

Christopher Beck's Eagle Service Project

Saturday, February 18, 2012

8AM to 5PM

WHO IS INVITED?

- I need as many of my fellow Scouts from Troop 97 in Sweetwater to participate as possible - please see this as YOUR opportunity to learn about our trails and what it takes to keep them beautiful.
- And I need members from the trail groups approved to do work in the Ocoee USFS District of the Cherokee National Forest: a few members of local trail advocacy, hiking, and trail maintenance groups have offered to help, and some members committed not only to helping with this project, but also to doing a bit of on-the-job teaching to those present who may be curious, or interested in our trails. Groups that have members who have committed to coming so far are Southern Appalachian Back Country Horsemen (SABCH), Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS), Benton MacKaye Trail Association, and the Cherokee Hiking Club. Other trail-oriented groups have been contacted.
- ACCORDING TO OCOEE USFS DISTRICT POLICY, THE ONLY PERSONS PERMITTED ON THE WORKSITE ARE THOSE AFFILIATED WITH A SPECIFIC ORGANIZATION THAT IS PRE-APPROVED TO WORK WITHIN THE USFS OCOEE DISTRICT (Scout Troop 97, Benton MacKaye, SAWS, SABCH, Cherokee Hiking Club, Chattanooga Hiking Club, etc), OR THOSE WHO HAVE SIGNED INDIVIDUAL HOLD-HARMLESS AGREEMENTS WITH/AT THE OCOEE USFS OFFICE IN ADVANCE OF THIS EVENT. This policy unfortunately prevents siblings, parents, friends, and family from participating unless they are "members" of one of these pre-approved groups, OR UNLESS THEY INDIVIDUALLY GO TO THE OCOEE USFS OFFICE (Mon-Fri 9a-4p) BEFORE FEBRUARY 18th TO SIGN A HOLD-HARMLESS AGREEMENT FOR THIS PARTICULAR EVENT. Please understand that this Eagle Project has to comply with and honor all of the rules, regulations, and Laws of the USFS and the Ocoee USFS District.

WHY DO I NEED YOU?

Simply put, I cannot complete my Eagle Scout Project without you, because an Eagle Scout Project is long-term and multi-faceted. First, I had to find a suitable project that benefited a body of persons or community not-for-profit, and then I had to meet with involved parties to plan every step of the project. I had to get approvals from them and from my Troop and from the Eagle Board. I had to seek out and assemble necessary supplies/ volunteers/ funds and materials for my project, and finally (NOW !) I have to manage the actual work of the project until the project is completed. Doing this project is the final step before I can become an Eagle Scout, an achievement that only 1 - 2 % of all Boy Scouts achieve. I have worked very hard and have learned so much through my years of Scouting, and I aspire to be one of the few who finish strong, all the way to Eagle.

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

My Eagle Project is the refurbishing and restoring of a local non-official around-the-pond trail located in the Ocoee USFS District in Benton (Ocoee), TN. This is a trail which local residents and their families use to access a small fishing pond.

WHERE IS THE PROJECT?

The actual project-site / pond is located 2.7 miles past the Ocoee USFS Office which is listed as Location (address) for this Event. The project-pond is on the left side of the road, at the intersection of Route 64 and Route 30. A map showing A (USFS Office) and B (the pond) is set as the EVENT PHOTO.

WHO WILL THIS PROJECT BENEFIT?

My project has several beneficiaries.

- First, it will benefit the Ocoee USFS District because it will remove a project needing to be done from their extensive to-do list.
- Second, it will provide a visit and a unique trail work opportunity in the Cherokee National Forest for the Boy Scouts in my troop (Troop 97, Sweetwater, TN), their families, and my friends.
- Third, the Ocoee / Polk County community will benefit by having a safer, cleaner, better-maintained trail around a longtime favorite fishing pond.
- And fourth, local trail advocacy, trail maintenance, and hiking groups have spent A LOT of time and energy teaching me so much about our trails, how to maintain them, and how to be a good steward of my natural treasures - and through this project it is my hope to unite and bring together different "trail" groups that do not always have the opportunity to work together on a common project, thus making Ocoee a better "trail" community, and also building a healthier, stronger forest-community.

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO WORK ON?

The actual work to be done will be

1. cleaning up trash and debris,
2. clearing light and moderate brush and debris using ONLY hand tools (lobbers, pulaskis, shovels, various rakes, swing-blades, etc), and
3. there are portions of the trail that need to be re-treaded. Bobby Mitchell of SABCH (Southern Appalachian Back Country Horsemen) has offered to teach the particulars of how to re-tread a trail properly.

We have some tools on loan from Ocoee USFS, but if you have any hand-tools that you think may be helpful, please feel free to bring them along. NO POWER OR ENGINE-TYPE TOOLS ARE PERMITTED ON THIS PROJECT. (** There are no big trees to be cleared; Ocoee USFS has taken care of those for us already.) [The BMTA will bring plenty of tools as well]

WHAT ABOUT SAFETY?

Each participant MUST HAVE and MUST WEAR an approved safety helmet, approved safety goggles, and work gloves at all times on the work site, and during all trail work on the work site. This is required by the USFS for working in the Cherokee National Forest - it is the LAW. We have 20 of each of these items, on loan from the USFS. If you own any of these items personally, please bring them with you. [The BMTA will bring helmets, gloves and safety glasses as well for BMTA and CHC participants]

WHAT IF I GET HUNGRY WHILE WE'RE WORKING?

Please bring a lunch, snacks, and drinks (water is strongly recommended !) for yourself. And please remember PACK IT IN, PACK IT OUT.

IT'S LATE, AND I'M HUNGRY AGAIN, SO WHAT DO I DO?

After all of our work is done, will you please join me, and my family, at our home in Benton, TN for dinner

? I will be making chili, homemade soups, salad, fresh baked bread, and dessert for everyone --- and I hope you will consider it my way of saying THANK YOU for all of your hard work. (Directions to our home to be provided at the worksite)

HOW DO I SIGN UP?

I have put an invite page on Facebook, but I have asked for participation by Benton MacKaye Trail Assn and Cherokee Hiking Club members as well. So, those invites will go through Rick Harris. Please contact Rick Harris directly by phone or email and he will give the information of BMTA and CHC attendees to Christopher. BMTA and CHC members are covered by agreements with the USFS so if you sign up and are a member of the BMTA or the CHC, you will not need to fill out an individual agreement. You will just have to sign the sign-in sheet on the day of the work trip.

Just a little info about Chris from Rick Harris

Chris is a 17 year old Boy Scout who lives now in Benton, TN. He used to live in Tellico Plains. He is very interested in protecting the environment and improving the hiking and horse trails of our Tennessee mountains. He has been on several work trips with us and has volunteered with the USFS on special assignments. He also is a member of 4-H and loves to ride horses. He also works with the SABCH (Southern Appalachian Back Country Horsemen) on work trips. He hopes to be a Wilderness -certified Paramedic and ultimately be tied in with a Search & Rescue Team for the wilderness areas. He plans to take whatever training he can of this sort, such as Tennessee EMT and Paramedic classes and Wilderness First Responder and Wilderness First Aid courses through NOLS. So please consider joining us for this work trip and get to know Chris a little better. I suspect we will see a lot of him in the years to come.

Rick Harris
TN/NC Maintenance Director, BMTA
Webmaster, Cherokee Hiking Club
423-253-6358 home
513-260-1184 cell
HarrisRi@aol.com
TN/NC BMTA Maintenance Director