

Helene A.T. Conditions, Closures, & Detours

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Thank you to ATC staff, the U.S. Forest Service, [Carolina Mountain Club](#), [Tennessee Eastman Hiking & Canoeing Club](#), [Mt. Rogers Appalachian Trail Club](#), and [Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers](#) for their help gathering this information and their work to repair the A.T. Trail conditions change daily. Storm damaged areas are dynamic. [Learn more](#).

From Davenport Gap to the New River at Pearisburg, VA (NOBO miles 239.4 to 637.8):

- Many sections are only “punched-through,” meaning that the Trail is passable, but hikers will encounter many downed trees on either side of the footpath. Crews will work to clear these trees through 2025 and beyond.
- The footpath was damaged in many places. Some trees were ripped up by the roots, creating large craters. These holes can be hard to see in snow and when covered with leaves.
- It may be difficult to find campsites and off-trail waypoints like side trails and water sources. Be extremely careful when leaving the trail to make sure you can find your way back. Look up before choosing a campsite! Do not camp near damaged, leaning, or diseased standing trees.
- Trees will continue to fall and make hiking slow and may even obscure the footpath. There may be short, flagged detours around some damage – pay attention! ATC has already received reports of hikers getting lost.
- We strongly urge you to not have campfires in hurricane-damaged areas, regardless of whether official burn bans are in place. Downed trees make the perfect fuel source for wildfires and there is an extremely high risk of fire this year.

NOBO A.T. Mileage	Waypoints	Status	Conditions & Detours
167.0 to 239.4	Fontana Dam to Davenport Gap (Great Smoky Mtns NP)	OPEN	<p>We've received reports that the A.T. through Great Smoky Mtns NP, while not severely damaged from Helene, does still have a higher amount than past years of downed trees.</p> <p>Ridgerunners report that there are severe blowdowns in the northern part of the park, especially around Low Gap, north of Cosby Knob Shelter. This is due to high winds this spring; the volunteers and park had already cleared most of the blowdowns from Helene. Remember that trees will continue to come down this year; the landscape is especially fragile after Helene.</p>
239.4 to 320.0	Fontana Dam to Sams Gap	OPEN	<p>Damage starts to become more severe as you head north to Sams Gap. All shelters remain open in this section except Walnut Mountain Shelter, which was planned for removal before the storm.</p> <p>Hot Springs, an important Trail town for A.T. hikers, is still recovering. However, they are welcoming hikers and several services are reopening. Bluff Mountain Outfitters, a popular stop for hikers, is reopening March 15.</p> <p>The Hot Springs Resort & Spa has also announced a Hiker Support Program for 2025 to offer A.T. hikers a place to rest, shower, and do laundry.</p>

320.0 to 344.6	Sams Gap to the Nolichucky River	OPEN	This section is the first heading north with severe damage. This and many sections to the north are largely “punched through,” meaning that the Trail is passable, but hikers will encounter many downed trees on either side of the footpath. In this section, the Whistling Gap area in particular had many downed trees. Shelters are open.
344.6	Chestoa Bridge over the Nolichucky River (gone).	DETOUR	Nolichucky Ferry Service Alternative: Nolichucky River Detour . Use extreme caution when walking along roads. Erwin, a popular stop for A.T. hikers, is still recovering. However, services are available and Uncle Johnny’s , a long-time popular stop for hikers, is welcoming hikers again.
344.6 to 352.9	Nolichucky River to Indian Grave Gap	OPEN	The damage worsens in this section and continues to be severe throughout Tennessee. Passable, but many downed trees, craters from uprooted trees, etc. Shelters are open.
352.9 to 374.2*	Indian Grave Gap to Hughes Gap	PARTIAL DETOUR	Iron Mountain Gap Detour The section of the A.T. that the detour routes around remains officially closed per a forest order to give crews room to conduct storm debris clean-up and wildfire mitigation work. Heavy equipment used for this project is dangerous - this section remains closed for hiker safety.

			We've received reports from hikers that they've found the start of the detour going north to be quite steep and slippery during rain.
374.2 to 395.6	Hughes Gap to U.S. 19E	OPEN – BURN BAN	<p>Similar to sections: many downed trees on either side of the Trail, footpath damage, etc. Shelters are open except for Roan High Knob, which is undergoing repairs planned before the storm.</p> <p>The Forest Service has implemented a burn ban for this section from Hughes Gap to Doll Flats. Do not have campfires in this section and be extremely careful with camp stoves.</p> <p>This section is over the Roan Highlands, so there is no tree damage along the balds (where there are no trees!). However, this area is home to rare and critically imperiled southern spruce-fir forest. Downed trees elsewhere in the forest create the perfect fuel for wildfires, putting this unique ecosystem at risk.</p>
395.6 to 420.3	U.S. 19E to Dennis Cove Rd	OPEN	<p>Moreland Gap Shelter (414.0) was damaged in the storm and likely has some roof leaks but is now usable.</p> <p>Otherwise, similar as other sections: many downed trees other either side of the Trail, footpath damage, etc.</p>
420.3 to 428.9	Dennis Cove Rd to U.S. 321	OPEN	This section is in the Pond Mtn Wilderness and there was severe damage. This section is still being punched through, but there is a short, flagged sidehill detour up around Pond Flats. Crews continue to work here – be sure to give them plenty of room and make sure they know you're there before passing them.

			Laurel Fork Shelter burned in 2024 (unrelated to the storm) and is closed.
428.9 to 433.3	U.S. 321 to Wilbur Dam Rd	OPEN	This section goes around Watauga Lake and reports indicate there is less damage than elsewhere. Keep in mind that there is a standing no camping/picnicking rule in place due to past bear activity.
433.3 to 449.5	Wilbur Dam Rd to TN 91	OPEN	This section is mostly through the Big Laurel Branch Wilderness, and its been reported that crews have punched-through this section, like others. Shelters are open.
449.5 to 470.9	TN 91 to Damascus	OPEN	Also only punched through. Shelters open. Bears have been very active here in the past in the spring and fall. Know that there were already few trees for a proper PCT hang, and many of the few that were there are likely now gone. There are concerns from the local community about the high wildfire risk. Do not have campfires in this section and be extremely careful with camp stoves
470.9 to 495.2	Damascus to Elk Garden	OPEN	Also only punched through. The VA Creeper Trail remains closed except for the short section that the A.T. follows (which is only open to foot traffic). There are also a few washed-out sections near stream beds. USFS and the Club report severe tread damage due to uprooted trees. Shelters are open.

			There are concerns from the local community about the high wildfire risk. Do not have campfires in this section and be extremely careful with camp stoves.
495.2 to 534.6	Elk Garden to VA 16/Mt. Rogers NRA HQ	OPEN	<p>Also only punched through. The area north and south of Trimpi Shelter (524.6) was hit especially hard and has many downed trees on either side of the Trail. Shelters are open.</p> <p>This section is over the Grayson Highlands and is home to rare and critically imperiled southern spruce-fir forest. Downed trees elsewhere in the forest create the perfect fuel for wildfires, putting this unique ecosystem at risk. We strongly urge hikers to not have campfire sthrough this section, regardless of official burn bans.</p>
534.6 to 637.8	VA 16/Mt. Rogers NRA HQ to the New River at Pearisburg	OPEN	Storm damage begins to taper off in this section, though there are still some sections that have tangles of downed trees on either side of the Trail. Shelters are open.
637.8 north	Pearisburg heading north	OPEN	You may still encounter some storm damage from Helene in this section, but it will be sporadic and limited to short sections.