

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

Winter 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

Banquet Potluck & Meeting
Christ Lutheran Church
March 7, 6:00 PM

WORK HIKES

Monday, January 26 - 8:30 AM
Monday, February 9 - 8:30 AM
Monday, February 23 - 8:30 AM
Monday, March 9 - 8:30 AM
Monday, March 23 - 8:30 AM
Monday, April 6 - 8:30 AM
Monday, April 20 - 8:30 AM

Hike Scheduling

Contact Edward Wilson

540-904-8904 – RATChikemaster@gmail.com

BOARD MEETINGS

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

Monday, January 12, 7:00 p.m.
Hollins Branch Library

Monday, February 9, 7:00 p.m.
Hollins Branch Library

What's Inside...

President's Report.....	2
Hikemaster's Report.....	4
New Members	4
Stone-age AT Marker.....	5
Hike Reports	6
Hike Schedule	13
Membership Renewal.....	15
Contacting the RATC	Back

What about Dues...

The year after your name on the address label is how far dues are paid. If it is less than 2015 then it is time to pay your dues.

You can now renew and even join at RATC.org. Just click the big red button and use Pay Pal. Billing you would cost money and we are very frugal with your dues. You can still pay by check which saves us a small fee.

President's Report

It is with much regret that I report to you that my three years as president of the club is coming to an end. I am very thankful for the opportunity I have had to serve the community of hikers that use the trail in our area. I have been involved with the club for over 15 years and have served on the board for nine years. The Trail is very important to me.

As I look back over these past three years, the most important aspect that comes to mind is the concept of stewardship. I have always kept this foremost in my thoughts as I worked to guide the club over the past three years. Stewardship means that we, as club members, have agreed to help maintain and improve the Appalachian Trail so that future generations of hikers can continue to enjoy it.

Our club has been in existence since 1932, over 80 years. Obviously every member of the club that established and maintained our 120 miles of the AT in the early years are long since gone. Our duty as current members is to carry on the great work that our predecessors started. Every current member of the club should try to be a good steward of the trail, in ways great or small. Also, as I look back over the past three years, I am very grateful for the people I have been associated with who have worked diligently to improve our section of the trail. We have been able to improve on nearly all areas of trail and club management. Some of the accomplishments I wish to highlight include:

Establishment of the Monday trail work crew.

The crew has accomplished many noteworthy things on the trail since it was established this past January. Most of their work over the past year has been dealing with safety hazards on the trail. They have rehabilitated the Andy Layne Trail, including placing numerous steps on a particularly steep section of the trail. They have also widened narrow sections of the AT in various places, including near Trout Creek. They have also rehabbed all of the kiosks at trailheads on our section of trail.

They have replaced all of the ladder-type stiles on our section of the AT with safer "dodgeway" type stiles. In recent years, two hikers have been seriously injured on our section of trail crossing faulty ladder-type stiles.

The crew's most significant accomplishment was the recent rehabbing of the two bridges over Craig Creek. This was a tremendous achievement, taking nearly 500 hours of effort.

The Monday work crew is currently occupied on rehabbing other long-neglected bridges on our section of trail.

Establishment of the club's Meetup site.

Three years ago, our club was experiencing historic lows in hiker participation on our recreational hikes. We were typically seeing just three hikers going on a club hike, including the hike leader. Many hikes were being cancelled due to lack of hiker sign-ups. Two years ago we introduced our Meetup.com site. Since

then, over 650 hikers have signed up. Our average hiking group size has increased to eight. This has obviously been a tremendous improvement.

Improved Web Site

Many members may not know it, but our Vice-President, Chris Wilson, has also been our Webmaster for the past two years. Due to Chris's hard work, I believe our web site is the best of any of the 31 trail-maintaining clubs. We have added information such as our minutes and budget reports. We have also added lively pictures and member access to needed club documents.

Shelter Maintenance

Unfortunately, due to several circumstances, the 16 shelters maintained by our club had fallen into disrepair. Thankfully, in March 2012 the current Shelter Supervisors, Therese and Homer Witcher, took over. Thanks to the efforts of these dedicated club members and their helpers they were able to work wonders on shelters. In less than a year, and with over 1,000 hours expended, they were able to get all of our shelters in shape so that they meet or exceed Appalachian Trail Conservancy standards.

Boundary Maintenance

Prior to 2013, our boundary maintenance program had been non-existent for many years. At that point Bruce Davidson took over as the club's Land Management Supervisor. Bruce worked diligently to create a boundary monitoring program for the A.T. lands that the club is responsible for. Through Bruce's efforts we now have

a vigorous boundary monitoring program. Several serious boundary encroachments have been found in the past year. These would not have been located and dealt with without Bruce's commendable initiative.

Other Accomplishments

- Over the past three years our membership has grown from 300 to 450.
- Through wise budget management, we have been able to maintain the lowest dues structure of any of the 31 trail maintaining clubs. For the first time in many years, the club has set and monitored an annual budget.
- Through monthly emails and reports in the Trailblazer we have kept members better informed of club activities.

Although we have accomplished much in the past three years, there is still so much left to do. One example is dealing with the greatly increased volume of hikers on McAfee Knob over the past few years. The club leadership is currently working with the National Park Service and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy to better manage this increased volume so that this much beloved section of trail is maintained and hikers have a rewarding experience.

There are also still numerous areas of our section of trail that need major work. As I said at the beginning of this message, we are all stewards of the Trail. I truly hope that, working together, we can pass the Trail along to future generations better than we found it.

Mike Vaughn

Hikemaster's Report

Wow, look at those temperatures and snowflakes dropping! It's officially winter out there! With winter and colder temperatures it may be tempting to snuggle up under a blanket and stay inside but really there is no better time to hit the trails! No snakes, no mosquitoes, no sunburn and no crowds.

Although the hike schedule appears slim the RATC will have plenty of hikes to help you get out and enjoy the Winter Wonderland. Although not printed in the Blazer many of our hike leaders have opted to add their hikes directly to Meetup. This allows them to schedule last minute hikes

around the weather and their schedules and prevents scheduled hikes from being cancelled (thanks to weather or illness).

If you haven't joined the meetup group yet, you don't know what great things you're missing! You can join at the following url: <http://www.meetup.com/Roanoke-Appalachian-Trail-Club/> You can also find it linked from the main RATC.com webpage.

As always, happy trails!

Edward Wilson

Welcome New Members

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club welcomes the following new members:

Jan Arthur

Pat Barnes

Ron Bell

Diana Billips

Emily Cassell

Karen Clarke

J. R. Davidson III

Russell Fisher

Greg Hardwicke

Marianne Hudert

Shirley Johnson

Heidi Ketler

Ted Lagos

Warren Lucas

Abraham McKinney

Stephen Niamke

Rose Nichols

Jen and Robert Perdue

Mark & Jeanne Smith

Steve Yonts

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

Brendle Wolfe

Discovered! AT Trail Marker From The Stone Age – or Beyond

In the late 1980's the Konnarock Crew had completed the relocation of the Trail on Brush Mountain and started to descend south to the Craig Creek crossing. As we began to cut into the sidehill, we hit a rock deposit of loose geometric-shaped stones. These stones had a raised border all around each piece which was of a different color and texture.

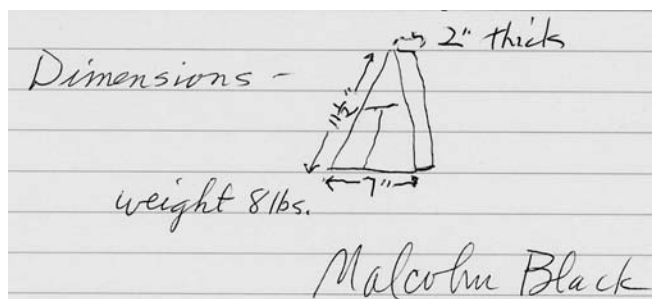
This unique formation had us all stopping work and just admiring stones the likes of which we had never before encountered. I finally took another Pulaski chop and down slid this ♣ marker! I took claim and carried it home.



Next – How was it formed and how did it get up here? I took the book by V. Collins Chew, Underfoot: A Geologic Guide to the Appalachian Trail and tried to find an answer.

The Craig Creek valley is of black shale of the Devonian period. This area was once covered by an inland sea. Mud filled in and eventually the oxygen-deprived water allowed rocks to form under pressure and became Silurian sandstone (also called Silurian mudstone). Upheavals drained these landlocked seas, exposing the muds to dry and crack into these geometric shapes. Later deposits of minerals filled in these cracks and eventually bonded to the sandstone. Mountain building pushed these rocks up to the ridge.

The north end of Brush Mountain has rocks on the ridge top of another period that contain tiny sea fossils.



Malcolm Black

Hike Reports

Wednesday, October 1 Ribble Trail, AT Loop

David Horst (leader), Christin Kash, Jim Webb, Madeleine Taylor with Sassy, David Youmans, and Jeff Edwards.

Mike Smith was scheduled to come but injured his knee and cancelled that morning. Four of us met at the Salem Park and Ride and met Jeff and Christin in Christiansburg to drive together to the trail head in Giles County. We began the hike up the north branch of Ribble Trail as it follows Dismal Creek. With David Youmans leading, we promptly took a wrong turn and had to backtrack a short distance. After this, we fired David Y as the leader and I took over. In a very short distance, I missed the turn onto the AT and we ended up on the horse trail. I heard Madeleine grumble that things were not going so well so far. After bushwhacking back over to the AT we managed to complete the rest of the hike on the correct trail. Madeleine seemed happier. After passing the Wapiti shelter, we made the steep climb up Sugar Run Mountain following Christin all the way up. After meeting up for lunch at the top, we continued on the AT to the intersection with the south branch of the Ribble Trail (also known as The Derryberry Trail). Descending sharply for the next few miles back to the parking lot, we managed to finish without incident. This was a great group of strong hikers on a beautiful day.

Sunday, October 05, 2014 8:00 AM House Mountains, Big and Little

Kris and Bob Peckman (leaders), Carl Cornett, Mary Harshfield, Carina Hughes, Ivy Lidstone, Sheila Vaughn

What a gorgeous day we had for this hike! Brilliant sunshine, cool breezes, beginnings of fall colors. The hike begins with a walk up an old road to the saddle between Big and Little House Mountains. From the saddle we followed the road up Big House Mountain. At one point the road turns right and follows the east side of the mountain up to a utility building, but a little trail straight ahead goes up some rocks to the mountain top and then to a spectacular overlook toward North Mountain (the Alleghany County one).



Carina, Kris, Sheila, Mary, Ivy & Bob



Carina & Sheila

We took the little trail and enjoyed the view, then returned to the saddle where we ate our lunch at the shelter there. Then we took the trail up Little House Mountain. The trail up the mountain was rerouted in 2013 by two students from a boarding school near Charlottesville and is much better than the previous one, though the students could have used some training from Bill Gordge. It is still too steep in places and is already beginning to erode. Once we reached the top of Little House Mountain, however, the trail is the same as before, a beautiful stroll through mountain laurel and nice big rocks in places, ending in an overlook to the north and I-64. We returned to the saddle, then to the cars, by the same route, and most of us were easily persuaded to try the gelato at Pronto in Lexington (it was great).

Monday, October 06, 2014 8:30 AM
Andy Layne Trail Workhike

Mike Vaughn, Dave Horst, Dave Williams, John Miller, Chris Winesett, Gary Bible, Homer Witcher & Jim Webb

We redug a steep side hill section and added cribbing on trail near Scorched Earth Gap.

Sunday, October 12, 2014 8:00 AM
Andy Layne Trail to Daleville
113 Mile Hike #3

Cancelled, heavy rain

Friday, October 17
Trout Creek to Dragon's Tooth Parking Lot

David Horst (leader), Jim Webb, Mike Smith, Maria Bowling with her dog Sumner, Jeff Edwards, Joanne Derryberry, Lisa Forster, John G., Madeleine Taylor with Sassy, and Christin Kash.

Gail from SML was scheduled to come with two guests. One of her guests, Ed Hamilton, showed up on time and we waited about fifteen minutes and then left to pick up Christin and Maria at the Dragons Tooth parking area. Ed stayed behind to wait on his friends and said that they would meet us at Trout Creek. We never did see them on the trail, so I hope that they were able to do a hike that day and will come out again on a RATC hike. We had a couple of new hikers to RATC on this hike, John and Lisa. John had not hiked in a while and was recovering from a hip replacement a year prior. Lisa was also fairly new to hiking. The entire group except for me headed up the 5-mile climb to the top at Dragons Tooth. I waited about 10 minutes at the trail head for Ed and the other two SML friends, who again we never did see that day. I soon caught up to the group, which soon divided into the fast and slow hikers. When the slow group got to the top, the fast group had left to descend to the parking area and get the vehicles from the Trout Creek area. I hiked down with the slow group. Just as we started down the steep descent, John's entire sole of one of his hiking shoes came off, exposing his sock. I used some elasticon tape from my first aid kit to tape it back on. We made it back down to the parking lot where we found Joanne waiting for us with Lisa. The rest had headed home. It was a challenging day for John but through it all, he was laughing and joking. I was amazed at how well both dogs did on the rock scrambling to the top and the tricky descent. Cudos to Sumner and Sassy. All in all a beautiful day

to hike with great people. Photos have been posted to Meetup. (It would be nice if one or two pix were also sent to the Blazer. Ed.)

Saturday, October 18, 2014 11:00 AM
Huckleberry Trail

Cancelled

Sunday, October 19, 2014 8:00 AM
Harveys Knob-Bearwallow Gap

Fred Meyer (leader), Darren Mellon, and Carina Hughes.

It was a cool and windy fall day and the first view at Harvey's Knob on the Blue Ridge Parkway was wonderful. We hiked the Appalachian Trail to Bearwallow Gap and back, stopping at Sharp Top and Mills Gap overlook. On the way back we also visited the Bobblet's Gap Shelter. The weather was wonderful.

Sunday, October 19, 2014 1:00PM
Ridgeline Trail to top of Mill Mountain

David Sutton and Linda Sutton.

This hike coincided with the GO Festival which has been held annually for the past 4 years, off Reserve Ave. After waiting at the RATC tent till 1:15, we decided to begin. By parking off the shoulder on Yellow Mountain Rd. (just under the Pkwy Spur Rd.) we hiked up to the top of Mill Mountain. As more mountain bikers share this trail with hikers, it is becoming more eroded, but still hikeable. Lots of good views along the ridge and a beautiful day to hike.

Wednesday, October 22
Cove Mountain & Little Cove Mountain Loop

David Horst (leader), Sumner Bowling with Maria, Joanne Derryberry, El Presidente Mike Vaughn, Carina Hughes, Sassy Taylor with Madeleine, Kris & Bob Peckman, and Christin Kash.

We met at the Daleville Park and Ride on a windy, sunny, cool morning. Because Bob and Kris use the Blazer to find their hikes, I joked with them that this was a Meetup hike and they will have to join Meetup in the future. :)) Kris also pointed out that I did not even sign my own sign up sheet. :)))



We caravanned to the trail head at the Jennings Creek footbridge near Arcadia and began the hike. The water in all the creeks was low, so no problems getting over Little Cove creek. Near the beginning we took a short side excursion up Cove Mountain to view a usually flowing waterfall, only to see just a trickle. Christin asked if it had a name. Mike said it wasn't named yet. I voted on Cove Mountain Falls. That is the unofficial name from henceforth.

After coming back down to our scheduled trail we passed over Little Cove Creek a couple of times and headed up the relentless couple of miles to the top. Passing over the horse trail we viewed the very large burned-out area of years past before reaching the AT. Heading north on the AT, we rock scrambled up a cliff area overlooking Rt 43 and Buchanan. With gorgeous views and a great photo opportunity, we paused for a perfect lunch break sheltered from the wind.



After lunch we descended along the AT to stop briefly at Cove Mountain Shelter for bathroom breaks and to regroup. Again continuing to descend we reached Jennings Creek Rd for the walk .7 miles back to the car. Maria was headed with Sumner up Middle Creek Rd. to spend the night camping at the Bryant Ridge Shelter. I headed further up Jennings Creek Rd. to take the back way up to Powell's Gap back home and the rest headed back to Roanoke.

This was a particularly beautiful hike with experienced, strong hikers. A great way to spend the day outdoors!

Many photos are posted on Meetup.

(Note: The Blazer needs pictures sent to the editor. Ed.)

Mondays, October 13,20,& 27 2014 8:30 AM AT Crossing at Rt. 621 Workhike

Mike Vaughn, Dave Horst, Dave Williams, John Miller, Chris Winesett, Mervin Brower, Jeff Edwards, Maria Bowling, Rex Card, Chad Fedhali, Bob Black, Jake Levitt & Jim Webb

Using a grant from LL Bean, we set about to repair the deck and handrail of the 60 ft-long bridge over Craig Creek. The first Monday was spent carrying the lumber from the parking lot to the bridge site. Each of us walked about 10 miles that day, 1/2 mile per trip.



The next two weeks were spent constructing the new deck, handrails and steps on each end and carrying the old deck lumber back to the parking lot for disposal. A total of over 175 man hours were spent on this project.

Saturday, October 25, 2014 8:30 AM
Sunday, October 26, 2014 8:30 AM
Sharp Top and Flat Top (Peaks of Otter)

Brendle Wolfe and Maggie (leaders), Erik Storm, Susan Terwilliger, Wendell Johnson, Mark Williams, Kim, Chris (didn't get everyone's last name as they wrote on the sign up un-clearly).

We started out tackling Sharp Top which was a steady climb to the top. During our hike up the weather was a bit breezy but the fall colors were in peak season. Upon arrival to the top of Sharp Top we found the place to ourselves. By mid-morning, during our descent, we encountered a crowd of people beginning up the mountain. Several people informed us that they saw a large black bear crossing the trail. Unfortunately we never got the opportunity to see it! After a quick break at the trail head we carried on to the second and less crowded Flat Top Mountain. The group agreed the lesser known peak maybe the tougher of the two! Nevertheless Maggie the Jack Russell Terrier, our hiking group buddy, led the way up the mountain with boundless energy! As the day progressed the wind began to really pick up and we had to put our layers back on! All in all it was a beautiful fall day!

FYI -Pictures from the hike are on the Meetup site.



Brendle, Erik, Mark, Susan, Kim, & Chris in front

Wednesday, October 31
Big and Little House Mountains

David Horst (leader), Madeleine Taylor with Sassy, Jeff Edwards, Joanne Derryberry, Maya Bohler, Shirley Johnson, David B Youmans, Amar Kumar, Christin Kash, and Cynthia Munley.

After leaving Daleville, the ten of us piled into two vehicles and made the trek to a few miles outside of Lexington to the remote trailhead in Rockbridge County on Saddle Ridge Rd.

The first part of this hike is an uneventful uphill walk along a old forest road to the saddle between the two peaks. After regrouping at the saddle, amid stories of the tragic 19th century history at this old apple orchard, we tackled Little House Mountain. Although the Conservancy has done a nice job of rerouting the trail up, with multiple switchbacks, it is still a difficult climb and descent. The trail is in need of some more side hill digging in spots to make it safer. Still, this is an improvement over the old blue blazed trail that goes straight up the mountain. After climbing to the top over about a mile, the last 3/4 of a mile is a really nice ridge hike with some cool rock scrambling. At the end of the trail is a wonderful, multi-tiered, unobstructed viewpoint. After regrouping, we all stopped to take in the views and take pictures. The descent back to the saddle is along the same trail. The group got fairly strung out on the descent. We all ate lunch at the saddle, albeit at different times based on hiker speed.

After lunch, most of us ascended Big House at our own pace. At the switchback about a half mile from the top, we all took the blue blazed "goat trail" to the top of the cliffs. Although I have seen goats up here on two previous occasions, there were none this day. This trail is a challenging climb up a rock face. At the top, a faint trail goes off to the left to reward us with views surpassing even Little House, again multi-tiered. Arriving at different times, everyone stopped to take it all in.

I have been up here several times and have been searching for the elusive "Table Top Rock", never before able to find it. But this day, aided by a fellow hiker blogger, I was rewarded to find this amazing, natural structure in a rock canyon about 250 yards from the viewpoint. I went back to gather some of the group who were waiting at the overlook. We all went back to document the findings with pictures. Jeff and David Y stood underneath the massive granite table feigning holding it up while I climbed up on top to give my "king of the world" pose. (We wish we had the picture. Ed.)

The descent back to the saddle and continuing to the parking area also saw the group get strung out. Christin had to get back to Roanoke to take her son

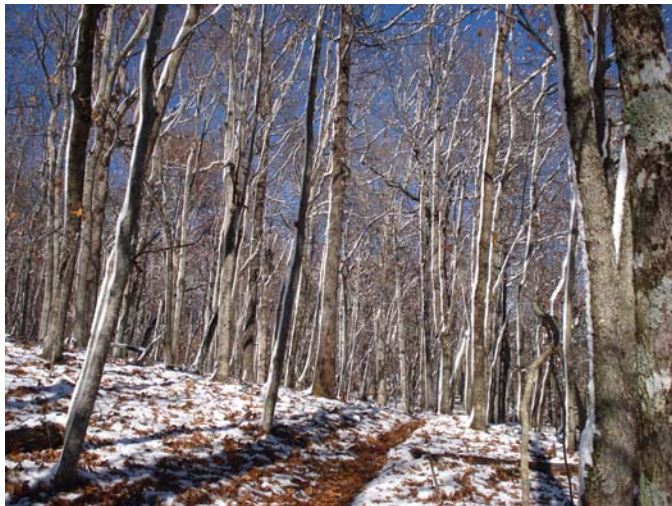
trick or treating, so 5 of us smoked the finale and left together. The rest of the group finished a little while later and headed back in Cynthia's van.

This was another wonderful fall hike to finish up the October Wednesday series. Great company, weather, and scenery! Many photos are posted on Meetup.

**Sunday, November 02, 2014 8:00 AM
Rich Valley (Rt. 42) to Great Valley (Rt. 11)**

Kris Peckman (leader), Maria Bowling (unofficial assistant), Karen Callahan, Rebecca and Allan Dickerman, Val Dymond, Jeff Monroe, David Youmans

Hard to believe it was only November 2! We had 1" to 3" of snow underfoot on the ridgetops in the morning, snow on the southwest sides of the trees, and snow dripping from the treetops in the afternoon. After a logistical challenge complicated by high winds which froze our brains in the parking lot where we all met, we set off in three cars, two headed for Route 42 and one for Groseclose. The New River Valley group headed south while the Roanoke/Charlottesville group headed north, meeting in the middle to exchange car keys. Each group had a nice mountain in the morning and another one in the afternoon, with woods and pastures to start and finish the day. The weather was sunny, highlighting the spectacular effects of the snow. Jeff kept the northbound group updated with data from his two GPS devices, and noted fallen trees (with picture and coordinates) for the maintaining club. Both groups reported a great day.



**Sunday, November 09, 2014 8:00 AM
Patterson Creek**

John Merkwon (leader), Bob Peckman, Janice Bostic, David Youmans and SB.

This was a loop hike in Botetourt and Craig Counties consisting of pieces of the Elmore, Price Mountain, Kelly, Tucker, Patterson Mountain, Helms and Loop trails that take you along both sides (mountain ridges) of the northern section of Patterson Creek. The trails were recently marked and in good condition with the exception of the Helms trail which has been abandoned. We lost the Helms trail a couple of times but thanks to a trace I had on my GPS from a past hike, we were able to make it through with minimal bushwhacking. It is a very nice feeling to see a yellow blaze when in search for a trail sign. Anyway we successfully climbed both Price and Patterson Mountains completing the eleven-mile hike in six hours. The weather and views were excellent.



Enjoying a beautiful Autumn day were SB, Janice, Bob and David

Wednesday, November 12, 2014 8:30 AM
Tar Jacket Ridge, Cole Mtn-Old Hotel Trail Loop

Mike Vaughn (leader), Christin Kash, John Miller, Dave Youmans, Mike Smith, Rebecca Terrill, Madeleine Taylor

We started out on the trail at Salt Long Gap, east of Buena Vista, on a beautiful, sunny Fall 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-degree views were spectacular. The visibility was outstanding. After a lunch break we continued on to Cow Camp Gap and then descended on the Old Hotel Trail back to Hog Camp Gap and returned to our cars at Salt Log Gap. It was truly a great day to be outdoors.

Saturday, November 15, 2014 11:00 AM
Roanoke River Greenway-Eastern End

Cancelled

Sunday, November 16, 2014 8:30 AM
Mill Creek Trail to Angel's Rest via AT

Brendle Wolfe (leader), Maria Bowling (assistant), Val Dymond, David Youmans, Karen Callahan.

After meeting in Roanoke we traveled down I-81 to meet the others in Dublin. Upon arrival we left vehicles below Angel's Rest off the AT and shuttled the other vehicle to the starting point. The day was cloudy and overcast but the cold weather was perfect for a long hike! We hiked northbound on the AT, resting at the top of the ridge for a lunch break. This part of the AT has definitely already seen snow and ice this year, as there were small amounts remaining in shady spots. Shortly after lunch it began to rain and it was a rather muddy and slippery trek down to the overlook of Angel's Rest and back to the car. During the descent we discovered a down cable line across the AT, the result of a recent storm most likely. All in all it was a long but fun hike with a small and tough group!

Monday, November 3, 2014 8:30 AM
Monday, November 10, 2014 8:30 AM
Workhike – AT crossing Rt. 621

Mike Vaughn, Dave Horst, John Miller, Mervin Brower, Blanche Brower, Jeff Edwards, Dave Youmans, Fletcher Meadema, Chad Fedhali, Bob Black, Jake Levitt, Dan Shain, Brian, Jim Webb, Shannon Palmer & Liz Belcher



After felling a couple of 12-14" diameter White Oak trees to use as stringers, we used slings and rock net to carry the 1200-lb logs a hundred yards to the bridge site. After removing the old decking and stringers, we hoisted the new stringers into place on the newly positioned pier and installed a new handrail and repaired the deck. Total man hours for this project were 125.

Friday, November 28
Post Thanksgiving Day Hike to Fulhardt Knob

David Horst (leader), Mary Beth Horst, Jim Webb, Mike Vaughn with Kent, Madeleine Taylor with Sassy, Rebecca Terrill, Mark Milberger, and Carlton Powell.

On a cold, windy day, it was nice to hike in the shelter of the trees! Originally planned to begin on Mountain Pass Road and end at Salt Pond Road at the BRP, we had to modify this hike. The park service had closed the parkway at the 460 exit due to snow, preventing us from getting to Salt Pond Road with our cars. So we did an out and back from MP Road up to Fulhardt Knob and returning. The group then split with some ending their hike there (Mike citing that Kent was too tired to continue, Mark, and Mary Beth) and the rest (Jim, Rebecca, Madeleine, Sassy, Carlton, and myself)

continuing on to the Daleville Park and Ride for a total of 9 miles. It turned out to be a really nice day for a hike with snow on the trail as we got up toward the top. We found a mess at the shelter left by a group of guys that had been camping there (sleeping mats, change from an apparent poker game, a food bag tied up in the tree, and various other trash. We did our best to carry out most of the trash. On our way down, we met Josh from the ATC. Later, we got an email from him saying that he had picked up all the rest of the debris and carted it off. Thanks, Josh! Overall, this was a great way to burn off some turkey and mashed potatoes with a fun group of great hikers. I plan on making the post Turkey Day hike an annual event.

**Sunday, December 07, 2014 7:00 AM
Rich Hole Wilderness North**

John Merkwon (leader), Boak Brantley, Maya Bohler, Rebecca Terrill, Doug Knighton, David Horst, Josiah Leonard, Jeff Edwards, Linda Conner and Bill Conner.



Linda and Bill Conner enjoy the day.

Although the preceding week was wet and cloudy, this turned out to be a great day for a winter hike - sunny and in the low 30's. For this report I'm going to steal some comments from Meetup. David said; "This hike had everything a hiker could want.... steep uphill, bushwhacking miles through briars, wading through stream crossings 16 times in 6 miles." Jeff commented: "The only thing missing was the lodge with the huge fireplace and hot tub to celebrate our accomplishment in together afterwards." We managed to get 10 hikers through this very strenuous 13.8 mile hike in just under 9 hours. As predicted the brush was a bit thicker and thornier this year than last. A good thing was that the snowfall a week prior

had flattened all the leaves so our feet remained dry during the bushwhack portion of the hike. However that same snowfall energized Simpson Creek so rock hopping across the creek was not possible. The first 6 wet water crossings were not too bad but after that feet started to get a bit colder and although we all had some dry socks in our packs we (I) could not declare when we were through with the water. By the time it became apparent that we were through with Simpson Creek, we had only two miles to go so everyone trekked on to beat the sunset and finished at 5:00.



L to R - Doug Knighton, David Horst, and Jeff Edwards enjoy lunch after the bushwhack portion of the hike.

**Saturday, December 13, 2014 12:00 PM
Cascades National Scenic Trail**

Cancelled

**Wednesday, December 17, 2014
Mount Pleasant**

Mike Vaughn (leader), Dave Youmans, Mike Smith, Madeleine Taylor, Joanne Derryberry, Jaime Duval, Hannah Wildman

After a muddy ride up a forest service road we started out on the trail at Salt Long Gap. The weather was clear and cold. After a steady three-mile climb we reached the summit of Mt. Pleasant. The views from the top of the mountain were fantastic. There was a cold wind blowing so after a short hike we continued on our loop hike over Pompey Mountain. After getting back to the parking lot, four of us did the short one-mile hike on the AT up to the open bald area of Cole Mountain for additional great views of the surrounding mountains.

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 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 Edward Wilson at 540-904-8904 or RATChikemaster@gmail.com.

Sunday, January 18, 2015 1:00 PM Tinker Creek Greenway Hollins to Carvins Cove

5 miles Easy No carpool fee—in Roanoke
This will be an out-and-back hike on a new addition to the Greenway system. It is an unpaved walking trail from the Hollins area to the Carvins Cove boat dock. There is a \$2.00 per person fee to use the Carvins Cove trail system.

Kris Peckman..... 540-366-7780

Monday, January 26, 2015 8:30 AM Workhike

Please contact the hike leader or check the Meetup event for exact information on this hike. We will complete the most "urgent" trailwork that needs to be done for our sections of the trail.

**Jim Webb 540-562-8896
..... startover14@peoplepc.com**

Sunday, February 1, 2015 8:00 AM Carvins Cove Trails

10 miles, Strenuous, 6 miles from Roanoke
\$0.75 carpool fee, plus \$2.00 per person to use the Carvins Cove trails.

Some new trails have been established at the Cove. I'll work in some of these new trails to make for an interesting loop. I'll have more detail closer to the hike date.

John Merkwan..... 540-904-2299

Monday, February 9, 2015 8:30 AM Workhike

Please contact the hike leader or check the Meetup event for exact information on this hike. We will complete the most "urgent" trailwork that needs to be done for our sections of the trail.

**Jim Webb 540-562-8896
..... startover14@peoplepc.com**

**Sunday, February 15, 2015 8:00 AM
Cascades/Barney's Wall**

8 miles, moderate, 54 miles from Roanoke, \$5.00 carpool fee, plus \$3.00 per car for 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. There is a great view of the New River Valley from Barney's Wall.
Kris Peckman..... 540-366-7780

**Monday, February 23, 2015 8:30 AM
Workhike**

Please contact the hike leader or check the Meetup event for exact information on this hike. We will complete the most "urgent" trailwork that needs to be done for our sections of the trail.
Jim Webb 540-562-8896
..... startover14@peoplepc.com

**Monday, March 9, 2015 8:30 AM
Workhike**

Please contact the hike leader or check the Meetup event for exact information on this hike. We will complete the most "urgent" trailwork that needs to be done for our sections of the trail.
Jim Webb 540-562-8896
..... startover14@peoplepc.com

**Sunday, March 15, 2015 8:00 AM
Apple Orchard Falls, AT, Cornelius Creek Loop**

8 miles (est), Moderate, 26 miles from Roanoke.
\$3.00 carpool fee

This is a popular hike located in the North Creek camping area, near Arcadia. A blue-blazed trail, steep in places, leads uphill to Apple Orchard Falls which are impressive. Instead of cutting across to the Cornelius Creek Trail we'll head up to the AT to make a bigger loop before getting back to the Cornelius Creek Trail which follows the creek downhill back to the parking lot.

John Merkwan..... 540-904-2299

**Monday, March 23, 2015 8:30 AM
Workhike**

Please contact the hike leader or check the Meetup event for exact information on this hike. We will complete the most "urgent" trailwork that needs to be done for our sections of the trail.
Jim Webb 540-562-8896
..... startover14@peoplepc.com

**Monday, April 6, 2015 8:30 AM
Workhike**

Please contact the hike leader or check the Meetup event for exact information on this hike. We will complete the most "urgent" trailwork that needs to be done for our sections of the trail.
Jim Webb 540-562-8896
..... startover14@peoplepc.com

**Monday, April 20, 2015 8:30 AM
Workhike**

Please contact the hike leader or check the Meetup event for exact information on this hike. We will complete the most "urgent" trailwork that needs to be done for our sections of the trail.
Jim Webb 540-562-8896
..... startover14@peoplepc.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 _____ State _____ Zip _____ - _____ 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 ***

Editor's Notes

This hike schedule is shorter than is traditional. It came with only two pleasure hikes for three months so Kris added two more. The trend seems to be to rely on Meetup. If you would like a fuller schedule AND you are willing to schedule to lead some hikes, please contact me. (bob@peckmanjazz.com) Meetup can be very handy and we both use it, but we think there should also be a full schedule of weekend pleasure hikes (difficult, medium, half-day, and easy) as well as the work hikes.

It would be nice to see the Meetup hikes reported in the Blazer. That means sending a report and a couple of photos to the Blazer editor. Composing the Blazer is enough of a job without gathering the reports and photos from Meetup. Plus the photos on Meetup are low resolution. And if you schedule a hike on Meetup in advance, send it also to the Blazer.

The future of the Blazer is at stake. Maybe it no longer serves the purpose I think it does. If you care enough to send you pictures and write-ups to meetup and the

website but not enough to send them to the Blazer editor then we will soon not have a Blazer. We have copies of Blazers that are many years old. While it is very difficult to erase anything from the Web, it is also impossible to control its preservation. Even though I am not willing to continue editing it, this publication is a worthwhile work of RATC.

The membership list is maintained by our membership coordinator, Bendle Wolfe. Please send any address, phone, spelling, etc., corrections to Brendle.

Also be aware of the year after you name on mailings. If it is less than the current year, you need to pay your dues.

<http://www.meetup.com/Roanoke-Appalachian-Trail-Club/> is the link to our meetup site. It's easy to do on ratc.org.

Bob Peckman

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



CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ROANOKE, VA
PERMIT 509

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Michael Vaughn
992-1350 **mikeva999@yahoo.com**
Vice President, Chris Wilson
757-202-3331 **theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com**
Secretary, Leigh Stover
540-392-2026 **stover121413@gmail.com**
Treasurer, Blanche Brower
387-9732 **blanche.brower@verizon.net**
Conservation Supervisor, Roger Holnback
556-2919 **rholnback@gmail.com**
Land Management Supervisor, Bruce Davidson
384-6760 **catawbamtn@verizon.net**
Trail Supervisor, David Jones
540-552-3058 **dhjones@together.net**
Assistant Trail Supervisor, Jim Webb
562-8896 **startover14@peoplepc.com**
Shelter Supervisors, Homer & Therese Witcher
992-3932 **witchers4@juno.com**
Hikemaster, Edward Wilson
540-904-8904 **RATChikemaster@gmail.com**
Newsletter Editor, Bob Peckman
366-7780 **bob@peckmanjazz.com**
Membership Coordinator, Brendle Wolfe
540-992-6621 **blwolfe@mail.roanoke.edu**
Counselor, Diana Christopulos
387-0930 **dianak16@earthlink.net**
Counselor, Guy Brooks
581-2023 **guybrooks@hotmail.com**
Counselor, Dick Clark
989-7053 **jandrclark@cox.net**

Counselor, Mervin Brower
540-387-9732 **mervin.brower@verizon.net**

ANCILLARIES

Social Chairman, Linda Akers
400-8117 **lakers4350@mail.com**
Webmaster, Chris Wilson
757-202-3331 **theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com**
Week-day Workhikes, Jim Webb
562-8896 **startover14@peoplepc.com**

OTHER

Southwest & Central VA Regional Director, Andrew Downs
540-904-4354 **adowns@appalachiantrail.org**
ATC Regional Representative, Open
.....
Regional Partnership Committee Rep., John Miller
375-3250 **john.miller591@comcast.net**
Alternate Regional Partnership Committee Rep., Mike Vaughn
992-1350 **mikeva999@yahoo.com**
The Mid-week Crew, Bill Gordge
774-3016 **bgordge@cox.net**
Roanoke Valley Greenways Liaison, Roger Holnback
Regional Partnership Committee Alternate, Roger Holnback
ATC-LT Coord. James to New River, Roger Holnback
556-2919 **rholnback@gmail.com**
ATC-LT Coord. New River to Damascus, Steve Reisinger
540-951-7580 **srei38@hotmail.com**
Sir Speedy Printer
344-8550 **info@sspeedy.net**

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club is an affiliate of
The Appalachian Trail Conservancy
and a member of The Nature Conservancy and the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy