

RATC Board Meeting Minutes
April 8, 2019
Glenvar Branch Library, 3917 Daugherty Road

In Attendance:

Board members: Jim Beeson, Brian Boggs, Jonathan Eagle, Josiah Leonard, Terri McClure, Bob Peckman, Anne Pfeiffer, Julio Stephens, Susan Terwilliger, Jason Thompson, Mike Vaughn, Homer Witcher, Therese Witcher

Others: JoBeth Bunning, Ken Bunning, David Jones, Jim Webb

Meeting was called to order by Jim Beeson at 7:00 p.m. During introductions, the new board members described their backgrounds and affiliations with RATC and other outdoor groups.

Approval of February 4 Board and March 16 Annual Meeting Minutes (Susan Terwilliger):

Corrections: None

Approved: A motion was made to approve the minutes, it was seconded, and the motion passed.

Treasurer's Report (Terri McClure):

Terri reported that RATC paid \$5,000 to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) to help secure the Doc's Way property near McAfee Knob. The club incurred around \$1,500 in expenses in March.

Financial activity since last board meeting (as of 4/8/2019):

Total in Checking: \$46,757.37

Total Monetary Assets: \$61,471.79

Receipts (YTD): \$6,881.70

Expenditures (YTD): \$7,542.75

See RATC website <https://www.ratc.org/financial-report/> for full financial reports.

Membership Report (Mark Farrell):

Mark was absent; he and Bill Neilan were out of town getting crosscut saw training. Terri McClure reported on current membership totals. People who have not paid dues throughout all of 2018 were dropped. There are now 556 current, dues-paying members. Jim Beeson remarked that close to one-third of RATC members have been dropped for long-term nonpayment of dues. A short discussion followed on how to correct this situation.

Regular Reports

Trail Supervisor's Report (Mike Vaughn):

Mike reported that work on the Dragon's Tooth trail is complete with 120 new stone steps plus cribbing. Currently, crews are installing rock steps on the east side of Sinking Creek Mountain (a half mile south of the Niday shelter), which is plagued with erosion and steep areas. Thirty-three rock steps have been installed so far; work will likely continue for several months. Mike observed that the purpose of trail work is to maintain, protect, and preserve the Appalachian Trail – not necessarily to make it easy for hikers.

Hikemaster's Report (Josiah Leonard):

Josiah reported that he and Susan Herndon-Powell, former hikemaster, held a hike leader training session on March 30. Josiah and Susan discussed the basics of Leave No Trace, safety, and group hiking rules. Five trainees showed up. Josiah showed the board charts depicting recent hike participation levels. There has been a sharp drop both in participants and in the number of hikes offered (though the numbers have risen in the past month). Forty-three hikes were offered in

2018. Josiah said each hike leader is expected to lead at least two hikes per year. A discussion ensued on how to increase hikes offered and hiker participation.

- It was noted that a wider variety of hikes (of varying distance and difficulty) might attract some hikers who are discouraged by the length and difficulty of many RATC hikes.
- Anne Pfeiffer commented that the Roanoke Outdoor Adventure Group (ROAG) offers more moderate-to-strenuous hikes and may be competing with RATC for local hikers. ROAG is not an actual club with insurance and bylaws; it is organized solely through Meetup.
- A new resource now available to hike leaders is a color-coded Google map. This map lists all hikes since 2016 and shows hike locations over the last three and a half years.
- Bob Peckman commented that group hike behavior has changed in recent years. Formerly, the group stayed together with a leader and a “sweep” at the rear. Now, the general pace is faster and the group tends to split up into subgroups of different paces.
- David Jones said the proportion of weekend to weekday hikes has changed. Formerly, nearly all recreational hikes were held on weekends. Now, many occur on weekdays.
- Terri McClure suggested that RATC-organized camping trips might appeal to some.

Conservation Supervisor’s Report (Butch Kelly):

Butch was absent.

Shelter Supervisors’ Report (Homer and Therese Witcher):

Homer reported that the Catawba Mountain shelter was reroofed and the interior restained on April 7. In February, a 16-inch extension was attached to the Fullhardt Knob shelter roof to keep rain out and gutter guards were installed to channel rainwater. The Campbell shelter privy was moved to a newly dug hole in late March and the exterior was restained. The Wilson Creek shelter also needs improvements if sufficient funds exist.

McAfee Knob Task Force Report (Brian Boggs/David Youmans):

Brian reported that the task force kickoff and social was held at Olde Salem Brewing Co. on April 5. Dave has begun his third season as Catawba Mountain Ridgerunner. Training for new Ridgerunners occurred on March 23 with an orientation hike on March 30. Many hikers are already out -- 350 people were seen on the McAfee Knob trail on March 23.

Land Management Supervisor’s Report (OPEN):

This position is currently open.

Newsletter Editor’s Report (Bob Peckman):

Bob noted that the Roanoke Times published a well-written memorial article for Siegfried Kolmstetter, a longtime hiker and RATC maintainer of the McAfee Knob trail. Bob said the spring issue of the Trail Blazer is out, and the submission deadline for the summer Blazer is June 1.

Updates and Action Items

1. PRESIDENT’S REPORT (Jim Beeson):

- a. Roanoke Valley Gives: Thanks to Brendle Wolfe, \$2,830 was donated to RATC on March 13 -- a \$600 increase over last year. Julio Stephens noted that Give Big NRV, on April 24, is another possible source of donations. There was a brief discussion on whether to alert RATC members to this and whether or how to target NRV members.
- b. VA 311 porta-johns: Jim reported that Wendy Janssen (National Park Service) has agreed to fund the rental of the portable toilets in the McAfee Knob parking lot through fiscal year 2019. Long-range plans

call for this parking lot to have the same amenities as the Dragon's Tooth lot (with bear-proof trash containers and a permanent restroom) if regular maintenance can be performed.

- c. Land management position: David Youmans, former land management supervisor, is no longer able to fulfill the duties of this position (which involve boundary work). Jim announced that Bill Neilan, RATC vice president, has volunteered to step in. Since most land management tasks occur between October and March (the McAfee Knob Task Force off-season), Bill can still be an active Ridgerunner. Bob Peckman moved to nominate Bill Neilan as land management supervisor, Brian Boggs seconded the motion, and the motion passed.
- d. RATC partnership meeting: April 16 (9 a.m. – 1 p.m.) at Roanoke County Regional Fire and EMS Training Center (1220 Kessler Mill Road, Salem). Representatives from several partner agencies will attend, including VDOT, fire and rescue teams, NPS, and the U.S. Forest Service. Jim noted that this meeting will allow RATC representatives to discuss current issues and bring up problems. For example, the McAfee Knob lot needs fresh gravel or crush. Another topic might be lessons learned from last year's Catawba fire. Julio Stephens suggested mentioning the club's need for a safe place to store trail maintenance equipment.
- e. LL Bean grants: Submissions were due at the end of March. Diana Christopulos submitted a grant to digitize the RATC archives. Another grant was submitted to replace a stolen generator.
- f. Doc's Way property: As noted in the treasurer's report, RATC paid \$5,000 to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy to help preserve the Doc's Way property near McAfee Knob. This large parcel of land, part of the McAfee Knob viewshed, is in danger of commercial development. The \$5,000 was paid to ATC as part of the required \$30,000 deposit. Jim pointed out that the club will not get its money back if the sale does not go through.
- g. Corn Boil date: Set for July 20 (at the Catawba Community Center) to include the Konnarock crew.
- h. Shuttle listing: RATC needs to update the list of shuttle drivers in our section. Since ATC does not provide shuttle information on its website, the club should include an updated list of shuttle drivers (with charges) on our site (for information only, not as an endorsement).
- i. Liability insurance: Susan Herndon-Powell received the 2019 premium invoice for \$1,475, which was sent to treasurer Terri McClure for payment.
- j. *Backpacker* Magazine: Has offered a free, one-year subscription to RATC members renewable each year that they renew their club membership.
- k. Trail maintenance storage unit: The board discussed the possibility of renting a storage unit to securely hold the club's trail maintenance equipment (instead of at a maintainer's home) at an approximate cost of \$600 per year. A 5 ft. x 10 ft. unit should suffice. We also need to store a generator. Renting a storage unit has the advantage of being insured against loss or theft. Jonathan Eagleton suggested using a trailer, which could be moved from place to place. David Jones said the National Forest Service has storage capacity in Blacksburg.

Calendar:

April 16	RATC partnership meeting
May 6	RATC board meeting
June 3	RATC board meeting
June 20	VA 311 shuttle meeting
June 21	Triple Crown meeting
July 20	Corn Boil
August	RATC board meeting
September	Starr Hill Brewery's RATC Month (Starr Hill will donate \$1 to RATC for every beer purchased all month)
October 18-20	Go Fest

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.