

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

Spring 2019

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

Workhikes

**Nearly Every Monday
Please check Meetup for
Places and times**

Trail Supervisor - Mike Vaughn
992-1350 – TrailSupervisor@ratc.org

BOARD MEETINGS

**Glenvar Public Library
3917 Daugherty Rd, Salem 24153**
(All members are always welcome.)

Monday, April 8, 7:00 PM

Monday, May 6, 7:00 PM

Monday, June 3, 7:00 PM

Monday, July 8, 7:00 PM

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Siegfried Remembered

Siegfried Kolmstetter came to our club in 1971 and by 1972 he was the overseer for the section from VA-311 to McAfee's Knob. That job changed a couple of times as we moved off, and later back onto McAfee but Siegfried maintained that job for 25 years. Siegfried was loved only by the people who knew him, all the people who knew him. He was a big man with a craggy face and a prominent German accent. Many people didn't get past that. But if you spent some time with him, you saw only Siegfried. He was a physician at the VA Hospital, highly respected and recognized for his exceptional care.



Siegfried Kolmstetter in 1986

A club member alerted Dan Casey that Siegfried was an interesting story so Lynn Bryant, Bill Gorge, Mike Haynie, Linda Akers, Kris and I met with him for lunch and had fun reminiscing about our dear friend. The result is in the March 28 Roanoke Times. Also read the nice stuff on RATC.org

Bob Peckman

President's Report

At our Annual Meeting/Potluck on March 16, 2019 I presented the following summary of 2018 – 19 year in review;

Trail Maintenance – Jim Webb

- Rocky Gap – 6 work hikes – 50 rock steps and 12 log steps
- Sinking Creek relocation completed – 3 year project, 2200 feet and 250 rock steps
- Replaced and added 6 feet to Dismal Creek bridge
- Andy Layne Trail bridge replaced – new pier built - \$1,000
- Andy Layne Trail – 45 log steps added
- John's Creek – 11 rock steps added
- Pine Swamp Branch Shelter – trees removed and shelter reopened
- Dragon's Tooth – 10 hikes – 110 rock steps added
- New Culvert added to VA 621 parking lot - \$800

Shelter Maintenance – Homer & Therese Witcher

- Fulhardt Knob – extended roof 16" – gutter guards
- Campbell Shelter – new metal roof
- Campbell Shelter – stained shelter & privy
- Campbell Shelter – relocated privy
- Niday Shelter – new metal roof
- War Spur Shelter – new metal roof
- Pickle Branch Shelter – relocated privy
- Pickle Branch Shelter – upgraded & added 45 wooden steps to water source
- Added nine fire grates

Hikes – Susan Herndon-Powell

- 56 Recreational Hikes
- 16 Different Hike Leaders
 - ✓ Chris Means – 11
 - ✓ Josiah Leonard – 10
 - ✓ David Horst - 6
- Liability Insurance
- ATC Virginia License Plate Proceeds
 - ✓ Hike Leader Wilderness First Aid

McAfee Knob Task Force – Brian Boggs

- 33 Volunteers – 175 Patrols
 - ✓ Bill Neilan 232
 - ✓ Scott Karns 119
 - ✓ Terry Shipley 109
 - ✓ Ann Kohinke 100
 - ✓ Susan Terwilliger 100
- 1,125 Volunteer Hours – 1,081 Miles Hiked
- 18,486 Visitors
 - ✓ 15,501 Day Hikers – 2,271 Backpackers – 718 Thru Hikers – 186 Other
- 570 Gallons of Trash Removed (Diapers)
- 46 Fire Rings Dismantled

RATC Management

- Roanoke Valley Gives – Brendle Wolfe
 - ✓ \$2730 up \$730 from 2018
- Doc's Way Property – Andrew Downs
 - ✓ RATC \$5,000 Contribution
- VA 311 Bridge – Diana Christopulos
 - ✓ Survey - Bridge Completion 2024
- Mountain Valley Pipeline – Diana Christopulos
- RATC Archives – Diana Christopulos
- Press Press Merch Store – Jim Beeson
- Backpacker Magazine – Mark Farrell

New RATC Board elected at March Meeting

President – Jim Beeson

Vice President – Bill Neilan

Secretary – Susan Terwilliger

Treasurer – Terri McClure

Conservation Chair – Butch Kelly

Land Management – Vacant

Trail Supervisor - Mike Vaughn

Shelter Supervisors – Homer/Therese Witcher

Hikemaster – Josiah Leonard

Newsletter Editor – Bob Peckman

Membership Coordinator – Mark Farrell

Counselor – Anne Pfeiffer

Counselor – Brian Boggs

Counselor – Julio Stephens

Counselor – Jason Thompson

Thank you to outgoing RATC Board members

Diana Christopulos – Vice President
 Dave Youmans – Land Management
 Jim Webb – Trail Supervisor
 Susan Herndon-Powell – Hikemaster
 Chris Means – Membership Coordinator
 Anne Kohinke – Counselor

Through the efforts of Brendle Wolfe RATC raised \$2,730 on March 13, 2019 during Roanoke Valley

Gives Day. This was an increase of \$600 compared to 2018. GREAT JOB BRENDLE!

RATC contributed \$5000 toward the purchase of a 237 acre property, i.e., Doc's Way that is in the view shed of McAfee Knob and Tinker. Andrew Downs, ATC Regional Director is coordinating the purchase which will protect this property from further development and preserve the AT view going forward.

Jim Beeson

Member News

We are happy to welcome the following new members:

<i>Megan James</i>	<i>Rachel Barham</i>	<i>Connie Edwards</i>
<i>Tom McAvoy</i>	<i>Donald Wilson</i>	<i>Robert Carneal</i>
<i>Chris Stafford</i>	<i>Caleb Fort</i>	<i>Connie Zeller</i>
<i>Mark Henderson</i>	<i>Jason Thompson</i>	<i>Scott O'Brien</i>
<i>Beth & Sean Campbell</i>	<i>Jesse Thompson</i>	<i>Joe Horne</i>

113-Mile Patch:

None this quarter

Contributions in honor of Siegfried Kolmstetter:

<i>Derry Hutt</i>	<i>Lisa Williams</i>	<i>Liz Belcher</i>
<i>Anne Kohinke</i>	<i>Network for Good</i>	<i>Jay & Kim Dowd</i>

Other Contributions:

<i>Lindsey Quesinberry</i>	<i>James & Karen Orville</i>
<i>Nancy Snyder</i>	<i>Carolyn Baratta</i>

Our Dog Policy From The 1988 Summer Blazer

- For your dog to participate in club events you must keep it quiet and in control at all times, whether by leash or commands.
- Please don't expect that your dog will ride in someone else's car.
- Please give the hike leader the opportunity to warn you that his or her hike has some precarious places inappropriate for a dog.
- We do not always see our pet through the eyes of others. Please do not be offended if the board decides that a particular dog is canina non grata.

RATC Board of Directors

Hikemaster's Report

Spring is finally here and I couldn't be more excited. Irises, daffodils, and crocuses are blooming in many Roanoke Valley neighborhoods, and the first of the spring wildflowers are just starting to appear on the Appalachian Trail. I hope you have a chance to go hiking and enjoy the beauty of the spring season. Even though we are starting to see some warmer temperatures, spring weather can sometimes be deceiving. Don't forget to pack the 10 essentials so you are not caught unprepared. The 10 essentials are a First Aid Kit, headlamp/flashlight, sun protection, trail food, fire-building supplies, knife, water and water treatment/filter, insulating layers and rain gear, map and/or compass, and an emergency shelter.

I'd like to welcome Larry Austin back as a RATC hike leader. Larry led interesting, original, and creative hikes for RATC for over 10 years. I'd also like to welcome new RATC hike leader Jenny Steding. They are both excited to lead hikes for RATC. Look for hikes led by Larry, Jenny, and our other awesome hike leaders on our Meetup page. If you are interested in leading hikes for RATC, please consider signing up for our next New Hike Leader Training on Saturday, March 30. You can register for the New Hike Leader Training by signing up through the Meetup.

Susan Herndon-Powell

New Trail Supervisor's Report

I am very happy to take over as Trail Supervisor and am really looking forward to continuing the effort to make our section the best-maintained section on the whole AT. As you probably know, our club maintains 120 miles of the AT. We also maintain several side trails, including the Andy Layne Trail and the blue blaze trail to Dragon's Tooth. Jim Webb, our Trail Supervisor for the past five years, has done a phenomenal job. He has put in thousands of hours on the trail and has tackled some big projects. He has led the rehab or replacement at least ten bridges, including the major work done on the Andy Layne bridge last Fall. In addition he has led numerous work hikes all over our section of trail. Hundreds of steps have been installed, including over 250 just last year alone. I am grateful that he will stay heavily involved in trail maintenance going forward.

I have walked most of the trail with Jim over the past year, evaluating the sections that still need work. With such a large amount of trail there is always work to be done. We have identified trail projects that will take nearly 100 work hikes to complete. There are other sections of trail that still need to be evaluated. In addition, I am sure

there will be work hikes needed over the coming year to fix damage caused by storms. As we saw last year, damage from Hurricane Michael and the November ice storm took hundreds of hours to fix. Wind and water are surely the greatest enemies of the Trail.

Working with Jim over the past years, our goal was always to try to make the trail a little bit better each year, particularly for the northbound thru-hikers in the Spring. I want to continue with this effort. In addition, we have been working to improve our three Triple Crown trails. Two years ago, we did a major rehab of the Andy Layne Trail, installing over 240 steps. Since last summer we have been working on the trail up to Dragon's Tooth. We have installed over 100 steps there as well as over 200 feet of rock crib wall. This work will soon be completed. We will then turn to a major rehab of the trail from VA-311 up to McAfee Knob. This section sees over 75,000 hikers each year. As you might expect, that many feet on the trail produces a great deal of wear and tear. We will spend much of the next year working on this section, to help ensure that all of hikers have a safe and enjoyable experience.

I invite all of the club members to come out on our work hikes. We will be having a work hike just about every week in the coming year. Believe it or not the work hikes are usually very enjoyable, although you can always be sure of getting dirty. All of our trail workers find it very rewarding to look back the work completed for the day and see the obvious improvements to the trail, whether it is a set of steps installed or a bridge fixed.

In addition to our weekly work hikes, we have an ongoing need for trail maintainers. These individuals take over a section of trail that varies

from three to five miles and perform minor maintenance activities. These include clipping, periodic reblazing, and reporting trail problems such as blowdowns. Trail maintainers should walk their section of the trail at least four times per year. Please contact me at mikeva999@yahoo.com or at 540-992-1350 if you are interested in working on a section of trail.

I really appreciate all of the efforts of our trail workers. They truly are the heart and soul of the Trail. I look forward to seeing many of you out on the trail in the year ahead.

Mike Vaughn

A reprint of an important piece from our sage, Andy Layne, in the Fall 1989 Blazer:

Tips, conceptions, misconceptions, and miscarriages for becoming a better trail worker (the abridged version), by Andy Layne

Seek professional help, start fast, end fast, after the work hike find somethin you like to do. Work through pain and injury, the benefits of quitten smoking and trail work cannot be overlooked. Lift weights, such as pulaskis. You'll not be spected to know nothin when you first report so you'll be given five minits to learn how, the only scuse for not showin up be for you to send somebody in your place who is biggern strongern you are, religion is no scuse for being a slacker. If you get a belly ache while working and it last more than two weeks, see your doctor (let us get this in now. Don't try to sno ball us, we just finished four thick books on sno ball jobs and they all made the best cellar list), do not unload such problems as knees ankles necks backs hips hernias bursas any thing fancied or fancy etc on your comrades as they probly have more of em than you do, frequent gas pains and dirhea are not legit scuse to leave the job site, consistent tiredness will not be tolrated under no circumstance. There will be absolutely no alcoholic stuff brought on the job site without a doctor's subscription, anyone with a noticable social disease will be required to work at least fifty feet from your nearest competitors. You will positively not listen to any weather reports for

three days before any work hike, don't gang up, some of the sorriest work we get is done by gangs, there will be no lip bendin cept to ask supervisor what to do, all abortion talk politics talk, assorted aches and pains talk, bitchin and gripin talk corny jokes and sports talk who's cheatin on their wives and girl friends talk etc will be done after quitten time. Don't bring too much food to the job as you won't have time to eat it no how. All no count work will be done over on your time, all lewd jokers and questionable behaviors will be sent immediately to the front on the raking that's where the yellow jackets and snakes lie in wait, don't dig in the yellow jacket nests, they don't know what you're doin and you won't have time to explain it to em, if you persist in diggin there any way you will be allowed only five minits of trauma time per nest, don't play with the snakes theyre on the endangered species list and don't have no sinse of humor, you wouldn't either if you had to crawl around on yo bare belly thro the bush. If you feel you are gittin discouraged, jittery, dispondent the world is closin in on you, if St. Albins Hosp give up on you, come see us. We take anything. If you merely feel that the green tunnel is closin in, just work your loppers faster.

Hike Reports

**December 29, 2018 8:30 AM
Laurel Creek / Kelly's Knob**

Joe Berney (leader), Michael Lee, Jennifer Frye, Harold Leighton, Shari Morris



Joe, Harold, Shari, Jennifer & Michael

Originally scheduled as Cascades Falls/ Barney's Wall. This hike started bad, but ended nicely. I woke the day before with an upper respiratory infection, but was determined to go on the hike! Upon arrival at the entrance to the Cascades, we were met with a locked gate and a sign stating "closed due to the government shutdown". Two of the folks had driven a long way, so discussing options with everyone, we decided to head to Laurel Creek / Kelly's Knob from hwy 42, for a hike of about the same distance.

We had a good climb up to the creek crossing. The creek was swollen due to the rains, but we were all able to safely navigate the creek. As we headed up the incline towards Kelly's Knob, the respiratory infection reminded me it was there and seriously winded me. We made it to the knob and the view was good. We had lunch on the rocks and took plenty of photographs.

We then headed down the mountain towards the vehicles. This time, at the creek crossing we chose a different path around the first crossing. At the second crossing, after everyone else was safe, I began my crossing and slipped and had a hard fall on the rocks and was soaked from the waist down. SO, the excitement just kept coming! We finished the rest of the hike uneventfully.

It was a beautiful, late December day and I enjoyed meeting and hiking with a few new people.

**Sunday, December 30, 2018 8:00 am
RATC Hike #12: Ribble Trail/A.T. Loop**

Kathryn Herndon-Powell (leader), Jenny Steding (assistant), Jim Beeson, Josiah Leonard, Ken Myers, Clare Weaver, Susan Sanders



Clare, Josiah, Jim, Susan, Ken, & Jenny --- Kathryn

This unseasonably warm winter day turned out to be perfect for a 10-mile hike on Sugar Run Mountain. When we arrived at the unmarked parking for the Ribble Trail, it was grey and gloomy and spitting a

light rain. We decided to warm up and get the climbing out of the way by heading straight up the Ribble Trail to Big Horse Gap, and by the time we reached the A.T. the sunshine was waiting there to greet us. Recent rains had created new streams splashing down the slopes, and occasionally down the trail itself. We enjoyed examining the ruins of an old cabin and former picnic area near the gap, until one hiker narrowly escaped a rusty nail through the shoe.

Once on the A.T., we cruised southbound along the crest of Sugar Run Mountain with views through the leafless trees of far-off blue ridges to our right, and Wilburn Valley to our left. We met a chatty section hiker who hadn't seen a soul for three days, stopped for lunch near some interesting boulders, and enjoyed the open winter view from the overlook.

By this time all clouds were gone and the visibility was splendid: we were able to spot not only nearby Angels Rest, but the dramatic gaps where the New River breaks through several long ridges, and some far-off development we guessed to be Blacksburg. We descended to Wapiti Shelter through lush rhododendron tunnels where the swollen creeks sparkled so prettily, we almost didn't mind that they were harder to hop across than usual. Wapiti Shelter was a pleasant place for a snack break, and Clare even found her cousin's entry from April in the register book. The Trail through the Dismal Valley was easy but wet, as usual, and we turned off onto the lower leg of the Ribble Trail to return to our cars just before the A.T.'s crossing of Lions Den Road. A stop by Trent's Grocery on the drive home provided both snacks and local color.

This hike was planned by Susan Herndon-Powell, who handled all the setup and communication but was sadly unable to join us due to a recent injury. Susan was missed, but Kathryn accepted a promotion to Hike Leader and Jenny stepped up as Assistant. It was a great final A.T. hike of 2018 in excellent company - thank you Susan for setting us up for success!

Tuesday, January 1, 2019 10:00 AM
Hanging Rock State Park

Chris Means (leader), Travis Cane, Jennifer Frye, George Self, Connie Edwards, Haidar Alatiyah, Bahaaldin Alamood, Leigh Ehlios, Franus Sosa

On our New Year's Day hike in Hanging Rock State Park, Danbury NC, 11 of us got together from 2 Meet Up hiking groups, RATC and ROAG, out of Roanoke, VA and got in a few miles. It had been raining the day before so it was super sloppy out there, but beautiful none the less.. Be well peeps... and...

Get Your Outside On !!!

Saturday, January 5, 2019 9:30 AM
RATC Section 13
South Ribble Trail to Kimberling Creek

Joe Berney & Ken Myers (leaders), Michael Lee, Dee Case, Susan Sanders, Jennifer Frye, and Sharon Holland



After driving through a misty rain, the precipitation ceased when we reached the parking area at the South Ribble Trail which connects to the AT at the North end of RATC Section 13. We hiked the water-logged, swampy path until we reached the side trail which we traversed to Dismal Falls. This portion of the AT is draped in rhododendron and would be a treat to see during the blooming season. There we enjoyed a short break with a snack, relaxing to the sound of the pounding waters of the falls and the warmth of the sun, which had appeared in a cleared sky. The remainder of the hike was a bit drier and we finished a great hike at the Kimberling Creek bridge.

**Sunday, January 6, 2019 10:30 AM
Hungry Mother State Park**

Chris Means (leader & photo), Sharon Tanner, Mike Hill, Sylvia Dill, Sara Dill, Jennifer Frye, Haidar Alatiyah and Bahaaldin Alamood,



Hungry Mother State Park in Marion, VA holds almost 20 miles of multi-use trails, as well as opportunities for fishing, camping, swimming and canoeing. Just a short drive from the Roanoke area, this park is only one of the many outdoor jewels we have available to us here in SW Virginia.. This day was all about hikers from the RATC and the ROAG laying down 10 miles on 4 trails, with the cherry on top being the Molly Knob Vista Trail. Be well peeps.... and...
Get Your Outside On !!!

**Sunday, January 27, 2019 10:00 AM
Petites Gap to James River Foot Bridge**

Chris Means (leader), Madeleine Taylor, Ken Myers, Laura Legere, Jennifer Frye, Layne R. Lee, Susan Terwilliger, Jim Beeson, Josiah Leonard, and Chasity Graham



Well the government angle didn't work out on this one but the weather did, here's a hike I led Sunday 01/27. The hike was planned to do Petites Gap down to the James, but due to the Parkway being closed we ended up doing Salt Log Gap approach trail up to the AT, then went SOBO down to the James River. Just goes to show you, no bad hikes in SW VA !! :-). Be well peeps... and...
Get Your Outside On !!!

**Wednesday, February 6, 2019 9:00 AM
RAPP (Roanoke Area Parks and Preserves)
Hike #1 – Green Hill Park**

David Wickersham (leader), Joanne Spetzler (assistant) and Marina Kellas

This was a mid-week leg-stretcher with the goal of hiking every trail in Salem's Green Hill Park. We met at the Roanoke River Greenway parking lot, just inside the entrance to the park. From there we followed the greenway to a network of woodland trails. As we walked, Joanne amazed us with her ability to identify birds based on their appearance and/or their habits and/or their calls.

We hiked each of the woodland trails. Some segments we hiked in both directions to close the loops. A couple of points of interest were the great views from the high meadow of the equestrian area and an aged industrial relic of some sort; a round masonry structure roughly 20 feet tall or so.

We covered 0.8 miles on each leg of the greenway walk and 3.0 miles on the wooded trails for a total of 4.6 miles for the day.

**Monday, February 13, 2018, 8:30 am
Work Hike – Trail to Dragon's Tooth**

Jim Webb (Leader), Bill Neilan, Mark Farrell, Mike Vaughn, Sandie Myers

It was a cold, windy day when we started out up to Dragon's Tooth. Wind gusts up to 30 mph were forecast for the day. Since the wind was out of the west and we would be working on the south side of the mountain we knew we would be protected. Upon reaching the work site for the day we all got to work digging out the trail for the placement of the new steps, looking for rocks to use as steps, and crushing rocks to use as fill material. Since we are all fairly experienced the work went quickly, without any mishaps. It was a beautiful, sunny day and we enjoyed the view of the surrounding mountains, including the Peaks of Otter, far off in the distance. Surprisingly, no hikers passed us while we were at the work site. We were all tired by the end of the day but were very proud of the seven steps we had installed.

That brings our total stone steps installed on the trail up to Dragon's Tooth to 101 since we started work there last June. We will be installing about 30 more before we complete the project sometime in April. There were a little over 200 stone steps already on that 0.8-mile section of trail so by the time we are finished there will be well over 300. It will be much easier to negotiate that difficult section of trail.

**Saturday, February 15, 2019 9:00 AM
RAPP Hike #2
Tinker Creek Greenway**

David Wickersham (leader), Joanne Spetzler (assistant), Dee Case, Mia Copeland and Layne Lee



This was a mid-week leg-stretcher with the goal of hiking from the Hollins trailhead of the Tinker Creek Greenway to the Carvins Cave boat docks and back. First things first...we started out by paying our \$3.00 day-pass fee at the pay station at the parking lot. This was required since we would be hiking in the Carvins Cove Preserve.

The first half mile or so was sloppy in spots but the rest of the way the trail was in good shape. After traipsing through the power lines right of way we made our way to the ridge where Carvins Cove came into view. Thanks to the bright blue skies and the lack of leaves on the trees we had some great views of the cove on our trek from there to the boat docks.

After arriving at the boat docks we admired the newest dock, luxuriated in the fantastic weather, then headed back to the trailhead. The total distance covered was 4.5 miles.

**Monday, February 18, 2019, 8:30 am
Work Hike – Trail to Dragon's Tooth**

Jim Webb (Leader), Dave Horst, Mark Farrell,
Mike Vaughn



It was another cold, windy day as we again started up to Dragon's Tooth. Today we were going to work at the base of the large wall, located most of the way up the trail. The treadway there is rough and a step had become dislodged. We reached the work site after a 75-minute hike and got to work. First off we had to install an extensive crib wall to help get the trail level. This took quite a few hikes along the trail looking for large rocks and transporting them back to the work site. Most of the rocks took all four of us to carry them over the rough trail. By the end of the day we had gotten 16 square feet of cribbing in place as well as two steps. We also took quite a few rock obstructions out of the treadway. All of this will help hikers when starting out on this very difficult, vertical section of the trail up to Dragon's Tooth.

**Monday, February 25, 2019 8:00 AM
Workhike - Dragon's Tooth**

Bill Neilan, Mark Farrell, Caleb Fort, Mike Vaughn, Sandie Meyers & Jim Webb

The day was cold with winds of 23 mph with gusts of 40 mph. It was our good fortune that the work area is on the East side of the mountain, out of the wind. The purpose of this hike was to improve the treadway on a couple of areas. One area needed a pathway over a sloped rock and the addition of a step. Another area was the addition of three steps in a staircase where the height was too big and created a hazard.

At the end of the day four new steps were in place.

**Monday, February 25, 2019 9:00 AM
Broad Run Mountain Loop**

Josiah Leonard (Leader), Larry Austin, David Horst, Julie Petruska, and Mary Psiaki

The weather did not seem to approve of this hike as it rained us out on the original date and then nearly blew us off the mountain during the trip. Nevertheless, we persisted and had a great day in the woods.

Each section of the route had its own challenges. The first leg that follows an old forestry road as it gradually climbs to a saddle, levels through another saddle, then gently descends was supposed to be the "easy section," but it was a challenge avoiding trees and limbs across the route, especially from the November ice storm. The section along Stone Coal Creek normally requires only step-overs or easy rock-hops for its many crossings, but the creek was running high after all of the recent rain. Julie opted to charge straight ahead on most crossings; Dave, Mary, and I performed feats of awkward gymnastics to keep dry feet (and were successful); while Larry did a combination using some rock crossings but stepping into the stream when unsure of his footing. Our last section before lunch was our longest climb of the day using the road and then the Ferrier Trail to ascend to the ridge of Broad Run Mountain. We stopped for lunch in the lee as the wind picked up dramatically as we crested the ridge.

The rest of the hike was along the spine of the ridge following an abandoned trail. There were occasional old blazes, reflectors, and sporadic maintenance, but we were mostly deciphering the route ourselves. We crossed each and every knob of the ridge, which seemed to get steeper and more rugged the farther we went (although tiredness may have added to that perception). It was difficult deciding what to wear as it was easy to get overheated when climbing, but then the howling wind would cause a chill on the corresponding down-slope. We were in the woods for almost exactly five hours (including breaks), covered about 9.7 miles, and had elevation changes of about 4,910 feet. It was a good, stout hike with a speedy group.

Saturday, March 2, 2019 9:00 AM
Campbell shelter privy move

Homer & Therese Witcher (leaders), Lisa Walkiewicz, Susan Terwilliger, Matthew Burnett, Joey Johnson, David Youmans, Bennett Witcher, Austin Arey, Taylor & Nathan Peterson, Jayden Durham

On Tuesday, Austin, Homer & Therese started digging the new privy hole. With the rain late Thursday and Friday, this made for a muddy job on Saturday. Having almost 4 feet dug ahead of time enabled the dirty dozen to finish the project on

Saturday, therefore avoiding having to complete the move in the rain forecast for Sunday.

We had a fantastic crew and everyone immediately jumped to their tasks. By the end of the day, we had dug the hole over 5 feet deep, moved and stained the privy, stained the outside of the shelter and covered the graffiti in the shelter. We also managed to clean up brush around the shelter and cut some firewood. All of this was accomplished before 3 pm, allowing time to either hike up to McAfee Knob or hike out the fire road.



Rockin The Outhouse crew

Peterson

Monday, March 10, 2019 11:30 AM
Peaks of Otter

Brendle Wolfe (leader), Jamie Caldwell, Susan Webb, and my furbaby Caleb.

We had a strong breezy morning as we started up Sharp Top. The breeze and clouds lifted for a lovely hike. We past more 4 legged hikers with

their owners than I have ever seen while hiking. The weather was so nice everyone was out and about. After a quick rest at the top we headed down and took a leisurely stroll around the lake and up to the old farmstead. All in all it was the perfect day for a 9-10 mile hike.

Saturday, March 16, 2019
RATC & ROAG Channels Hike

Chris Means (leader), Chasity Graham, Carol McPeak, Kaleb Reed, Wayne Walk Jr, David Jones, Shawn Buck, Ken Mulane, Nellie Farmer, Charles Collins, Katelyn Rae Barker, Bahaaldin Alamood, Ron McCorkle, Chase Davidson, and Nancy Reid



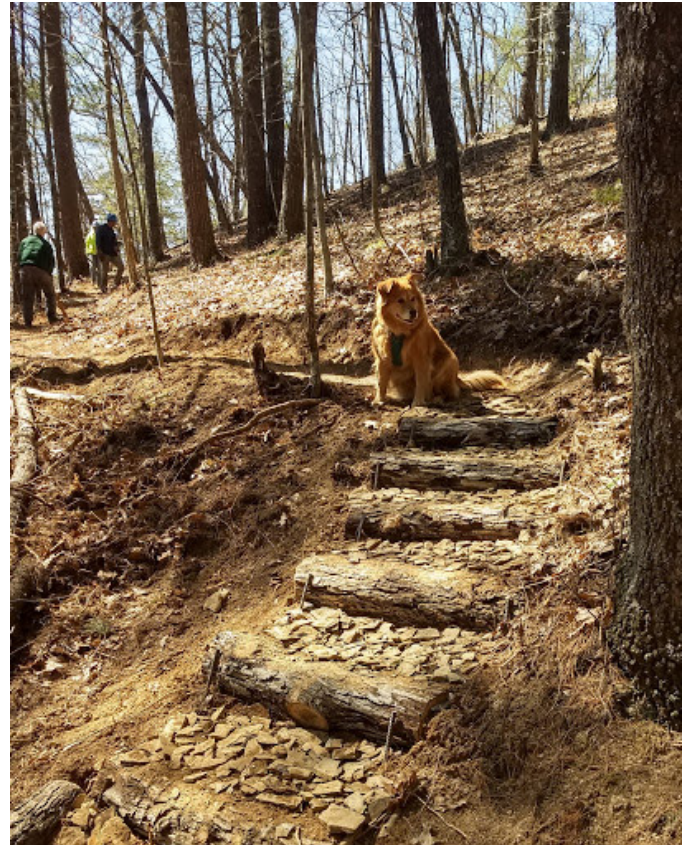
Chasity shows the dimensions Means

I had the honor of leading 15 friends of mine up to The Channels Nature Area Preserve. It was a tad nippy to start out but it's a 3.2-mile steady upward hike to get there, so that worked itself out :-). A very magical place indeed and yet another blessed day spent just wandering around in the woods.. Be well peeps... and...
 Get Your Outside On !!!

Sunday, March 17, 2019 8:00 AM
Sinking Creek Trail Crew

Bruce Agnew (leader), Jim Webb, Matthew Burnett, Mark Farrell, Fred Meyer, Bill Neilan, and Sasha

Six souls braved the perfect weather to install 13 wood steps on the east flank of Sinking Creek Mountain. Sasha the dog provided perimeter security keeping the bears at bay while supervising the workers. Jim Webb dropped the trees necessary for the steps, Matthew Burnett, a new trail volunteer, provided unique observations from his perspective. Mark Farrell encountered a couple whose last name was Niday. They were en route to the shelter named after one of their ancestors.



Truth be known, while these guys were standing around with their cold hands in their pockets, Sasha built the steps.

In discussing trail conditions further up the mountain, it's apparent many more work trips will be necessary to bring the trail on east flank of Sinking Creek mountain into compliance with current ATC guidelines. This small group of dedicated trail volunteers shall be known going forward as the Sinking Creek Crew since the first 10+/- work trips were on the west flank of Sinking Creek Mountain. Now we're on the east flank. The attached picture shows a few of the steps added.

**Sunday, March 17, 2019 8:30 AM
Big Butt/Forge Mountain Hike**

Jeff Monroe, PATC & Dave Horst, RATC (leaders)
RATC: Josiah Leonard, Jenny Steding & Wilma Vargas

PATC: Ann Hays, John Brandt and Jim Frye (who turned back early due to a foot issue) plus Dave's friend Casey from Richmond.



A combined group of the RATC and PATC-Charlottesville Chapter met at the Goshen WMA parking lot to explore some of the trails few people see – south of VA-39 in the Goshen Wildlife Management area. The route took hikers over the summit of Forge Mountain to a fantastic overlook, then past a powerline cut and over Cooper's Knob to a dirt road that was once the access road to a fire tower on the summit of Big Butt Mountain that no longer exists. The group followed the road to the 3451-foot high Big Butt Mountain summit at 5.9 miles.



On the way back, the group followed a trail none of them had ever hiked, which turned out to basically be an occasionally blazed bushwhack. They followed a steep slope down under the powerlines, then a brutal climb back up to Forge Mountain. From there, they retraced their steps to the parking area for a hike that totaled 12.8 miles with 4075 feet elevation gain.

**March 18, 2019, 8:30 am
Work Hike – Trail to Dragon's Tooth**

Mike Vaughn (Leader), Jim Webb, Mark Farrell, Bill Neilan, Jim Beeson, Sandie Myers



Before and After

Vaughn



It was a beautiful, sunny day as we started out up the familiar trail to Dragon's Tooth. We have been fortunate with the weather this winter and have been able to do several work hikes on this section in the past two months. Today we were going to work on the last small section of the trail that needed steps and some cribbing. Upon reaching the work site, we got busy locating rock for steps and preparing the treadway for the steps by clearing soil and roots.

The work went quickly and by 1:30 we had installed six steps and 16 square feet of cribbing. We saw several groups of day hikers and a couple of backpackers. All were grateful for the improvements to the trail. Most of our work hikes since last June have been on this one-mile section of the trail. During this time we have installed a total of 120 rock steps and nearly 200 feet of crib wall. We were all glad to gather up our tools at the end of the day and look forward to working on a different section of trail after completion of this big project.

Monday, March 25, 2019 8:00 AM
Work Hike – East Side of Sinking Creek Mtn.

Mike Vaughn (Leader), Jim Webb, Mark Farrell, Bill Neilan, Jim Beeson, Sandie Myers, Sue Terwilliger, Bruce Agnew



Today was our first day working on a steep and eroded section of trail on the east side of Sinking Creek Mountain. The Konnarock crew, along with club members did a terrific job over the past three years working on the west side of the mountain. The new section there was opened up in November and features over 200 new stone steps and extensive cribbing. The east side of the mountain coming down from the ridgeline is in bad shape in spots.

We will need at least ten work hikes at that location and will be installing well over 100 stone steps. It was a cool, sunny day when we started out from the trailhead on VA-621. The forecast was for rain starting around 1:00 so we were going to have a fairly short workday. After a 1.5-mile hike in on good trail we started to work. We split up and began installing steps in three different locations as well as making crushed rocks for the steps. There are plenty of rocks on that side of the mountain so we had little difficulty finding steps. By the time we quit work about 12:30 we had installed 10 new steps as well as clearing some rocks and stumps and redigging about 75 feet of side hill. We all felt it was good progress for a short day and look forward to getting back out there again. It did start on raining right on time when we were ten minutes from the trailhead.

Monday, March 25, 2019
Sawtooth Ridge

Bahaaldin Alamood, Kathy Smith, Mathem Alamood, Chris Means (leader), Chasity Graham, Madeleine Taylor, Layne Lee, Jennifer Frye



So I got to hang out with 7 members of my hiking family on Sunday, covering a little better than 6 miles we got all of the Outdrz glory on this one. A tid-bit of mountains, a dash of cliffs, a sprinkling of streams and some rolling fields to boot !! Sawtooth Ridge will never let you down.. Be well peeps... and.... Get Your Outside On !!! [#outdrz](#)

Hiking Guidelines

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

Both hikers and leaders, please go to <https://www.ratc.org/regional-hiking-resources/> and click on Bob Peckman's Regional Hike List to 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 suggest changes or new hikes.

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 of \$0.10/one-way mile. We carpool 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 driving expenses.

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. 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 Josiah Leonard, hikemaster@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		
Treasurer, PO Box 12282, Roanoke, VA 24024, or use PayPal at ratc.org .	Donation	\$ _____
	Amount Enclosed	\$ _____

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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