

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

Spring 2012

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.

CALENDAR OF CLUB ACTIVITIES

WORK HIKES

Sunday, April 22, - 8:30 AM
Catawba Mountain

-

Saturday, May 27 - 8:00 AM
Salt Pond Mountain

-

Saturday/Sunday, June 23&24 - 8:00AM
Salt Pond Mountain

Hike Scheduling

Contact Adam Wood

302-528-9680 – adampaulwood@yahoo.com

BOARD MEETINGS

(All members are always welcome.
Please let the host know you plan to attend.)

Monday, April 16, 7:00 p.m.
Hosted by *Roger Holnback*

Monday, May 21, 7:00 p.m.
Hosted by *Dick Clark*

Monday, June 18, 7:00 p.m.
Hosted by *Mike Vaughn*

What's Inside...

New Members.....	2
Hikemaster's Report	2
Hike Reports	3
Hike Schedule.....	11
Membership Renewal	15
Contacting the RATC	Back



At the Cascades by Walz

Welcome New Members

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club welcomes the following new members:

Edward Burgess

Dan Dennison

Victor Fischer

Jennifer Horne

Tom Howard

Bud LaRoche

John & Pamela Reed

Janet Scheid

Nancy Snyder

Linda Stowell

Phillip Strokus

Trish Webb

Brian Batteiger

Theresa Conti

Danielle Dahlheimer

David Foster

Tom Howard

Glen, Susanna & Hannah

Mitchell

John & Pamela Reed

Hunter & Debby Wiley

And we thank you for making donations:

Edward Burgess

David L. Cullen

Victor Fischer

Michael G. Haynie

Jennifer Horne

Carina & Bill Hughes

Ursula & Siegfried Kolmstetter

Bud LaRoche

Ivy Lidstone

Mike & Jennie Reilly

Janet Scheid

Phillip Strokus

Nancy Snyder

Fleet Feet Sports Roanoke

Beverly D. Williamson, Jr

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

Bob Blankenbaker

President's Report

Many of you know that besides the AT there are a few other long distance foot trails in America. The most prominent of these are the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) and Continental Divide Trail (CDT). A recent addition to this list is the GET, the Great Eastern Divide Trail. This trail runs just west of the AT, from Alabama to New York State. It is currently 1,800 miles long, but there are plans to extend it. Planning for the trail started in 2007.

Like the AT, the work on the GET is performed by volunteers. Several volunteer trail clubs are already in existence to maintain it and more will probably be formed. The trail links several existing trails such as the Allegheny Trail in West Virginia and the Tuscarora Trail in Virginia. It actually shares 20 miles of the AT over Peters Mountain from Pearisburg to the intersection with the Allegheny Trail. So far, no

one has completed hiking the whole length of the GET.

To find out more about the trail go to www.greateastertrail.net.

Troutville is the latest town along the A.T. to be designated an Appalachian Trail Community. This program is designed to recognize communities that promote and protect the A.T. There are now 14 communities along the trail that have received this designation. To find out more about this program go to www.appalachiantrail.org.

Another club member, Timo Grüneberg, has completed the section of the A.T. maintained by our club and has received a "113 Mile" patch. If you have completed all of our section of the trail let me know and I will send you a patch. You

can find out more about the hikes on our section of the A.T. by visiting the Trail Information area on our web site, www.ratc.org. There are descriptions and maps of the day hikes on our section and a chart to keep track of your miles.

Several pictures taken by RATC club member Vince Mier were featured in the February issue of Journeys, the magazine of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. The pictures were taken during Vince's 2011 thru-hike. Vince is also a trail maintainer for the club.

At our March banquet several hike leaders received hats and club T-shirts for leading multiple hikes over the past year. Hats for leading 4 - 6 hikes went to Blanche Brower, Merv Brower, Sue Scanlin, Lois Smith, Maurice Turner, and Mike Vaughn. T-shirts for leading 7 - 8 hikes went to Maya Bohler and John Merkwon. A hat and T-shirt for leading more than nine hikes went to Diana Christopulos, Mark McClain, and Kris Peckman. Thanks to

all of the hike leaders for helping the club over the past year! Contact me if you are interested in becoming a hike leader.

We have added a new article to the Resources section of our web site, www.RATC.org. It lists the ten essential items, such as raingear and a lighter, that you should bring on a hike.

Dogs are allowed on most of the AT. On RATC hikes, it is up to the hike leader whether to allow dogs on the hike, but don't expect that your dog will be welcome in a driver's car. If you do take your dog on the trail, please follow these guidelines:

- Do not allow your dog to chase wildlife.
- Leash your dog around water sources.
- Be sure that your dog does not bother other hikers.
- Bury your pet's waste.

Mike Vaughn

Hike Reports

Sunday, September 18, 2011 – 8:00 AM Garden Mountain to Poor Valley

Bob and Kris Peckman (leaders), Maya Bohler, Carina Hughes, Jim Walke

Cancel the advertised magnificent views of Burkes Garden: fog obliterated them. The sun only came out after we were halfway down the mountain at the end of the day. However, after the long, long car shuttle, it felt wonderful to be hiking again, even in the fog. The hike starts with a steep but short ascent, then a four-mile ridge walk. After Walker's Gap there's a 2-mile climb of about 1000 feet elevation to Chestnut Knob (there were, indeed, chestnuts on the ground as we approached the Knob), where a fully enclosed, large stone shelter with giant-sized bunks and a picnic table protect hikers from the elements. We had just reached the bottom of the clouds as wisps scudded by. The composting privy had a sign ordering Maya to replenish the duff bucket, which she dutifully did. Jim showed us old bottles and bedsprings that had been tossed off the steep, Burkes Garden side of the

mountain, probably by the resident fire warden back when this shelter was the warden's cabin. The trails approaching the knob from both sides are relentlessly up: it must have been a great location for a fire tower. We ate lunch inside the cozy cabin, but when we emerged to start hiking along the balds of Chestnut Ridge, the sun was beginning to come out, warming us enough to get down to short sleeves. We began to see views of the Mt. Rogers area to the south as the fog was lifting. A wide swath of trail has been recently mowed through the entire open area of the ridge, and the two large mowers were still there. It was a quick descent through the woods to Carina's car, where we began the long car shuttle in reverse. The drives on the two very long dirt roads were interesting, far too interesting. At least the hiking time beat the driving time by one hour (6 to 5), and the drive along Route 42 was lovely. Our views had been blocked by more than fog. This hike would be best in the spring when the days are long but before the leaves block the views.

Saturday, December 3, 6:00PM**Holiday Potluck Dinner**

Carolyn McPeak (leader) plus a cast of thousands.

We have the best potluck ever. Then Dave Socky's slide show on their very rugged trip in the Wind River range was inspiring to some, and made the rest of us so grateful that we have our pretty little mountains to walk in.

Sunday, December 4, 2011 8:00AM**Andy Layne Trail to Daleville,
113 Mile Hike #3**

John Merkwan (leader), Karen Callahan (assistant), Carina Hughes, Ivy Lidstone, Carl Cornett, Kris and Bob Peckman.



Strange things can happen on the trail: rearing back on the white lightning... or an equipment malfunction? - Merkwan

On this beautiful day for a hike, we saw five different groups along the 13.1 miles of bliss on today's hike. One of nature's oddities allowed us to see both a sunrise and sunset over Tinker mountain. Leaf-off views were in abundance, and the juxtaposition of the serenity of Carvins Cove on one side of Tinker Mountain and urban sprawl on the other gave visual variety to the hike. A single rock formation, Hay Rock, had many new messages sprayed on its massive canvass. Apparently, someone is backing "Ron Paul 2012" as an avid naturalist in giant red spray letters. This hardly compares with some very early more traditional graffiti of "Robert & Robin or Penny" which makes one ponder the complexities of relationships. Although this was not a Christmas hike, Carl

thought a dog barking in the hollow was attempting to sing Jingle Bells in dog speak. Being in the spirit of foolishness, I helped Carl sing a dog verse which helped silence the Christmas hound.

Sunday, December 4, 2011 1:00PM**~~AT, Black Horse Gap to Blue Ridge Parkway~~
Chestnut Ridge**

Maurice Turner (leader) & Dena Goldberg

It was a sunny day on this afternoon hike and we encountered horse back riders in addition to runners and other hikers. Another nice day for a hike that is close in and a short drive from home.

Sunday, December 11, 2011 8:00AM**Work Hike**

Steve Burt, Bruce Davidson, David Jones, Kris Peckman

The last hike report (Pearis Mountain) stated that four participants are better than none, and so too this truism holds for this workhike. Three RATC members met at the Route 311 parking lot, on a clear but cold day.

Today's work was to repair a moderately steep twenty-yard section that was eroding. Arriving at the site and looking at the situation, the first question was how we would fix this problem. With a crew of three, we had to limit the amount of trail we would try to fix--the top third of the section.

Once we narrowed our goal, the nagging question remained: what were we going to do to repair this site? The confounding factor was that the trail was underlain by the bedrock slabs that are typical on Catawba Mountain. When at a loss on how to proceed, sometimes you just have to pick up a tool and start using it. Grabbing a pick and a Pulaski, we pecked at the rock slab to find suitable places for steps. Beating on the seemingly solid bedrock we found that some parts moved. Soon we had excavated a site for one step and had a plan for a couple more. Things were just falling into place.

With a hole for a step dug out, we set our digging tools aside and headed uphill to find suitable rocks to fill this hole. The search was fruitful, and soon we were carefully sliding rocks down to our work

area. About this time our fourth member came along. He had come in earlier to add wood bracing to the last rock slab bridge.

Though the sun was out and it was a beautiful day, lunch was a bit short due to cooler temperatures. As the day wore on and quitting time neared, the work switched from building steps to filling in around the newly constructed steps, blocking possible detours away from these steps and spreading leaf litter over the areas where we had dug, drug heavy rocks or in some other way disturbed the natural look.

One third of the job was done!

**Sunday, December 11, 2011 11:00AM
Roanoke River Greenway (Salem)**

Mark McClain & Diana Christopulos (leaders), Carl Cornett, Rhinda North, Trish Webb, Conrad and Bee Grundlehner, Don & Carol Strum, Georgia Gallaher, Bob Peckman. We were joined by a couple of Salem friends en route, Meg Hibbert & Ellen Holtman.

Cold but sunny weather, with little wind, made for great conditions for our walk of about five miles. Starting from the Moyer Park trailhead on Eddy Avenue we walked to Rotary Park. The only section that hasn't been completed is a short loop under the Colorado Street bridge. In dry weather, the route of this loop can be easily walked, but as it had recently flooded we opted to cross Colorado Street instead. Turning around at Rotary Park, we retraced our steps along the greenway back to Colorado Street where we stopped for a delicious buffet lunch at the Shanghai Restaurant, just two doors down from the trail. We then returned to Eddy Avenue via Riverside Dr. which offers an unobstructed view of the Roanoke River for a half-mile stretch that includes several great rapids. Finally, we walked part of the route of the next section of the Roanoke River Greenway, which is expected to be under construction very early in 2012. Birding was good, with loads of mallards, scads of Canada geese, a great blue heron, a kingfisher, and two hooded mergansers.

**Wednesday, December 14, 2011 8:30AM
Cove Mountain/Little Cove Mountain
Lollipop Loop**

Larry Austin (leader), Kris (assistant) & Bob Peckman, Carl Cornett, John Merkwan, Maya Bohler, Carl McPeak, Ivy Lidstone and Carina Hughes

This mid-week hike produced nine hikers on a day with partly cloudy skies and temperatures rather mild for mid-December. We met in Daleville at 8:30 and proceeded to the Cove Mountain trailhead at Arcadia. The hardest climb was at the beginning of the hike. After hiking the length of the Cove Mountain Trail, we hit a short section of the Buchanan Trail which led to the AT. We followed the AT north for about 1/2 mile and hit the Glenwood Horse Trail going north for approximately a mile. We then cut down an old hunter's path to Cove Creek and followed Cove Creek to its headwaters, doing a little bushwhack at the end and then re-entered the Horse Trail. We followed the Horse Trail north again for 1.5 miles to the Little Cove Mountain Trail. We had lunch on a small knoll on that trail with views of Flat Top, Harkening Hill and Floyd Mountain. We proceeded on the Little Cove Mountain Trail near its end at Jennings Creek and turned onto an old section of the AT up to a waterfall. We then proceeded back up the hunter's path to the Horse Trail and followed it back to the Cove Mountain Trail where we then descended Cove Mountain back to our starting point. The woods were not abuzz with wildlife this day. This was perhaps because they heard us coming in the leaves and of course all the chatter going on. We did see some great views of mountains in the distance and some interesting trees, including one containing a bush of mistletoe. We enjoyed some Holiday refreshments and fellowship at the end and then headed back to Daleville.

**Sunday, December 18, 2011 1:00PM
Cascades National Scenic Trail**

It was a cold but beautiful day for a hike into the gorge to see Cascade Falls. The stream was roaring. We started with five hikers (Chuck Walz (leader), Sue Scanlin (assistant), Carl Cornett, Cheryl Crowell, and Linda Harrison). But before long we were joined by Tim and Vicky Gillow with three

dogs. We hiked along the stream in and out of the sun. Saw some snow and ice hanging from the trees. In one area the side wall was nothing but ice. Sue did some cleaning of steps that were covered with leaves. When we got to the falls everyone had something to eat and watched some kids walk across the stream to beside the falls to get pictures. They were up to their knees in one place. I am sure they were cold by the time they got back to the parking lot. What do they say, youth is wasted on the young? It was a very enjoyable hike with everyone and we enjoyed being together hiking on a nice crisp day.

**Sunday, January 1, 2012 8:00AM
Sprouts Run/Pine Mountain Loop**

Larry Austin & Lois Smith (leaders), Bob & Kris Peckman, Carl Cornett, Ivy Lidstone, Paul Jones, Jen Schaeffer, Maurice Turner, Carina Hughes and Maya Bohler.

New Year's Day 2012 presented itself with sun, clouds, a few sprinkles (lasting a minute or so) and some wind along Pine Mountain. The temperatures varied depending on the cloud cover but all in all it was a beautiful day for hiking. We started at the Sprouts Run trailhead with its many stream crossings. The water was flowing good but all the crossings were easily negotiated. The waterfalls along the way were really pretty. After leaving Sprouts Run we headed to Pine Mountain via an old logging road and a small bushwhack. We stopped at the first wildlife pond for our lunch around 11:15. It was in a little bowl and provided some shelter from the wind which had just begun to blow. It was a great spot for lunch. We then headed on our way along the ridge of Pine Mountain until its end at Solitude Road. We walked the road back to our point of origin. The only wildlife we encountered were some birds and most of them were along Solitude Road. We had a good group of hikers enjoying the first day of 2012.

**Sunday, January 1, 2012 1:00PM
Fort Lewis Mountain**

Dave Sutton (leader), Denise Dabney, Benjamin Dabney, Noah Dabney, Rod Liebl, Carter Aylor, Matt Sutton, Jimbo Harshfield, Mary Harshfield, Cheryl Penn, Stuart Rawlins, Charlie Huffman, Paula Kirtley, Jim Constantin, Nora Barker, Sandy

Nester, Trish Deel, & Jeanne Duddy.

The hike begins from a roadside "pullout". Although other trails lead to the "top", this one is the best. We crossed over a slightly higher than normal creek and up the bank to begin our hike. It was clear skies when we began, yet by the time we reached the "top" it was raining and cold. The trees had shed their leaves, so we could see for a distance. About half-way down the mountain, the rain stopped but we were still wet. We had some fun though, didn't we? It was a great hike and we were back in time to watch some significant NFL games.

**Sunday, January 8, 2012 8:00AM
Mount Pleasant**

Cancelled.

**Saturday, January 14, 2012 8:00AM
Brush Mountain Work Hike**

Blanche Brower, Mervin Brower, Steve Burt, Timo Grüneberg, David Jones, Michael Sperber, Phillip Strokus, Maurice Turner, Mike Vaughn

A weather forecast of a windy cold day had our devoted trail maintainers second guessing January work hikes. But at eight-thirty, two groups met at the Route 621 parking area. Tools were divvied out and instead of lingering to chat, the cold weather made everyone start moving up the trail.

Our first order of business was to stop and evaluate at the buttresses of the Craig Creek bridge—it's rotten; it needs to be replaced. There is never a scarcity of projects to do on the AT....

Back to today's chores, we were here to repair water bars and steps at the 19 switchbacks that ascend Brush Mountain. The first hikers to reach the first switchback set to work. A log step had come loose, and with the log still sitting by the trail this repair was as simple as redigging a trench and bedding the log back in place.

As the stragglers reached this first work site, they stopped to catch their breath, then they leapfrogged past to continue the climb to the next switchback. Gradient, slope, hill, elevation change, however you describe climbing up a mountain carrying a pack, holding tools, and wearing all of your cold weather

gear, well this makes a frigid, windblown thirty degrees feel like a balmy spring day. Sweat started to show on the exposed faces, and hikers kept stepping to the side of the trail to pull off a jacket or some insulating clothing and stuff it into the pack.

Whenever a switchback was encountered, three or four people would drop their packs, set down their tools, and discuss what needed to be done to keep the trail treadway structure in place for another five or ten years. Then they set to work to accomplish the plan.

As the sun climbed toward noon the day's weather turned nice. Lunch was eaten sitting in the sunshine by the side of the trail.

The work continued in a similar fashion through the afternoon. Late in the day clouds appeared and the warm sun shone no more, the temperature dropped and the wind picked up making work on the last two switchbacks go hastily. With the last switchback returned to good order, warm hats and gloves were pulled from packs and the long coast down to Craig Creek began.

At the parking area the tools were returned to the truck and cold drinks were enjoyed.

See you on the next work hike—Right?

**Sunday, January 15, 2012 1:00PM
Cascades National Scenic Trail**

Cancelled

**Sunday, January 22, 2012 8:00AM
Catawba Mountain (Rt. 311) to Sandstone
Ridge (Rt. 624)**

Maya Bohler, (leader), Larry Austin, H.R. Blankenship, Karen Callahan, Carl Cornett, Ivy Lidstone, Kris & Bob Peckman, Jen Schaeffer, Maurice Turner, Mike Vaughn

The weather did not look inviting early in the morning, and the fog on Catawba Mountain was so thick that it would have been easy to miss the parking lot. Nevertheless, eleven hikers were eager to get out for some exercise. While we waited for everyone to show up, we discussed the car shuttle options and decided to extend the hike by about 1-1/2 miles to the Dragon's Tooth parking lot where

parking several cars was easier. It was quite chilly, and the group moved at a brisk pace to stay warm. The views were hidden from us, but on the ridge the fog had coated the pine tree needles and the shrubs with a fine layer of ice - a very pretty sight. It gave us a taste of winter. It was too cold to stop much, and the group made it back to the cars before noon. Kris and Bob Peckman stayed behind to do some trail work on their section, for which we are most grateful.

**Sunday, January 22, 2012 1:00PM
Mill Mountain Loop**

Sue Scanlin (leader), Joanne Derryberry, Carol Strum, Don Strum

It was a dreary day to go hiking, definitely on the cold side and for most of the way it looked like it would start to rain any minute. The birds along the way didn't mind – they sang their little hearts out. Maybe they knew that three out of the four of us were birders and didn't want to disappoint us? We saw very few people on the trail and none at all on the viewing platform. Very unusual. As if we had made a reservation, the sky had cleared somewhat by the time we got there and we even had a surprisingly good view. Nevertheless, we didn't linger long and soon headed down the Watchtower Trail to Prospect Rd. so that we wouldn't get chilly again. The mansion still had its Christmas decorations on display and under the gate house we had to tiptoe around thick, icy patches. As planned, we took the Monument Trail back to the Star Trail and before long we were back at the parking lot. In spite of the mediocre – to say the least – weather, our outing turned into an enjoyable experience, in large part due to us being such a small group. We stayed together, had interesting conversations, and got to know each other somewhat. Reminded the leader of her first hikes with the club.

**Sunday, January 29, 2012 8:00AM
Douthat State Park**

Kris Peckman (leader), Rushdat Kunle-Sanni (assistant), Larry Austin, H.R. Blankenship, Carl Cornett, Anne Hanna, Ivy Lidstone, Fred Meyer, Donna Mitchell, Bob Peckman, Cheryl Penn, Geoff Putnam, Lois Smith, Mike Vaughn, Gyorgyi Voros

Fifteen eager and fleet-footed hikers hit the trails on

the west side of Douthat State Park on a beautiful, sunny, very un-January-like Sunday. The lake sparkled, the unclothed trees revealed their bones as they rose toward the blue sky. We passed three bikers on the Middle Mountain Trail. At lunch at the Tuscarora Overlook, some shivered on the shaded cabin porch which served as a bench, while others basked in the sun on the ground in front of the cabin. The Blue Suck falls and stream were running full, making a lovely sound to accompany us as we headed down and back to the cars at 2:00—too early!



Douthat Group by Cheryl



Lunch time with a view by Cheryl

The question arose as to the origin of the name “Blue Suck” falls. The Virginia Outdoors website

says that “suck” is an Appalachian term for a sort of whirlpool at the base of a waterfall.

**Sunday, February 5, 2012 8:00AM
Mountain Lake Trails**

Cancelled, few takers with the weather.

**Saturday, February 11, 2012 11:00AM
Murray Run Greenway**

Diana Christopulos & Mark McClain (leaders), Don & Carol Strum, Susan Sanders, Paul Blaiklock, Caryl Connolly, Roger & Ellen Holtman, Paula Kirtley

A major cold front was arriving in Roanoke Valley with temperatures in the 30's and dropping, 20+ mph winds, and blowing snow. It was another perfect day for a hike on the beautiful Murray Run Greenway, the most natural of the Roanoke Valley Greenway System. Starting at Virginia Western campus, we walked the 2 miles or so over to Grandin Road, with a detour on the beautiful loop trails in Fishburn Park. We enjoyed lunch at All Sports Cafe (great chili), and then bundled back up for the return trip. The snow had stopped, our bellies were full, and the wind was at our back - what could be better?

**Sunday, February 12, 2012 8:00AM
Montebello Fish Hatchery to Route 56**

Mike Vaughn (leader), Dan Phlegar (assistant), Dan Dennison, Kris & Bob Peckman, Don Hoke, Carl Cornett, Maya Bohler

Eight of us headed out on this hike on a very cold, windy day. It was 14 degrees when we started on the trail at Montebello. After a one mile hike up the access trail we reached the AT and headed north. Most of went up on Spy Rock to enjoy the view. Visibility was excellent, although it was hard to stand up in the wind. We quickly moved on. There were a few inches of dry, powdery snow on the trail. We were the first ones through on the trail since the previous day's snowfall, so we got to walk in the fresh snow. After three hours of hiking we started the ascent up Priest Mountain from Crabtree Meadows. We stopped at the AT shelter partway up and had lunch. It was fairly pleasant there since it was mostly out of the wind. At the summit we paused briefly to take in the view. We could look

back and see Spy Rock to the west and also see Waynesboro to the north. We then began the steep descent off of the mountain. The trail drops 3,000 feet in about four miles to the Tye River. We got back to Roanoke around 6:30, tired and windburned.

Search for Dan Dennison hiking WDBJ7 and find interesting things about this and future hikes.



**Sunday, February 19, 2012 8:00AM
Hoop Hole Upper Loop**

Cancelled due to ice & snow.

**Sunday, February 19, 2012 1:00PM
Chestnut Ridge Trail**

Cancelled due to ice & snow.

**Sunday, February 26, 2012 8:00AM
Sinking Creek Mountain Work Hike**

Larry Austin, Steve Burt, Ed Colvin, Matt Gentry, Timo Grüneberg, David Jones, Vince Mier, Kris Peckman, Ron Sloan, Michael Sperber, Lois Smith, Phillip Strokus

Wow, what a difference a week makes. Last Sunday our only significant snow of the season was falling, and this week it was warm enough to hike in shirts with no jackets or pullovers.

The nice weather must have thawed out some of our trail volunteers because we had twelve people show up for the hike! We gathered at the Route 621 parking area and discussed how we would divvy up our chores: blowdown clearing, undergrowth lopping and blaze painting. It was difficult to decide how we would get everyone on the trail.

Eventually, different groups went out as they got their assignments and picked up their tools. One group loaded into a truck and drove down Route 621 and then up the Forest Service road past the Sarver Trail. This road ends near the ridge of Sinking Creek Mountain where there is a quarter mile stealth trail that leads steeply up to the AT.

So, we had two chainsaw crews working, one person painting blazes and the rest using loppers to cut back several areas of dense mountain laurel.

The lopping at the top of the mountain took a little longer than anticipated, and the blowdown removal went a little quicker than anticipated. Without a clear understanding of how the group at the bottom of the mountain would meet the group at the top of the mountain, we ended up with people all over the mountain. Parts of groups came down and went up fast, and the remainder of the workers met after lunch and tried to piece together who went where.

Knowing that everyone was below the last lingering loppers and the blazers, all opted to head down the mountain. At the shelter most of today's crew were there helping Homer, Therese and friends who had come in to build a new picnic table.

After this regrouping everyone continued toward the parking lot. There all hikers were accounted for, jokes were shared, and refreshments were enjoyed.

It was a beautiful day to be out on the trail, and we did a great day's work.

See you on the next work hike—Okay?

**Sunday, March 4, 2012 1:00PM
Pandapas Pond Trails**

Cancelled.

**Sunday, March 4, 2012 8:00AM
Trout Creek (RT 620) to Dragon's Tooth
Parking, 113 Mile Hike #6**

Kris Peckman (leader), H.R. Blankenship, Maya Bohler, Carl Cornett, Sandra Cothran, Barbara Duerk, Dorte Eriksen, Lars Høgsted, Carina Hughes, Ivy Lidstone, Fred Meyer, Bob Peckman, Geoff Putnam, Mike and Sheila Vaughn

Blue sky with scudding clouds making patchworks of shade and sun on the neighboring mountains, brisk chilly wind, spectacular views. Some water on the trail and a good flow in the creeks from recent rains. Fifteen hikers spread out from the get-go, so I really only know the hike from one perspective, but I think all had a good time. We

enjoyed the company of Dorte and Lars, who are here in Roanoke from Denmark, thanks to Novozymes. Rushdat sent us a big plate of cookies but couldn't come herself, being too busy with school projects. Thanks for the cookies, but we missed you, Rushdat!



Sandra & Bob by Lars

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.

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.

The club is always looking for experienced hikers to help lead club hikes. If you know of someone that you think would be a good hike leader, or wish to nominate yourself, please contact Adam Wood at 302-528-9680 or email adamcampaullwood@yahoo.com.

Sunday, April 1, 2012 8:00AM Mountain Lake Trails

10 miles, Strenuous

\$5.00 carpool fee, 54 miles from Roanoke

We will be hiking on trails in the Mountain lake area. Located in Giles County, Mountain Lake is one of the few natural lakes in Virginia.

Chris Wilson 757-202-3331
or theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com
Maya Bohler 540-344-6588
or mayabohler@cox.net

Sunday, April 8, 2012 8:00AM Falling Water Cascades to Visitor Center

11 miles, Strenuous with a serious bushwhack climb

\$2.50 carpool fee, 27 miles from Roanoke

This hike will begin at the Falling Water Cascades Parking lot off the Blue Ridge Parkway north of the Peaks of Otter. We will end the hike at the Visitor Center at the Peaks of Otter. The route will follow an old logging road, the Glenwood Horse Trail, a Forest Service Road, a steep bushwhack climb up the north side of Harkening Hill. At that point, we will then follow the Harkening Hill Trail down to the Visitor Center.

You will experience a lot of good views in various directions and a route not known by many, if any. The car shuttle should be about five minutes.

Larry Austin..... 540-254-2092

Saturday, April 14, 2012 8:00AM Walking the Blue Ridge Half Marathon course

13.1 miles, Strenuous

No carpool fee, in Roanoke

This hike is for those who are in training for walking the Blue Ridge Half Marathon or just want to take a shot at the course. Includes portions of Roanoke River Greenway, Mill Mountain, South Roanoke, Old Southwest, Downtown Roanoke, and Mountain View. Starts and ends at Vic Thomas Park. Optional group lunch at Village Grill for survivors.

Mark McClain..... 355-6526
or mcclain.salem@gmail.com
Diana Christopulos 387-0930

Sunday, April 15, 2012 1:00PM Belfast Trail to the Devil's Marbleyard

3.0 miles, Easy

\$3.00 carpool fee, 35 miles from Roanoke

Located a few miles beyond Natural Bridge Station, this popular hike starts about an hour's

drive from Roanoke. The route follows the Belfast Trail in the Jefferson National Forest and heads steeply uphill for a little over two miles. At this point the Devil's Marblyard appears just to the left of the trail. This is an eight-acre field of quartzite boulders which affords endless scrambling opportunities (watch out for snakes, though) and great views. The return is along the same route.

Blanche and Merv Brower..... 540-387-9732

**Sunday, April 22, 2012 8:30AM
Catawba Mountain Work Hike**

Moderate

No carpool fee, in Roanoke

We will be doing some maintenance work on the trail on Catawba Mountain.

Dave Jones..... 540-552-3058

**Sunday, April 22, 2012 1:00PM
Flat Top Mountain**

4.3 miles, Moderate

\$2.50 carpool fee, 27 miles from Roanoke

Located at the very scenic Peaks of Otter along the Blue Ridge Parkway in Botetourt County. At one point a side trail descends a short distance to an unusual formation known as Cross Rock. At the summit of Flat Top nice views may be obtained by easy scrambles onto projecting rocks.

Dave Sutton..... 540-774-0648

**Wednesday, April 25, 2012 8:00AM
Petites Gap to Sunset Field
via AT and Horse Trail**

12.5 miles, Strenuous

\$4.00 carpool fee, 42 miles from Roanoke

This hike will begin at Petites Gap on the AT and head south to the Blue Ridge Parkway crossing south of Thunder Ridge Shelter. We will walk the Parkway 100 yards or so south and head down a gated Forest Service Road to the Glenwood Horse Trail at Reeds Creek, then follow the Horse Trail south to the site of former Camp Kewanee and follow an old road a short distance to Sunset Field. Along the AT from Petites Gap is the opportunity to view numerous early Spring wildflowers including thousands of Trilliums unless they bloom early this year. The car shuttle will be about 20 minutes.

Larry Austin 540-254-2092

**Saturday/Sunday, April 28/29, 2012 10:00AM
Catawba Mountain (311) to Daleville (220)
113-Mile Hikes 3 & 4**

19.5 miles, Strenuous

\$1.00 carpool fee, 6 miles from Roanoke

This is a joint backpacking hike with the Girl Scouts. Starts from the 311 parking lot on Catawba Mountain – only 15 minutes from Roanoke. Certainly one of our most challenging hikes, it is recommended only for those in excellent physical condition. Almost 20 miles of the Appalachian Trail leads over varied terrain with several steep climbs and tricky footing in places. Highlights include McAfee Knob, Tinker Cliffs and Hay Rock. There are also numerous unnamed overlooks providing nice views of both the Catawba Valley and Carvins Cove.

Barbara Duerk..... 540-343-1616

**Sunday, April 29, 2012 8:00AM
North Mountain Trail**

13.6 miles, Very Strenuous

\$1.50 carpool fee, 18 miles from Roanoke

We will be hiking the length of the North Mountain Trail from Stone Coal Gap in Botetourt County to Dragon's Tooth parking lot on Route 311. This hike follows the ridgeline, with over 50 ups and downs. There are many good views along the trail.

Don Hoke..... 540-563-2902

**Saturday, May 5, 2012 11:00AM
Green Hill Park Trails**

4 miles, Easy

No carpool fee, in Roanoke

We will walk the Roanoke River Greenway in Roanoke County's Green Hill Park and do a loop hike on the park's trail system. This will be a slow-paced hike to allow time to enjoy wildflowers (trillium, etc.) and other spring wonders. Optional lunch follows in a popular Salem eatery.

Mark McClain..... 355-6526

or mcclain.salem@gmail.com

Diana Christopulos..... 387-0930

Sunday, May 6, 2012 8:00AM
Catawba Mountain (Rt. 311) to Dragon's
Tooth Parking 113-Mile Hike # 5

8.9 miles, Strenuous

\$0.50 carpool fee, 6 miles from Roanoke

The hike begins at the 311 A.T. parking lot – just 15 minutes from Roanoke. The Appalachian Trail is followed south over the many humps of Catawba Mountain before dropping down to the open fields of Beckner's Gap. Between Routes 785 and 624, the trail crosses Sandstone Ridge. Beyond 624 the trail heads uphill past the Boy Scout Trail. It then reaches Rawie's Rest, a knife-like rocky outcrop with good views, before continuing on to Lost Spectacles Gap, where a blue-blazed trail on right leads down to the Dragon's Tooth parking lot.

Carina Hughes 540-588-0433

Sunday, May 13, 2012 8:00AM
Catawba Mountain (Rt 311) to McAfee Knob

7.8 miles, Moderate

\$0.50 carpool fee, 6 miles from Roanoke

Located west of Salem in Roanoke County, the hike follows the Appalachian Trail up and back. Extensive cliffs at the top afford unparalleled views of both the Catawba Valley and the city of Roanoke.

Carina Hughes 540-588-0433

Sunday, May 13, 2012 1:00PM
A.T., Black Horse Gap to Curry Gap, 113 Mile
Hike #1

6.9 miles, Moderate

\$1.50 carpool fee, 16 miles from Roanoke

This hike is located in Botetourt County. From Black Horse Gap on the Blue Ridge Parkway, elevation 2,400 feet, the trail heads south. There are limited views on this section of trail. In 2.4 miles a blue blaze trail on right leads to the Wilson Creek Shelter. After crossing Wilson Creek, the trail ascends steeply. It then descends steadily and crosses Curry Creek. From there it ascends steeply on switchbacks to the Salt Pond Road crossing. We will then go left on Salt Pond Road for 0.9 miles back to the BRP.

Blanche and Merv Brower 540-387-9732

Sunday May 20, 2012 8:00AM
Hoop Hole, Upper Loop

8 miles, Strenuous, \$2.50 carpool fee

28 miles from Roanoke

The hike is located in Botetourt County between Eagle Rock and Oriskany – some 45 minutes from Roanoke. This hike uses part of the lower loop to get to the upper loop which includes a steep climb to the top of Montgomery Knob in the Jefferson National Forest.

Kris Peckman 366-7780

Wednesday, May 23, 2012 8:00AM
Harvey's Knob to Jennings Creek

10.3 miles, Strenuous

\$2.00 carpool fee, 18 miles from Roanoke

This hike will begin at the overlook at Harvey's Knob off the Blue Ridge Parkway. We will follow the AT north to the junction with the Little Cove Mountain Trail. We will then descend the Little Cove Mountain Trail to Jennings Creek. If we hit the date just right, this hike will offer many wildflowers, including rhododendron and mountain laurel. We should have good views at Parkway crossings. The car shuttle will be about 20 minutes.

Larry Austin 540-254-2092

Saturday, May 27, 2012 8:00AM
Salt Pond Mountain Work Hike

Moderate

\$6.00 carpool fee, 58 miles from Roanoke

We will be working on relocating a worn-out section of the A.T. near the War Spur Trail in the Mountain Lake Wilderness area in Giles County. Forest Service approval for the relocation is pending. If the approval is not obtained by the date of the work hike, another work hike will be substituted.

Dave Jones 540-552-3058

**Saturday, June 2, 2012 10:00AM
Catawba Mountain (Rt. 311) to Dragon's
Tooth Parking 113-Mile Hike # 5**

8.9 miles, Strenuous

\$.50 carpool fee, 6 miles from Roanoke

This is a joint hike with the Girl Scouts. The hike begins at the 311 A.T. parking lot – just 15 minutes from Roanoke. The Appalachian Trail is followed south over the many humps of Catawba Mountain before dropping down to the open fields of Beckner's Gap. Between Routes 785 and 624, the trail crosses Sandstone Ridge. Beyond 624 the trail heads uphill past the Boy Scout Trail. It then reaches Rawie's Rest, a knife-like rocky outcrop with good views, before continuing on to Lost Spectacles Gap, where a blue-blazed trail on right leads down to the Dragon's Tooth parking lot.
Barbara Duerk..... 540-343-1616

**Sunday, June 3, 2012 8:00AM
Mount Pleasant**

6.9 miles, Moderate

\$5.00 carpool fee, 57 miles from Roanoke

This hike is located in the Mount Pleasant scenic area near Route 60 in Amherst County. This loop hike goes to the summit of Mount Pleasant via the Henry Lanum Trail. There are sweeping views to the east and west from two rock outcrops at the summit. The hike will return to the starting point via the Pompey Trail.

**Chris Wilson 757-202-3331
or theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com**

**Saturday, June 9, 2012 8:00AM
Roanoke River Greenway
(Roanoke west section)**

7 miles, Moderate

No carpool fee, in Roanoke

We will walk the western section of the Roanoke River Greenway including the newest section between Bridge Street and Memorial Ave. Rated moderate due to distance, we will be entirely on paved trail which is mostly level. This hike will be "down and back" from Bridge Street, and will include a restaurant brunch stop en route.

**Mark McClain355-6526
or mcclain.salem@gmail.com
Diana.....Christopulos 387-0930**

**Saturday/Sunday, June 9/10, 2012 9:00AM
Mount Rogers Backpack Trip**

16.0 miles, Strenuous

\$10.00 carpool fee, 102 miles from Roanoke

Join us for one of the premiere hikes in the U.S. and one that the club does not often offer. Most of this hike will be on trails at over 5,000 feet of elevation. The trail will follow the A.T. through the open mountain meadows of the Mt. Rogers Scenic Area, with a side trip to the wooded summit of Mount Rogers, at 5,729 feet, the highest point in Virginia. There are many semi-wild ponies in the open meadows along the trail. We will camp near the trail in the Rhododendron Gap area.

**Mike Vaughn..... 540-992-1350
or mikeva999@yahoo.com
Dan Phlegar..... 540-389-1783**

**Sunday, June 17, 2012 8:00AM
Bearwallow Gap Loop**

10.5 miles, Strenuous

\$1.50 carpool fee, 18 miles from Roanoke

This hike will begin at the Bearwallow Gap Horse Trail Parking and will follow the Glenwood Horse Trail north to its junction with the Buchanan Trail. We will then follow the Buchanan Trail to its junction with the AT. Heading south on the AT, we will hike to Bearwallow Gap, cross Route 43 and hike the AT to the top of the mountain. We will then detour off trail and head to a rock outcropping with great views north and west and then bushwhack down the mountain to intersect with the Horse Trail once again. We will then follow the Horse Trail north to where we parked.

**Fred Meyer 304-744-9219
John Miller 540-375-3250
or John.miller591@comcast.net**

**Saturday & Sunday, June 23&24, 2012 8:00AM
Salt Pond Mountain Work Hike**

Moderate

\$6.00 carpool fee, 58 miles from Roanoke

We will be working on relocating a worn-out section of the A.T. near the War Spur Trail in the Mountain Lake Wilderness area in Giles County. Forest Service approval for the relocation is pending. If the approval is not obtained by the date of the work hike, another work hike will be substituted.**Dave Jones..... 540-552-3058**



Nature's Dining Room with a View - Merkwan

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

Name(s) _____	New Member Packet fee	\$5.00 _____
Address _____	Indiv. # of years _____	x \$10.00 _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____ - _____	Family # of years _____	x \$15.00 _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____	OR	
Email _____	Individual life membership	\$250.00 _____
	Family life membership	\$300.00 _____
Year you joined RATC (make a guess!) _____	Donation	\$ _____
Make checks payable to RATC, PO Box 12282, Roanoke, 24024-2282	Amount Enclosed	\$ _____

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



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The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club is an affiliate of
The Appalachian Trail Conservancy
and a member of The Nature Conservancy and the Western Virginia Land Trust