

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

Summer 2013

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

Cornboil & Potluck
Saturday, August 3 - 6-9 PM
Catawba Community Center.

WORK HIKES

Sunday, July 7 - 8:30 AM
Catawba Mountain

-
Saturday/Sunday, August 3 & 4 - 8:00 AM
Konnarock – New Trail near Bluff City

-
Saturday, September 7 - 8:30AM
Andy Layne Trail

Hike Scheduling

Contact Chris Wilson
757-202-3331 – TheShoelessWanderer@gmail.com

BOARD MEETINGS

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

Monday, July 15, 7:00 p.m.
Hosted by *Mike & Sheila Vaughn*

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

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Both the Salem and Blacksburg Backcountry Ski & Sports give a 10% discount to all RATC members. Just let them know you're a member when you check out. There are some exclusions, but staff will be more than happy to help you.

Take your Trail Blazer to Walkabout Outfitters in Roanoke (301 Market Street or 4822 Valley View Blvd) for 10% off your entire purchase.

Bruce Davidson, a member of our club, was named the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's Volunteer of the Month for December.

Bruce has been very active in the club boundary program and has been leading boundary work hikes. He also maintains a section of the A.T. north of McAfee Knob. Congratulations Bruce!

Welcome New Members

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club welcomes the following new members:

*Cynthia Allgood
Justin Burnley
Michael Daly
John Davis
Valerie Dymond
Rick Eisenring
Jenny & Curt Ezell*

*Michelle Freshwater
Megan Hewitt
David Horst
John Hubbard
Joyce McKnight
Matthew Metcalf
Tricia Ridgeway*

*Robert Slackman
LaDona & Grace Stossel
Phillip Strokus
Jas Strokus
Rick & Connie Wabon
Steven Wilder
Mike Yeatts*

And the following donors:

*James & Jill Beeson
Victoria Brownell
Rick Eisenring*

*Kim Ferguson
Michelle Freshwater
Linda Harrison*

*Donna Logan
Cindy Reardon
Rick & Connie Wabon*

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

Edward Wilson

President's Report

As most RATC members know, our club is responsible for maintaining 120 miles of the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) here in southwest Virginia. This represents 5% of the entire 2,185-mile length of the trail, which goes through fourteen states from Georgia to Maine. Our club is one of 31 trail maintaining clubs that work with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) to manage the A.T. Besides trail maintenance, we are responsible for building and repairing shelters and other structures, as well as monitoring and protecting the Trail corridor.

With approximately 350 members, we can be considered a medium-size club. The largest trail maintaining clubs, such as the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) and Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) have tens of thousands of members (the AMC has over 100,000 members). The 120 miles of trail we maintain is fairly large for a club our size. The amount of trail maintained by each of the trail maintaining clubs varies from 7.2 miles by the Wilmington Trail Club to 266 miles by the Maine Appalachian Trail Club. If you want to learn more about the other trail maintaining clubs you can find links to their web sites at the ATC's site, www.appalachiantrail.org.

Just a reminder, registration is still open for the Appalachian Trail Biennial Conference being held July 19-26 at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina. There will be 70 workshops on hiking and the outdoors, in addition to 66 different hikes, including 114 miles of the Appalachian Trail, much of it in the Smokies. There will also be 23 excursions, such as white-water rafting, at locations in western North Carolina. You can register for the conference at the ATC web site.

Tim Miller has been selected to serve as the Appalachian Trail Community Ambassador for Troutville, Virginia. He will serve as a community liaison to the ATC and our club to encourage volunteerism and stewardship of the Trail in the Troutville area. This year there are 17 ambassadors serving 15 different communities along the A.T. Tim attended Virginia Tech and attained a Bachelor of Science Degree in Forestry and Wildlife and a Master of Arts Degree in Education. He is currently a teacher at Central Academy Middle School in Botetourt County where he completed the ATC's Trail to Every Classroom program in 2011. He is an Eagle Scout, lifelong hiker and backpacker.

The Konnarock crew will be returning on August 1 -5 to work on our club's section of trail. They will continue work on completing a trail relocation around Bluff City, near Pearisburg in Giles County. Club members are welcome to come out and work with the crew. Contact Trail Supervisor, Dave Jones at dhjones@together.net to work with the Konnarock Crew.

The Konnarock crew is a group of volunteers from all over the country who each year come in for a week or more to work on the trail. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy coordinates the work of the crew. There are several different crews that work along the whole length of the A.T. The Konnarock crew works with clubs on the southern section of the trail.

Mike Vaughn

Trail Supervisor's Report

How's your trail? The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club maintains 120 miles of the Appalachian Trail, and if you are reading this newsletter then you too maintain 120 miles of the Appalachian Trail. So, how is your trail? Tuesday, April 9th, John Baranowski, a member of RATC, hiked up to McAfee Knob. All was well on his way up but on his way down rock slab bridge number two was demolished by a fallen tree.



John's trail was not in such good shape and John could not fix the problem, so John contacted Mike Vaughn, the RATC president, and three weeks later your fellow club members went out to the former bridge number two and put the trail back in good order.



We are all hikers and we all love all of our trails. Some express their affection by hiking on them whenever there is a free moment. But, we also need to express our love by caring for our trails. In the past this care was done by a select few, but now we all need to find some way to contribute. However, it is understood that going into the woods to spend all day moving big friendly rocks, BFRs, into a set of steps is not for everyone. To accommodate different preferences the RATC will strive to match skills and desires with trail lovers who need to express their affection for trails.

In the future, look to this article for suggestions of how you can express your love of trails. Some ideas are in the works to diversify our work projects. One idea is to recruit a group of "Blazers." This group of hikers would be trained on the ATC trail marking specifications and then they would be assigned to hike sections of our trail that need reblazing. Another idea is to establish a group of corridor monitors. These people would work more individually or in small groups walking the boundaries of the ATC and NPS lands to keep an eye on the lands on either side of the trail—just a walk in the woods to ensure all is well.

Of course rain keeps falling, and the trail still climbs to the high peaks, so we will continue to repair and enhance eroded, worn areas with BFRs and other natural materials. Also, green brier, blueberries, mountain laurel and other shrubby plants continue to grow across the trail, so loppers and weedeaters will still be used to keep the trails open. Likewise, those pesky bridge busting trees falling in the woods will keep us busy with chainsaw, hand saws, cross cut saws and axes, clearing a way for the greenbrier to grow...oops, no, that would be to keep the way clear for us to hike (Darn greenbrier pops up everywhere).

We always need and welcome new help with trail maintenance. Please refer to the hike schedule for our monthly work hikes. And, note that the first weekend in August we host the ATC's Konnarock crew. Our goal this year is to complete the Bluff City relocation (near Pearisburg, VA), so consider coming out to join in the fun.

As acknowledgement of the people who give so generously of their time to maintaining our trail, each year at the annual meeting service awards are presented. Three levels of service are acknowledged: for participating in four work hikes or otherwise working on the trail for 32 hours an RATC hat is given; for seven work hikes or 56 hours an RATC shirt is given; and for nine work hikes or 72 hours a hat and shirt are given. Since these awards are for work done on the trail, the recipient can opt to substitute leather work gloves instead of the hat or shirt. This year hats were awarded to Steve Burt, Bruce Davidson, Duncan Hollar, Roger Holnback, Ron Sloan, Lois Smith, and Mike Vaughn; shirts were awarded to Larry Austin, Liz Belcher, Bill Floyd, and Vince Mier; and a hat and a shirt were awarded to Blanche Brower, Mervin Brower, Timo Grüneberg, Frank Haranzo, David Jones, Maurice Turner, Homer Witcher, and Therese Witcher. (Note that the record keeping for these acknowledgements is volunteer based....if you earned an award and were not mentioned, please don't reach for a BFR, but instead, contact the Trail Supervisor to correct this oversight).

See you out on the trail.

David Jones

ATC Director of Conservation

I am thrilled to announce that Andrew Downs has accepted the Southwest and Central Virginia Regional Director position. Many of you know Andrew from his work with ATC's Deep South office where he has been employed by ATC since 2007 as the Regional Trail Resources Manager. Andrew brings a diversity of experience to the Regional Director position. Most significantly he has extensive experience working with agency partners and volunteers. He has also managed and developed crew programs, secured funding for trail projects, and recently initiated the development of a Wilderness Skills Institute. Andrew holds a Masters of Science degree from North Carolina State.

Andrew is highly motivated, and is committed to effective management of the A.T. and to ATC. It is a pleasure to offer him an opportunity to professionally grow with our organization. He will be transitioning into his new role starting April 1st. We will allow him time to close out his projects in the southern office while taking the reins on projects and programs in Virginia. We expect that Andrew will be fully settled into his new role by mid-May.

Please join me in congratulating Andrew, and welcoming him as the new Regional Director.

Laura Belleville

ATC Biennial

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy will be holding its 2013 Biennial from July 19 -26 at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, NC. This exciting event is open to everyone. Registration began April 15, 2013.

The Biennial will feature 66 guided hikes, including hikes along the A.T. and in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. There will also be excursions offered, such as whitewater rafting and tubing. You can also attend numerous workshops about the outdoors.

Here is a link to find out more about the Biennial:

<http://www.appalachiantrail.org/who-we-are/events/2011/07/26/atc-cullowhee-2013>

About Western Carolina University

- * - Lovely mountain setting
- * - All dorm rooms equipped with air condition
- * - Modern student dining hall
- * - Ample space for activities, camping, and RVs

About Cullowhee, North Carolina

- * - Spectacular vistas
- * - Easy, medium, and strenuous hikes
- * - Access to the Appalachian Trail, the Bartram Trail, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and the Nantahala National Forest
- * - Nature, history, and family friendly atmosphere

Hike Reports

Tuesday, March 5, 2013 9:00 AM Lee Hollow (Rt. 621) to Trout Creek (Rt. 620) 113-Mile Hike # 7

Ed Burgess (leader), Mike Vaughn, Madeleine Taylor, Jeff Monroe

The hike today began with several bridge crossings in a low area that had been flooded recently. The flood had left a lot of debris in the area and washed out the banks of the creek somewhat. Mike took a little extra time to inspect the bridges and look for damage. Then we traveled along the hill in a very beautiful area until we came to the actual ascent up Brush Mountain. The trail was in good shape and the grade was not difficult but it was a rather long climb to the summit. We finally reached the top and followed the ridge to the short blue blazed trail that leads to the Audie Murphy Monument where we had lunch on the benches. Jeff went down to explore the overlook. We each followed the trail down to an outstanding

view. Then we headed on back down the blue blazed trail to the AT. It was a nice ridge walk which toward the end became steep and descended to Trout Creek and our shuttle cars.

Saturday, March 9, 2013 11:00 AM Green Hill Park Trails

Mark McClain & Diana Christopoulos (leaders), Barbara Bricks, Carol Grimes, Grace Stuart, Lynne Edwards, John Miller, Lucie Bando, Cheryl Penn, Doug Fowley, Kathy Paranac, Pat Cousins (and granddaughter Jessie), Jim Constantin, Caryl Connolly, Sharon Probst, Susan Anderson-Hodge

The sun was out, and there was a warm feeling that spring cannot be far behind, so a large group turned out for our ~4-mile walk on the greenway and trails of Green Hill Park. On the ground, however, we found few signs that winter is not still in full control - we'll have to come back later to see the

glorious spring wildflowers! We walked the length of the paved greenway path, then continued on the natural trails along the river and up to the ridge. The open field of the equestrian center was a welcome rest stop before we completed the circular hike back to the parking area. Nearly everyone gathered for the sumptuous buffet lunch at Mamma Maria's following the hike.

**Sunday, March 10, 2013 9:00 AM
Devil's Marbleyard**

Homer and Therese Witcher (leaders), Maya Bohler, Carl Cornett, Phil Cantrell, LaDonna Stossel, Carol McPeak, Eben Schoeman, Brendle Wolfe, Theresa Jangela, Bill Walsh, Guy Brooks, Bennett Witcher, Noah Luther, Sachitt Gullapalli, Gregory King

March 10th turned out to be a great day for 16 hikers to visit Devil's Marbleyard. With a clear sky and temperatures in the mid sixties, who could ask for more? Despite some snow still in the rocks, over half of the hikers rock-scrambled all the way to the top, led by 3 teenagers. Four of the hikers scrambled only about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way before stopping to enjoy the warm sun and the great views, while the remainder stayed near the bottom to enjoy getting to know each other. We are sure there were a few aching bodies the next day, but we think that all would agree it was a great hike on a beautiful day.

**~~Tuesday, March 12, 2013 9:00 AM~~
Thursday, March 14, 2013 9:00 AM
Sinking Creek to Lee Hollow,
113 Mile Hike #8**

Ed Burgess (leader), Madeleine Taylor, Mike Vaughn, Jeff Monroe, John Hubbard

Once again it was a wonderful hike on the Appalachian Trail with some outstanding views down into the valley below. As we began our hike up Sinking Creek Mountain, the ground was covered with about an inch of snow. We hiked along through some open pastures as we gradually ascended the mountain. It was not long until we came to the famous landmark known as the Keffer Oak. It is a massive Oak that I read was over 30 feet in circumference and estimated to be over 300 years old. Once again we started our climb up the mountain, which was not as difficult as I expected. Once we reached the summit, it was a nice ridge walk for most of the day with views down into the valleys below on each side of the trail. We also saw many large piles of rocks. It was apparent that at one time some farms or homesteads had occupied this ridge but now the only signs of life were the rock piles. If it had not been for the stiff and very cold wind that seemed to cut like a knife on any exposed flesh, we may have taken more time and explored the area. We were all thankful when the trail dipped down off the ridge and out of the wind occasionally. We took advantage of one such occasion to have lunch on the leeward side of the ridge out of the wind. Without the wind blowing it was actually comfortable sitting on the rocks with an awesome view of the valley below as well as the mountains in the distance. In fact, I think it was John who pointed out that we could see all the way to Catawba Mountain.

After lunch we continued on the ridge for a few miles before we started the descent to Lee Hollow. It was a rather long descent but the trail was well maintained and eventually we came to the Niday Shelter. After a short break we continued on down to Lee Hollow where we had left the vehicles and we met the only hiker we had seen the entire day. He was section hiking the AT and at this time was heading up toward the shelter. We informed him of the cold wind that was howling on the ridge but he said he was prepared for anything that would come and had been in cold and snow several times on his hike. We wished him well and as he started up the mountain we got into the warm vehicles and made our way back home.

**Sunday, March 17, 2013 1:00 PM
Carvin's Cove Trails**

Carina Hughes (leader), Karen Callahan (assistant), Michelle Freshwater (new member!), Guy Brooks, Susan Anderson Hodges, Jimbo Harshfield, Mary Harshfield and Beth Heath.



Gary, Carina, Karen, Michelle, Mary, Beth & Susan - Jimbo

On this St. Patrick's Day the weather was in the mid forties and foggy with a forecast of light rain. In fact, we got a misty rain from the fog and it turned out to be perfect conditions for a stroll in the woods. We were also blessed with a delightful group of hikers! It was the first time I had the pleasure of hiking with most of them and they were wonderful company. The trail in this lower loop of the park was in good condition, helping us complete our journey in less than 3 hours.

**Tuesday, March 19, 2013 9:00 AM
Johns Creek (Rt. 632) to Sinking Creek (Rt. 630)
113-Mile Hike # 9**

Ed Burgess (leader), Mike Vaughn, Madeleine Taylor, Jim Webb, Kelly Stevens, Cynthia Munley

It was a very good hike on the AT once we finally started after the long drive. I want to commend the people who maintain this section of the trail and who cut and cleared the many huge blow-downs.

The hike was not exceptionally long but it was a steep climb from Johns Creek to the summit of the mountain. Once we crossed Route 601 at Rocky Gap, the trail followed an old road and became even steeper. Eventually, we all reached the summit and made our way to Kelly Knob and the blue blazed trail that leads to the White Rock overlook. It was an outstanding view from White Rock down into the New River Valley. The warm temperatures and clear blue skies made it even better. The very strong wind did not deter Mike and Cynthia from climbing out on the rocks to take a break. Since the rest of us were not as brave, we moved back into the trees out of the wind to have our lunch break.



Kelly, Madeleine & Cynthia - Burgess

After lunch it was a short walk along the ridge until we started to descend toward Sinking Creek, even steeper than the morning's ascent. We took a break at Laurel Creek Shelter before descending another 2 miles to Route 42. Then it was back to climbing through some open fields and over a hill before we actually came to Sinking Creek where we had left the vehicles.

Saturday, March 23, 2013 8:30 AM Catawba Mountain Work Hike

Liz Belcher, Steve Burt, Phil Cantrell, Jimbo Harshfield, David Jones, Fred Meyer, John Miller, Glen Mitchell, Hanna Mitchell, Susanna Mitchell, James Narramore, Phillip Stokus, Susan Terwilliger, Jim Webb, Kyle Williams

Catawba Mountain, Catawba Mountain, Catawba Mountain. Every time there is a work hike on the trail to McAfee Knob it is shocking to see how many people walk this trail.

Because of this heavy use, we regularly return to Catawba Mountain to offer a bit of spit and shine to the hard used Appalachian Trail. The many feet pounding the earth compacts the soil, then it rains, and soon the Appalachian Trail is transformed into the Appalachian rivulet, carrying water and soil downhill. For this reason, most of our work hikes on this section focus on drainage issues.

Today we had a great turnout, 15 people! The trail supervisor was running late so, once again confusion reigned for the first bit of the hike. But soon, tools were dispersed, a quick

reminder of safety was given and the group headed up the trail.

At the work site we discussed and observed evidence of how compacted earth, rain and slope combine to create the "Appalachian rivulet." Then, a challenge was made to return this short section from a rivulet back to the Appalachian Trail. We divided into smaller groups and set to debarking logs and digging trenches across the trail to hold the debarked logs which will halt and divert the flow of water.

It seems that the Trail Supervisor has been doing a bit of trail maintenance homework. After water bar construction was well under way he pulled out an orange and stated that its roll mimicked the flow of water. So, off he went to critique the new trail contour by letting the orange roll down the trail. "Shape the water bars so that the orange rolls off the trail." And so the rest of the day was spent making "orange juice bars" instead of water bars.

Surprisingly, just after lunch all the water bars had been installed. So, half of the group moved up the trail to the fire road crossing. Here the masses of people coming down McAfee Knob are short-cutting a switch back. These rogue paths need to be closed because of... erosion problems.... Old logs, sticks and branches were pulled from the surrounding woods to dissuade hikers from taking these short cuts.

Back at the water bar construction, the trail supervisor kept asking for one more bucket of soil for this water bar and that water bar. Finally he was satisfied and this project was complete.

Since we had more time and the workers were willing we moved ahead to put in a log crib to support a section of trail that was beginning to slough down the mountain. A long log was cut, it was set in place along the trail and dirt was pulled down from above to reestablish the trail tread. And with this project completed, the work day was done.

What a day. Many water bars were put in place. A section of sloughing trail tread was reinforced and a badly neglected switchback was armored. That called for a round of cold drinks at the parking lot.

If you have read this far, you must be interested in trail maintenance, please join us. A cold drink at the end of the day has your name on it.

Sunday, March 24, 2012 8:00 AM AT - Trout Creek to Dragon's Tooth Parking 113 Mile Hike #6

Kris Peckman (leader), Fred Meyer, Grace and LaDonna Stossel

Four enthusiastic hikers braved the "wintry mix" forecast, but we took the precaution of parking at the corner of 621 and 620 rather than trying to use the private bridge or going the back way on 620 with its steep hills and switchbacks. That added maybe an extra mile to our hike, which was enjoyable in its own right. A herd of black cows with white faces included two very small calves. A very few small drops appeared on

Fred's car during the shuttle, and while we could hear some precipitation hitting the trees as we walked along Trout Creek, we didn't feel anything. As we progressed up the trail, little ice pellets began to appear. They got thicker and thicker and eventually became snow. We probably had an inch of snow by the time we stopped for an early lunch in a somewhat sheltered spot. We heard a couple of bird calls and wished we could identify them. Continuing up the ridge past Hemlock Point, the wind was blowing the snow in our faces, so when we reached the Secret Trail, the leader reluctantly decided caution was the better part of valor and led us down the Secret Trail rather than chance going down the rocks from Dragon's Tooth in blowing snow. With much less wind as we descended, we could appreciate the beauty of the snow. This was a group of hardy hikers, and I think we all were a little disappointed to have our hike shortened.



Grace the Snow Maiden – LaDona

Sunday, March 24, 2013 1:00 PM
Friday, March 29, 2013 1:00 PM
Poor Mountain

Carina Hughes (leader), Sue Scanlin (assistant), Chloe Hughes, Mary Harshfield, Jimbo Harshfield, Frank Penn, Carolyn Penn, Maya Bohler, Joanne Derryberry, Irina Mashina, Carol McPeak, Jen Perdue, Carl Reed, Susan Anderson Hodges, Cynthia Munley, Frank Munley, Shelly Warner and Carol Kinzer.

The original date and time of this hike was smack in the middle of a six inch Sunday snowfall. This Good Friday was a magnificent day with 0% precipitation, sunshine galore and 18 smiling hikers enjoying our four mile walk in the woods. Several RATC members in the group brought enthusiastic guests and family members who we hope will join us in later adventures. Participants were pointing out familiar places in the distance and Shelly was able to spot her house as we enjoyed a panoramic view of Salem and West Roanoke County

Tuesday, March 26, 2013 9:00 AM
Pine Swamp (Rt.635) to Johns Creek (Rt. 632)
113-Mile Hike # 10

Cancelled.

Saturday, March 30, 2013 12:00 PM
Buffalo Mountain

Chris & Edward Wilson (co-leaders), Eileen Rowan, Guy Brooks, Chelsea Richardson, Diana Christopulos, Mark McClain, Aubrey Arrington, Cary Simms, Brendle Wolfe, Lisette Franko, Kelly Stevens, Sharon Probst, Caralee Eicher, Madeleine Taylor, Katia Fiorentino, and Noah Pires



Chelsea Richardson atop Buffalo Mountain

An incredible turn out for this short hike located in Floyd County. A beautiful day to be out with mild temperatures and plenty of sunshine, hard to believe the ground was covered in snow two days ago! After a leisurely stroll to the top of Buffalo Mountain we spent a considerable amount of time picnicking, socializing and bird watching. A clear day so wonderful views to be had, including the iconic Pilot Mountain in North Carolina. We eventually determined we must head home, so after a leisurely stroll back down the mountain we returned to the cars, all in agreement that this is a must re-do hike.

Saturday, March 30, 2013 8:00 AM
Carvin's Cove

Cancelled, no hikers.

Sunday, March 31, 2013 10:00 AM
Tinker Cliffs

Cancelled.

Tuesday April 2, 2013 9:00 AM
Big Horse Gap to New River (RT 460)
113-Mile Hike #11

Ed Burgess (leader), Mike Vaughn, John Hubbard, Madeleine Taylor and her dog Sassy, Kelly Stevens, Jim Webb, Cynthia Munley, Julie Buchikos, Sheila Vaughn, Melissa Vaughn, Amar Kumar, Katia Fiorentino and her son Noah

We left one vehicle in Pearisburg at the Wade's Market (which is now closed) and we all crammed into the other two vehicles to drive to the trailhead, which was still several miles away. Then we began our trek back to Pearisburg.

This hike on the AT may have been my favorite. That may have been because we did not have to climb a thousand feet or more to the ridge. We were already high at a gap in the mountain and only had to ascend a few hundred feet to the ridge. Also, the weather was bright sunshine with clear blue skies and only a slight breeze and nearly perfect temperature. The trail was in good condition with some excellent views down into Wilburn Valley. We hiked along the ridge to Doc's Knob Shelter where we took a lunch break and some photographs. After lunch we proceeded along an old roadbed with rhododendrons growing along each side of the trail for several miles. We eventually left the roadbed and got back to a single track trail, where we scared several deer. Today, I saw more wildlife than I have seen all winter. I suppose maybe they were out enjoying the beautiful day just as we were. I personally saw five deer and one grouse as we hiked along the trail today. At one outcrop and overlook I looked over the rock and came face to face with a huge vulture. However, as I was moving back so others could see, it flew from its perch on the rock ledge. We continued our trek along the ridge passing several overlooks with outstanding views down into Wilburn Valley. We eventually came to the most popular overlook known as Angels Rest. It was a nice view down into the New River Valley but I personally liked the overlook that we had stopped at earlier which was about .6 miles behind us. After taking some photos at Angels Rest we continued the long descent to Pearisburg and the New River.

Saturday April 6, 2013 8:00 AM
Garden Mountain (Rt 623) to Rich Valley (Rt 42)

Chris & Edward Wilson (co-leaders), Bill Reich and Carina Hughes

Another beautiful day for a hike! Mild temperatures and bright blue skies made this the perfect day to tackle this challenging 17-mile hike. Good views were to be had of Burkes Garden, several AT thru hikers were met at Chestnut Knob Shelter. Unfortunately a hiker fell and hurt himself which delayed the pace; however, all were equipped with headlamps so hike after dark no problem! We later learned he had sprained his knee (ouch!) and will be recovering for the next 3-6 months. We wish him a speedy recovery!

Sunday April 7, 2013 8:00 AM
Hoop Hole Upper Loop

Kris Peckman (leader), Linda King (assistant), H.R. Blankenship, Val Dymond, Jack Fessler, Doug Fowley, Mary and Jimbo Harshfield, LaDona Stossel

Seems every hike report refers to "great group", "good company", etc. Maybe hiking just attracts nice people. But I still think today's group was above average. We also benefited from the first nice warm day this year.

LaDona had printed a great trail map from hikingupward.com (free site—check it out). We did the hike in a Figure 8, going

up the right side of the lower loop, crossing over to go up the left side of the upper loop, around and down the right side of the upper loop, crossing over again to go down the left side of the lower loop. The Forest Service has marked the trail with plastic diamonds: yellow for the lower loop, blue for the upper loop. The upper loop could use some maintenance on the treadway: our feet kept sliding sideways.

Thursday's surprise snowfall meant the water in the streams was high, creating a logistical challenge at each one of the many crossings. There were some wet feet, but not enough to require a sock change. By the end of the day, LaDona got the stream-crossing ballet award.

Flora: one bunch of round-lobed liverwort (*Hepatica americana*) in bloom on the way up the lower loop. Fauna: lots of deer droppings on top of the ridge, calls from an unseen junco (identified by Mary), one tick (yes, already), amazing rectangular holes in a tree, probably made by pileated woodpeckers.



Val, Kris & LaDona - Jimbo

As we came up to the ridge, H.R. spotted where to start bushwhacking up to the cliffs, but declined to join that expedition (been there, done that). Most of the rest of us walked up through the open woods to the bottom of the cliff, but the "leader" couldn't find the way up that she just knew was there. Val persisted, however, and actually found a much easier way up. She and Linda hollered down to have lunch delivered, but instead the rest of us followed and enjoyed the view of the Craig Creek Valley, which was spectacular despite a light haze. Eventually, we all returned to the trail and had lunch there with our patiently waiting companions.

On the way down, Jack was given a lovely Hello Kitty bandaid to cover a thorn scratch. We studied a pile of old iron pipe pieces, probably remnants from a sawmill of long ago. Then back to the creeks, with beautiful waterfalls and more crossing entertainment. Total mileage, including the bushwhack to the ridge, was 10.07 miles, according to Jack's amazing GPS watch. Linda has the same watch, also recording 10 miles, and a highest elevation (on top of the ridge) of 3633 feet, from a starting elevation of 1302 feet.

Tuesday April 9, 2013 9:00 AM
Ribble Trail/A.T. Loop
113-Mile Hike #12

Ed Burgess (leader), Madeleine Tayler with Sassy, Mike Vaughn, Cynthia Munley, Sheila Vaughn, Jim Webb, John Hubbard, Frank Munley

It was a beautiful spring day with bright sunlight filtering through the trees as we made our way along the Ribble Trail to connect with the Appalachian Trail. The Ribble Trail was not very well maintained but it was very pretty as we hiked along Dismal Creek with the Rhododendrons growing along the banks and the stream gurgling along underneath the branches. It was a beautiful hike along the stream even though we had to watch closely for the rare blue blazes. Once we eventually connected with the AT, we traveled along at a good pace while crossing several bridges. It was not long until we came to the Wapiti Shelter. Some of us went up the short blue blaze trail to the shelter for a short break, some of us continued on up the trail and began the climb up Sugar Run Mountain. We caught up with each other at an outstanding overlook where we could see far down in the valley, as well as see the ridge we had hiked the week before down to Pearisburg. I thought it was one of the best overlooks we had seen since we started hiking the RATC-maintained section of the AT.



Frank, John, Sheila, Mike, Ed, Madeleine & Jim-Cynthia

After lunch at the overlook we continued along near the ridge as we continued northbound. The trail followed an old roadbed much of the way and was not actually on the ridge. There were no more scenic overlooks as we continued on toward Big Horse Gap. Just before arriving at Big Horse Gap, we came to the Ribble Trail which descended the mountain to complete the loop back to where we had parked the vehicles. As we hiked down the Ribble Trail we passed by the Old Honey Springs Cabin; however, it was now only a pile of planks, since it had not been able to withstand the storms and winds of the last few years. This part of the Ribble Trail was not very well maintained at all. There were no water bars and the water had made gullies down the mountain where the trail should have been. Also very few blazes could be seen and it was difficult at times to determine where the trail was actually going.

Saturday April 13, 2013 8:00 AM
Roanoke - Walking Half-Marathon Training Hike

Mark McClain, Diana Christopulos (leaders), Mervin & Blanche Brower, Georgia Gallaher, Lisette Marie, Stuart Tausman

This hike was planned as practice for the Blue Ridge Half Marathon which would be the following Saturday. To avoid repetition of the route, we walked the course in reverse, starting from Wasena Park. After just over a mile we discovered that the route was impassable due to high water over the bridge at Smith Park. Returning to our starting place, we devised a shuttle to skip over the flooded bridge, and picked up the route again on Jefferson St. We made a circuit around South Roanoke, then hopped on the Roanoke River Greenway (picking our way through the Komen Walk for the Cure group which was going in the opposite direction. We then headed up the Mill Mountain Greenway to the Star Overlook, then down the road and into downtown Roanoke for a piece of the Lick Run Greenway, then out to Grandin, Vic Thomas Park, and finally returning to Wasena.

Sunday April 14, 2013 8:00 AM
Mountain Lake Area Trail Clearing

Steve Burt, Colleen Gentry, Matt Gentry, Megan Hewitt, Carina Hughes, David Jones, Bob & Kris Peckman, Ron Sloan, Marlyse Whittaker

Today we were spring cleaning the AT from Bailey Gap to the War Spur Trail, 7.2 miles.

After dropping off the second group we had people working from both ends, each heading to the midpoint, the parking area near Wind Rock. The shuttle driver then returned to the meeting point at the parking lot for Wind Rock and the last two workers started working toward Bailey Gap.

The skies were clear, and with no leaves on the trees the mid April sun baked the good spring feelings deep into our psyche.

Near mid afternoon the Bailey Gap groups met. Upon meeting, all the blowdowns on this section had been cut so the sawyers shouldered their chainsaws and started to walk back to the Wind Rock parking lot. The people with the long handled clippers (loppers) continued to cut underbrush; a loppers job is never done. About three quarters of the way, hikers were spotted up ahead; it was the remaining group coming from the War Spur Trail. Spring cleaning of the entire section was complete.

What a successful day it was to clear seven miles of trail. But, there is more to the story. Matt and Colleen Gentry, had camped near War Spur shelter the night before and they came up Salt Pond Mountain and cleared the trail from the shelter to the War Spur Trail junction. With the Gentrys' contribution today's work hike cleared 10 miles of trail, that is 8% of the RATC's 120 miles, in just one day!

Tuesday April 16, 2013 9:00 AM
Ribble Trail to Kimberling Creek (RT 606)
113-Mile Hike #13

Ed Burgess (leader), John Hubbard, Madeleine Taylor and Sassy, Cynthia Munley, Frank Munley, Rick Eisenring

As we pulled into the parking area at the trailhead it was a beautiful morning with the sunshine and cool morning air. It was a wonderful morning to be out in the woods and hiking along Dismal Creek. However, when we left Roanoke it was cloudy, with a very light rain falling and scattered fog. We did not know what to expect as we traveled the 70 plus miles south to the trail that we were going to hike. So it was a very pleasant surprise to see such a beautiful morning for our hike. The only downside of the morning was John's poor muddy car after going the last 5 miles on the road to the trailhead. When Madeleine was looking at the oozing mud from underneath and around the tires, Sassy had to investigate also, and as Sassy got a closer look a big glob fell on her back.



Madeleine enjoys the healing waters of Dismal Creek - Ed

We began our hike down the Ribble Trail just as we had done last Tuesday, but today the creek crossings were a little more difficult since the water level was higher after the recent rains. However, we all made it without anyone getting soaked and it was not long until we came to the intersection of the AT. Last Tuesday we turned left and went north, however today we were going south so we turned to the right. We followed along the stream through numerous Rhododendrons, which made many green tunnels as we made our way toward Dismal Falls. The trail was in good condition and we moved along at a fast pace for the next 4 miles, until we came to the blue blazed trail that led over to the falls. We made our way down the blue blaze trail to the falls, which was well worth the effort, and ate lunch and beheld the beauty. The water was rushing over and around the rocks as it fell in ripples to the large pool below, where two men were fishing. Some of the group decided to take their shoes off and put their feet into the cold water and just relax, while others were busy taking photos of the beautiful area. We finally had to leave the beauty and get back on the trail to finish our hike down to Route 606 and Kimberling Creek where we had left a shuttle car.

While John & I ran the shuttle, the rest of the group had decided to pick up trash that was scattered over the area and when we returned they had a huge pile of trash collected. It was with much effort that John did get it all into his car to dispose of once we got back to Roanoke.

This hike was the easiest of all the hikes and was also one of the most beautiful with Dismal Creek and Dismal Falls to enjoy. I would highly recommend this hike anytime of the year, but it would be most beautiful if it were done while the Rhododendrons were blooming, since they were so numerous all along this section of the trail.

Saturday April 20, 2013 8:00 AM
AT - Catawba Mtn. (311) to McAfee Knob

Carina Hughes (leader), Dawn Lamb, Anne Hanna, Amy Phillips, Randy Jones, Bob Slackman and Sheila Vaughn.

We were thrilled to have these seven fantastic hikers with us on this extremely busy day in the Roanoke Valley. On this Earth Day there were many competing activities such as the Blue Ridge Marathon, the Grandin Theatre Film Festival and the Kite Festival in Salem. As we started our journey up Catawba Mountain, the temperature was in the mid 40s reaching the 50s by hike's end. We were all so excited when we arrived at the Knob as the views were absolutely awesome. Amy, who was in Roanoke on a business trip, was literally jumping from rock to rock. Sheila could barely look for fear she might fall. As always, it was a treat to have Anne along as she identified the wildflowers and birds. Bob and Randy kept the conversation going with their experiences and it was great to see Dawn again. Everyone was so pleasant. It was a wonderful way to jump start this glorious weekend.

By the way, when we were leaving the Knob, a couple had just arrived and were sitting taking in the view. They turned around to greet us and we exchanged niceties and learned they were from Sydney, Australia on vacation. We couldn't stay to chat so we wished each other well. The next day, we were on another RATC hike 60 miles North of Roanoke led by Mike Vaughn. After we finished our lunch at Cold Mountain, we were getting ourselves situated and were just starting to continue our southbound hike when I look up and hear, "It's you again!" The friendly couple from Australia had recognized us. I asked them how they knew to go to McAfee Knob and then hit this other breathtaking spot. The lady started telling us how they planned their vacation around a "Top Ten Favorite Hikes along the Appalachian Trail in Virginia and North Carolina" list created by this guy Mike Vaughn which is on the RATC website. We all just looked at each other and burst out laughing and I said, "This is your lucky day, there is Mike Vaughn himself!" They met their vacation guide guru all the way from Australia! What are the chances of that happening? Amazing! Thanks Mike for being such a great AT ambassador.

Sunday April 21, 2013 8:00 AM
Salt Log Gap to Long Mountain Wayside

Mike Vaughn (leader), Carina Hughes, Sheila Vaughn, Cynthia Munley, LaDona Stossel, Grace Stossel, Melissa Vaughn, Bill Reich, Kris & Bob Peckman

We started out on the trail at Salt Long Gap, east of Buena Vista, on a beautiful, sunny Spring day. Shortly after starting out we reached Tarjacket Ridge, which offered great views looking eastward. We reached Hog Camp Gap, after descending from the ridge. After a short ascent, we reached the highlight of the hike, the open grassy balds on Cole Mountain. The 360 views were spectacular. After a lunch break we continued on to Cow Camp Gap and then ascended the wooded summit of Bald Mountain. From there it was a steady, 2,500 foot descent to Long Mountain Wayside and the completion of the hike. It was a great day to be outdoors.

Tuesday April 23, 2013 9:00 AM
Kimberling Creek RT 606 to Jenny Knob RT611
113-Mile Hike #14

Edward Burgess (leader), Mike Vaughn, Rick Eisenring, John Hubbard, Cynthia Munley, Jim Webb

After the long drive down I-81 and to the trailhead, most of us were anxious to get on the trail. However, Cynthia was anxious to finish the cleanup of the parking area which she had began the week previously. She led the cleanup while Mike & I ran the shuttle. Back at the parking lot the group had collected a large pile of trash and was still hard at work when we arrived. Cynthia and Rick continued to work while the rest of us crossed Kimberling Creek on one of the longest suspension bridges on the Appalachian Trail. After half an hour or so, Cynthia and Rick caught up with us. The climb up Brushy Mountain was not too difficult but there were some occasional steep sections and the temperature was rising rapidly as the morning was giving way to the afternoon heat. Once we reached the summit of the mountain we decided to stop for lunch. After lunch it was a ridge walk and an occasional view down the valley below. After a couple of miles we descended the mountain and crossed Route 608; however, what goes down will always go back up, so it was another climb up Brushy Mountain. This climb up was not as difficult as the earlier climb but the temperature had gotten to the uncomfortable level so we stopped at the Jenny Knob shelter for a water break. There we met a northbound thru-hiker from Canada who shared some of her experiences of the last couple of months with us before continuing on her northbound trek. As we were leaving the shelter, Cynthia found a beautiful rock with several fossils imprints on it. She said it was the first she had found on the Appalachian Trail, even though she had found many before in other parts of the country. We continued our hike on toward Jenny Knob as Cynthia continued to look for beautiful rocks along the trail. By the time we arrived at the trailhead where Mike's car was parked she had a heavy pack with all the rocks she had collected. We had met 8 or 10 thru-hikers as they were hiking northbound on their trek to Maine, which was a special treat.

Saturday April 27, 2013 1:00 PM
Dragon's Tooth Parking to Dragon's Tooth

Guy Brooks (leader), Laurie Spangler, Doug Fowley, Emilee Garman, Kathy Parancac, Lauren Miller, Adam Casey, Dustin & Heather Derrick

Five of us left the Orange Market parking lot on a slightly cloudy day. We met the rest of the group at the Dragon's Tooth parking lot. So nine adventurous trekkers began hiking up the Dragon's Tooth trail. Laurie, our wild-flower trail guide, helped us identify the flowers that were blooming. We saw white trillium, various varieties of violets, gaywings and fire pinks. We also saw many ferns which we couldn't identify. Doug was our trail maintainer as he collected and carried out some trash. Some of our group decided to enjoy the views from lower parts of the mountain. The rest of us continued up to Dragon's Tooth where we enjoyed a slight breeze and some very nice views. We arrived back at the parking lot just as it began to rain. We laughed all the way back to the Orange Market listening to Emilee's adventures with rednecks, cowboys and bikers. A fun time was had by all.

Sunday April 28, 2013 8:00 AM
Longdale North Mountain Trail

John Merkwan (leader), Fred Meyer, LaDona Stossel, Bob and Kris Peckman

Rain was forecast and rain it did, not a drencher, but a steady sprinkle that put our rain gear to good use. This was a lazy-man's hike as we started this hike by driving to the top of North Mountain and began with a relatively flat 2 mile ridge walk. Although this first stretch is normally chocked with valley views we had to use a bit of imagination to see Big and Little House Mountains in the distance. Distant views may have required some imagination but spring flowers were in full view with trillium, a colony of bellwort we found growing head high on a small rock shelf and many others. This was an easy down hill hike of 8.4 miles taking 4 1/2 hours.



Fred, Kris & LaDona – The rainwear fashion show - Merkwan

**Tuesday April 30, 2013 9:00 AM
Black Horse Gap (BRP) to Curry Gap (BRP)
113-Mile Hike #1**

John Hubbard (substitute leader for Ed Burgess), Jeff Monroe, Cynthia Munley, Frank Munley, Rick Eisenring, Herman R. Blankenship, Jim Webb, Joanne Derryberry

The Tuesday hike group had another wonderful hike today on the Appalachian Trail. This one started at Black Horse Gap and ended at Salt Pond Road and both trailheads were accessed from the Blue Ridge Parkway. The morning started with an email from Ed telling me he was very sick and could not make it so he picked me to lead. Well, this is a first for me, not the hiking but leading a group. I tell you there couldn't be a better group for me to "lead". I did not have to do anything special except enjoy the great weather, the trail and the great company. If you have ever heard of being in a fog that's the way it was on the parkway this morning, I mean "pea soup" but the temperature was perfect and we started the hike at about 2,400 feet but soon lost most of it as we traveled south on the AT. However, as always once you go down you know it is going back up again and we gained all 1,400 feet of it back very quickly. I did make a wrong choice at Salt Pond Road, and if the group had listened to me we would still be heading to Daleville. However, thanks to Jim, Jeff, and HR. who pointed us in the right direction. I appreciate and thank you guys for setting me straight. We ended the hike at about the same elevation as we began and most importantly we ended it with the same nine noses we started with this morning. It was another great day on the awesome Appalachian Trail.

**Saturday May 4, 2013 8:00 AM
Brushy Mountain Trail Rehabilitation**

Guy Brooks, Blanche Brower, Mervin Brower, Phil Cantrell, David Jones, Jerry Kyle, Jasper Lui, Jonathan McGlumphy, Phillip Strokus, Maurice Turner, Jim Webb

The RATC maintains a lot of trail, and when we have a hike way down in Bland County the long drive to the work site reminds one of the breadth of our section.

Today we had a good crew who chose to make that long drive. Eleven people came from Roanoke, Salem, Blacksburg, Alderson, WV and Charleston, WV. With these various origins there were several meeting places with the ultimate meeting spot being Trent's Store in Bland County. As seems to be more and more typical David Jones, the RATC Trail Supervisor, was last to arrive. After signing our hike participation sheet everyone loaded into cars and drove back to the trail crossing a mile down the road.

Our work today was trail tread rehabilitation about three quarters of a mile south of the Kimberling Creek suspension Bridge. After divvying up the tools, like ants headed to a picnic, our crew headed single file up the trail.

In about fifteen minutes Jerry Kyle, the RATC Overseer for this section, stopped and indicated this was our work site for the day. Here the trail had slipped down the mountain and our

job was to reestablish the trail tread. We had about 100 yards of digging to accomplish, and this goal appear to be a bit overly optimistic. Regardless, we set to work. Several participants had never dug trail tread so David Jones took this group and started to discuss and demonstrate the techniques of shaping a pleasing trail.



Getting Down and Dirty – Blanche

On the other end of the spectrum we had several folks from the Mid Week Crew, a group of volunteers who gather every week to build trail somewhere in the Roanoke Valley. These three, Maurice, Blanche and Mervin set to work as if their Mid Week Crew leader, Bill Gorge, was right there keeping an eye on them. And they do an amazing job building trail.

The day progressed. Several Thru Hikers passed and they stopped and shared their stories. The new tread lengthened. We stopped for an enjoyable lunch and returned to work. Soon the new tread tied into the existing trail. We spent the last hour of work tidying up the work site.

We did it! We accomplished our seemingly over optimistic goal—good job!

**Sunday May 5, 2013 8:00 AM
Catawba Mtn. (311) to Dragon's Tooth Parking
113-Mile Hike #5**

Carina Hughes (leader), Karen Callahan (assistant hike leader), Doug Fowley

Even though the forecast was not promising, we were blessed with wonderful conditions. With temperatures in the 50s and the sun shining for most of our trek, we felt blessed to be out enjoying one of our favorite hikes in the area. As we traveled southbound, we met about 9 hikers on their way to Maine. One of them asked us if The Homeplace had a TV so he could watch the NASCAR race. We later found him crossing 311 headed in the opposite direction from the famous restaurant as we figured he had continued to conduct research and was going straight to a joint where he was certain to view the event. He was a man on a mission!

Karen, as always, was a trooper. She had eye surgery twice in April, the last one 14 days before and was relieved to be able to exercise and enjoy the outdoors. Doug found out about us through the Meet Up site and has been on several hikes with RATC. They were lovely hiking companions.

Sunday May 5, 2013 1:00 PM
Jennings Creek (RT614) to Bryant Ridge Shelter

Mervin & Blanche Brower (leaders), Sue Scanlin, Dan Reichel

We met at the Daleville commuter parking lot and left in one car shortly after one o'clock for our starting location.

The weather was cloudy and in the 60s. So it was very pleasant to hike. We only met 2 people on the trail. Nobody was at the shelter when we got there. We had a snack and, after about 20 minutes, walked out. It took us the same time to walk in as out.

Tuesday May 7, 2013 9:00 AM
Curry Gap (BRP) to Daleville (RT 220)
113-Mile Hike #2

Ed Burgess (leader), Jim Webb, Rick & Tammy Eisenring

After being ill last week I was anxious to hit the trail even with the cool conditions and rainy forecast. We loaded into the car and drove to Salt Pond Road on the Blue Ridge Parkway. We hiked the nearly 1 mile to where Salt Pond Road intersects with the Appalachian Trail and headed south on the AT in a steady but slow rain. We met 3 thru-hikers and wished them the best as they continued on their way toward Maine. We arrived at Fullhardt Knob Shelter just as the rain started coming down harder. One person was just leaving and 3 other thru-hikers were preparing to start their hike for the day. We settled down to have lunch in the shelter out of the rain. Once again we put on our rain gear and packs and started down the trail toward Daleville. The trail was in excellent condition; the descent was very gradual with switchbacks and a pleasure to hike. After about 3 miles we crossed a fence stile, Mountain Pass Road and a small bridge. Then I was surprised to see a brand new bridge over a gully. Jim told me that Homer and Therese Witcher had recently installed the bridge and the new picnic table at the Fullhardt Knob Shelter. After crossing the newly made bridge it was a steep climb up through a cow pasture but there were no views in the fog. We continued on down the trail, crossing the railroad track and Route 11, and we eventually came out of the woods at a very busy Route 220 in Daleville near our vehicles.

It was another awesome hike on the AT, even with the difficult weather conditions. Rick's wife, Tammy, joined us on her very first AT hike and hopefully she can join more hikes in the future under better conditions.

Saturday May 11, 2013 7:00 AM
Sunday May 19, 2013 7:00 AM
Rock Castle Gorge

Carina Hughes (leader), Sandra Cothran, Dan Dennison

On this gloomy day, we lost several strong hikers to the wet forecast at the last minute. However, the rain contained itself the entire trip. We actually benefited from the cool fog and morning dew. It was especially helpful during the first 3.5 miles while we ascended from the creek to the Blue Ridge

Parkway. This walk in the woods has so much variety. We enjoyed the roaring creek, the lush canopy of trees, the flowers, cows, lizards and the freshness of spring. However, it was so foggy we could not enjoy the incredible vistas from the parkway. We could hardly see a few feet ahead of us once we reached the top. Because the grass had not been mowed and it was hard to see the next blaze, we were following our instincts and were able to count on Sandra's incredible memory. She became our hero as she found the trail several times as we did our best to avoid the cows and stepping on their digested dinner! We were fascinated by a few red lizards and the first to bloom rhododendrons brought smiles to our faces. The rain started rather timidly about 30 minutes before we finished and it refreshed us as we put our rain gear on and were protected by the trees. Dan and Sandra took wonderful photographs along the way and we all enjoyed great conversation.

We decided we must visit soon on a clear sunny day so we can take advantage of this favorite hike and its expansive views while the flowers are still in bloom.

Tuesday May 14, 2013 9:00 AM
Thursday May 16, 2013 9:00 AM
Andy Layne Trail (RT 779) to Daleville (RT 220)
113-Mile Hike #3

Ed Burgess (Leader), Madeleine Taylor, Jim Webb, Kelly Stevens, Cynthia Munley, Doug Knighton, Joanne Derryberry

After a beautiful walk through some woodlands and fields we crossed the fast moving creek on a bridge that had seen better days, but it was still useable and seemed very stable. Once across the bridge the climb began up to Scorched Earth Gap. It was a long and difficult climb in certain areas, while at times it was also a very gradual ascent. At the gap we took a short photo op break at a large rock near the trail. After the photo session it was back to hiking and descending to Lamberts Meadow Shelter where we stopped for few minutes to check the water supply and use the privy. Most of us decided to hike on down to Lamberts Meadow for lunch, while Cynthia chose to stay behind for fresh water and photos. It was not long until Cynthia joined us. Kelly decided to try her new water filter and was very satisfied with it.



Jim, Kelly & Doug – Burgess

After lunch it was back to the trail as we traversed along the side of the mountain for a few miles before reaching Angels Gap, where we climbed up to the ridge and stayed there until the descent to Daleville. The ridge walk had many ups and downs as well as some fantastic views both of Carvin's Cove on the right and Botetourt and Daleville on the left. Near Hay Rock, we hiked under some beautiful and large outcropping of rocks. After Hay Rock it was still a few miles before we started our descent to Daleville and several more overlooks.

Friday May 17, 2013 12:00 PM
Grayson Highlands/Mt Rogers Backpack Trip

Postponed until fall due to lack of participants

Saturday May 18, 2013 8:00 AM
Cascades to Butt Mountain

Cancelled, no hikers.

Tuesday May 21, 2013 9:00 AM
McAfee Parking lot to Andy Layne Trail RT 779
113-Mile Hike #4

Ed Burgess (Leader), Madeleine Taylor, Kelly Stevens, Joanne Derryberry, Jim Webb, Rick Eisenring, and Jay Dhamrhat

Jay Dhamrhat drove over 7 hours from New York City Monday night after work, hiked with us this Tuesday, and was going back to work on Wednesday. Now that is dedication beyond anything I could imagine. Jay told me at McAfee Knob, looking out over the beautiful Catawba Valley, that the time, the effort and the expense was worth it.



Jay Dhamrhat from NYC - Burgess

We started at the McAfee Parking lot and took a break at the Catawba Shelter. Then we continued on up the mountain to McAfee Knob, and enjoyed the fantastic views. After taking many photos we decided to have an early lunch. Then Jim, Joanne and Jay quickly finished lunch and went ahead while the four of us that were left took our time. At Tinker Cliffs we took a long break enjoying the view down in the valley and looking back toward McAfee Knob when I heard someone talking and yelling from down below the cliff. Two fellow hikers had missed the turn and had gotten off the Appalachian

Trail and were looking for a way up the cliffs. I yelled down to them to retrace their steps back to the huge rock they had passed under and to look for the white blazes on their left. In a matter of minutes they were back on the AT and passed by us. Then it was down hill to Scorched Earth Gap where we left the AT and down the Andy Layne Trail to my car.

Wednesday May 22, 2013
The mid-week crew
Too Wet to Work on Trail

Bruce Davidson, Roger Holnback, Jim Brown, Maurice Turner, Jon VanLuik, Mervin Brower and Blanche Brower

It was too wet to do their normal thing so they worked on parking for emergency vehicles at the McAfee Parking Lot and the foot bridge across the street. Here are some photos:



**Sunday May 26, 2013 8:00 AM
Anthony Knob Loop**

John Merkwan (leader), Ivy Lidstone (assistant), H.R. Blankenship, Carl Cornett, Maya Bohler, Adam Wood, Carina Hughes, Bob and Kris Peckman

Although one could argue that any day you are able to hike is a great day, this really was a great day for a hike: clear skies, low humidity and shirt sleeves. This hike was in the Longdale Recreation Area about 6 miles east of Clifton Forge. It is readily apparent that Park Service budgets have fallen on hard times as a portion of the trail system has been neglected for many years. This made for a full body and mind work out because not only did we have to negotiate blow-downs, we had to tap into our inner Daniel Boone and scout for trail signs in places where the trail disappeared. Speaking of trail signs, we didn't stumble onto any wildlife during the hike but it seemed that every bear in the George Washington Forest had been leaving its signs on the trail. A historical note: This area was originally known as Green Pastures and was built for African Americans who were prevented from using the forest facilities during the days of segregation. In 1963 the area was opened to all races and the name was changed to Longdale.

Distance: A hike of 10 miles taking 5 1/4 hours.

**Saturday-Monday May 25-27, 2013 8:00 AM
Backpacking Cumberland Gap National Park**

Chris & Edward Wilson (co-leaders), Guy Brooks, Matt Lovern



A good crowd, small but good - Lovern

A perfect weekend for hiking! Beautiful blue skies and mild temperatures made this a great time to hike. Gorgeous views of the Kentucky/Tennessee/Virginia border greeted us as we started on the trail, the perfect motivation for this 19-mile weekend. We spent the night near a cabin (Martin's Fork) with horseback riders; one unfortunately had fallen off of his horse (70 year old riding bareback) and had to be evacuated. We haven't heard from them, but hope everything turned out okay, and wish him a speedy recovery! It made for a very interesting breakfast to eat our oatmeal as horses grazed through our campsite. Horses weren't the only animal life though; snakes, turkey, mice, chipmunks and even bears were spotted on this

wildlife-filled weekend. Special thank you to Matt Lovern, our shuttle driver for helping us cut over an hour out of our drive time!

**Tuesday May 28, 2013 9:00 AM
McAfee Parking to Dragon's Tooth Parking
113-Mile Hike #5**

Ed Burgess (leader), Jim Webb, Lisette Franko, Doris Mercado, Kelly Stevens, Cynthia Munley, Frank Munley, Madeleine Taylor and Sassy (her dog)

The special event of the day was that we saw a bear along the trail. It was the first one I had seen since I began doing the day hikes for the club and several others said it was the first they had seen on the AT.



Lisette & Kelly taking a break on the way up - Burgess

After waiting on a couple of people who did not show up and getting our shuttle vehicles in place, it was about 9:25 before we actually started the hike. The temperature was warm but we made good time along Sawtooth Ridge. With the leaves out there were not many views. After the many ups and downs along the ridge we finally came down and crossed Catawba Creek on the footbridge and then a few minutes later crossed Blacksburg Road. After traveling through the field and around the side of Sandstone Ridge we came to a stile and what looked as though in the past there had been a mill down at the stream. It was here we saw the bear down next to the creek. He must have heard us or gotten our scent but he quickly bounded up the mountain on the opposite side of the stream. He was a beautiful creature as he scrambled up through the brush and trees. After watching him until he was out of sight we continued on to the next footbridge and decided to take a lunch break just beyond in a nice area under some pine trees that had been used as a camping spot.

After lunch we went over Sandstone Ridge, crossed Newport Road, passed by the Boy Scout Trail and climbed to Rawies Rest where we took a break for views and photos. The climb was difficult but also very beautiful now that the Rhododendrons were blooming along the trail. Then on up to Lost Spectacles Gap, where we regrouped and took the blue-blaze trail down to the parking area. It was a very good day on the Appalachian Trail.

Sunday June 2, 2013 1:00 PM
Thunder Ridge to Cornelius Creek shelter

Mervin & Blanche Brower (leaders), Cynthia Munley, Carl Cornett

The hike started from the parking lot behind KFC on Route 460. It was raining heavily when we all showed up, so we changed our hike so we would ride in one car and not do a car switch. We drove out on the Blue Ridge Parkway in the rain and fog to Sunset Field. We started our hike in rain gear and hiked down to Apple Orchard Falls. We met one through hiker who was trying to keep dry and a couple who had gone down to the falls. The view from the falls was very dramatic with the low cloud on the mountains and the rain. We stopped for pictures and a snack at the falls. It stopped raining as we started to hike back. We took the fire road to Cornelius Creek trail which was in good shape and everything looked very lush when the sun came out. On Cornelius Creek we saw a large Lady Slipper. When we reached the AT we turned back towards Sunset Field.. It started to rain again so we had to put on our rain gear. We took Highway 43 to Buchanan and Highway 11 to come home because the Blue Ridge was too foggy.

Tuesday June 4, 2013 9:00 AM
Trout Creek (RT 620) to Dragon's Tooth Parking
113-Mile Hike #6

Ed Burgess (leader), Jim Webb, Maya Bohler, Doug McNaron, Lisette Franko, Joanne Derryberry, Rick Eisenring, Mary Harshfield, Jimbo Harshfield, Kelly Stevens, Mike Vaughn, Frank Munley, Cynthia Munley



Jimbo on top of the world - Burgess

Today was a near perfect day for hiking and we had one of the largest groups that has joined me on a hike. After dropping some cars off at Dragon's Tooth Parking Lot we headed to Trout Creek and Route 620. We crossed the creek on a small bridge and began our climb up to the crest of the mountain and began hiking toward our destination of Dragon's Tooth. The beautiful Mountain Laurel were nearly in full bloom as we made our way up and down the many elevation changes as we traversed the crest of the mountain. All the while we were gaining elevation and we began seeing several scenic overlooks as we kept getting higher on the ridge. After what seemed like many more miles than it actually was, we finally arrived at the blue blazed trail that led us to Dragon's Tooth.

Saturday June 8, 2013 6:00 AM
Hanging Rock State Park

Chris Wilson (leader), Brendle Wolfe, Chelsea Richardson, Doris Mercado

A nasty stormy morning greeted us, and pouring rain plagued the drive down to the park. Though we were all well equipped for the rain we dreaded a long day hiking in it. Fortunately for us, by the time we reached the park, the rain had moved on and we were greeted with blue skies and lots and lots of humidity. Within 1/4 mile we were all dripping in sweat. It was, though, a gorgeous day to hike, with clear views from all the knobs visited: Moores Knob firetower, balanced rock, cook's wall, house rock, wolf rock and of course Hanging Rock. By completing all of these overlooks each member of this all-girl group was eligible for an exclusive patch from the park for the "5 overlook challenge." A great day was had by all, and it was unanimous that we must complete this hike again in the fall.

Sunday June 9, 2013 8:00 AM
Lee Hollow (Route 621) to Trout Creek
113-Mile Hike #7

Mike Vaughn (leader), Susan Terwilliger, Jim Webb, Carina Hughes, Dan Dennison, H.R. Blankenship, Kris & Bob Peckman



Chipmunk, 14-year-old solo AT thru-hiker - Bob

We started out on the trail at Lee Hollow about 8:45. The mountain laurel was in full bloom all along the trail as we started our ascent up Brushy Mountain. The weather started warming up as we got near the top. At the Audie Murphy monument we talked to a thru-hiker whose trail name is Chipmunk. She was just 14 years old. She said if she finished the whole trail she would be the youngest person to hike the

trail solo. She meets her mother at road crossings most evenings.

Dan stayed at the monument in hopes of interviewing some of the warrior hikers that are thru-hiking this year (Dan works for WDBJ-7). The rest of our hike was uneventful. The trail was in great shape. (See Dan's photo on page 23.)

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

Thursday, July 04, 2013 8:00 AM Carvin's Cove

6 miles, Moderate/Strenuous

\$0.50 carpool fee, 6 miles from Roanoke

Trails: Hi-Dee-Hoe to Brushy Mountain to Buck to Hotel to parking lot. Be back home in time to enjoy the Independence Day festivities!

Carina Hughes540-588-0433
.....chughes@rcs.k12.va.us

Friday, July 05, 2013 5:00 PM Tinker Cliffs (Sunset Hike)

10 miles, Moderate

\$1.00 carpool fee, 12 miles from Roanoke

Located in Botetourt County, the trailhead for this hike is on Route 779 roughly halfway between Catawba and Daleville. The hike crosses meadows and Catawba Creek and then starts the ascent to Scorched Earth Gap where it continues on the AT to Tinker Cliffs. Several spots along the cliffs offer excellent views of McAfee Knob and the Catawba Valley. This is a sunset hike; we will enjoy dinner at the top while watching the sunset before hiking back to our cars in the dark. Bring a headlamp!

Please RSVP at least 24 hours in advance.

Chris & Edward Wilson.....757-202-3331
.....theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com

Saturday, July 06, 2013 8:00 AM Hay Rock

8.0 miles, Moderate

\$0.00 carpool fee, 0 miles from Roanoke

The first mile is over relatively flat terrain, followed by a mile uphill to a ridge line. From there it's another 2 miles to Hay Rock with outstanding views of Carvins Cove, the Roanoke Valley and rural Botetourt County.

Please RSVP at least 24 hours in advance.

Dan Dennison540-251-1465
.....danmountain15@yahoo.com
Carina Hughes540-588-0433
.....chughes@rcs.k12.va.us

Sunday, July 07, 2013 8:30 AM Catawba Mountain

\$0.50 carpool fee, 6 miles from Roanoke

We will make our quarterly visit to the trail up to McAfee Knob to rehabilitate the trail tread and make any necessary trail improvements.

David Jones540-552-3058
.....dhjones@together.net

Thursday, July 11, 2013 8:00 AM
Black Horse Gap (BRP) to Curry Gap (BRP)
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 Salt Pond Road. Go left on Salt Pond Road for .9 miles back to the BRP.

Please RSVP at least 24 hours in advance.

Chris Wilson.....757-202-3331

.....theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com

Friday, July 12, 2013 8:00 AM
Carvin's Cove

8-9 miles. Strenuous

\$0.50 carpool fee, 6 miles from Roanoke Trails:

Four Gorge to Brushy Mountain connecting to new trails (perhaps Tuck-a-way, Comet and Kerncliff). Route yet to be determined.

Carina Hughes540-588-0433

.....chughes@rcs.k12.va.us

Saturday, July 13, 2013 8:00 AM
Roanoke River Greenway (Salem)

4.5 miles, Easy

\$0 carpool fee, 0 miles from Roanoke.

This walk will include the oldest and the newest sections of the Roanoke River Greenway. There's a dramatic view of the river from the new greenway bridge at 12 O'Clock Knob Road. Breakfast at a popular Salem diner at the midpoint of the walk.

Mark McClain.....540-355-6526

.....mcclain.salem@gmail.com

Diana Christopulos540-387-0930

.....dianak16@earthlink.net

Sunday, July 14, 2013 8:00 AM
Peaks of Otter

11 miles, Strenuous

\$3.00 carpool fee, 30 miles from Roanoke

This hike uses 3 trails, Sharp Top, Flat Top and Harkening Hill. There are some wonderful views and we will walk around Abbot Lake. This is a strenuous hike of about 11 miles and there is a very short car shuttle from Flat Top parking area To Peaks of Otter Lodge.

Fred Meyer304-546-5572

wfmeyer@suddenlink.net.....304-744-9219

Carina Hughes540-588-0433

.....chughes@rcs.k12.va.us

Thursday, July 18, 2013 8:00 AM
Curry Gap (BRP) to Daleville (RT 220)
113-Mile Hike # 2

9.4 miles, Stenuous

\$1.00 carpool fee, 9 miles from Roanoke

The hike is located in Botetourt County. From Curry Gap on the Blue Ridge Parkway, the trail ascends on Salt Pond Road for .9 miles to the A.T. crossing. Turn left on the A.T. (south). The trail follows the ridge line, with limited views to the valley below. At 3.7 miles the blue-blazed trail on left leads to Fullhardt Knob Shelter and the wooded summit of Fullhardt Knob. The trail then descends from Fullhardt Knob. There are a series of switchbacks near the bottom. At 6.7 miles the trail crosses Mountain Pass Road (Route 652). It then ascends an open knoll, with good views of McAfee Knob and Tinker Mountain, before descending and crossing Va. Route 11. The trail continues through mainly old orchards to Route 220.

Please RSVP at least 24 hours in advance.

Chris Wilson.....757-202-3331

.....theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com

Thursday, August 01, 2013 8:00 AM
Daleville (Rt 220) to Andy Layne Trail (Rt 779)
113-Mile Hike #3

11.0 miles, Strenuous, no carpool fee, in Roanoke

The hike is just north of Roanoke, starting in Daleville. It begins with an 800 foot climb up Tinker Mountain and then goes along a scenic ridge overlooking Carvins Cove.

Please RSVP at least 24 hours in advance.

Chris Wilson.....757-202-3331

.....theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com

Saturday, August 03, 2013 8:00 AM
Sunday, August 04, 2013 8:00 AM
Konnarock Work Weekend
Bluff City Relocation

We will be back to working on a relocation near Pearisburg that we last worked on several years ago. This year we plan to finish this project, so consider coming out both Saturday and Sunday to dig new trail

David Jones540-552-3058

.....dhjones@together.net

Saturday, August 3, 2013 6:00-9:00PM
Annual Corn Boil

The 2013 annual corn boil is scheduled for Saturday, August 3, from 6-9 at the Catawba Community Center, behind the post office at 779 and 311. Join us as we host the trail maintaining crew. Bring a LARGE dish to share. Club provides all the corn on the cob you can eat! Utensils, plates, cups, etc. provided. A good time to catch up with all your ATC friends and/or make new ones. Don't miss it!

Thursday, August 08, 2013 8:00 AM
McAfee Parking to Dragon's Tooth Parking
113-Mile Hike # 5

8.9 miles, Strenuous

\$.50 carpool fee, 6 miles from Roanoke

The hike begins at the McAfee parking lot – just 15 minutes from Roanoke. The Appalachian Trail is followed south over the many humps of Saw-Tooth Ridge 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. Continue on to Lost Spectacles Gap, where a blue-blazed trail on right leads down to the Dragon's Tooth parking lot.

Please RSVP at least 24 hours in advance.

Chris Wilson.....757-202-3331

.....theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com

Thursday, August 08, 2013 5:00 PM
McAfee Parking to McAfee's Knob
(Sunset Hike)

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. This is a sunset hike; we will enjoy dinner at the top while watching the sunset before hiking back to our cars in the dark. Bring a headlamp!

Please RSVP at least 24 hours in advance.

Chris & Edward Wilson.....757-202-3331

.....theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com

(This is not a typo, Chris is doing both of them. Ed.)

Saturday, August 10, 2013 8:00 AM
Lick Run Greenway

6 miles, easy

No carpool fee, in Roanoke

We'll walk the Lick Run Greenway from Valley View to downtown Roanoke, have a stop for breakfast and a turn around the farmer's market, then return to our starting point.

Mark McClain.....540-355-6526

.....mcclain.salem@gmail.com

Diana Christopulos540-387-0930

.....dianak16@earthlink.net

Sunday, August 11, 2013 8:00 AM
Carvin's Cove

6 miles. Moderate/strenuous

\$0.50 carpool fee, 6 miles from Roanoke.

Trails: Four Gorge to Brushy Mountain to Hi-Dee-Hoe to parking lot

Carina Hughes540-588-0433

.....chughes@rcs.k12.va.us

Thursday, August 15, 2013 8:00 AM
McAfee Parking to Andy Layne Trail (Rt. 779)
113-Mile Hike # 4

12.8 miles, Strenuous

\$1.50 carpool fee, 16 miles from Roanoke

This hike offers the opportunity to see two of the prime vistas on the Appalachian Trail, McAfee Knob and Tinker Cliffs, in one day. The hike starts across from the large gravel A.T. crossing parking lot on Route 311. Be extremely careful crossing route 311, visibility for cars is limited and they are moving very fast. The trail climbs gradually to McAfee's Knob, passing John's Spring Shelter at 1.0 mile and Catawba Mountain shelter at 3.0 miles. At 3.7 miles reach short blue-blazed trail on left to McAfee Knob. The cliffs there offer magnificent views of the Catawba Valley and the city of Roanoke. The trail then follows the the ridge line to Tinker Cliffs at 8.6 miles, with views of McAfee Knob and North Mountain. Continue north on the A.T. for another half mile to Scorched Earth Gap. Go left on the Andy Layne Trail for descent to Rt. 779.

Please RSVP at least 24 hours in advance.

Chris Wilson.....757-202-3331

.....theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com

Friday, August 16-Sunday August 18, 2013
Backpacking Northern Shenandoah National Park

Miles TBD, Strenuous

\$17.00 carpool fee, 170 miles from Roanoke.

An exciting trip to SNP to hike the northern section of the park. Possible camp ground fee the first night-which would be covered individually by each participant. Exact mileage to be determined at a later date- contact hike leader for more details. Trip limited to 10 people. No dogs allowed.

Please RSVP before Aug 10.

Guy Brooks.....540-581-2023

.....guybrooks@hotmail.com

Chris Wilson.....757-202-3331

.....theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com

Sunday, August 18, 2013 8:00 AM
Patterson Creek Area Trails

11 miles, Strenuous
 \$3.00 carpool fee, 30 miles from Roanoke.

This is a 11 mile loop hike in Botetourt and Craig Counties. We will be hiking in Patterson Creek area. The trails are mostly faint in this section but should have some nice views from both Patterson and Price mountains. This hike will be assembled from pieces of the Elmore, Price Mountain, Kelly, Tucker Patterson Mountain, Helms and Loop trails along both sides of the northern section of Patterson Creek.
John Merkwan.....540-904-2299

Thursday, August 22, 2013 8:00 AM
Trout Creek (RT 620) to Dragon's Tooth Parking, 113
Mile Hike #6

7.2 miles, Strenuous
 \$1.50 carpool fee, 16 miles from Roanoke

The hike is in Craig and Roanoke County west of Salem. After crossing Trout Creek, we will ascend through a fire recovery area, pass by the Pickle Branch shelter, then ascend to the ridge, which we will follow around the crescent-shaped top of Cove Mountain to Dragon's Tooth with its great views and rock-scrambling opportunities. We will descend on the A.T. to the Dragon's Tooth trail to the Dragon's Tooth parking lot.
Please RSVP at least 24 hours in advance.
Chris Wilson757-202-3331
.....theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com

Saturday, August 24, 2013 8:00 AM
Ribble Trail to Kimberling Creek (Rt. 606)
113 Mile Hike #13, plus Dismal Falls

7.8 miles, Strenuous
 \$6.00 carpool fee, 71 miles from Roanoke

Located in Giles County, this hike follows Dismal Creek for several miles. Much of the trail is lined with rhododendron. At 3.9 miles, a blue-blazed trail on right goes 0.3 miles to Dismal Falls. We will be hiking down and around Dismal Falls and back up to the A.T. This part of the creek is very scenic. The hike ends at Route 606 and Kimberling Creek. The A.T. goes over the creek on a footbridge.
Please RSVP at least 24 hours in advance.
Chris & Edward Wilson757-202-3331
.....theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com

Saturday, August 24, 2013 9:00 AM
Roaring Run

2.0 miles, Easy
 \$2.50 carpool fee, 27 miles from Roanoke

Located in Botetourt County, the hike visits a cascading stream and scenic waterfalls, and a standing pre-civil war iron ore furnace, used for making iron ingots, stoves, and other iron products for the building of America.
Ed & Carey Martin.....434-760-2513 (C)
540-366-7061 (H)edwardnmartin@gmail.com

Sunday, August 25, 2013 9:00 AM
St Mary's River

8.8 miles, Strenuous
 \$8.00 carpool fee, 63 miles from Roanoke

This hike will be along the St. Mary River in the St. Mary's Wilderness Area in Augusta County, north of Roanoke. We will be passing several swimming holes, so bring your bathing suit and a towel so you can take a dip in the river.
Mike Vaughn.....540-992-1350
.....mikeva999@yahoo.com

Tuesday, August 27, 2013 8:00 AM
Ribble Trail, A. T. Loop
113 Mile Hike #12

9.9 mile, Strenuous
 \$6.00 carpool fee, 71 miles from Roanoke

Located in Giles County, this hike follows Dismal Creek before a starting a steep climb up Sugar Run Mountain. The hike then follows the ridge line for several miles, offering views of the Wilburn and New River Valleys. The hike starts on the Ribble Trail for .4 miles to the A.T. At the A.T. intersection, turn left (north). The trail crosses Dismal Creek on footbridges several times in the next mile. At 1.9 miles the trail passes the Wapiti Shelter and then begins ascending Sugar Run Mountain. At 4.3 miles a rock outcrop provides excellent views of the valley below. At 6.5 miles, reach northern end of blue-blazed Ribble Trail. Make left onto the Ribble Trail and begin steep descent of the Ribble Trail, passing the old Honey Springs Cabin. The trail will cross FS 201 several times before reaching the parking area at 9.9 miles, where car is located. **Please RSVP at least 24 hours in advance.**
Chris Wilson.....757-202-3331
.....theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com

Thursday, August 29, 2013 8:00 AM
Lee Hollow (Rt. 621) to Trout Creek (Rt. 620)
113-Mile Hike # 7

9.2 miles, Strenuous
 \$1.50 carpool fee, 16 miles from Roanoke

AT hike located in Craig and a little bit of Roanoke County, the hike on Brush Mt. includes the Audie Murphy Monument, a tribute to the most decorated soldier of WWII, who died in a plane crash on the mountain in 1971. This hike has a mile of road walk added because the bridge may be out on Rt. 620.
Please RSVP at least 24 hours in advance.
Chris Wilson.....757-202-3331
.....theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com

Saturday, Aug. 31 - Monday, Sept. 2, 2013 8:00 AM
Camping: Great Smoky Mountains National Park

This is a car camping day hiking trip. There will be an out and back hike to a water fall. **Please RSVP as soon as possible to ensure a campsite. Limit 8 total people.** No dogs. We will also hike to a section of the park that has never been logged and see some big trees that will require a car shuttle. On Sunday we will do a short loop or an out and back then return home. No pets allowed per GSMNP rules.

Please RSVP 14 days in advance
Guy Brooks.....540-581-2023
guybrooks@hotmail.com

Thursday, September 05, 2013 8:00 AM
Sinking Creek to Lee Hollow
113 Mile Hike #8

10.4 miles, Strenuous
 \$4.00 carpool fee, 41 miles from Roanoke

Located in Craig County, the hike climbs up Sinking Creek Mountain, then follows the ridge where rock piles and old apple trees remain from the days when even the top of the mountain was farms. Several slanted rocks offer views of Craig Creek Valley and the mountains beyond.

Please RSVP at least 24 hours in advance.
Chris Wilson.....757-202-3331
theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com

Saturday, September 07, 2013 8:30 AM
Andy Layne Trail

We will be working on trail tread, improving water management structures and rehabilitating steps.

David Jones.....540-552-3058
dhjones@together.net

Sunday, September 08, 2013 8:00 AM
Whetstone Ridge

11.1 miles, Strenuous
 \$6.00 carpool fee, 60 miles from Roanoke

This hike begins on the BRP near MP 29 and Montebello. Primarily a ridge walk along Whetstone Ridge, but the South Mountain section has a series of hilltops in its section. Trail comes out onto Irish Creek Road (SR 603). There will be a 15-mile shuttle between trailheads.

Kris Peckman540-366-7780

Thursday, September 12, 2013 5:00 PM
Tinker Cliffs (Sunset Hike)

10 miles, Moderate
 \$1.00 carpool fee, 12 miles from Roanoke

Located in Botetourt County, the trailhead for this hike is on Route 779 roughly halfway between Catawba and Daleville. The hike crosses meadows and Catawba Creek and then starts the ascent to Scorched Earth Gap where it continues on the AT to Tinker Cliffs. Several spots along

the cliffs offer excellent views of McAfee Knob and the Catawba Valley. This is a sunset hike; we will enjoy dinner at the top while watching the sunset before hiking back to our cars in the dark. Bring a headlamp!

Please RSVP at least 24 hours in advance.

Chris & Edward Wilson.....757-202-3331
theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com

Thursday, September 12, 2013 8:00 AM
Johns Creek (Rt. 632) to Sinking Creek (Rt. 630)
113-Mile Hike # 9

8.3 miles, Strenuous
 \$3.00 carpool fee, 30 miles from Roanoke

The hike is located in Craig and Giles counties. From Johns Creek Valley, the trail climbs steeply. At 2.0 miles it crosses route 601 at Rocky Gap. At 3.8 miles a blue blazed trail on right leads to White Rock, with great views of the New River Valley. The trail then descends, passing Laurel Creek Shelter at 5.1 miles. At 7.5 miles the trail crosses Route 42 in Sinking Creek Valley.

Please RSVP at least 24 hours in advance.
Chris Wilson.....757-202-3331
theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com

Saturday, September 14, 2013 10:00 AM
Roanoke Loop Urban Hike

6 miles, Easy
 No carpool fee, In Roanoke

This loop hike is a sampler of Roanoke's popular greenways, parks, neighborhoods and downtown attractions. We'll include sections of the Roanoke River, Mill Mountain, and Lick Run Greenways, restoration activity in Old Southwest, Mountain View neighborhood, Elmwood, Wasena, Smith and River's Edge Parks, Roanoke market area. Lunch (optional) at Wasena City Tap room near the end of the hike.

Mark McClain.....540-355-6526
mcclain.salem@gmail.com
Diana Christopulos540-387-0930
dianak16@earthlink.net

Saturday&Sunday, Sept. 14&15, 2013 6:00 AM
Backpacking Cranberry River

18.9 miles, Strenuous
 \$13.00 carpool fee, 128 miles from Christiansburg,

In the Cranberry Backcountry, this strenuous 18.9 mile circuit hike traverses a ridge of old growth forest, and follows the banks of Cranberry River. A unique hike with 5-star rated campsites. Please note carpool location with be in Christiansburg.

Please RSVP before Sept 7 to ensure a spot.
Chris & Edward Wilson.....757-202-3331
theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com

Sunday, September 15, 2013 8:00 AM
Sunset Field to Petites Gap

7.3 miles, Moderate
 \$2.50 carpool fee, 23 miles from Roanoke.

This hike will be on the A.T. from the Sunset Field overlook on the Blue Ridge Parkway to Petites Gap on the BRP. This hike has wonderful views from Thunder Ridge Overlook and Apple Orchard Mountain, which has a large grassy bald at its summit. This route is also known for the Guillotine, a rock formation, where the trail passes under a suspended rock. There is also a beautiful series of over 100 rock steps installed by the Natural Bridge Appalachian Trail Club along the trail immediately past the Guillotine.

Kris Peckman 540-366-7780

Thursday, September 19, 2013 7:00 AM
Pine Swamp (Rt.635) to Johns Creek (Rt. 632)
113-Mile Hike #10

13.2 miles, Strenuous
 \$7.00 carpool fee, 62, miles from Roanoke

The hike is located in Giles County. From Stony Creek Valley we will climb 1,100 feet in one mile to the heavily wooded northern slope of Big Mountain. The trail winds through the 11,172-acre Mountain Lake Wilderness between Salt Sulphur Turnpike and the War Spur Shelter. Wind Rock on Potts Mountain provides the best viewpoint of the hike.

Please RSVP at least 24 hours in advance.

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

Saturday, September 21, 2013 12:00 PM
Hoop Hole, Lower Loop

3 miles, Moderate
 \$3.00 carpool fee, 28 miles from Roanoke

Located in Botetourt County, the hike makes a loop by following two delightfully wild streams: Hipes Branch and Stony Run. Both of these pass through steep-sided canyons and have plenty of cascades and deep pools. While there is little change in elevation, there are many stream crossings, some of which may be tricky if the water is high.

Ed & Carey Martin 434-760-2513 (C)
540-366-7061 (H) edwardnmartin@gmail.com

Sunday, September 22, 2013 8:00 AM
Glenwood Horse Trail/AT/Sulphur Spring Loop

8.7 miles, Strenuous
 \$3.80 carpool fee, 38 miles from Roanoke

Start point is the Sulphur Springs trailhead. We will proceed up to Petites Gap via the Glenwood Horse Trail (GHT) to link up with the AT. We will then hike 2.7 miles north on the AT to the Sulphur Spring Trail intersection. At this point we take a loop to the helicopter landing pad before returning back to the car via the Sulphur Spring Trail. There will be some minor bushwhacking required as the GHT is very faint in this section causing a bit of misdirection when last hiked in November of 2011.

John Merkwan 540-904-2299

Tuesday, September 24, 2013 8:00 AM
Kimberling Creek (Rt. 606) to Jenny Knob (Rt.611)
113 Mile Hike #14

9.8 miles, Strenuous
 \$6.00 carpool fee, 70 miles from Roanoke

This hike is located in Bland County. It starts by crossing Kimberling Creek on a suspension footbridge. This is one of the longest footbridges on the A.T. The trail then ascends steeply to the wooded summit of Brushy Mountain, before descending to Licksillet Hollow. It then crosses Route 608 and again ascends Brushy Mountain. It passes Jenny Knob Shelter before reaching Route 611, the southern terminus of the section of the A.T. maintained by the RATC.

Please RSVP at least 24 hours in advance.

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

Thursday, September 26, 2013 7:00 AM
Big Horse Gap to New River (Rt 460)
113 Mile Hike #11

12.0 miles, Strenuous
 \$6.00 carpool fee, 60 miles from Roanoke

This hike will follow the A.T. north from Big Horse Gap near Dismal Falls in Giles County. It will go along the ridge line of Pearis Mountain, passing Doc's Knob shelter along the way. There will be several view points along the way, including Angel's Rest.

Please RSVP at least 24 hours in advance.

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

Sunday, September 29, 2013 8:00 AM
Montebello Fish Hatchery to Crabtree Falls

8.1 miles, Strenuous
 \$6.00 carpool fee, 64 miles from Roanoke

This hike starts at the Montebello Fish hatchery in Nelson County. The hike starts with a steady climb up an old fire road. At 1.0 miles it intersects the A.T. The hike will then head north on the A.T. After a half mile we will reach Spy Rock. Spy Rock is a granite dome with great, 360 degree, views of the Priest Wilderness area and other surrounding mountains. It requires some rock scrambling to get to the top. The hike will continue on the A.T. for another three miles to the intersection with the Crab Tree Falls trail. At 1,200 feet this falls is the highest east of the Mississippi.

We will descend along the falls trail back to the parking lot.

Mike Vaughn 540-992-1350
..... mikeva999@yahoo.com



Trail-art by Dan Dennison from June 9 hike - Go to the online version to see it in color.
www.ratc.org - Newsletter

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 _____
Year you joined RATC (make a guess!) _____	Family life membership	\$300.00 _____
	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