

Hiking • Saving Trails • Making Friends
Carolina Mountain Club eNews



January 2026

Announcing the Art Loeb Thru-Hike Challenge!

The Art Loeb Trail carries the name and spirit of one of the Carolina Mountain Club's most influential figures. Art Loeb's vision for trail building and stewardship helped shape not only this route, but the identity of the Club itself. For decades, the trail has challenged and inspired hikers across Western North Carolina. This spring, the Carolina Mountain Club, in collaboration with The Pisgah Conservancy, honors that legacy by introducing the Art Loeb Thru-Hike Challenge.

Launching Spring 2026, the Art Loeb Thru-Hike Challenge celebrates endurance, preparation, and respect for the trail. Whether you aim to complete the trail in a single push or over multiple days, this challenge is about committing to the experience and honoring the landscape that makes it possible.



Patch Design Competition

To mark the launch, we're calling on artists, hikers, and maintainers in our community to help define the visual identity of the challenge.

Submit an original patch design inspired by the Art Loeb Trail - its terrain, history, culture, or the spirit of those who take it on. The winning design will become the official Art Loeb Thru-Hike Challenge patch, revealed at our Spring Launch Party. Design submissions are open now. Deadline: February 15th, 2026.

Check out the [Patch Design Competition Guidelines](#) for rules and submission criteria

Whether you hike, maintain, design, or all three, this is your invitation to be part of something lasting.

Stay tuned and keep your boots by the bed, the trail is calling.



How to Save a Shelter

Story by Sarah Jones Decker
Photos by David Huff

If these chestnut log walls could talk, maybe they would reminisce about all the laughter shared inside them. Or maybe they would talk about the generations of mice that established their homes here over the years. These walls might joke that the structure has been facing the wrong way since it was built, often filling the open fourth side with snow in the winter and offering little break from mountain storms. Surely, these walls would talk about the strapping young Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) boys who dropped and notched the chestnut logs with hand tools and sweat equity over 80 years ago.

[Read full story in BRO](#)



Sarah Jones Decker and Tom Weaver

Trail Running

Join CMC for Its Inaugural Trail Run on January 25, 2026

For the first time in the club's soon-to-be 103 year history, trail running is being offered as a new category on the 2026 hike calendar. The runs are being

introduced on a quarterly basis to start, led by Paul Scalese, and if this type of event sounds like your speed (pun intended), then we'd love for you to join us!

The first run will be on **Sunday, January 25th at 10am**, and we will be running the entire length of the **Laurel River Trail**, near Hot Springs. Total length will be ~7.5 miles, and we will break halfway at the end of the trail at the French Broad River for a snack break and photos. This route fulfills hike **#43** of the **100 Favorite Trails Challenge**.

John Ribes will be the co-leader for this inaugural run, and we have set the limit on participants to **15 runners**. Prior trail running experience is required, and all runners are expected to come prepared with adequate hydration and shoes with proper traction.

For more information, contact Paul Scalese at pscalese15@gmail.com. Be a part of CMC history on this inaugural event!

Bernhardt Watch Company features John Whitehouse

Check out this interview with John Whitehouse, CMC's Burnsville Monday Crew Leader and co-founder of the **NC High Peaks Trail Association**. Huge thanks to John and the Monday Crew for all the work you do on the trails!



Whitehouse Interview

CMC & Pisgah Area SORBA

Growing Trail Partnerships



Back in November, CMC and Pisgah Area SORBA held a successful joint workday on the multi-use Turkey Pen Gap Trail—an effort we're just now sharing in our January eNews because it was too good to leave out.

The CMC Section Rovers Crew and SORBA volunteers turned out 21 strong, including CMC President Les Love, our new Councilor for Maintenance Glen Hess, and SORBA's Trail Programs Director Jared Harman and Trail Specialist Will Avent.

Despite the forecast calling for subfreezing temps, the delayed 10 AM start made for a surprisingly pleasant day. Les summed it up well: "I was really proud of all the work that everyone got done. What a great turnout!"

Looking ahead, CMC and SORBA plan to host quarterly joint workdays, rotating between bike/hike and hike-only trails and mixing up days of the week so more crews can participate. These partnerships strengthen our stewardship and build valuable relationships across the trail community.

Hike Leaders' Appreciation & Education Dinner – Save the Date!

Attention all Hike Leaders!! The annual Hike Leaders' Appreciation and Education Dinner has been confirmed for Friday evening, **February 27, 2026 at the Hilton Asheville Biltmore Park**. Always a fun time, this event is for any hike leader who will have led or co-led a hike during 2025 or the first quarter of 2026. CMC Council members are invited as well. Our featured speaker will be CMC's own superstar A.T. Maintenance Supervisor, Paul Curtain, and all trail crew leaders will be invited too! Be sure to mark your calendars and look for your invitation in January.

Save the Dates

2026 Events

Friday, February 27th - Hike Leaders Dinner

Saturday, May 23rd - Spring Social

Saturday, September 12th - Maintainers Picnic

Saturday, November 14th - Annual Meeting and Dinner

2026 Quarterly Workdays

Saturday, April 25th - Pisgah Project Day

Saturday, June 6th - National Trails Day

Saturday, August 15th

Saturday, September 26th - National Public Lands Day

Remote Overnight Crew Weekends

April 18/19 - Appalachian Trail

June 27/28 - Shining Rock Wilderness

October 10/11 - Appalachian Trail

Remembering Our Members

Honoring members of Carolina Mountain Club who have recently passed away.

Roy Jackson Dalton, Jr.

December 23, 2025

[Click for Obituary](#)

Emile "Bud" Haas, Jr.

November 26, 2025

Volunteer Opportunities

The Club is currently seeking both section maintainers and members for our weekly trail crews.

Section Maintainers "adopt" a portion of trail and are responsible for tasks such as quarterly walk-throughs, routine maintenance (including tread work, trimming, and clearing water diversions), and reporting any downed trees or other trail obstructions.

Weekly crew members join scheduled group outings to help with a variety of trail maintenance projects. It's a great way to learn trail skills, meet other volunteers, and make a meaningful impact.

Like to join a weekly crew or become a section maintainer? Like more information? Click the **Volunteer** link below.

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[Volunteer](#)

[Hike](#)

Carolina Mountain Club is the oldest and largest hiking and trail maintenance organization in the Southeastern United States. As a member-run volunteer organization, we embody the spirit of community and shared passion for the outdoors, welcoming everyone who wishes to participate in its activities.

Leading over 200 hikes per year, the club maintains more than 440 miles of trails in Western North Carolina, including 94 miles of the Appalachian Trail and 150 miles of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail.

Questions or feedback on the CMC eNewsletter and content can be directed to David Huff at communications@carolinamountainclub.org



www.carolinamountainclub.org

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