

Pisgah Project Day was a huge success!

Donna Bange

CMC hosted two work areas: Art Loeb trail near Black Balsam with 59 volunteers and Barnett Branch with 12 volunteers. This was our first quarterly crew of the season, held in close partnership with The Pisgah Conservancy (TPC). Despite the cold rain, every volunteer stayed for the duration of the event, and we maintained a perfect safety record with zero incidents.



At the Art Loeb trail, Chris Werbylo and 17 crew leaders managed 14 worksites. This popular area had significant water erosion and deep ruts. Our volunteers organized into 12 sites focused on water diversions and rock repair. Five crews dug up to two feet deep to create diversions, while seven crews built and repaired rock steps designed to ensure proper water runoff. Additionally, Paul Scalese led a team 2.2 miles in for brushing and tread work toward Shining Rock, and Rene Roberge led a team at the MST and Forest Service Road 816 crossing for general tread work.

Jan and Kevin Onan led the CMC efforts at Barnett Branch; it also was a huge success. Twelve volunteers — including a hardworking, self-motivated seventh grader — split into three crews to saw and split logs, make stakes, build three steps, and clear water diversions, roots, debris, and overgrowth from the trail. They worked through steady,

much-needed rain and came away dirtier for it. Everyone stayed safe, and they had a great time.

Organizing an event of this scale requires a dedicated CMC team (Chris Werbylo, Dan Sanford, Ike Isenhour, Jan & Kevin Onan, Les Love, David Huff, Karen Schultz and Donna Bange). It was rewarding to see the joy and astonishment of our volunteers as they realized the immediate impact of their hard work. One new volunteer even shared that she plans to bring her friends and family back to see the improvements firsthand. There is a great deal of satisfaction in knowing these rock steps and water diversions will keep these trails sustainable for future hikers and backpackers.

