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# THE TRAIL HEAD



*The official Newsletter of the Yahoola Creek Trails Conservancy*

## Sections:

- Meetings and Announcements
- On the Trail
- About the Conservancy

## A New Look, A New Logo

One of the translations of the Cherokee word “Yahula”, from which the word “Yahoola” is derived, is the insect known as the antlion or “doodlebug”. The “doodlebug” gets its name from the odd winding, spiraling trails, or “doodles”, it leaves in the sand while looking for a place to build its trap.



Antlion trap

It is in the bottom of these pitfalls that the antlion larva awaits its favorite

prey – ants of course! Once an ant falls in it has a hard time climbing out and will probably become the antlion’s next meal.



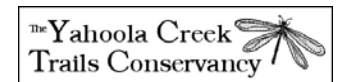
Antlion larva

It’s hard to believe these ferocious looking critters will one day grow up to become beautiful flying insects resembling damselflies, fluttering their way through the night sky.

This amazing creature of our childhood can indeed

still be found along the banks of Yahoola Creek and along the trail system. We have decided to adopt this fascinating insect as the official “mascot” of the YCTC.

Judy Toppins has used her considerable artistic skills to design for us our very own stylized version of the adult antlion for use in logos, letterhead or other media. The following is an example of a proposed design for our new logo:



Please let us know what you think!

## Meetings and Announcements

### Upcoming Work Day

Daffodils are in bloom, maple tips are red, and the YCTC is full-tilt-boogie on Spring preparations. You are warmly invited to come dig in the dirt with us again. We will be finishing up the community garden structures, more planting and beautification, and

we’re planning a group trail walk to evaluate needs and see what surprises we may have breaking bud along the way. We’ll also be pruning more of that darn privet!

So bring your boots, work gloves, pruners and shovels if you like. We’d love to see you there!

**Our next Work Day begins at 10 am at the Yahoola Creek Park kiosk on Saturday, March 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**Our next YCTC meeting is at 7 pm on Wednesday, March 26<sup>th</sup> in the Lumpkin County Park & Rec building.**

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## On the Trail

### February Work Day

The trails are truly a labor of love for YCTC members and volunteers. February 16th marked the group's second monthly work day. Dozens of friends and neighbors gathered to enhance the space and prepare for spring.



Spring will provide evidence of the tremendous amount of volunteer effort put toward enhancing the space with beautiful flowers, perennials and trees. Hundreds of bulbs will sprout along with copious wildflower seeds. Planted hemlocks and pines will grow to provide shade and beauty. Volunteers also planted an interesting selection of perennials which are already beginning to emerge.



Several volunteers worked to remove invasive privet to reveal wild roses along the path. Another volunteer nurtured the discovery pond by

thinning cattails while carefully protecting the amphibian eggs developing there. Other volunteers worked to create this year's community garden space.

More than 200 volunteer hours were dedicated to the space during this one day, and the results are awesome. Much is left to do. Everyone is invited to attend the next trails work day on Saturday, March 15, when volunteers will work to complete the garden structures, erect local artwork, plant perennials, remove privet, and walk the trails together to identify needs and discover what spring is beginning to bring us.



### Discovery Pond Grows

If you've been to the trails after a rain lately you've heard the deafening singing of the frogs. Spring peepers and chorus frogs breed early here, and their egg masses (along with those of other amphibians) now add interest and excitement to the pond. Volunteers have worked hard to thin the cattails, exposing a surprising number of koi that survived the winter. Other aquatic plants are

beginning to green up in and around the pond, which is now much larger thanks to Scott's work with the skidloader.



### A New Entrance Sign

The attractive new entrance sign on Highway 52 is helping visitors find the park and trails. A very unscientific survey of folks at the trailhead revealed that many of them are simply looking for places to recreate in the area and decided to check out the park after seeing the sign. Some suggested that a specific sign for the trails would also have been helpful in finding the way there.

### LCHS Student Projects

Through a partnership with Lumpkin County High School nearly 50 students will be completing semester long projects at the trails. Ms. Deaton's Urban Forestry and Basic Agriculture courses will be at the trails on a weekly basis. The student-driven projects will greatly enhance the space and help to raise awareness of the trails and their contributions to the community.

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## Yahoola Creek Trails Conservancy

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Thank you for your  
continued support!

## On the Trail – cont'd

### Garden of Eatin'

The community garden is beginning to take shape as volunteers constructed and placed nine raised garden beds (with lumber donated by Scott Lacey) and a 15 foot bean pole tepee during the last work day. The garden will be home to heirloom and unusual varieties of vegetables and herbs, especially those that appeal to children. There will be tasty tomatoes, sky-high sunflowers, purple pole beans, "sparkle" strawberries, easter egg radishes, and red popping corn among the fun edibles grown.

Donated fill dirt is being brought in for the low-lying areas, and high quality organic soil is being donated by Mr. Natural Soil Products for the raised beds. During the next work day on Saturday, March 15, volunteers will construct the remaining raised beds from stacked stone and wood, fill the beds with

soil, lay landscape fabric in the path areas, spread wood chips and mulch, and finish the tepee structure. Future work days will complete the garden with an entrance arbor, garden fencing, and planting.



You are invited to help bring this wonderful community garden to life by donating your time, money, or materials. If you have plants, seeds or other materials you would like to donate, please contact us!

### New Additions to Garden of Eatin'

In Spring, a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of love. The Yahoola Creek Park playground was the scene of pre-school romance on a recent Saturday. While parents and grandparents worked

on the garden, four-year olds Camille and Eli made friends while checking out the frog legs in the pond and playing on the swings. At home that evening, Eli announced to his mom that he really likes Camille. "She's nice," he stated. "I'm going to marry her." Camille was equally smitten with Eli, and talked about him most of the way home to Flowery Branch.

While Camille was making new friends, her Papa, Mike Warlick, planted six thornless blackberry bushes near the bank of the small stream that runs along the back side of the garden area. Look for the posts and watch the blackberry canes leaf out and flower in the next few months. Next step - add horizontal bamboo between the poles to provide additional support for the bushes.

You can always count on finding friends of all kinds and all ages at Yahoola Creek Park.

## About The Conservancy...

The Yahoola Creek Trails Conservancy (YCTC) is a new, nonprofit (501(c)3 candidate) community-sponsored organization whose mission is to enhance and preserve the Yahoola Creek Park Hiking Trails.

The YCTC is a strong advocacy and support group that assists with the development of the trails, and also assists local and state officials in their efforts to create a safe and vibrant hiking trail system.

Thank you to all current and new members for the time and money you have contributed to make the Trails and Conservancy possible!