TRAIL BLAZER NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

Fall 2015

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

Holiday Potluck

Saturday, December 5, 6:00 PM Christ Lutheran, corner of Grandin & Brandon

WORK HIKES

Monday, September 14 - 8:30 AM
Monday, September 21 - 8:30 AM
Monday, September 28 - 8:30 AM
Monday, October 12 - 8:30 AM
Monday, October 26 - 8:30 AM
Monday, November 9- 8:30 AM
Monday, November 23 - 8:30 AM
Monday, December 7 - 8:30 AM

Hike Scheduling
Contact Bob Peckman
540-366-7780 – bob@peckmanjazz.com

BOARD MEETINGS

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

Monday, October 19, 7:00 PM Hollins Branch Library

Monday, November 16, 7:00 PM Hollins Branch Library

Monday, December 14, 7:00 PM Hollins Branch Library

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On December 5th, at the Holiday Potluck, Dan Phlegar, will be doing a presentation titled "Twenty-two years in the Wyoming Wind River Mountains"

"A Walk in the Woods" movie challenges – and helps – RATC's McAfee Knob Task Force

Before the release of "A Walk in the Woods," busy fall weekends brought about 300 people to McAfee Knob. On September 5, three days after the film's premiere, RATC volunteer ridgerunner Bob Egbert reported 544 hikers already on the trail at 3 pm, with more still arriving.

Maybe the huge increase will be short-lived, but a report by Appalachian Trail Conservancy staffer Kathryn Herndon shows that use of the McAfee Knob section was increasing 55 percent each year even before the movie's release. In fact the entire "Triple Crown" part of RATC's section – from Dragon's Tooth to Tinker Cliffs – has become a popular destination for hikers and backpackers throughout the eastern half of the nation.

With strong support from ATC, the club launched its McAfee Knob volunteer ridgerunner task force last spring, with training offered in May and August. Like the paid ridgerunners, these volunteers talk with hikers, help maintain the trail, and report their findings to the ATC. Each volunteer works at least one Friday, Saturday or Sunday per month from May through October.

In the task force's first two months, volunteers:

- Saw 2,974 visitors
- Volunteered for 248 hours (covering every Saturday and most Fridays and Sundays) – working closely with paid Ridgerunners Stephanie Breig and Eric West
- Removed about 58 gallons of trash and 20 illegal fire rings

 Accompanied NPS Ranger Todd Remaley early Sunday morning, July 5, when he wrote 18 tickets for illegal camping, illegal campfires, and alcohol on McAfee Knob

The task force still needs more members as well as funding for maps, first aid kits, tools and other supplies. When the movie opened at the Grandin Theater on September 2:

- ATC staff organized a special fund raiser at the CoLab on September 4, raising over \$1,100 for the task force
- The Virginia Film Office pledged \$500 to RATC's McAfee Knob task force to help offset the use of McAfee Knob in Virginia tourism promotions that will use "A Walk in the Woods."
- WSLS 10 and the Roanoke Times highlighted the RATC and its efforts
- RATC volunteers and friends tabled in the Grandin lobby from September 2-5

The 18 currently trained members of the McAfee Knob Task Force are: Randy Adams, Brian Boggs, Diana Christopulos, Josie DeMarce, Bob Egbert, David Foster, Jonathon Giuffria, Carina Hughes, Robin Jordan, Scott Karns, Mark McClain, Sandie Meyers, Susan Powell, Bruce Sellars, Susan Terwilleger, Gyorgyi Voros, Jim Webb and David Youmans.

Want to help take care of McAfee and the Triple Crown? Contact Kathryn Herndon at kherndon@appalachiantrail.org or 540-904-4393.

Diana Christopulos

Hikemaster's Report

Some have been asking: should we use the Blazer or should we use Meetup? The answer is not one or the other; use them both together. They are both tools of the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club and very good ones. We again have a very strong schedule in the Blazer and every hike will also be listed on Meetup. We have some leaders who do not use Meetup, so Meetup will direct you to phone them. I like having the schedule so I can

make sure that I am available for my favorite hikes. I love the way Meetup jogs me awake to remind me so I don't miss them. I urge all RATC members to join our Meetup group. It is very easy to do at RATC.org.

Meetup is an independent organization with its own agendas. They provide a good service for which we are grateful, but they are not part of RATC. Please also join the RATC and support the organization that builds and maintains the trails we walk on and the shelters we over-night in, organizes the hikes we go on and advocates for the protection and preservation of the Appalachian Trail. We are one of three partners: the Federal government in the form of the National Forest Service and the National Park Service, our club (RATC), and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC). ATC is the umbrella organization coordinating the efforts of all the maintaining clubs including RATC. Joining ATC is another way to support the Trail and to stay informed.

Jonathan Eagle has been busy on many things, but two things I really like are the new email addresses. Please send your hike reports to blazer@ratc.org. If you can, please scan the hike sign-up sheets and send them also. The same address will also send them to the membership coordinator. To email about hikes, send it to hikemaster@ratc.org.

In order to have a good hike schedule, we need leaders and assistants on each hike. If you are a leader and someone assists you, please list them as assistant on your hike report. If you would like to lead or assist on hikes, please email me so I can add you to the list for the next schedule.

The most popular feature of the Blazer is the hike schedule but a close second is the hike reports. We have always counted hike leaders and assistants for banquet awards by looking at the hike reports. If you acquire your own assistants please list them in your reports. If assistants have not been listed in reports, email me so I can count them. Late hike reports are always welcome.

Bob Peckman

Welcome New Members

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club welcomes the following new members:

Cynthia Allgood Marilyn Moody Travis Stanley Ryan Stevens Ernest Allred Michael Morris Elvir Berbic Bill Pifer Betty Stoegbauer Rebecca Terrill Josephine Demarce Sam Quesinberry Arietta Fleming-Davies David Robinson Sarah Warburton Gary Flora Thomas Schmidt Donna Williams

Todd Gloede Scott Schwarzer Aubrey Willis
Bruce Jones Christie Sheffield Leonard & Chris Yates

Andrew Kessler Scott Shetrone Susan Powell

Cole McManus Robert Slackman

Marie Meredith Ellie Snead

The following made a donation to RATC: Gary Flora

The following donated to RATC in memory of Malcolm Black:

Marsha Allen

Wanda James

Marsha AllenWanda JamesJason & MelissaJim & Cathy OverholserCynthia BeelerStonecipher & FamilyHomer & Therese WitcherDelwyn, Michelle &Janna & John Rice

Hiddy Burgess Mackenzie James

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

Hike Reports

Monday, June 15 8:30 AM Workhike

Hike canceled.

Saturday, June 20 8:30 AM Workhike

Hike canceled.

Sunday, June 28, 1:00 pm Niday Shelter

David Sutton (leader) HR Blankenship, Mia Copeland, Mia Bohler, Simply Hilda, Arietta Fleming-Davies, Corinne Noirott

There was lots of shade on this hike, while the temperatures remained in the low eighties. The first mile is gradually uphill, then the trail becomes rolling with some downhill portions until you reach the shelter itself. This is a really nice shelter with a composting outhouse. The crew did an excellent job building these structures. However, Mia Buhler did pick up some discarded clothing and I packed some plastic articles away from the area and we headed back to the parking area after a 30 minute break. It was a great hike with even greater hikers!

Monday, June 29 8:30 AM Workhike

Hike canceled.

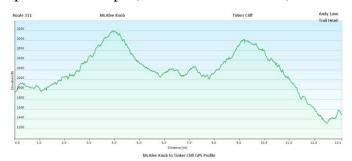
Sunday, July 5, 8:00 AM McAfee Knob and Tinker Cliffs Hike #4

David Socky (leader), Bob Alderson, Ana Anderson, and Carina Hughes

The weather predictions for the day were not good, which is why the turn out for this hike was somewhat low. But, as it turned out, the weather was not bad at all. As a matter of fact, the clouds and fog kept the temperature down so it wasn't as hot as some July hikes can be. It did drizzle a couple of times, but only for about 5 minutes – not enough to really get anyone wet.

It was a good hike, and for the location, not very crowded. Carina was keeping track of how many people we saw during the day. I believe the total was 26. And we only saw three people once we got past McAfee Knob.

The trail from route 311 to McAfee Knob to Tinker Cliff and finally to the trail head for the Andy Lane trail is 13.1 miles from my GPS. Our total elevation gain was 4,022 feet, but we descended a total of 4,489 feet, indicating that we finished at a lower elevation then where we started. We finished the hike in 6 hours and 42 minutes giving us an overall speed of just under 2 mph. Our moving average speed was 2.5 mph (I love GPS statistics ©).





McAfee Knob with Ana, Bob and Carina

Socky



New gate stile on Andy Layne trail

Socky

The clouds and fog didn't allow for very good views, but I did get some nice photos at McAfee Knob. I hadn't been on the Andy Lane trail since the improvements were made, so I did take some pictures of the new gates and the beautiful flowering fields.



Field of flowers on Andy Layne trail

Socky



We saw hundreds of these beetles which are the 'larger elm leaf beetle' (Monocesta coryli)

Socky

Saturday, July 11, 9:30 am Poor Mountain Preserve

Jimbo and Mary Harshfield (co-leaders), Maya Bohler, Kathy Arrington with her dog Luna, Jonathan Eagle, Marni Smith, Nancy Reid, Caralee Eicher, Bob Peckman, Geoff Putnam

Three first-time RATC hikers joined us on this fine summer day. Recent rain left fresh air and vivid colors, but slightly slick rocks on the trail. We noticed many piratebush shrubs which are abundant at Poor Mountain Preserve but quite rare globally. They are easily identifiable at this time of year by its fruit, which is oval-shaped, pale green, and about

an inch long. Everyone enjoyed snacking on wild blueberries and a few wineberries at various places along the trail. We also stopped for a snack break down by the creek before climbing back up to complete the 4 ½ mile hike.

Sunday, July 12, 8:00 am Mountain Lake

John Merkwan (leader), H.R. Blankenship, Jimbo Harshfield, Mary Harshfield, Bob Peckman, Kris Peckman, David Youmans, Dee Case, Bill Reich, Joe B and Arietta Fleming-Davies



Arietta lunching on Bald Knob

Merkwan

This hike explored 8 miles of trails around the Mountain Lake Resort where we were actually on parts of 14 named trails. We enjoyed the scenic view from the ruins of the old golf club house and the summit of Bald Knob. We passed by the lodge, checked on the level of the lake (still very low) and enjoyed the rhododendrons which were in full bloom along one of the trails. As always trail chatter was interesting but Bob and Dave stepped it up a bit with talk on measuring the speed of light in ether and whether quantum mechanics or string theory would be best for testing the hypothesis. The temperature was pleasant for this time of year. We

started the hike at 63 degrees, finished at 69 and when we returned to the Orange Market it was 87. The hike was 8 miles long and took 4 1/2 hours.



Jimbo Harshfield and Kris Peckman mug for the camera at Mountain Lake

Merkwan



Mary and Jimbo Harshfield, Bob and Kris Peckman, and Dee Case - Mountain Lake's Bald Knob Merkwan



Joe B. "Can you hear me now?"

Merkwan

Sunday, July 12, 1:00 PM Cascades

Blanche and Mervin Brower (leaders), Kathy and Les Brown

We waited in the parking lot till 1:00 PM but no one else showed up. We then drove to the Cascades. As we approached the park ran into a big car line up. A ranger was there saying we had to wait for space to open up in the parking lot to go in. That every weekend they were experiencing crowds like this. We decided that we did not want to wait so turned around and drove to Pandapas Pond where we parked in the lower lot. From there we hiked around the pond, up the Honey Suckle and down Horse Nettle trails. Then we hiked along the Poverty Creek Trail. There were lots of people using the trial hiker, bikers and horse riders. As we were hiking out we had a shower and got a little wet. On the way home we stopped at the Cellar in Blacksburg for supper.

Monday, July 13, 8:30 AM Pearisburg Workhike

Jim Webb, Fred Lashley

The ATC hired a contractor, Fred Lashley, to complete work on a difficult rock face on the Pearisburg relocation.

Saturday, July 18, 8:00 AM Sinking Creek (630) to Craig Creek (621) Hike #8

David Youmans (leader), Jim Beeson, Jim Webb, Arietta Fleming-Davies, Julia Petruska

Great hike in July, but man was it hot! Luckily most of the terrain was protected from the sun. Sinking creek never disappoints. Five of us took on the mountain, and five returned. Unscathed? Not all of us. Jim Beeson showed no remorse moving up the approach leading to the AT. Unfortunately, the wasps guarding the nest several miles later showed no remorse either. Jim Beeson took three stings like a man, finishing the rest of the hike in good time. All of us made good time to the top. Speaking for myself, I had sweat pouring down, but once on the ridgeline, a cooling breeze brought smiles to all of us. The ladies of course merely glistened. Arietta, new to the area, and new to RATC showed no signs of being a "newbie." Nice to meet you, and welcome! Jim Webb our infamous Trail Supervisor/ Mcafee knob maintainer joined us. This guy,fresh off a miserable bout with Lyme disease trucked up the trail in typical form. He also had the pleasure of watching Beeson suck up the wasps. Julie Petruska joined us too. She is always a pleasure to have around, not to mention a motivator. The ridgeline was a blast as usual. The much griped about rock slabs area provided outstanding views of Craig creek valley, and were dry, and the traction fine. Trail was in decent condition overall, and as usual, a great hike. Anyone who has not done it yet, do it! Thanks everyone! I hope to hike with you all again soon.



"Enjoying the view" (Arietta Fleming-Davies, Jim Webb, Jim Beeson, Julie Petruska) Youmans

Saturday, July 18, 8:00 am Dragon's Tooth

Hike canceled.

Sunday, July 19, 8:00 am Apple Orchard Falls & Mountain, Cornelius Creek and The Guillotine

There were 0 "yes" RSVPs for this hike therefore it was cancelled due to lack of interest.

Monday, July 20, 8:30 AM McAfee Knob Workhike, Bridge #3

Jim Webb (leader), Jim Beeson, Mike Vaughn, Chad Feghali, Jake Levitt, John Wilson

On a very hot and humid Monday morning we met in the parking lot at 311 for our safety meeting and to discuss the days plan. After signing in we headed up the trail with our tools.

Our objective was to remove the old Boy Scout project bridge #3 and replace it with log cribbing and rock fill just as we had done with bridges 5,6 and 7. With very little hiker traffic on the trail, work progressed very quickly.

As you can see by the before and after pictures this type of bridge fits in better with the Park Service's idea of a primitive trail.



Before Webb



After Webb

July 23 – August 12 Konnarock workhikes – Pearisburg relocation

Jim Webb (trail supervisor), John Miller, Dave Horst, Fred Meyer, Blanche & Merv Brower, Mike Vaughn, Dave Youman, Roger Holnback, Travis Stanley (ATC)

All of the above worked with Konnarock at one time or another. A couple of names slipped my mind and for that I am truly sorry.



Webł



Webb

Saturday, July 25, 7:30 am Lick Run Greenway

Rupert Cutler (leader), Sharon Probst

Sharon Probst of Garden City joined me on the hike from the Upper Washington Park parking lot to Valley View Mall and back. Beautiful morning, many birds, we pretty much had the trail to ourselves.



Rupert Cutler & Sharon Probst

Cutler

Saturday, July 25, 8:00 am Chestnut Ridge Loop Trail

Hike canceled.

Sunday, July 26, 8:00 am Broad Run Mountain – Lick Branch

John Merkwan (leader), Susan Terwilliger, Todd Gloede, Kathy Arrington and David Wickersham. Bear protection provided by Ace and Luna.

The hike started at the Lick Branch Trail head, (the one on the New Castle side of Broad Run Mountain) and advertised about 4 1/2 miles of bushwhack. Due to a navigational error, however, we had an extra 1 1/2 miles of adventure as I led our merry band down the wrong ridge line.

The blueberries were scarce but the ones we did find were packed with flavor. Plenty of bear scat but no bear during the hike - perhaps the wildlife sensed our canine duo and made themselves scarce.



Todd and Ace at rest

Merkwan

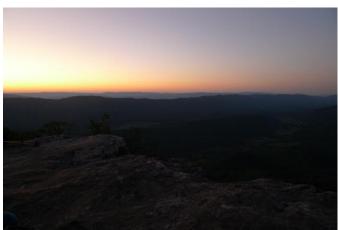
The second half of the hike was on the Lick Branch trail and I guess it makes sense that we had to poke through more blow-downs on the established trail than we did during our bushwhack. We ended the hike with some cold watermelon and lemonade. Best of all - a tick and chigger-free 11 mile hike taking about 6 1/2 hours on a warm July day.

Friday, July 31, 6:00 pm Full moon hike to McAfee Knob

Maya Bohler and Brendle Wolfe (co-leaders), Jeanne Duddy, Terry Eff, Todd Gloede, Karen Leslie Major, Carolyn McPeak, Alanna McWilliams, Nancy Reid, Carol Rowlett, Arietta Sleming, Marni Smitz, Shelley and Tyler Teer, Libby Weiner

This was the first clear day after weeks of hot, humid, murky weather. It was still hot at 6PM as we started the hike up to the knob, but fortunately we were mostly on the shady side of the mountain, under a dense tree canopy. On the way we spotted a few beautiful Turk's Caps lilies, one of the largest wildflowers on the A.T. We made it to the knob just in time for the sunset and enjoyed the view. While it was still daylight we saw the moon rise out of the haze along the horizon and watched it getting bigger and more golden as it rose into the clear sky. At the same time, as dusk set in, the western skyline was glowing red from the sunset! It was a spectacular sight.

On the Knob, there were quite a few other "moonstruck" people besides our group. We lingered until dark, eating our snacks and taking pictures. Then we hiked down, taking the fire road to the trailhead. The last ones arrived at the parking lot a little after 11PM.



Sunset Bohler



The photos show Brendle and Terry admiring the full moon rising

Bohler



Todd's German Shepherd "Ace" smiling at the moon.

Sunday, August 2, 8:00 am Crabtree Falls and The Priest

David Socky (leader), Bob Slackman, Scott Shetrone, Kathy Arrington, Bill Reich, Carol Rowlett, Robin Knapmeyer, Bob Alderson, Bob Peckman, Fred Meyer, Cahterine Cotrys, & John Brandt



Group photo at Crabtree Falls

Socky

www.ratc.org

I had done The Priest at least 3 times, and even Three Ridges, but I had never hiked Crabtree Falls before. So this was an exceptionally good hike, partly new to me, and an interesting challenge in leading a total of 12 hikers on this challenging trail. The falls themselves were very pretty, although they are more a series of long cascades then a waterfall. We made our way to the top of the cascades along with a number of other visitors, taking photos at all the overlooks, in about an hour or so.



Crabtree Falls, Cascade 1

Socky



Crabtree Falls, Cascade 2

Socky

It didn't take long to get to the upper Crabtree Falls parking area. Since I hadn't been on this trail before, I foolishly asked if we had done all our climbing at this point. One of our group laughingly corrected my misunderstanding, saying that there was quite a bit of climbing before getting to the Priest shelter. And there was, especially the section of rough gravel road that led to the Appalachian Trail and then at least a mile of milder uphill to the Priest shelter.

The weather was actually quite agreeable, mostly sunny, but a few clouds here and there. The temperature was in the low 80s with very reasonable humidity, although I always get hot, no matter what the outside temperature is. There were plenty of opportunities for photos, including many flowers and mushrooms. I believe it was Robin who was quite knowledgeable on the names of many of the flowers and plants.

We had lunch at the Priest Shelter, taking a very pleasant break after gaining over 3100 feet of elevation. After the Priest Shelter, there was only a 100 or so feet of climbing to do before we reached the rock outcrop which is near the top of the Priest. The view looks essentially to the north with a great view of Pinnacle Ridge to the North West. Three Ridges can barely be seen to the right, or North East. From this point, the rest of the route is downhill the whole way. You essentially lose 3000 feet of elevation in 4 miles. There is a nice overlook about a third of the way down, which looks out over the Piedmont to the South East and made for a nice rest break before our final trudge down the mountain.



Rock overlook near summit of The Priest

Socky

Here is some data from my GPS, for those who enjoy such statistics: The total length of the hike was 9.4 miles, with a total elevation gain of 3274 feet and an elevation loss of 3894 feet. The fact that our elevation loss was greater than our gain indicates that we started at a higher elevation then where we finished. The profile of our hike bears this out. Our moving average was 2.17 mph and overall speed was 1.55 mph which is not bad, considering that we stopped to enjoy views and have lunch for an hour and forty five minutes. Our total hike time was six hours. The high point for the trip was 4,074 feet at 5.2 miles from the Crabtree Falls trailhead.

It was a pretty good hike all around. Not too hot and very good company.



Profile map of hike

Saturday, August 8, 8:00 am Read Mountain

Hugh Hall (leader), Joe Berney, Karen Major, Joanne Derryberry, Tony Wright, Crystal Wright

Six hikers set out on this mid-summer day. Virtually the entire hike was in the shade. Temperature was in the mid 80's. We stopped at Boulder Point (the highest point of the hike) for a break and took pictures. We had a spectacular view from Buzzards Rock on this clear day. Difficult to believe this hike is located in the middle of a residential neighborhood. We felt like we were in the middle of nowhere. Joanne served as our photographer. No bushwhacking was necessary (as stated in the hike description). Joanne helped us identify birds we encountered. Tony shared his knowledge and enthusiasm for searching for and identifying mushrooms found in the wild. New friends were made as most of this group was previously unacquainted.

Sunday, August 9, 1:00 pm Read Mountain

Mervin & Blanche Brower (leaders), Karen Coon, Lynne Edwards, Cynthia Hutchison and Hugh Hall

We car pooled over to the Read Mountain park which is a short distance. The parking lot was full when we got there so parked on the grass. We walked up the trail till we reached the new trail the Wednesday Crew had just put in. We took this trail until we reached the look out over the south view from Read Mountain. We then hiked up stairway to heaven which we took up to join the old trail. From there we went to Buzzards Roost where we had a good view of Roanoke airport to Tinker Mountain. It was a clear day good for looking out from the mountain. After a short stay enjoying the view we walked back down on the old trail. Every one enjoyed the hike in the moderate weather.

Saturday, August 15, 8:00 am Cascades and Barney's Wall

Hugh Hall (leader), Karen Callahan (leader), Karen Major, Carol Rowlett, Kathy Arrington and dog Luna

We hiked on the trail next to Little Stony Creek to reach the Cascades. A group of Cub Scouts were ahead of us. The shade kept us relatively cool. Luna kept the group entertained with her exploration and shepherding instincts that made sure all of us stayed close together. Our group was small enough that we all got to know one another. We enjoyed the fabulous view from Barney's Wall while eating lunch after hiking the Nature Conservancy Trail. We returned to the parking lot via the access road. After five hours on the trail I think we were all glad to see the parking lot.

Monday, August 17, 8:30 AM McAfee Knob Workhike

Mike Vaughn, Dave Horst, Jim Webb

Repaired a number of rock steps on the trail between Johns Spring and Catawba shelters.

Saturday, August 22, 8:00 am Mill Mountain trails

Mike Hopkins (leader), Amy Thomasson, Georgia Shaurette, Christine Yates, Jacalee Eicher, Karen Major, Marilyn Moody www.ratc.org

We hiked Woodthrush, Ridgeline, Watchtower, Star, and Driveway trails. All went well and everyone seemed to have a good time and feel challenged.

Sunday, August 23, 8:00 am Sugar Run Gap to Pearisburg

Homer & Therese Witcher (leaders), Jim Webb, Bob Slackman, Jim Beeson, Bill Reich, Karen Callahan, Fred Meyer, Arietta Fleming-Davis, Laura Hunt, Lisa Walkiewicz, Matt Gentry & Toby

From Pearisburg, 11 people rode in the Witcher's van to Sugar Run Gap and Homer drove it back to the cemetery in Pearisburg. We headed off on our hike and quickly broke into 2 groups, with Bill leading the faster group and Therese as sweep for the slower group. As we hiked, Jim was busy making notes of the blowdowns that need to be removed. We took a short break at Doc's Knob shelter and were pleased with the new rock patio in front of the shelter which has replaced the mud that was usually there in the past. From there, we hiked on to the power line overlook where we were met by Homer, Matt and Toby who had hiked in from Pearisburg.

After lunch, we hiked to the Wilburn Valley overlook and as we were leaving, it started to rain. We had light rain at Angel's Rest and most of the way down to Pearisburg. After the first road crossing where Matt and Toby left us, Jim led us on the incomplete relocation and we all admired the great rockwork. This was a good hike with a very likeable bunch of hikers.

Monday, August 24, 8:30 AM McAfee Knob Workhike

Dave Horst, Jeff Edwards, Travis Stanley, Jim Beeson, Jim Webb

Cut and debarked a number of Chestnut Oak trees in preparation for replacing bridge #4 on the trail. We also repaired some rock steps on the trail.

Saturday, August 29, 8:00 am **Bottom Creek Gorge**

Mike Hopkins (leader), Hilda Morris, Susan Powell, Amy Thomasson, Jared Cypher, Jim Beeson, Jill Beeson, Owen Robinson, Will Schneider

All went well and everyone seemed to have a good time and feel challenged.



Hopkins



Hopkins



Hopkins



Hopkins

www.ratc.org

Sunday, August 30, 1:00 pm Mill Mountain trails – Ridgeline & Monument Loop Trails

Dave Sutton (leader), Chris Means, Nancy Reid, Reagan Williams, Jim Constantine, Dee Case, Darlene W.

We parked along Yellow Mountain Road and hiked up the Ridgeline Trail (purple blazes), up the ridge to the Discovery Center for comfort stops. After venturing to the overlook we headed down through the Monument Trail. About 80% of the trails were shaded by deciduous trees so sun exposure was minimal. It was a good hike and a really great day to hike.

Monday, August 31, 8:30 AM McAfee Knob trail Workhike

Jim Webb (leader), Mike Vaughn, Jeff Edwards, Jim Beeson

The old Boy Scout bridges were getting hard to maintain and didn't fit the image of a primitive trail.

Five bridges complete and one to go. On a beautiful late summers day we hiked up to the Boy Scout bridge #4 and set about to tear it out and replace it with a log bridge with crushed rock as the tread.



Before Webb



After Web

Hike Schedule http://www.meetup.com/Roanoke-Appalachian-Trail-Club/#calendar

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

Saturday, October 3, 2015 8:00 AM Pine Swamp (635) to Johns Creek (632) 113-Mile Hike # 10

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

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.

Sunday, October 4, 2015 1:00 PM Buffalo Mountain

4.3 miles, Moderate \$4.00 carpool fee, 44 miles from Roanoke

Located in Floyd County in the vicinity of Mabry Mill, the hike goes to the summit of Buffalo Mountain with extraordinary views in all directions. The distinctive shape of Pilot Mountain in North Carolina is visible in the distance on a clear day. A network of unofficial trails lead to various points on the edge of the mountain's massive rock face.

Carolyn McPeak.....<u>mcpeakcr@aol.com</u> 890-2855

Sunday, October 4, 2015 1:00 PM Roanoke River Greenway from Bridge St

3.5 miles, Easy No carpool fee

Meet at the Bridge Street Greenway parking lot We will walk from Bridge Street, out and back, Actual distance at the pleasure of the hikers.

 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. Uncle Bob Needs You! Please lead or assist for one or two hikes on the next schedule. Contact Bob Peckman at hikemaster@ratc.org. For Blazer matters blazer@ratc.org

Wednesday, October 7, 2015 9:00 AM Cove Mountain Loop

8.2 miles, Strenuous

23 miles from Roanoke, \$2.00 carpool fee Roanoke based hikers will carpool from Daleville at 9AM and meet the Charlottesville-based hike leader at the trailhead.

This hike starts by climbing the Appalachian Trail past Little Cove Mountain Shelter from the Jennings Creek Road, east of Arcadia, north of Buchanan. At 4.5 miles, we will leave the A.T. and descend on the Little Cove Mountain Trail 2.7 miles back to Jennings Creek Road. We will walk the road 0.8 miles back to our vehicles. Elevation at the start of the hike is 1000 feet, and the A.T. portion of the hike climbs much of the way, ascending to 2600 feet, meaning that this is a tough hike. Further details of this hike can be found here:

http://www.wanderingvirginia.com/2012/11/atlittle-cove-mountain-trail-loop.html

Jeff Monroe monroejeff@gmail.com

Sunday, October 11, 2015 8:00 AM Curry Gap (BRP) to Daleville

10.5 miles, Moderate 9 miles from Roanoke, \$1.00 carpool fee

The hike starts on Curry Gap on the Blue Ridge Parkway. It follows Salt Pond Road to the intersection with the A.T., then goes up the A.T. to Fullhardt Knob. There are limited views along the trail and at the summit of Fullhardt Knob. The trail then descends, crosses route 11 and ends on route 220 in Daleville.

Fred Meyer	wfmeyer@suddenlink.net
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	540-968-2750
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Sunday, October 11, 2015 1:00 PM Roanoke River Greenway

6 miles, Flat & Easy No Carpool fee

Meet at Vic Thomas Park. Hike from 13th street parking lot back to Vic Thomas Park. Bring water and a snack.

Wednesday, October 14, 2015 8:30 AM Terrapin Mt - Reeds Creek Loop

9 miles, Strenuous 30 miles from Roanoke, \$3 Car Pool fee.

We will assemble at the Daleville Park and Ride. Terrapin Mountain is near Big Island in Bedford County. The trail gets little traffic as it is not accessible from the Blue Ridge Parkway. The hike starts from Terrapin Mt Rd. The first 3.5 miles is a steep ascent to the summit. We will pass over three false summits before the peak with some great views. Dropping slightly down, we will reach Camping Gap and pick up Reeds Creek Trail. The trail follows the creek down with cascading water and pools before intersecting the Terrapin Mt. Trail once again.

David Horst......<u>horstde@aol.com</u>804-852-7653

Saturday, October 17, 2015 10:00 AM Tinker Creek Greenway Hollins to Boat Launch

4.5 miles, Easy

No Carpool fee, \$2 hiker fee for Carvins Cove We'll meet at the Gander Mountain store parking lot (8195 Gander Way, off Plantation Road) and carpool to the small trailhead parking lot.

We will start at the Tinker Creek Greenway-Hollins Trailhead and go down to the picnic area near the Carvins Cove boat launch where we will eat lunch with a lovely view by the water. The return trip is uphill, but it's gradual and not too taxing.

Sunday, October 18, 2015 8:00
Two for the Price of One
Potts Mountain Trail
Allegheny Trail to Observatory, Peters Mtn.

7.5 miles total, Moderate 45 miles from Roanoke, \$5 Carpool Fee Both hikes are in Monroe County, WV right on the Giles Co, VA line. One is the Potts Mountain Rail Trail (4.5 miles) and the other one, only 4-5 miles away by car, is the Allegheny Trail to the bird Observatory on Peters Mountain (3 miles round trip). Both hikes require little elevation gain and I would rate the hikes moderate. I like to make hikes fun and not a race through the woods. We have the option of the Swinging Bridge Restaurant at Paint Bank on the way back.

Sunday, October 18, 20015 1:00 PM Mill Mountain – Woodthrush Trail

3.2 Miles, Easy No Carpool Fee

Wednesday, October 21, 2015 8:30 AM Rattlin Run - AT - Sawmill Branch Loop

10 miles, Strenuous

No Carpool Fee, \$2 /person, kiosk in parking lot

We will meet at the Orange Market. Starting from the Bennett Springs parking area, the hike will combine part of Rattlin Run, bushwhack up to the AT north of Campbell Shelter, blue blazed trail from Brickey's Gap to the Lamberts Meadow campsite, before descending sharply down Sawmill Branch Trail. After intersecting and continuing down Arrowhead Trail, we take Happy Valley back to the parking area. Views from Rattlin Run and Brickeys Gap should be great as the leaves are changing.

Saturday, October 24, 2015 1:00 PM Carvin's Cove from Bennett Springs

3 miles, Easy

No Carpool Fee, \$2 /person, kiosk in parking lot

From the parking lot, we will start on the Hi-Dee-Ho trail, then veer right on Hotel trail for 1.5 miles and return on the same route.

Sunday, October 25, 2015 8:00 Rock Castle Gorge

11.0 miles, Strenuous 57 miles from Roanoke, \$5.50 carpool fee

Located in Patrick County, on Blue Ridge Parkway land. After a steep 2,000-foot ascent, the hike parallels the Parkway – passing alternately through woods and open fields with extraordinary views. On the descent down the other side of the gorge, the hike passes some old cabin sites and a series of interesting rock formations. The last few miles are along Rock Castle Creek – a wild stream with many cataracts. It is beautiful in the fall!

Sunday, October 25, 2015 1:00 PM Mill Mountain Loop

3 or 4 miles, Easy No Carpool Fee

We will meet and start at the Star Trail Parking lot, 1208 Riverland Road, Roanoke.

We'll go up the Star trail and down Mill Mtn. Greenway to Prospect Rd. From there return to the parking lot via Monument Trail and a piece of Star trail/Wood Thrush connector.

Sue Scanlinscanlin@verizon.net989-0497

Sunday, November 1, 2015 8:00 AM Catawba Mtn (311) to Trout Creek (620)

12.9 miles, Strenuous 6 mile drive + 12 mile shuttle, \$2 carpool fee

Located in Roanoke and Craig County, the hike follows the roller coaster Sawtooth Ridge, with views of Fort Lewis Mountain on the left and Cove Mountain and North Mountain on the right. The hike continues over Sandstone Ridge and then begins the strenuous climb to Dragon's Tooth, which offers great, near 360-degree views. The hike will then follow the ridgeline of Cove Mountain and descend to Trout Creek.

Sunday, November 1, 2015 9:00 AM Carvins Cove Lakeside Trail

4 miles, Easy

No Carpool Fee, \$2 /person, kiosk in parking lot

We will meet at the Orange Market and carpool to the end of Tinkerview. From the parking lot we will go down Horsepen Trail and continue on the Lakeside Trail. The turn-around point will be at the pleasure of the hikers.

Wednesday, November 4, 2015 8:00 AM Goshen Pass - Jump Rock Loop

About 9 miles, Strenuous 60 miles from Roanoke, \$6 Carpool Fee.

Meet at Daleville Park and Ride.

This hike, not far from Lexington, in the Goshen Pass Nature Preserve, encompasses a swinging bridge, views of the Maury River, a waterfall, great views of the Shenandoah Valley and Lake Merriweather from Jump Rock. This is truly a beautiful area and one of the jewels of Virginia.

Saturday, November 7, 2015 1:00 PM Mill Mountain Trails

5.4 miles, Moderate No carpool fee

We will meet at the Star Trail Parking lot, 1208 Riverland Road, Roanoke. Here's your chance to explore the Mill Mountain trails! We will make a loop, going up to the Monument Trail, then down and around the mountain and back to the parking lot for a total of 5.4 miles and walking on parts of 6 different trails.

Jimbo & Mary Harshfield 344-4341 harsh803@gmail.com

Sunday, November 8, 2015 8:00 AM Broad Run Mountain Loop

10.3 miles, Strenuous.

12 miles from Roanoke, \$1.50 carpool fee

Sunday, November 15, 2015 8:00 AM Cascades to Butt Mountain

10.8 miles, Strenuous 54 miles from Roanoke, \$5.50 carpool fee \$3 per car parking

Located in Giles County near Pembroke, the hike will first go along Little Stony Creek, to the Cascades – an impressive waterfall. It will then go up the nature Conservancy Trail to Barney's Wall, a cliff that features a 700-foot drop with a great view of the New River Valley. From there it will continue on along the ridge-top of Butt Mountain to the location of an old fire lookout tower.

Sunday, November 15, 2015 1:00 PM Tinker Creek Greenway from 13th St

2.2 Miles, Easy No Carpool Fee

Wednesday, November 18, 2015 8:00 AM Little and Big House Mountain

9.5 miles, Strenuous40 miles from Roanoke, \$4 Carpool FeeMeet at Daleville Park and Ride

The House Mountains are just outside of Lexington in Rockbridge County. This hike is two out and back hikes up separate peaks from a saddle. Both peaks are short but steep climbs up to spectacular views. With Little House, the climb brings us up to a ridge where we hike about 3/4 mile to the view point. After descending to the saddle where there is a shelter and campsite, we ascend the steep trail up to the top of Big House Mountain. We will ascend the "goat trail" from there to another wonderful viewpoint with 270-degree views. We will also do a short bushwhack to Tabletop Rock before descending.

David Horst......<u>horstde@aol.com</u>804-852-7653

Saturday, November 21, 2015, 1:00 pm Carvins Cove area at Bennett Spring

3 miles, Easy

No Carpool Fee, \$2 /person, kiosk in parking lot

We will meet at the Orange Market. From the parking lot, We will start on the Hi-Dee-Ho trail, then veer left

over the bridge towards the fire road. We can either return the same route or make a loop by walking on the road (which is quite beautiful, too).

Jean Warren 384-6229

Sunday, November 22, 2015 7:00 AM Rich Hole Wilderness North

A hard and long 13.8 miles; Very Strenuous 45 miles from Roanoke, \$4.50 carpool fee

My annual iron man/woman hike. This hike is in the Rich Hole Wilderness Area which burned in April, 2012. The fire burned away the brush but left the canopy intact. Part of the hike includes 3.5 miles of a ridge bushwhack which will require some rock scrambling and brush busting. The return leg is along North Branch Simpson Creek so we have varied terrain on this lollipop-shaped hike. Last year an early snow and subsequent melt made for quite a few wet-feet crossings of Simpson Creek. This is a tough hike and the brush re-grows a bit every year. If you want a challenge, please join me. Distance: A hard and long 13.8 miles which has taken as long as 9 hours, which could be less depending on fitness.

Sunday, November 29, 2015 8:00 AM Black Horse Gap (BRP) to Daleville (Rt. 220) 113-Hikes # 1 & 2

13.6 miles, Strenuous 17 miles from Roanoke, \$1.50 carpool fee

The hike starts at Black Horse Gap on the Blue Ridge Parkway in Botetourt County. This is the northern terminus of the 113 mile long section of trail maintained by the RATC. The AT parallels the parkway heading south. It passes the Wilson Creek shelter and then crosses Salt Pond Road at Curry Gap. The trail then climbs Fullhardt Knob, where there are limited views. The trail then descends, crosses route 11 and ends on route 220 in Daleville.

Homer & Therese Witcher 266-8912 266-4849..... witchers4@juno.com

Sunday, November 29, 2015 1:00 PM Lick Run Greenway

3 miles, Easy No Carpool Fee

Meet by the Downtown Tower Parking Garage, shuttle to Best Buy and walk the prettiest greenway

Wednesday, December 2, 2015 9:00 AM Sprouts Run - Pine Mountain Loop

10 miles, Strenuous

20 miles from Roanoke; \$2 Carpool Fee We'll meet at the Daleville Park and Ride

This hike will combine most of the Sprouts Run Trail (approximately 3 miles), a bushwhack from Sprouts Run to the Pine Mountain Trail (unmaintained) and about 1 mile on a gravel road back to the starting point. Pine Mountain is the mountain opposite Wilson Mountain which we usually do as part of a loop when hiking Sprouts Run. In addition to the normal creekside walking on the Sprouts Run Trail, the Pine Mountain Trail is actually a closed Forest Service Road which is grassy in places and wooded in others. It contains some good views of mountains to the east and west and also has about four game ponds built by the Forest Service. The bushwhack portion of this hike entails walking on an old logging road for a little way, then climbing up the mountainside a little way and then hitting a grassy road which will then lead to the Pine Mountain Trail.

David Horst......<u>horstde@aol.com</u>804-852-7653

Saturday, December 5, 2015 8:00 AM The Peaks of Otter Flat Top and Sharp Top

4.3 + 3.8 miles, Moderate

30 miles from Roanoke, \$3 carpool fee

Flat Top Mountain:

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

Sharp Top Mountain:

We will be hiking to the top of Sharp Top, at the Peaks of Otter on the Blue Ridge Parkway in Bedford County. The first half of hike is a steep ascent with many stone steps. There is a spectacular 360-degree view from the summit.

Saturday, December 5, 2015 8:30 AM Dismal Falls

4.6 miles, Easy

70 miles from Roanoke, \$6 Roanoke carpool fee Roanoke area folks meet at the Thompson Memorial Park n Ride, exit 140, west of Salem at 8:30. Blacksburg and Christiansburg area folks meet at the Christiansburg Lowe's parking lot, along the left edge at 9:00.

We will hike just over four miles round trip from VA 606/Kimberling Creek in Bland north on the AT to the falls side trail and .3 miles to the falls. Dress in layers, wear sturdy footwear/boots and bring lunch and water. This hike is pretty easy with mostly short or gradual elevation changes.

Maria Bowling540-239-2583 <u>maria.bowling@gmail.com</u>

Saturday, December 5, 2015 6:00 PM Holiday Pot-Luck

Our annual Holiday Fellowship event will be held as usual at Christ Lutheran, corner of Grandin & Brandon. Bring a large dish to share—there's always a wonderful array of food! Bring food item for RAM's food pantry if desired.

Program: Dan Phlegar will do a presentation on his trips to the Wind River Range in in Wyoming. He has been going there every summer for the past 21 years. Questions, Contact Linda Akers at 400-8117.

Sunday, December 6, 2015 1:00 PM Chestnut Ridge Trail

5.4 miles, Moderate No Carpool Fee

The hike is located 4 miles from Roanoke and 1 mile from the Blue Ridge Parkway. It is a 5.4-mile loop around the Roanoke Campground behind Mill Mountain. The trail is well graded and surrounded by woods.

Saturday, December 12, 2015 8:00 AM Hay Rock

8.0 miles, Moderate No Carpool Fee

Located in Botetourt County, north of Roanoke, the hike starts and ends in the Daleville parking lot. Except for a short feeder trail, the route follows the Appalachian Trail to Hay Rock and back again. There are several good overlooks along the way, but the best one is Hay Rock. This overhanging chunk of sandstone provides shelter on one side and great views on the other – for those willing to scramble to the top.

Hugh Hall	············	725-8874
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	heelstar2	000@yahoo.com
Brendle Wolfe	•••••	540-968-2750
	hlwolfe@n	ail roanoko odu

Sunday, December 13, 2015 8:00 AM **Guillotine/Apple Orchard Falls/Cornelius** Creek

Approximately 10 miles, strenuous 26 miles from Roanoke, \$2.50 Carpool Fee

Please meet at Daleville Park and Ride. Start at Sunset Field (milepost 76.3 on BR Parkway). Take the AT going by the Guillotine, Apple Orchard Falls Trail, then the Cornelius Creek trail, returning by the Appalachian Trail.

Fred Meyer......wfmeyer@suddenlink.net David Jones 540-552-3058dhjones@together.net

Sunday, December 27, 2015 8:00 am Fuller Rocks/Big Rocky Row

10.8 miles. Strenuous 39 miles from Roanoke, \$3.50 carpool fee Group size limited to 10 hikers.

We will begin from the James River Foot Bridge parking area off of Rt. 501/130 in Amherst County. It is a strenuous out and back hike with

spectacular views of the James River cutting its way through the surrounding mountains! We will begin hiking North on the Appalachian Trail crossing Rt. 501/130 and Hercules Rd. before paralleling Rocky Row Run creek. The hike then begins a tough ascent to Fuller Rocks (4.0 miles). We will continue to climb beyond Fuller Rocks, taking in a view of Glasgow to the West, then up Big Rocky Row overlook (5.4 miles) before heading back down. Upon returning to the parking area, if the group is up to a short detour, we will cool down with a hike across the James River Foot Bridge.

Kris & Bob Peckman......366-7780bob@peckmanjazz.com

Friday, January 1, 2016, 9:00 AM McAfee/Devil's Kitchen Potluck

7.8 mile, Moderate, \$0.50 carpool fee 6 miles from Roanoke

Start the year out right. Beat the crowds! This is a potluck picnic. (Please label your contents so those with food problems can indulge with abandon.) We can devilishly make hot chocolate and soup out of the wind.

Kris & Bob Peckman......366-7780bob@peckmanjazz.com

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	StateZip	Family # of years	x \$15.00	
Home Phone	Work Phone	Individual life membership	\$250.00	
Email		Family life membership	\$300.00	
Check here to save a tree and take only an e-Blazer		Donation	\$	
Make checks payable to RATC, PO Box 12282, Roanoke, 24024-2282		Amount Enclosed	\$	
*** Or go to ratc.org ***				

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
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