

Helene A.T. Conditions, Closures, & Detours

Updated 05/22/2025

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	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.
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 have reopened, including Bluff Mountain Outfitters, a popular stop for hikers.</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. However, there have recently been sawyer teams in this area clearing more newer downed trees and further cutting back the blowdowns. Areas that have been cut back further are: Little Bald to Whistling Gap and High Rocks to Spivey Gap.

			Shelters are open.
344.6	Chestoa Bridge over the Nolichucky River (gone).	DETOUR	<p>Nolichucky Ferry Service Alternative: Nolichucky River Detour. Use extreme caution when walking along roads. Hikers can shuttle around the roadwalk if they prefer and still be eligible for our 2,000-miler program.</p> <p>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 this season.</p>
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	<p>Iron Mountain Gap Detour</p> <p>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 now active and is dangerous - this section remains closed for hiker safety. Hikers must stay out.</p>

			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. Use caution on this section in wet weather.
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. Along with downed trees elsewhere in the forest, damaged spruce-fir trees dry out extremely quickly and are very flammable. This creates the perfect fuel for wildfires, putting this unique ecosystem at risk.</p> <p>Sawyer crews have also been out in this section cutting back the blowdowns and clearing new blowdowns, including north and south of Roan High Knob Shelter.</p>
395.6 to 420.3	U.S. 19E to Dennis Cove Rd	OPEN	Moreland Gap Shelter (414.0) was damaged in the storm and likely has some roof leaks but is now usable.

			Otherwise, similar as other sections: many downed trees other either side of the Trail, footpath damage, etc.
420.3 to 428.9	Dennis Cove Rd to U.S. 321	OPEN	<p>This section is in the Pond Mtn Wilderness and there was severe damage. Similar to other sections; only punched through, though crews continue to work on this section and clear it back.</p> <p>Laurel Fork Shelter burned in 2024 (unrelated to the storm) and is closed.</p>
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 has been punched-through. Shelters are open.
449.5 to 470.9	TN 91 to Damascus	OPEN	<p>Also only punched through. Shelters open.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p>

470.9 to 495.2	Damascus to Elk Garden	OPEN – PLEASE DO NOT HAVE CAMPFIRE	<p>Also only punched through. The VA Creeper Trail between Damascus and Creek Junction remains closed except for the short sections that the A.T. follows (which are only open to foot traffic). A.T. hikers should not attempt to use the Creeper Trail heading north out of town where it is blue blazed and leaves the A.T.</p> <p>USFS and the Club report severe tread damage due to uprooted trees. Shelters are open.</p> <p>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, regardless of official burn bans (there is no official ban in this section currently).</p>
495.2 to 534.6	Elk Garden to VA 16/Mt. Rogers NRA HQ	OPEN – PLEASE DO NOT HAVE CAMPFIRE	<p>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. Along with downed trees elsewhere in the forest, damaged spruce-fir trees dry out extremely quickly and are very flammable. This creates the perfect fuel for wildfires, putting this unique ecosystem at risk. We strongly urge hikers to not have campfire through this section, regardless of official burn bans (there is no official ban in this section currently).</p>

534.6 to 637.8	VA 16/Mt. Rogers NRA HQ to the New River at Pearisburg	OPEN	<p>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.</p> <p>Due to a windstorm over the weekend of May 17-18, there are more blowdowns and a small landslide about a mile south of VA 606/Kimberling Creek (NOBO mile 609.3). The footpath is passable, but hikers should be extremely careful around the landslide. Sawyers will be out again the week of May 26 to further clear the Trail.</p> <p>Learn how to stay safe when you encounter erosion and unstable ground on the Trail.</p>
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.