

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

SPRING 2004

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.



Pink Lady's Slipper

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CALENDAR OF CLUB ACTIVITIES**WORK HIKES**

Sunday, April 4 - 8:30 AM
Catawba Mountain

Saturday & Sunday, May 22-23 - 8:00 AM
White Rocks Camp Out

Thursday - Monday, June 17-21 - 8:30 AM
Konnarock – Catawba Mountain

Hike Scheduling

Contact Don Nulph
774-8618 – Nulph-d@cox.net

BOARD MEETINGS

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

Monday, April 26, 7:30 p.m.
Hosted by Roger Holnback
at Land Trust Office

Monday, May 24, 7:30 p.m.
Hosted by Don Nulph

Monday, June 28, 7:30 p.m.
Hosted by Charles Parry

**The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club is an affiliate of
The Appalachian Trail Conference
and a member of The Nature Conservancy**

Welcome New Members

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club welcomes the following new members:

Otis Farmer & Peggy Sloss
Wesley & Hettie Barnes
Frank Haranzo, Jr
James R. & Mary John

R. Miller,
Sara Jo Emmerich
Sheri Pippin
Donna L. Morgan

Joe Kelly
Caryl Connolly
Diana Christopoulos

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

Mervin Brower

President's Message

The most pressing issue on the AT is land and view preservation. It is extremely important that everyone be vigilant and take notice when land near the trail goes on the market. We lost the opportunity to negotiate for the land on the side of North Mountain by minutes! So be quick in contacting Roger Holnback, or any Board member, as soon as you notice any land becoming available near the Trail.

There must be some confusion about my request for e-mail addresses. They will go into the club's Excel sheet. They will not be distributed purposefully by being printed or put on the web page. They will not be distributed accidentally by being in an address box accessible to hackers. We have gotten smart enough to use blind copy-list to keep your e-mail address private. If someone asks for your e-mail address, I will e-mail you and tell you who wants it. I receive over 100 SPAMs per day, so I have become very sensitive. But e-mail is much quicker than the phone tree. There have been events, like funerals or hospitalizations, where we only had time

to contact the folks who gave us e-mail addresses. Maybe we could combine an e-mail start with a phone-tree finish. But we do not have enough e-mail addresses to do that.

In the summer issue, we normally print the name-address-phone list. If you would like to not be listed, please contact me by May 15. If you want just a partial listing, I will figure out a way to accomplish that.

The annual meeting and elections will be over when you read this. But we will still need new blood on the board. Please come out to some meetings and see what it is all about. Except for voting, you can do everything at a meeting including eat! You may want an office next time or we may bore you to death. Come find out; there is more to do than most folks realize.

Check the date on your mailing label to see if your dues are due!

Bob Peckman

Trail Supervisor's Report

We have had an easy winter, with only one work hike as the previous two got snowed out. To the best of my knowledge, the winter has not been too hard on the trail. Let's keep our fingers crossed that we do not get any more ice storms in the next month.

This spring we will have two more work-hikes finishing some trail improvements to the Catawba Mountain section of trail between the first two shelters. Then we will turn our attention to spring maintenance, which is largely up to the individual overseers; although, we will have our annual spring work-trip in the White-Rocks area. In June we will

begin a serious relocation on the AT just south of McAfee's Knob. This will be with the Konnarock Crew. The dates for this work are: June 17 – 21, July 8 – 12 and July 29 – Aug. 2. Let's see if we can get at least 30 people to work one or more days with the crews this summer and at least 15 to earn t-shirts by working 5 or more days.

I am asking that an updated list of overseers be published in this issue. I expect that if you wish to help on a particular section, the overseer will welcome you.

Charles Parry

Hikemaster's Report

113-Mile Patch: Members who hike the entire section of the AT maintained by RATC are entitled to one free 113-Mile Patch. To get the patch, inform the Hike Master of your accomplishment.

Service Awards: For hike leaders, for the fiscal year Oct 2002 to Sept 2003, leading more than 4 hikes and less than 7 (Mervin Brower, Laura Montague, Jean Warren, Linda Akers, Blanche Brower, Bobbie

Stitcher, Jerry Austin, Suzanne Barnett, Mary Lou Gaminde, John Lynham, Sue Scanlin, Lois Smith) get a hat; leading 9 or more hikes (David Sutton, Maurice Turner, Kenny Garrett) get a t-shirt. No one had 7 or 8 hikes.

Let me know: If you need a hike to get the 113-Mile Patch; if you would like to lead hikes; or if you would like a special hike on the schedule.

Don Nulph

Shelter Supervisor's Report

The Shelter Supervisors are performing a maintenance inventory on as many of our shelters as possible through the remainder of the winter and into spring. We will prioritize the list into projects and discuss with the Board. Approved projects will

be planned, and volunteers will be needed to help repair our shelters and privies.

Any interested volunteers, please email the Shelter Supervisors at ratc_shelter@yahoo.com

Jonathan Reed & David Cheslow

Hike Reports

Sunday, November 30, 2003, 1:00 PM Sharp Top

No calls. Hike cancelled.

Sunday, December 7, 2003, 8:30 AM Work Hike - Stony Creek

Workhike canceled due to snow.

Saturday, December 13, 2003, 8:00 AM Sunset Field Camping Ridge Exploratory Hike.

Hike canceled due to snow and ice.

Sunday, December 14, 2003, 1:00 PM Jennings Creek to Bryant Ridge Shelter

Hike canceled due to weather.

Sunday, January 4, 2004 1:00 PM Catawba Mountain (Rt. 311) to Sandstone Ridge (Rt. 624)

Maurice Turner (leader), H.R. Blankenship (co-leader), Gary Bible (co-leader), Suzanne Osborne, Winfred Noell, Carl Cornett, Mervin Brower, Blanche Brower, Jo Jo Gin, Liliann Vuongh, Frank Dieter, Jennifer Pfister, Linda Akers, John Read, Karen Beckett, Bobbie Sticher, Mary Gilbert, , Joyce Fisher, Mike Ferguson, Madeleine Taylor, Zetta Campbell, Mary Lou Gaminde, Marianne Demk'o, Dave Sutton, Linda Sutton, and Phelps Gates.

This had to be one of the largest groups of hikers in some time to come out for a hike. The sky was mostly overcast but warm with temperatures in the 60's, the last pleasant day before the next cold front moved in. A group of hikers started from 311 with HR in the lead while a few of us made the car switch. Some hikers waited until we returned to start the hike. Overall, the hike went well. We did notice on our hike a fence is being built at Catawba Creek to keep the cows out of the stream; it hasn't been completed as yet but it shouldn't affect hiking. We finished by 4:30 and we managed to get everyone back to their vehicles. Thanks to HR and Gary for assisting on this hike.

Saturday, January 10, 2004 8:00 AM Jenny Knob Shelter Maintenance Hike

Hike was cancelled due to snow.

Sunday, January 11, 2004 7:00 AM Ferrier - Lick Branch - Price Mountain. Exploratory

David Wickersham (leader), Maurice Turner (assistant leader), Carl Begby, Schelley Himel, Don Hoke, Charlie Scharnberg and Andy Soyars.

The Saturday night low had dipped to 9 degrees in Roanoke. It was so cold at the Daleville park-'n-ride at 7:00 a.m. we had trouble keeping the ball-point pen warm enough to fill out the sign-up sheet.

We set out for the Price Mountain trailhead on Rt. 606 in Botetourt County, not far from Fincastle. This was the exit point for the originally planned itinerary. Due to the snowfall a few days before, I elected to cut the hike roughly in half. Leaving two vehicles there, we took the other two vehicles to the alternate starting point – the Lick Branch trailhead at Stonecoal Gap. Surprisingly, the remote dirt road to Stonecoal Gap had been plowed so we had no problems on the shuttle. We hiked the well-maintained Lick Branch Trail up Broad Run Mountain. At the top, we intersected the Price Mountain Trail and took a short break. The temperature was only in the mid-teens but everyone was shedding layers as a result of our climb and the bright sunshine.

I had been concerned that the snow might be deeper on the mountain than in Roanoke and that it might be iced over since Saturday had been warm enough to cause some melting. As it turned out, there was only about 2-3 inches of nice powder which hampered our progress little and created an idyllic winter scene.

From the junction, we headed north on the Price Mountain Trail and what was to have been the second half of the publicized hike. The Price Mountain Trail is an unmaintained ridge top route that begins at the Lick Branch Trail intersection and runs along the crest of Broad Run Mountain,

north to Rt. 606. It crosses 606 and runs for several more miles along the top of Price Mountain before descending to the Forest Service road that runs through Patterson Creek Valley. The section we hiked is particularly beautiful as it is mostly narrow and rocky with nice wintertime views off both sides. The curious animal tracks in the fresh snow were a source of constant entertainment, amazement, and speculation along the way. The high temperature only reached the mid-twenties so the snow remained fluffy, and we didn't have to contend with slush and soggy boots as is often the case on snow hikes. All in all, it was a perfect winter hike. I hope my greatly overestimated distance for this hike in the Blazer didn't scare too many folks off because this was a truly wonderful hike.

**Sunday, January 11, 2004 1:00PM
Spec Mines Trail**

Hike canceled. Parkway closed & snow on county roads.

**Sunday, January 18, 2004 8:00 AM
Trout Creek (RT 620) to
Lee Hollow (RT 621)
113-Mile Hike #7**

Kenny Garrett (leader), Bob & Kris Peckman, Carl Cornett & Carl Bagby

We had five hardy souls show up for this cool wet hike. A steady drizzle could not dampen the mood, as we started from Rt 621 hike north. We were unsure if the hike was going through fog or low hanging clouds as we climbed Brush Mountain. As we reached the fireroad at the top, we realized we were above the cloud layers, and also above the showers. We took a quick break at a new bench which had been recently placed along side the trail. We then continued the short walk to the Audie Murphy Monument, where we enjoyed another short break, complete with picture taking and great conversation. As we left the ridge, we found ourselves hiking back down into the clouds and drizzle. We finished the hike at Trout Creek, and decided that pizza and beverages at a nearby Salem eatery were in order. The group was full of humor and wit and the hike was an enjoyable stroll for all.

**Sunday, January 18, 2004 1:00 PM
Cascades**

No calls - hike cancelled.

**Sunday, January 25, 2004 8:00 AM
Work Hike on Catawba Mountain**

Workhike cancelled due to snow.

**Sunday, January 25, 2004 1:00 PM
Catawba Mountain (Rt. 311)
to McAfee Knob**

The hike was cancelled due to the snow storm.

**Sunday, February 1, 2004 8:00 AM
Jenny Knob (Rt.611) to
Kimberling Creek (Rt. 606)**

Hike was shortened to Rt. 611 to Rt. 608, Bland County, due to snow.

Kenny Garrett (co-leader), Maurice Turner (co-leader), Charlie Scharmberg, Shelley Himel, Carl Cornett, H.R. Blankenship, Jennifer Pfister, & Laura Montague

We had eight motivated people with cabin fever. After last weekend's snow, and this week's cold weather, we were itching to get out and walk. The leaders decided to shorten the hike to walk the 4 ½ mile section of the A.T. from Rt. 611 to Rt. 608 (which is the southern most section of the club). Upon arrival to the parking area, we discovered we would be hiking on virgin snow. We observed many deer tracks, along with other smaller forest critter tracks on the trail. The snow averaged from slight in one part to over six inches deep in other parts. We enjoyed a nice break at Jenny's Knob shelter, which has a brand new picnic table. We finished early afternoon, then traveled to Rt. 606 so that everyone could walk across the A.T. foot bridge over Kimberling Creek. The creek was frozen, and like the scenery of the hike, utterly beautiful. I believe hiking in the snow is like running in sand, it takes more effort to go less distance. Everyone had a great time as we are often reminded of the thrill of the trip over concentrating on the destination.

**Sunday, February 1, 2004 1:00 PM
Bottom Creek Gorge**

Hike cancelled due to snow and ice.

Sunday, February 8, 2004 8:00 AM
Dragon's Tooth Parking to Trout Creek
(Rt. 620) by way of Boy Scout Trail
113-Mile Hike # 6

Kris & Bob Peckman (leaders), Carl Bagby, Carl Cornett, Shelly Himel, and Charlie Scharnberg

When we arrived at the Dragon's Tooth Parking lot, the driveway was too icy to drive. The snow in that area had a thick melted-and-refrozen crust. We walked up to check out the trail and quickly decided that, even if we could break the ice crust to walk, we could never finish this hike in one day. For plan B, we chose the greenway up to Mill Mountain. We parked in the Williamson Road lot by Elmwood Park and started walking. The greenway takes the old road to the top, which we anticipated might be icy past the mayor's house. So we took Riverland to the Star Trail, which was on the sunnier side and not so icy. The views at the top were great, and so was the wind. We ate our lunch in the sun and shelter of the back porch of the visitor center. On the way back down, we took a left from the Star trail onto an older trail. As we came around towards the north face of the mountain the ice crust became thicker and thicker until we could no longer break it. At that point we went back to the Star Trail. We made a left on Walnut since Riverland was not so great. When we got to the old road, we decided to walk up to the mayor's house and see if the road above it looked as bad as it had from the top. It did. We met several cyclists just cruising up and down the cleared part of the road. (Were they any more crazy than us?) It turned out to be a nice adventure on a perfect day to do something different with a congenial group.

Sunday, February 8, 2004 1:00 PM
Stiles Falls

Hike cancelled due to high water in the creek and snow and ice.

Sunday, February 15, 2004 1:00 PM
Dragon's Tooth Parking to Dragon's Tooth

Sue Scanlin (leader), Jean Warren (assistant), Caryl Connolly, Carol McPeak, Joyce Fisher & Gary Bible

With the forecast drop in temperature and a good possibility of some snow later in the day, most callers first asked if the hike was actually on. Yes, it was and if things were to turn nasty, we'd just turn around. Of the nine callers, one was a "maybe, don't wait for me", one later called again to withdraw, three were no-shows (all men, maybe the Daytona 500 interfered?), and that left six of us, including Sue and Jean, who actually met at the HR OM.

Once at the Dragon's Tooth parking lot, we could only see slushy snow on the trail. That made Jean and Caryl change their minds and they returned to the Orange Market to walk the Hanging Rock Battlefield Trail instead while Carol, Joyce, Sue, and Gary started up the trail towards Dragon's Tooth around 1:30pm.

Joyce and Gary alternated in the lead position. The snow patches on the trail were somewhat slippery but passable. Before reaching the AT, we met two groups of hikers who had not gone all the way up. Should we? So far, it had not been too bad and footprints in the snow showed that others had gone further up. So we continued. The view of the mountain range across the valley was spectacular! At the top, we met some other hikers plus two dogs, took pictures, had something to eat, and soaked in the view in all directions. Magnificent! By 3:45pm we were on our way down again. The partially iced-over rock steps were more of a hindrance going down than they had been on our way up. Fortunately, no mishaps occurred. Once again, we wondered what kind of animal (-s) had recently stripped large portions of bark from some trees. We neither saw animal tracks in the snow around the trees nor claw marks on the trees. By 5:30, we were back at HR OM and on the way home, the predicted snowfall began. It couldn't have worked out any better than that for us and the no-shows missed a memorable hike.

Sunday, April 18, 2004 8:00 AM
Terrapin Mountain

10 miles, Strenuous, \$2.50 carpool fee
 41 miles from Roanoke

Located in Bedford County close to Apple Orchard Mountain, this hike mostly uses old logging and Forest Service roads. On the way up you pass by two rocky outcrops which offer good views of the valley between this Mountain and Apple Orchard Mountain and the Thunder Ridge area. On the way down we'll follow and cross a few creeks.

Don Hoke 563-2902
Kris Peckman 366-7780

Sunday, April 18, 2004 1:00 PM
Dragon's Tooth Parking to Dragon's Tooth

5.2 miles, Moderate, \$1.00 carpool fee
 10 miles from Roanoke

The trail to Dragon's Tooth ascends steep, rugged outcrops of quartzite, which form the spine of Cove Mountain. A difficult hike, Dragon's Tooth summit offers magnificent views of nearby and distant peaks year-round.

Mervin & Blanche Brower 387-9732
Mike Ferguson 344-8525

Sunday, April 25, 2004 8:00 AM
Sinking Creek (Rt 630) to Lee Hollow (Rt 621)
113-mile hike #8

10.4 miles, Moderate-Strenuous, \$2.50 carpool fee
 18 miles from Roanoke

Located in Craig County, this hike passes through open land and then woods as it climbs to the crest of Sinking Creek Mountain. Several slanted rocks offer views of Craig Creek Valley and the mountains beyond.

Don Hoke 563-2902
Terri McClure 375-2650

Sunday, April 25, 2004 1:00 PM
Flat Top Mountain, Trillium

4 miles, Moderate, \$2.00 carpool fee
 27 miles from Roanoke

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.

David Sutton 774-0648
Ed Wallace 774-0175

Sunday, May 2, 2004 8:00 AM
Montebello Fish Hatchery to Tye River

10.5 miles, Strenuous, \$4.50 carpool fee
 65 miles from Roanoke

A scramble to the top of Spy Rock (about 50 vertical feet) is highly recommended in order to take advantage of the outstanding panoramic views. The summit of The Priest, at 4,063 feet also has excellent views just off to the left. The Priest is the highest point in Nelson County and the focal point of the so-called Religious Range. In the last four miles of the hike, the Appalachian Trail drops 3,000 feet as it descends to Route 56 and the Tye River.

Laura Montague 725-3682
Kenny Garrett 890-8946

Sunday, May 2, 2004 1:00 PM
Catawba Mountain (Rt 311) to
Sandstone Ridge (Rt 624)

5.9 miles, Moderate, \$1.00 carpool fee
 6 miles from Roanoke

The hike is in Roanoke County, west of Salem. It follows Sawtooth Ridge with, as the name implies, lots of ups and downs, then winds through open meadows across Catawba Valley, to a final climb over Sandstone Ridge and down to Route 624.

Bobbie Stitcher 890-2140
Linda Akers 776-1969

Saturday, May 8, 2004
Shelter workhike, TBA

David Cheslow 389-7791
Jonathan Reed 265-4782

Sunday, May 9, 2004 8:00 AM
Cornelius Creek Trail to Jennings Creek

12.5 miles, Strenuous, \$2.00 carpool fee
 23 miles from Roanoke

Located in Botetourt County, the hike offers great creek side walking along beautiful Cornelius Creek and includes views from Black Rock Overlook on AT. Hike will pass both Cornelius Creek Shelter and Bryant Ridge Shelter.

Larry Austin 254-2092
Kris Peckman 366-7780

Sunday, May 9, 2004 1:00 PM

Rock Castle Creek, Fire Pink

6.4 miles, Easy-Moderate, \$3.00 carpool fee
45 miles from Roanoke

The route follows an old Forest Service road along Rock Castle Creek – a beautiful stream that is bordered by a profusion of rhododendron and mountain laurel. There are several creek crossings (on bridges) and at one point the trail passes an old mountain homestead, which is still used in the summer.

Mervin & Blanche Brower **387-9732**
Sue Scanlin **989-0497**

Sunday, May 16, 2004 8:00 AM

Henry Lanum Trail Plus

9.2 miles, Strenuous, \$3.50 carpool fee
56 miles from Roanoke

The hike consists of the Henry Lanum Loop Trail plus hiking to and from the loop. There are spectacular views from each of the two rocky peaks of Mount Pleasant with rock scrambling opportunities.

Dick Clark **989-7053**
Dick Moran **389-3744**

Sunday, May 16, 2004 1:00 PM

Spec Mines Trail

5.8 miles, Moderate-Strenuous, \$1.00 carpool fee
15 miles from Roanoke

Located in Botetourt County, the trail descends 1,400 feet through mixed hardwood forest and offers good views near the top. Old open mines in the area.

David Sutton **774-0648**
Georgia Gallaher **345-8700**

Saturday, May 22, 2004 8:00 AM
White Rocks Camp Out & Work Hike

We will do routine maintenance between the War Spur Trail and Pine Swamp Shelter. We will be doing clipping, blow-down removal and perhaps some reblazing depending on weather conditions and crew size.

Charles Parry **540-951-1402**
Hal Cantrill **387-2347**

Sunday, May 23, 2004 8:00 AM
White Rocks Camp Out & Work Hike

Charles Parry **540-951-1402**
Mike Ferguson **344-8525**

Sunday, May 23, 2004 1:00 PM

Cascades

4 miles, Easy-Moderate, \$3.50 carpool fee
54 miles from Roanoke

Trails run along both sides of Little Stony Creek and terminate 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 (\$2.00) to park at the trailhead.

Mary Lou Gaminde **344-1637**
Jean Warren **384-6229**

Sunday, May 30, 2004 8:30 AM

**Petites Gap, Hunting Creek,
Glenwood Horse Trail Loop**

9.7 miles, Strenuous, \$2.50 carpool fee
40 miles from Roanoke

Located in Bedford County, this hike offers views at Thunder Ridge Overlook, & hopefully blooming thickets of rhododendron on both the AT and Hunting Creek Trails and good views of the lovely Hunting Creek with its falling waters and moss-covered rocks.

Larry Austin **254-2092**
Don Hoke **563-2902**

Sunday, May 30, 2004 1:00 PM

Bearwallow Gap to Little Cove Mountain Trail

3.3 miles, Moderate, \$1.50 carpool fee
22 miles from Roanoke

Located in Botetourt County, the trail climbs steeply to the top of the mountain, about 500 feet in 1.4 miles, then follows the ridge to Little Cove Mountain trail. The climb makes this a moderately difficult hike.

Mervin & Blanche Brower **387-9732**
Georgia Gallaher **345-8700**

Sunday, June 6, 2004 1:00 PM
**Thunder Ridge Overlook to Cornelius Creek
Shelter**

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

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.

Bobbie Stitche **890-2140**
Mary Lou Gaminde **344-1637**

Sunday, June 6, 2004 1:00 PM

Catawba Mountain (Rt 311) to McAfee Knob

7 miles, Moderate, \$0.50 carpool fee
6 miles from Roanoke

Located west of Salem in Roanoke County, the hike follows the Appalachian Trail up and back. Extensive cliffs at the top afford unparalleled views of both the Catawba Valley and the city of Roanoke.

Dick Moran 389-3744
Gary Bible 977-2954

Saturday, June 12, 2004
Shelter Workhike, TBA

David Cheslow 389-7791
Jonathan Reed 265-4782

Sunday, June 13, 2004 8:00 AM
Pine Swamp to New River (Rt 460)

19.5 miles, Strenuous, \$4.50 carpool fee
58 miles from Roanoke

Located in Giles County Virginia and Monroe County West Virginia, this is a lengthy hike on the Appalachian Trail, which traverses a portion of the long ridge of Peters Mountain. Along the ridge top, which roughly forms the Virginia-West Virginia border, there is little change in elevation. Both the ascent and the descent, however, are rather steep.

Two open areas along the ridge – Symms Gap and, especially, Rice Field – offer views and excellent spots for breaks or lunch.

Kenny Garrett 890-8946
Laura Montague 725-3682

Sunday, June 13, 2004 1:00 PM
Andy Layne Trail (Rt 779) to Tinker Cliffs

5 miles, Moderate, \$1.00 carpool fee
10 miles from Roanoke

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

Sue Scanlin 989-0497
Sharon Harrison 427-0834

Thursday -Monday, June 17-21, 2004 8:00 AM
Work Hike on Catawba Mountain

6 miles from Roanoke, \$0.50 carpool fee

With the help of the Konnarock Crews, we will begin relocation of most of the AT between Catawba Mountain Shelter and the Knob.

Charles Parry 540-951-1402
Laurie Adkins 966-2811

Sunday, June 20, 2004 1:00 PM
Wind Rock to War Spur (Rt 613)

4.6 miles, Easy, \$3.50 carpool fee
50 miles from Roanoke

Located in Giles County, the hike passes Wind Rock (4100 feet), which has which has good views north over Stony Creek Valley toward Fork and Peters mountains on left. The hike then follows the AT and the War Branch Trail back to the cars.

Mary Lou Gaminde 344-1637
Lynn Bryant 343-2084

Sunday, June 27, 2004 8:00 AM
Catawba Mountain (Rt 311) to Trout Creek (Rt 620)

12.9 miles, Strenuous, \$1.00 carpool fee
6 miles from Roanoke

Located in Roanoke and Craig County, the hike follows the roller coaster Sawtooth Ridge, with views of Fort Lewis Mountain on the left and Cove Mountain and North Mountain on the right. The hike continues over Sandstone Ridge and then you begin the climb to Dragon's Tooth.

Kris Peckman 366-7780
Maurice Turner 981-5518

Sunday, June 27, 2004 1:00 PM
Buffalo Mountain

4 miles, Easy-Moderate, \$3.00 carpool fee
48 miles from Roanoke

Located in Floyd County, the parking area for Buffalo Mountain is on Route 727, a few miles from the Blue Ridge Parkway in the vicinity of Mabry Mill. Buffalo Mountain, at just under 4,000 feet, is the highest point in Floyd County.

Dick Clark 989-7053
Georgia Gallaher 345-8700

Hike Reports (Continued)

Saturday, February 14, 2004 8:00 AM Wapiti Shelter Maintenance Hike

David Cheslow (co-leader), Jonathan Reed (co-leader), Carl Cornett, Christy Straight and Carol Broderson.

Carol drove all the way from the Mount Rogers area, so she met us near Kimberling Creek rather than drive all the way to Roanoke. We got started right on time, but the weather did not turn out as nice as predicted. The Forest Service roads that go near Wapiti shelter were covered with several inches of snow and ice. I missed the last turn-off and we did not realize it until the FS road crossed the Ribble trail... 2 miles from the shelter. Most of us were a bit cramped from sitting in the car. We decided, since we were not carrying anything heavy, to hike the two miles rather than drive back to the missed turn-off and take a chance on being able to drive one mile closer. Of course, that turned our planned 2 mile hike into a 4 mile hike. Combined with the icy snow, our hike was quite a bit more challenging than originally planned. At first glance, the shelter looked to be in great shape. We cleaned out the fire grate before building one to cook our lunch. We had a fabulous lunch... good food, good drink, great company... "a good time was had by all." We installed a "boil or treat" sign near the water source. One of these signs needs to be posted near each shelter water source... both as a reminder for hikers to treat their water and as a signal as to where water can (usually) be found.

Only a few shelter water sources have these signs. Jonathan reported that some of the shingles were falling off the roof and, on closer inspection, we discovered that all of the shingles are in need of replacement. That's a big project that needs to be done sometime this summer. We can bring materials in by horse/mule to within a hundred yards. It would be great if someone with some roofing skills would volunteer to plan and coordinate this project. The Forest Service would likely help us with transporting materials... they might even be able to help in other ways. Then we discovered a real bummer.... the logs that form the shelter are being eaten by some sort of bug... Jonathan thinks pine bark beetles. You can see

hundreds of tiny holes in the logs, each with a trail of sawdust leaking out. All of the crosspieces on the picnic table need replacing, as do most of the bolts holding it together. This is a smaller project suited for someone with modest carpentry skills (cut a board, drill a hole, add bolts and screws, measure twice, cut once). I have a list of materials and tools that will be needed. The fourth project for this shelter is to "chink" between the logs to cut down on the breeze in the shelter. I contacted a log cabin builder and he recommended a synthetic material called "perma-chink." I think it would be much (much) better if we could find an organic solution. Again, I have measurements for the amount of material needed. Some more research is needed before this project can move forward. We could certainly schedule more than one of these projects on the same day... or they could all happen independently... however it works out is fine. The RATC will pay for materials (even better if we can get them donated though) and there are enough folks with tools that none should need to be purchased. So all we're asking for is your time and energy. Please contact me or Jonathan if you're interested. Remember... this is only one of the 13 shelters we maintain - there are LOTS of other projects if these don't fit you well. Other projects coming up are building and digging a new outhouse at Lambert's Meadow and installing signage in the composting outhouse at Laurel Creek. There will be more as Jonathan and I complete our inventory. As we were leaving, we stopped at Wapiti pond where we found (as usual) lots of garbage. We picked up 2 large trash bags full. I think what we need at this location is a volunteer to visit the shelter/pond about once every month or six weeks. If you live near Pearisburg, Dublin or Wytheville and would like an excuse to get out in the woods every few weeks, perhaps you'd be willing to "adopt" this shelter? The hike back was hard going uphill in the snow carrying lots of stinky garbage but good conversation helped us pass the time; arriving back in Roanoke a bit later than planned (just after 6PM). To those who couldn't join us on this trip... write March 13 on your calendar. The Blazer says we'll be going to Docs Knob, but we have some pressing work to be done elsewhere. Stay tuned for details as they develop.

**Sunday, February 15, 2004 8:00 AM
Petites Gap to James River (Rt.501)**

Lois Smith Leader, Shelley Himel, Charlie Scharnberg, H.R Blankship, Carl Cornett, Gary Hale, Jennifer L. Pfister and Emily Randow.

Laura Montague could not lead the hike due to an illness in her family. Laura called to tell me the section of the Parkway that we were to travel on was closed due to the snow and ice in the days before. I was not sure of the condition of the trails and decided to do Hay Rock in the afternoon. If the trails were icy, we could have easily turned back. The day was cool and windy and there were icy patches but the trails were in fair shape. The group we had moved up and back down the trail quickly as they were strong hikers and the wind was very brisk at the Rock. The hike was enjoyed by all.

**Sunday, February 22, 2004 8:00 AM
Work Hike on Catawba Mountain**

Charles Parry, Laurie Adkins, Malcolm Black, Bob Foutz, Jerry Kyle, Larry Austin, Wes Barnes, Charlie Scharnberg, Shelly Himel, Dana Helsley, Fred Coughlan, Kris Peckman, & James Lewis

Thirteen people was a local maximum for our work hikes. We had 6 people who were more or less new to work trips. Actually, Jerry worked on the Konnarock Crew last summer and Wes had worked with us over 20 years ago. It was good to have so many new people and we hope that they will all be back soon.

The work plan was to continue work on a project that we began last November, which is a short relocation around a badly eroded section of trail about 1/2 mile south of the Catawba Mountain Shelter. With so many workers, it went real fast and we almost finished the digging. I did not want to open it then, since we need to install steps on the switchback and do a better job of brushing that in. We also want to thoroughly close the old trail. All of that can wait until our next trip. We had a good day and quit work before 4 o'clock.

**Sunday, February 22, 2004 1:00 PM
Rock Castle Creek**

Dave Sutton (leader), Bobbie Stitcher (assistant leader), Mary Lou Gaminde, Linda Akers, Merv Brower, Blanche Brower, Carl Cornett, John Read, Linda Akers, Jo Jo Gin, Liliann Vuong,

Sharon Harrison, David Harrison, H.R. Blankenship, Madelene Taylor, Mike Ferguson, Mary Gilbert, Zetta Campbell .

It was a bright sunny day with cool temperatures. We arrived at the trail just after 2 PM (all except Linda, John, Mary, and Mary Lou. The driver was navigating by the Parkway and passed the intended exit so this group hiked the upper portion of the trail as we were to learn later.) Carl took a couple of pictures of the group on the lower portion of the trail while we wondered where our other four hikers were. While hiking we passed an old mountain homestead amidst hardwoods and continued on a gradual incline through a profusion of rhododendron and mountain laurel. We crossed the creek several times on bridges and the last mile we hiked uphill atop two inches of snow covering the trail, until we met a junction. It is easy to see why that in 1984 Rock Castle Creek Gorge Loop Trail was designated a National Scenic Trail in recognition of its outstanding features.

**Sunday, February 29, 2004 8:00 AM
Tar Jacket Ridge, Cole Mt. –
Old Hotel Trail loop**

Kris Peckman (leader), Otis Farmer, Mary, Jimbo & Prancer Harshfield, Shelley Himel, Mike Leahy, Bob Peckman and Charlie Sharnberger

Larry Austin's niece picked today for her wedding, cheating Larry out of his hike and leaving Kris as leader. We had checked out the roads as best we could with the ice two weeks ago, but still took the two cars on a half-hour detour before arriving at the trailhead. Amazingly, we still had to scramble over ice on the way up Tar Jacket Ridge. After that, most of the trail was clear, but the ground was still frozen. The views were great on this sunny day, but we didn't eat lunch on the top of Cold Mountain because of the wind. On the way down Cold Mt. we met Sandra Elder and a group from the Natural Bridge Club, who helped us locate Goshen Pass in the distance. On the Old Hotel Trail, Mike was surprised to find a yellow birch tree. Bob wanted to report Prancer to the Sheltie Council for letting the group separate into two groups on the forest service road, but decided to let him off since he had been such a polite hiker all day. Welcome, Otis, on your first hike with RATC.

**Sunday, February 29, 2004 1:00 PM
Seven Mile Mountain**

Dave Sutton (leader), Lynn Bryant (co-leader) Peggy Bryant, Bobbie Stitcher, Maurice Turner, Linda Sutton, Emory Richardson, Sue Foy, Mary Lou Gaminde, Nancy Utz, Mervin Brower, Blanche Brower, Jo Jo Gin, Liliann Vuong, Liz Wicks, Vada Sarsfield, Mary Gilbert, Donna and Kyle Haley, Gary Adams.

We started hiking at 2 PM from the parking area at road 658, following the orange blazes (painted by Lynn and Peggy and crew) heading south. The first mile was steep, taking us by a giant sink hole, still filled with frozen water. Upon reaching the top of the ridge we took a break in a grassy area that was once a homestead. From here the trail descends gradually, following the ridge and crossing an old road bed. We owe special thanks to Peggy Bryant, who drove the shuttle to the other end, clearing away numerous tree limbs and logs while we made our descent down to road 632. Upon finishing Lynn shuttled the drivers back to the start point. It was a nice warm winter afternoon for a great hike!

**Sunday, March 7, 2004 10:00 AM
Kimberling Creek (Rt. 606) to
Ribble Trail (South End)**

Kenny Garrett (leader), Greg Foster (assistant leader, Dave Miller, Mary Lou Gaminde, Georgia Gallaher, Mary Gilbert, Sherri Pippin, Brice Moon & Jackson Foster.

The day was perfect for an early spring stroll. We saw two deer and a grouse just prior to parking the cars. After the drive to Bland/Giles Counties, the walk was underway. We started on the southern end of the blue blazed trail, then turned south on the Appalachian Trail

The trail was in great shape with signs of recent maintenance. There were several small creek crossings, but no one went for a swim. The path was muddy in some areas, but that is to be expected in early March. After a few miles of a casual and mostly flat stroll, we took the side trail to Dismal Falls. There we took a lunch break and everyone seemed to really enjoy the peacefulness and beauty of the water and rocks. We then returned to our southern trek over the one hill of the hike and down to Kimberling Creek. We played on the footbridge for a few minutes before heading back towards Roanoke. I believe everyone enjoyed this middle of the day hike along Dismal Creek. P.S. Several comments were made that this hike would be even better if planned during the blooming of the Rhododendron, which are plentiful along this section of trail.

**Sunday, March 7, 2004 1:00 PM
Daleville (Rt. 220) to Hay Rock**

Leader Mervin Brower (leader), Blanche Hale (assistant leader), Lillian Vuongh, Jo Jo Gin, Emory Richardson, Sue Scanlin, Sue Foy, Liz Wicks, Nancy Utz, Otis Farmer, Vada Saxsfiels and Madeline Taylor

The day was in the 60's and sunny and windy. We left the parking lot at about 1:10 PM and returned at 5:00 which meant that we made good time. We were very compatible group and remained together during the hike. With no leaves on the trees the view was spectacular from the top of the Tinker Mountain. It was good to see Carvin's Cove filled with water again. We met Homer & Therese Witcher at Hay rock.

If you plan to be away, let us know and we will put a first-class stamp on your Blazer. That is cheaper and easier than paying for the notice that your Blazer went into the trash! – *Therese*

RATC Overseer Assignments Spring 2004

VA 611 to VA 606:	Kenny Garrett, Dorthy Hoskins
To Dismal Creek:	Mike and Virginia Reilly
To Ribble Trail (north end):	Bill Floyd & Leslie Kay
To powerline:	David Hicks & Greg Still
To US 460 Bridge:	Charles & Gloria Parry
Pine Swamp Shelter to Bailey Gap Shelter:	Mike Ferguson
To War Spur Shelter:	Hal Cantrill, Bob Foutz
To Rocky Gap:	Clyde Perdue & Bill Ross
To Sinking Creek:	Joe, Brian & Leigh Anne Kelly
To Niday Trail:	David Cheslow & Stephanie Kent
To VA 621:	Red Crone
To VA 620:	Mervin and Blanche Brower
To VA 624:	Bob & Kris Peckman
To VA 311:	Ed Bessel, Don Nulph & Maurice Turner
To Campbell Shelter:	Laurie & Leonard Adkins
To Brickey's Gap:	Ron McCorkle
To Ditch Trail:	Bill Gordge
To Angel's Gap	Zetta Campbell & Dick Clark
To US 220:	John Lynham
To VA 652:	Homer & Therese Witcher
To Salt Pond Road:	Jim & Linda Hutchings

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

Names(s) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____ - _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Email _____ Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Family Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> New 1 year \$20	<input type="checkbox"/> New 2 year \$35	<input type="checkbox"/> Renew 1 year \$15	<input type="checkbox"/> Renew 2 year \$30
Individual Member	<input type="checkbox"/> New 1 year \$15	<input type="checkbox"/> New 2 year \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Renew 1 year \$10	<input type="checkbox"/> Renew 2 year \$20
Make checks payable to RATC, PO Box 12282, Roanoke, 24024-2282				<input type="checkbox"/> Life \$500

Another Change Afoot

Dear friends and colleagues!

It seems hard to believe that it has been almost three years since I left the Appalachian Trail Conference and Southwest Virginia and over 2 1/2 years and three summer seasons of work with the Pacific Northwest Trail Association. It has been a rewarding if demanding time for both Tina and I.

At PNTA we now have five new regional offices reminiscent of my early days at ATC, and the first two sections of the PNT have received federal recognition covering 160+ miles of the trail. Several sections are well on their way to improvement moving off open roads to backcountry and wilderness settings. Youth crews and volunteers involvement have grown substantially, and with it our reputation with our agency partners.

I have great gratitude and admiration for the volunteers, volunteer leaders and agency partners who have been at the heart of this growth and accomplishment.

And now for the news!!! I have recently accepted a new position as Director of Trail Operations for the Pacific Crest Trail Association. Although PCTA is based in Sacramento, I will be working from Vashon Island. I will be leading PCTA's efforts in trail maintenance and management, and trail protection. I'm really excited about this new challenge and feel that PCTA is poised for real growth in their capabilities. My hiking buddies will just have to come west and sample some of the PCT with me, and trail work friends can join me for a volunteer vacation! More news as things settle out and I catch my stride.

As for Tina, in the last three years she has gone from being a prof to being the director of Antioch University's Programs in Education, which includes about half AUS's students and faculty.

Please let me know how things are going; it has been far too long since I have seen, talked to or e-mailed many of you.

Mike Dawson