

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

Fall 2009

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.

CALENDAR OF CLUB ACTIVITIES

Holiday Potluck
Saturday December 5 – 6:00 PM

WORK HIKES

Sunday, October 25 - 8:00 AM
Sinking Creek Mountain

-

Sunday, November 22 - 8:30 AM
Andy Layne Trail

-

Sunday, December 13 - 8:30 AM
Dragon's Tooth

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, October 12, 7:30 p.m.
Hosted by Liz Belcher

Monday, November 16, 7:30 p.m.
Hosted by Bob & Kris Peckman

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Conservation Supervisor's Message

Exhibit Developer Needed:

We have been asked several times recently to provide an exhibit at special events that focus on outdoor recreation. This would be a way for us to recruit new members and hikers. The Board is looking for someone who might be interested in putting together a display with pictures of hikes and work days and maybe some background information on the Club and ATC. It could be done on a 3-panel foam core board like those used for science fair projects. If interested, contact Mervin Brower or someone on the Board.

Liz Belcher

Welcome New Members

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club welcomes the following new members:

Roger Boles

Christopher Slocum

Holly Matusovich

Elizabeth Surat

Rushdat Hale

Ed Colvin

John & Hilda Knapp

Michael Hamilton

Rebecca Terrill

And we thank *Larry & Barbara Dennis* for their donation in memory of *Vernon Lorish*.

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

Bob Blankenbaker

Trail Supervisor's Report

We had 22 people work with the Konnarock Crews this summer, but only 3 of us earned T-shirts by working 5 or more days. The T-shirt winners were Blanche Brower, Mervin Brower and myself. We got a good start on the Bluff City relocation and hopefully will be able to finish it next year.

This fall we have 3 separate projects to work on. First we will do a short relocation on Sinking

Creek Mountain, near Sarver Hollow Shelter. This will get the trail off one of the slanted rock sections where it is sliding down hill. Next we will repair some steps and do some regrading on the Andy Layne Trail. We will also try to close off some switchback shortcuts. Finally, we will try to close switchback shortcuts on the trail from the parking lot to Dragon's Tooth.

Charles Parry

Hikemaster's Report

In June, I went on a camping and backpacking trip to southeastern Utah. We visited and hiked in Arches and Canyonlands National Parks. The wide-open country there is very inspirational. Hiking in the desert is a little more challenging than here in the East. The main factor is the lack of water on the trail. You definitely have to make sure you are carrying enough with you, particularly on backpack trips. Also, the intense sunshine and lack of humidity tends to wring moisture out of a person. The last factor is simply the vast undeveloped areas out there. You definitely should have a map and compass with you while out hiking. The survival period for someone lost in the back country there could be as little as two days.

Backpacker magazine recently had an interesting article about a person who analyzes lost hiker

cases. Robert Koestner lives in Charlottesville and has spent several years compiling statistics on over 50,000 lost hiker incidents. He said 88% of these incidents occur in the mountains. The typical lost hiker is male, 38 years old, and is day hiking solo. He is usually poorly equipped—often lacking map and compass—and compounds a wrong or missed turn by forging ahead rather than retracing his steps to his last known location. Nearly half of the incidents occur in July and August. Typically the lost hikers are eventually found 11 to 12 miles from the point the hiker was last spotted/known to be. His research suggests that “most people get lost near the middle of a route to a destination or halfway in between when coming back.” Koester has also seen a rise in recent years in the number of people found uphill from where they were last seen or known to be. While some hikers have always headed to higher

ground in an attempt to reorient themselves, Koester says that many more are now saying that they moved uphill searching for cell-phone coverage. He says there are three things hikers should do to help avoid getting trouble in the woods. First, make a reasonable estimate of how much time and effort a hike will require. Second, always leave your itinerary with friends, family, or rangers when you go into the backcountry. Include your intended route, expected return, and what time they should initiate a rescue if they haven't heard from you. Even on a routine day hike, at least tell someone where you're going. Lastly, always carry the 10 essential hiking items with you: map, compass and/or GPS, headlamp, food, water, extra clothes, first-aid kit, matches, raingear, and an emergency blanket or a large plastic garbage bag for shelter. When you're packing for a hike, ask yourself, 'Do I have enough gear that I could spend the night out if I had to?'"

Many of you may have heard of a thru-hiker that was seriously injured in a confrontation with another hiker at a trail shelter in North Carolina in June. While some confrontations may be unavoidable, the best (and safest) option when dealing with a conflict with someone on the trail is to avoid the conflict in the first place. If you see someone engaging in illegal activity on the trail report them to the authorities as soon as you can. Avoid getting in a confrontation with the individual. Remember, you may be miles from the nearest source of help if the confrontation turns violent. In addition, you don't know the mental state of the person and whether the person is impaired by drugs or alcohol. To report an incident, contact the National Forest Service at 540-265-5100 or call 911.

Mike Vaughn

Bear Country Tips



If You Carry Bear Pepper Spray:

- ◆ Use *bear* pepper spray. Personal self-defense pepper spray is not effective.
- ◆ The canister must be immediately available, not in your pack.
- ◆ It is effective only at distances of 10–30 feet and can be adversely affected by wind, cold temperatures, and age of the spray.
- ◆ Follow the manufacturer's instructions, know how to use the spray, and be aware of its limitations, including the expiration date.
- ◆ If you use the spray to stop a bear, leave the area immediately. The spray is effective for a short time and is less effective the second time.
- ◆ It is not a repellent. Don't spray it on people, tents, or backpacks.
- ◆ Carrying bear pepper spray is no substitute for vigilance and exercising safety precautions.

A Fed Bear Is a Dead Bear

Do not leave packs containing food unattended, even for a few minutes. If a bear obtains human food even once, it often becomes aggressive about obtaining such food, and may have to be destroyed or removed from the park.

Alert Bears to Your Presence

Make loud noises, shout, or sing. Hike in groups, stay on maintained trails, and use caution if vision is obstructed. Do not hike after dark. Avoid carcasses; bears often defend this source of food.

If You Encounter a Bear

Do not run; bears can easily outrun you. Plus, running may cause an otherwise non-aggressive bear to attack. If the bear is unaware of you, keep out of sight and detour behind and downwind of the bear. If the bear is aware of you but has not acted aggressively, slowly back away.

Do not drop your pack! This teaches bears how to obtain human foods and often means the bear must be removed.

Climbing trees to avoid bears is not often practical. All black bears, all grizzly cubs, and some adult grizzlies can climb trees. Plus, running to a tree may provoke an otherwise uncertain bear to chase you.

If a Bear Approaches or Charges You

Do not run. Some bears will bluff their way out of a threatening situation by charging, then veering off or stopping abruptly. Bear experts generally recommend standing still until the bear stops and then slowly backing away. If you are attacked, try to lie on the ground completely flat on your stomach. Spread your legs and clasp your hands over the back of your neck. Do not drop your pack! It will protect your back.

Frank Haranzo gave us this NPS bulletin. It was written for grizzlies but applies to black bears as well.

Appalachian Trail Conservancy 38th Biennial Conference



July 1 – 8, 2011
Emory & Henry College
Emory, Virginia

The Virginia Regional Partnership Committee (RPC) comprised of the seven A.T. maintaining clubs of Central and Southwest Virginia are pleased to host

Virginia Journeys 2011
Celebrating the
Appalachian National Scenic Trail
and the
Blue Ridge Mountain Trails of Virginia



APPALACHIAN TRAIL
CONSERVANCY

Founded in 1836, Emory & Henry College is the oldest college in Southwest Virginia and one of only a few colleges in the country whose entire campus is listed on the National Historic Register. The campus encompasses 331 pristine acres and is located one-half mile off Interstate 81 (Exit 26).

With one-fourth of the Appalachian Trail in Virginia, the A.T. follows north from the Tennessee state line through Damascus, the "friendliest town on the trail" and enters the Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area with Virginia's highest peak at 5,729 feet. The trail affords a splendid wilderness trip as it passes Whitetop Mountain, Rhododendron Gap and Grayson Highlands State Park. Also located nearby is the Virginia Creeper Trail, along a native-American footpath and old mountain railroad bed.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

- Hikes on the Appalachian Trail in Virginia and Tennessee
- Mountain biking and hiking on the Virginia Creeper Trail
- Canoeing and kayaking on local waterways
- Visits to Virginia State Parks
- Excursions to nearby historical and cultural locations

INDOOR ACTIVITIES

- ATC's Biennial General Membership Meeting
- National and local entertainment
- Workshops on a variety of outdoor and nature topics
- Discussions on club and A.T. Conservancy issues
- Exhibits and vendors
- Socialize with fellow Trail Community friends

General & Volunteer Information
Register Online after March 1, 2011
www.appalachiantrail.org/VIRGINIA2011

Virginia Travel Information
www.virginia.org

Emory & Henry College Information
www.ehc.edu

Hike Reports

**Sunday, February 22, 2009 11:00 am
Catawba Mt. (Rt. 311) to Sawtooth (Rt. 785)**

Jean Warren and Mike Ferguson (leaders), Billy Ferguson, Maurice Turner, Rita Krasnow and her canine friend, Lolla.

Another perfect RATC hiking day - a mixed bag of clouds, sun, high winds, and 34 degrees, along with a few snow flurries. Mercy me, those winds know how to blow up on the ridge! Maurice found us some blue birds to watch and checked on the maintenance condition of the trail. The most fun we had was walking through leaves up to our knees (leaves which covered rocks) as we were climbing up. Some of us were falling more than others (huh, Rita?), but since I was in the back, I got to witness when we were all down at the same time. Slippery like a water slide! Though we all enjoyed ourselves, Lolla had the most fun. A mixed breed with some whippet or greyhound in her, it was beautiful to watch her literally streak across the wide-open field. Afterwards, the men folk took off for the Home Place while the women headed for home.

(The editor is sorry this was at the bottom of a pile. Found at last!)

**Sunday, May 31, 2009 7:00AM
A.T., U S 58 to Damascus**

John Miller & Kenny Garrett (co-leaders), Carl Cornett, and Kristin Peckman

The hike started with the weather in the 60's and a pleasant breeze that lasted the whole hike. There was a threat of rain in the morning that didn't materialize during the hike. It cleared off in the afternoon and we finished the hike in sunshine and temperatures in the 70's. The forest was alive with color provided by Mountain Laurel, Rhododendron, Flame Azalea, Fire Pink, Galax, Rattlesnake Weed, Blackberry and Blueberry bushes.

Not many animals were seen during the hike but we did come across an orange newt on the trail. Those newts always look like a plastic toy some child has dropped along the way. A black snake and garter snake were also seen much to Carl's delight. The most abundant creatures were the through-hikers we encountered heading north as we headed south.

This was a long but pleasant hike and we made it back to Salem with daylight to spare.

**Sunday, May 31, 2009 1:00PM
Curry Gap to Fullhardt Knob
Beginner's Hike**

Zetta Campbell (leader), Fred Walters, Mary Gilbert, Steve Tomaziefski with his dog

Only four humans and one dog went on this hike (never did get the dog's name down). We might have had two dogs, but Mary's Son (her dog) preferred the couch to the trail this time. After thunderstorms the night before, it was a real treat to wake up to blue skies, a sunlit world and clear air. All along the route of this hike were lots and lots of mountain laurel in full bloom—a plethora of them, you might say, and I do! The leader led from the rear and let the young'uns scamper up the trail. We met several through hikers along the way, on their way from Springer Mountain to Katahdin. It's that time of the year. Fred wondered how 2,000 hikers, starting at about the same time managed, especially at the beginning; so, he asked one of them. He admitted it was "a mess". As for this hike, one of our number opined this was not a beginner's hike. I would agree, but I had asked for it. It was beautiful, though.

**Sunday, June 7, 2009 8:00AM
Old Hotel Trail, Cold Mountain Loop**

John Merkwan & Janie Bible (co-leaders), H.R. Blankenship, Mike Vaughn, Sheila Vaughn, Sarah Cuthbertson, Fred Walters, Ivy Lidstone, Kathy & Lauren Lockhart, Ryan Bayse, Kathy Keiter

It was a beautiful day and with elevations reaching 4000 feet, it made for a great summer hike. Mountain Laurel was in full bloom, along with lots of other wild flowers. The hike started out with a steady climb in the woods and opened up to an area where the Old Hotel once existed. We continued on to climb Cold Mountain. It is compared to the high mountain meadows in Scotland and Switzerland and justly so. The summit of Cold Mountain is an open mountain bald with views in all directions. Along with the beautiful yellow flowers on either side of the trail, the view was very picturesque. We were all pleasantly surprised after returning to the cars with cold beverages and homemade Danishes provided by John. It was a wonderful day

considering weather, the surroundings, and (last but not least) the company

**Saturday & Sunday, June 13 & 14, 2009
8:00AM**

Bluff City Relocation Work Hike

Charles Parry, Dana Helsley, Blanche Brower, Mervin Brower, Fred Meyer, Karen Callahan, Jonathan McGlumphy, Kris Peckman, Peggy Bryant, Jerry Kyle

There were 5 of us on Saturday and 6 on Sunday. There was also an SCA crew of about 10 people and the Konnarock crew of 11. We worked in the middle with the SCA crew below us and the Konnarock crew above us. Kerry Wood spent a lot of time working with the SCA crew both days. On Saturday Dana and I worked on a set of steps and on Sunday Jonathan and I worked on another set of steps. The others dug new trail.

**Sunday, June 21, 2009 8:00AM
Punchbowl (BRP) to James River (Rt 501)**

Kris Peckman (leader), Gary Bible, H.R. Blankenship, Pat Guzik, John Merkwon, John Miller, Mike, Sheila, and Melissa Vaughn, Fred Walters

After a week of rain followed by hot, humid weather, we were treated to a sunny day with a delicious breeze. We had ten congenial hikers including Mike and Sheila's daughter Melissa, home from VCU for Father's Day.

The hike begins with a 1000' elevation gain in the first two miles (on the lee side, ergo, no breeze) as we climbed first Punchbowl, then Bluff, mountains. Coming down Bluff Mt., first H.R., then John, saw a young bear! Later we ate its lunch (yummy blueberries, right beside the trail), but it never came back to protest. We also saw a moth, shaped like a stealth bomber, with a symmetrical black and white pattern of giraffe-like spots, and a tiny red head. Fairly hasty research shows it looking something like a Leconte's Haploa moth. The mountain laurel were dropping their remaining flowers, leaving clusters of little green and red balls with a little spike sticking out from each ball. Other flowers we spotted were Indian pipes, long-leaved bluets, and a yellow flower that I think was tickseed. Also

observed were a scarlet tanager, a tame deer, and a few thru-hikers, one of them very angry with life in general.

We had lunch at Big Rocky Row, overlooking the James River, and then hiked down, down, down till we crossed Hercules Road and finished the hike on the new section, built to connect with the footbridge over the James River. This is a beautiful section along the creek—very refreshing on a warm day. In the creek we saw a snake, but it was too quick for us to identify it.

**Sunday, June 21, 2009 1:00PM
Thunder Ridge Overlook to Sunset Fields Overlook**

Kenny Garrett (leader), Zetta Campbell (assistant) Lance Garrett, Mark, Brad & Luke McClean, Steve Tomaziefski, Hugh Hall, Dena Goldberg & K-9 Rascal and guests Christy Straight and Allen Sowder

What a beautiful June afternoon for a Father's Day outing. We made a stop at the Peaks of Otter Visitor's Center on the way to the trail head. There was a nice deer there that let everyone get close enough that some even petted her. We then continued our drive north on the parkway and started our stroll where the A.T. passed the Thunder Ridge overlook. I had told our hikers that this was a fairly flat easy walk. When questioned about that description as we approached the shelter for a snack, I still defended the statement. I assured them that this hike contained no hills, just slight variations in elevation. We met a couple of section hikers and four thru-hikers on this section. One hiker stated that with her husband's support, she had quit her job and started in Springer and was loving the adventure. The Guillotine looked really cool as always. The breeze (understatement) was blowing hard enough to keep everyone at a comfortable temperature for the walk. The views were totally magnificent from the ridges. I believe everyone had a really enjoyable time.

**Sunday, June 28, 2009 7:00AM
Fox Creek (Rt 603) to Elk Garden (Rt 600)**

John Miller (leader), John Merkwon (co-leader) and Rushdat Hale

After the long drive to the car switch points, three hardy souls began hiking the 16.8 miles in temperatures in the upper 60's. The white Rhododendron were in bloom in the lower elevations and but the blueberries were not yet ripe so no trail treats for the hikers. The breeze was with us as we climbed in elevation and helped to keep us cool. Many side trails went off to various destinations but the AT was well marked. We met many recreational and perhaps a few section hikers as we made our way south. The hike leader flushed a large bird (maybe a turkey), a chipmunk and a gray squirrel during the hike. We encountered the "wild ponies" on Wilburn Ridge. One was so wild the hike leader had to go around him since he was grazing in the middle of the trail. We all made it through "Fatman's Squeeze" as we climbed to the summit of Rhododendron Gap. The sky started to look like rain as we were on the bald approaching the rocky high point of the hike. We noticed many camping areas and shelters filling up as the day got older. We stopped for a short lunch break and finally began our descent shortly after. At the end of the hike we went through a field of grazing cows and their calves. We made the car switch and got back to Salem before 8:00 pm.

**Sunday, June 28, 2009 1:00PM
Buffalo Mountain**

Blake Mitnick(fearless leader), Sue Scanlin, Bruce Sellars, Dave Miller, & Mary Gilbert.

On a lovely summer day we climbed the trail at Buffalo Mountain and enjoyed the spectacular view of Virginia and North Carolina mountains. The group was small but good. The trail is greatly improved from the previous trail. Our expedition was short, lasting about 1/2 hour to the top but everyone felt the afternoon was quite well spent.

**Sunday, July 5, 2009 1:00PM
Read Mountain Trail**

John Miller (leader), Dave Sutton (co-leader), Carl Cornett, and Kraig and Hannah Neidigh

Twelve people expressed interest in this hike but only five wanted to do it on a cool rainy Sunday afternoon. It was an invigorating trek up to Buzzard Rocks but none of the views materialized. The hike leader tried to tell folks what they might be seeing if the mountain had not been shrouded in clouds. At the top we enjoyed the non-views and some chit chat and then went back down the mountain to our vehicles. We all got to hike with new people and found that enjoyable. It was a better way to spend a rainy Sunday than watching TV.

**Sunday, July 12, 2009 8:00AM
Catawba Mountain (Rt. 311) to Andy
Layne Trail (Rt. 779) 113-Mile Hike #4**

Dick Moran (leader), Chuck Walz (assistant), H.R. Blankenship, Sarah Cuthbertson, Fred Meyer, Kris and Bob Peckman, John Merkwon and Richard Kurstan.

The day was hot and muggy and ended up with some passing thunderstorms by the time we reached Tinker Cliffs. A highlight of the walk was encountering a family from Indianapolis, IN at McAfee's Knob who were walking a section of the trail. According to the father, they were still getting acclimated to the altitude! There were good views from the Knob and from Tinker Cliffs including the passing thunderstorm. The heat did take its toll on some of us (myself included) but we banded together and persevered.

**Sunday, July 12, 2009 1:00PM
Roaring Run**

Kenny (leader) & Dawn Garrett, Mary Gilbert & K-9 Son, Sherry Kessel, Anne Hanna, Zetta Campbell and Guests; Dabney Moon, Shawn, Ana, and Abigail Biggins, Phil, Denise, and Faith Settle, Susan Owen, Linda Harrison, Drew Troth, and Kayse Carter

What a beautiful sunny afternoon for a short stroll. The temperature was lower than average for July. We had a large number of hikers for this adventure. Thankfully, we were afforded the use of a church van from my church so that everyone could travel with only taking two vehicles. Once there, the insects seemed to hang around the parking lot area and did not follow us up the trail. The water was flowing beautifully over the rocks and cascading

down the runs into the pools. There were several on this excursion that had never walked along this magnificent creek. We all mingled and relaxed at the base of the tallest falls and just relaxed in the wonder of it all. Surprisingly, the trail was not crowded on this warm afternoon. After a long period of time, we had to ply ourselves away and begin our walk back down the trail towards the reality of life and leave this haven of beauty and relaxation behind. I believe that a wonderful time was had by all. The club members engaged the guests in such a friendly manner that I believe we will be seeing many of them again.

**Sunday, July 19, 2009 8:30AM
Andy Layne Trail Work Hike**

Charles Parry, Dick Clark, Kris Peckman, Christy Straight, Lance Clark, Kenn (?) Baird, Mark Nefeld (?), Ron Collins, Ashley Boot

We had 4 club members and 5 from the Roanoke Cement Company plant. The cement company people provided us with coffee and doughnuts at the parking area. We started 6 people at the parking lot, while the other 3 of us drove up cement company property to the point where the trail is on the old road. The first group clipped and re-blazed the trail. In the upper group, I used the weedeater to cut weeds on the road while the others clipped. There we were soon joined by 2 people from the lower group. About lunch time the weedeater broke and the trail blazers caught up with me. We had our lunch and headed on up. We soon met the others coming down. At that point everybody except Dick, Kris and I left. The three of us continued on up to Scorched Earth Gap with me clipping and the other two blazing. After finishing, we returned to my truck, which was just below the old road and drove out across cement company property. It was good to renew our acquaintance with the cement company people. We need to remember that the company is doing a great public service by allowing the trail to be on their land.

**Sunday, July 26, 2009 1:00PM
Otter Creek Trail**



July 26 Otter Creek hike photo by Kenny Garrett, leader

Yes, that is a person next to the rock, The report will come next issue if Kenny's hard drive survives the virus. (Never trust anyone who offers help on line. Ed.)

**Sunday, July 26, 2009 8:00AM
Rock Castle Gorge**

Mike Vaughn (leader), Fred Meyer (Assistant), H.R. Blankenship, Karen Callahan, Carl Cornett, Rushdat Hale, Bob & Kris Peckman

Rock Castle Gorge is located along the Blue Ridge Parkway near Floyd. The trail through the gorge has been designated a National Scenic Trail in recognition of its outstanding features. We started on the trail at 9:30. We hiked the trail counter-clockwise from the bottom of the gorge. Floydfest was being held nearby but it was quiet in the gorge. After a steep climb out of the gorge, we reached the open fields along the Blue Ridge Parkway at Rocky Knob. We then hiked through the open fields for three miles. The breeze was refreshing and the 360-degree views around us were great. We stopped for lunch at an old A.T. shelter. The A.T. used to go through this area, but was relocated to west of Blacksburg many years ago. Shortly after lunch dark clouds rolled in and it started to rain heavily. We hurried to get off the ridgeline in the thunder and lightning. By the time we reached the top of the gorge, the rain had stopped. We could hear the music from Floydfest, whose grounds were only about a mile away. We started on our steep descent

into the gorge through thick groves of rhododendron. At the bottom we paused for a long rest at a particularly scenic spot along Rock Castle Creek. The last two miles of the hike were an easy walk on an old fire road along the creek.

**Sunday, August 2, 2009 8:00AM
Cove Mountain/Little Cove Mountain Loop**

There were eleven individuals signed up for this hike; however, it was cancelled by the leader due to rain showers and heavy downpours with imbedded thunderstorms. Of paramount importance in any hike is the safety of the participants. In this case, a decision had to be made early on the morning of the date of the hike to cancel rather than place people in jeopardy.

**Sunday, August 2, 2009 1:00PM
Falls Ridge**

Maurice Turner (leader), Bob Blankenbaker, Dave Sutton and Steven Tomaziefski.

It had rained in the AM and it was just cloudy conditions when we met at the Orange Market, and it was partly cloudy by the time we started our hike at Falls Ridge. The start of the hike along the travertine waterfall reminds me somewhat of a rainforest. We made our way above the fall and over the first ridge and down the other side via a series of steps. We hiked up the other ridge past the lime kiln and did the loop around the top, removing a big limb, that had fallen, off the trail. It became partly sunny later in the afternoon with a slight breeze. We were the only hikers when we started our hike but by the time we got back to the parking lot, there were five other vehicles. The fair weather people that didn't show missed a good hike.

**Thursday - Sunday, August 6-9, 2009
8:00AM
Bluff City Relocation Work Hike**

Charles Parry, Maurice Turner, Kris Peckman, Malcolm Black, James Brown, Bill Gorge, Mervin Brower, Blanche Brower, Jim Lewis, Eddie Baldwin, Julio Stephens, Dana Helsley, Homer Witcher, Therese Witcher, Peggy Bryant, Christy Straight, David Jones, Lori Jones, Kathy Brown

On Thursday the midweek crew joined us to give us a total of 9 people. We started work where the June

crew had finished. We put in a couple of steps, but it was mainly side hill digging. The Konnarock crew of 9 people arrived in mid afternoon and began work on some unfinished trail below us. On Friday, there were 4 of us and we did mainly side hill digging, but ran into rocks in the afternoon. Laura Belleville stopped by for a visit in the afternoon. On Saturday we had 5 people and decided to bring in a rockbar and sledge. On the way in, we stopped to remove one rock that was in the middle of the trail. We eventually turned it into a step along with a couple of other rocks. After joining the rest of the crew the main work was side hill digging. We quit around 3PM to allow time to get to the corn boil. Sunday was our best day with 12 workers. By noon we were passing the site of the old dome house. We put in a few rock steps, but the main work was side hill digging. As the side hill grade was very shallow, the work went quite fast. We pretty much got over to the real steep section, which a few of us took a look at. Anyway, that will have to wait until next year. I would estimate that we are close to half done with project.

**Saturday, August 8, 2009
Annual Cornboil – Green Hill Park**

Great food, even better people, sorry if you missed it. Ed.

**Sunday, August 16, 2009 1:00PM
Black Horse Gap to Bobblet's Gap
Beginner's Hike**

Zetta Campbell (Leader), West Francus & dog, Alan Simpson, Jenny Holman, Rushdat Hale

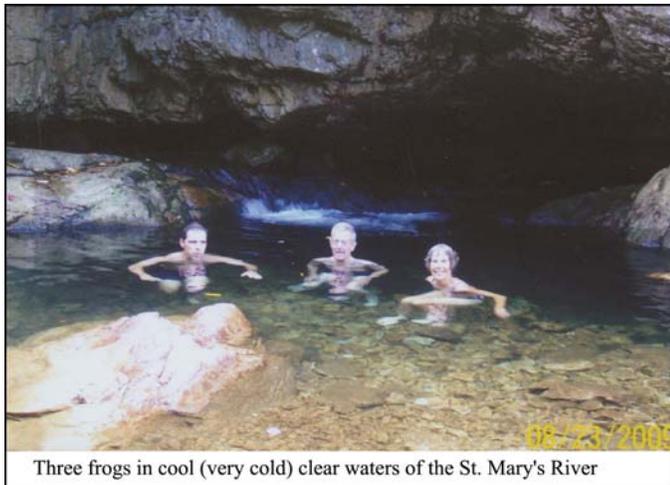
Only five showed up for the hike on this beautiful sunny day. Most of us didn't know each other prior to this hike, and were "foreigners" from other parts: West and Sam from Bedford, Alan and Jenny from Christiansburg, Rushdat from Nigeria and now living in Roanoke, and finally the leader, more or less native to Roanoke County.

This seemed to have been a good year for mushrooms. We noticed a good variety of colors: golden, orange, white, tan, pastel green, and even a black one. As we tramped on through the beautiful woods, getting glimpses of the surrounding mountains, the leader wondered if she had missed the "exit" to Bobblet's Gap, for the trail does not go

directly into the overlook and, as Miss Know-It-All, was supposed to know it all! Jenny figured we had been hiking at the blazing speed of a mile an hour. Was that why the five miles had seemed like ten? Then we spotted from below a bridge which is a clue we were near the overlook. Two of our group, who had gone ahead, we spotted at some signs. One of them read "Bobblet's Gap Shelter". You do not go to the shelter, but all we had to do was leave the trail and walk up to the overlook. So, the leader had not missed the "exit". This was a very congenial group and everyone seemed to have a good time.

**Sunday, August 23, 2009 8:00AM
St. Mary's River**

Kris Peckman (leader), John Merkwon (able assistant), H.R. Blankenship, Karen Callahan, Carl Cornett, Chase Davidson, Mary Gilbert and dog Son, Pat Guzik, Linda King, Paul McAnnally



Three frogs in cool (very cold) clear waters of the St. Mary's River

We had good weather and a congenial group for this summer hike. Even after consulting maps, we reached a point where we were unsure of the route to the trailhead, but a friendly local pointed us in the right direction. We hiked along the creek, and sometimes in the creek in the places where the trail has eroded away. On the bank to our left was the location of the rail line that carried the iron and manganese ore out from the mine which went out of business after World War II. At a fork in the trail, we went to the right to follow a side creek for a while, then crossed it and climbed to the old mine site. At the intersection with the Mine Bank Trail we paused for a snack

and chatted with a local couple who had come down the Mine Bank Trail. On the return trip we stopped for lunch by a pool in the side creek, then returned to the fork and took the spur trail to the falls, stopping along the way at a very pretty pool where a few of us took a swim and posed for a lot of pictures. Son gave us some good laughs as he barked at the rushing water and tried to bite it. Then on to the falls where we watched a father and children jump off the high rocks into the water. Paul looked like he was tempted to try it, but didn't. This is hardly a strenuous hike, but I think everyone enjoyed being near water on a warm summer day.

**Sunday, August 30, 2009 8:00AM
Montebello Fish Hatchery to Crabtree Falls**

Gary Bible (leader), John Merkwon (assistant), H.R. Blankenship, Jay Nunley, Fred Walters, Sarah Cuthbertson, Matt Montgomery, & Melonie Mitchell

Most of us departed Daleville at 8:00 a.m.; Matt and Melonie met us at the trailhead. The weather was beautiful and the low humidity made for a very comfortable hike. We hit the trail at approximately 9:45 a.m. Our group made a rather brisk pace to Spy Rock. Views from Spy Rock were spectacular! Plenty of sunshine and comfortable breezes made for a nice break. We moved on to a nice clearing next to a forestry road to enjoy lunch with good fellowship. Next, we hiked on another 1½ miles to the top of Crabtree falls. The water flow seemed to be unusually low when considering the abundant rainfall we've seen this summer; however, it still provided a refreshing dip for the feet of some of us. After a nice break at the overlook at the top of the falls, we continued down the heavily used trail, stopping to enjoy many of the additional overlooks. We met many other hikers on this portion of the trail. We drove to the trailhead to pick up the additional car and returned to Daleville. A good 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.

The club is always looking for experienced hikers to help lead club hikes. If you know of someone that you think would be a good hike leader, or wish to nominate yourself, please contact Mike Vaughn at 540-992-1350 or email mikeva999@yahoo.com.

**Sunday, October 4, 2009 8:00AM
A.T., Petites Gap to James River**

9.9 miles, Strenuous, \$4.00 carpool fee
39 miles from Roanoke

The hike is in the James River Face Wilderness located in Bedford and Rockbridge County. It roughly parallels the Blue Ridge Parkway. After a stiff climb to Highcock Knob (3073') it's a pleasant downward trending hike to James River (678') with occasional views to the west and grand finale on the James River Foot Bridge, longest foot-travel-only bridge on the AT.

John Miller375-3250
Karen Callahan540-961-0640

**Sunday, October 4, 2009 1:00PM
Fallingwater Cascades Beginner Hike**

2.1 miles, Easy, \$2.50 carpool fee
27 miles from Roanoke

Located in Botetourt County, this loop hike goes down a short, scenic trail to Fallingwater Cascades. This is a scenic stream just off the Blue Ridge Parkway. The trail follows the stream for a short distance before ascending back to the trail head.

Zetta Campbell 366-8165

**Sunday, October 10/11, 2009 8:00AM
Dolly Sods Backpack**

11 miles, Strenuous, \$18.00 carpool fee
180 miles from Roanoke

The Dolly Sods Wilderness Area is in northern West Virginia near Canaan Valley. The entire hike will be at an elevation of 4,000 feet or higher in mostly balds caused by early timber operations. The whole area is diverse in vegetation with spruce, firs, aspen trees. This time of the year provides a wide variety of colors with golden leaves from aspens to brilliant red ground cover. The area has many hikers at this time of the year, especially on weekends. However, due to the large area you should not be crowded. The daily hike should not be over 5 miles, but you will have a backpack that can slow you. Expect cool nights and dress accordingly. We should be out of the woods around 3:00 PM on Sunday and expect a 3.5 hour drive back to Roanoke.

Dan Phlegar 389-1783

**Saturday, October 17, 2009 9:00AM
A.T., Black Horse Gap to Troutville (Route 11), 113 Mile Hikes #1 & 2**

12 miles, Strenuous, \$1.00 carpool fee
13 miles from Roanoke

This will be a joint hike with the Natural Bridge Appalachian Trail Club. The hike will begin at Black Horse Gap, where the sections maintained by the two clubs meet. We will pass Wilson Creek, Curry Creek, Salt Pond Road, Tollhouse Gap, Fullhardt Knob along the way. The hike will finish on Route 11 at Troutville

Kenny Garrett 293-7967
Steve Tomaziefski 537-5360

**Sunday, October 18, 2009 11:00AM
Brushy Mountain**

6.0 miles, Moderate, \$.50 carpool fee
5 miles from Roanoke

This is a 6-mile loop hike near Hanging Rock, at the end of Timberview Road. The two mile ascent to Brushy Mountain is rather steep but the reward comes on the return. The hike offers

glimpses of Carvin's Cove Reservoir, McAfee's Knob, and the surrounding mountains.

Jean Warren..... 384-6229

**Sunday, October 25, 2009 8:00AM
Sinking Creek Mountain Work Hike**

1 mile, Moderate, \$4.00 carpool fee
41 miles from Roanoke

We will be relocating a short section of eroded trail on Sinking Creek Mountain.

Charles Parry 540-951-1402
Linda King..... 342-2411

**Sunday, October 25, 2009 1:00PM
Sharp Top Mountain**

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

We will be hiking to the top of Sharp Top, at the Peaks of Otter on the Blue Ridge Parkway in Bedford County. The first half of hike is a steep ascent with many stone steps. There is a spectacular 360-degree view from the summit.

Gary Bible 977-2954
Mary Gilbert 774-0330

**Sunday, November 1, 2009 8:00AM
Ferrier – Lick Branch – North Mountain Trails**

7.6 miles, Strenuous, \$2.50 carpool fee
26 miles from Roanoke

Located in Craig County east of New Castle on the border of Botetourt County, this lollypop hike will begin at the far end of North Mountain trail and ascend Broad Run Mountain. From there we will head southeast going down the Lick Branch Trail and continue on a gravel road connecting to Ferrier Trail returning us back to Broad Run Mountain and finally accessing the North Mountain Trail to complete the hike.

John Merkwon 904-2299
Dick Moran 389-3744

**Sunday, November 1, 2009 1:00PM
Read Mountain Trail**

4.5 miles, Moderate, \$1.00 carpool fee
7 miles from Roanoke

Join us for a hike up the trail to the summit of Read Mountain. The trail was built by the mid-week work crew and was opened last year. There are good views of McAfee Knob from the summit of the mountain.

Dave Sutton 774-0648
Karen Callahan 540-961-0640

**Saturday, November 7, 2009 7:00AM
Old Rag Mountain**

7.2 miles, Strenuous, \$13.00 carpool fee
149 miles from Roanoke

Old Rag Mountain is in Shenandoah National Park, north of Charlottesville. It is one of the premier day hikes in the U.S., with spectacular 360-degree views from its massive granite summit. This is a difficult hike, with a great deal of rock scrambling, some hand over hand climbing, and 2,500 feet of elevation gain.

Mike Vaughn 992-1350
Carl Cornett 342-3950

**Sunday, November 8, 2009 11:00AM
Grassy Hill Nature Preserve**

6 miles, Moderate, \$4.00 carpool fee
30 miles from Roanoke

The hike is located in Franklin County, just outside the town of Rocky Mount at the Grassy Hill Natural Area Preserve, owned and managed by the Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation. This hike will traverse Grassy Hill which is a formation composed of ancient volcanic rocks rich in magnesium. Hikers will get to see a mixture of habitats including areas that support rare plants.

Sue Scanlin..... 989-0497
Steve Tomaziefski 537-5360

**Sunday November 15, 2009 8:00AM
Mill Creek Trail to Angel's Rest via AT**

8.4 miles, Strenuous, \$6.00 carpool fee
66 miles from Roanoke

This hike begins near the town of Narrows in Giles County. It starts by following Mill Creek to a scenic waterfall. It then follows a fire road to the intersection with the A.T. It will then head north on the A.T. to Angel's Rest, then descend to Pearisburg.

Dan Phlegar..... 389-1783
Rushdat Hale..... 309-7263

**Sunday, November 15, 2009 1:00PM
Troutville (Rt 11) to Fullhardt Knob**

7.0 miles, Moderate, \$.00 carpool fee
0 miles from Roanoke

The hike is located in Botetourt County. This up-and-back Appalachian Trail hike begins at a small parking lot on Route 11 at the Troutville town limits. After crossing railroad tracks, hikers ascend a grassy hill with excellent views. The trail then crosses a road and begins the climb to Fullhardt Knob. We will use part of the old A.T. on the hike back down.

Maurice Turner 334-2128
Blanche Brower..... 387-9732

**Sunday, November 22, 2009 8:30AM
Andy Layne Trail Work Hike**

1 mile, Moderate, \$1.00 carpool fee
9 miles from Roanoke

We will be re-grading and installing some stone steps on the Andy Layne Trail in Botetourt County.

Charles Parry..... 540-951-1402
Dick Clark 989-7053

**Sunday, November 22, 2009 1:00PM
Flat Top Mountain**

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

Located in Botetourt County at the Peaks of Otter, this scenic hike climbs to the summit of Flat Top mountain on a series of switchbacks. 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.

Ed Wallace..... 774-0175
Mary Gilbert..... 774-0330

**Sunday, November 29, 2009 8:00AM
Douthat State Park**

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

The hike is located in Bath County in the George Washington National Forest near Clifton Forge. This hike is one of many possibilities in Douthat State Park. It will include Brushy Hollow Trail, Mountain Top Trail, Mountain Side Trail, Beards Gap Trail, Beards Gap Hollow Trail, Locust Gap Trail, and Stony Run Trail with some nice views of the lake and mountains.

Kris Peckman 366-7780
Maya Bohler 344-6588

**Sunday, November 29, 2009 11:00AM
Dragon's Tooth Parking Lot to Trout
Creek, 113 Mile Hike #6**

7.0 miles, Moderate, \$2.00 carpool fee
16 miles from Roanoke

The hike is in Craig and Roanoke County west of Salem. The hike starts on a blue-blazed trail leading to the AT at Lost Spectacles Gap. It then follows the AT south to Dragon's Tooth, which offers spectacular views and challenging rock scrambling opportunities. The trail then descends Cove Mountain, passing by Pickle Branch Shelter and over Trout Creek, ending at Rt. 620.

Jean Warren 384-6229

**Saturday, December 5, 6:00 PM
Holiday Potluck Dinner**

The holiday Potluck dinner will be at Christ Lutheran Church on the corner of Brandon Ave. and Grandin Rd. at 6:00 PM. The Club will provide beverages and table service. Club members will provide a dish to share.

This is one of the few social events we have in the year. Come see what your friends look like without a pack and boots!

We will have a box at the door if you wish to bring a nonperishable food item to be donated to RAM House.

There is always a great program - TBA.

**Sunday, December 6, 2009 8:00AM
Wilson Mountain/Sprouts Run Loop**

8.1 miles, Strenuous, \$2.00 carpool fee
24 miles from Roanoke

The hike is located in Botetourt County, at Solitude near Arcadia. Sprouts Run Trail offers creekside walking with little elevation gain until the last 3/4 mile in its approach to Hoop Pole Gap. This is a beautiful trail that offers several nice cascading waterfalls, pools of water and some cliffs and huge trees of various species. There will be multiple stream crossings on this hike.

John Merkwan 904-2299
Fred Walters 977-1430

**Sunday, December 6, 2009 11:00AM
Catawba Mountain (Rt 311) to McAfee
Knob**

7.4 mile, 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.

Sheila Vaughn992-1350

**Sunday, December 13, 2009 8:30AM
Dragon's Tooth Work Hike**

1 mile, Moderate, \$1.00 carpool fee
9 miles from Roanoke

We will be making repairs to the trail up to Dragon's Tooth.

Charles Parry540-951-1402

Bob & Kris Peckman366-7780

**Sunday, December 20, 2009 8:00AM
Hoop Hole, Upper Loop**

7.3 miles, Moderate, \$3.00 carpool fee
28 miles from Roanoke

The hike is located in Botetourt County between Eagle Rock and Oriskany – some 45 minutes from Roanoke. This hike uses part of the lower loop to get to the upper loop which includes a steep climb to the top of Montgomery Knob in the Jefferson National Forest.

Fred Walters 977-1430

Rushdat Hale..... 309-7263

**Sunday, December 20, 2009 1:00PM
Apple Orchard Falls, Cornelius Creek
Loop**

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

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 parking lot.

Gary Bible 977-2954

**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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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