

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

WINTER 2000

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.

President's Report

Telephone Calling Tree

We now have a Telephone Calling Tree. Thanks to Liz Lamson and the rest of the callers. We have used the Telephone Calling Tree twice. If you were not called, there could be several reasons. 1) Your phone number was not on our membership list. 2). You live a long distance from Roanoke. 3) You are very new to the club. If you would like to be on the Telephone Calling Tree, or a caller on the tree, or need a correction to be made, give Liz a call (774-8981). If you really do not want to be called, Liz will remove your name from the Telephone Calling Tree. We will send an updated Telephone Calling Tree some time next year. We will try to keep from imposing on you by keeping the use of the Telephone Calling Tree to a minimum. Again, thanks to Liz and the callers. I hope you think the Telephone Calling Tree is an asset to be club.

Another way of helping with club communications is email. Everyone does not have email but for the ones that do we can add them to the clubs' email list (which we are now starting). This could reduce some of the calls that might be made with the Telephone Calling Tree. People on the email list would not be called. To get on the email list send me (nulph-dr@worldnet.att.net) an email indicating that you want on the list.

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TRAIL BLAZER

Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club
PO BOX 12282
ROANOKE VA 24024-2282

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Hike Schedule - WINTER 2000

Guests

Visitors are always welcome. Come dressed for hiking. You are expected to follow the directions of the hike leaders.

Transportation

You may drive your own car if you wish; however, the hike leader is responsible for arranging transportation and all will follow his/her directions. The cost to help defray car expenses is noted on the schedule and should be given to the driver.

Meeting Place

The point of departure is at the discretion of the hike leader, so always check with the leader when planning to attend.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 2000

8:00 AM BIG HORSE GAP TO BLUFF CITY

11 miles-Moderate
\$3.00 carpool fee
Bobbie Stitcher 890-2140
Linda King 342-2411

1:00 PM WINDROCK-WARSPUR OVERLOOK- CHESTNUT TRAIL

5 miles-Easy
\$2.50 carpool fee
Ed Wallace 774-0175
Neil Fitzpatrick 992-2446

SUNDAY, JANUARY 16, 2000

10:00 AM POTTS MTN EAST FS 176 TO RT 617

6 miles-Moderate
\$3.00 carpool fee
Bill Gordge 774-3016
John Lynham 336/292-7637

1:00 PM FULHARDT KNOB TO RT 11

7 miles-Moderate
\$1.50 carpool fee
Lucien Metayer 344-1877
Sharon Bottomly 989-9694

989-9694 SUNDAY, JANUARY 23, 2000

8:00 AM CORNELIUS CREEK, APPLE ORCHARD FALLS LOOP

8 miles-Moderate
\$3.50 carpool fee
Ron McCorkle 982-8289
Linda Akers 776-1969

989-9694 SUNDAY, JANUARY 23, 2000

1:00 PM HENRY LANUM TRAIL

6 miles-Moderate
\$3.50 carpool fee
Dick Clark 989-7053
Zetta Campbell 366-8165

SUNDAY, JANUARY 30, 2000

8:00 AM WORKHIKE ANDY LAYNE TRAIL

\$1.50 carpool fee
Charles Parry 540/951-1402
Ron McCorkle 982-8289

1:00 PM GROUSE TRAIL TO RT 311

5 miles-Moderate
\$1.50 carpool fee
Bill Gordge 774-3016
Neil Fitzpatrick 992-2446

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2000

8:00 AM SPEC MINE TRAIL AND HAMMOND HOLLOW LOOP

9 miles-Moderate
\$2.00 carpool fee
Dick Clark 989-7053
Gary Hale 268-5283

1:00 PM FALLING WATER CASCADES

2 miles-Easy
\$3.00 carpool fee
Sue Scanlin 989-0497
Don Nulph 774-8618

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2000

8:00 AM PETITES GAP TO THE JAMES RIVER

10 miles-Moderate
\$3.00 carpool fee
Lucien Metayer 344-1877
Bobbie Stitcher 890-2140

1:00 PM BRUSH MOUNTAIN

8 miles-Moderate
\$2.00 carpool fee
Sharon Bottomly 989-9694
Gloria Parry 540/951-1402

Welcome New Members

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club welcomes the following new members. We look forward to meeting you on the trail soon.

Harry Burns
Miriam Rogin
Gladys Lander
Chris Bryan
Tricia Thiet

Carol Via Paul
Lisa Workman
Steve & Kathy Smith
William M. Hackworth
Todd Athey

Phyllis Keith
David & Linda Sutton
Durant & Sandy Vick
Eric G. Thelan

Roanoke Appalachian Trail club Annual Dinner and Business Meeting

Christ Luthern Church, Corner of Grandin and Brandon
6 p.m. Saturday, March 18, 2000

Menu: Spinach Salad, Ham, Sweet Potatoes, Seafood Casserole, Rice, Green Beans, Mixed Medley of Vegetables, Fruit Salad, Variety of Desserts, Tea, Coffee.

Speaker: Brian Chisom – “The 100 – Mile Wilderness”

Reservation Form Mail to Shirley Kotheimer, 5914 Janda Drive, Roanoke, VA 24019
Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club Annual Dinner and Business Meeting

Please reserve _____ places at the RATC Annual Dinner Meeting

Please Make out name tags as follows: _____

Enclosed is a check for \$_____ (\$12.00 per person) Please make checks payable to RATC

ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB 1999 MEMBERSHIP & RENEWAL APPLICATION

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
5. Abide by instructions of the leader on group hikes and trips

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Telephone Day: _____ Evening: _____ Email: _____

One Year Two Year One Year Two Year

New Family Membership.....\$20.....\$35 Family Membership Renewal.....\$15.....\$30

New Individual Membership.....\$15.....\$25 Individual Membership Renewal.....\$10.....\$20

Lifetime Membership \$500.....Amount Enclosed: \$_____

Make checks payable to: RATC, PO BOX 12282, ROANOKE VA 24024-2282

Trail Supervisor's Report

Each fall we compute the total workhours for the previous year (Oct. 1 - Sept. 30).

This Years totals are:

	Workers	Workhours
Park Service Lands	50	1050
Forest Service Lands	81	2250
Totals	110	3300

The total number of workers is 50 + 81 - 21 = 110 because 21 people worked on both types of land.

We award RATC T-shirts to people who work at least 7 days on the trail each year. This must include 5 club workhikes with at most 3 during the Konnarock visits. According to my count we had 13 people earn T-shirts this year. The winners are Malcolm Black, Lynn Bryant, Peggy Bryant, Hal Cantrill, Bill Gordge, Jim Hutchings, Ron

McCorkle, Lucien Metayer, Charles Parry, Bob Peckman, Kris Peckman, Maurice Turner and Homer Witcher. In case I missed someone who should be on this list, please let me know and I will make additions. I want to thank everyone on this list as well as all the 110 people who worked on the trail this year. I would like to see 20 people earn T-shirts each year, but the number seems to stay about the same each year. However we do have two new names on the list this year.

Our January and February workhikes will be on the Andy Layne, while in March we will complete some unfinished A.T. repairs in the Pearisburg area. We are always happy to have new people join us.

Charles Parry

Land Management Supervisor's Report

The demolition of the two houses just off 311 on Catawaba Mountain was completed in early November. The sites have been re-graded and seeded with grass. The drive to the houses has been blocked with a very large rock to prevent vehicle access. It will now be allowed to re-grow and eventually will become forest land. This leaves the Vail house out on the mountain and some minor clean up near it to be done next. Hopefully there will be sufficient funding available to take action on these areas. The asbestos and lead paint removal has been done on them.

The final hearing for the AEP proposed 765 kV power line was postponed from late November to May of 2000 to allow other Protestants ample time to perform additional studies of the new proposal going from Wyoming West Virginia to Jackson Ferry, Virginia. As stated previously the current position of the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club and the ATC is that the proposed crossing of the new 765 kV power line adjacent to I-77 is acceptable to the Trail with sufficient mitigation.

A number of club members have participated this fall in the Jefferson National Forest Plan revision process. This document controls the direction of the forest for the next 10 years or more. After the first of the year there will be a Club and ATC meeting to review what the draft plan has in it for the lands adjacent to the Appalachian Trail. If you are interested in participating in this meeting, call me or our President, Don Nulph.

The current status of the Forest Plan is that we have a rolling draft plan with plans or prescriptions for all of the land in the Jefferson. This is an ongoing process of review and revision and we have at this time an opportunity to influence the outcome of how lands along the Appalachian Trail are managed.

Again I would like to request help with the marking of our boundaries that were ax blazed last year. We have about 8 miles of boundary to mark with paint over the ax blazes. If you are interested in helping with this activity, please call me at 387-2347.

Although not in the area of things I follow, we do now have approval to build a shelter near the Sarver Cabin site on Sinking Creek Mountain.

Hal Cantrill, Land Management Supervisor



Fall Hike Reports

Tinker Cliffs via Andy Layne Trail

April 11, 1999

Suzanne Barnett (leader), Zetta Campbell (assistant), Jonathan Stewart, Jim Hewitt

The clouds were still low at noon, and it had rained all morning. But Zetta and I decided to give the ole Andy Layne a try. We met Jonathan and Jim at Hanging Rock. By the time we got to the top of Tinker Cliffs, the sun was shining and the view was grand. Along the trail we saw Virginia bluebells, spring beauties and bloodroot.

AT Route 311 to Route 779

August 22, 1999

Homer and Therese Witcher (leaders), Gary Hale (assistant), John Kovacich, Bennett Witcher

For reasons unknown we only had one hiker show up for this hike. As it turned out, this suited Therese and me, for it gave us a chance to pursue our other strong interest. We explained to Gary that we had a softball game Sunday afternoon and really wanted to play. Since John and Gary had hiked together before, it was decided that Therese, Bennett and I would turn back at McAfee Knob. They went on to 779 on a very pleasant day for hiking, while Therese and I went on to our softball game. As for Bennett, he was proud that he managed to hike the seven miles by lunch. All in all I think the five of us had a good day.

AT Peters Mountain Pine Swamp to Symms Gap

August 29, 1999

Mike Ferguson (leader), Jill Gawne (assistant), Jim Gawne, Maurice Turner, Gary Hale

After passing Pine Swamp shelter, we began seeing hard hats, shin guards, picks and then the Konnarock Crew. They were working on the Virginia Tech section. We effortlessly reached the ridge line, and after a lunch stop we headed to Symms Gap and Mystery Ridge. The old logging road was in good shape and there were even tire tracks near the top of the mountain. The discussions on the way down centered around whether or not we should bushwhack down the mountain, who built that cabin way up here, and why would anybody construct a driveway straight up a cliff.

Andy Layne Trail Work Hike

September 12, 1999

Charles Parry (leader), Kris Peckman (assistant), Malcolm Black, Sara Patterson, Lynn Bryant, Peggy Bryant, Brian Chisom, Lisa Brodick, Philippe Moore, Caleb Krolle, Mia Marchievate, Beth Tuscatte, Christian Liquore, Paul Morel, Keith Nye, Bob Peckman, Peter Morgan

At the beginning we had four people, but soon there were six. After removing a few blowdowns on the way up, it was after 11:00 when we got to the work site. Malcolm and I spent what was left of the morning putting together our flag lines from last

Apple Orchard Falls

year. We also discovered that the Park Service boundary was now marked. After lunch Kris and I went off to flag the remaining part of the relocation. We heard voices down in the hollow below us and discovered it was Brian and the Roanoke College group. I showed them the flag line to the work area. They had gotten off the trail somewhere on the way up. Kris and I flagged the trail into Scorched Earth Gap and modified it a bit on the way back. We both felt it might need more modification. When we got back, quite a bit of trail had been dug and the College group was getting ready to leave. Also, Bob had arrived. We worked another hour before quitting. It was a beautiful day and we made good progress on the relocation.

AT Salt Pond Road to Blackhorse Gap

September 12, 1999

Linda Akers (leader), Sue Scanlin (assistant), Dave Miller, Barbara Plotner, Mary Dooley, Arlene Thomas, Jenny Wright, Pat Cousins

Eight of us left Market Square East on this 70+ day. We did a quick car switch and began the hike at Salt Pond Road. We thoroughly enjoyed this lovely hike and the beautiful weather. We took a short break at the stream (only one running) before Wilson Creek Shelter. Our new hikers did extremely well. Sue and her dog turned back early on, the remainder finished the hike about 5:00.

Torry Ridge - Sherando Lake - White Rock Falls Loop

September 19, 1999

No report received.

Sawtooth Ridge

September 19, 1999

No report received.

Old Rag

September 25, 1999

No report received.

Wilson Creek Shelter Staining

September 26, 1999

Maurice Turner (leader), Lynn and Peggy Bryant (assistants), Kevin Black, Malcolm Black, Roger Holnback

We hiked in two miles from Black Horse Gap to Wilson Creek Shelter on this beautiful Sunday with temperatures in low 80s. We managed to sand, clean and stain the shelter and privy in just over two hours. We used the color Brierwood for the stain and the result was quite satisfying; everyone seemed to agree the color blended with the forest. We hiked the distance back to our vehicles and still had most of the afternoon to do other activities.

September 26, 1999

Linda Akers (leader), Liz Lamson (assistant), Bill Lamson, Marianne Demko, Sammy, Mitzi and Sammy Oakey, Blake Mitnick, Mary Gilbert, Sharon and Heather Harrison, Susan Zorn, Tish Maye, Louise Chagnon, Carolyn Baratta, Zetta Campbell

One contingent met at upper level of Towers then proceeded to Market Square East to meet the remainder of the group there. Enjoyed the ride down the Parkway where a few colored leaves were observed. Met up with Zetta at Sunset Field where we parked and began our hike down to the falls. Little Sammy relished taking the lead and leaving his parents behind. Saw a number of mushrooms identified by our "hiking botanist" and fall flowers still in bloom.

Enjoyed snacks and conversation at the falls before returning to a cool breeze and our cars at the top of the ridge. Some of our faster hikers (in a hurry to return home) had already departed. An enjoyable jaunt for everyone; hope that our new hikers will return.

Shenandoah National Park: Rattlesnake Point to Compton Gap

October 2, 1999

Jimmy Whitney (leader), Gary Hale (assistant), Peggy Bryant

A beautiful day with temperatures in the 70s. We were hiking by 10:15, finished by 3:30. Did not see much wildlife: a chipmunk, a deer at the end of the hike, but we did see lots of bear scat. A few leaves changing, some wildflowers - a pretty good day.

Flora: spotted wintergreen, wild rose, galax, and two varieties of sunflower-like flowers.

Fauna: terrapin.

Rock Castle Gorge

October 3, 1999

No report received.

Deer Trail to Route 311

October 3, 1999

Zetta Campbell (leader), Jeannie Huffman (assistant), Mary Gilbert, Roger Holnback, Shelley and Peter Maschwitz, Hannah and Natalie Maschwitz, Letitia Maye, Suzanne Barnett, Pete Lissman, Evelyn King, Carole Collett-White, Ralph Hart, Kitty Senge, Susan Zorn, Peggy Bryant, Blake Mitnick

Out of eighteen hikers, only eight did the hike the way it was supposed to be done. Were the others wrong? Well, no, of course not. This is what happened.

Before we carpooled out to the end of North Mountain Trail at Route 311, Peggy Bryant said something about work on the parking area. "Fine," thought the trail boss. "They have improved it." But, when she and others arrived at the parking area she was familiar with, it looked just the same. Furthermore, some people were missing. After lengthy discussions in the hot sun, the decision was made to move out and set up the car switch, when Suzanne appeared around a curve in the road, and told us we needed to park at the new parking area a little further on. The trail had been relocated at this end because of some kind of land dispute. The parking

place was only around the curve and was a grassy area. Don't like to complain, but it would help for the leader to be informed of changes like this.

Since this had consumed more time than expected, four of the group elected to start up the trail from there and come back the same way. The rest went on to Deer Trail. Jeannie immediately started racing up the trail, although she admitted slowing down as it got steep. By the way, there is now no sign here, although there are sparse yellow blazes. Most of the way up, Carole and Evelyn found it a little much and turned back. Further on, on North Mountain Trail, the Mashwitzes decided to turn back. Since Carole had come with them, they said they would take her back, and also Evelyn. The trail on the ridge was much easier and enjoyable. Trees in leaf hindered distance views, but it was still beautiful.

Allegheny Trail, WV: Laurel Run to James Run

October 10, 1999

Rained out.

Tyke hike to Fairystone State Park

October 10, 1999

Rained out.

Angel's Rest Workhike

October 16, 1999

Charles Parry (leader), Bill Floyd, Walter Parry

I arrived in Pearisburg about 9:30. By the time Bill and Walter arrived, I had a short relocation flagged and partially brushed out. The relocation is a switchback of about 200 yards in length about 1/4 mile above the road. It will eliminate an eroded section of trail. Due to limited manpower we only got it half done. The weather was great and it was comfortable working. Several hikers passed through and most started up the relocation until Bill put a few logs across it. On the way out we did a little step repair work at the road crossing. I plan to have another workhike in the area this winter to finish this job and do other repair work.

Dragon's Tooth

October 16, 1999

Linda Akers (leader), Sue Scanlin (assistant), Charles Ayling, Marianne Demko, Sue Foy, Sharon Harrison, Heather, Nathan and Charles Harrison, Sharon McCulley, Dave Miller, Susan Newton, Durrant Vick, Elliott Wheeler

Several new hikers were with us this beautiful fall Saturday afternoon. Everyone was prompt, so we were soon acquainted,

loaded up and headed for the trailhead.

Note was taken of the many improvements made in this trail over the past several years by our hardworking Konnarock Crew, as well as club volunteers. It gave even our younger members a challenge, which they obviously relished. Most of the crew scrambled up on the Tooth. It took some coaxing, but the view was well worth it. After a fair amount of time enjoying the break, we headed back down the trail to our waiting cars. We even managed to retrieve a hiking stick that had been left on the way up.

Elephant Mountain

October 24, 1999

Dick Clark (leader), Bobbie Stitcher (assistant), H.R. Blankenship, Gary Hale

Elephant Mountain needs help. I told Mike Ferguson that we had better not put it on the schedule again until the trails have had some maintenance. There are blowdowns almost too numerous to count and the trail leading to the summit is so overgrown that it is virtually impossible to follow in places. In addition, sections of the trail just below the ridge crest are eroded to the point of being unsafe.

After being barked at by many junkyard dogs on our one-mile walk through Buena Vista, we got on the trail that leads to the abandoned town reservoir. Usually the reservoir is full, but due to the recent dry conditions, it was essentially empty.

From here on we overcame one obstruction after another as we picked our way to the summit. Lunch was at the overlook on the elephant's rump on the north end of the mountain. In keeping with trail conditions in general, the overlook was seriously overgrown and the views were quite limited.

After retracing our steps down the Elephant Mountain Trail, we continued on our loop around the mountain. Everything considered, this was in somewhat better shape than the first part even though some of the stream crossings have become confusing.

It is a shame that this trail system has fallen into such a state of disrepair because it has some very appealing features. Most prominent among these, in my opinion, are the rugged streams and the attractive old growth forests -- in particular, the hemlock groves. My guess is that there has been little or no maintenance in the last twenty years

As it happens, this is my quarter for the animals; in six weeks or so I'll be reporting back from Buffalo Mountain. Stay tuned.

Stone Coal Gap to Catawba Valley Trail

October 24, 1999

Bill Gordge (leader), Jeannie Huffman (assistant), Pam Rorer, Judith and Kelly Ogle, Sharon McCalley, Zetta Campbell, Sharon Rippee, Barbara Plotner, Pat Cousins, Peggy Bryant, Susan and Heather Foy, Homer Witcher

The mountains were bright with color and the fall day was crisp and sparkling. Fourteen people came out to enjoy the spectacle.

Although little used, this section of the North Mountain trail is the most interesting, there being several high knobs and several plunging notches to make varied terrain.

The trailhead is situated deep in the 2844-acre Stonecoal Creek scenic area and surrounded on three sides by the North Mountain and Broad Run roadless areas--all three units identified by the Sierra Club in its Virginia's Mountain Treasures report.

The mid-week work crew has rehabilitated the trail. The Lick Mt. and Ferrier trails, which enter the Gap on the opposite side, are currently receiving much needed work by the mid-week group.

At the start, you are treated to a long, long steady climb up out of the deep cleft of the gap, but finally you look back and are rewarded to see that Broad Run Mountain is now at your feet.

Despite the fact that the sights and sounds of the cement plant are never very far away, there are frequent grand glimpses of the Great Valley to the East, with Purgatory Mt. and the Peaks easily identified.

To the North and West are impressive views of Spesard Knob, Sinking Creek Mt., Broad Run Mt., and the rolling sweep of unbroken forest canopy along the valley ahead of you.

This was a day for losing things. A young man at the parking lot lost a camera and a purse filled with valuables, while one of our number lost her eyeglasses and case. We found the purse and glasses, but unfortunately not the camera.

Andy Layne Trail Workhike

October 31, 1999

Charles Parry (leader), Bill Gordge (assistant), Ron McCorkle, Maurice Turner, Roger Holnback, Linda King, Malcolm Black, Larry Metayer, Mike Vaughn, Bob and Kris Peckman, Jenny Wright, Leonard Adkins, David and Lucy Downs, Homer and Therese Witcher, Laura Wertz, Teresa Martinez, Brian Chisom, Margie O'Connell, Michele Rice, Lindsey Marshall, Josh Nathaniel, Peter Morgan, Sue Pernotto

The phone tree and dinner got more people out than usual. We arrived at the work site around 10:30 and began work. Several people came or left during the day, but we made the dirt fly. By quitting time we had dug about 750 feet of new trail. Several of us talked with Roger about the corridor problems associated with the trail. Roger works part time with the ATC land trust and he will try to obtain additional right of way for the trail. Let's hope he is successful. It was a good day's work and a good dinner. We ought to do it again. Also, the weather was great.

Huckleberry Trail

October 31, 1999

Gloria Parry (leader), Dick Clark (assistant), Pete Trower, Blake Mitnick, Mike and Billy Ferguson, Mary Lou Gaminde, Sherry Kessel, Ruth Trout, Connie Grant

Huckleberry Trail meanders through the New River Valley countryside with diverse views. The weather was a breezy 70 degrees and the fall leaves were still gorgeous. The six miles to the New River Valley Mall exit went quickly and we all enjoyed the day. I rode my bike back to the library and proceeded on to Salem to the delicious barbecue dinner at the Senior Center. Congrats to Don Nulph and all who put on this feast. Good work!

Crabtree Falls and The Priest

November 7, 1999

Gloria Parry (leader), Bobbie Stitche (assistant), Charles Parry (volunteer assistant), Linda King, Neil Fitzpatrick, Gary Hale, Amy Richardson, Suzanne Barnett, Sharon Rippee

Another beautiful, warm fall day. Still have some leaves and color, a glorious time of the year. We started the hike at 10:30 am and the last three off the trail (including self) was at 4:30 pm. A congenial bunch crammed (all 9 of us) into the back and available spaces in Bobbie's small station wagon (tight fit). Everyone enjoyed the day. No wildlife seen.

Curry Creek Trail

November 7, 1999

Dave Miller (leader), Linda Akers (assistant), Larry Austin, Carolyn Baratta, Zetta Campbell, Marianne Demko, Berlie and Patsy Bowman, Kathie Clarke

What does a six mile "Curry Creek Trail Hike" entail? After all, Curry Creek Trail is only $\frac{3}{4}$ mile long! A morning's inspection of the long, narrow, gravel road (F.S. Rd 186) leading to the bottom end of the Trail advised not trying from that end except with 4-wheel drive Jeeps or ATVs. The consensus was to come in on Salt Pond Road from the Parkway, go down the AT to Curry Creek, and walk in from there on Curry Creek Trail, which we did. This was a nice, sunny day with some breezes and cool enough for good hiking. After about an hour to get to the trailhead off the AT, we went in for about another 40 minutes on Curry Creek Trail. The trail was covered with leaves but was easily followed, running close to the Creek. Three Creek

crossings, involving significant stepping rock installation, made the trip interesting, but in order to get back up the climb to Salt Pond Road and to the cars before dark, we turned around before actually reaching F.S. 186, but we must have been close. We welcomed visitors Patsy, Berlie and Kathie, who drove in from Clifton Forge, and invited them to join us on future hikes.

Andy Layne Trail Workhike

November 14, 1999

Charles Parry (leader), Kris Peckman (assistant), Malcolm Black, Peggy Bryant, Ron McCorkle, Homer Witcher, Brian Chisom, Lindsay Marshall, Josh Nathaniel, Kelly Gilligan, Peter Morgan, Matt Laloyzetta, Chad Wilkins

When I met Kris and Malcolm at the bridge, it looked like we were in for a small turnout. Fortunately, the number grew quite rapidly. When I got to the worksite Ron was already there. In a few minutes, Kris and Mal arrived along with Peggy. Ron and I spent most of the day working on two sets of steps a short distance down the mountain from the diggers. The Roanoke College group arrived shortly before lunch time and left as Ron and I were finishing the last set of steps. The diggers had completed about 100 yards of trail reaching the old road which we will follow for a short distance. I am not sure when Homer arrived, but he was there when Ron and I joined the diggers. Ron and I walked out to Scorched Earth Gap with Homer to check out the rest of the relocation. We then went down the old trail, meeting the others at my truck. It will take 5 to 8 more workdays to complete the relocation, I think.

Roaring Run

November 14, 1999

Don Nulph (leader), Liz Lamson (assistant), Ralph Hart, Pat Cousins, Dave Sutton, Linda Tanner-Sutton, Matt Sutton, Evelyn King

It was a beautiful day. The fall color was gone. I wonder what the hike would be like were it full color. There was plenty of water flowing even though it has been dry lately. Wonder what it would be like when we had lots of rain. It is a short hike, and the trails are not well marked. The sign talks about a 3-mile to Hoop Hole. I wonder if that's a good hike.

Pickle Branch

November 20, 1999

Linda Akers (leader), Mervin Brower (assistant), Blanche Brower, Marianne Demko, Don Lawhorn, Bobbie Stitche

A small but enthusiastic group met to hike this beautiful Saturday afternoon. Don wanted to drive due to prior commitments, so the rest piled into Linda's wagon and headed for the trailhead. Once we'd conquered the initial uphill climb the rest was a piece of cake. Met and talked with a southbound thru-hiker at Pickle Branch Shelter, then encountered two more once we had made our loop and returned to the trailhead. Since it was still a little early, and we didn't feel we could do the Homeplace justice, we hiked another 45 minutes on the Audie Murphy Trail. We decided to turn back after reaching the crest and hearing many more gunshots. It was also getting late (prime hunting time??) and none of us had remembered to wear blaze orange.

Don headed back to a party in Roanoke, while the remainder partook of the delicious food at the Homeplace in Catawba. A very pleasant outing for all.

Pickle Branch Shelter Workhike

November 21, 1999

Maurice Turner (leader), Lynn and Peggy Bryant (assistants), Adam Cheslow, Dave Cheslow, Bill Gordge, Linda King, Lucien Metayer, Charles Parry, Kris Peckman

We were able to drive most of the way to Pickle Branch Shelter via the Forest Service road since Charles Parry had the key to the gate. While some worked installing the new fire grate, the others replaced steps down the blue blaze trail to Pickle Branch. The grate was installed by lunch and in the afternoon, we all were helping replace steps, using stone when possible and locust on others. Bill Gordge and a few others took care of a couple of blowdowns on the blue blaze leading off the AT to the shelter and on the AT itself, while the rest of us were winding down our work on the steps. We drove back to Trout Creek around 4:30 to rendezvous with Bill Gordge, Kris and Lucien. Charles and the Bryants waited for them, and the rest of us drove back to Orange Market. The weather had been cooperative for our hike--a typical autumn day.

Smoky Mountain National Park: Cataloochee Divide Trail

November 28, 1999

No report received.

Bottom Creek Gorge

November 28, 1999

Malcolm Black (leader), Sue Scanlin (assistant), Jimmie Black, Blake Mitnick, Suzanne Osborn, Zetta Campbell, Lynn Bryant, Wendell Boitnott, Connie Grant, Suzanne Barnett, Letitia Maye, Pat Cousins, Winfred Noell, Madeline Taylor, Gordon Kendall

When eight of us left Cave Spring Corners, little did we know that the unseasonable 60s on this sunny Sunday after Thanksgiving weren't to be the only unusual feature of this hike. For all practical purposes, this was also a leaderless hike because we didn't meet up with Malcolm until the hike's very end due to some miscommunication. Sue, the assistant, had never before been to Bottom Creek Gorge, but luckily we first met Lynn and later were joined by Jimmie, who provided expert substitute leadership. And what a beautiful trail system this is! Nice terrain, spectacular vistas, varied flora, and the remnants of cabins make for a most interesting hike. Add to that a group as congenial as this one and it's no wonder that a good time was had by all.

AT Sawtooth Ridge to Trout Creek

December 5, 1999

Kris and Bob Peckman (leaders), Bobbie Stitche (assistant), H.R. Blankenship, Peggy Bryant, Marianne Demko, Gary Hale, John Kovacich, Christine Ward

This was a surprisingly warm day for December, warm enough at times for T-shirts. The morning haze still obscured the valley to our east as we set out on Sawtooth Ridge, Bobbie's favorite section of the A.T. By the time the drivers "caught up" with the rest of the group, they were warming themselves in the sun at a high viewpoint. Crossing the pasture over to Sandstone Ridge, we met Sandra and Jim Elder of NBATC, finishing up part of their 113 miles on the RATC section! The creek on the Sandstone Ridge section seems to be full of watercress--it was tempting to feast on it. A little ways up from the creek, we found coralberries, which Marianne identified by their Latin name, *Symphoricarpos orbiculatus*.

At 624 Bob left us for another commitment. Bobbie, Marianne, and Kris ate lunch at Rawie's Rest, admiring the view. I think the others made it to the Tooth for lunch. On the way up between Rawie's Rest and the Tooth, Marianne, our resident botanist, gave Kris a lesson on lichens as she exulted over the huge quantity of lichens on the rocks. We all reunited near the Tooth, but after that we stayed fairly spread out for the rest of the hike. Altogether, it was a lovely day, great hike, and congenial group. We hope to see Christine again on another hike.

Buffalo Mountain

December 5, 1999

Dick Clark (leader), Neil Fitzpatrick (assistant), Suzanne Barnett, Malcolm Black, Wendell Boitnott, Zetta Campbell, Harford and Linda Gardner, Connie Grant, Ralph Hart, Sherry Kessel, Blake Mitnick, Betty Field, Betsy Franklin, Mary Ann Johnson, David, Linda, and Matthew Sutton, Kathy Tinaglia, Louise and Randall Turner

In the last several months, Buffalo Mountain has been given a rather attractive face-lift. First, a bit of background information: for many years Buffalo Mountain was privately owned, although the road to the summit had always been open to the public. Then a few years ago, the mountain and a fairly large tract of surrounding land was purchased by the Nature Conservancy. The Conservancy, in turn, deeded it over to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, which carried out the improvements.

The most striking change is in the road itself. If you have taken this hike before, you may remember that the lower part was muddy and full of potholes while the upper section consisted of boulders and large, irregular slabs of rocks. All of this has been replaced by a uniformly walker-friendly surface of crushed gravel. There is also a gate and a small parking lot about halfway up the road.

On the summit, the telephone poles and the supports for the old fire tower have also been removed. Now there are no man-made objects to detract from the striking beauty of this unusual mountaintop.

With rather complicated logistics (several hikers met us at various places along the route) we were a little late in getting the outing underway. As we started out, the clouds rolled in and, by

the time we reached the top, it was quite nippy and a serious wind was doing its best to blow us off the mountain.

The views, however, were quite good -- with the strange mass of Pilot Mountain, North Carolina dominating the vista on the southern horizon. Because of the chilly conditions, some people did not stay on top very long at all. In fact, when I got back to the parking lot, several cars had already gone.

Incidentally, there is an excellent book about the Buffalo Mountain area called *The Man Who Moved a Mountain*. In the early part of this century, there was very little work to be had in this rather isolated part of Floyd County. As a consequence, there was plenty of feuding, moonshining and the like. The book tells the story of Bob Childress, a local boy who became a

Presbyterian minister and returned home to establish his church in the midst of a Primitive Baptist culture.

By his faith, hard work, and personal charisma he was able to bring out the best in many of his neighbors and acquaintances. Over time, the moral atmosphere of the Buffalo community improved considerably, and eventually it even attained a certain measure of prosperity. If you haven't read this engaging book, I can highly recommend it.

The Hike Report Editor is
Kris Peckman

Trail Photos Wanted

Construction of the RATC World Wide Web page will soon be complete, but your help is needed.

Specifically, photos are being sought for the "Photo Gallery," "Trail Attractions," and "Shelters" portions of the web page. A "Nearby Trails" section will be added later, when time permits. For now, if you have photos (digital or prints - sorry, no slides please) that were taken along the AT in the Daleville corridor (in the RATC section of the trail) and which you think people might like to see on our web page, please send them to: David A Cheslow, 730 Apperson Drive, Salem, VA 24153-7021

Digital photos may be e-mailed to dcheslow@swva.net. Please be sure to include:

- your name
- the photographer's name
- the names of any identifiable people in the picture
- the date the picture was taken
- where the picture was taken
- which of the three sections above you believe the photo should appear in, and
- any comments that should accompany the picture.

Please do not submit any pictures, which are copyrighted, as the pictures will be available to everyone on the Internet. The photos will be appropriately attributed on our web page, but others can freely copy web page contents and may not give credit where it is due. If you would like the photo(s) returned to you, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Realize that if you send an original through the mail, that it may be damaged; if your picture is precious, please send a copy or make arrangements with the webmaster to hand deliver it. The RATC board has the ultimate authority as to what content (including photos) appears, and does not appear, on the RATC web page.

There is a special need for photos of the trail shelters maintained by the RATC. It would be nice if we could post a picture of each shelter and of each shelter's water source.

The webmaster is:

David A. Cheslow

Hike Schedule – WINTER 2000 *(continued)*

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2000

8:00 AM LICKSKILLET HOLLOW TO I-77
13 miles-Moderate
\$3.50 carpool fee
John Lynham 336/292-7637
Ken Garrett 890-8946

1:00 PM CASCADES
4 miles-Easy
\$2.50 carpool fee plus park fee
Linda Akers 776-1969
Marge Griffith 774-0693

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2000

8:00 AM WORKHIKE ANDY LAYNE TRAIL
\$1.50 carpool fee
Charles Parry 540/951-1402
Jim Hutchings 427-4536

1:00 PM HARVEYS KNOB TO BOBBLETTS GAP
3 miles-Easy
\$2.00 carpool fee
Ed Wallace 774-0175
Sue Scanlin 989-0497

SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 2000

8:00 AM RAMSEY DRAFT TO JEREMY RUN LOOP
8 miles-Moderate
\$3.50 carpool fee
Maurice Turner 334-2128
Linda King 342-2411

1:00 PM JENNINGS CREEK TO BRYANT RIDGE SHELTER
7 miles-Moderate
\$1.00 carpool fee
Zetta Campbell 366-8165
Suzanne Barnett 772-4273

SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 2000

8:00 AM WHITETOP MTN TO RT 728
8 miles-Moderate
\$3.50 carpool fee
Mike Ferguson 344-8525

1:00 PM RT 621 TO NIDAY SHELTER
3 miles-Easy
\$2.00 carpool fee
Bill and Liz Lamson 774-8981
Suzanne Barnett 772-4273

SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 2000

6:00 PM RATC ANNUAL BANQUET/ MEETING
Christ Lutheran Church, Grandin Road at Brandon Avenue
See reservation form on page 3 for details.
Shirley Kothiemer 562-0356

SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 2000

8:00 AM WORKHIKE ANGEL'S REST
\$3.00 carpool fee
Charles Parry 540/951-1402
Mike Ferguson 344-8525

1:00 PM ROCK CASTLE CREEK
4 miles-Easy
\$2.50 carpool fee
Linda King 342-2411
Kay Clatterbuck 989-8275

SUNDAY, MARCH 26, 2000

8:00 AM WORKHIKE WILSON CREEK SHELTER
\$2.00 carpool fee
Maurice Turner 334-2128
Peggy and Lin Bryant 343-2084

1:00 PM BOBBLETTS GAP AND HAMMOND HOLLOW TRAIL LOOP
6 miles-Moderate
\$2.00 carpool fee
Ken Garrett 890-8946

The RATC Mid-Week Crew

The Mid-week crew works independently on hikes and trail maintenance (A.T. and other) on, as the name applies, weekdays.

To learn more about the mid-week crew, contact.

Bill Gordge

Phone..... 344-9213

CALENDAR OF CLUB ACTIVITIES

ANNUAL BANQUET AND BUSINESS MEETING

March 18, 2000
Christ Lutheran Church

WINTER WORK HIKES

Saturday, January 30, 2000

Andy Layne Trail

Sunday, February 27, 2000

Andy Layne Trail

Sunday, March 19, 2000

Angels Restl

Sunday, March 26, 2000

Wilson Creek Shelter

WINTER BOARD MEETINGS

(Open to all Club members who register with the host in advance.)

Thursday, January 20, 7:30 p.m.

Hosted by Mike Ferguson

Thursday, February 24, 7:30 p.m.

Hosted by Hal Cantrill

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The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club is an affiliate of

The Appalachian Trail Conference

and a member of

The Nature Conservancy

And The American Hiking Society