

# TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

Winter 2017

*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

**Annual Meeting Potluck March 4**  
**Leonard Adkins**  
**Visual Histories of the AT**

### WORK HIKES

**First Saturday resumes 3/4/17**  
**Bruce Agnew**  
540-846-6180 csc236inf@gmail.com

**Monday, February 13 - 8:30 AM**

**Monday, February 27 - 8:30 AM**

**Monday, March 13 - 8:30 AM**

**Monday, March 27 - 8:30 AM**

**Monday, April 10 - 8:30 AM**

**Monday, April 24 - 8:30 AM**

**Trail Supervisor**

**Jim Webb**

562-8896 – startover14@peoplepc.com

### Hike Scheduling

**Contact Bob Peckman**

540-366-7780 – hikemaster@ratc.org

### BOARD MEETINGS

(All members are always welcome.)

**Monday, January 9, 7:00 PM**

**Monday, February 6, 7:00 PM**

**Glenvar Public Library**

**3917 Daugherty Rd, Salem 24153**

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Does anyone remember Mike Dawson? He is the main man with the Pacific Crest trail. When he worked for the ATC, he was a fierce fighter helping us with land issues. Mike is the originator of the No-Net-Loss concept. When we use it today, we should remember Mike Dawson.

I'm sorry but we have lost information about those who want us to save paper and not mail a Blazer. Please tell us again!

We are looking forward to having author Leonard Adkins present Visual Histories of the AT at the Annual Potluck Business Meeting on March 4th.

Saturday, March 4, 6:00 PM at Christ Lutheran Church, Grandin & Brandon.

Bring a covered dish and be part of the tastiest potluck in town.

## Member News

We are happy to welcome the following new members:

*Christopher Aman*  
*Kat Andrew*  
*Matt & Hoagie Allenbaugh*  
*Bryan Banks*  
*Robin Boone*  
*Andrew Bowman*  
*Eric Bronnenkant*  
*Matthew Browning*  
*Clayton Cabiness*  
*Craig Champney*  
*Paul Chauvin*  
*Daniel Chitwood*  
*Samantha Clark*  
*Ted & Alice Clay*  
*Brandon Comer*  
*Michael Enz*  
*Jeff Farmer*  
*Blair Garland*  
*Janet Gibbons*  
*Wendy Greer*  
*Mark Gustafson*  
*Jill & Paul Hardesty*  
*Jeff Henschel*

*Ryan Hoke*  
*Laura Hunt*  
*Douglas Hurd*  
*John Hvozdovic*  
*Gregory Jans*  
*Caleb Johnson*  
*John Johnson Family*  
*Nancy Kern*  
*Kim Karns*  
*George & Kathy Kesler*  
*Sahar Alee Koloukani*  
*Julian Kryzanowsky*  
*Karyn Lefebvre*  
*Josiah Leonard*  
*Evan Lukow*  
*Ashley Maness*  
*Steve Marshall*  
*Steve McTeer*  
*Jordan Meador*  
*Amy Messick*  
*Jerrey Miller*  
*Tammy Mixon*  
*Doris Moorman*  
*William & Faye Neilan*

*Sophie Perrin*  
*Tim & Trish Poole*  
*Jason Rannow*  
*Tom Reilly*  
*Laurel Riddle*  
*Allison Rivetti*  
*Jonathan Roberts*  
*Becky Shepard*  
*Ray Shup*  
*Barry Stephens Family*  
*Neil Strickland*  
*Timothy Thornhill*  
*Bryan & Becky Tinsley*  
*Deborah & Dan Ullmer*  
*Lucas Vance*  
*Wilma Vargas*  
*Clare Weaver*  
*Jared Webb*  
*Lisa & William Whalen*  
*Tammy Wolfe*  
*David Youngblood*  
*James Zell*

Congratulations to *Evan Lukow* for earning his 113-mile patch.

We extend our thanks to *John Cox* (a through-hiker), *Bryan Banks & Michael Mohlere* for donating to RATC.

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## Hikemaster's Report

Please go to <http://peckmanjazz.com/HIKERATC.HTM>, familiarize yourself with it and offer corrections and improvements. The purpose is to provide enough information for you to do, and even lead, a hike that is new to you. Please contribute to this effort. If a description is inaccurate, or could be improved, email me a correction. Measure driving and shuttle miles and correct them. Inform me of additional meeting places and measure miles from them.

Our first hike leader training was a good

experience. Susan is planning to have more, each based on specific topics. But there will always be time to answer new questions as they arise and to explore situations and problems.

Another way to train yourself to be a leader is to assist. Every hike with more than a few people should have an assistant. You might sweep or just make sure that the sign-up sheet is legible. Leaders should list you as assisting in the hike reports so that you get credit in the banquet leader awards.

**Bob Peckman**

## Hike Leader Training a Success!

On September 22, 22 members and 2 prospective members gathered at Backcountry Ski and Sport in Salem for a Hike Leader Training. Topics covered leadership, hike leader guidelines and requirements, Leave No Trace, gear essentials, emergency situations, basic first aid and safety, and sharing experiences. There was a good mix of current trip leaders and folks wanting to step into that role. Moving forward, we'd like to host two Hike Leader Trainings every year, one in the spring and one in the fall. Spring date TBD. If you have ideas for what you would like to see at these trainings, please email

susan.e.powell07@gmail.com.

RATC members in attendance were: Cheryl Crowell, Jason Rannow, Bob Peckman, Kris Peckman, Brendle Wolfe, Carol Rowlett, John Hvozdovic, Jeff Edwards, Chris Means, Bruce Agnew, Jim Beeson, Caryl Connolly, Josiah Leonard, Dave Horst, Madeleine Taylor, Mary Harshfield, Butch Kelly, David Sutton, Kathryn Herndon, Carina Hughes, Stephen Niamke, and David Foster. RATC prospective members in attendance were Kim Dulaney and Kaia Flom.

*Susan Powell*

## Hike Reports

### **Sunday, September 18, 2016 Saltpond Rd to AT and back**

Dave Sutton (leader) Linda Sutton, Sue Scanlin, and Chris Yates.

Some of the heat has left is so it was a good day for a late summer hike. We followed Salt Pond Rd for about 2.1 miles and where it intersected with the AT is where we took a short break and headed back north on the AT. The maintainer of this portion of the trail is doing a good job maintaining it. The overgrowth appears to have been removed or trimmed back quite well. We all kept together as a group pretty much and returned to our vehicle after about 3 and a half hours. Hope we can hike together again!

### **Sunday, September 18, 2016 Audie Murphy Memorial**

Chris Means (leader), Shaun Buck, Georgia Shaurette, Dee Case, Kathy Arrington, Karen Callahan

We didn't get started until 10:00 so what was originally a cooler morning had begun to heat up as we started our ascent through the Brush Mountain East Wilderness area. A nice breeze visited us regularly and would've been welcomed all day. We passed several other groups of hikers, including one pair of brothers section hiking 40 miles from

Daleville to the trailhead where we'd started out earlier, on Craig's Creek Road.



Kathy and Karen having lunch

Means

After a refreshing lunch at the overlook behind the memorial we started our descent to the parking area on Trout Creek to shuttle back to the drop vehicles. A very enjoyable hike with some awesome company.

### **Saturday, September 24, 2016 Family Hiking Day**

Unfortunately I have no written reports, but we had enough leaders to make a hike:

Fisherman's & Roanoke River Trails - Heidi Ketler



Tinker Ridge - Matt Allenbaugh  
 Mill Mountain Trails - Christine Elder  
 Sawtooth Ridge - Kathryn Herndon



Family Hike on Sawtooth

Herndon

#### September 26, workhike

Rained out

#### Sunday, October 2, 2016 Lambert's Meadow Picnic Table

Homer and Therese Witcher, Taylor and Nathan Peterson, Bennett Witcher, Kevin Witcher, Brenin Witcher, Darin Witcher, Ryan Witcher, Meredith Simmons, Adam Day



Brendin, Darin &amp; Ryan - We start them young!

In September, a huge tree fell at Lambert's Meadow and crushed the picnic table. On October 2, a mostly Witcher crew, including Homer's 11, 8 and 6 year old grandsons, went up and built a new table. Nathan Peterson carried most of the lumber up the

side of the mountain to get it close to the AT. From that point, the work crew carried the lumber about 1/2 mile on the Appalachian Trail to the campsite. We constructed the picnic table and ended the afternoon by having a weenie roast before heading home. The highlight was realizing that we are training a new generation of trail maintainers.

#### Sunday, October 2, 2016 Sinking Creek Mt. Relocation

Jim Webb & Bruce Agnew



Progress on Sinking Creek Mountain

Agnew

We continued to work on the Sinking Creek Mountain Relocation. The relo involves approximately 2000 feet, one switchback and 6 rock slides. The rock slides present a serious challenge to any trail builder considering the size of the rocks.



The October work trip picked up from where the September trip left off, moving some of the smaller rocks into and away from the future tread across the slide areas. The larger rocks will be left for the Konnarock Crew when they return next summer. For those of you interested, consider joining the ATC Konnarock Crew next summer for a week of trail building with volunteers from across the country. Check out AppalachianTrail.org, the ATC web site, for more information.

**Sunday, October 9, 2016  
Hungry Mother State Park**

Chris Means (leader), and Gloria from Spain

I ended up with only one other person on this hike besides myself, Gloria, but as usual it was a very rewarding hike! Gloria had only been in the US for a bit over two weeks, furthering her career. She's taking some classes and will be in the area only briefly. Gloria seemed to be concerned that her English wasn't too good, but we put that worry to rest as I quickly helped her realize how much better her English was, once compared to my Spanish! Gloria is an avid hiker in her home county of Spain and she was kind enough to give me some details of the things to "not miss" when I venture that way. This was her first hike in the US and it was a beautiful day for a walk in the park. Of her outdoor goals while visiting the US, getting on the AT ranks high and I'm hoping to be the one leading the day she makes her goal come true.

**Monday, October 10, 2016  
McAfee's Knob Tail Rehab**

Jeff Edwards, Dave Horst, Steve Marshall, John Miller, Jim Beeson, Kevin Hegg, & Jim Webb

A two day work session was required to replace a section of log cribbing on the trail to McAfee's Knob. The existing cribbing, installed only five years ago, was starting to rot. We started by drilling new holes into the rock below the existing bridge and installing 3/4" diameter steel pins. These will hold the new logs we cut from White Oak which is a more rot resistant wood. After cutting the new logs to fit and placing them against the steel pins, we removed the old rotting log cribbing. We finished the job by adding additional rocks and dirt to bring the cribbing up to trail level.



**Monday, October 17, 2016  
Rock Castle Gorge**

Sandra Cothran and Linda Conner (co-leaders), Judy Kruse, Jim Beeson, William Conner, Dru Sexton, Karen Callahan, Bob Pierce, Henry

We could not have chosen a more perfect fall day for a hike: leaves beginning to change colors, clear blue sky, and temperatures quickly rising to the low 70s! Only 2 members of our group had never hiked this trail before, so the rest of us were able to offer those 2 the needed reassurance during the seemingly never-ending steep ascent at the beginning of the hike. Everyone was in agreement that we were wise in hiking this trail in a counter clock-wise direction rather than clock-wise, which would necessitate a knee-straining descent of this steep portion of the trail. Several of us had previously hiked this trail and seen the damage caused by last fall's downpours, so we were duly impressed by the bridges that the Forest Service had constructed to repair the areas of washout. It was an enjoyable day spent with a cheerful and affable group of skilled hikers!



**Thursday, October 20, 2016  
Audie Murphy Loop**

Jeff Edwards (leader), Julie Petruska, Jennifer Frye, Jill & Randy Pennington, Ken Myers, David Horst.

Jeff and Julie carpooled from Pandapas pond parking lot on 460 in Blacksburg. David picked up the rest at Orange Market in Roanoke and drove to the hike end point on Miller Cove Rd. We left a vehicle there and drove back about 5 miles to the hike beginning on 621. Due to leaf cover on the trail we made an inauspicious 50-foot trek through the woods but then backtracked and got headed in the right direction. A lack of white blazes is always a good clue! After a steady climb with 1500 feet of elevation gain we made it up Brush Mountain to the Audie Murphy monument. We had some lunch and enjoyed the beautiful view from the overlook then started the steady descent to Miller Cove Rd. Everyone had a good time enjoying the warm weather and the beginning of fall leaves changing colors.

**Sunday, October 23, 2016  
Harvey's Knob to Mills Gap**

Chris Means (leader), Georgia Shaurette, Wilma Vargas, Kim Dulaney, Julie Shumaker, Madeleine Taylor, Jennifer Frye, Kirsten & Rhett Herman, Chastity Graham, Laurie Spangler



A Cast of Thousands

Means

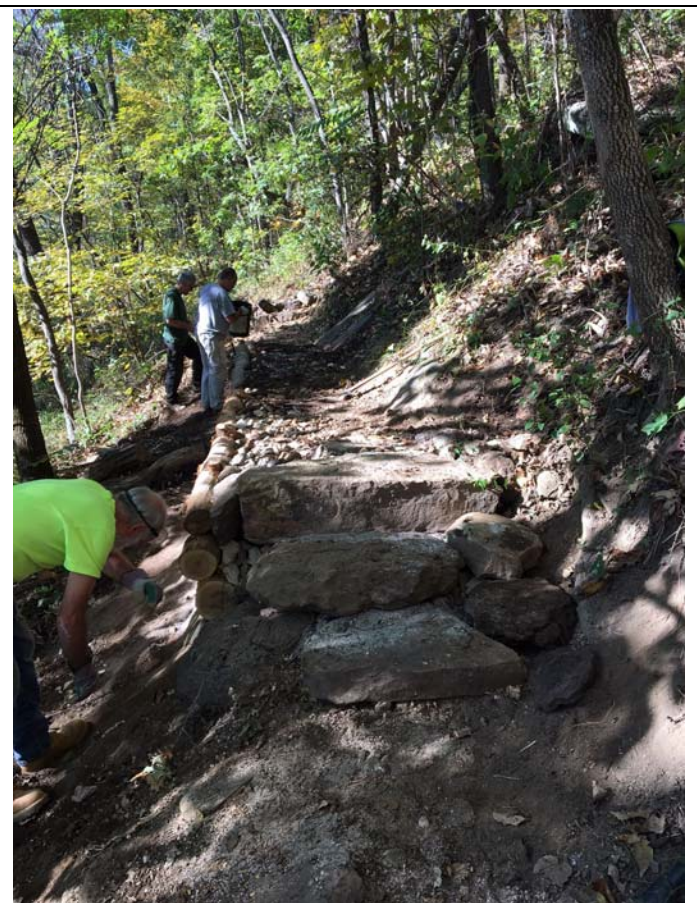
We had 11 hikers and two trail dogs show up for this trip which was offered through both the RATC and ROAG Meet Up groups. There were some birders counting raptors when we arrived at Harvey's Knob and the group was lucky enough to

see a Bald Eagle before we began. It was a blustery hike with fairly cool temps most of the day. The group hiked from Harvey's Knob to the Mills Gap Overlook and back for a total of 8+ miles, stopping for lunch in the picnic area of the Mills Gap Overlook. We of course were chasing the seasonal fall colors which sadly hadn't really taken hold yet in the area. The info we'd obtained stated this would be the most advantageous weekend to view the changes, but it was not to be. A great hike with some old friends and the opportunity to make some new ones was the standard, as always. See you on the trail..

**Monday, October 24  
McAfee's Knob Tail Rehab**

Bill Neilan, John Miller, Jim Beeson, Colin Owens, & Jim Webb

Continuation of October 10.



Supercribbing

Webb



**Wednesday, October 26**  
**Hanging Rock - Craig County**

David Horst and Jeff Edwards (leaders), Nancy Reid, Maya Bohler, Jeff Monroe with his four-legged sidekick, Lois Smith, Josiah Leonard, Jim Beeson - our resident through hiker, Chase Davidson, and Julie Petruska.

An awesome brisk day starting at a remote trail head with an amazing group of friends – what could be better. The hike through recently lopped trails led us to the top of Potts Mountain where we enjoyed amazing views north toward the Peaks along the 2 mile walk to the Hanging Rock trail head. A short ¾ miles later led to a remote north-facing outcropping overlooking Happy Valley. After lunch here, I left to avoid seeing Jeff Monroe standing out on the edge of the hanging rock to have his picture taken with a 20 mph wind ready to send him over the edge. But the post on Meetup verified that he actually did it. We took a different route down to make things interesting. And of course the next 1 ½ miles were totally off trail. I think Maya was a little concerned when she asked me if I knew where we were. But soon back on the trail where I split off to get my truck while Jeff Edwards led the group down to a different trail head, hiking along the beautiful Cove Branch along the way. We will be doing some more maintenance on some of this trail in the future to make this hike even more spectacular. Thanks to Jeff E for helping out on this one. And Josiah finally got to see Hanging Rock!

**Sunday, October 30, 2016**  
**Trout Creek to Dragon's Tooth**

Chris Means (leader), Carol Rowlett, Maya Bohler, Andrew McDonald, Dan Chitwood, Gloria Perez, Madeleine Taylor, Susan Sanders, and David Jermann

On this hike we had 9 hikers and 2 trail dogs assembled from both the RATC and ROAG Meet Up Groups. The creator of the Roanoke Outdoor Adventure Group, Andrew, traveled back to town to go out on this event with us. It was an unusually warm day, and coming up from the Trout Creek side we didn't see too much traffic. As a group we covered the 8 miles in about 7 hours including breaks and a good 45-minute squat at the Tooth. Carol did some rock scrambling while others took

advantage and got in a quick siesta, hammock or not ☺ Another great hike with a nice bunch of people.



The "Demolition Zone" next to the Tooth Means

**Wednesday, November 2, 2016**  
**Garst Mill/Mud Lick Trash Dash!**

Chris Means and Maya Bohler(leaders), George Delvin, Grant Holly, Fred Jourdan



The Trash-dashers

Means

Today's trash dash had the pleasure of having two fellow VA Master Naturalists along (Maya Boyer and George Delvin) to help tidy up the Greenway section and some creek bank areas in Garst Mill Park. The weather was great temperature-wise and a nice breeze kept it cooler for us as we worked. The park had its usual evening crowd of 30 or so individuals enjoying the park, many also bringing along their four-legged friends. Together as a group we were able to gather and dispose of 7 bags of



debris in about 2 hours. It was a very enjoyable day with some good work getting done.

**Wednesday, November 2, 2016  
Terrapin Mountain**

David Horst and Jeff Edwards (leaders), Theresa McDaniels, Gary Bible, Linda and Bill Conner, Ted Clay, Beverly Appel, Chase Davidson, Julie Petruska, Steve Bowles, and Dru Sexton



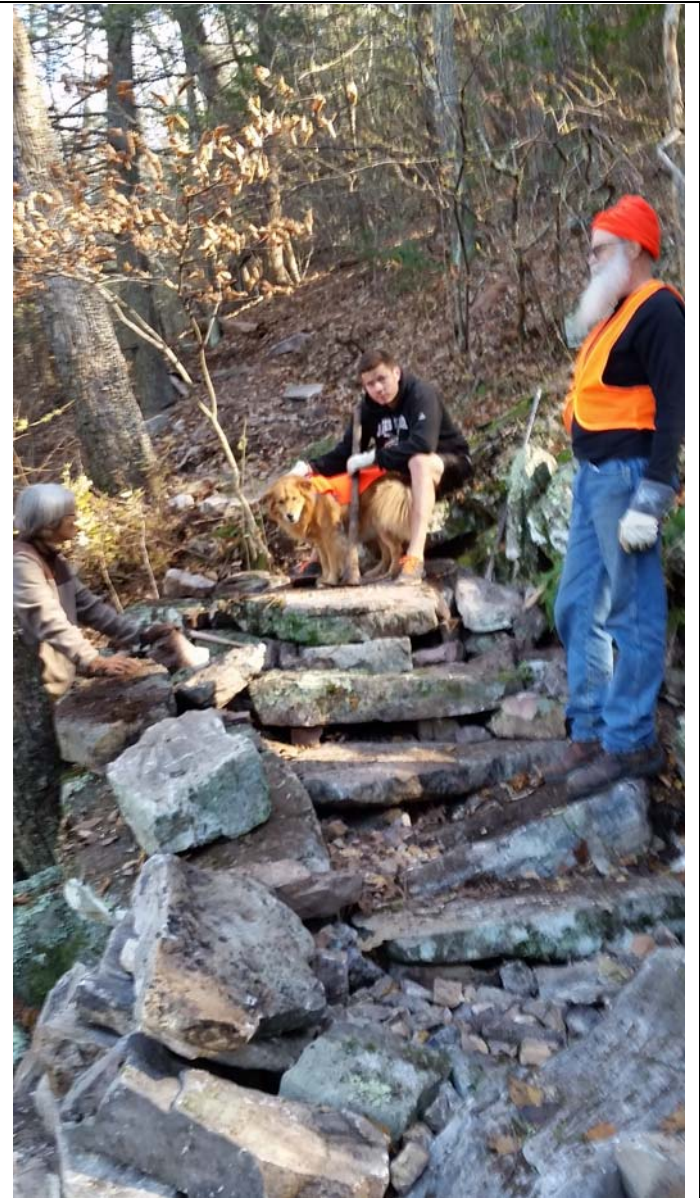
From Terrapin Mountain

Linda

Another great day of weather led us out to Bedford County almost to Big Island. The hike warms up quickly as we climb for the first 3 miles over three false summits to reach the top. The trail is rocky and very steep reaching 30% grade in spots. The first summit gave us great views of the Blue Ridge to the west. The very top passes a rock that looks like a turtle's back, thus the name Terrapin Mt. The views here are wonderful and this is where we stopped to for a break and a snack. Heading down to Camping Gap, we picked up the Reeds Creek Trail. After a mile, I took most of the group on my customary off trail excursion for a couple of miles that allowed for more exposure to the cascading Reeds Creek. This also led to another unnamed trail that I will use on a future hike to make a loop with the AT over Thunder Hill. Back together at the intersection with Terrapin Mt Trail, we finished up our 10 mile strenuous journey. Very strong group and a lot of fun to hike with!

**Saturday, November 5, 2016  
Sinking Creek Mt. Relocation**

Kathryn Herndon, Susan Powell, Chase Davidson, Julie Petruska, Jim Webb, Bruce Agnew and Conner, a walk-on.



Agnew

We had seven volunteers including three of the overseers responsible for this section of trail. Kathryn, Jim and Susan worked on finishing a crib wall that will support a few steps on a steep section of trail while Chase, Julie, Bruce and Conner added steps to the upper end of the last rockslide. It was a productive day. The RATC Saturday Crew will pick up again after the holidays on March 4<sup>th</sup>. Mark your calendars. Joining a work crew even for a day



is a great way to give back. Consider joining us on March 4<sup>th</sup> 2017.

**Sunday, November 6**  
**Flat Peter/Dixon Branch Loop**

John Merkwon (leader)

No one came along. I did go myself and found the old trail so will schedule and try again at a future date.

**Monday, Nov 7, 2016**  
**Location: Dragon's Tooth Trail**

Bill Neilan, John Miller, Mike Vaughn, Tim Mancl, Jeff Edwards, Jill Pennington, Randy Pennington & Jim Webb



It was sunny but the temperature was in the 40's as we headed out from the Orange Market and headed to our work site on the Dragon's Tooth trail. We had enough volunteers today to split up into two teams to tackle some badly eroded parts of the trail. One group installed some badly needed rock check steps while the other added some rock and log steps.

**Wednesday, November 9, 2016**  
**Carvin's Cove, Brushy Mt. - Lakeside loop**

Maya Bohler & Mary Harshfield (leaders), Kris & Bob Peckman, Joanne Derryberry, Ted Clay, Beverly Appel, Madeleine Taylor



Joanne hung her phone in a tree

Derryberry

We met at the Orange Market and carpooled the 2.5 miles to the parking area on Timberview Rd. At 9 am we proceeded to the first trailhead off Horsepen which is the Trough, leading us up to the fire road on Brushy Mountain. The day was perfect – cool and breezy fall weather. It felt good to be out and to escape from the election blues that haunted most of us. There were still leaves left on the trees providing lovely fall colors but not obstructing the views of the surrounding ridges. We continued on Brushy Mountain Rd., climbing gradually up to the highest point of the Mountain and then dropping down to the intersection with Hemlock. From there the trail started to descend, sometimes gradually, sometimes steeply. Once on the Lakeside trail the terrain became hilly and the trail meandered up and down and around. Only after 4 hours of steady hiking were we rewarded with the first glimpse of Carvin's Cove Lake through the trees. For about a mile we followed the shoreline, enjoying the view of the lake. The last 1-1/2 mile followed the Horsepen back to the parking area. We made it back to cars at 2:15 pm.



**Sunday, November 13, 2016  
Dragon's Tooth Loop Hike**

Bob & Kris Peckman (leaders)

We put this on the schedule too late and went by ourselves. It was a good thing because when we got to climbing the big slabs near the tooth, Bob discovered that his hand was not yet ready for prime time and we turned back. It was a nice loop: We started at VA-624 at the AT crossing. We passed the yellow-blazed Boy Scout Trail and followed the AT to the saddle (Lost Spectacles Gap) and then half way to the tooth. On the way back we took the Blue Blaze from the saddle down to the Yellow Blaze Boy Scout Trail and followed that back up to the AT and the AT back to our car. From VA-624 to the saddle is a very pretty section and there is never a crowd!

**Saturday, November 16, 2016  
Goshen Pass - Jump Rock**

David Horst and Jeff Edwards (leaders), Madeleine Taylor, David ?, Jim Beeson, Beverly Appel, Tancrede, and Julie Petruska.



Jump Rock

Taylor

A couple of illnesses and a couple of people that refused to pay the DGIF a fee reduced our numbers to 8 really great hikers. This is going to be an annual event for me as I think the remoteness, the steepness, the variety of terrain and the views make this one of my favorite day hikes in Virginia. Again the weather did not disappoint as we had a cool, crisp, clear day. The swinging bridge still looks and feels suspect and the three person limit is probably wise and was heeded by our group. The steep

multi-tiered climb after leaving the walk along the Maury River did not disappoint either. We did stop about 2 miles up for a break overlooking Goshen Pass. Then up again for another mile before dropping into the saddle for our climb once again up Jump Rock Mountain and amazing 270-degree views. A slight mishap coming down back into the saddle separated a couple of hikers for a short time. But in this area, a 10% loss of hikers is my expectation. The group said that I almost seemed disappointed that we were all together again for the views at Viewing Rock overlooking Lake Merriweather. The hike back down to the bridge is through a myriad of trails that I do not recommend anyone ever doing without someone that knows this area. This was a very strong group with a couple of new attendees, David and Tancrede who made this journey a lot of fun.

**Monday, November 21, 2016  
Trail North of Rte 606, Bland**

Kevin Hegg, Fred Meyer, Bill Neilan, Jim Beeson, John Miller & Jim Webb



Erosion Before

Webb





Great Erosion Killers

Webb

It was very cold and windy as we met at the Orange Market with the temperature hovering around freezing. By the time we had finished the long drive to the Bland county worksite the temperature had risen to 40 degrees and a bright sun was shining.

A set of old steps leading from the road up a bluff and into the woods was badly in need of repair. Years of water running down the trail and over the steps had taken a toll on them as shown in the before picture. A little hard work with timbers and rebar transforms the trail into a new set of steps. There was even enough timber left over to put four steps in further north on the trail.

**Saturday, November 26, 2016**  
**Stone Mountain, Roaring Gap, NC**

Chris Means and Carol Rowlett (leaders), Kathy Arrington, Julie Shumaker, Jennifer Frye, Dan Chitwood, Madeleine Taylor, Wilma Vargas, Jackelyn Badea, Bill Frye and Jerry Bachun



Only serious hikers allowed!

This hike was at Stone Mountain State Park in Traphill, NC. We had 12 hikers join this event with one driving from Lewisburg WV and two others from Richmond VA. We settled on the 8-mile option which covered 3 different trails in the park and gave us a good opportunity to walk off some of the holiday meal. The weather was great which in turn gave us the ability to enjoy some of the long distance views this particular park is known for. A good time was had and a great day for outdoor fun!!

**Tuesday, November 29, 2016**  
**The Channels, Hayters Gap**

Chris Means (leader), Wilma Vargas, Jennifer Frye, Madeleine Taylor, Evan Lukow, Dan Chitwood, Jim Beeson, Kris Peckman, Maya Bohler, Jamie Brown

This hike started out a bit wet but the weather eventually gave us a break. It was a little better than 3 miles uphill to the Channels Nature Area Preserve near Hayters Gap, VA. Its name comes from a group of sandstone boulders and eroded crevices located on a portion of the land. The preserve is part of the Channels State Forest on the border of Washington and Russell counties. We had 10 hikers at this event and by lunch break at the top near the fire tower the sun had come out in full force. A very beautiful day for an outdoors adventure.





From the Top

Brown

It was cool, but sunny, on this fall day—a great day for a hike. It was fun to meet some relative newcomers to the club, and everyone enjoyed having an 8-month old baby along. Although Mary and Maya had scouted out the route, too much time had elapsed (and things looked different with most of the leaves fallen from the trees) for them to remember all the turns. The group was forgiving, though, and we managed to find our way. We made an approximately 5-mile loop hike starting from the Visitor's Center. We took parts of the Forester's Trail, the yellow and black bike trail, the red and black bike trail, the River Walk, the brown trail through the historic area, and finally the Old Salem Turnpike Trail back to the Visitor's Center. We had a nice leisurely break on the porch of the historic house. We made it back by about 12:30.



Inside

Frye

**Friday, December 2, 2016**  
**Explore Park**

Mary Harshfield and Maya Bohler (leaders), Caralee Eicher, Bekah Quirin with her young daughter, Dan Perry, Joanne Derryberry, Wilma Vargas, Brandon Comer

**Sunday, December 4, 2016**  
**Hay Rock**

Chris Means & Carol Rowlett (leaders), Wilma Vargas, Georgia Shaurette, Ted Clay, Kelly O'Rourke, Shawn Holland, Bill Frye, David Jermann, Nancy Wallace, Laurie Spangler, Kris & Bob Peckman, Ruth Blaskis, Ken Myers, Lori Booker, Jennifer Frye, Anne & Tim Pfeiffer, Joe Miller



This hike had the largest headcount for any hike I'd been on, a record for me to lead by far. A big thanks to Carol for the Assistant lead on this event, and also I'd like to welcome Kelly from Charlottesville who joined us on this one. Kelly is a member of the PATC and has shown some interest



in joining our local hiking groups and possibly leading some events.



Although overcast most of the day the views from the ridgeline above Carvin's Cove were impressive as ever. To be such a large crowd, the group stayed relatively intact for most of the hike. All in all a great day to be out and an enjoyable mix of people to run around in the woods with!

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**Monday, December 5, 2016**

**Workhike VA-624 trail South**

Bill Neilan, Kevin Hegg, Jim Beeson, Dave Horst & Jim Webb

It was cold and sunny, a perfect day for working on the trail. A section of the trail south of Newport road was showing its age and starting to sag down the hillside. An hour or two of digging by the five of us brought it up to standard again. We also needed to replace a rock step that had slipped out of place over the years.

**Thursday, December 7, 2016**

**House Mountain**

David Horst ( leader), Ken Myers, Evan Lukow, Beverly Appel, Madeleine Taylor fresh from oral surgery, Jim Beeson, Nancy Wallace, Ed Burgess-my mentor, Josiah Leonard, Wilma Vargas, David ?, Terry Shipley, and Nancy Kern.

We had hikers from all over for this one. Some new, some old....and a really great surprise was to see Ed Burgess hiking with us again after a long sabbatical. My very first RATC hike was with Ed when he was leading most of the weekday hikes. Many of us miss seeing him and hope he will join us again soon. Madeleine had oral surgery the day before and was a little loopy! Fortunately, Ed hiked with her the entire day and kept her from wandering off trail down to Devils Backbone brewery. We had wonderful weather and of course the views at the top of both mountains are spectacular. And Table Rock never ceases to amaze anyone seeing it for the first time. Ed and I both got on top for pictures. And all of the women got together at the outcropping at the top of Big House for a group picture – seemed like an estrogen fest and discrimination to me! (Is that politically incorrect?) This was one of the most fun groups that I have hiked with on a RATC hike - with lots of laughter! Great group!

**Sunday, December 18, 2016**

**South of the Foot Bridge**

Both Clubs: Jeff Monroe (leader) & Kelly O'Rourke  
 RATC: Bob & Kris Peckman, Carol Rowlett, Jennifer Harvey Frye, Chris Aman, and Wilma Vargas  
 PATC: Marley McGrath, Patrick Cory, and Barbara Martin





In the fog

Frye



The Group

Kris



We stayed together

Monroe

Because weather forecasts predicted 55 mph winds at elevations above 2,000 feet and off and on rain, the group decided to travel at low elevations. The hikes included the old (pre-2000) A.T., the Cashaw Creek Trail, the current A.T. between Hercules Road and the Johns Hollow Shelter, and the Sheppe Pond Trail. Rains held off except during lunch, which most of the group consumed inside the Johns Hollow Shelter. Most of the group had never hiked several of the trails in the day's Figure 8 hike, and enjoyed seeing some new parts of the National Forest.

**Monday, December 19, 2016  
McAfee Knob Fire Road**

Chris Aman, John Miller, Bill Neilan, Mike Vaughn, Kevin Hegg, Dave Horst & Jim Webb

The weather was cold and cloudy but with just a hint of a wind; it was a very comfortable workday. The day was spent on the fire road at McAfee's cutting back the brush and small trees that encroach on the roadway. The Roanoke Fire and Rescue has a difficult time navigating the road in certain areas and widening the road in those areas makes for a faster and safer rescue.

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Kenneth Grandstaff was visiting from Des Moines, IA in July and took this picture so we would know what kind of people were loitering in front of Pickle Branch Shelter. He also admired the nice roof!



## Hiking Guidelines

<http://www.meetup.com/Roanoke-Appalachian-Trail-Club/#calendar>

Both hikers and leaders, please consult the hike descriptions at

<http://peckmanjazz.com/HIKERATC.HTM>

Tell me how to make the descriptions better. Try to use the name and description when posting a hike on Meetup, or maybe we should change it.

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. Make requests if we don't fill your needs.

Hikes are rated by length and terrain so hikers can evaluate them based on their individual strengths.

Easy terrain – Greenways or old roads

Moderate terrain – Typical AT

Strenuous terrain – long climbs and rough trails

Challenging – neglected trails and bushwhacking

Shuttle lengths are included to calculate carpool fees. Carpooling is encouraged to save gasoline

and because trailhead parking may be limited.

The hike leader is responsible for arranging the carpool. While there is no fee to hike with the club, the carpool fee is for the driver.

**If you are new to hiking or unfamiliar with the hike, contact the leader who will be glad to help you evaluate whether the hike is appropriate for you and also if you are properly equipped. Hike leaders should recommend that you don't come if you are not prepared with equipment or condition.**

**The club is always looking for experienced hikers to help lead club hikes. Uncle Bob Needs You! RATC needs you! Get on Meetup and lead a hike or contact the leader on a hike and offer to assist. Come out for the next hike-leader training. Contact Bob Peckman at [hikemaster@ratc.org](mailto:hikemaster@ratc.org). For Blazer matters [blazer@ratc.org](mailto:blazer@ratc.org)**

## Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club Application New and 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 the instructions of the leader on group hikes and trips.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ New Member Packet Fee \$5.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Indiv. # of years \_\_\_\_\_ x \$15.00 \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Family # of years \_\_\_\_\_ x \$20.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Second Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Individual Life membership \$250.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Family life membership \$300.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Dues are payable in January of each year. Make checks payable to RATC.

Please send dues and any questions about money or membership to our

treasurer, Blanche Brower, PO Box 12282, Roanoke, VA 24024,

[treasurer@ratc.org](mailto:treasurer@ratc.org) (540)387-9732. You can also use PayPal at [ratc.org](http://ratc.org).

Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TRAIL BLAZER  
Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club  
8131 Webster Dr  
ROANOKE VA 24019-2333



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