

Hiking • Saving Trails • Making Friends
Carolina Mountain Club eNews



July 2026



Goodbye and Good Luck to Chris Werbylo!

Priscilla Estes



"Didn't take much to 'lead' great people with a great work ethic. I am blessed to have been able to do this and will certainly miss seeing everyone on a regular basis."

– Chris Werbylo

In ten short years, Chris Werbylo became a vital part of Carolina Mountain Club's (CMC) trail maintenance machine. The journey started in June 2016, when he and his wife, Jayne, moved to Maggie Valley, North Carolina, from Toledo, Ohio, after a successful career as a high school math teacher, football coach, and junior high track coach. Three months later, Chris discovered the Carolina Mountain Club and the Wednesday and Friday trail work crews, while Jayne began a new career at Mast General Store (where she is currently Lead Inventory Support Coordinator.)

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Art Loeb Trail Challenge

Kevin O'Shea

The Art Loeb Trail (ALT) challenge opened on April 1st and the five of us committed to taking it on. Our group included Tom Butler (team leader), Sara Basile, Kristen Friedman, Kevin O'Shea, and Jeff Wilcox. Tom took care of logistics, scouting for campsites and scheduling a shuttle. He downloaded the Art Loeb Trail Project map to his phone which identified possible water sources and campsites - 78 waypoints! - a valuable resource along the trail. He also provided a copy of the *Art Loeb Trail Backpacking Adventure Guide Notes*, which is published by Adventure Nerds, LLC. All of us were asked to review in advance.



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CMC Celebrates National Trails Day In Hot Springs

Donna Bange

There is nothing quite like the energy of over 100 volunteers—from the school age children to the 80-somethings—all coming together to build, sustain and maintain the A.T. and Van Cliff hiking trails. This was the energy on Saturday, June 6th in Hot Springs as CMC celebrated National Trails Day with trail maintenance. Chris Werbylo led the overall event, with support from Donna Bange, Richard McDanel and countless crew leaders. There were 15 work sites each led by a veteran CMC trail maintainer.



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Warehouse and Office Renovation Update

Tom Weaver, Project Foreman

We've made significant progress on our renovations over the past few weeks, thanks to the hard work of our talented team. Alison Curtin and Vikie Kelso, our mural painting team, are wrapping up the mountain scape mural in the office space. It looks fantastic!



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**Maintainers Mel Skiles, Tim Kurtz, and Glen Hess on
WLOS ABC 13!**

As America prepares to celebrate its 250th birthday one of North Carolina's most treasured outdoor landmarks is celebrating a milestone of its own.

For nearly 50 years, the Mountains-to-Sea Trail has connected communities across the state, stretching more than 1,100 miles from the Great Smoky Mountains to the Outer Banks. But after Helene tore through western North Carolina in September 2024, portions of the trail were left virtually unrecognizable.

Today, thanks to hundreds of hours of volunteer work, one of Asheville's most beloved sections is open once again.

[Click image to view](#)



Carolina Mountain Club Conservation Corner

Luke Bennet, Councilor for Conservation

Earlier in June on top of Mount Mitchell, conservation partners with the Southern Appalachian Spruce Restoration Initiative gathered alongside a small army of dedicated volunteers. The volunteers represented multiple organizations including Carolina Mountain Club.



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CMC-SAR Quarterly Training: The Wilderness Olympics Nobody Asked For (But Everyone Needed)

Nicolas Nouvel, Councilor for Preparedness

If anyone wandered into our quarterly CMC-SAR training expecting a quiet day of maps and knots, they quickly discovered they had accidentally entered the Appalachian Survival Games.



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Carl Sandburg Home Hike

Thomas Butler

CMC is always ready to partner with groups in our community who share our love of hiking and the outdoors, so when we were contacted by a National Park Service volunteer who works at the Carl Sandburg National Historic Home about leading history hikes, we jumped at the chance. CMC has led hikes on the trails of the Sandburg Home at least since 2003, but this was to be a first, a unique hike planned around the history of Connemara in Flat Rock, which became Sandburg's home, and of the history of the Sandburg family. And all done in partnership with - and led by - the National Park Service.



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Outdoor Skills and Safety Classes



Volunteers with the CMC Search and Rescue Crew offer free classes, typically one per month, on a variety of topics within the realm of outdoor skills, safety, and preparedness. Use the links below to learn more about each upcoming class, as well as to register.

[Sunday, July 12: "Staying found \(or at least dry\)"](#)

[Wednesday, August 26: "Introduction to GMRS Radio Communications"](#)

Last Call – Camporee 2026!

August 7-9, Appletree Group Campground, Nantahala Ranger District

We still have a few spots left for a weekend of fun and fellowship at the Appletree Campground (2425 Junaluska Rd., Tipton, NC. We will have a large group site reserved with a fire pit, covered pavilion, running water (flush toilets) and a bathhouse (warm showers!) If you'd like to join us but aren't quite up to camping, there are several cabin/Airbnb options in the area, as well as a few hotels in nearby Andrews (the hikes will not start before 9am if you'd rather drive in for the day). We will offer a variety of hikes (and lengths) on Saturday and Sunday along the Bartram Trail (which runs through the campground) and nearby Appalachian Trail. The cost of the Camporee is \$10/person to offset the cost of the group site (regardless of how many nights you plan to camp).

To reserve your spot or if you can lead a hike, please contact Jeff Wilcox.

[Contact Jeff Wilcox](#)

Become an Appalachian Trail Section Maintainer

Looking for a rewarding way to give back to the Appalachian Trail? We currently have four section maintainer opportunities available, including two positions where you'll partner with an experienced co-maintainer.

- **Section 2317 – 2.5 miles to Lemon Gap (*Co-maintainer opportunity with Bob Beach*)**
- **Section 2145 – 4.1 miles from Bluff Mountain to Garenflo Gap**
- **Section 2240 – 2.3 miles to Big Butt, including Jerry Cabin Shelter (*Co-maintainer opportunity with Russ Gillenwater*)**
- **Section 2252 – 2.8 miles from Sugarloaf to Rice Gap**

Contact Paul Curtin for more information.

[Contact Paul Curtin](#)

Save the Dates

Saturday, September 19th - Maintainers Picnic

Saturday, November 14th - Annual Meeting and Dinner

Quarterly Workdays

Saturday, August 15th - TBD

Saturday, September 26th - National Public Lands Day

Remote Overnight Crews

October 10/11 - Appalachian Trail

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.

Donate

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



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meetup

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