

## Watauga County Tourism Development Authority Urges Locals to Help Clear the Tanawha Trail in May

Written by Wright Tilley  
Tuesday, 04 May 2010 10:38

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The Watauga County Tourism Development Authority will play a support role in a late-May effort to help the Blue Ridge Parkway reopen the Tanawha Trail after last winter's storm damage. Currently, portions of the trail are impassable from Grandfather Mountain to Price Park.

According to Roy Jones, facilities manager for the Highlands District of the Parkway that includes the Boone area, the National Park Service is planning two separate volunteer trail work days on May 15th and May 22nd when it's hoped that Boone area volunteers can help clear storm debris. The Parkway will supply two chainsaw operators each day to head at least two work crews.

The Watauga County Tourism Authority is supporting the effort and encouraging local trail enthusiasts and tourism supporters to volunteer by signing up for the work days in advance via e-mailing or calling WCTDA planner Eric Woolridge at [eric@exploreboonearea.com](mailto:eric@exploreboonearea.com) ; 828-266-1345.

The task will include dragging smaller brush from the trail as well as removing sections of trees and branches that have been sawed into smaller pieces by Parkway employees using

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chainsaws. Volunteers will be encouraged to wear hiking boots and bring work gloves, safety glasses or other eye protection, lunch, and clothes appropriate for the weather.

Where the work will occur, and where volunteers will meet Saturday mornings before work, will be decided closer to the volunteer days and announced by e-mail from the WCTDA directly to volunteers and through local media.

Wright Tilley, executive director of the Watauga Tourism Development Authority, notes that the May 22nd trail volunteer day occurs as National Tourism Week ends. "Coming out to help clear the Tanawha Trail is a great way to support the Blue Ridge Parkway's effort to open our trails as well as celebrate the local economic importance of tourism."

Tilley says the Boone area is "fortunate to have so many Parkway access points in our area," and that road is "critical to the tourism success of Watauga and surrounding counties. With the 75th anniversary season set to begin, it's critical that the road be as open as possible." Tilley urges local tourism groups and trail supporters to volunteer. "We need all the help we can get clearing the trails on those weekends," he says.