

## **RATC Board Annual Meeting Minutes**

March 10, 2021

Online format (through GoToWebinar)

**NOTE:** This year's meeting was held via an online group meeting platform, GoToWebinar, kindly made available by the law firm Gentry Locke.

Jim Beeson, outgoing RATC president, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The first order of business was a review of the club's trail maintenance activities in 2020.

### **Trail Maintenance / Volunteer Recognition**

Mike Vaughn, trail supervisor, thanked the volunteers who contributed 4,900 hours of trail work during the year – all the more remarkable since no maintenance was allowed from mid-March until June. Twenty-four new maintainers were added in 2020, bringing the total to 92. Highlights include:

- Completing major projects on the Dragon's Tooth trail, adding 80 stone steps.
- Installing 385 wood and stone steps in various AT sections and side trails.
- Refurbishing three bridges (VA 785, Andy Layne trail, and VA 652).
- Purchasing a \$900 rock drill, which facilitated cutting and shaping rock steps.

Volunteers who contributed at least 20 hours of trail maintenance were recognized. Homer and Therese Witcher, shelter supervisors, logged more than 900 hours doing trail and shelter maintenance. Jim Webb logged 612 hours, the most for any individual. Jim Brown was also recognized for his outstanding service in creating wooden signs along the trail. A complete list of volunteer hours and club activities in 2020 can be found on the RATC website under "Documents – March 10, 2021, Annual Meeting."

### **Treasurer's Report**

Terri McClure, treasurer, summarized the club's financials over the past year. Total receipts for 2020 were \$56,289; total expenses were \$56,565. Highlights include \$9,000 received in membership dues, \$4,500 received in contributions, and \$8,700 received in grants from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC). Total cash on hand at the end of the year was \$59,170. For more financial information, go to <https://www.ratc.org/ratc-documents/financial-reports/>

### **Membership**

Mark Farrell, membership coordinator, reported that RATC currently has 665 members – including several outside of Virginia. Thirteen new members joined in February. Mark's Facebook posts, especially of trail maintenance activities, have generated much interest and many views.

### **McAfee Knob Taskforce**

Bill Neilan, incoming RATC president, reported that the Ridgerunner program, now in its seventh year, will kick off again in April. Although the 2020 season was cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic, there were 89 patrols, 11,270 visitors counted, and 201 gallons of trash removed.

### **Trail Management**

Jim Beeson reviewed the highlights of RATC's accomplishments and projects during the past year:

- The club raised \$44,000 toward the purchase of an 8-acre property next to the McAfee Knob trailhead and sold \$8,000 worth of McAfee Knob-themed T-shirts.
- RATC is currently working with ATC to refurbish and convert a cabin on the Dowd property (between Campbell shelter and Brickey's Gap) into a rental property. Jay Dowd, who sold the property to ATC, described the cabin and its history since its construction in the late 1800s. He said this property has provided a sense of pride for his family and now will be put to good use by ATC and RATC.
- Andrew Downs, a regional director for ATC, described long-term plans to safeguard the McAfee Knob and Tinker Cliffs viewshed. This involves purchasing land in the Catawba Valley to preserve its character and protect it from development. Andrew complimented RATC on its prudent use of funds for trail maintenance. He said the house near the McAfee Knob trailhead will be razed sometime this spring.
- Big changes are coming to the McAfee Knob trailhead over the next few years with the building of a pedestrian bridge over VA 311. A shuttle to serve McAfee Knob hikers is also in the planning stages.

### **Election of 2021-2022 RATC Board of Directors**

The last piece of business was the election of the 2021-2022 RATC Board of Directors. Here is the slate of officers:

President – Bill Neilan

Vice President – Jim Beeson

Secretary – Susan Terwilliger

Treasurer – Terri McClure

Membership Coordinator – Mark Farrell

Shelter Supervisors – Homer and Therese Witcher

Conservation Supervisor – Butch Kelly

Trail Supervisor – Mike Vaughn

Hikemaster – Jennifer Frye

Trail Blazer Editor – Ron Bradbury

Land Management Supervisor – Kevin Moore

### **Counselors**

Jason Thompson (2021-2023)

Brendle Wolfe (2021-2023)

Julio Stephens (2021-2023)

Andrew Bowman (2020-2022) – not on current election slate

### **Ex-Officio Positions (not on election slate)**

Webmaster – Jill Pennington

Archivist – Diana Christopulos

McAfee Knob Task Force Liaison – Dee Case

The new board was unanimously elected, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.