

RATC Board Meeting Minutes

June 3, 2019 Glenvar Branch Library, 3917 Daugherty Road

In Attendance:

Board members: Jim Beeson, Brian Boggs, Mark Farrell, Butch Kelly, Terri McClure, Bill Neilan, Bob Peckman, Julio Stephens, Susan Terwilliger, Jason Thompson, Mike Vaughn

Others: Diana Christopulos, Jonathan Eagle

Meeting was called to order by Jim Beeson at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of May 6 Board 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):

RATC has received \$1,400 in contributions from the Siegfried Kolmstetter memorial fund through May. Current funds for the VA 311 McAfee Knob lot porta-johns are depleted. However, as reported in the April 2019 meeting minutes, the National Park Service (NPS) has agreed to fund the rental of these units through fiscal year 2019. Jim Beeson said NPS will work directly with the vendor. RATC has received \$550 from an LL Bean grant to replace a stolen generator and \$760 for a footbridge over Catawba Creek. These funds must be used by the end of the year.

Financial activity since last board meeting (as of 6/3/2019):

Total in Checking:	\$46,476.59
Total Monetary Assets:	\$61,191.07
Receipts (YTD):	\$8,939.49
Expenditures (YTD):	\$9,973.12

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

Membership Report (Mark Farrell):

Mark has updated the introductory letter to new officers. He reported 11 new single memberships and two family memberships in May. Mark and Jim Beeson noted that many of RATC's 1,600 Meetup site members are potential club members who might be inspired to join with the incentive of a one-year free *Backpacker* magazine subscription. The Elevate your Vibe event scheduled for May 11 at Wasena Park in Roanoke was canceled due to weather. Troutville Trail Days, where RATC and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) will share a booth, are June 7-8 with a hike on June 8.

Regular Reports

Trail Supervisor's Report (Mike Vaughn):

Work in the Sinking Creek area is complete after eight work hikes. Trail maintenance work during the past three weeks has been in the War Spur area near Mountain Lake. Problems addressed include water running down the trail and erosion. Work crews will later return to the Dragon's Tooth area, putting in new steps and improving creek crossings along the Blue Blaze trail.

- VA 311 McAfee Knob parking lot: This lot has deteriorated badly and urgently needs repair. Large potholes are a constant threat. The core problem is poor drainage. Solving the problem involves not just laying down more gravel but digging a ditch around the lot to promote better drainage. These tasks were last done in 2012. Mike said the ditch must be maintained to prevent future problems. It will cost about \$2,000 to dig the ditch, regrade the parking lot, and deliver the gravel. Rockydale Quarry has offered to donate \$1,000 worth of gravel.

- A discussion ensued on how to fund improvements to the lot. Jim Beeson has talked to NPS and the Virginia Department of Transportation, but neither agency has agreed to fund this project.
- Terri McClure, club treasurer, summarized RATC's available funds and said there is enough money to pay for McAfee Knob lot improvements.
- Jim Beeson suggested using an online fundraising tool such as GoFundMe (through Facebook) for this purpose. Diana Christopoulos pointed out that someone needs to manage this if we do so. Jim also asked for pictures of cars in the lot to illustrate its overcrowding and structural problems.
- Mike moved to authorize RATC to spend \$2,000 to fund McAfee Knob parking lot improvements. Susan Terwilliger seconded, and the motion passed.

Hikemaster's Report (Josiah Leonard):

Josiah was absent. Eight group hikes were offered in May. Robert Bomber, Jeanine Bomber, and Jenny Steding were acknowledged for leading their first RATC group hikes. No hikers earned a 113-mile patch last month.

Conservation Supervisor's Report (Butch Kelly):

Conner McBane, ATC resource specialist, is on paternity leave. Butch described some of the invasive plant management work going on now and planned for fall. He is working in the Pickle Branch shelter, Burrus Tract, Andy Layne, and Sinking Creek areas to control tree-of-heaven, autumn olive, and other invasive plants. Butch is very interested in maintaining habitat for species such as the golden-winged warbler and shrike. He also scouts for rare plants and recently discovered some pirate bush, a rare shrub, near the Dragon's Tooth parking lot.

Shelter Supervisors' Report (Homer and Therese Witcher):

Homer and Therese were absent. The Wilson Creek shelter and privy were reroofed on May 19.

McAfee Knob Task Force Report (Brian Boggs):

David Youmans led a Ridgerunner orientation hike to Dragon's Tooth on May 18. A planning meeting for all Ridgerunners is scheduled for June 6 at Olde Salem Brewing Company. Brian reported there are currently 104 trained Ridgerunners but many are not active. Bill Neilan is following up with inactive Ridgerunners.

Land Management Supervisor's Report (Bill Neilan):

Bill said he will have no regular land management updates until after this year's Konnarock work is completed.

Newsletter Editor's Report (Bob Peckman):

- Bob will send out requests for news items for the next Blazer; the deadline for articles and other content is June 19. Bob also suggested that all references to VA 311 parking lots specify which lot is meant (i.e., Dragon's Tooth vs. McAfee Knob) to minimize confusion. It also helps the rescue squad, which initiated this proposal.

Updates and Action Items

1. PRESIDENT'S REPORT (Jim Beeson):

- a. *Liability insurance 2019*: Premiums are due in July. Terri McClure will pay them.
- b. *Backpacker magazine*: Jim discussed conditions for *Backpacker's* offer of a free, one-year subscription for new RATC members. The club must first verify its 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. We also must provide a monthly list of new and renewed members.
 - A discussion followed on how to revise membership forms on the electronic Blazers to accommodate more than one email address. Some families have multiple members with different email addresses. Jim said up to two email addresses are allowed per family. The membership form should include a space for first family member and second family member.

- c. *Trail maintenance tool storage unit*: Mike Vaughn said he is meeting with Roanoke County Fire & Rescue on June 5 to follow up with plans to move RATC’s tool storage shed onto fire and rescue center property.
- d. *Website form generation update (Jonathan Eagle)*: Jonathan, RATC webmaster, explained the need for an upgrade to the website’s form generation plug-in software from Huge IT Forms. Currently, all form responses can only be sent to a single email address. With a one-time fee of \$19, the software upgrade will allow each form to email results to a separate email address if necessary. The upgrade also includes tech support for the software. Mike Vaughn moved to use this form-generation service, Jason Thompson seconded, and the motion passed.
- e. *RATC board meeting dates and time change*: Jim announced that effective July 1, the Glenvar Branch Library will close at 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday. So, beginning in August, board meetings will start at 6 p.m. Jim has reserved the library meeting room for August 5, September 9, October 7, and November 4.

2. AT Visitor Use Management (VUM)/NPS/ATC Visual Resource Inventory (Diana Christopulos):

- a. *Visitor Use Management*: Diana presented draft RATC recommendations for visitor use management from the McAfee Knob 311 parking lot to Campbell shelter, a high-use area monitored weekly by the McAfee Knob Task Force. The area of concern also includes the Dragon’s Tooth trails, Tinker Cliffs, and the North Mountain loop. The National Park Service has received funding to complete the VUM process, and visitor management initiatives should build on the partnership planning and extensive data gathered since 2015. Some of these recommendations regarding the McAfee Knob 311 parking lot include paved and marked parking spaces, secure restroom facilities, and a possible visitors’ center next to the lot.
 - Other recommendations discussed included setting up a shuttle bus service to bring hikers to the McAfee Knob trailhead, treating the fire/rescue road as the preferred route for McAfee Knob day hikers, and recruiting seasonal trail hosts (caretakers) for the Catawba and Campbell/Pig Farm camping sites. Trail hosts may help reduce crowding at legal camping areas, especially for large groups (such as Scouts).
 - Diana asked for a motion to approve these VUM proposals to present at an upcoming meeting with NPS and other partner agencies. The board approved the recommendations with no motion taken.
- b. *Visual Resource Inventory Project*: The purpose of this project is to help protect the Appalachian Trail from external threats such as pipelines and other development in the AT viewshed. It involves using an NPS visual assessment tool called “Enjoy the View.” Volunteers will be trained by an NPS consultant and spend several days in the field gathering data. The goal is to put a number on the quality of visual impacts.
 - Diana requested volunteers from RATC leaders. Bill Neilan, Diana, Brian Boggs, Butch Kelly, and David Youmans agreed to participate, working in teams of four to six. ATC and NPS staff will also take part.

Calendar:

June 7-8	Troutville Trail Days
June 20	VA 311 shuttle meeting
June 21	Triple Crown meeting
July 20	RATC Corn Boil
August 5	RATC board meeting (6 p.m.)
September 9	RATC board meeting (6 p.m.)
September	Starr Hill Brewery’s RATC Month (Starr Hill will donate \$1 to RATC for every Love beer purchased in Sept.)
October 7	RATC board meeting (6 p.m.)
October 18-20	Go Fest (Go Outside Festival, Roanoke)
November 4	RATC board meeting (6 p.m.)

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.