



Trail Tree Newsletter

April 2016

This is Volume 32 of the Quarterly Trail Tree Project Newsletter. We hope the topics in this newsletter will be of interest to you. If you want us to report on other things, just let us know and we will be happy to do that. Below is all the latest news.

Trail Tree (TT) Database

Trail Tree Database

From September 2015, the submissions of trees had all of a sudden picked up and we have had over 72 trees submitted since 1 January 2016. There are so many great trees to show you I had a hard time picking out the ones to include in this newsletter. I've picked trees from multiple states to show the extent of the trees distribution. I only got to February in picking the trees so will have to put the March and April trees in the next newsletter. We currently have 2,194 trees in the database. There are still trees in the database that need to be reconsidered and based on what we know now possibly deleted.

Trees of Interest

GA TREES

Judy and Ken are covering NE GA for us and finding many trees in their locale. They have been trained in dowsing so they can check the tree to make sure it's a Marker Tree with an underground stream flowing under the tree. Of the many trees they have found, the one to the right is from Rabun County, GA and is 47.1 inch in diameter.

They also found the tree on the next page which is 45 inches in diameter. Interesting note on this tree is it was originally visited by



Rabun County GA Tree – 47.1 Inch Diameter

Elaine Jordan ten years ago when she was researching her book. She did not record the locations of the trees she visited so it was great to find it again. Two other previously found Marker Trees are just about 1.5 mile south of this tree.

TN TREES

We have begun receiving a number of trees from TN lately. One tree submitted to us by Jake is near the TN River and points to Swallow Bluff Island. There was an Indian village in the vicinity of this tree. There are also Indian Mounds in this locale. After we received Jakes first tree, he found two more nearby.

We also received a tree from Robbie near Baxter TN shown below to the right.



Ga Tree 45 inch diameter



TN Tree – 28.7 Inch Diameter

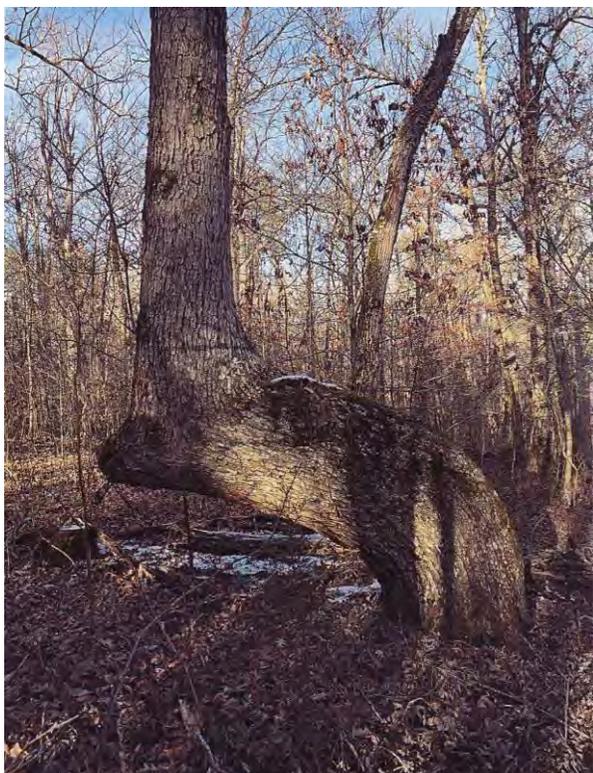


TN Tree – 38.8 inch Diameter

AR TREES

Richie sent us a tree from near Paragould, AR which is almost 28 inches in diameter. This tree points to the location of an artesian well that went dry due to over pumping of the ground water in that area.

Bob Gaut is one of our principal researchers in AR and keeps submitting a steady stream of trees to the database. One of his latest trees is shown below. It is located near Clinton , AR. The tree is 31 inches in diameter and may be related to an Indian Trail. Some of Bob's dogs always accompany him to help him find and checkout the tree. He also usually has his friend Barnett with him to keep him in line.



AR Tree 27.7 Inch Diameter



AR Tree – 31 Inch in Diameter



NY Tree – 35 Inch Diameter

NY TREE

Jeff located the tree shown to the right in upstate NY near the Finger Lakes. This tree is 35 inches in diameter. The tree is probably related to the Seneca Indians who lived in that area of NY.

KY TREE

This tree on the next page from KY was found near Parkers Lake, KY.

AL TREE

Amanda from south AL send in a tree near her that unfortunately never got measured for size but it is quite large. The tree points to water.

OK TREE

It is not often that we find a tree in OK but Keith sent in a beauty to us. He was told by the Cherokees who live nearby to protect this tree as it is special.

Indian Heritage Sites Mapping Program

I've changed the name of this section because we are now mapping more than Indian Trails. Using dowsing techniques we can map a variety of Indian sites that we could not do previously.

I mentioned in the last newsletter we had been given permission to map a large Indian Rock Cairn site in Dawson County, GA. We completed that mapping in late January and went on to map two more sites, one in Upson County, GA and the other in Talbot County, GA. These last two sites had multiple Indian graves located using the dowsing rods. In some cases the identity of the gender of the person buried can be determined. A Google Earth image of the Rock Cairn site is on the next page. The light blue lines show the location of the underground streams; the dark blue lines are the surface streams. The 8 large rock cairns (yellow) and 8 small rock cairns (red) are located above the underground streams.

When plotted on Google Earth, the eight large cairns form a representation of the Big Dipper.



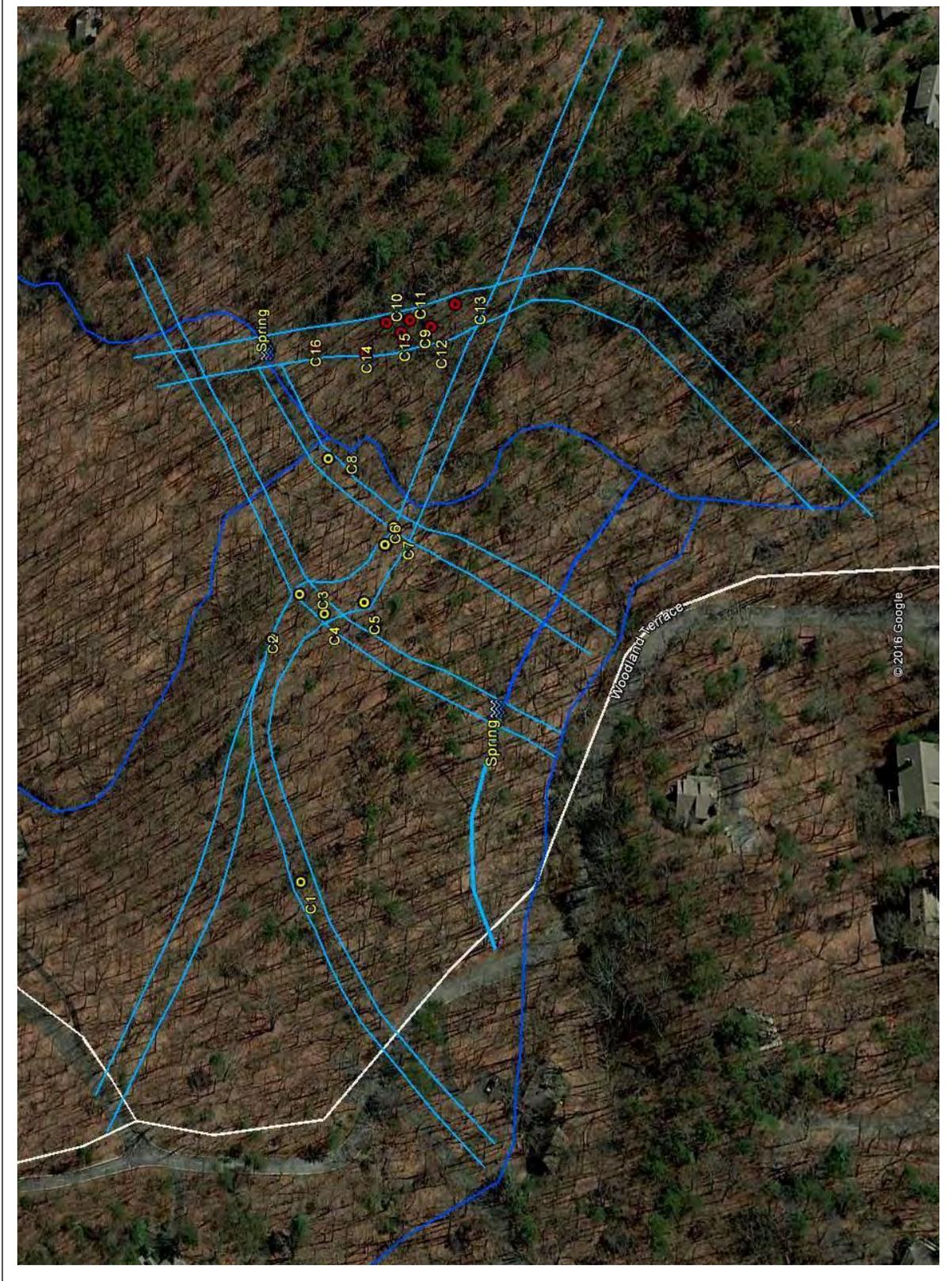
KY Tree



AL Tree



OK Tree – 38.1 Inch in Diameter



What we are learning from all this new research is that the Indians had the ability to understand where underground water was located and they placed their important sacred sites directly above that water. Every Indian Marker Tree that we have found previously and every one we are finding now are above underground streams. We are using this knowledge as an added discriminator to determine if a bent tree is in fact a Marker Tree.

What this is further showing us is that the Indians did not just select a tree to point at a feature but may in fact have planted the tree in relationship to the underground stream and then bent the tree, usually pointing the tree in the direction of the flow.

Mystery of the Trees Documentary

We screened the documentary a number of times in 2015 and are doing some screenings in 2016. We will screen the movie next at the 2016 Wilderness Wildlife Week in Pigeon Forge, TN in May. This event usually attracts 80,000 people to TN. If you would like to schedule a screening in your area, contact Don Wells at mountainman93@gmail.com.

***Mystery of the Trees* Presentations and Book Signings**

We reprinted the book *Mystery of the Trees* in November 2015 and the 3rd edition is again selling well. With the book back in print, we have expanded our lecture series for 2016. Listed below are the available 2016 lectures. We have already made presentations of several of our new talks which are based on our new book that is not yet released. If you want to schedule a presentation for 2016, check the list and contact us at the above email address to schedule a time. The presentations are offered for free but traveling to overnight venues is not feasible unless a large audience of at least 75 people can be guaranteed.

Mountain Stewards Presentations for 2016

New Presentations

- **Native Americans in Colonial History – 35 Minutes**

Most American's perception of our Indigenous people is one of fierce war painted warriors fighting with the settlers who were trying to carve out homesteads in land occupied by the Indians. The Hollywood portrayal is often anchored with the scene of the Calvary coming over the ridge to rescue the settlers from the savage Indians attacking the wagon train. Few, however, know the history of the Indians who served as commissioned officers first with the British and later under the Continental Army. After the Revolutionary War, other warriors fought in battles against the British, Spanish and other Indian tribes. Many Indians also served as guides for Army units as well as guides for those exploring the frontier as our country expanded west.

This presentation tells the story of the Indians who served as part of the US Militia and US Army.

- **The Trail of Tears – Not Just the Cherokees – 40 Minutes**

In many states the school system's curriculum allows for a short unit on the forced relocation of the Indians. Generally only the Cherokee Removal from August 1838 to March 1839 is all that is included. In fact the removal period began in 1790 and continued until the late 1850's and all of the Five Civilized Tribes were affected.

This presentation discusses the removal of the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek and Seminole from southeastern America. The pain and suffering of these indigenous peoples and the long term impact on their lives is presented in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the Indian Removal.

- **George Washington's Secret Agent – A Thousand Mile Journey Without a Map – 40 Minutes**

After the end of the Revolutionary War, our first President, George Washington, was eager to put war behind him and get the new country established on a firm footing. However, on multiple fronts, the conflict continued, not with the British, but with the Indians. The new Constitution gave the Federal Government control over Indian Affairs. However, some states continued to be determined to drive all of the Indians out. They often ignored the Federal Government's rights. The situation in Georgia was so bad that the Creek Indians declared war on the state! Washington did not believe that Georgia would deal with the situation peacefully so he sent his agent, Col. Marius Willett, on a "Secret Mission." His job was to reach the Creek nation without alerting the people of Georgia and convince the Creek Chiefs to sign a treaty with the National government.

This presentation tells the story of Washington's Secret Agent's journey to Alabama, his return to New York with 27 Creek Chiefs and the signing of the 1790 Treaty of New York. It also covers the return trip of the Indians under logistics support of Major Calab Swan.

Other Presentations

- **Mystery of the Trees – 45 minutes**

The *Mystery of the Trees* is the story of curiously bent trees that were used by Indians as sign post across the continent. As they traveled, often great distances, to hunt, trade, gather medicinal plants, and communicate with other tribes, the trees guided their way. Exploring a story that has been hidden for many years, this presentation also leaves the audience with an appreciation for Native people who hold a great reverence for the earth and nature. These living artifacts have many names: Indian Trail Trees, Marker trees, Thong trees, Signal trees, Prayer trees and Culturally Modified trees are a few. In less than a decade, bent trees have been documented as existing or as having previously existed in 40 states. Using GPS (Geographical Positioning System) and digital topographic technology trees are correlated with known Indian trails and village sites. Plotting this information on topographic and 3-D maps

graphically tells us more about the cultural history of the Native Americans. These trees are sacred to the Native Americans and many tribes bent trees as part of their culture.

- **In the Presence of the Elders – 35 Minutes**

Many tribal elders were interviewed over the past eight years as the story about the *Mystery of the Trees* developed. Those interviews not only resulted in a greater appreciation of the story of the trees and the other great losses of their culture but also gave us a greater understanding and respect for the spirituality and wisdom of the Native Americans. Through the use of these filmed interviews, this presentation shares what has been learned about their culture, their spirituality and their wisdom from those who were the original inhabitants of our country.

- **Mystery of the Trees Documentary Film – 30 minute version**

The first-ever filmed glimpse into a part of Native American culture that has been mostly hidden from public knowledge is presented in this documentary film. The narration and participation in the telling of this story by Native American actor Wes Studi (*Dancing with Wolves, Last of the Mohicans*, plus many other films) anchors this film. Interviews with tribal elders from the Cherokee, Muscogee-Creek, Comanche, Delaware, Ute, Osage, Quapaw and other tribes adds the interest.

In a eight year journey, the Mountain Stewards moved from mere curiosity about oddly shaped trees they began to encounter to an in-depth research study of what many call Indian Marker Trees. In the best tradition of scientific exploration, probing the mystery of trees first found in their own back yard raised many questions. As a result, in 2007, researchers from multiple states joined with the Mountain Stewards in exploring this fascinating but obscure story. The initial meeting of these researchers was held at Hobbs State Park in March 2007. As research continued, interviews with tribal elders provided glimpses into the understanding of the cultures which, after living close to nature for thousands of years, were almost destroyed by European settlers.

The interviews with the elders not only resulted in a greater appreciation of the Indians use of trees but also instilled in the researchers a deeper respect for the spirituality and wisdom of those who were the first people on the land. It is hoped that the documentary will encourage the preservation of these story-telling trees as well as point the way to future areas of study about many other aspects of Indian culture that have been impacted. The film cover the journey of our research and tells the story not told to this depth before.

Presentation Planning

Each presentation usually includes a short introduction of the speaker plus time for questions and answers folling the presentation. Thus, it is best to add 15-20 minutes to the presentation time to allow for the entire event.

New Book for 2016

Our new book, *Stories of Indian Culture – In the Southeast* is completed and undergoing editing at this time. We hope to have it ready for publication in late 2016 if we can find enough money to publish the book.

Stories of Indian Cultural Heritage In the Southeast

A Cultural Way of Life that is Fast Disappearing



Don and Diane Wells

with

Eddie Lanham

Facebook

To stay in touch with our activities in between Newsletter issues, follow us on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/mysterytrees. This site provides a running account of our weekly activities. Please log on to the site and **LIKE** the page. This opens our information to a larger audience and helps educate folks about the program. Currently, we have over 1,400 **LIKES**. We are now striving for the 2,000 mark.