

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

FALL 2003

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.



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

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS**President, Bob Peckman**

366-7780 bob@peckmanjazz.com

Vice President, Roger B. Holnback

556-2919 rholnback@westernvirginialandtrust.org

Secretary, Laurie Adkins

966-2811 habitualhiker.va@netzero.net

Treasurer & Historian, Stephanie Kent

986-0787 skent@rev.net

Land Mgmt. Supervisor, Jim Hutchings

427-4536 JimHutchings@worldnet.att.net

Conservation. Supervisor, Liz Belcher

989-6586 lbelcher@co.roanoke.va.us

Trail Supervisor, Charles Parry

951-1402 parrycj@math.vt.edu

Shelter Supervisor, David Cheslow & Jonathan Reed

389-7791 dcheslow@rev.net

265-4782 squeaksreed@yahoo.com

Hikemaster, Don Nulph

774-8618 nulph-d@cox.net

Newsletter Editors, Therese & Homer Witcher

992-3932 witchers4@juno.com

Membership Coordinator, Mervin Brower

387-9732 mervin@brower.cc

Counselor, Leonard Adkins

966-2811 habitualhiker.va@netzero.net

Counselor, Dick Clark

989-7053 artscoun@infionline.net

ANCILLARIES**Social Chairman, Carolyn McPeak**

(540)890-2855

Phone Tree Chairman, Liz Lamson

774-8981 blueridge@prodigy.net

Hike Reports Editor, Kris Peckman

366-7780 kris@peckmanjazz.com

Newsletter Distribution, Bobbie Sticher

890-2140 rb_bobbie@rbnet.com

Webmaster, David A. Cheslow

389-7791 dcheslow@rev.net

Roanoke College Rep., Brian Chisom

389-7393 (H), 375-7393 (W)..... chisom@roanoke.edu

Mid-week Workhikes, Bill Gordge

774-3016 bgordge@cox.net

OTHER**ATC Board of Managers –Mac (McKinney) Taylor**

(804)264-1255 jant1@comcast.net

ATC-LT Coordinator - James River to New River and**Director Western Virginia Land Trust, Roger B. Holnback**

556-2919 rholnback@westernvirginialandtrust.org

ATC Trail & Land Management Committee-Hal Cantrill

387-2347 hacantrill@worldnet.att.net

ATC Regional Rep., Teresa Martinez

540-961-5551 tmartinez@atconf.org

ATC-LT Coord. New River to Damascus, Steve Reisinger

504-951-7580 sre38@hotmail.com

Roanoke Valley Greenways Liaison, Don Nulph

774-8618 nulph-d@cox.net

Sir Speedy Printer

344-8550 robbiey@rbnet.com

CALENDAR OF CLUB ACTIVITIES**Saturday, October 25 – 5 PM**
Social at Red Crone's retreat cabin**Saturday, December 6 – 6 PM**
Holiday Banquet**WORK HIKES****Sunday, October 25 - 8:30 AM**
Sarver Hollow**Sunday, November 9 - 8:30 AM**
Catawba Mountain**Sunday, December 7 - 8:30 AM**
Stony Creek**Hike Scheduling****Contact Don Nulph**
774-8618 – Nulph-d@cox.net**BOARD MEETINGS****(All members are always welcome.**
Please let the host know you plan to attend.)**Thursday, October 9, 7:30 p.m.**
Hosted by Mervin Brower**Thursday, November 13, 7:30 p.m.**
Hosted by Homer & Therese Witcher**December: No board meeting**

Welcome New Members

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club welcomes the following new members:

John Birckhead
Colin Bidwell

Paul & Cindy Lechner
Betty Field

Nicholas Weitenberner
Charlie Sutphin

Beverly C. Read
Gerald & Deborah Kyle

We look forward to meeting you soon - hiking on the trail, at work, social event, or a board meeting.

Mervin Brower

President's Message

Thank you to Lucy Downs, for all her service as the social chair. The job created too much of a conflict with their bed & breakfast business, as both activities were always simultaneous. But she really left in style by finding her own replacement. And so, in the same paragraph, we welcome Carolyn McPeak as the new social chair.

Ron McCorkle, our shelter supervisor, has also retired. The Board was unanimous in asking David Cheslow to fill that spot. David accepted, but as a team with Jonathan Reed. We already had precedent for a team board position with Homer and Therese Witcher serving as the Blazer Editors. David and Jonathan clarified one issue we had not thought of: one position - one vote. The Board agreed that this is the way to handle team Board positions. We are looking forward to seeing a new level of shelter supervision from two gung-ho guys.

All of us who attended the Multi-Club meet know that Lucien Metayer and his team did a spectacular job. Bobbie Stichter did all the hikes (she has new respect for Don Nulph and does not want his job!) Stephanie Kent handled all the money issues and

Linda Akers did the social-event work. Ed Wallace was in charge of the excursions and Maurice Turner was in charge of the canoe trip and that did not have the minimum of 10 signed-up. Charlie Parry, Lucien & Stephanie Kent worked on one of the camp's trails and the camp refunded a lot of our fees. It was a very warm gathering and all the out-of-towners I spoke with were quite impressed. What teamwork! The Witcher family shared their improved thru-hike presentation on Friday night, which was very impressive. On Saturday night, Curley Ennis started out in first gear, was in overdrive within 15 minutes and stayed there for the rest of the show. Leonard Adkins presented a slide show on flowers of the AT. It was after the presidents meeting, but the few who saw it had a rare treat.

Welcome to Mac (McKinney) Taylor, our new liaison to the ATC Board of Managers, replacing Jimmy Whitney. Mac lives in Richmond, but plans to come to many of our board meetings.

Bob Peckman

Thank you "Atwater Carey" for the 4 first aid kits you donated to RATC. Any club member who would like to purchase their own first aid kit can do so for \$25 (\$39 retail value). These are large kits, appropriate for hike leaders and weigh about 1½ pounds. Contact Leonard Adkins at 966-2811 or e-mail: habitualhiker.va@netzero.net if you would like to take advantage of this deal.

Trail Supervisor's Report

The Konnarock Crews have come and gone for another year. We had 18 people work 85 person days with the crews. As in recent years, there has been more depth than breadth as 15 people worked more than one day. We had 10 people earn t-shirts by working 5 or more days. Jim Hutchings set the record by working 13 days. The people who earned t-shirts are: Suzanne Barnett, Malcolm Black, Blanche Brower, Mervin Brower, Bill Gordge, Jim Hutchings, Linda Hutchings, Jim Overholzer, Charles Parry and Maurice Turner. Our biggest single day turnout was on Saturday, August 2

when we had 14 people, in addition to the 9 crewmembers working. I want to personally thank all of you who turned out. I think that we accomplished about what I had hoped to do.

This fall we will continue to work on the Catawba Mountain rehabilitation that we worked on during our final Konnarock week. Next year we will have three Konnarock weeks to work on the McAfee Knob relocation.

Charles Parry

Multi-Club 2003

Multi Club Meet 2003 has come and gone. Now the Multi-Club committee can relax and look back on a great weekend. If you have never been to Multi-Club meet, you have miss one best times an AT hiker can have. We kept everyone busy from the get go. Camp Alta Mons, Shawsville, VA, provide a great location to stay and their food was to die for. Malcolm Black and the Witcher children made mementoes of the weekend for all the hikers. Bobbie Stitcher and Linda Akers kept all of the hikes running smoothly. Maurice Turner was in charged of the canoe trip but only 4 signup and we needed 10 for the trip. ED Wallace was the organizer of all the excursions. Stephanie Kent made sure that we did not break the club bank. And I (Lucien Metayer) was in charge of keeping of the records, entertainment and keeping everyone a happy camper. I would like to

specially thank our trail supervisor, Charles Parry, for coming out at the last minute to flag a new trail (Christmas tree Mountain trail) on Saturday for Camp Alta Mons. Stephanie and I blazed the new trail the next day. This was special request from the camp. This Labor Day weekend was the end of a year long project. This project would not have possible with help of dedicated committee members. Also, I would like to thank all of the hike leaders and excursion leaders for a great job. Next year's Multi-Club will be at Fontana Village in the Great Smokey Mountains. So make plans now to join Multi Club 2004.

Lucien Metayer

Hikemaster Report

The summer Hike Leaders received "Duties of a RATC Hike Leader" which resulted from the work done on hike leader protocol (see summer 2003 Blazer). There was more good information than included in the document. The document was limited to one sheet of paper. A larger document could be created. Comments are welcome on the current version. Did not hear from any one looking for slower pace short distance hikes. Some like the 10 miles or so and others like them around 5 miles and some would like to see backpacking trips. Yet others would like to see 10 miles on Saturday. Are there any leaders for 10-mile Saturday hikes or backpacking trips? For the summer hikes a costumed per hike "Hike Leader Package" was sent to the hike leaders as an aid. The package included a map of the hike; data about the

hike including data put in the Blazer for the hike, and when appropriate a map and directions to get to the trailhead, and a map and directions for the shuttle. The package **does not** replace the maps and documents that hike leaders currently use for a hike. Hopefully it will compliment them and give further assistance to the hike leader. For this package to improve in quality and usefulness for future hike leaders, the current hike leaders need to make suggestions and indicate where corrections and additions to the package are needed. This is part of the ongoing process of cataloging the RATC hikes.

Don Nulph

DUTIES OF A RATC HIKE LEADER

29-Jun-2003

1. We Have a Responsibility:

The Club and its hike leaders have a responsibility to the hikers and to themselves to act responsibly and with care in carrying out the public service of leading hikes. Hike leaders need to be prepared. They should have a first aid kit, map, compass, whistle and a flashlight. Occasionally a hike will return after dark even though it was not planned. They need to know the hike, how to get there, where to park cars, how to do the shuttle and think about emergency situations that might arise.

2. The hike goes on, if at all possible:

If a leader cannot make the hike, it is his/her responsibility to provide a qualified substitute. The Hike Master may be able to make some suggestions. The hike leader(s), in case of bad weather, may cancel a hike.

3. The hike meeting place:

The hike leader(s) may select the meeting place for a hike, but an assumed location will be used to calculate the carpool fee if location is not determined when the schedule is made. It must be determined before the first hiker calls asking for the location.

4. Hiker Readiness:

The location of the meeting place is intentionally omitted from the Blazer so the hike leaders have the opportunity to talk with the prospective hikers and gather some information. Ask leading questions; be interested in their hiking activities. This is the best time to help the prospective hikers decide if this hike is for them and make sure they know how to be properly prepared (water, food, clothing, footwear, whistle, etc.).

5. Gather some information:

The leader(s) can make a list of the names and phone numbers so they can call back in the case of a change in plans and also have an approximate head count.

6. Greet, Brief, Count, and Qualify the hikes:

Leaders (who will identify themselves as such) will greet all hikers, members and guests alike, and make sure every one is introduced to each other. Get every one going on the hike to sign the official sign-up sheet (name, phone number, and emergency contact). Know how many hikers are present. The leader needs to observe the equipment and advise or reject poorly prepared persons (high heels, sandals, insufficient clothing for cold weather, no water/food). Also check whether there are any medical problems (bee sting allergies, other allergies) and whether there are any medical pros in the group. Leaders will give an overview of the hike route (possibly supplemented with maps or trail description handouts), mention unusual or significant features, and indicate generally the rest stops and lunch break. Now is the time to state that this is a group activity and that the group is expected to follow the leaders' directions.

7. *Organize the Car Pool:*

When cars are required, the leader will explain car pool trip cost sharing to the group, give clear instructions to all drivers, including exact route and destination. Cars should try to stay together and behind the leader. A designated regrouping place should be agreed upon for long or complicated drives. Any special arrangements must be discussed at this time. For example, if there are faster hikers who wish to complete the hike and drive away before the rest of the group, the hike leader may allow them to do so only after determining there will be enough cars to transport everyone back to the beginning trailhead or meeting place.

8. *Maintain One group with no lost "souls":*

The leader and assistant leader will decide who will lead and who will sweep (the person stationed at the end of the group). All hikers must stay behind the lead hiker and the sweep will bring up the rear. The lead hiker and the sweep are experienced hikers appointed by the hike leader. The lead hiker will stop and wait for everyone to arrive and rest, when the sweep is too far in the rear or there is a need for some in the group to have a rest stop (physical or biological) or at points where the group could become separated (intersections, hazards, or confusing places). It must also be made very clear to each person electing to go ahead that they are no longer considered a part of the RATC hike and RATC and the hike leaders no longer have any responsibility for their safety, well-being or transportation.

9. *All aboard*

The leaders must make sure that every one is present or accounted for and all vehicles are functioning properly (no flat tires, etc.) before anyone drives away.

10. *RATC wants New Members and Hike Leaders*

Are there any prospective members or hike leaders in the group? Talk to the guests and offer them a schedule and/or a membership application or if available, a copy of the Blazer. Look for prospective hike leaders. Let the Hike Master know your recommendations.

11. *Do the paper work*

The hike leaders need to mail or email the hike report to the Blazer Editor while it is fresh in their minds and update the hike leader package with your additions and corrections and return it to the Hike Master.

12. *Follow Up*

It would be a friendly gesture if the leaders called some of the guests to invite them back to join future hikes.

Hike Reports

Sunday, December 8, 2002, 1:00 PM Roanoke Mountain Loop

Dave Sutton (leader), Sue Scanlin (assistant leader), Bill Mistele, Mary Lou Gaminde, Marianne Demkó, Stephanie Scanlin, Jim Wilson.

We had just enough people to ride in one vehicle, so Bill offered to drive his van. We had to park at the spur road, because of snow. As a group it was agreed that the extra walk could be accomplished. While continuing down the road atop 1 to 2 inches of snow, we met Club member Doug Clary and other cyclists on mountain bikes testing out a ride on the snow. (The bikes handled it pretty well). As we continued up the steep road, Stephanie pointed to a young hawk overhead. Deer tracks and rabbit prints were seen in the snow. Two hikers continued up to the overlook where we had an impressive view of the Roanoke Valley. Virginia Pine was the predominant tree on top. Descending the mountain, some hikers were "skiing" by sliding on their shoe heels. We all had fun going the "extra mile", and as I heard most were aching the following day.

Sunday, February 16, 2003, 1:00 PM Sharp Top

Cancelled due to a winter storm.

Sunday, April 13, 2003, 1:00 PM Rt. 621 to Niday Shelter

Dave Sutton (leader), Jean Warren (assistant leader), Debbie Reynolds, Mary Lou Gaminde, Georgia Gallaher, Warren and Suzanne Shows, Jo Anne Edmunds, Emily Edmunds, Anna Casey, Sue Scanlin, Carolyn Baratta, Craig Bradley, Sharon Harrison & Luke.

You could not ask for a more beautiful day and we sure had it. We arrived at the intersection of road 621 and the AT after 20 minutes of scenic driving along the Craig River. We kept a nice, slow and easy pace heading south on a gradual climb. The first quarter mile of the hike we passed through a colony of licopodium or running pine. Hikers pointed to wild iris growing along the trail. It was an easy walk across a few stones to ford a small stream. We were joined by 3 weekend overnight

backpackers for our break at the shelter. For some, reading the log book left at the shelter was an adventure in itself. Upon return, deer were wandering near the AT. The dogwoods were at their peak. We all made it back by 4 and had a wonderful hike.

Sunday, April 27, 2009, 1:00 PM McAfee's Knob

Linda Akers (co-leader), Bobbie Sticher (co-leader), Debbie Robbins, Mark Ingram, Cindy Bowles, H.R. Blankenship, Sam Oakey, Jerry Smith, Liz Hager, Lois Smith, Marianne Demkó, Gene Downs, Jennifer Pfister, Mary Gilbert and Creg Bradley.

The group assembled at the Orange Market under a cloudless blue sky, and quickly headed for the trailhead. Jennifer jogged to the fire-road crossing, where she rejoined the group. We passed blooming money-plant, spring beauty, pussytoes, fire-pinks, purple dead-nettle, wild mustard, mountain laurel, and wild iris. The lady-slippers were just coming up. The "cow's tail" group explored the site of the old Johnson Farm on the way up, where all that remains is a few rock walls, the chimney and root cellar (evidence of an era gone by). The fast hikers had just left the knob when we arrived. That didn't stop us from enjoying the views while we took a break, pointed out Tinker Cliffs to a number of hikers, and snapped a few photos. As always, the return trip went quickly, and all 16 were accounted for at the parking lot by 5:30 p.m. All in all, it was an invigorating and enjoyable hike on a warm April afternoon.

Sat., May 31 & Sunday, June 1, 2003, 8:00 AM Workhike – Whiterocks Camp Out

Charles Parry (leader), Fred Coughlan, Bob Foutz, Mike Ferguson

This was supposed to be our annual Whiterocks campout and work hike. However, Hal had back problems and was not able to go. Also, the weather was pretty wet. Therefore, we decided to do two day trips instead of an overnight. On Saturday, it was Fred and me. We clipped from the

Rocky Mountain Road to the Salt Sulphur Turnpike. We also took out several small blow downs and got wet. Fortunately, it didn't rain much until after lunch.

My truck tags expired on Saturday night and my new ones had not yet arrived, so Bob agreed to drive on Sunday. We met Fred and Mike over on Stony Creek. It was decided that Mike and I would work from Pine Swamp Shelter north, while Fred and Bob would work from the Rocky Mountain Road south. We spotted a vehicle at the road crossing in the middle. We saw several thru-hikers both days and they seemed to be in good spirits despite the wet weather. We only carried small handsaws, but were able to get all of the blow downs. We met just past the VA 635 crossing in early afternoon and decided to spend the remainder of our time putting in more corduroy in the wet area north of the road. We finished the worst of the wet spots.

Sunday, June 8, 2003, 8:00 AM

113 mile #10

John's Creek to Pine Swamp Branch Shelter

Kenny Garrett (co-leader), Jerry Austin (co-leader), H.R. Blankenship, Larry Austin, Laura Montague & Sandy Leach

It was a great day for hiking. It had stopped raining prior to our arrival at the trail head. The worst part of the day was the time it took for the car switch. We began walking at 10:00, and immediately met the first of several thru-hikers that we talked to on and off throughout the day's stroll. The trail showed signs of recent maintenance and was in great shape, except for the mud. We enjoyed laughing at each other as we encountered Mother Nature's humor of the slippery and muddy climbs and the intermittent wading pools. The temperatures held in the upper 70's throughout the day. As we took a break on Wind Rock, we observed a proud hawk circling over the West Virginia landscape. We also saw several chipmunks, deer, and Laura made friends with a box turtle. The most prevalent animal was the gnats just below Wind Rock and at the trail heads. Larry identified numerous wildflowers to include orange and pink azaleas, rhododendron, jack-in-the-pulpit, and others. We strolled through several fields of the greenest ferns I've ever seen.

All had a great time, even though the mud made the hike seem longer than 13 miles.

Sunday, June 8, 2003, 1:00 PM

Hanging Rock Greenway

Mary Lou Gaminde (co-leader), Jean Warren (co-leader), Zetta Campbell, Georgia Gallaher, Mike & Margaret Ferguson and Billy & Natalie Ferguson

We met at the Hanging Rock end of the greenway. It was drizzling when we started our walk, but stopped shortly afterward. There was a large tree across the greenway and Jean said there were some poison ivy vines growing on it. We all tried to be really careful when we climbed over it. We had two very young walkers with us, Billy 5 years old and Natalie 3 years old, and we all enjoyed having them along. We got back before the rain started again, which is quite an accomplishment these days.

Thursday - Monday, June 12 -16, 2003

Workhike - Sarver's Cabin

with Konnorock Crew

Charles Parry, Bill Gordge, Malcolm Black, Kris Peckman, Fred Coughlan, Mervin Brower, Blanche Brower, Greg Still, Dana Helsley, Jim Hutchings, Linda Hutchings, Suzanne Barnett, Maurice Turner, Jim Overholzer
Konnarock Crew: Bobby Usher (crew leader), Dave Tompkins (assistant crew leader), Mike Smith, Ted Wilson, Kerri Hamos, Kenny Fellers, John Tatara

When I arrived on Saturday, several steps had been set and a good bit of trail had been dug. By Saturday night all the top part of the trail had been dug and we still had lots of step work. On Sunday, we had diggers working near the big switchback and four crews of step builders. My group had the top most corner and we had to bring some rocks in from downhill. Near quitting time, we had a big one to move and realized that we needed some mechanical help. On Monday, the digging got done, but the club will need to go back for a day or two of step work.

Saturday, June 21, 2003

Dismal Branch Bridge

Charles Parry, Kevin Franklin, Dave Hrdlicka, Gwynn Franklin, Ross Hart, John Neathawk,

Allain Hart, Brian Fink, Jamie Robertson, John Cleary, Bill Smith, Don Cleary, Dorothy Cleary, Mark Franklin, Donald Cleary, Matt Franklin

This was Kevin Franklin's Eagle Scout project, which was over a year in the making. Last year, Kevin, his dad and I made a site visit to the bridge. The old bridge was built from native timbers, which we had replaced in 1987. The decking was about 30 years old, had a lot of moss on it and was in bad shape. We decided to put in a 24 foot bridge with stringers built of 3 2"x12"s bolted together. As the bridge is not very high, we did not put on a rail. On Tuesday, Dave, Kevin and I picked up the stringer material on a Forest Service trailer and got it behind the gate at Kelly Flats. I had picked up the decking and got it pre-cut to 3 feet lengths. On Saturday, I met the scout troop at a pull over area on top of Brush Mountain. We left most of their vehicles at the fisherman parking area near the AT crossing and crammed everybody into our three 4 wheel drive vehicles. We found the stringers where they had been left and put them in the truck that Kevin brought. The grass was high in Kelly Flats and I missed one stream crossing and got stuck. Fortunately, I had some heavy rope and we were able to pull it out with the other truck. We could drive to within half a mile of the site and then had to carry in the material and tools. We got everything in by noon and began the assembly work. They had several cordless electric drills, so the assembly went quite fast. We got the stringers across the stream without much problem and then began decking. By 3:30 the new bridge was done. After some pictures, we headed out, taking the old decking with us. It is a nice bridge and should last 30 – 40 years. On the way home the scout troop wanted to stop in Blacksburg for pizza. They didn't have to twist my arm too hard to get me to join them. Kevin's brother, Matt, had done a bridge with me as an Eagle Scout project 4 or 5 years ago. It was good to see the Franklin family again.

Sunday, June 22, 2003, 9:00 AM
113 mile #9
Sinking Creek to John's Creek

Jerry Austin (co-leader), Maurice Turner (co-leader), H. R. Blankenship, Don Hoke, Blake, Greg Bradley, and Mary Gilbert.

Maurice met all the Roanoke area hikers at Orange Market and I (Jerry Austin) met all of them near the trailhead on Route 42. We left two cars there and packed all seven of us into my big town car and headed across the mountain on Route 601 to John's Creek to hike back to Sinking Creek. The weather was perfect, no rain, the sun was shining nicely, but it was not too hot. Also there was a nice breeze blowing. I saw several deer and lots of chipmunks. Also we heard a lot of loud and noisy Cicadas, on the lower parts of the mountains, but not up high. We hike through miles and miles of blooming mountain laurels. They were breathtaking. We also hiked through fields with lots of cows and lots and lots of blooming daisies everywhere. Almost immediately upon leaving the parking area at John's Creek, we hit a big blowdown really blocking the trail badly with lots of stuff on the trail. The hike around it was hard because of lots of blowdowns around it. Other than that the trail looked pretty good except for a few small blowdowns and one other big one just a little uphill from where the AT crosses Route 601. We hit a trail magic setup within 50 yards or so before crossing Route 601 with a sign which said "Welcome Hikers". After pulling the mountain, I could have used one of the sodas left there, but I figured I'd leave it and all the others for the Thru Hikers, who certainly need it a lot more than I do. The trail magic set up had a cooler full of something (maybe beer), several 12 packs of soda, and four gallons of water or so, and several garbage bags hanging there to leave your trash so it could be hauled off. I was impressed. The Kelly's Knob view on top of the mountain was impressive. Most AT signs I saw were in good shape except for the John's Creek Trail sign and the Directions sign on the John's Creek side of the Mountain, which talks about Big Pond shelter (which is now known as Laurel Creek Shelter). These two signs could definitely use some work. When I finished the hike, Maurice took me back across the mountain to my car and the other hikers rode in one car back to Roanoke. A great day and a great hike.

Hike Schedule

Going on a group hike can fulfill a number of worthwhile purposes. These include such things as physical conditioning, social interaction, the enjoyment of nature, and the thrill of reaching a spectacular viewpoint. The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club consistently tries to provide a wide range of hiking opportunities for people of all ages, interests and abilities. Guests are always welcome to join us.

For the most part, we rate our hikes as follows:

Easy – 3 to 5 miles; good trails or old roads; modest elevation changes.

Moderate – 5 to 8 miles; steeper trails which may be rough in places.

Strenuous – 8 miles and up; long hikes with extensive climbs and possible rough trails or bushwhacking.

Hikes, which do not fall, neatly into one of these categories may be rated **easy-moderate** or **moderate-strenuous**.

You may drive your own car to the trailhead if you wish. However, carpooling is encouraged to save gasoline and because trailhead parking may be limited. The hike leader is responsible for arranging such carpooling as may be required. While there is no fee to hike with the club, the indicated amount is to defray automobile expenses and should be given to the driver of your carpool.

You will need to call the leader to find out where the hiking group will be meeting. If you are new to hiking, the leader can also give advice about clothing, footwear, and equipment. If you are unfamiliar with the hike, the leader will be glad to answer your questions and help you evaluate whether or not it is suitable for you.

Saturday, October 4, 2003, 8:00 AM Andy Lane Trail to Daleville Park & Ride 113-Mile Hike #3

11 miles, Strenuous, \$1.00 carpool fee

The hike is just north of Roanoke. Starts in the Catawba Valley and ends in Daleville. Hike up the relocated Andy Lane Trail and then a scenic ridge walk overlooking Carvins Cove.

Ed Wallace 774-0175

Maurice Turner 334-2128

Sunday, October 5, 2003, 1:00 PM Sunset Field to Apple Orchard Falls

3 miles, Moderate, \$2.00 carpool fee

32 miles from Roanoke

Located on the Blue Ridge Parkway North of the Peaks of Otter near milepost 78. Enter the national forest at 0.1 miles, cross the A.T. at 0.2 miles, a logging road at 0.8 and at 1.4 miles look back on a beautiful 200-foot water falls. The hike down is relative easy, but getting back up is another thing. It is a step climb back.

Sue Scanlin 989-0497

Dick Moran 389-3744

Sunday, October 12, 2003, 6:00 AM Old Rag

7 miles, Strenuous, \$6.00 carpool fee

150 miles from Roanoke

Old Rag is in the Shenandoah National Park north of Charlottesville and Madison. It is very popular hike that has spectacular views from a massive granite peak.

Linda Akers 776-1969

Kenney Garrett 890-8946

Sunday, October 12, 2003, 1:00 PM Trout Creek to Pickles Branch

2.5 miles, Easy, \$1.00 carpool fee

15 miles from Roanoke

Located in Craig County in the Jefferson National Forest just south on AT from Dragons Tooth in Millers cove.

Mervin Brower 387-9732

Paul Blaiklock 985-6220

Sunday, October 19, 2003, 8:30 AM**Douthat State Park**

7-10 miles, Strenuous, \$3.00 carpool fee

40 miles from Roanoke

Located about 39 miles straight up Rt. 220 from Daleville to trailhead near Clifton forge. With 40 miles of trails that cross and interconnect, there are lots of hiking opportunities here. This hike uses several trails to form a loop that climbs and then descends Middle Mountain from the main road that bisects the Park. Along the way there are a couple of small waterfalls plus a great lunchtime view from a side trail on top of the mountain. Add to carpool fee \$3.00 per car.

John A. Lynham 336-292-7637

Maurice Turner 334-2128

Sunday, October 19, 2003, 1:00 PM**Catawba Mountain (311) to Sawtooth (785)**

4 miles, Easy-Moderate, \$1.00 carpool fee

5.5 miles from Roanoke

Located in Roanoke County just west of Salem and I-81 near the Catawba Valley. This is an up and down ridge walk through the forest coming out on pasture near the end. Last year (2002) the fall leaves were very beautiful.

Bobbie Sticher 890-2140

Jean Warren 384-6229

Saturday, October 25, 2003, 8:30 AM**Work Hike followed by social Saver Hollow**

\$2.00 carpool fee

Charles Parry 540-951-1402

Mervin Brower 387-9732

Sunday, October 26, 2003, 1:00 PM**Chessie Nature Trail**

6.5 miles, Easy, \$3.00 carpool fee

42 miles from Roanoke

The hike is along the Maury River between Lexington and Buena Vista. It has river views, high cliff and well-preserved Locks of 19th-century canal system. It is best in spring and fall when foliage is thin.

Suzanne Barnett 772-4273

Don Hoke 563-2902

Sunday, November 2, 2003, 8:00 AM**Route 52 near I-77 to Licksillet Hollow**

12 miles, Strenuous, \$4.00 carpool fee

Located 70 miles from Roanoke. The hike starts north of Bland and ends north of Crandon.

Kenney Garrett 890-8946

John A. Lynham 336-292-7637

Sunday, November 2, 2003, 1:00 PM**Harkening Hill**

2.8 miles, Moderate, \$2.00 carpool fee

25 miles from Roanoke

Located at Peaks of Otter on Blue Ridge Parkway north from Roanoke. This area is beautiful and the hike is very popular with the general public. This is a beautiful area.

David Sutton 774-0648

Sue Scanlin 989-0497

Sunday, November 9, 2003, 8:30 AM**Work Hike Catawba Mountain**

\$1.00 carpool fee

Charles Parry 540-951-1402

Laurie Adkins 966-2811

Sunday, November 9, 2003, 1:00 PM**Carvins Cove Boat Launch to Cemetery**

4 miles, Easy, \$0.00 carpool fee

Located at the City of Roanoke's reservoir.

There is a fee of \$1.00 for Roanoke City residents and \$2.00 for every one else.

Georgia Gallaher 345-8700

Dick Moran 389-3744

Sunday, November 16, 2003, 7:30 AM**Greenbrier State Forest**

8 miles, Strenuous, \$5.00 carpool fee

72 miles from Roanoke

Greenbrier State Forest in West Virginia is located 35 miles west of Clifton Forge near White Sulphur Springs. It's developed much like a state park, with a campground, trails, cabins, and even a swimming pool. Most of the trails climb to the ridge top or run along the side of Kate's Mountain (after which the rare Kate's Mountain Clover is named). This hike is a loop with a couple of steep sections as it ascends and then descends the mountain. There is a modest view of the Greenbrier River Valley at the top.

John A. Lynham 336-292-7637

Maurice Turner 334-2128

**Sunday, November 16, 2003, 1:00 PM
Catawba Mountain (311) to McAfee Knob (AT)**

7 miles, Moderate, \$1.00 carpool fee

5.5 miles from Roanoke

Located west of Salem. Hike starts from the 311 parking lot on Catawba Mountain. This is a very popular hike. It is up-and-back along the Appalachian Trail. For the first two miles, the trail generally follows the ridgeline of Catawba Mountain to the Catawba Shelter. The last mile and a half of trail passes a number of unusual rock formations as it climbs to the summit of the knob. Extensive cliffs at the top afford unparalleled views of both the Catawba Valley and the city of Roanoke.

Linda Akers 776-1969

Bobbie Sticher 890-2140

**Sunday, November 23, 2003, 10:30 AM
Black Horse Gap to Salt Pond Road
via the 1930 AT**

4.5 miles, Moderate, \$2.00 carpool fee

13 miles from Roanoke

Located along the Blue Ridge Parkway north of Route 460. This hike follows the directions given in the 1934 Trail Guide on hiking the AT between Black Horse Gap and Curry Gap. There is bushwhacking on this hike.

Dana Helsley 977-4154

Fred Coughlan 387-2331

**Sunday, November 23, 2003, 1:00 PM
Mill Mountain Loop**

4-6 miles, Moderate, \$1.00 carpool fee

3 miles from Roanoke

Georgia M. Gallaher 345-8700

Paul Blaiklock 985-6220

**Sunday, November 30, 2003, 1:00 PM
Sharp Top**

2.5 miles, Moderate, \$2.00 carpool fee

25 miles from Roanoke

Located at Peaks of Otter on Blue Ridge Parkway north from Roanoke. This area is beautiful and the hike is very popular with the general public.

Sharon Harrison 427-0834

Mary Lou Gaminde 344-1637

**Sunday, November 30, 2003, 1:00 PM
Daleville to Hay Rock**

7 miles, Moderate, \$0.00 carpool fee

0 miles from Roanoke

No driving for this one – the trail starts directly from the Daleville commuter lot. Except for a short feeder trail (old A.T.), the route follows the Appalachian Trail to Hay Rock and back again. There are several good overlooks along the way, but the best one is at Hay Rock. This overhanging chunk of sandstone provides shelter on one side and great views on the other – for those willing to scramble to the top.

David Sutton 774-0648

Don Hoke 563-2902

**Sunday, December 7, 2003, 8:30 AM
Work Hike - Stony Creek**

\$4.00 carpool fee

Charles Parry 540-951-1402

Mike Ferguson 344-8525

**Sunday, December 7, 2003, 1:00 PM
Bearwallow Gap to Jennings Creek(AT)**

5 miles, Moderate, \$3.00 carpool fee

23 miles from Roanoke

Located in Botetourt County southeast of Buchanan.

Kenney Garrett 890-8946

Sue Scanlin 989-0497

**Saturday, December 13, 2003, 8:00 AM
Sunset Field Camping Ridge Exploratory Hike.**

6-11 miles, Strenuous, \$2.00 carpool fee

32 miles from Roanoke

Located on the Blue Ridge Parkway north of the Peaks of Otter. This is an exploratory hike looking in the area of Sunset Fields, Apple Orchard Mountain, Thunder Ridge, Camping Gap, Camping Ridge and White Oak Ridge to see if there is a possible loop hike. Be prepared!

Don Hoke 563-2902

David L. Schoendorfer 540-772-2297

**Sunday, December 14, 2003, 1:00 PM
Jennings Creek to Bryant Ridge Shelter**

6 miles, Moderate-Strenuous, \$2.00 carpool fee

23 miles from Roanoke

Located in Botetourt County not far from Arcadia and Buchanan.

Bobbie Sticher 890-2140

Linda Akers 966-2811

Weekends of December 21 and December 28, no hikes. If any one wants to hike these weekends, send Don Nulph an e-mail (no phone calls on this,

please). Don will see if a hike can be organized and continue the communications by e-mail.

Work Hike/ Social Saturday, October 25, 2003

Workhike at Sarver Hollow Shelter-AT "blue blaze". Workhike followed by a social at 5:00 at Red Crone's retreat cabin. Red will supply a smoked deer hind-quarter, everyone supply a carry in dish, BYOB

Directions: Crone on mailbox #596 (from Sarver area: just over Montgomery/Craig Co line is a church on left, turn into Red's the next drive on left) (from 311, 9 miles then look on right) Once in the drive, bear left and cabin is up the hill.

Please RSVP for Social by Friday 10/24 to Dave and Lucy Downs 384-7219

Holiday Banquet Saturday, December 6, 2003, 6 PM

It will be held at Christ Lutheran Church on the corner of Brandon and Grandin Avenues. We will eat at 6:00 PM. The club will provide beverages and table service.

Club members will provide

1. A dish to pass
2. A non-perishable food item to be donated to RAM House
3. This is voluntary. A 2 minute (strictly enforced) story of a wilderness adventure they had while hiking.

Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club Application New & Renewal

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

Names(s) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____ - _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Email _____ Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Family Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> New 1 year \$20	<input type="checkbox"/> New 2 year \$35	<input type="checkbox"/> Renew 1 year \$15	<input type="checkbox"/> Renew 2 year \$30
Individual Member	<input type="checkbox"/> New 1 year \$15	<input type="checkbox"/> New 2 year \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Renew 1 year \$10	<input type="checkbox"/> Renew 2 year \$20
Make checks payable to RATC, PO Box 12282, Roanoke, 24024-2282				<input type="checkbox"/> Life \$500

Hike Reports (Continued)

Sunday, June 22, 2003, 1:00 PM Harkening Hill

Mervin & Blanche Brower (co-leaders), Mary Lou Gaminde, Dave Miller, Paul Blaiklock, Harry Ballard, Kim Ferguson, Carolyn Baratta, E. Baratta, Sherry Kessel.

The day was bright, clear and about 70 Degrees. A perfect day for hiking. We did the loop around the Johnson farm. We stopped to look through the house and garden. We stopped at the balancing rock for a rest and had a talk with a couple from Minnesota. Some people climbed on it for a rocking ride. Then, we went on to the top and looked at the view. After which it was all down hill to the information center, which was the end of the hike. We saw some wild flowers. With the way we did our loops we put in about 6 miles of walking which everyone enjoyed.

Sunday, June 29, 2003, 6:00 AM Peter's Mountain

Laura Montague (co-leader), Kenny Garrett (co-leader), Larry Austin

A small but happy group. Since it was just the three of us Kenny and Larry wanted to change the meeting time to 7 am so we did. We did 17.4 miles (or 20 for those of us who walked the dog 2.5 miles before the hike). Kenny thought it was 19.4 if you started at Stillhouse Branch and 22.4 if you started at Wades. By the time I convinced him otherwise we were past Wades and it was pretty obvious that neither guy really wanted to do that other two miles. It did not matter to me. We saw 4 adult deer and 4 speckled fawns. Rhododendron in bloom, Mountain Laurel in bloom, Spiderwort in bloom, Indian Pipe (which Larry says is kind of rare) and many other blooming wildflowers that Larry named but I cannot remember. And last, but not least, we saw one box turtle. We were on the trail at 8:45 and off by 4 pm. Guys don't take long breaks. Lunch was 15 minutes. I was still arranging my stuff when I realized that I had better get busy eating. It was hot when we were climbing but otherwise a beautiful day. We were alternately serenaded by the birds and the 17 year locusts.

Sunday, June 29, 2003, 1:00 PM Carvins Cove

Linda Akers (leader), Bobbie Sticher (co-leader), Emory Richardson, P.W. Bryant, Marianne Demkó, Beverly C. (John) Read, Georgia Gallaher Erin Baratta, Carolyn Baratta, Paul Blaiklock, Blake Mitnick, Joyce Fisher, Mervin Brower & Blanche Brower

We all met at Carvins Cove (necessity - to get passes) and began our hike there. After a short distance of road-walking, Blake decided to look for greener trails elsewhere. We took a short break at the old cemetery where a number of hikers turned back to their cars at the cove. The remaining contingent continued on around the cove and to the new parking area at Bennett Springs where Bobbie's car awaited to take us back to the cove. It was a little cramped with 8 people, but we made it in one trip. Good hike for a hot afternoon.

Sunday, July 6, 2003, 8:00 AM Stillhouse Branch to Rice Field

Maurice Turner (leader), H.R. Blankenship

The hike was changed to Route 311 to Dragons Tooth Parking Lot because there were only two calls for the hike and only one showed. H.R. Blankenship and I decided to hike the Route 311 to Dragon's Tooth Parking section rather than drive all the distance to Pearisburg. We started at 8:30 and finished at 11:30, allowing us the rest of the day to do other things. It was humid weather but we finished before it got too hot.

Sunday, July 6, 2003, 1:00 PM Fenwick Mines Trail

Don Nulph (Leader), Sharon Harrison (assistant leader), Georgia Gallaher, Peggy W. Bryant, Mary Lou Gaminde, Lynn Bryant, Douglas Stark, Alison Nulph, David Nulph, Dog Luke

I made one trip with my wife to find the place and did no hiking and then went the week before to find the trails, etc. The hike started out as a nice warm July day. Five minutes into the hike, it started raining. Some continued in spite of the rain. Some things known were learned again. When hiking, be prepared for rain. Computer printouts do not like to be wet. Dogs like to be wet and share the wetness. I

did not know how much of the trails should be part of the hike. To the right we hiked (in the rain) to the overlook to the falls. Kept on hiking finding level trail that looked like it was part of an old railroad bed. Found "a do not cross or get on this bridge" bridge on part of the old railroad bed. We found an old cemetery, accessed by a jeep road. At this point the rain stopped and we went back to our starting point and picked up the two hikers who had returned to the car when it started raining. The whole group hiked left to the other parking lot over the swampy area. The place is like a park in the middle of nowhere. It is a very interesting place but we did not find the mines. While we were hiking, Luke was having fun in the creek.

Sunday, July 13, 2003, 8:00 AM
Work hike – Brushy Mountain

Charles Parry (leader), Bob Foutz, Greg Still, Dana Helsley, Fred Coughlan, Paul Workman

I met Bob at the Pandapas Pond parking area, just outside of Blacksburg. We drove over to Kimberling Creek and Greg was right behind us. We had barely gotten out of our trucks when Dana pulled in with the Roanoke folks. We split into two crews with Fred, Bob and Paul doing clipping and blow down removal (with a handsaw) from Va. 611 to Va. 608. Dana drove them to 611 and got them started in the right direction. In the meantime Greg and I got our mowers out of our trucks and headed up the hill to the AT. I headed down toward the creek while Greg headed up the mountain. Dana was up there by the time I finished mowing on the lower end. I told Dana that I thought most of the clipping was up the hill and headed up with my mower. The Autumn Olive trees had practically grown across the trail, so when we finished the mowing I went down to my truck to get another pair of loppers and a handsaw. By noontime we had the trail through the field in pretty good shape. We then drove over to 608 where we had lunch, before heading up the mountain with weed eater, a few digging tools and clippers. Our goals were to clear the trail under the power line, re-grade a few short sections of trail and clip as needed. As Greg had to leave early, we left him at a spot that needed re-grading about 3/4 ths of the way up. After doing some clipping under the power line, I realized that Dana didn't need me so I headed down to help Greg. On my way down, a hiker on his way to

Damascus passed me. He remarked about the fresh trimming on the other side of the mountain. I told him we had done it in the morning. Shortly after, I got back to the digging area Greg had to leave. That area was about done, so I moved on down to the next one and had it pretty well done, by the time Dana got back. We did one more area on the way down and got back to our trucks about 4. As the other crew had not arrived, Dana spent some time trimming the trailheads on both sides of the road with the weed eater, while I headed in to meet the others with clippers and handsaw. I found several small blow downs in the first quarter of mile, but not much after that. I had gone about 3/4 of a mile when I heard familiar voices around the next bend. When we got back to the road, Dana's truck was gone, but I spotted a note on my backdoor. He had gone over to 611 to look for the missing crew. We got in my truck with Bob in the back and drove to Va. 42 and pulled into the store parking area. Almost immediately, Dana pulled in behind us. It was almost 6 o'clock and the end of a productive workday. The other crew reported that they found a lot of small blowdowns, which they removed and three large ones that they could not remove. They said that the large ones were easily stepped over, so there is no rush to remove them.

Sunday, July 13, 2003, 1:00 PM
Catawba Mountain to Dragon's Tooth Parking
113-mile, hike #5

Linda Akers (co-leader), Paul Yeatts (co-leader), Dave Miller, John Read, Joseph McManus, Michael Bassett, Lois Smith, Paul Blaiklock, Joann Edmunds, Cindy Boeler, Marianne Demkó, Creg Bradley, Blake Mitnick

We met at the Orange Market then dropped hikers off at trailhead at top of Catawba Mountain. We took all cars to Dragon's Tooth Parking lot, then returned drivers to begin hike at Sawtooth trailhead. First contingent had gone ahead, so the remaining 7 brought up the rear. We managed to make it to the stream crossing before it started raining. Some came prepared; others made do with very stylish Wal-Mart shopping bag head coverings (no duct tape required!). The rain refreshed us, and we made it back to our waiting cars around 5:00. Fortunately, we were using the new sign-up sheets provided by the club, which require phone numbers; for one of the drivers had left with someone else's

car & house keys in the trunk of his car. Don't know what would have happened if I did not have that phone number! Thanks to Paul Yeatts (new hike leader) for his able assistance.

**Saturday, July 19, 2003
Sarver Shelter Trail Work Hike**

Charles Parry, Jim Hutchings, Dana Helsley, Fred Coughlan, Greg Still

When I arrived at the parking area, Greg was already there. Actually, he had come out Friday and done some work on the badly overgrown areas on top of the mountain. He had spent the night at the shelter and had come down to meet us. Jim arrived shortly thereafter and said that Fred and Dana were coming. As soon as they arrived, we headed up the mountain with three rock bars, two picks, two pulaskis, one shovel and a come-along in a bucket. We probably could have done fine with one less pulaski, but needed everything else. The first job was to move a large boulder uphill, that we had started moving a few weeks earlier without making much progress. This time the rock moved quite easy, of course, I was operating the come-along while three others worked with rock bars and one with a pick. After getting it in place, Dana and I stayed to put the finishing touches on that set of steps, while the others headed back to the previous set. Dana and I got down to where the others were about lunchtime. We discussed the operation and decided that there was one monster rock that needed to come out if we could move it. It did with a lot of digging, prying and pulling with the come-along. After some more discussion, we figured out how to use it. Next came several smaller rocks and finally one very large one for the top step. We left a couple of people there to finish up while the rest of us went down to start the final set. We discovered that there was no good material left close to the site and that the best material was 150 feet up the trail. There was another monster partly in the trail. It would wiggle and after some digging prying and pulling we got it out. Fred spotted some round firewood sized rollers just off the trail. With a combination of prying, and pulling with the come-along, we got it moved to the site. We decided that it would be the top step, and one rock close by could be used, but we needed a third one. Jim and Greg proceeded to set the one that was there, while the others went to find a third one that also had to be brought down the

trail. The three of us moved it with the rollers and rock bars. It went into place quickly, but we had to do a lot of digging to set the monster. It was after five before we quit, but we were all glad to be done. Actually, the trail could still use a little more polish, but it may be awhile before it gets done. We were all pretty tired by the time we got back to the vehicles.

**Sunday, July 20, 2003, 9:00 AM
Apple Orchard Falls Cornelius Creek Loop**

Maurice Turner (leader), & H. R. Blankenship

We met at Daleville parking lot and drove I-81 to the Arcadia exit and to the North Creek parking area to begin our hike around 9:45. It was a pleasant day with partly cloudy skies and temperatures around the mid 80's. We took a break at the falls which was fantastic due to this year's rainfall. With the Forest Service's construction in this area of steps, a bench seat and walkways, it made it a more enjoyable experience. We decided to extend the hike and go to the AT and then back down the Cornelius Creek trail, making it around 7 miles. We saw a rattlesnake in the trail coming back and we quietly moved past it. We finished our hike at 1:30 and headed back to Daleville. We had met some other hikers on the trail and some fishermen at the parking lot coming back.

**Sunday, July 20, 2003, 1:00 PM
Belfast Trail to Devil's Marbleyard**

Mervin & Blanche Brower (co-leaders), Paul Blaiklock (co-leader), Bobbie Sticher, Marianne Demkó

The day was a clear & sunny with temperatures in the 80's with high humidity. The parking lot at the site was empty. We hiked up to the top of the marbleyard and then ate lunch. After this we decided to go on up the trail. We flushed a flock of ruffed grouse with about 6 taking off at different times. Found some low bush blueberries other wise known as huckleberries and some green gooseberries. When we reached where the trail branched to go on to the AT we decided to go back.

**Sunday, July 27, 2003, 9:00 AM
Daleville to Hay Rock**

Homer Witcher (leader), H.R. Blankenship, Dana Helsley, Pete Lissmann, Cindy Bowles, MaryLou Gaminde, Morgan McIntyre, Taylor & Bennett Witcher

At 9:05, we left the Daleville commuter parking lot on our hike to Hay Rock. The weather was somewhat warm, making it a bit uncomfortable. We noticed a few blowdowns and thought the trail needed some clipping at the powerline crossings. The hike itself was uneventful, but some of us did enjoy climbing on top of Hay Rock, for the view of Roanoke Valley and Carvins Cove. After eating, we hiked back accompanied by some welcomed breezes. Taylor, Bennett & Morgan played in Tinker Creek on the way back, perhaps enjoying the fullness of the hike more than the rest of us.

**Sunday, July 27, 2003, 1:00 PM
Pandapas Pond**

Dave Sutton (leader), Jean Warren (assistant leader), and John Read.

About 5 miles past Blacksburg is the turnoff for Pandapas Pond in the Jefferson National Forest. It was a really nice afternoon to hike in such a beautiful area. We followed the fine gravel trail around the pond once, then headed up the Horse Nettle trail, south to the Joe Pye trail back towards the pond to extend our hike. Even the Rhododendron were still blooming as we walked through its tunnel-like canopy. Near the pond, Jean pointed to a goldfinch flying about. John noted that monarch butterflies were around us. Dragonflies, dashers, and skimmers hovered about the water surface. Dave went for a short swim in the warm pond water and Jean put her feet in the water while John sat as lifeguard on the shore.

**July 31 – August 4, 2003, 8:30 AM
Workhike, Catawba Mountain – Konnarock**

Charles Parry (leader), Jim Hutchings, Linda Hutchings, Bill Gordge, Malcolm Black, Bob Foutz, Jim Overholzer, Greg Overholzer, Suzanne Barnett, Blanche Brower, Mervin Brower, Kris Peckman, Laurie Adkins, Liz Belcher, Dana Helsley
Konnarock Crew: Jason Shearer, Andrew Warwin, Jerry Kyle, Beth Negronioa, Lee Davis, Bill Algary, Sarah Beane, Paul O'Shield, Vicki Thompson

We moved rocks, we made rock steps, we put in rock waterbars, and we re-dug some trail. Everything we did involved rocks and dirt. We used a come-along to move a few monster rocks. Most of the trail from the site of the former Boy Scout Shelter to the first rock bridge to the north is now in pretty good shape. We still have a bit of work to do in the final 100 yards south of the first rock bridge and a whole lot of work in the next half mile to the north. This area should keep us busy most of the fall and winter. The high point of the week was Saturday when we had 23 workers and a big feast at the corn boil following work.

**Sunday, August 3, 2003, 1:00 PM
Falls Ridge**

Maurice Turner (leader), Dave Sutton (assistant leader), Cheryl Norton, Cara Norton (14), Sean Norton (11), Trevor Norton (10) and John Read.

Bobbie Sticher was attending the ATC Conference in NH and I agreed to lead the hike and Dave Sutton assisted. We started our hike around 1:45 through an open field that led to the access trail to the travertine waterfall. Since there had been ample precipitation, the 80-ft waterfall was very impressive. We hiked above the falls and looped around to the trail to the ridgeline; there is a loop trail at the falls and another at the ridge. We finished around 3:30 just in time to miss the showers, which were heavy in some places. As additional information on the Preserve, in 1968, Mr. William P. Bradley, a photographer and publicist, bought the Falls Ridge Preserve area from a local family. Mr. Bradley used the property as a retirement home, and eventually deeded Falls Ridge to the Conservancy in 1974. A large Indian settlement was located upstream of Falls Ridge Preserve on the North Fork of the Roanoke River, but the only direct evidence of Indian activity has been the discovery of a few white flint arrowheads. In 1823, The Governor of Virginia granted to the Birchfield family 700 acres of land, encompassing part of the present day preserve. A local family, the Dudleys, later acquired the land and used it not only for farming but also to operate several enterprises: a wool carding mill, general store, post office, lumber mill, grist mill and a livery. In 1939, a kiln to produce burnt lime was installed at the falls by Harry Dudley. Calcium carbonate cliffs (travertine)

deposited by the stream were blasted loose, crushed and carted by mule to the top of the kiln. Traces of this operation can be seen near the falls. The Conservancy has worked to upgrade the trails, thanks in part to Bill Gordge's mid-week work group, providing good views of the waterfall while protecting nearby habitat from erosion. Rare plant species are being monitored.

Sunday, August 10, 2003, 8:00 AM

Montebello – Fish Hatchery to Crabtree Falls

Jimmy Whitney (leader), Lois Smith (assistant leader), HR Blankenship, Gary Hale, Don Hoke, Pat Mankin

An overcast day was the order as the group headed towards Nelson County for the longer than it seemed 7-mile hike. Quite a few streams had overrun their banks along Route 56 as evidenced by the beaten down plants and grasses. A very steep road began the hike from the parking lot near the Fish Hatchery as we climbed the mile to the AT intersection. Enjoyed the wonderful view from Spy Rock-the 6 of us had it to ourselves and there was good visibility despite some of the low-hanging clouds. Encountered a brief shower during lunch at the Cash Hollow overlook. Lois saw a small garter snake along the trail and all of us admired the many orange lichens/fungi along a large tree. Crabtree Falls was flowing great with all of the rain lately-all of us stared in awe at the series of falls that are rumored to be the largest waterfall in Virginia. The group finished a little after 4PM. If you haven't visited these Falls, be sure to check them out sometime.

Sunday, August 10, 2003, 1:00 PM

Blackhorse Gap to Bearwallow Gap

Kenny Garrett (Co-Leader), Gene Downs (Co-Leader), Jesse Garrett, Lance Garrett, Dana Helsley, Linda King, Harry Ballard, Bobbie Sticher, Brian Ballard(from Georgia), Neil McKinney, Brice Moon, Brent Kawamura

The afternoon started with twelve people wanting to go out and stroll along the parkway. The skies were overcast, but with a positive mental attitude, we started off for a nice seven miler. We passed quite a few groundhogs on the way to the parking area, but only saw a few small lizards and butterflies. The hike was wonderful and we only

encountered one shower that lasted for approximately 30 minutes. Everyone enjoyed the stroll, including the kids that were coaxed out there. We especially appreciated Brian hiking with us while in from Georgia visiting his father and for Neil, who moved here from Ashville, N.C., two weeks ago. The skies were too overcast for great pictures, but were great for realizing how it feels to walk for seven miles in the heavens.

Sunday, August 17, 2003, 8:30 AM

Hoop Hole – Upper & Lower in Figure 8

Terri (leader), Homer and Therese Witcher, H. R. Blankenship, Dick Moran, Gary Hale, Larry Austin.

It was a sunny, warm morning when 6 of us left the Daleville parking lot around 8:45am to head to Hoop Hole. We met Larry at the Hoop Hole trailhead, where he pointed right and asked if we were going in from the left. I said, "No, we are going counter-clockwise." After being told that counter-clockwise was left, I agreed that we were going left, even though I had seen Larry point right. All confusion set aside, 7 strong hikers headed off for a day in the woods. The trail started with 4 or 5 stream crossings. Those (which is everyone else) with sure feet crossed on rocks. Not trusting sneaky, slippery rocks, I chose to walk through the water and get my feet wet. Although the trail is well marked with yellow blazes, there are times when one has to look beyond a fallen tree or dense blueberry undergrowth to spot the blaze.

Eventually, the trail climbs to the top of a ridge. At Homer and Therese's suggestion and guidance, some of us took a side trail up to the top of the rocks, where we ate lunch and enjoyed the beautiful view of the valleys below. As we resumed our hike and headed down the mountain, we encountered a brief rain shower. Although the rain did not last long, some of us were quite wet at the end of the hike from walking through the wet foliage that crowded the trail. We encountered 4 or 5 stream crossings near the end of the trail, and we finished our hike about 3pm. The hike was very enjoyable, as were the people who came on the hike.

The wet weather we have been experiencing seems to be good for the forest, which seemed very alive on this hike. We saw all kinds of fungi in all colors and shapes: bright orange, bright yellow, round and brown like a biscuit, or straight and skinny like coral. (Are you reading this, Sylvia? I wish you

had been along to tell us what we were seeing.) We saw a bright orange salamander, a nice-sized lizard, a small, thick toad camouflaged like a piece of tree bark with yellow fungus growing on it, and a frog with long skinny legs. (I didn't actually see the long-legged frog. I just saw the outstretched legs as the frog bounded twice across the trail and into the water.) We saw a bright yellow caterpillar that had one black stripe down its back, and we heard quite a few birds. This is a very nice hike that requires very little driving time (about 30-40 minutes), while giving one the sense of being deep in the woods. It is also versatile in that you can make a short loop or a long loop out of it. Just look for the blazes. On the long loop, don't take the orange-blazed trail, as you will end up at Roaring Run. (Homer and Therese can attest to that.) And, oh yeah, if you get to the top of a knob with a fallen tree on it, and the trail doesn't seem to continue on, look on the other side of the knob to the left, you'll find the trail (and the blaze) there.

**Sunday, August 17, 2003, 1:00 PM
War Spur & Loop Hike**

Dave Sutton (leader), Suzanne Barnett (assistant leader), Georgia Gallaher, Mary Lou Gaminde, Matt Sutton, Armond Garrett, Neil McKinney, Zetta Campbell.

We arrived at road 613 and the AT about an hour and three quarters after leaving Orange Market. We followed the trail north for about 2.6 miles through some relatively easy terrain. We did cross a few soggy streams. We turned right on the War Spur for an additional 1.5 miles, 80 percent of which was a flat grass covered trail. Ferns growing to 5 feet were found near the parking area. Two other trails meet the parking area which Dave investigated. One leads through a virgin hemlock, spruce and fir stand. The other is a chestnut trail. Mountain Lake and the surrounding wilderness are something out of the ordinary. Due to individual budgets we bypassed the lodge buffet and tried Western Sizzlin'.

**Sunday, August 24, 2003, 8:30 AM
Johns Creek Mountain Trail to Level Green
113-mile hike #9**

Kris Peckman (leader), H.R. Blankenship, Linda King

Before leaving the Orange Market, our little group decided to extend the hike to finish at Route 630 where there is a small parking lot, raising the hike mileage to almost 9 miles. We started up the Johns Creek trail at 10:00 am. It was well maintained and marked mostly with yellow metal diamonds nailed to the trees. Along the AT in the woods we saw some turkeys and tiny hoppy toads (bodies about 1/2 inch long). We also saw many different mushrooms, the most notable being the big orange ones protruding from the foot of a big tree near the trail to Kelly Knob, a perfect golf ball, and two with leopard-skin caps. Marianne, we needed your expertise today! During our lunch stop at Kelly Knob, we were joined by a couple with two beautiful dogs. Other than them, we saw only six hikers besides ourselves today. H.R. noted that there is no register in the Laurel Creek shelter. Laurel Creek itself was lovely. We took a peek at the old house (still standing, though a piece of its tin roof is now missing) before emerging from the woods into the pasture, where we were awestruck by the beautiful vistas on all sides. The weather was clear and the temperatures comfortable even out in the sun. Two donkeys grazing in one of the fields had to keep tails and ears in constant motion, to keep the flies off. The fields were full of Queen Anne's Lace, thistle, Joe-Pye Weed, and a beautiful purple flower that I couldn't find in any book but appeared to be some sort of aster. We finished our hike at 3:30 - a leisurely day with so much to see along the way.

**Sunday, August 24, 2003, 1:00 PM
Cascades**

Mary Lou Gaminde (leader), Caryl Connolly, Neil McKinney, Sherry Kessel, Lorrie Huffman, Carolyn Baretta.

We met at the Orange Market for the hike. We decided to take a longer but more scenic route via Rt 311 & Rt 42 that wound over the mountains because of all the anticipated traffic in the Blacksburg & Christiansburg area. When we

arrived, which I think we were all beginning to doubt would happen, the parking area at the Cascades was crowded and there were a lot of people enjoying the day and the beautiful trail and the waterfall as did all of us who hiked. We all decided to take a chance with the traffic and come back the faster way, Interstate 81 and Rt 460.

**Sunday, September 7, 2003, 8:30 AM
Stone Coal Gap to Andy Lane Trail (779)**

There is no hike report for this hike. There were no calls and no one showed at Daleville parking lot.

**Sunday, September 7, 2003, 1:00 PM
Chestnut Ridge Trail**

Lynn Bryant (co-leader), Georgia Gallaher (co-leader), Maurice Turner (co-leader), Laura Effel, Neil McKinney, Sharon Spillman, Ralph Hart, Mary Lou Gaminde

First the Kudos 1) Thanks to Lynn and Peggy Bryant for weed whacking the trail prior to the hike. 2) Thanks to Dr. Bill Gordge and the midweek work group and the 100 plus Faith Christian School boys and girls who did a great job on restoring parts of the trail this past spring. Unfortunately, this being a joint use trail, the horse tracks are tearing up the trail again. 3) Kudos again to Dr. Gordge and the Roanoke College Freshmen who did some trail restoration several weeks ago.

Now to the hike: The weather was great with temperature at 70° (Ralph Hart had a thermometer). We encountered 5 horse persons on trail, actually the 2 women riders we passed twice so there were only 3 horses on trail. The hike started a little after 1 PM and we returned to cars by 3:30 PM. There was one guest hiker with us, my youngest daughter, Sharon Spillman. I think all enjoyed the afternoon workout, although this trail has no views.

Winter Scene

We need a picture of a winter scene for the front of the winter blazer. If anyone has pictures or articles for the winter blazer, please submit to Homer & Therese Witcher at wintchers4@juno.com



Photo courtesy of Dana Helsley



Photo courtesy of Jerry Austin