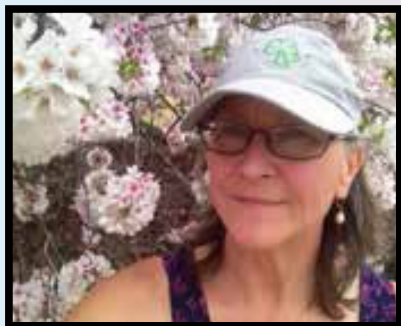


TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

Spring 2026

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.



President's Report

It has been an incredibly busy couple of months for our club! From Andy Layne Trail projects and bridge maintenance decisions to interviews for Ridgerunner, trail evaluations, boundary season preparations, and our trail maintainers ramping up for thru-hiker season, our volunteers have been at the heart of everything we do. Some of the other important projects we are busy with include:

- Catawba tent pad site - 12 platforms making the impact of camping more focused, eliminating sprawl, and creating an inviting alternative to shelters and less-than-ideal camping sites
- Media appearances for both the exciting new funding being made available to vastly improve the MacAfee parking lot area, and the challenge with the Andy Layne Trail requiring a reroute
- Many sign renovations including on-trail and parking lot. Some of these are still being executed or planned, but they are on the way
- Onboarding of new club officers, and updating existing documents and job descriptions of all board and ancillary positions. Planning sessions with all leaders for the 2026-2027 seasons
- Lots of meetings: RPC (Regional Partnership Committee), leadership, club committees
- Elections, onboarding, Ridgerunner interviews
- Trail evaluations, reroute planning and execution

Whether it's funding improvements like new parking lots, updating signs, or planning for privy and bridge renovations, your support and volunteering continue to keep our trails safe, beautiful, and welcoming.

The Benefits of Volunteering

Volunteering with our club is more than just lending a hand—it's about connecting with a cause that matters. Our dedicated volunteers enjoy:

- Personal Rewards: Gifts, pride, and the satisfaction of giving back.
- Social Connections: Meeting new people, forming friendships, and engaging with the hiking community.
- Health and Wellness: Exercise in nature and the joy of being outdoors.
- Stewardship and Learning: Hands-on experience in trail maintenance, conservation skills, and public education.
- Community Impact: Supporting preservation, providing safe trails and shelters, and contributing to a vital mission.

Continued on Page 2

- Community Impact: Supporting preservation, providing safe trails and shelters, and contributing to a vital mission.

How We Support You

We’re here to make it easy for you to give back. Membership support includes discounts, education opportunities, a sense of belonging and ownership, and many stewardship opportunities. We support our volunteers with gifts, many opportunities for satisfaction and pride in work well done, a sense of social responsibility, opportunities to interact with the public spreading our message, expert advice on skills for trail maintenance and building and care of specialized tools, free use of tools!

What are our goals and how do we achieve them?

Our mission is conservation and preservation of the wilderness experience on the Appalachian Trail and associated lands. We achieve this by protecting wildlife, managing invasive species, handling administrative tasks, advocating for legislative changes, seeking local support, providing educational and recreational opportunities, organizing social activities, providing tools and training, curating hikes, organizing work trips, promoting backpacking, creating conservation and land protection opportunities, engaging with the public, providing shelters and safe trails, advocating for the trail, offering programs to help people give back, and providing opportunities for leadership and mentoring. We also provide outreach events, area experts, and opportunities to connect with the community.

How do we encourage volunteerism and membership?

We promote ourselves through emails, newsletters, social media, our website, event booth opportunities, social events, and hiker happy hours. We also advertise on the ATC volunteer site and encourage members to reach out to the public. We use media, product marketing, and our web store to promote ourselves.

Where do we need help?

We need social media, data input, managers, trail volunteers and crew leaders, hike leaders, shelter maintainers, conservation volunteers, membership volunteers, volunteer management, graphic designers, artists, photographers, grant writers, public relations specialists, boundary stewardship adopters, branding experts, event planners, donation acquisition specialists, backpacking trip leaders, equipment managers, archivists and more. If you want to help, there are a great number of opportunities.

What are our resources?

We have the support of ATC and our government partners, which provides experience, experts, funding, knowledge, and conservation relationships. We also have experts throughout the club and equipment area experts. And, we have the past experiences of not only our club but other clubs as well.

What would be the ideal world?

Tell us. Volunteerism is about service. We seek to serve. Tell us what we can do to help you.

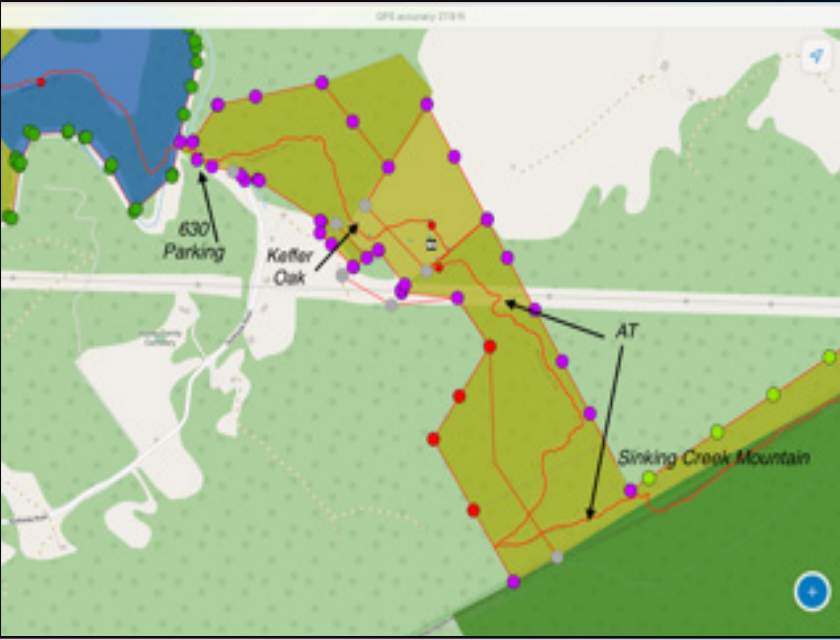
Linda Mulheren
President

Boundary Monitoring - A Year in Review

Boundary work this year has been focused in the Sinking Creek area and the northwest side of Sinking Creek Mountain. The survey monument find rate has been very good this year with us, even finding some monuments that had not been found in years past, including one underground in the middle of a cow pasture!

We spent most of 2023 and 2024 completing monitoring the trail corridor trail south of the Route 630/Keffer Oak parking area in Level Green. In 2024/2025, we worked the boundary along Pearis Mountain. This year, we embarked on working the boundary line trail north of that 630 road crossing in Level Green.

We use an app called ArcGIS Field Maps to guide and record our work. This app features many tools making boundary monitoring much easier than in the past. We enter data and photos for each monument worked on. Each monitoring year has a unique color code for the completed monuments; in the image above you see the following: 2016 red dot, 2022 light green dot, 2024 dark green dot, this season purple dot, not yet monitored or not to be monitored, gray dot, encroachments small red dots, and the ATC open area vista is marked with a camera icon. Dark blue land is National Park Service land, light green is U.S. Forest Service corridor tract or easement property. The Appalachian Trail is the red line running through the land areas. This map also includes the Route 630/Keffer Oak parking lot.



Boundary monitoring season generally runs from December through March because we aim for colder temperatures when snakes, bugs, and leaves are scarce. Our goal each trip is to locate and maintain the boundary line, distinguished by the boundary survey monuments placed about 500 feet apart. A big part of boundary work is trimming back vegetation so monuments are easier to locate and maintain. Ideally, we should be able to look down the boundary line from one monument to the next. We also refresh painted blazing along the boundary line, red for U.S. Forest Service land and yellow for National Park Service land.

Cold weather is to be expected for boundary monitoring, but this year threw some mighty challenges with snow, ice, and frigid temperatures. We often debate the challenge of getting the job done versus having fun (well, not being too miserable). Weather conditions were less than ideal, leading to numerous canceled trips. Although we aimed for two weekdays and two weekend trips per month, we did not achieve that many!



Brrrrr! Very cold start to the workday!

We have had outstanding volunteer turnout this year including **Craig McNally, Greg Still, Dave Grimm, Bo Abney, Mark Allamong, John Grant, and Linda Mulheren.**

Craig has been helping out for three years and comes to just about every boundary work trip held by RATC, as well as some with the ATC. Craig also oversees the trail south of Angels Rest. In addition to trail work, Craig has been the lead with club outreach at not only Steppin' Out, but also at the Blacksburg Farmers Market, where we have found a lot of interest in our club in that community. He is also seeking advanced training with cross-cut saw maintenance and sharpening, to bring back to our club and pass on those skills.

Also overseeing trail up on Pearis Mountain are **Greg** and **Mark**. Greg and Mark have also been doing work trips with us for a couple of years. Greg not only maintains trail, he is a certified and active sawyer, and has been amazingly helpful with providing a UTV to help get us and equipment high up on the face of Pearis Mountain, where we did some very steep boundary work last year. In addition, he is currently seeking advanced training in rock work in order to help train others in the club.

Mark has been with us for two years and also volunteers with the Piedmont Appalachian Trail Hikers Club (PATH), which maintains the AT farther down in Southwest Virginia. He brings to our boundary team many years of experience in sawyer, forestry, and orienteering skills. He enjoys being hands-on with the technical aspects of boundary work and is a strong asset.

Bo recently moved to our area from Florida, where he was an active volunteer leader with the Florida Trail. He brings great maps skills to our team and has been an invaluable participant.

John is returning from a very cold and steep boundary work trip a couple of years ago with ATC on Peters Mountain.

Dave has previously done boundary work with ATC. In addition, he maintains a trail on Sinking Creek Mountain and regularly volunteers on other sections. Recently, he has been helping build the Catawba Shelter area tent platforms.

In addition to what RATC has been doing on boundary work, ATC has been completing some work in the RATC region as well. **Virginia Mooney**, along with seasonal boundary technician **Andrew Ehms**, has worked on the Burruss Tract in Bland County, and various other trail corridor sections in the Catawba area, as well as work in the Outdoor Club of Va Tech (OCVT) region on Peters Mountain.

Submitted by Kelly Mulheren
Land Management Supervisor



Left to right, Craig McNally, Bo Abney, Dave Grimm, and Mark Allamong cheer another monument found!



What started as a cold day turned into a beautiful afternoon for boundary workers Bo Abney, Greg Still, Craig McNally, and Linda Mulheren.



The excitement of finding the monument buried in the cow pasture caused celebration, as this monument had not been found on a previous boundary monitoring trip.



Finding this monument buried on a roadside underground and in snow, involved a shovel and a metal detector for Mark Allamong and Kelly Mulheren. One of the roadside monuments found this day was just a bent post and a detached cap. The placement of monuments next to rural roads often leads to decapitation by snowplows and mowers.



John Grant, Craig McNally, Dave Grimm, and Kelly Mulheren ham it up after a successful boundary day.



A marker hidden by debris and moss.



Boundary sign and red boundary blazes.



Nature sometimes helps with the job.

2026 Awards Potluck Dinner

The Awards Potluck was held on February 14, 2026. The evening events included volunteer awards and a presentation by Skip Fredericksen, Outreach Coordinator from the AMC-CT Trail Committee.

In Skip Fredericksen's "AT: The Musical," he shared the trials, tribulations, and triumphs he and his daughters experienced on their 205-day through hike of the Appalachian Trail.

Thank you to the staff at Outdoor Trails who donated a \$25 gift certificate and Walk-about Outfitters who donated a water bottle and a \$20 gift card. Members of the RATC can receive a 10% discount when shopping at Outdoor Trails.

Submitted by Jeanine Bomber
Events Coordinator



Recipients of the over 300 hours volunteered in 2025 who were in attendance are (left to right) Presenter, Vice President Adam Day - President, Linda Mulheren - 602 hours, Jim Webb - 458 hours, Homer Witcher - 382 hours, Therese Witcher - 412 hours, Bill Dawson - 362 hours, and Ryan Wagoner - 412 hours. Not pictured Mike Vaughn - 581 hours, and Kelly Mulheren - 587 hours.

Appalachian Trail Conservancy Cumulative Awards

Greater than 100 hours of volunteer service:

- John Grant
- David Grimm,
- Jimmy Whitney
- David Nova
- Gary Moore
- Mark Wilhelm
- Thomas Martin

Greater than 500 hours of service:

- Tom McAvoy
- Ron Bradbury
- Greg Still,
- Bo Carneal

Greater than 1000 hours of volunteer service:

- Bennett Witcher
- Linda Mulheren
- Donna Logan
- Kelly Mulheren



Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club Volunteer Service 2025



Greater than 75 hours:

- Mike Scott
- Brian Kelley
- Adam Day,
- Walter Shroyer
- David Grimm
- Gary Moore
- Mark Allamong

Greater than 100 hours of volunteer service:

- David Nova
- Dee Case
- Bill Floyd,
- Ron Bradbury
- Craig McNally
- John Kelly
- Thomas Martin
- Carol Rowlett
- Brian Boggs
- Greg Still
- Bo Carneal,
- Mark Wilhelm
- Donna Logan
- Greg Stick

Greater than 200 hours of volunteer service:

- Diana Christopulos, 200
- Tom McAvoy, 215
- Pete Irvine, 240
- Susan Terwilliger, 271
- Bennett Witcher, 277

Greater than 300 hours of volunteer service:

- Bill Dawson, 362,
- Homer Witcher, 382
- Therese Witcher, 412,
- Ryan Wagoner, 412,
- Jim Webb, 458
- Mike Vaughn, 581
- Kelly Mulheren, 587
- Linda Mulheren, 602

Southern Partnership Meeting- March 27-29, 2026

The Southern Partnership meeting was held at the Mountain Lake Lodge March 27-29. This meeting involved the U.S Forest Service, ATC, and all of the clubs in Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia. Approximately 60 people attended. The meeting began with a 5.5-mile hike from Wind Rock to the War Branch trail to observe the relocation of the AT completed by the Konnarock Trail Crew last year. Highlights of the meeting were:

- Based on a new cell phone software to track visitors there were 16.9 million AT visitors this past year making the AT #1 in visitation among all National Parks
- 1,700 volunteers put in 70,000 hours of work on the trail. Most of this was Helene related
- Recreation is the #1 economic product of the U.S. Forest Service
- May 2 & 3 there will be a free wilderness first aid training class by Konnarock Trail Crew in Sugar Grove, VA
- \$6.3 Million has been funded to pave, install bathrooms, build retaining wall and shuttle parking for the McAfee Knob Rt. 311 parking lot
- NextGen, an ATC Board of Directors advisory council, made up of 18-35 year-olds, was represented and shared their observations with all of SPM
- Increased use of hostels and their impact was discussed and warrants further study
- 5,000 red spruce seedlings will be planted in the Mt. Rodgers highlands, pony grazing area will be reduced from 5,000 to 1,000 acres to better protect and maintain the herd, and better protect rare G1 forests and habitat
- Volunteer training modules are being developed for club volunteers and will be online on the ATC website this summer: learn.appalachiantrail.org
- Moldering privy design will be approved this spring and following inspections for lead and asbestos construction will begin
- License plate program has generated over \$1 million since its inception in 2010. Very flexible funding has helped fund ridgerunners and club projects in Virginia
- ATC Efforts are underway to connect with communities along the trail to develop outreach and awareness of the benefits and needs of the trail users
- Brett Randolph with VDOT won the Virginia Agency Partners of the year for 2026. Brett has for years, masterfully led about 2 monthly meetings for all phases of the pedestrian bridge project, and other projects affecting roads and parking along the AT in our region. John and Trudy Philips of the Natural Bridge AT Club won the 2026 Volunteer award for their decades long and tireless work on the trail.

*Submitted by Tom McAvoy
Conservation Supervisor*

Streaming of RATC Board Meetings

Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club Board meetings are usually held the first Monday of the month at the Glenvar Branch of the Roanoke County Library. Meetings start at 6:00 PM. RATC is also streaming these meetings. If you'd like to participate online, so it is simple as accessing the page linked below and using a QR code to access the stream.

[https://www.ratc.org/events/ratc-board-meeting-4/Board Meeting Stream](https://www.ratc.org/events/ratc-board-meeting-4/Board%20Meeting%20Stream)



A presentation during the Southern Partnership Meeting at Mountain Lake Lodge, March 27-29th.



SPM attendees assembling to hike.



SPM attendees taking in the view from Wind Rock.

WORK HIKES

January 6, 2026, Catawba Mountain

Mike Vaughn, Jim Webb, Greg Stick, Gary Moore, Craig McNally, Greg Still, Sarah Waid, Josh Gipson

Today was our biggest group yet for the Catawba tent pad project. We were also blessed with some great winter weather, sunny and a high near 60. During the previous work hike we had a difficult time moving the logs for the tent pad walls. At the suggestion of Tom McAvoy I ordered a heavy duty dolly. We were anxious to see how this worked. It worked fantastic. We were quickly able to move four heavy 10-foot logs. The last couple of logs were to be moved by just two people. After moving the logs, we split into three groups, one group installing steps on the privy trail and the others starting work on two tent pads. We made excellent progress and should be able to complete the privy trail and one tent pad on our next work hike.

January 19, 2026, Catawba Mountain

Mike Vaughn, Greg Stick, Gary Moore, Craig McNally, Greg Still, Sarah Waid, Benjamin Waid, John Grant

Today we had another big group. It was a nice sunny day with comfortable temperatures for January. We split into three groups, with one group working on the trail to the privy and the other working on two tent pads. The work went very well. By the end of the day we had completed the privy trail and one tent pad.

January 22, 2026, Catawba Mountain

Mike Vaughn, Gary Moore, Craig McNally, Greg Still, Josh Gipson, Dave Grimm, Jim Webb

With a severe winter storm expected, we scheduled a work hike on short notice. The turnout was very good. We split into two groups and worked on separate tent pads. In addition, Josh and Craig brought over logs for two more tent pads. The work went well. By the end of the day we were able to complete another tent pad. Six have now been completed, with six to go.

Continued on Page 12



Taking crib logs to the tent pad sites.



Building stairs to tent pad number 4.



Cribbing a tent pad.



Jim Webb at a tent pad.

March 9, 2026, Catawba Mountain

Mike Vaughn, Gary Moore, Mark Allamong Greg Still, Susan Terwilliger, Greg Stick, Jim Webb,

We had a good group starting out and nice weather forecast. We split into two groups with one splitting crib logs and the other working on a tent pad. Later in the day, we were able to work on a tent pad that had been mostly completed previously. By the end of the day, both tent pads were completed. We were very satisfied **with our work.**

March 19, 2026 Catawba Mountain

Mike Vaughn, Greg Still, Dave Grimm, Jim Webb, Kathryn Herndon - Powell

At the work site we got busy splitting logs for steps and working on a tent pad. Around lunchtime a well-dressed hiker came down trail. We were surprised to see someone out there. He is Damien from Florida. He was in our area for a visit and decided to go for a hike. He had gotten off the AT by mistake near the shelter. On our way out we ran into him again and he had been able to get up to the Knob. By the end of the day we had nearly completed the tent pad.

*Submitted by Mike Vaughn
RATC Trail Supervisor*

Here are some submissions by RATC member **Greg Still** who also spent some time last fall working on portions of the trail further south in the RATC's domain.

Near Angels Rest 3-November 17th

Greg Still, John Grant, Dave Grimm, Bill Floyd, Craig McNally

We returned to two steep switchbacks near Angels Rest today to construct log steps previously cut by Bill Floyd and Greg Still. Construction proceeded quickly with experienced volunteers working together efficiently. The photo shows the finished project at one of the switchbacks.

Near Angels Rest #2-October 1st

Greg Still, John Grant, Jim Webb, Mark Allamong, Dave Grimm

On a beautiful fall day this hard- working group completed construction of log steps near Angels Rest started on a previous work hike. The photo shows the finished project, 27 steps. After inspecting the steep switchbacks above and below this section we decided to return at a later date to install log steps at both switchbacks.

Near Angels Rest #1-September 22nd

Greg Still, Mark Allamong, Susan Terwilliger, Gary More, John Grant, Jim Webb, Mike Vaughn, John HvozdoVIC, Bill Floyd

We had a large group of dedicated and hard working volunteers today. Most of us used logs and stakes previously cut by Mark and Greg to construct steps on a very steep section of the trail not far from Angels Rest. Others worked on constructing log and brush barriers to deter social trails cutting switchbacks as well as restoring the trail in eroded areas.



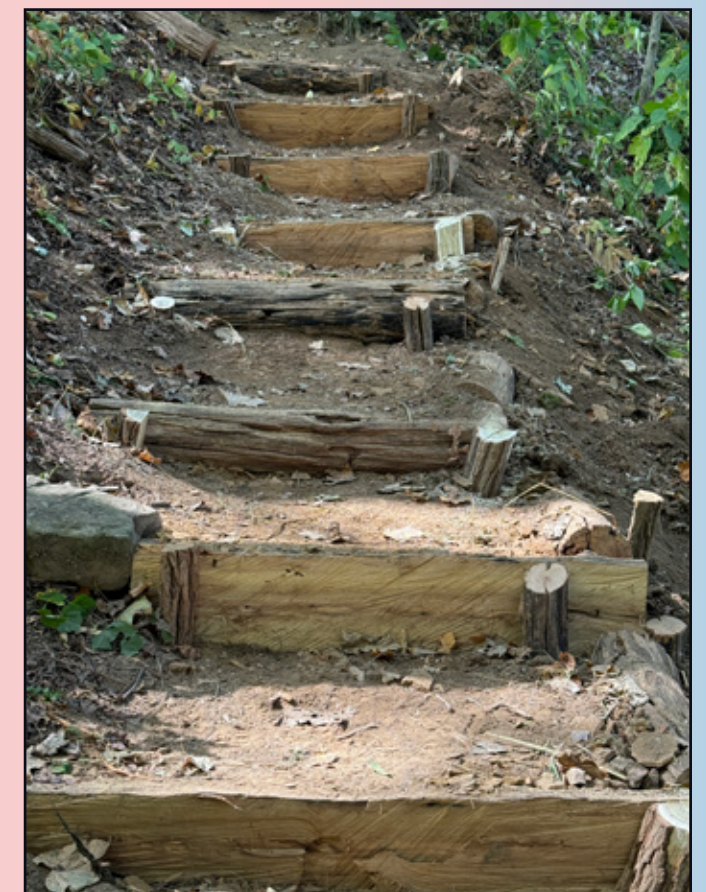
Working on the Catawba shelter tent pads with a visit from a dapper hiker.



Switchback step construction near Angles Rest on November 17th.



Log steps constructed near Angels Rest on October 1st.



Detailed image of steps constructed near Angels Rest on Sept 22nd.

Vernal Pool Monitoring

Thanks so much for reaching out about The Roanoke Valley Master Naturalist (RVMN) Vernal Pool Program. My name is Denise Alexander and I'm the RVMN Vernal Pool Coordinator. We have been reaching out to hiking and biking groups to raise awareness of vernal pools. In addition, we rely on people out on trails to send us leads on vernal pool locations.

Master Naturalists are dedicated volunteers who complete specialized training to become certified naturalists, learning about local ecosystems, wildlife, plants and conservation practices. As a trained volunteer resource, A Master Naturalist contributes many hours of service by leading educational programs, monitoring natural areas, participating in citizen science, and promoting stewardship of natural resources. Their combined training and volunteer efforts provide communities with a valuable source of environmental knowledge and support for protecting local natural habitats.

Our chapter has a certification process for vernal pool monitors. We are always looking for new vernal pools to balance with enthusiastic monitors. Vernal pools are seasonal wetland, small pools or depressions that fill with water in the spring from precipitation, runoff and rising groundwater. They tend to be isolated with no inlet from a stream system. Many will dry out later in the summer, losing water through evaporation and transpiration. Because they do not hold water year round, fish cannot live in them, which makes these pools safe breeding habitats for many salamander and frog species. Some of these are obligate species, meaning they rely on vernal pools for critical parts of their life cycle, especially reproduction. Obligate species in our area include Jefferson, Spotted and Marbled salamander, and Wood Frogs, which lay their eggs in these temporary pools. Vernal pools are important in the landscape because they support biodiversity, provide breeding habitat for wildlife and contribute to a healthy forest and wetland ecology.

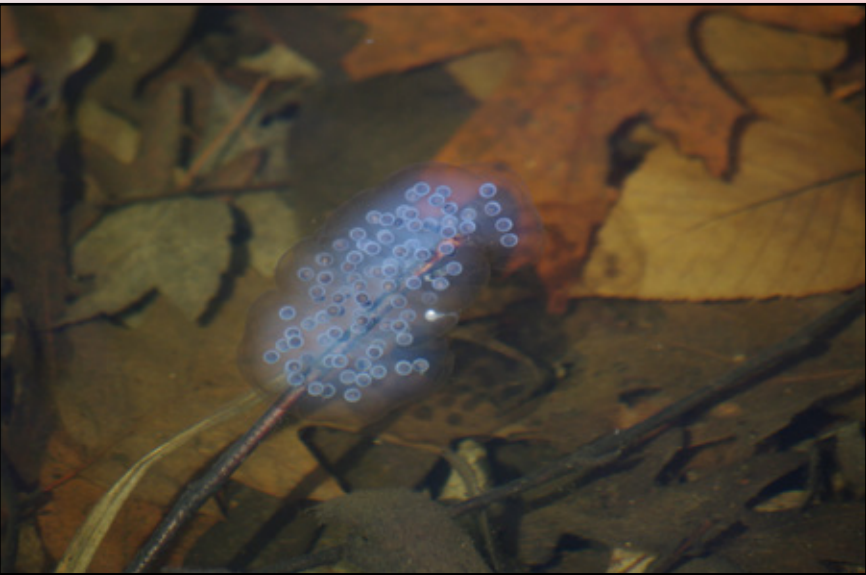
You are so lucky if you have a pool in your yard with an annual spring resident! Interestingly, salamanders also return each year to the pool that they were born in unless the habitat is compromised. We often spot pools at this time of year by following the chorus of frogs. If you have RATC members on the trail that spot a vernal pool, it would be helpful if they noted directions to the pool and recorded GPS coordinates. Also, if you have contact with forest rangers, ridgerunners or trail maintenance volunteers who might know of a vernal pool, we would really appreciate it if you would forward information.

Almost all the pools we have in our database have been spotted by hikers and bikers. You are a valuable resource for our program!

Thank you again for reaching out.

Submitted By Denise Alexander
Roanoke Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists
RATC Member

Editor's Note: Denise Alexander is a RATC member and coordinator for the Roanoke Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists. We recently posted a request for support on our Facebook page and followed up with a request for more information for this edition of The Trail Blazer. Denise's response is in the right column under Vernal Pool Monitoring and her contact information is below.



A spotted salamander eggcluster in a vernal pool.
(Spotted salamander egg_BradCarlson_creativecommons.jpg, Brad Carlson, Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 2.0,)

If you encounter a vernal pool or know of one Denise Alexander's contacts are:

anansi3130@gmail.com
(540)814-2788

<https://rvmasternaturalists.org/members/>

Learn more about vernal pools in Virginia at the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources linked below:

<https://dwr.virginia.gov/blog/vernal-pools-for-salamanders/>



FAROUT FOR FREE FOR VOLUNTEERS!

FarOut has extended an offer to club volunteers for free sections of their guide. If you are not familiar with FarOut, it is a mapping and informational app widely used on the AT by hikers, backpackers, and volunteers.

ATC has officially partnered with them, and FarOut has generously offered guides to us for free.

In order to receive the free section(s) we will need to provide to FarOut a list of the volunteer's FARout account the email address and username for each account, as well as the section needed, Southern Virginia (south of U.S 220) or Northern Va (north of U.S. 220).

Please send that information to president@RATC.org.

In addition the free guides sections, FarOut is offering a 10% discount code for all of our members. We do not yet have that code, but when we do we will pass it along.

Subscribe to FarOut mailing list to be the first to hear about sales and new guide releases!

<https://going-farout.co/newsletter-signup>

History Opportunity

Sephra Kolker, Workforce Program Coordinator for HistoriCorps, is reaching out to share an upcoming local volunteer opportunity at the Settlers Museum Farmhouse in nearby Atkins, Virginia, adjoining the Appalachian Trail.

This summer, HistoriCorps, along with volunteer workforces, will head to the George Washington & Jefferson National Forests to restore the historic Settlers Museum Farmhouse. They will have five week-long volunteer sessions between May 24 - June 26, and are looking to recruit volunteers from the area and get the word out about this historic preservation effort. For more information about the volunteer opportunity go to

<https://historiccorps.org/settlers-museum-farmhouse-va-2026/>

Sephra Kolker
Workforce Program Coordinator
skolker@historiccorps.org
www.historiccorps.org

RATC HISTORY CORNER, Approximately 75, 50 and 25 Years Ago

Spring is always an exciting time for club members, with longer days and warmer temperatures. Here’s what RATC volunteers were doing in the past.

75 years ago - 1951

Tom Campbell was RATC President (the shelter near McAfee Knob is named after him and his wife Charlene). In January, Jimmy Denton submitted a report for the Trail Supervisor, Woody Williams, who had been called to active duty with the Army. The 145+ mile relocation between McAfee Knob and Iron Mountain was well underway, with Campbell scheduled to lead an exploratory hike on Peters Mountain. Molly Denton, who had just finished her term as the first female President of RATC, was putting together an album of RATC photos from the 1930s-50s. The photo here shows a hiker on 12 O’Clock Knob looking into the Roanoke Valley when the AT went over Andrew Lewis and Poor mountains Larry Pownall, one of RATC’s founders in 1933, wrote a short history of the club and shared negatives of his early photos with Molly Denton

50 years ago - 1976

Zetta Campbell was editing the Blazer, with Charles Musgrove as President and Bill Gordge the Hikemaster. Trail Supervisor Stafford Query reported that in the past year RATC had added 34 miles of relocated Trail to its section, with 24 of those miles built and maintained by the club and 10 miles built and maintained by Jefferson National Forest (including bridges across Craig Creek and Stoney Creek). RATC also built 10 new stiles for crossing fences and maintaining good relationships with private landowners. Twenty designated sections had RATC overseers who cared for the Trail and its amenities. Siegfried Kolmstetter had the McAfee Knob section. There were about a dozen hikes each quarter.

25 years ago - 2001

We dedicated the Andy Layne Trail in honor of our great volunteer. Dick Clark was President, with Laurie and Leonard Adkins, Charles Parry, Bob and Kris Peckman, Ron McCorkle, Hal Cantrill, Jimmy Whitney, Bill Gordge and Roger Holnbach also serving on the board.

Two work hikes and a dozen pleasure hikes were scheduled for the quarter, all on Saturdays or Sundays. Dick Clark reported that Roanoke County was going to include impacts on the AT viewshed in its planning process and that, after 21 years as the first Appalachian Trail Conservancy regional staff member, Mike Dawson was leaving the area. Clark added that, for sheer serendipity, nothing can beat the hiker from Montana who liked the trail in the Roanoke area so much that he sent the club a contribution of \$250 [almost \$1,500 in 2026!].

10 years ago - 2016

Oh my goodness, I was President! We were faced with a number of challenges. There was a huge rise in the number of visitors to the McAfee Knob section. We worked with Kathryn Herndon-Powell of ATC and other partners to form the McAfee Knob Task Force as a partial solution. We also worked closely with Andrew Downs at the ATC and Supervisor Wendy Janssen of the National Park Service to begin the complex Visitor Use Management process that would eventually help secure funding for a shuttle service, a pedestrian bridge and new and improved parking at the McAfee Knob trailhead. We worked to gather expert and detailed information about the potential visible impacts of the proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline on the AT. Our work eventually resulted in over \$19 million from MVP for the purchase of land in the AT view shed here and funds to help small local communities impacted by the project. We lost long-time leader Mervin Brower, a Canadian transplanted to Roanoke by General Electric. His wife Blanche remained RATC Treasurer, with Roger Holnbach as Vice President. We celebrated the first Troutville Trail Days and FINALLY opened the difficult Bluff Mountain relocation near Pearisburg, with Mike Vaughn and Jim Webb stepping up after the loss of Charles Parry. Bob Peckman was hikemaster and Blazer editor. He brought the newsletter into the digital age, adding color at almost no cost.

Submitted By Diana Christopulos, PhD, Archivist
All materials are based on the RATC in the Virginia Tech Permanent Collections



On 12 O’clock Knob. Taken by P.H. Trout in 1938

RATC HISTORY QUIZ QUESTIONS

The Trail Blazer is currently published 4 times a year. When was it published 11-12 times a year, (almost every month)?

- 1965-2001
- 1934-65
- 1934-41
- 1945-2000

From its founding and for decades thereafter, RATC hikes were held primarily on:

- Saturday and Sunday
- Saturday and Wednesday
- Sunday
- Saturday

The answers to the quiz are found on the bottom left of page 22.

All editions of the Trail Blazer since 1999 are available in digital format on our website and can be accessed using the link below:

<https://www.ratc.org/newsletter/>

Unsung AT Heros

Three people that may not be well known to the club but do a tremendous amount of work for the trail are **Virginia Mooney, George Annis, and Scott Noe**. They have responsibilities maintaining the open areas and many other duties from Rockfish Gap south to Damascus, 400 miles!



Virginia Mooney cutting Autumn Olive.

Virginia has been the Natural Resource Coordinator for the past three years with ATC working with Conner McBane. She organizes and does herbicide treatments and tree cutting. She also does boundary work and assists with the sawyer certification programs. Before her current duties she was an intern doing plant surveys at White Top and worked with the Konnarock Trail Crew doing trail maintenance and relocations.



George Annis, Virginia Mooney, Scott Noe, and Conner McBane and the masticator!



Virginia spraying invasives.



Virginia and George.

Scott (blue bandanna) is a retired veterinarian from Bedford, VA. He is a member of the Natural Bridge AT club and has been a very active volunteer for eight years. He is an excellent certified sawyer and an all-around handyman. All three work very well together and are a lot of fun in the field, often spending many nights camping in remote AT sections to get their work completed.

More about the Appalachian Trail Conservancy conservation programs is linked here:

[Conservation Team](#)

<https://appalachiantrail.org/about/our-team/#conservation>

[Virginia Mooney](#)

<https://appalachiantrail.org/leadership/virginia-mooney/>

[Connor McBane](#)

<https://appalachiantrail.org/leadership/conner-mcbane/>

George retired after over 30 years with the USFS as an aquatic Entomologist and wildlife technician. George's specialty is operating a skid steer bushhog/mulcher/masticator. He is also a class C sawyer and is always looking for a good joke.

*Submitted by Tom McAvoy
Conservation Supervisor*



Wolf Creek Greenway on February 23rd.



Lick Run Greenway on February 9th.

RATC SPONSORED HIKES

Even though parts of the winter were cold and icy, the RATC still sponsored weekly hikes in the region. Some are on local greenways and some are more adventurous and rigorous. Each year the club makes sure to sponsor hikes on all 14 sections that club maintains and recognizes those who manage to complete all 125 miles of RATC-maintained trails.

RATC MEETUP

<https://www.meetup.com/roanoke-appalachian-trail-club/>

All 14 Sections of Maintained Trail

<https://www.ratc.org/at-hiking/ratcs-14-at-hikes/>



Hike # 2, Curry Gap to Daleville on March 2nd



Mill Mountain Star and Loop Trail on January 12th.



Hike #1, Curry Gap to Blackhorse Gap on February 28th.



AT Between the Road on March 1st.



Andy Layne to Daleville on March 7th.

Andy Layne Trail Relocation

Hikers, Roanoke Cement officials and RATC officials were surprised in early February when work on the Roanoke Cement property went a bit out of bounds and compromised the beginning portion of the Andy Layne Trail. Roanoke Cement, who owns the property and grants an easement for trail use has been planning with the RATC and ATC for a relocation of this portion of the trail.

However, work done by the contractor on the site wasn't part of that plan. It was never the intent of Roanoke Cement to close the trail prior to completion of proposed relocation work, and this problem affected their operation as much as it did trail access.

Because of this error, some things happened quickly to maintain access to this popular trail head and ensure hiker safety. RATC, ATC and Roanoke Cement officials met immediately to formulate and implement a plan. **Linda and Kelly Mulheren and Trail Supervisor Mike Vaughn** should be recognized for their efforts for quickly blazing the new route and communicating these changes to the public. Because of their efforts, the new route was opened and reduced access to this popular trail area was minimal.

For their part, Roanoke Cement has expanded parking at the new trail head and both the ATC and RATC have updated maps and provided information to hikers to navigate the new routes in the area.

[Andy Layne Detour Information](https://www.ratc.org/andy-layne-trail/)
(<https://www.ratc.org/andy-layne-trail/>)

[Detour and Parking Map](https://caltopo.com/m/139L030)
<https://caltopo.com/m/139L030>

Submitted by Mike Scott
The Trail Blazer, Editor

HISTORY quiz answers from page 15...

- 1: B, the club switched from monthly to quarterly newsletters in mid-1966, when 6 issues were published. It saved a lot of time and money!
- 2: C, club hikes were usually on Sunday. We think it is because one of the club's founding groups, the Nomad hikers, was composed of U.S. Postal Service workers who only had one day off each week - Sunday.



Parking lot construction at the new Andy Layne trailhead. Photo credit to ridgerunner David Nova.



Looking toward Tinker Cliffs from expanded parking at the Andy Layne trail head. Photo credit to ridgerunner David Nova.

RATC BOARD MEMBERS

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Sign Makers: Linda and Kelly Mulheren
signs@ratc.org

RATC TRAIL MAINTAINERS AND SECTIONS		
#	Section	Maintainers
1	VA 611 to Va 608	Walter Shroyer Mickey Pellillo
2	VA 608 to VA 606	Matthew Barnett Todd Coake (sawyer)
3	VA 606 to Ribble Trail	Mike & Jennie Reilly, Denise & Bill Hendon Stephanie & Jack Buffet
4	Ribble Trail to Big Horse Gap	Bill & Leslie Kay Floyd
5	Big Horse Gap to Doc's Knob Shelter	Craig McNally Mark Allamong (sawyer)
6	Doc's Knob Shelter to Power Line	Matt Gentry Tim Ligon
7	Power Line to Wilburn Overlook	Greg Still (sawyer) Craig McNally
8	Wilburn Overlook to Cross Road	Julie Petruska, Sue Terwilliger, Craig McNally
9	Cross Road to US 460	Adam Stevens
10	Pine Swamp to Bailey Gap	Dave & Lori Jones (sawyer)
11	Bailey Gap to VA 613	Pete Schitthenner Eric West Adam Stevens
12	VA 613 to Lone Pine Mountain	Greg Hardwicke Lisa Garcia Kurt Stephenson Ryan Wagoner
12A	Lone Pine Mountain to War Spur Trail	Eric West
13	War Spur Trail to Johns Creek Road	Kelly and Linda Mulheren Molly and Fred Jones
14	Johns Creek Road to Rocky Gap	Terry Shipley, Greg Evanylo
15	Rocky Gap to field north of route 42	Brian Kelly (sawyer) David Engel
16	Field North of route 42 to Route 630	Shane Smith
17	VA 630 to Sarver Shelter Trail	Chase Davidson , Amanda Yoder David Anderson
18	Sarver Shelter Trail to N. end of Ridgeline	Chase Davidson (sawyer), Kathryn Herndon-Powel,Susan Herndon-Powell, David Grim, Russ Estes
19	N. end of Ridgeline to VA 621	Eric Hanson, Molly Brunner, Josie Demarce
20	Va 621 to Audie Murphy Monument	Erik Leedom

March 23, 2026, Work - Catawba Mountain

Mike Vaughn, Greg Still, Laurie Adkins, Jim Webb

It was a fairly small group starting out. The weather was good today, pleasant, with the winds picking up in the afternoon. At the work site, we split up, with Greg and Jim cutting logs for steps. Laurie and I worked on a tent pad. After a couple of hours we finished the tent pad and cutting the steps. We then started on a trail from the tent pad loop down to the water source. The work went well and by the end of the day we had installed six steps on the trail. We got back to the parking lot at 2:00.



#	Section	Maintainers
46	Catawba Valley Trail (CVT)	Johnathan Harris Michelle Cook Sean Cook
47	Ribble Trail	Bill & Leslie Kay Floyd
48	Boy Scout Trail	Donna Logan
49	McAfee Fire Road, Rte 311 to AT crossing	Peter Irvine (sawyer) Kailee Sesler Sarah Ward
50	McAfee Fire Road, AT crossing to Campbell shelter	Dario Izquierdo Gary Moore

#	Section	Maintainers
21	Audie Murphy Monument to VA 620	Lee Hipp Will Mackinnon
22	VA 620 to Ridgeline	Hugh Craft Joe Brabant, Jan-Erik Zeller (section sawyer)
23	Ridgeline to Dragons Tooth	Tom McAvoy, Charles Hudson, John Grant, Jan-Erik Zeller (sawyer)
24	Dragons Tooth to VA 624	David Poteet Sarah Allison
25	VA 624 to VA 785 Tree line	Bo Carneal Becky Carneal
26	VA 785 Tree line to VA 311	Bo Carneal Becky Carneal
27	VA 311 to Fire Road	Jim Webb (sawyer) Greg Stick Erik West
28	Fire Road to Campbell Shelter	Jim Webb (sawyer) Greg Stick
29	Campbell Shelter to Brick-eyes Gap	Bill Gunn Nick Lindsay Christian Smith
30	Brickeys Gap to Ditch Trail	Kevin Witcher
31	Ditch Trail to Angels Gap	Bryon Lane Mike Phillips
32	Angels Gap to Power Line	Mike Vaughn Jeff Armstrong
33	Power Line to US 220	Ron and Cathy Butler, Nancy and Leonard Galvan Robert & Jeanie Bomber
34	US 220 to VA 652	Homer and Therese Witcher
35	Va 652 to Fullhardt Knob Shelter	Dave Horst (sawyer)
36	Fullhardt Shelter to Salt Pond Road	John Garris Mark Wilhelm
37	Salt Pond Road To Wilson Creek	Greg Lester
38	Wilson Creek to Black Horse Gap	Theresa McDaniel Mary Frye
39	Andy Layne Trail	Daniel Howell, Randy Fuller
40	Dragon's Tooth Trail	Donna Logan, Brad Clay
41	War Spur Trail	Anja Whittington, Jay Raymond
42	North Mtn Trail, Route 311 to Grouse Tr.	Jeff Hoepner Alex Reis
43	North Mtn Trail, Deer Tr. To Grouse Trail	Hugh Craft Joe Brabant
44	North Mtn Trail, Grouse Tr. To TurkeyTrail	Bob Patten
45	North Mtn Trail, Turkey Tr. To CVT	VACANT

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

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

***Hurry and join or renew!
Dues will change in
2026.***

**Roanoke Appalachian
Trail Club Application
New and Renewal**

IF ACCEPTED FOR MEMBERSHIP, I AGREE TO:

1. Support the objectives of the RATC
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)	Individual New	\$20	
	Individual Renewal	\$15	
	Lifetime Ind Member	\$250	
Address	New Family	\$25.00	
City	State	Zip	Renew Family \$25
Phone	Lifetime Family	\$300	
Email		Donation	\$
	Total Amount Enclosed		\$

Renewal dues are payable on the anniversary of initial membership. Make checks to "RATC" or use PayPal at [ratc.org](https://www.ratc.org)

(<https://www.ratc.org/join-renew/>)

Mail checks to: RATC, PO BOX 12282, Roanoke VA 24024-2282

RATC is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Membership dues are tax-deductible.

Please Note: To save costs, the Trail Blazer is provided electronically via email/link. Paper copies may be obtained via mail. Request a paper copy via treasurer@ratc.org or by calling 540-521-5435