

RATC Board Meeting Minutes
August 5, 2019
Glenvar Branch Library, 3917 Daugherty Road

In Attendance:

Board members: Jim Beeson, Brian Boggs, Mark Farrell, Butch Kelly, Josiah Leonard, Terri McClure, Bill Neilan, Bob Peckman, Anne Pfeiffer, Julio Stephens, Susan Terwilliger, Jason Thompson, Mike Vaughn, Homer Witcher, Therese Witcher

Others: Caleb Fort, Jim Webb

Meeting was called to order by Jim Beeson at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of June 3 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):

Terri reported that RATC's funds are down about \$2,600 because of two big expenses in July: liability insurance premiums and McAfee Knob parking lot repairs. ATC will reimburse the club about \$2,000 total for parking lot repairs and replacement of the Route 621 culvert using AT license plate proceeds. Jim Beeson announced that Maurice Turner, a deceased long-time trail maintainer and club member, included RATC in his will. The specific amount will be announced when the estate is settled. Terri said members who renew after July 1 are paid up through the following year.

Financial activity since last board meeting (as of 8/5/2019):

Total in Checking:	\$45,265.61
Total Monetary Assets:	\$59,980.15
Receipts (YTD):	\$9,627.54
Expenditures (YTD):	\$12,373.94

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

Membership Report (Mark Farrell):

RATC currently has 667 members. Mark has been posting regularly on Facebook, documenting trail maintenance projects such as reroofing the Laurel Creek and Catawba Mountain shelters. These posts have garnered more than 4,000 views. Several new trail maintainers have joined RATC crew as a result. Additionally, Bill Neilan has posted trail-maintaining pictures on Meetup. Mark has posted some pictures on Trail Maintainers, a closed Facebook group. He sent out eight new membership packets and responded to five email inquiries since June.

- Jim Beeson said before-and-after online pictures of the McAfee Knob parking lot have also inspired prospective members to join. Jim is working with *Backpacker* magazine staff to finalize details of how to make a subscription available to new members.

Regular Reports

Trail Supervisor's Report (Mike Vaughn):

This year's Konnarock crew began a 6,000-foot relocation in the Mountain Lake area, near the War Spur trail. RATC maintainers worked with the Konnarock crew for four days, completing 130 feet on July 29. This project is expected to take three years. Bruce Agnew is also leading weekend work hikes in this area. RATC maintainers now wear club T-shirts to create a uniform effect.

- The McAfee Knob trail also needs work owing to its heavy use. Upcoming work hikes are planned for this area.
- Jim Beeson thanked Bill Neilan, Jim Webb, Mike Vaughn, and others for their work on the McAfee Knob 311 parking lot (regrading and ditch digging). Jim also thanked Bruce Agnew for resuming his work hikes in July.
- Jim Webb has asked permission to relocate a short part of the McAfee Knob trail just north of the fire road intersection. The current section is a social trail never officially approved.

Hikemaster’s Report (Josiah Leonard):

There were six recreational hikes in June and six in July. Josiah noted that the club now offers a good mix of easy and harder hikes. He is continually encouraging hike leaders to step up and lead more hikes. Anne Pfeiffer asked whether most recreational hikers are club members; Josiah said it’s a mix of Meetup and RATC members. Josiah is working with Jonathan Eagle (RATC webmaster) on using a template to update shuttle driver information in our area on the RATC website. No one earned the 113-mile patch this month.

Conservation Supervisor’s Report (Butch Kelly):

Butch has been working with Conner McBane, ATC resource specialist, to control tree-of-heaven and other invasive plants at the Burrus Tract and elsewhere. Conner and Butch recently hiked from the Catawba Sustainability Center to the McAfee Knob fire road to conduct a rare plant survey for the National Park Service. The purpose was to determine whether any rare or endangered plant species (such as pink lady slipper) were in the way of the new trail. None were found.

Shelter Supervisors’ Report (Homer and Therese Witcher):

The Laurel Creek shelter and privy were reroofed July 21. Jenny Knob shelter is scheduled to be reroofed September 15, followed by Doc’s Knob and Wapiti shelters. Other shelters in our section already have metal roofs that do not need replacing right away.

McAfee Knob Task Force Report (Brian Boggs):

Dave Youmans, Catawba Valley Ridgerunner, led an orientation hike at Dragon’s Tooth on July 21. Brian says the same 20 to 25 volunteer Ridgerunners are showing up from week to week. Ranger Brian Wilson has been a welcome presence in the Catawba Valley area and a great help to Ridgerunners.

Land Management Supervisor’s Report (Bill Neilan):

Bill said he will have nothing to report until fall.

Newsletter Editor’s Report (Bob Peckman):

The deadline to submit information for the fall Blazer is September 15.

- Bob moved to allow RATC members who want a print copy of the Blazer to inform any board member of their wish. The board member would then pass this information onto Terri McClure, club treasurer. Currently, RATC members must contact the treasurer directly to request print copies. The motion was seconded.
- A discussion followed. Jim Beeson noted that viewing the Blazer online is the default; members have to notify the treasurer to receive a paper version. Mark Farrell pointed out that members are informed of this policy when they join RATC. The process is, and has been, member to treasurer without involving third parties. Currently, 70 members have requested paper copies.
- After more discussion, a vote was taken. The nays carried, and the motion did not pass.

Updates and Action Items

1. PRESIDENT’S REPORT (Jim Beeson):

- a. *LL Bean/ATC license plate grants:* Applications for LL Bean grants are not being accepted at this time. RATC earlier received money from LL Bean to replace a stolen generator and repair a footbridge.

- Jim asked for suggestions for ATC license plate grant funds. Some possibilities are membership displays and trail maintenance equipment. The application deadline is August 1, 2019, but Jim has requested an extension until August 12. He will resend information to board members on how to apply for a grant.
- b. *Starr Hill Brewery*: Starr Hill has designated September 2019 as RATC Month. The brewery has pledged to donate \$1 for every Love beer purchased all month. Bill Neilan asked board members to participate, or at least to thank Starr Hill for its generosity.
- c. *Trail/shelter maintenance mileage reimbursement*: Jim asked the board to consider approving reimbursement for trail maintainers who drive their own vehicles to various sites around RATC's section. Mark Farrell pointed out that the number of work hikes has increased over the past few years (from monthly to weekly), requiring much more driving than in the past. The policy of passengers reimbursing drivers (as on recreational hikes) is not as suitable for work hikes. Mike Vaughn said maintainers should not need to pay driving expenses when commuting to work hikes.
 - A discussion followed on whether and how the club should reimburse trail maintainers for driving expenses. Bob Peckman suggested calculating a mileage fee based on distance and number of passengers. Bill Neilan said it would be simpler to figure reimbursement based on point-to-point distance instead of per mile.
 - Terri McClure, Jim Beeson, and Therese Witcher suggested researching the policies of other maintaining clubs as to whether they reimburse for mileage to and from the work site. Bob Peckman suggested raising club dues to cover mileage reimbursement. Terri said we might apply for a grant.
 - Josiah Leonard proposed forming a committee to follow up and research this topic. Butch Kelly, Bill Neilan, Mark Farrell, Terri McClure, and Julio Stephens volunteered to serve on the committee. They will report to the board at the November 4 meeting.
- d. *ATC leadership changes*: Suzanne Dixon, president and CEO of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, is resigning her position as of August 30, 2019, after two years of service. Sandra Marra, chair of ATC's Board of Directors, will be the new president and CEO.
- e. *RATC Stewardship Council nominations*: August 15, 2019. Jim described the council and its role within the ATC and the trail-maintaining clubs. The council regularly meets with the ATC board and president.
- f. *Socials*: Jim thanked Scott Karns, social chairman, for a very successful Corn Boil on July 20. He set December 14 as the tentative date for the holiday social.

Calendar:

September 9	RATC board meeting
September	Starr Hill Brewery's RATC Month (Starr Hill will donate \$1 to RATC for every Love beer purchased)
October 7	RATC board meeting
October 18-20	Go Fest (Go Outside Festival, Roanoke)
November 4	RATC board meeting

Meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.