

East Lakeshore Trail

On December 1, 2014, a group of 20 volunteer trail builders completed the last few hundred yards of the of the East Lakeshore Trail, marking a 12+ year effort, building more than 30 miles of completed trail.

The initial trail building outings in 2003 were the result of meetings that started the previous year in reaction to the loss of beautiful forested land between Baker Hollow and Powerline Cove. Meetings of a small group of citizens from Greenback and Tellico Village evolved into another mission of the newly established Watershed Association of the Tellico Reservoir (WATeR). This organization pursued development of the East Lakeshore Trail as a major community recreational asset, but another impetus was to help deter the possibility of future sale and destruction of more lands along Tellico Lake for the purpose of additional commercial and residential development. After the Tellico Women's Club donated some funds to purchase tools for building the Trail, a village hiking group gave-up one of their weekly hikes each month to help build the Trail. Two members of that group went down to Soddy Daisy to learn how to trail-build from the Cumberland Trail Group. When the tools arrived, construction started. Trail work began near an old dead oak tree (it fell into the water in 2012) which the young people used for swinging out and dropping into the water. This tree was located east across the lake from the historic Bowman House in the Tanasi Neighborhood. Trail work proceeded northward following the shoreline and then east back into Powerline Cove. It took 3 years, working one morning a month, to finish this first section. In the very beginning, there would typically be 5 or 6 people out to work. Then, very slowly, other people started to arrive and contribute their time and sweat. This first section has 3 to 4 miles of trail, two bridges, one stair step, and a stone filled cage boat landing. Over the next seven years, Bob Martin, past chairman of the trails committee for WATeR, was in charge organizing a trice monthly, half day work sessions that brought the Trail to where it is today.

Trail Purpose

The purpose of the East Lakeshore Trail at Tellico Reservoir project is to provide a recreational and educational hiking trail along a portion of the east shoreline of Tellico Lake. In 2012, the trail was recognized as a **National Recreation Trail** by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The East Lakeshore Trail is one of the longest National Recreation Trails in Tennessee. Hiking

clubs, nature groups, and many individuals come from nearby communities to use and enjoy the trail year-round. The Knoxville Track Club have held a number of races on the trail from half marathons to 100 mile events. The East Lakeshore Trail adds another dimension to the multi-use nature of the public land on which it has been built. It provides a quality recreational resource contributing to the physical and emotional well-being of those who use it. The trail provides an educational tool through the use of information bulletin boards at trailhead kiosks, signing of native trees and plants along the trail, and a 1.6 mile self-guided interpretive trail.

Project Description:

Construction of the East Lakeshore Trail is a joint venture between WATeR* and the Tennessee Valley Authority. It is being built mainly with volunteer labor. The concept began in 2002 and was solidified with a formal cooperative agreement between WATeR and TVA in 2003. Now it is a reality with completion of 31+ miles of trail. It is envisioned that the trail system could ultimately consist of about 35 miles with the addition of loops and spurs to scenic over looks. The project involves initial trail layout, trail construction including installation of bridges, water bars, fence stiles and timber stair treads as needed, development of trailhead parking areas with kiosk bulletin boards, scenic view areas with benches, and boat landing areas making the trail accessible by water.

The TVA provides general oversight and technical support, assisting with heavy equipment construction needs such as building trailhead parking areas and large bridges, and furnishes some of the materials needed for trail construction. The trail project is widely supported by residents of nearby local communities including Lenoir City, Loudon, Vonore, Greenback, and the general Knoxville metropolitan area. It has received support and financial assistance from the Tellico Village Women's Club, Kiwanis Club of Tellico Village, Cooper Homes, Tellico Village Woodworkers Club, Tennessee Trails Association, Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation, American Hiking Society, and the State of Tennessee. One of the most significant contributions to the Trail was the matching grant given to the TVA from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation through the Recreational Trails Program. The grant and matching funds were applied toward the construction of an 85' bridge that linked the Davis Ferry, Glendale,

and Coytee Loop Branches to the Sinking Creek Branch and all other parts to the south.

Currently, the East Lakeshore Trail consists of nine completed segments available for public use and enjoyment (over 30 miles).

From north to south they are:

- the Canal Branch (1.5 miles)
- the Baker Hollow Branch (3.2 miles)
- the Davis Ferry Branch (3.3 miles),
- the Glendale Branch (2.8 miles),
- the Coytee Loop Branch (2.4 miles),
- the Sinking Creek Branch (4.5 miles),
- the Lotterdale branch (3.8 miles)
- the Jackson Bend Branch (5.1 miles),
- the Morganton Branch (3.1 miles).

In addition, a loop trail, a shortcut, a connector trail and a scenic spur to Wildcat Point have been built adding more than 3 more miles to the Trail.

Location:

East Lakeshore Trail is located along the east shoreline of Tellico Lake opposite Tellico Village and Rarity Bay. The trail lies between the Canal Bridge on Rt. 321 and mile 18 of the Little Tennessee River channel. Access to the trail is provided at six existing trailheads with vehicle parking for 15 to 20 vehicles. Two more trailheads are planned to go online in 2015. Each trailhead has an information bulletin board kiosk with a large map of the trail. Smaller take-along maps and WATeR brochures are also supplied. Three signed boat-landing areas provide easy access to the trail for boaters.

Detailed information with maps, interpretive guides, and directions to the trailheads is available on the East Lakeshore Trail menu item of the WATeR website (www.tellicowater.org).

Volunteer Info:

Work on the East Lakeshore Trail is performed 2 days a month. Those wanting to volunteer their time to a worthwhile community project can call George Zola 614-937-0767 or email at zola1029@gmail.com.

Another important aspect of the trail system is the ***Adopt a Trail*** maintenance program. Volunteers are assigned to specific trail sections and are responsible for maintaining their sections on a monthly basis. Those interested in adopting a section of the trail for routine maintenance contact Tom Siegele at tdsiegele@gmail.com.

On average volunteers contribute 1,200 to 1,600 hours annually to build the trail. Many more hours are contributed for planning, administrative and general maintenance needs. For example, in 2012 forty-five days of trail work resulting in construction of three miles of trail from Peterson Road to Wildcat Pointe Trailhead - the ***Morganton Branch***. Timber treads, steps, two bridges, signs, mile markers, trail blazes, and a lot of “pug” surfacing was part of the job completed. Trail builders logged 1,606 volunteer hours of trail construction averaging about nine (9) trail-builders per outing. The excellent turnout of trail-builders is what made it possible to bring the East Lakeshore Trail to Wildcat Point Trailhead, its southern terminus. Twenty-nine (29) different people participated in trail building in 2012. In addition to this, many people spent numerous hours working throughout the year to keep the entire East Lakeshore Trail in good condition. Trail building for 2012 ended on a beautiful mild December day where members of Tellico Village Broadcasting joined the trail builders to do a video documentation of the East Lakeshore Trail which can be viewed from a link on WATeR’s website..

The Future

It is envisioned that the trail system could ultimately consist of about 35 miles with the addition 3 to 4 more miles of loops and spurs to scenic over looks mostly in the Wildcat area.