next puddle heading south. Two Crew Leaders ran the new dump trailer to move about half of the rocks over to the storage area near Camp Brumby. A small crew of big, strong volunteers that loader the rocks into the trailer and made several trail repairs along the way. The invasive plant crew eradicated privet near the meadow west of the Nose Creek Trail and into the woods heading south.

Two crew leaders moved materials from Kolb's Farm to the work area and flagged the work site on Friday.

8/10/19 WORKDAY

On Saturday, August 10, almost 90 volunteers joined 16 (yes 16!!) Crew Leaders, about 8 Trail Ambassadors, and 8 members from SCA to continue work on the Noses Creek trail north of Noses Creek. Work performed included:

- Constructing drainage at the south end of the section just north of the creek and filling in a swale at the Hardage Mill trailhead with large rocks to stop erosion and to prevent silt from running down to the creek.
- Sloping the trail at dip to get water off to both sides. The crew was chased off the other big puddle area by a swarm of angry yellow jackets.
- A “Root Group” removed dead roots that were making it difficult for Park vehicles to use the trail/road.
- Crew Leaders continued to use the new dump trailer to move more rocks over to the storage area near Camp Brumby.
- A large crew tackled the big ugly root area on the north end with a big load of dirt.
Thanks to SCA for joining us on their “day off” to start work south of Noses Creek.

II. STUDENT CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION AT KMNBP

Two leaders and half a dozen SCA members are spending a month at KMNBP to perform trail work in our most difficult trail areas. Aided by Crew leaders, in 15 9-hour workdays, SCA:

- Repaired of the ugly rut in the saddle up little k, rebuilt the steps, provided drainage, and did repair work in the puddles near the top.
- Removed weeds and vines at Fort McBride and trip roots near French’s Rock.
- Built two new steps, debarred, trimmed weeds, removed roots, and built a short crib to remove a short side creep trail just over the top of little k.
- Cleaned and made minor repairs on the Grand Staircase (an SCA tradition), cleaned out part of a French drain and ditch, cleaned water diversion structures, and other maintenance work on the Lower Mountain Trail.
- On the trail club workday (extra credit), built some temporary silt traps/rock dams to stop erosion and protect Noses Creek on the south Hardage Mill trail, and helped stage crusher run from Kolb’s Farm.
- “Enjoyed” two days of invasive plant removal in the area of Wagner’s attack near Cheatham Hill.
- Repaired steps and water structures and did some weed removal up Pigeon Hill.
- Sharpened Pulaskis.
- Closed the nuisance social trail at the switchback on the backside of little k.
- And the hardest work – repaired the trail and removed hiker-created diversion trails up the backside of little k.
- At press time, work was planned for either the Hardage Mill Trail or at Gilbert Road.
Thank you, SCA.

III. RELATED WORK

CREW LEADER TRAINING

Jay Dement taught a Crew Leader class on March 2 focusing on trail maintenance techniques. In April, Jerry Given continued the training focusing on NPS, Kennesaw Mountain, and Trail Club procedures, on crew dynamics, and related topics.

EAGLE PROJECTS

A complete discussion of the many Eagle Scout projects is not within the scope of this report. However, a few are discussed below.

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IV. FUTURE WORK

The September 14 workday will be fence building. One site will be the last of the stacked rail fence at the VC. The other site will be at the Cheatham Hill Road parking lot. Donald will run the workday. It will involve lots of staging of fencing materials, equipment, and removal of old fence.

On October 12, I have proposed completing and touch up of the Noses Creek Trail north of the Creek and starting work south of the creek. We will have a crew leader day in advance to do ditch witch work.

On November 9 I have propose continuing the work south Noses creek trail.

One of the problems we have had is that we work on a section, then might night return for two or three years, allowing silt, gravel, and leaves to fill the ditches and draining structures, causing a bigger problem. To avoid this, I am suggesting annual maintenance on all trails as is done on the AT and other trails. After the leaves fall, I propose performing light maintenance on all the Park trails, by sending small crews along the trails to clean out knocks, water bars, and dips, deberming where there are puddles forming, trimming encroaching weeds, removing loose rocks, raking leaves and diffing silt out of ditches, etc. some crews will have to hike 3 miles out and back, doing minor maintenance all the way. One month will be spent in each section of the Park.

The Park has 23 new wayside interpretive markers. We or the Eagle Scout candidates may be asked to install some of these.

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ABT PARK DAY APRIL 13

The American Battlefield Trust sponsored “Park Day” was held in conjunction with our regular workday on April 13. Adam Strotman welcomed our volunteers at 8:30.

Work this day included cleaning out water diversion structures and the culvert at the base of Big K, rebuilding and cleaning up the fence, building some water diversion features on the environmental trail, rebuilding the stone steps at the last place where the Mountain Trail cuts through the earthworks toward the top of Big K, trashing the social trail on top of the earthwork, placing a stack rail fence on either side of the trail to protect the earthwork, cleaning up the steps and the water diversion features at the grand staircase, and building a new stone step. Other work included fighting the huge privet grove near Kennesaw Ave, doing the annual ditch clean out on the Mountain Road and completely rebuilding the French drain at the curve, which was working really well during the 3.5” rain event on 4/19. More work included cleaning out the foundations at the CCC Camp Brumby, doing maintenance on the lower Mountain Trail, and rebuilding.

At noon, Amanda handed out ABT Park Day T shirts.

Later, Donald returned to lead 11 Cub Scouts and parents on the Unknown Soldier trail.

I sent a short story and a few of Fred’s photos to the ABT and have received thank you notes from two staffers at ABT.

REI EARTH DAY 4/20

On Friday, Crew Leaders assembled on April 19 to stage materials for the next day. However, due to wet conditions caused by very heavy rains and a change for the worse in the forecast for Saturday, we cancelled the REI workday for Saturday. However, a large group of crew leaders staffed a booth at Old Country Brewery to promote the club.

HARRISTON HILL

Bill and Donald helped Marjorie prepare a grant application to develop the Harriston Hill site recently added to the Park by an act of the United States Congress. In the winter, the site has views of Big K, little k, Lost Mountain, and Nodine’s Hill. It also has a possible earthwork constructed in the rear of the Mud Creek Line. Although we are trying to find out if this really is an earthwork, we will stay away from it either way. The top of the hill was used as a signal station during the battle of Kennesaw Mountain. Major General William Tecumseh Sherman was on the hill when he learned of the Battle of Kolb’s Farm – this is where the big

controversy started between Sherman and Hooker. Sherman wrote more about this controversy in his memoirs and official report than he did about his failed attacks on June 27.

MAY 2019 WORKDAY RAINED OUT

In accordance with KMNBP procedures, the May 11 was cancelled due to forecast bad weather.

MEMORIAL DAY OF SERVICE

On Saturday May 25, Crew Leaders assisted the Park cleaning the camping area for the living history groups for the June 29 155th anniversary of the battle. There was also a living history lecture by a federal infantry soldier, a Ranger walk up Big K, and a remembrance ceremony at the mountain top.

JUNE 15, 2019 WORK DAY PLUS “PREP” DAY

In accordance with KMNBP procedures, the June 8 workday was cancelled due to forecast bad weather. A makeup workday was held on June 15.

The work day consisted of drainage control, rock work, and fence work on the Noses Creek Trail north of Noses Creek at and the trail heads for the Hardage Mill Trails north of Noses Creek. Specifically, the following work was performed:

- The trail head on the Hardage Mill Trail just north of Noses Creek was rebuilt.
- The fence at the trail head to the Hardage Mill Trail was rebuilt and enlarged.
- A large dip that gathered water for days after heavy rains was mucked up, fill material laid down in layers then compacted, and crusher run placed to act as a tread.
- Large rocks were removed and a small ditch on the side of the trail (road) was added to control the water. The purpose of this project is to facilitate maintenance vehicles and mowers, law enforcement vehicles, and emergency vehicles to drive on the road again. One more section remains to be done.
- At corrugated metal culvert that carries the small creek under the trail, silt traps were built in four places to protect the creek from silt and a hole was filled in.

On Friday before the work day, Crew Leaders moved crusher run from the John Ward Creek west bridge to the work area and flagged the work site for Saturday.

JULY 13, 2019 WORK DAY PLUS “PREP” DAY

On Saturday, July 13 approximately 36 volunteers joined a dozen Crew Leaders and several Trail Ambassadors to continue work on the Noses Creek trail.

Volunteers and Crew Leaders removed the last of the buried rocks in the trail and built drainage. Others completed the rebuild of the trail at the big puddle and started work at the next puddle heading south. Two Crew Leaders ran the new dump trailer to move about half of the rocks over to the storage area near Camp Brumby. A small crew of big, strong volunteers that loader the rocks into the trailer and made several trail repairs along the way. The invasive plant crew eradicated privet near the meadow west of the Nose Creek Trail and into the woods heading south.

Two crew leaders moved materials from Kolb's Farm to the work area and flagged the work site on Friday.

8/10/19 WORKDAY

On Saturday, August 10, almost 90 volunteers joined 16 (yes 16!!) Crew Leaders, about 8 Trail Ambassadors, and 8 members from SCA to continue work on the Noses Creek trail north of Noses Creek. Work performed included:

- Constructing drainage at the south end of the section just north of the creek and filling in a swale at the Hardage Mill trailhead with large rocks to stop erosion and to prevent silt from running down to the creek.
- Sloping the trail at dip to get water off to both sides. The crew was chased off the other big puddle area by a swarm of angry yellow jackets.
- A “Root Group” removed dead roots that were making it difficult for Park vehicles to use the trail/road.
- Crew Leaders continued to use the new dump trailer to move more rocks over to the storage area near Camp Brumby.
- A large crew tackled the big ugly root area on the north end with a big load of dirt.
Thanks to SCA for joining us on their “day off” to start work south of Noses Creek.

II. STUDENT CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION AT KMNB

Two leaders and half a dozen SCA members are spending a month at KMNB to perform trail work in our most difficult trail areas. Aided by Crew leaders, in 15 9-hour workdays, SCA:

- Repaired of the ugly rut in the saddle up little k, rebuilt the steps, provided drainage, and did repair work in the puddles near the top.
- Removed weeds and vines at Fort McBride and trip roots near French’s Rock.
- Built two new steps, debarred, trimmed weeds, removed roots, and built a short crib to remove a short side creep trail just over the top of little k.
- Cleaned and made minor repairs on the Grand Staircase (an SCA tradition), cleaned out part of a French drain and ditch, cleaned water diversion structures, and other maintenance work on the Lower Mountain Trail.
- On the trail club workday (extra credit), built some temporary silt traps/rock dams to stop erosion and protect Noses Creek on the south Hardage Mill trail, and helped stage crusher run from Kolb’s Farm.
- “Enjoyed” two days of invasive plant removal in the area of Wagner’s attack near Cheatham Hill.
- Repaired steps and water structures and did some weed removal up Pigeon Hill.
- Sharpened Pulaskis.
- Closed the nuisance social trail at the switchback on the backside of little k.
- And the hardest work – repaired the trail and removed hiker-created diversion trails up the backside of little k.
- At press time, work was planned for either the Hardage Mill Trail or at Gilbert Road.
Thank you, SCA.

III. RELATED WORK

CREW LEADER TRAINING

Jay Dement taught a Crew Leader class on March 2 focusing on trail maintenance techniques. In April, Jerry Given continued the training focusing on NPS, Kennesaw Mountain, and Trail Club procedures, on crew dynamics, and related topics.

EAGLE PROJECTS

A complete discussion of the many Eagle Scout projects is not within the scope of this report. However, a few are discussed below.

In November, several crew leaders assisted on an Eagle Scout project in the meadow in front of the Visitors Center by hauling old fence to the CCC Camp Brumby and by assisting with construction of the new fence

On April 6, the “last” three battlefield signs (150 in total) were installed by Eagle Scout candidate David McAskill.

Fencing along Stilesboro Road and Old 41 was replaced by several Eagle Scout candidates and their crews. On May 18 and May 25, the last two sections of the fence along Old 41 were completed with help from

a few Crew leaders. Eagle projects scheduled on July 20 and July 27 and in August continued to replace old fencing at the VC parking lot.

INVASIVE PLANTS

A detailed discussion of invasive plant eradication is also not within the scope of this report. Danny, Cam, Harry, Eric and friends continue to be very active around the Park with invasive plant groups. You never know when or where they might show up. Invasive plants never sleep. On workdays, Danny tells me where they will be working so that I can get the information on the approved plan and for safety and informational purposes.

IV. FUTURE WORK

The September 14 workday will be fence building. One site will be the last of the stacked rail fence at the VC. The other site will be at the Cheatham Hill Road parking lot. Donald will run the workday. It will involve lots of staging of fencing materials, equipment, and removal of old fence.

On October 12, I have proposed completing and touch up of the Noses Creek Trail north of the Creek and starting work south of the creek. We will have a crew leader day in advance to do ditch witch work.

On November 9 I have propose continuing the work south Noses creek trail.

One of the problems we have had is that we work on a section, then might night return for two or three years, allowing silt, gravel, and leaves to fill the ditches and draining structures, causing a bigger problem. To avoid this, I am suggesting annual maintenance on all trails as is done on the AT and other trails. After the leaves fall, I propose performing light maintenance on all the Park trails, by sending small crews along the trails to clean out knocks, water bars, and dips, deberming where there are puddles forming, trimming encroaching weeds, removing loose rocks, raking leaves and diffing silt out of ditches, etc. some crews will have to hike 3 miles out and back, doing minor maintenance all the way. One month will be spent in each section of the Park.

The Park has 23 new wayside interpretive markers. We or the Eagle Scout candidates may be asked to install some of these.

Some other long term undefined projects may include trail work in the Cheatham Hill area, a new trail up Harriston Hill, a rebuild of the upper Mountain Trail like we did on the lower Mountain Trail, all major projects. All these will take lots of careful planning and review and possible compliance by the NPS.

...All depending on the needs of the Park.