

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

Spring 2008

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club is a recreational hiking association of volunteers who preserve and improve the Appalachian Trail as the nation's premier, continuous, long-distance footpath.

Dorothy Laker, 1922-2007

Dorothy Laker, the second woman to ever thru-hike the Appalachian Trail, has passed away in Florida at age 85. At her family's request, no formal obituary was released, in keeping with the intensely private nature in which she lived her life. This year marked the 50th anniversary of her first thru-hike. She was not only the second woman to do a thru-hike, but also the second person to complete three thru-hikes -- the first person being Grandma Gatewood. "Dottie" Laker was a pioneer among all hikers, not just women hikers. On Laker's second thru-hike, she spent the week from Erwin to Damascus in the company of the first-ever thru-hiker, Earl Shaffer, who planned to hike again with her when she reached his home state of Pennsylvania but they never reconnected. For perhaps the most complete account of her hiking exploits, check out the first volume of "Hiking the Appalachian Trail" by Rodale Press.

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Welcome New Members

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club welcomes the following new members:

Jason & Lisa Cash
Sandra Cothran
Rob Crittenden
Betty M. Young
Mike Sowder

Eva & John Gray
Robin Hinrichs
Judith Langenhorst
Brad, Vicki, Luke & Mark McLean
Mark and Kimberly Dominesey

Paul McAnnally
Blake Mitnick

We look forward to meeting you soon: hiking on the trail, at work, social event, or a board meeting.

And thanks to the generous folks who have donated money to our club:

Clark R. Cobble
Robin Hinrichs
Robert C. Wallenborn
Maurice Turner
Diane McVaney

Sherry Kessel
John Lynham
Siegfried & Ursula Kolmstetter
Nancy Bower and Lindsey Quesinberry

Reinhard A. O'Neill
Christy Straight

Mervin Brower

A Word about the Website

RATC Website Forum

Last year the RATC's website underwent a facelift with a new webmaster taking over, David Perry. If you've not visited the site, please do so, as it is full of information about the club. Here is what you can find on ratc.org:

- Latest club news
- Membership application
- Trail info
- Hike schedule
- Volunteer opportunities
- Links to the Trail Blazer online
- Contact information
- RATC and AT-related resources and links
- Link to report trail problems

There is a new feature on the RATC website--a discussion forum for all things related to the AT and the RATC. Just visit www.ratc.org and click on the "FORUM" link in the upper right corner of the page. You'll need to select a username and password to register. The forum should be very busy this spring as more folks get out on the trail and post messages with questions about routes, shelters, and other questions. Remember, joining the online forum is NOT the same as joining the RATC!

David Perry

Trail Supervisor's Report

This spring most of our work will be in the Pine Swamp area. We actually have three things to do there. The first is to get the new roof on the shelter. We have a trip scheduled there for April 19 & 20. A Forest Service contractor needs to get the stonework done first, so hopefully it will be finished by then. We will also have a trip out there on April 5th to do some more preliminary work. The next trip out there will be May 17 & 18 to do our routine

maintenance from Pine Swamp to the War Spur Trail. On June 5 – 9, the Konnarock Crew will be here to begin work on the Pine Swamp relocation. They will also be back on July 31 – Aug 4 to work in that area. There are a couple of real steep and badly eroded

sections of trail on the two miles of trail between the two Stony Creek Trailheads. We will be doing relocations around these. We will have work-trips scheduled June 7 & 8 and those will probably be the only days I will be there. I have not yet got my summer teaching schedule, but expect to be teaching then. Thursday and Monday are half days for the crew and are probably not worth the drive out there. But if people want to go on Friday, please let me know and I can arrange a tool pick up. By early August, things in the Pine Swamp area should

be much improved.

Each year we give awards to people who do considerable work on the trail. The awards are a hat for 4 days, a T-shirt for 7 days and both for 9 days. We also give workers a glove option, the number of pairs depending on the number of days. This year's winners in the 4-day category are: Malcolm Black, Mervin Brower, Chase Davidson, Bill Floyd, Fred

Meyer, Bob Peckman and Bob Stimson; in the 7-day category: Blanche Brower, Peggy Bryant, Bill Gordge and Mike Vaughn; in the 9-day category: Greg Bryant, Dick Clark, Fred Coughlan, Kenny Garrett, Frank Haranzo, Ralph Hart, Dana Helsley, Jerry Kyle,



Pine Swamp Shelter - Kerry Wood

Charles Parry, Kris Peckman, Maurice Turner, Homer Witcher, Therese Witcher. In case I missed somebody, please let me know and I will make corrections. I want to say thanks to everybody on the list, as well as to everybody else who worked on the trail.

Correction: In the fall Blazer Jim Walke was inadvertently left off the write up for the Oct. 27 Pine Swamp Work-hike. Our apologies to Jim.

Charles Parry

Hikemaster's Report

At our March banquet several hike leaders receive hats and club T-shirts for leading multiple hikes over the past year. Hats for leading 4 - 6 hikes went to Larry Austin, Gary Bible, Maya Bohler, Blanche Brower, Mervin Brower, Georgia Gallaher, Sue Scanlin, Dave Sutton, and Maurice Turner. T-shirts for leading 7 - 8 hikes went to Bobbie Sticher and Mike Vaughn. Hugh Hall, Kenny Garrett, John Miller and Kris Peckman received both a hat and T-shirt for leading nine or more hikes. Thanks to all of the hike leaders for helping the club over the past year.

We have added two additional articles to our web site, www.RATC.org. The first is called "Leave No Trace Guidelines". Leave No Trace is a national and international program designed to assist outdoor enthusiasts with their decisions about how to reduce their impacts when they hike, camp, picnic, snowshoe, run, bike, hunt, paddle, ride horses, fish, ski or climb. The program strives to educate all those who enjoy the outdoors about the nature of their recreational impacts

as well as techniques to prevent and minimize such impacts. The other article is a checklist to be used when preparing for backpacking trips.

I am the latest member of the "113 Mile Club", completing all 113 miles of the section of the A.T. maintained by our club. It has been a real pleasure to hike our section of trail over the past few years. We have a great section of the trail in our area. Most of our members live in the Roanoke area, which is at the northern part of our section. The southern terminus of our section is in Bland County. Highlights of this section include Angel's Rest on Pearis Mountain, which offers a magnificent view of the New River, and the Mountain Lake wilderness area. Mountain Lake is a unique upland forest area. Highlights of the northern part of our 113 miles include the familiar landmarks of Dragon's Tooth, McAfee Knob, and Tinker Cliffs.

Mike Vaughn

Hike Reports

**Sunday, December 2, 2007 8:00AM
Lickskillet Hollow (Rt 608) to Jenny Knob (Rt 611) 113 Mile Hike #14**

Mike Vaughn & Maya Bohler (leaders), Steve Tomaziefski

It was cold and cloudy when we started on the trail. The forecast was for rain starting in the afternoon. The first part of the hike was a 1,100-foot climb to the ridgeline on Brushy Mountain. When then started our walk along the ridgeline. There were good views through the leafless trees to the valleys on either side of the mountain. We passed Jenny Knob shelter after about two miles. It is located at a scenic spot along the trail. This section of the trail is at the far southern end of the part of the A.T. maintained by the RATC. It started raining as soon as we got off the trail at 2:30. We did not see any other hikers all day.

**Saturday, December 8 2007 10:00AM
Bennett Springs Loop Hike**

Cancelled due to bad weather.

**Sunday, December 9, 2007 8:00AM
North Mountain Trail**

Dick Moran (leader), John Merkwon, Carl Cornett, Steve Tomaziefski, Kris & Bob Peckman

A good hike with weather ranging from walking in the clouds to some hazy sunlight. As we all noticed, the trail needs work, particularly trail blazes which have faded and are far apart. Perhaps a future work hike is called for. The leaves were very deep, frequently making footing a surprise.

**Sunday, December 16, 2007
Tinker Ridge Work Hike**

Canceled due to rain.

**Sunday, December 16, 2007 1:00PM
Dragon's Tooth via Rawie's Rest**

Cancelled because of high wind and ice at 2000 ft.

**Tuesday, January 1, 2007 9:00AM
New Year's Catawba Mountain (Rt 311) to
McAfee Knob & pot-luck lunch**

Kris Peckman (leader), Mike Vaughn (assistant), Jim Belcher, Maya Bohler, Doug Buchanan, Rhonda Chewning, Carl Cornett, Mary and Jimbo Harshfield, Hugh Hall, Carol Kincer, Dan and Kathy Phlegar, Ann Rogers, Dave and Nick Socky, Patrick and Tracy Wassmer, Molly Western, and extremely well-behaved canine guests Sage Phlegar and Prancer Harshfield

What a beautiful day and a beautiful way to start off

2008! After distributing the carry load, we headed up the first hill pretty much as a group, but got spread out after that. Prancer quickly learned that he could not keep the whole group together and stuck to managing his own family. One participant managed to drop a camera in the same spot where another participant last year dropped a water bottle twice. There are some spirits in that ground! Dan saw a deer, but that was in another spot. As long as we stayed on the lee side of the ridge, we stayed toasty and even shed garments. But on the top the wind blew fiercely. That same wind, combined with Sunday's rain, stretched visibility out to forever. We could see mountains we never knew were there.

Most of us found our way down to the Devil's Kitchen without any trouble and started the soup cooking. It was bubbling nicely before the carrier of the cups showed up, so one hungry participant was reduced to eating hers out of a can. As always, the goodies people managed to squeeze into their packs were amazing, and we all regaled ourselves. Tracy said her students (5th graders) would not believe it tomorrow when she told them she had lunch on top of a mountain today.

It was getting chilly, so we packed up the mess and took another look at the view from the Knob before heading down. The combination of sun and clouds, and the low sun, delineated the mountains in a spectacular way.

At the Catawba shelter, we left Carl, who had carried all his gear to the top and back so he could spend the night on the mountain. He says his bag is rated to 30 below, so he was sure he'd be warm enough—we all hope so. On down a ways, we puzzled over a mass of twigs hanging from a branch: mistletoe? a squirrel's nest? a cancerous growth?

I think it was about 4:00 when we reached the parking lot after a good hike with great company.

**Sunday, January 6, 2008 8:00AM
Ferrier – Lick Branch – Price Mountain**

David Wickersham (leader), Maya Bohler (assistant leader), Larry Austin, Carl Cornett, Pat Guzik, Fred Meyer, Kris & Bob Peckman, Jen Schaeffer and Dave Socky.

I have led this hike in early January several times in recent years. This year had the best turnout yet as 10 hearty hikers turned out for a strenuous winter hike.

The weather report called for morning rain but a couple of brief episodes of drizzle soon gave way to beautiful,

unseasonably warm weather.

The end trailhead of this point-to-point hike is on Route 606 at the Botetourt-Craig county line. The beginning is the Ferrier trailhead near New Castle.

The Ferrier Trail is one leg of the popular Ferrier - Lick Branch loop hike. We breezed along the easy Ferrier Trail in short order. At the point where the trail intersects the Lick Branch Trail we turned left where loop hikers would turn right. This is where things get more interesting.

We found our way along the unmaintained route up Lick Branch and veered off to the right to where the trail starts switchbacking up Broad Run Mountain. This is an invigorating climb of 800+ feet. A short while after reaching the ridge top is the junction with the Price Mountain Trail. We took an early lunch break there.

After lunch we turned everyone loose and the hares, tortoises and "normals" proceeded at their own pace along the beautiful ridgeline of the mountain. There were many leaves piled up on the ridge. This made footing tricky because the leaves were wet from the morning rain and there were rocks and sticks lurking under the leaves. There are many outcrops of angling, lichen-covered bedrock jutting out of the backbone of the mountain to add even more spice.

The ridge has numerous knobs and saddles and the "trail", which is really an unmaintained "route", goes up and down every one. In all the total elevation gain for the hike is a respectable 2,580.4 feet according to the Delorme profile.

All in all it was a great hike. The true mileage for the hike is uncertain. Our consensus was about 8.5-9.0 miles that feels more like 20.

(Editor's note: This trail has shrubs and small trees growing in the treadway, confusing us as to where the trail actually is which was often not where we were walking. It needs clipping desperately while the trees are still small.)

**Sunday, January 6, 2008 1:00PM
Roanoke Valley Greenway, Wasena to 13th St.**

Dave Sutton & Maurice Turner (co-leaders) Linda Sutton, Sherry Kessel, Debbi Carroll, Hugh Hall, Teddy Jefferson, Joyce Castelli, Zetta Campbell, Cris Cowan, Phil Cowan, Doug Buchanan, Jeanne Duddy, Rob Liebl, Jim Belcher, Sue Scanlin.

This was perfect hiking weather. The temperature hit 60F! We assembled under the Elm Avenue Bridge along Wiley Dr and followed the new Greenway. The path parallels the Roanoke River passing Memorial Hospital, IGA grocery store (off Riverland Dr), to a nice parking area, adjacent to the sewer treatment facility. The Greenway is landscaped in some areas with white pine and evergreen shrubs. A flock of mallards was viewed floating on the river. Thanks to one of our hikers, we were shuttled back in his Jeep Kaiser (seats sixteen) for a fun riding experience!

**Sunday, January 13, 2008 9:00AM
Cove Mountain/Buchanan Trail/Horse Trail
Loop**

Larry Austin & Lois Smith (leaders), Bob & Kris Peckman, Jen Schaeffer, Carl Cornett, Paul Jones and Maurice Turner



We Walk for Food - Cornett

The weather for this hike was mostly overcast with highs in the upper 30's to lower 40's. We began the hike just off Jennings Creek Road at Arcadia near the Arcadia Chapel. Carl took a photo of the gang in front of the Arcadia Chapel sign. We then walked about 100 yards to the entry to Cove Mountain Trail, which is an old forest service road. We followed the road about 0.8 mile to where the trail actually begins its ascent of Cove Mountain. The Cove Mountain trail is about 1.5 miles long and intersects with the Buchanan Trail about 0.2 miles from its beginning off the AT. We did a 200- foot bushwhack from the Cove Mountain Trail to the AT so that we could start from the beginning of the Buchanan Trail where it intersects the AT. We were on the AT about 200 feet or so. The Buchanan Trail and the Glenwood Horse Trail utilize the same path for about 3/4 mile and then the Buchanan Trail veers to the left and the horse trail to

the right. We would return via the horse trail at this intersection later in the hike. No wildlife was noticed along the route until we finally stopped for lunch back near the intersection of the horse trail and Buchanan Trail, at which time we spotted a red-headed woodpecker who was sounding off a little. We returned to the starting point by way of the Cove Mountain Trail but it was much easier as it was all down hill. Some took another photo op at a double tree which had picked up quite a large rock from the ground over the years in its growing process. We finished this hike around 1:00 p.m. and returned to Daleville to disperse in the various directions from which we came.

**Sunday, January 13, 2008 1:00PM
Sharp Top Mountain**

Linda King, Hugh Hall, Jim Belcher

Hugh hadn't hiked Sharp Top before, so this was a new adventure for him. Jim traveled from Martinsville to see if the mountain had changed since he last hiked it twenty-some years before. It was a rather chilly, blustery day and we had a treat of a few snow flurries at the summit. When it was time to head back down the mountain, it had become quite cold and we decided to descend by way of the road. We had a fine time!

**Sunday, January 20, 2008 8:30AM
Tinker Ridge Work Hike**

Charles Parry, Kris Peckman, Mike Smith, Kevin Jordan

The cold weather and snow kept down the crowd for the day. Actually, it wasn't too bad: the temperatures were in the 20's and there was some snow on the ground in spots, but the ground was not frozen, so digging was no problem. Mike and I spent most of the day working on steps at the switchback corner. Kris and Kevin dug trail above the steps and got about 100 feet done. The worst part of the day was lunch as it was cold and windy. There was some sun, but it did not take long to get cold. It was a short break. We later learned that Merv came out after lunch, but was unable to find us. We quit work around 3. It was good to have two new workers out for the day.

**Saturday, January 26, 2008 10:00AM
Roaring Run**

Cancelled due to lack of interest, due to "yucky" weather.

Sunday, January 27, 2008 8:00AM
Salt Log Gap to Montebello Fish Hatchery
Montebello Fish Hatchery to Seeley-Woodwoth Shelter

John Miller & Kenny Garrett (co-leaders), Pat Guzik, Carl Cornett, Dean Goldberg, and Carl Bagby

The hike was originally planned to go from Salt Log Gap on the AT to the Montebello Fish Hatchery but due to icy roads it needed to be changed on the fly. We found the parking lot at the fish hatchery filled with vehicles we assumed were associated with the Boy Scouts. After squeezing the trucks into the parking lot we hiked the icy access road to the trail. We met the Boy Scouts on their way back to the parking lot. They had a sort of exhausted look about them. After inquiring we found they had spent the night at Spy Rock and hardly any of them had slept. With much slipping and sliding we made our way to the trailhead. We found the trail to have one or two inches of snow on it and with the temperature in the thirties we knew it and the ice on the road would not melt. We made our way to the shelter and ate our lunch. We then hiked back to the parking lot with more slipping and sliding. Although not the hike originally planned, most of the hikers seemed to enjoy the opportunity to get together and share this 6.6-mile ice-hiking experience.

Saturday February 2, 2008 8:00 AM
Pine Swamp Shelter Work-hike

Charles Parry, Kenny Garrett, Lance Garrett, Hal Cantrill, Jerry Kyle, Kerry Wood, Martha Cox, Naomi Ratliffe, Mike Dehart, Harry Moore, Betty Moore

We had a good group including several first time workers. Kenny and his son were already in there when we arrived. They brought out a load of trash and left as they had a tree blown down in their yard that they needed to clean up. The work for the day included



clearing the trail on the way to the shelter, so we could use the cart to bring trash out. When we all got to the shelter, Hal and Kerry went up on the hill behind the privy, to cut trees down for the new roof. The rest of us went through the pile of debris from the old roof. We pulled out nails and sorted into a firewood pile and a

take out pile that included the plywood and any non-burnable material. The latter was eventually taken out in the cart. In the afternoon, we began work on the salvage lumber pile. We pried it apart, took out the nails, put it in a pile and covered it up with plastic. It will eventually be hauled out and used for other trail projects. We also removed the final beams from the shelter. I never did get up on the hill to see what Hal and Kerry did, but they thought they had enough trees cut for the new roof. It was a sunny, warm day and very pleasant working conditions. We had a good day and got a lot done.

Sunday, February 3, 2008 9:00AM
Lipes Branch Trail

Mike Vaughn & Kris Peckman (leaders), Carl Cornett, Fred Meyer, David Bowers, Margarita Cubas, Pat Guzik, Maya Bohler, Marisol Arcila, Bob Peckman, Chris Lynch

It was a great day for a hike, partly cloudy and cool. Lipes Branch is located in the Barbours Creek wilderness area in Craig County, about 20 miles northeast of Roanoke. It is surprisingly remote for being so near the city. The trail is a steady 1,600 foot climb up to the top of Potts Mountain. We reached the summit of the mountain around noon. There is a set of cliffs at the summit that face north. There was a stiff breeze blowing and most of the rocks were covered with a thick coating of ice. A few of us scrambled around on them. The views towards West Virginia were terrific. We then went to a flat rock on the south side of the mountain and had lunch. This was out of the wind and was very pleasant. The views here were great also. We could see McAfee Knob and Tinker Mountain off to the southeast. Looking directly east we could see the Peaks of Otter, which were about twenty miles away. The descent from the mountain was uneventful and we made it back to Roanoke well before the start of the Super Bowl.

Sunday, February 3, 2008 1:00PM
Fort Lewis Mountain

Ed Wallace & Maurice Turner (co-leaders), HR Blankenship, Dena Goldberg, Peggy Bryant, Sue Scanlin, Pat Cousins

Nice day for a hike, although a bit chilly. Nothing unusual to report. We all made it back in time to watch the Super Bowl.

Saturday, February 9, 2008 10:00AM
Wolf Creek Greenway
Beginner Hike

Lynn (leader) & Peggy Bryant, Pat Cousins, Zetta Campbell & Bob Peckman

The only way to describe this day is WOW! Sunny, temperature in the mid 60's, more like summer than winter. There were five people on this hike plus many people and pets on Wolk Creek Trail today. We did about 5 miles in 2.5 hours. It was a leisurely pace on an easy trail. This is one of the most busy Greenway trails. It's a social trail and sometimes can take 3 or 4 hours to go the 5 miles with many stops to talk and pet pooches. There are a number of comfort stations and benches to stop and take five for us older and slower AT members. To sum up – a good hike on a good day. Trail humor: I stopped to talk with the lady of one of the smallest dogs I ever saw. I asked her what the pooch did for enjoyment. She said his favorite thing was killing pit bull dogs. (Ask a stupid question.)

Sunday, February 10, 2008 10:00AM
Jennings Creek (Rt 614) to Bryant Ridge
Shelter

Kenny Garrett & John Miller (co-leaders), Carl Cornett, Andy Robinson & Guest Robin Hinricks

Yes, we have more of an adventurous spirit than we do common sense sometimes. We went out for this nice stroll from Jennings Creek over Fork Mountain to Bryant Ridge Shelter on the Sunday that the weathermen were calling for wind gusts in excess of 60 mph. For a change, the weathermen hit it right and the wind was howling, swirling, and definitely gusting. We heard trees falling throughout the forest, and even had a large limb come down by the trail sort of near Kenny and John. We laughed at our challenge to finish our hike with the strong head wind pushing us back. After completing the not-so-moderate walk, we returned to Roanoke to find much wind damage, power outages, and fallen trees. All things considered, we had a great time winning against Mother Nature by not letting the weather control our desire to complete a hike.

Sunday, February 17, 2008 8:30AM
Tinker Ridge Work Hike

Charles Parry, Maurice Turner, Mike Smith, Steve Burt, Dana Helsley, Homer Witcher, Therese Witcher, Mervin Brower, Blanche Brower

It was mostly cloudy, but warm and pleasant all day. We dug trail and put in 3 or 4 steps. As I didn't expect to do much rockwork, I did not put any rock bars in my

truck. In the afternoon, we decided to move a huge rock into place for a step. We could move it down hill with the picks, but could not get it where we wanted it. The solution was to use a wooden rock bar. It was about 12 feet long and 3 inches in diameter and took at least two men to operate it, but it did the job. By early afternoon, we realized that we were going to finish the first switch back. There was still some work to do on the lower end, so I took Homer and Therese down and showed them what I wanted done. We actually finished the first switchback and got started on the second before quitting time. Other than blazing we opened the new switchback. Homer and Therese went back a few days later and did the blazing. It is one down and two to go for this relocation. Hopefully, in another year we will finish it.

Saturday, February 23, 2008 10:00AM
Apple Orchard Falls, Cornelius Creek Loop

Jean Warren & Dave Miller (co-leaders) & Laurie Spangler

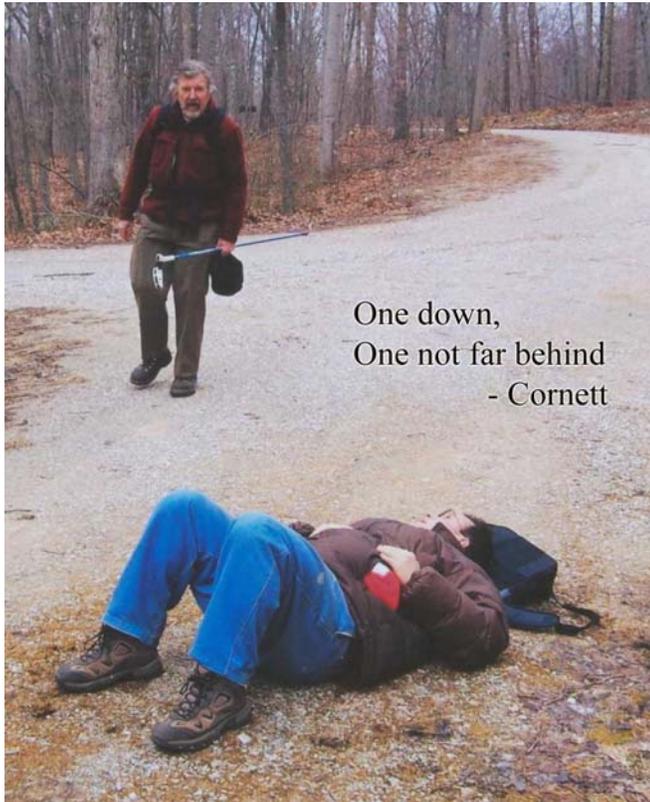
Okay, where was everybody in this beautiful day in February? Partly cloudy/sunny skies and high 40's – perfect for a hike! Laurie agilely folded herself into the back seat of my truck, and off we went to one of my favorite hikes of the area. We hiked the same pace, conversing about the beauty around us, as well as the current political scene. The falls has abundant water as well as icicles hanging around nearby rocks. Continuing the loop and passing by the picturesque creek is always a highlight. The water seemed unusually clear, making mini-waterfalls and small pools as it cascaded over the mossy rocks. Nearing the parking lot, we met up with some fishermen (the only people we saw). What a great day we had!

Sunday, February 24, 2008 8:00AM
Curry Creek Loop Trail

Larry Austin & Lois Smith (leaders), Bob & Kris Peckman, Maya Bohler, Carl Cornett, Jen Schaeffer, Hugh Hall

The weather for this hike was overcast and cold with temperatures staying in the mid to upper 30's during the hike. We drove the short distance from Daleville Park and Ride to Forest Road 634 just above Camp Bethel to begin this circuit hike. We followed Forest Road 634 to its junction with the Curry Creek Trail. This trail no longer has a sign designating it as a trail off of 634. You just have to know where it starts. Curry Creek was running fairly well and we had several creek crossings. Once we hit the AT, we headed north for about 2.5

miles and had lunch at the Wilson Creek Shelter. After another 2.5 miles of climbing to Black Horse Gap, we descended the Old Fincastle Road back to our starting point. We moved along at a fairly rapid pace and finished at 1:30 p.m. We jumped one grouse but no other wildlife was out that we could see, and we met no other hikers along the way. In spite of the recent windstorm, this section of the AT was in very good shape with only a few small blow-downs.



One down,
One not far behind
- Cornett

**Sunday, March 2, 2008 8:00AM
Dickey Gap (Rt 16) to Fox Creek (Rt 603)**

John Miller (leader), Kristin Peckman (co-leader), Carl Cornett, Hugh Hall, Bob Peckman, Mark Packett and Jim Walke

A more perfect day for hiking could not have been ordered. The skies were blue and the temperatures reached the sixties in the afternoon. After a short car shuttle we started our hike. The first thing we encountered was a small waterfall that had much water flowing. This and the other streams with water in them were very refreshing since most of the hikes have been very dry this year. There was some snow on the trail in the shadowy spots but it didn't pose a problem for any of the hikers. We stopped for lunch at the Hurricane Shelter that was

dedicated in 2004. This was neither on our maps nor in our books but was most appreciated by the group. There weren't any really open views but with the leaves off the trees we could see the ridges in the distance. The hike ended with plenty of time to spare and the group enjoyed a light snack provided by the leader.

Participant's note: There are lots of hemlocks in this area, and they don't seem to have been affected by the adelgid yet. Jim pointed out a raccoon track in the snow.

**Sunday, March 2, 2008 1:00PM
Top of Brush Mt to Audie Murphy Memorial
Beginner Hike**

Kenny (leader), Dawn & Lance Garrett, Austin Whittaker, Vicki, Luke & Mark McLean, Pat Cousins, Bobbie Stitcher, Joyce Fisher, Dena Goldberg, Zetta Campbell and Guests Patricia & Alan Sowder, Sharon Staples, Artie, Daniel & Elaina Accardo

What a beautiful early spring day for a stroll. We had a large group of members and guests for this warm Sunday afternoon short walk along the fire road from the Brushy Mountain Parking Lot to the Audie Murphy Monument and return. The hike was only 1.5 miles (not the 3 miles as advertised in the Blazer.) Everyone had a great time walking, talking, laughing, and enjoying the warm sunshine. And, we had seven kids on this hike who may have actually learned a little of the history of a great American hero.

**Saturday, March 8, 2008 6:00 PM
Potluck Banquet & Annual Meeting**

Carolyn McPeak (leader) and 106 members and guests.

This was the best attendance in decades and the best food ever. We had to set up more tables, but the more diners, the more food! Carolyn made fantastic table decorations and the event was very festive. The obligatory business meeting was painlessly short. Then Leonard Adkins started the entertainment with his new and expanded trivia quiz with real prizes. After that he presented Laurie's and his latest thru-hike. This was a smell-the-roses hike and the presentation was very poetic. After a few questions, the food had settled enough for us to waddle to our cars. It was the best banquet that I can remember – ed.

Sunday, March 9, 2008 9:00AM
Daleville (Rt 220) to Andy Layne Trail (Rt 779)
113-Mile Hike #3

Homer and Therese Witcher (leaders), Kris Peckman (assistant), Carl Cornett, Bob Peckman, Maurice Turner

Homer and Therese agreed to start the hike an hour later, since last night was the banquet and today was "spring forward" day. Then they graciously ran the car shuttle in advance! We had spectacular weather for a hike over a beloved close-to-home section. We had the opportunity to hike over several very recent relocations which have greatly improved the trail. Probably the highlight of the day was the lunchtime sighting of a bald eagle soaring toward Tinker Ridge from the direction of Fincastle! It was nice meeting the afternoon group as we slid down the mountain.

Sunday, March 9, 2008 1:00PM
Tinker Cliffs

Kenny Garrett and Carl Bagby (co-leaders), Brad, Luke and Mark McLean and guests: Susan Sperduto, Laura Bracht, Dena Goldberg, Melanie Montgomery and Matt Fitzgerald

We met at Daleville, and split into two hiking groups. We then drove to the trail head and began our muddy ascent up the Andy Layne Trail. The day was sunny, with only a light breeze. The trail was very muddy in places due to the previous two days of rain. We met the long hike group that was finishing their hike at the bottom of the Andy Layne Trail. We played on the rocks and fallen trees on the way up. Upon arriving on the top of Tinker Cliffs, we found numerous icicles hanging from the shady areas. We didn't stay on the top very long, before sliding back down the trail. A fun time was had by all.

Hike Schedule

Going on a group hike can fulfill a number of worthwhile purposes. These include such things as physical conditioning, social interaction, the enjoyment of nature, and the thrill of reaching a spectacular viewpoint. The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club consistently tries to provide a wide range of hiking opportunities for people of all ages, interests and abilities. Guests are always welcome to join us.

For the most part, we rate our hikes as follows:

Easy – 3 to 5 miles; good trails or old roads; modest elevation changes.

Moderate – 5 to 8 miles; steeper trails which may be rough in places.

Strenuous – 8 miles and up; long hikes with extensive climbs and possible rough trails or bushwhacking.

Hikes which do not fall neatly into one of these categories may be rated **easy-moderate** or **moderate-strenuous**.

You may drive your own car to the trailhead if you wish. However, carpooling is encouraged to save gasoline and because trailhead parking may be limited. The hike leader is responsible for arranging such carpooling as may be required. While there is no fee to hike with the club, the indicated amount is to defray automobile expenses and should be given to the driver of your carpool.

You will need to call the leader to find out where the hiking group will be meeting. If you are new to hiking, the leader can also give advice about clothing, footwear, and equipment. If you are unfamiliar with the hike, the leader will be glad to answer your questions and help you evaluate whether or not it is suitable for you.

**Saturday, April 5, 2008 8:00 AM
Pine Swamp Shelter**

0.5 miles, Moderate
60 miles from Roanoke, \$5.00 carpool fee

We will be preparing the shelter for the roofing job in two weeks. The shelter is located in Giles County.

Kenny Garrett.....293-7967
Charles Parry.....540-951-1402

**Sunday, April 6, 2008 8:00AM
Catawba Mountain (Rt. 311) to Dragon's
Tooth parking lot via Andy Layne and North
Mountain trails**

22 miles, Strenuous
6 miles from Roanoke, \$.50 carpool fee

This should be a truly epic hike! It offers the opportunity to see two of the prime vistas of the Appalachian trail in one day. The hike first climbs gradually to McAfee's Knob, then follows the AT on the ridgeline to Tinker Cliffs before dropping down to Rt. 779 on the Andy Layne Trail. It will then climb to the top of North Mountain and head south. The rest of the hike is an up-and-down ridge walk, with occasional views on both sides.

Kenny Garrett.....293-7967
Linda King342-2411

**Sunday, April 6, 2008 1:00PM
Bottom Creek Gorge**

5.3 miles, Moderate
16 miles from Roanoke, \$1.50 carpool fee

Hidden away at the corner of Montgomery, Roanoke, and Floyd counties is the Bottom Creek Gorge Preserve on top of Bent Mountain. The Nature Conservancy has developed a network of trails that pass ponds, streams and meadows and follow tunnels of rhododendron that lead you around and down to the Bottom Creek George, then up to a vantage point to see Bent Mountain Falls flow from a mountain side

Sue Scanlin989-0497
Ed Wallace774-1075.

**Sunday, April 6, 2008 1:30PM
Hanging Rock Greenway – Beginner Hike**

3.4 miles, Easy
In Roanoke, no carpool fee

Walk a very pretty section of the Greenway system.
Sharon Rippee.....387-3495

**Saturday, April 12, 2008 1:30 PM
Roanoke River Greenway – Beginner Hike**

2.5 or 5 miles Easy
In Roanoke, no carpool fee

We will start at the sewage plant and walk 5 miles to Wasena Park. We can leave an extra shuttle car at Piedmont Park for those who prefer a 2½-mile hike. A very nice walk along the Roanoke River.

Laura Montague725-3682

**Sunday, April 13, 2008 8:00AM
Fuller Rocks, Big Rocky Row**

8.8 miles, Strenuous
39 miles from Roanoke, \$3.00 carpool fee

This hike will start on the A.T. crossing on Hercules Road. The hike goes through an old slate mine and follows an old roadway that offers very good views. The trail connects with the AT and then we will hike south back toward the James River. The trail will cross Big Rocky Row, both of which have magnificent views of the James River and the surrounding mountains. The trail will descend back to Hercules Road, passing an A.T. shelter along the way.

Dan Phlegar389-1783
Carl Cornett342-3950

**Sunday, April 13, 2008 1:00PM
Bennett Springs Loop**

6.0 miles, Moderate
3 miles from Roanoke, \$.25 carpool fee

This hike begins at Carvins Cove Parking Lot (off Rt. 311, Not Williamson Rd.) The one mile ascent to the top of Brushy Mountain is quite steep, while the rest is moderate. Good views of McAfee's Knob and the valley are beautiful, while on the descent we will cross a stream several times. It's a pretty loop trail.

Jean Warren.....384-6229
Chuck Walz774-3596.

**Saturday, April 19, 2008 8:00AM
Pine Swamp Shelter Roof Repair**

0.5 miles, Moderate
60 miles from Roanoke, \$5.00 carpool fee

We will be repairing damage to the shelter's roof caused by a fallen tree from a wind storm in April 2007. The shelter is located in Giles County.

Kenny Garrett.....293-7967
Charles Parry.....540-951-1402

**Sunday, April 20, 2008 8:00AM
Pine Swamp Shelter Roof Repair**

0.5 miles, Moderate
60 miles from Roanoke, \$5.00 carpool fee

We will be repairing damage to the shelter's roof caused by a fallen tree from a wind storm in April 2007. The shelter is located in Giles County.

Kenny Garrett..... 293-7967

Charles Parry.....540-951-1402

**Sunday, April 20, 2008 1:30 PM
Bearwallow Gap to Little Cove Mt. Trail**

4 miles, Easy
30 miles from Roanoke, \$3:00 carpool free

Hopefully we will see a lot of Lady Slippers. The trail is just off the Blue Ridge Parkway. After a short climb, the trail is basically level.

Zetta Campbell 366-8165

**Sunday, April 27, 2008 8:00AM
House Mountains, Big and Little**

9.1 miles, Strenuous
48 miles from Roanoke, \$4.50 carpool fee

Located in Rockbridge County west of Lexington. Purchased for preservation by the Rockbridge Area Conservation Council (RACC) in 1989, the 800+ acres including the tops of Big House and Little House Mountain, and the saddle between them, contain numerous species of plants and provide views of the Rockbridge County countryside. We will follow the 2-mile woods road to the saddle, hike another mile to the cliffs of Big House Mountain, then return to the saddle and take the Little House Mountain trail which involves a climb followed by a lovely ridge walk

Kris Peckman..... 366-7780

John Miller 375-3250

**Sunday, April 27, 2008 1:00PM
Andy Layne Trail to Tinker Cliffs**

7.2 miles, Moderate
9 miles from Roanoke, \$1.00 carpool fee

Located in Botetourt County, the trailhead for this hike is on Route 779 roughly halfway between Catawba and Daleville. In 2001, this trail was dedicated to Andy Layne – a prominent member of RATC who passed away in 1991. The hike

crosses meadows and Catawba Creek and then starts the ascent to Scorched Earth Gap where it continues on the AT to Tinker Cliffs. Many spots along the cliffs offer excellent views of McAfee Knob and the Catawba Valley.

Sue Scanlin 989-0497

**Sunday, May 4, 2008 8:00AM
A.T., Black Horse Gap to Bearwallow Gap**

8.5 miles, Strenuous
9 miles from Roanoke, \$1.00 carpool fee

This hike starts at the northernmost part of our section of the A.T. The trail parallels the Blue Ridge Parkway and has great views. There are plenty of mountain laurel, rhododendron, and azalea along this section of trail. These should be in bloom.

Mike Vaughn 992-1350

Maya Bohler 344-6588

**Sunday, May 4, 2008 1:00PM
Flat Top Mountain**

4.6 miles, Moderate
30 miles from Roanoke, \$3.00 carpool fee

Located in Botetourt County, this hike is scheduled to optimize the chances of catching the many trilliums along the trail at their peak. At one point a side trail descends a short distance to an unusual formation known as Cross Rock. At the summit of Flat Top, nice views may be obtained by easy scrambles onto projecting rocks.

Dave Sutton 774-0648

Gary Bible 977-2954

**Saturday, May 10, 2008 1:00 PM
Belfast Trail to the Devil's Marbleyard**

3.0 miles, Easy
35 miles from Roanoke, \$3.00 carpool fee

Located a few miles beyond Natural Bridge Station, this popular hike starts about an hour's drive from Roanoke. The route follows the Belfast Trail in the Jefferson National Forest and heads steeply uphill for a little over two miles. At this point the Devil's Marbleyard appears just to the left of the trail. This is an eight-acre field of quartzite boulders which affords endless scrambling opportunities (watch out for snakes, though) and great views. The return is along the same route.

Kenny Garrett..... 293-7967

Hugh Hall 725-8874

**Sunday, May 11, 2008 8:00AM
Trout Creek (Rt 620) to Sandstone Ridge (Rt 624)**

7.0 miles, Strenuous
9 miles from Roanoke, \$1.00 carpool fee

The hike is in Craig and Roanoke County west of Salem. After crossing Trout Creek, we will ascend through a fire recovery area, pass by the Pickle Branch shelter, then ascend to the ridge, which we will follow around the crescent-shaped top of Cove Mountain to Dragon's Tooth with its great views and rock-scrambling opportunities. We will descend on the A.T. over Rawie's Rest (more rocks and great views) to Route 624 near the Dragon's Tooth parking lot. There should be many flowers in bloom along this section of trail including turkey's beard, dwarf iris, fire pink, rhododendron, mountain laurel, lilies of the valley, and pink ladyslippers.

Kris Peckman..... 366-7780

**Saturday, May 17, 2008 , 8:00AM
Mountain Lake, Stony Creek Work Hike**

Some miles, Moderate
50 miles from Roanoke, \$5.00 carpool fee

We will be doing clipping, blazing, and blow-down removal in the Mountain Lake area.

Charles Parry.....540-951-1402

Hal Cantrill 387-2347

**Sunday, May 18, 2008 8:00AM
Mountain Lake, Stony Creek Work Hike**

Some miles, Moderate
50 miles from Roanoke, \$5.00 carpool fee

We will be doing clipping, blazing, and blow-down removal in the Mountain Lake area.

Charles Parry.....540-951-1402

Hal Cantrill 387-2347

**Sunday, May 18, 2008 1:00PM
Cascades**

4.0 miles, Easy
54 miles from Roanoke, \$5.00 carpool fee
Located in Giles County near Pembroke, the hike uses trails which run along both sides of Little Stony Creek, which ends near the Cascades – an impressive waterfall. Usually the hike will go up one side of the creek and come back on the other. The Forest Service charges a nominal fee (\$3.00) to park at the trailhead.

Jean Warren 384-6229

Ed Wallace 774-1075.

**Sunday, May 25, 2008 8:00AM
Rock Castle Gorge**

11.0 miles, Strenuous
57 miles from Roanoke, \$5.50 carpool fee

Located in Patrick County, on Blue Ridge Parkway land. After a steep 2,000-foot ascent, the hike parallels the Parkway – passing alternately through woods and open fields with extraordinary views. On the descent down the other side of the gorge, the hike passes some old cabin sites and a series of interesting rock formations. The last few miles are along Rock Castle Creek – a wild stream with many cataracts.

Linda King.....342-2411

Hugh Hall 725-8874

**Sunday, May 25, 2008 1:30 PM
Rock Castle Creek - Beginner Hike**

4.0 miles, Easy
57 miles from Roanoke, \$5.50 carpool fee

This hike is out and back along the creek below Rock Castle Gorge. It has been called the Fire Pink Hike. We will start at the same point as the Rock Castle Gorge Hike. There should be a number of wild flowers in bloom.

Zetta Campbell366-8165

**Sunday, June 1, 2008 7:00AM
Garden Mountain (Rt 623) to Brushy Mountain (Rt 52)**

15.3 miles, Strenuous
71 miles from Roanoke, \$7.00 carpool fee

We will be starting out at the A.T. crossing on the top of Garden Mountain in Burkes Garden, Tazewell County (elevation 4,000 feet). The hike will go north on the A.T., passing the Jenkins Shelter. There are good views of Burkes Garden along the trail. The hike will generally be downhill, ending near I-77 in Bland County.

John Miller375-3250

Mike Vaughn.....992-1350

**Sunday, June 1, 2008 1:00PM
Thunder Ridge Overlook to Cornelius Creek Shelter**

6.9 miles, Moderate
23 miles from Roanoke, \$2.50 carpool fee

Located in Bedford County, this hike has wonderful views from Thunder Ridge Overlook and Apple Orchard Mountain. This route is also known for the Guillotine, a rock formation, where the trail passes under a suspended rock.

Mervin & Blanche Brower.....387-9732

Sunday, June 1, 2008 1:00PM
North Face of Mill Mt. via Mill Mt. Greenway
Beginner Hike

4-5 miles, Easy

In Roanoke, no carpool fee

This will go from the Piedmont Parking lot up the mountain. This is a lot steeper than most of the easy hikes, but not too steep for cars and bicycles to climb. We **WILL** go at an easy pace!

Ron McCorkle..... 982-8289

Saturday, June 7, 2008 8:30 AM
Lick Run Greenway – Beginner Hike

6 or 3 miles, Easy

In Roanoke, No carpool fee

This hike will start near the Hotel Roanoke and follow this beautiful greenway to the 581 overpass at Valley View Mall. Then part of the group can end the hike at Best Buy if they have left a car and the rest can return to the Hotel for the whole 6 miles.

Rupe Cutler..... 345-7653

Saturday, June 7, 2008 8:00AM
Pine Swamp Trail Relo. with Konnarock Crew

Some miles, Moderate

50 miles from Roanoke, \$5.00 carpool fee

We will start work on the relocation of an eroded section of the A.T. near Pine Swamp shelter in Giles County.

Charles Parry.....540-951-1402

Mike Ferguson..... 344-8525

Sunday, June 8, 2008 8:00AM
Pine Swamp Trail Relo. with Konnarock Crew

Some miles, Moderate

50 miles from Roanoke, \$5.00 carpool fee

We will start work on the relocation of an eroded section of the A.T. near Pine Swamp shelter in Giles County.

Charles Parry.....540-951-1402

Mike Ferguson..... 344-8525

Saturday, June 14, 2008 8:00AM
Mount Rogers

8.0 miles, Strenuous

102 miles from Roanoke, \$10.00 carpool fee

Join us for one of the premier hikes in the U.S. and one that the club does not often offer. Most of this hike will be on trails at over 5,000 of elevation. This hike will start at Massie Gap in Grayson Highlands State Park. The trail will follow the open mountain bald of Wilburn Ridge to the heavily wooded summit of Mount Rogers, at 5,729 feet, the highest point in Virginia. There are many semi-wild ponies in the open meadows along the trail. In addition, a profusion of rhododendron can also be seen. These should be in bloom in June. There are several places to camp along the trail if anyone wants to backpack and stay overnight. There are also overnight lodging options available. Contact the hike leader for additional information on these.

Dan Phlegar.....389-1783

Kris Peckman (phone only)366-7780

Sunday, June 15, 2008 1:00PM
A.T., Ribble Trail to Dismal Falls

4.2 miles, Easy

69 miles from Roanoke, \$6.00 carpool fee

We will hike on the A.T. along Dismal Creek in Giles County, ending at Dismal Falls, a scenic water fall.

Kenny Garrett.....293-7967

Hugh Hall..... 725-8874

Sunday, June 22, 2008 7:00AM
Garden Mountain (Rt 623) - Rich Valley (Rt 42)

17.3 miles, Strenuous

71 miles from Roanoke, \$7.00 carpool fee

We will be starting out at the A.T. crossing on the top of Garden Mountain in Burkes Garden, Tazewell County (elevation 4,000 feet). The hike will go south on the A.T., passing the Beartown Wilderness Area. There are good views of Burkes Garden at two points along the trail. The hike will generally be downhill, ending in Wythe County.

John Miller.....375-3250

Dick Moran.....389-3744

**Sunday, June 22, 2008 1:00PM
Sharp Top Mountain**

3.6 miles, Moderate
29 miles from Roanoke, \$3.00 carpool fee

This hike will climb to the 4,000-foot pinnacle of Sharp Top, one of the Peaks of Otter in Bedford. There is a spectacular 360-degree view from the rocky summit. The Peaks of Otter are rich in history. They were first measured by Thomas Jefferson, who thought they were among the highest mountains in North America. We will also be making a side trip to the site of a bomber that crashed on the side of the mountain on a training exercise during World War II. Parts of the plane can still be seen.

Maurice Turner540-334-2128
Gary Bible 977-2954

**Sunday, June 29, 2008 1:00PM Apple
Orchard Falls, Cornelius Creek Loop**

5.7 miles, Moderate
26 miles from Roanoke, \$2.50 carpool fee

This is a popular hike located in the North Creek camping area, near Arcadia. A blue-blazed trail, steep in places, leads uphill to Apple Orchard Falls. The falls are impressive and the trail has been greatly improved in recent years. Beyond the falls, a crossover path leads to the Cornelius Creek Trail which follows the creek downhill - back to the start.

Mervin & Blanche Brower.....387-9732

**Sunday, June 29 1:30 PM
Around Mill Mountain – Beginner Hike**

Miles to be determined, Easy
In Roanoke, no carpool fee

This hike includes going up the Star Trail. While I did say up, we will go at a beginner’s pace.

Ron McCorkle.....982-8289

If our dues records are in error, notify Bob Peckman. If your address label says “Last Issue”, we do not have a record of you paying your 2007 dues, so you owe for 2 years. If it says “Pay Dues”, you owe for 2008. Just a year number indicates what year you are paid through. You can pay ahead as many years as you like. If you are a life member or are an agency partner, there will be nothing after your name.

Do you like to see photos in the Blazer?
Do you like to see your name?
Then send me photographs please, by email or the post office. Always give your name so I can credit you, and tell me the hike or the date. Write your address on the back if you want your print return mailed. – ed.

For hike reports, typing is as nice as email.

**Roanoke Appalachian
Trail Club Application
New & Renewal**

- If accepted for membership, I agree to:
1. Support the objectives of the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club
 2. Abide by the rules of the National and State Parks and Forests
 3. Respect the interests of the owner when on private property
 4. Keep trails and woodlands free of litter and
 5. Abide by instructions of the leader on group hikes and trips

Name(s) _____ New Member Packet fee \$5.00 _____
Address _____ Indiv. # of years _____ x \$10.00 _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____ - _____ Family # of years _____ x \$15.00 _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Individual life membership \$250.00 _____
Email _____ Family life membership \$300.00 _____
Year you joined RATC (make a guess!) _____ Donation \$ _____
Make checks payable to RATC, PO Box 12282, Roanoke, 24024-2282 Amount Enclosed \$ _____

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Alternate, Roger Holnback
556-2919 rholnback@westernvirginalandtrust.org

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Director Western Virginia Land Trust, Roger B. Holnback**
556-2919 rholnback@westernvirginalandtrust.org

ATC-LT Coord. New River to Damascus, Steve Reisinger
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Roanoke Valley Greenways Liaison, Roger B. Holnback
556-2919 rholnback@westernvirginalandtrust.org

Sir Speedy Printer
344-8550 sirspeedy@rbnet.com

CALENDAR OF CLUB ACTIVITIES**WORK HIKES**

Sunday, April 5 - 8:00 AM
Pine Swamp Shelter Roof Repair

-

Saturday & Sunday, April 19 & 20 - 8:00 AM
Pine Swamp Shelter Roof Repair

-

Saturday & Sunday, May 17 & 18 - 8:00 AM
Mountain Lake, Stony Creek

-

Saturday & Sunday, June 7 & 8 - 8:00 AM
Pine Swamp Trail Relo. w/ Konnarock

Hike Scheduling

Contact Mike Vaughn
992-1350 – mikeva999@yahoo.com

BOARD MEETINGS

(All members are always welcome.
Please let the host know you plan to attend.)

Monday, April 21, 7:30 p.m.
Hosted by Liz & Bill Lamson

Monday, June 2, 7:30 p.m.
Hosted by Gloria & Charles Parry

**The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club is an affiliate of
The Appalachian Trail Conservancy
and a member of The Nature Conservancy and the Western Virginia Land Trust**