

Promontory Stump by Walt Weber

How many of you have seen the treasures at Promontory Stump? Or, how many of you have even heard of Promontory Stump or know where it is located?

In the beginning, September 1983, when work first started on construction of our section of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail, the original routing of the trail was via the existing Art Loeb, Black Mountain and Buck Spring trails between NC 215 and Pisgah Inn. This required the construction of new trails between NC 215 and the Art Loeb Trail at Silvermine Bald, between the Art Loeb and Black Mountain trails and between the Black Mountain and Buck Spring trails. All of this work was completed by September 1986. A new trail was started in December 1990 between Forest Road 816 and the Looking Glass overlook at MP 417 on the Blue Ridge Parkway which was later extended to connect with the Buck Spring Trail. This new 11.9 mile trail, completed in March 1996, became the Pisgah Ridge section of the Mountains-to-Sea trail and reduced the original length of the MST by 16.4 miles.

The final segment of the Pisgah Ridge section of the MST to be built was between US 276 and the Buck Spring Trail, a distance of 1.6 miles. In its final days of construction the crew was split into two groups, one working from US 276 down and the other from the Buck Spring Trail up. The two groups came together on March 4th 1996 next to a little jagged stump at a point 1.1 miles north of US 276. One hundred seventeen years earlier, the rails of the Union and Central Pacific railroads came together at Promontory Summit in Utah and a golden spike was driven at this point to commemorate the joining of these two sections of railroad into a continuous route. The point where the two work groups of the Brevard Monday trail crew came together was named Promontory Stump. Later, a golden rock (mountains) and a golden seashell (sea) were buried in the little rotted tree stump with some appropriate ceremonious words being spoken by District Ranger Art Rowe.

Following is a photograph of part of the trail crew at the time that the two groups came together, completing the Pisgah Ridge section of the MST:



From left to right they are, Dick Roberts (trail boss), Dick Stubbe, John Bell, Al Kohan, Tom Joyce, Dick Johnson and John Sauerteig. The photo was taken by crew member Walt Weber.

The golden treasures have been residing in this stump for these many years, having been removed from the site only once (in 2007) for a new paint job, and this time for a coating of polyurethane to better preserve their color (no, they are not actually made of gold). The following photo is of Walt Weber holding the treasures in May 2007 prior to their new coats of paint.



And just where is Promontory Stump? It has been kept well disguised these past 14 years and only a few people have known of its exact location, so here is a hint as to how it can be found: Just before reaching the top of the grade following the second bridge north of US 276 (about 0.1 miles from the bridge), you will find a low jagged stump slightly below and just off the right side of the trail with a short pathway parallel to the trail and to the right of the stump. There should be a quartz rock laying to the right of the short pathway (as of June 4th 2010) and a small flat rock should be laying on the top of the stump. Lots of luck and if you find the stump, please put everything back and completely cover up the treasures before you leave.

Have big fun!

Walt Weber