

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

Winter 2012

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

The Banquet Potluck
Saturday, March 3
at Christ Lutheran Church
The program will be Vince Mier
who thru-hiked the Trail this year.

WORK HIKES

Saturday, January 14, - 8:00 AM
Brush Mountain

Sunday, February 26 - 8:00 AM
Sinking Creek Mountain

Saturday, March 24 - 8:00AM
Pine Swamp to Route 635

Hike Scheduling

Contact Mike Vaughn
992-1350 – mikeva999@yahoo.com

BOARD MEETINGS

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

Monday, January 9, 7:00 p.m.
Hosted by *Fred Walters*

Monday, February 13, 7:00 p.m.
Hosted by *Liz Belcher*

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If you are a trail overseer or have hiked the whole AT, by sections or thru-hike, we will give you an RATC hat and T-shirt. If you qualify for both, you get two each. Hiking more than once does not earn you more. They will be available at the April overseer meeting or contact Dick Clark for mailing at: 989-7053 or jandrclark@cox.net

Welcome New Members

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club welcomes the following new members:

Jim & Jill Beeson

Paul Blaiklock

Brooke Chang

Chris Owen & Andrea McCullough

Jim Constantin

Travis Dillon

Todd & Joann Everett

McMillan Johnson

Shannon Palmer

Don & Carol Strum

And we thank you for making donations:

Jim & Jill Beeson

Chip & Ashley Donahue

Kim Ferguson

Sylvia A. Fine, MD

Linda Diane Harrison

Terry & Cathy Lauver

Jack & Meredith Malloy

Katherine Neal

Shannon Palmer

Joe & Connie Vaughn

Chuck & Ana Walz

Pamela Welsh

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

Bob Blankenbaker

Hikemaster's Report

This year marks the 90th anniversary of the article written by Benton MacKaye that first proposed an Appalachian Trail. He is widely recognized as the founder of the AT. In his article, along with the trail itself, he advocated for communities to be built along the trail where hikers could rest and enjoy the mountains. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy has created a program that builds on MacKaye's idea. Towns along the trail can now be designated as Appalachian Trail Communities. The Appalachian Trail Community program is designed to recognize communities that promote and protect the A.T. As long distance hikers know, towns along the trail are a great asset. They are places to restock with provisions, sleep in a real bed, and take a shower. The towns that have been designated as Appalachian Trail Communities are recognized for their efforts to be good neighbors to the Trail. They also realize the economic benefits that the Trail can bring via tourism. These towns also help to preserve and protect the A.T.

So far about a dozen towns and cities along the trail have become part of the program, including three in Virginia. These are Harrisonburg, Pearisburg, and Damascus. Troutville is the latest to achieve that designation.

Some of the club members may recall that one of our members, Chase Davidson, hiked a good portion of the

Pacific Crest Trail in 2009. He hiked from the Mexican border to near Mt. Whitney in California. This summer Chase continued his journey. He hiked nearly 600 miles through the Sierra Nevada mountain range. His hike included a climb up Mt. Whitney, which, at over 14,000 feet, is the highest mountain in the continental U.S.

The Pacific Crest Trail goes from Mexico to Canada. It is approximately 2,700 miles long. It is not well marked, and is considered a more difficult hiking challenge than the AT. The trail follows the highest portions of the Sierra Nevada and Cascade mountain ranges. The PCT ranges in elevation from just above sea level at the Oregon-Washington border to 13,153 feet at Forester Pass in the Sierra Nevada. The route passes through 25 national forests and seven national parks. It was designated a National Scenic Trail in 1968, although it was not officially completed until 1993. The Pacific Crest Trail, Appalachian Trail and Continental Divide Trail are the three long distance trails in the U.S. Successfully hiking all of these three trails is known as the "Triple Crown of hiking". To read more about Chase's adventure, go to his trail journal at postholer.com/chaseat99. He has over 1,000 photos posted there, along with his trail journal. Chase has also hiked the AT several times.

Mike Vaughn

Hike Reports

Saturday, September 17, 2011 8:00AM Work Hike - -Brush Mountain VA621 to Audie Murphy Monument

Timo Grüneberg, Mervin and Blanche Brower

The days are gettin' shorter, the mornings arrive shrouded in fog, and the leaves are turning from green to all varieties and combinations of red, yellow and orange... what does that mean? Summer is over and it is Football Season! Due to low hiker response and the lack of a (hike-) leader, the work hike scheduled for Pearis Mountain was adjusted. Today the Hokies and Mervin and Blanche Brower had something in common -- "home turf" advantage. Instead of going to Pearis Mountain the three hikers would work on Brush Mountain, the section of the trail on which the Browsers serve as overseers.

With the new work venue, the still highly motivated but leaderless maintainers implemented a new offense system -- the Single Wing. This old-school system doesn't require a Quarterback and focuses on run "attack". This seemed like a good alternative for the day. So, off marched the group down the trail. Soon their progress was blocked--blowdown. Teamwork, double-teaming, chopping, gapping, sticking to the basics soon removed the block and the team again made forward progress.

Soon the major project of the day revealed itself. The heavy spring rains had destroyed the foundations of one of the creek bridges. The group dug out the remainders of the former wooden bases and then replaced them with large rocks and reinforced the surroundings with smaller rock "gargoyles." Lastly the trail before and after the bridge was tidied up with some light digging.

The last part of the day was spent installing water bars to correct some trail erosion. Blanche, of course equipped with her favorite tool (the 4-tooth fire rake), raked several hundred feet of trail to remove beaming, the built up material on the downhill side of the treadway that causes water to run down the trail instead of across it.

For one of the next work hikes, with a bigger team and most likely a different formation, we discussed and planned the strategy for rehabilitation of some eroded switchbacks on the section. And like the Hokies (they beat Arkansas State 26:7... ☺) we achieved a victory as well, a small one, but we fixed some problems and spent a great day outdoors.

Sunday, September 25, 2011 7:15AM Three Ridges: Reed's Gap to Tye River

John Miller and Larry Scott (NBATC co-leaders), Jim Farley (NBATC), Mike and Sheila Vaughn and HR Blankenship

This was a joint hike with the Natural Bridge Appalachian Trail Club. The RATC members met them at the Tye River and we car shuttled to Reed's Gap. The temperature was in

the mid 60s and it was foggy when we started. We climbed to Hanging Rock and found views that were partially obscured by low lying clouds but the break in the fog seemed promising. As we topped Bee Mountain the sky darkened and it began to rain. We had planned to stop at Chimney Rock to eat lunch but it was still raining pretty hard. The group voted to move on and stop at the next shelter some two miles away. Even so part of the group stopped at the Flat Rock on the third ridge to eat. We encountered many blowdowns on this hike. The descent to the shelter was treacherous due to the wet rocks with leaves and moss on them. The rain started again as we made the final descent to the river. The hike took 6 hours for most of us to complete. The forecasters had predicted a 30% chance of rain. That must have meant that it would rain for 30% of the hike. Even though we did the work, we were not rewarded with the views this hike can offer, but no one got hurt or lost and all got a workout so the hike was a success. All agreed that we should do more joint hikes.

Sunday, September 25, 2011 1:00PM Jennings Creek (Rt 614) to Bryant Ridge Shelter

Mervin & Blanche Brower (leaders), Rod Liebl, Jim Constantin

We met at the Daleville commuter parking lot where we carpooled to our starting location. We arranged to go in one car and left shortly after one o'clock. It had been raining in the morning but was clear and sunny for the hike. We saw some red and yellow mushrooms, which were pretty because of their colors. We met a through hiker going from north to south. He was a biology teacher from northern New York who had lost his job so decided to through hike the AT. We again admired the shelter and the work that went into it. There were a number of blow downs on the trail. We walked out of the trail about 6:00. When we tried to start our car nothing happened. A truck had just pulled in so Blanche asked if he had jumper cables and could give us a jump start. He did and after several tries it finally started. We drove back to the parking lot and dropped our passengers off and drove to Advance Auto to have a new battery installed.

Sunday, October 2, 2011 8:00AM Wind Rock (Rt.613) to Pine Swamp Shelter & return

John Merkwan (leader), Carina Hughes (assistant), Fred Meyer, H.R. Blankenship and Ivy Lidstone.

Do you remember that first cold weekend in October? I'm pretty sure our happy group was the first to find snow this season. As we headed up toward Mountain Lake we noticed quite a few leaves were on the road but didn't think too much about it until just after the resort we saw snow on the trees and by the time we reached the trail head at Wind Rock there was 1/2 inch of snow that had collected on the leaves that were on the ground. It was quite the shocker when we opened the car doors and were hit with a pretty hefty breeze coming across the valley onto Big Mountain. Brrrr - we quickly grabbed the

packs out of the trunk, tightened shoelaces and started hiking. The wind was constant throughout the hike but there were some calm areas when we were deep into the forest but very little sun so there was only a little warming during the day. The highlight of this trip was the Closed or Bottle Gentian that was in bloom. Not a typical bloom, they look like a Christmas tree bulb and only open a small bit to allow bees to squeeze in and do their business. Once pollinated the tips turn from white to purple saving the bees time by telling them there is no more nectar. The extract of gentian flowers is also a common ingredient in homeopathic cures for things such as hair loss, weight loss and fungal infections. I under predicted the distance again, coming in at 15 miles versus the predicted 14.6 miles.

**Sunday, October 2, 2011 1:00PM
Troutville (Rt 11) to Fullhardt Knob**

Fred Walters (leader), Rushdat Kunle-Sanni (assistant), Mike & Sheila Vaughn, Karen Callahan, Kujo (K-9)

The hike started with sunny skies, a moderate breeze and mild fall temperatures. Indeed, a very nice afternoon to be out hiking. As we made our way up to the summit, we were greeted by various wildlife including deer, chipmunks, several lizards and many different bird species. Deer were abundant along the trail especially near the forest edge surrounding the pastures at the base of Fullhardt Knob. Fred Walters discussed the history of the American chestnut tree and current efforts by scientists to re-establish this once magnificent tree to its original splendor after the devastating effects of the chestnut blight. Hopefully foresters will have continued success in crossbreeding a blight resistant species and future generations will enjoy hikes up this ridge filled with towering chestnut trees!

Up on the summit at the Fullhardt Knob shelter we policed the area around the shelter. Mike lugged a tent someone had discarded back to the parking lot as part of our clean-up effort. As we descended the trail in the late afternoon, dark clouds gathered along the southwest horizon and our pace to the parking lot quickened. We arrived at the parking lot in time to avoid any wet weather and enjoyed several treats provided by the hike leader.

**Saturday, October 8, 2011 11:00AM
Hanging Rock Battlefield Greenway Trail
and Salem Highlights**

Mark McClain, Diana Christopulos (leaders), Cheryl Penn, Steven Norris, Paul Blaiklock, Rhinda North, Joanne Derryberry, Caryl Connolly, Pat Cousins, and Kassi Archambault

Dead solid perfect would be a good description of the weather, low 70's and not a cloud in the sky. Our group gathered in downtown Salem then car-pooled to the Hanging Rock Battlefield Monument. After a photo op at this historical site, we forded Mason Creek and set off toward Salem on the rails-to-trails Hanging Rock Greenway (we're told soon there may be a new footbridge across the creek!). We diverted off the

greenway as we got into the residential area then enjoyed a walking tour of central Salem that included Sherwood Burial Park (peaceful), the playing fields at Elizabeth Campus (soccer in progress), East Hill Cemetery (historical, with best views in town), and Roanoke College Campus (more soccer in progress). We topped it off with a great meal at Macado's before heading home.

**Sunday, October 9, 2011 8:00AM
Tinker Cliffs**

Fred Meyer (leader), Rushdat Kunle-Sanni (assistant), Carina Hughes, Ivy Lidstone, Dan Dennison, and guests Jennifer Horne and Linda Harrison

It was a wonderful day! When we arrived at the cliffs, we could see for many miles. After proceeding along the cliffs we turned around and visited the Lambert's Meadow campsite. This hike has nice scenery such as the meadows at Catawba Creek and excellent views of McAfee Knob. The hike was approximately 10 miles.

**Sunday, October 16, 2011 8:00AM
Work Hike**

Cancelled

**Sunday, October 16, 2011 11:00AM
Jennings Creek (Rt 614) to Bryant Ridge
Shelter**

Sue Scanlin & Carina Hughes (co-leaders), Paula Kirtley, Elija Kirtley (Paula's 7-year-old grandson), Tom Skelly, and three guests from Ireland: Una Whiting, Finola McDonald, Nollaig O'Ceallaigh

Two other callers didn't show up at the Daleville Park & Ride lot. We left in two cars around 11:15 AM. Although it was a beautiful day, the parking lot at the trailhead wasn't filled up. With Sue the leader and Carina the sweep, we soon were on our way: up, up, and more up. We stopped and regrouped several times which - as a byproduct - allowed all of us from Roanoke to chat with Tom's visitors from Dublin, Ireland. They are members of a Walking Club there and frequently hike in the Wicklow Mountains.

Eventually, Carina and Sue switched leader and sweep positions. All of us were together to take a close look at a snake that had positioned itself right over its hole on the side of the trail as if posing for pictures. None of us could identify it.

At this point we were on a long downhill stretch, which Sue didn't recall being so long when she had been there before. When we met some hikers going in the opposite direction, they said we were still quite some distance from the shelter. Taking the time it had taken us so far into consideration, we all agreed that we would forgo seeing the fancy shelter and turn around instead.

On the way back, while we were having a snack break, a

through hiker and his father who accompanied him on this part of the AT stopped to talk with us. He was very complimentary about the trail's condition and thankful for the maintainers' work. They didn't specify a part of the trail, but since they were heading north, they must have traversed the RATC's section earlier; so here you trailworkers are: Compliments to you for all the work you do!

Even though we didn't get to the shelter, everybody had a good time and enjoyed this gorgeous day in the woods.

**Saturday, October 22, 2011 9:00AM
Catawba Mountain (Rt 311) to McAfee Knob**

Linda King (leader), Carina Hughes (assistant), Trish Webb, Maya Bohler, Jim Constantin, Doug Phares, Melissa Talley, Joan Ragland

This hike was part of the Roanoke Outdoor Circus events being held the week end of October 22.

We had a gorgeous fall day for our hike. Several in the group had never hiked McAfee's Knob and it was fun to introduce them to this hike and the beautiful view from the top. No one was disappointed and all felt rewarded for their efforts. When we finished our hike, the parking lot was full to overflowing and we were quite glad we had begun and finished ahead of the crowd.

**Saturday, October 22, 2011 1:00PM
Dragon's Tooth Parking to Dragon's Tooth**

Mike Vaughn (leader), Rushdat Kunle-Sanni (assistant), Sheila Vaughn, Lynn Edwards, Dan Dennison, Mia Copeland

It was a crystal clear Fall afternoon with temperatures in the high 60s. Not unexpectedly, the trailhead parking lot was nearly full and we got the last two parking spots. We got off to a brisk start and shortly reached the A.T. at the gap. We soon started on the rockier parts of the trail and slowed down considerably. As we got higher the views across the valley were great. The Fall leaf colors were outstanding. After the last difficult, steep section we all made it to the top. It was fairly crowded, but some of us were still able to scramble up on the rocks for a near 360-degree view. We took our time going back down over the difficult trail and we all made it safely back to the trailhead by 5:00.

**Wednesday, October 26, 2011 9:00AM
Sprouts Run/Wilson Mountain Loop**

Larry Austin & Kris Peckman (leaders), Bob Peckman, John Merkwan, Carl Cornett, Ivy Lidstone, Maya Bohler, Sandra Cothran, Carina Hughes and Jeanne Duddy

It was a beautiful day for our first Wednesday hike with a well-attended group of great hikers. We commenced the hike around 9:45 and completed it around 1:40. There were some nice Fall colors along the way. Sprouts Run was flowing with less intensity than usual but still quite beautiful. Since one has to cross the stream around 15 times, the lower water level

aided in those efforts. We saw a few flowers still hanging on as well as some interesting looking fungi. We ran across a half-grown box turtle on the upper part of Sprouts Run. It was unusually friendly for box turtles as they usually disappear into their self-contained house. This one did not do so even though it was handled quite a bit with Ivy giving us a lesson in identifying the gender of box turtles. Wilson Mountain provided some nice views of the Solitude Valley, Purgatory Mountain and the James River. Upon returning to our starting point, we enjoyed some seasonal refreshments and made the trek back to Daleville.

**Sunday, October 30, 2011 1:00PM
Sharp Top Mountain**

Dave Sutton(leader), Carl Cornett, Brooke Chang, Johan Von Eader

It was a really nice crisp day for a hike. Only one day after the first October snow in awhile, the snow remained in patches along the Parkway (above 2,000 ft.) We were eager to get to the summit at 3,862 ft. Ice covered many of the ferns, branches, and trees as we approached the crown. When we reached the top we took a long break and ate some trail snacks. It was a great view at the summit. (Some of the stones were taken from here and used in the construction of Washington Monument in D.C.) Coming down, some of us had tired legs, but we made it without major injury. It was a great hike on a nice day.

**Sunday, November 6, 2011 8:00AM
Salt Log Gap to Long Mountain Wayside**

Mike Vaughn (leader), H.R. Blankenship, Carina Hughes, Mia Copeland, Carl Cornett

The morning started out clear and cold with the temperature about 32 degrees. Since there were just five of us, we decided to all go in one car and revised the hike some, since the original hike had a car switch. The drive to Amherst County was uneventful and we made it to the trailhead at Salt Log Gap and headed south on the A.T. After a short climb, we reached Tar Jacket Ridge, with its sweeping views of the surrounding mountains. We could see The Priest far to the north and Apple Orchard Mountain, some twenty miles south. After a descent to Hog Camp Gap, we climbed up Cold Mountain. The views from here were even better, with Mt Pleasant looming to the east and the Great Valley of Virginia to the west. By now we had a Fall afternoon with temperatures in the high 60s. From Cold Mountain we moved on to Cow Camp Gap shelter for lunch and the five mile return hike via the Old Hotel trail and Tar Jacket Ridge.

**Sunday, November 6, 2011 1:00PM
Bottom Creek Gorge**

Sue Scanlin & Maya Bohler (leaders), Nancy Utz, Kim Ferguson, Cheryl Crowell, Jim Constantin, Caryl Connolly, Trish Webb, Gyorgy Voross, Caralee Eicher, Joanne Derryberry, Megan Brown, Carol McPeak

Beautiful foliage and a clear, sunny sky promised to make this a memorable hike. We, eleven ladies and one gentleman, left Cave Spring Corners shortly after 1 PM to be joined by Carol on the trail later on. We took the trails in a counter clockwise direction, starting with the Loop Trail (blue).

Soon after passing the cemetery on the right, the forward group inadvertently startled two deer on the left side so that they ran away, never to be seen by the others in our group. Several of us explored the remnants of the cabin on the right side of the trail. At the overlook, cameras went into action and everybody enjoyed the view of the falls while munching on some snacks.

On the way back along the Knight Trail (yellow), three ladies went down the spur trail to get a closer look at Bottom Creek and maybe even test the water temperature. Two dogs that seemed to be on their own and probably belonged to some neighbors in the area met up with us shortly before we returned to the parking lot and hung around there until we left.

Saturday, November 12, 2011 11:00AM Western Section, Roanoke River Greenway

Mark McClain & Diana Christopulos (leaders), Karen & Rudy Vietmeier, Caryl Connolly, Dawn Lamb, Paul Blaiklock, Linda Harrison, Cheryl Crowell, Pat Cousins, Bill Modica

Perfect weather (cool & sunny) greeted us as we congregated at the gazebo near the tennis courts in River's Edge Park. Heading westward, we enjoyed the waning fall colors along the river as we walked through Smith Park, Wasena Park, and Vic Thomas Park to the current end of the trail at Memorial Ave. Then we took a sneak peak (with permission of Roanoke City officials) at the next section of the greenway, which will continue westward from Memorial Ave. to Bridge Street, adding about a mile to the length of the Roanoke River Greenway. For those not familiar with the route, the greenway will cross the river on the Memorial Ave. bridge sidewalk then loop down to the left on the road adjacent to Ghent Park, then under the bridge, where the paved greenway trail will pick up again. This section will soon be complete, having been delayed by some difficulties getting the two bridges that will span the Roanoke River in this section. We stopped for a great lunch at the Village Grill on Memorial before returning to our starting point.

Saturday, November 12, 2011 8:00AM Work Hike - Pearis Mountain

David Jones, Steve Burt, Timo Grüneberg, & Michael Sperber

Only four members came out to work, and when doing trail work always remember: Four people are certainly better than none!

Today we would do the work on Pearis Mountain that was scheduled for the September work hike. About half a mile up the trail from Morris Road a twenty-yard section of trail was badly sloughing down the mountain. Several attempts have been made to correct this enduring problem. However, the

soil is loose and the slope is steep, so the treadway keeps falling away.

To stop the slumping we would "harden" the trail with log cribbing on the downhill side. For such work we typically use rock for cribbing because it does not rot as quickly as logs....But sometimes the land dictates what materials we use; although we were in a drainage there were relatively few rocks here. Fortunately, a couple of dead locust trees were close by—locust is ideally suited to for cribbing because it is extremely durable.

The first order of business was to cut one of the logs to length. The chainsaw was rough to start and then once started, it stopped, dead. One of the reasons that locust is such durable wood is because it is hard. Hard wood is hard to saw. Reluctantly handsaws were pulled out of packs, until after the hundredth or two pulls on the chainsaw, it roared to life. This life lasted long enough to cut the log, and again, the saw stopped, dead.

Abandoning the chainsaw it was time to move the log. Nylon slings were wrapped around the 22-foot trunk and the four of us pulled. The tree moved! Hooray. With short spurts of progress, the tree was scooted twenty feet over and ten feet up. Now it was beside the existing trail.

Now we had to cut more locust—hard wood, hard to saw. We set to making long stakes to drive into the loose ground. That is three people set to making stakes with handsaws and one person set to getting the chainsaw running. After cutting one four-foot stake the woods came alive with the glorious sound of the loud whine of the chainsaw. Soon all the stakes were cut each with a nice pointed end.

The saw continued to work for the remainder of the day. The logs were set in place, the stakes were driven deep in the ground to anchor the logs and the trail was redug to fill in behind the new cribbing. At one end, existing rock steps were rebuilt to tie in well with the new treadway.

Working on the east side of Pearis Mountain with the recent time change the daylight seemed to run out quickly. As the sun dropped below the ridge above us, it was a bit surprising how the temperature dropped dramatically. The last rock step was put in place and the last of the fill was tamped and smoothed behind the new log cribbing. We gathered all of our tools, checked twice to make sure we did not overlook a tool in the fall leaves and then headed down the mountain.

Shortly, we came out of the shadow of the mountain ridge and it was again a bright warm day. What better weather to pause by the vehicles, have a cold drink, and kid each other over who did the least amount of work.

**Sunday, November 20, 2011 8:00AM
Lee Hollow (Rt. 621) to Trout Creek (Rt.
620) 113-Mile Hike # 7**

John Miller (Leader), Bob Peckman, Kris Peckman, Ivy Lidstone, Bill Brazier and Mike Vaughn

At the start of the hike the temperature was in the mid 40's but we quickly warmed up on the relentless climb to the ridge of Brush Mountain. The group separated on the way up but reunited on the ridge. We then strolled to the monument where we met and talked to two South-bound through hikers. They had some adventures in Vermont with Hurricane Lee but they hope to finish before the new year. There was a nice breeze all day long that kept us from getting too hot. At the end of the hike the temperature had risen to the low to mid 70's. It was a great late November hike!

**Sunday, November 20, 2011 1:00PM
Catawba Valley Trail - North Mountain &
back**

Fred Walters (leader), Megan Brown and Cheryl Penn with K-9 "Beasley"

The 5-mile hike started with absolutely perfect fall weather conditions including mild temperatures in the low 60s. Our small group of 3 hikers and one K-9 started the 1500' ascent up the Catawba Valley Trail enjoying the diverse scenery abounding the trail.

On the top of North Mountain, we were provided a vantage point to see for miles in all directions. A great day to be out and about hiking.

**Sunday, November 27, 2011 8:30AM
Floyd Mountain/Glenwood Horse Trail**

Larry Austin, Maya Bohler (leaders), Bob & Kris Peckman, Bill Brazier, H. R. Blankenship, Paul Jones, John Merkwon, Maurice Turner, Fred Meyer, Jen Schaeffer, Lois Smith, Mike & Shelia Vaughn and Ivy Lidstone.

We had a beautiful, although somewhat windy day, for this hike. The temperatures were quite pleasant for late November. Fifteen hikers who were getting out after Thanksgiving made the coordination of people and cars interesting. Driving to the trailhead north on I-81 gave us a clear indication of what to expect with holiday traffic heading back from the trail if that same route was taken. We thus decided early on that we would drive back on Route 11 instead of the interstate. After dropping off one vehicle at the trail where we were concluding the hike, we drove three vehicles and 15 hikers to the starting point, which took about 15 minutes. We began the hike around 9:40 a.m. on the blue-blaze trail leading from Middle Creek Road to the AT. Then the hard climb started up and over Floyd Mountain and the ridges before and after it. That was about 4 miles of strenuous climbing. After about 2.5 miles, it became apparent that the hike was more strenuous than expected and three folks decided to turn around and take some easier trail, see some water falls, and do just 6 miles instead of 11 before the drive back to Daleville. We do not use the word strenuous lightly, and we never leave any serious hiker behind! The remaining 12 stopped at the Cornelius Creek Shelter for lunch and then headed south on the Glenwood Horse Trail. We had some great views of mountain peaks on the AT and the horse trail offered many more, including some dramatic views of Flat Top and Sharp Top. We completed the hike a little after 3:00 p.m., had some fine refreshments (thanks to Jen's husband) and finally ran the car shuttle and departed around 3:40.

Hike Schedule

Going on a group hike can fulfill a number of worthwhile purposes. These include such things as physical conditioning, social interaction, the enjoyment of nature, and the thrill of reaching a spectacular viewpoint. The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club consistently tries to provide a wide range of hiking opportunities for people of all ages, interests and abilities. Guests are always welcome to join us.

For the most part, we rate our hikes as follows:

Easy – 3 to 5 miles; good trails or old roads; modest elevation changes.

Moderate – 5 to 8 miles; steeper trails which may be rough in places.

Strenuous – 8 miles and up; long hikes with extensive climbs and possible rough trails or bushwhacking.

You may drive your own car to the trailhead if you wish. However, carpooling is encouraged to save gasoline and because trailhead parking may be limited.

The hike leader is responsible for arranging such carpooling as may be required. While there is no fee to hike with the club, the indicated amount is to defray automobile expenses and should be given to the driver of your carpool.

You will need to call the leader to find out where the hiking group will be meeting. If you are new to hiking, the leader can also give advice about clothing, footwear, and equipment. If you are unfamiliar with the hike, the leader will be glad to answer your questions and help you evaluate whether or not it is suitable for you.

The club is always looking for experienced hikers to help lead club hikes. If you know of someone that you think would be a good hike leader, or wish to nominate yourself, please contact Mike Vaughn at 540-992-1350 or email mikeva999@yahoo.com.

**Sunday, January 1, 2012 8:00AM
Sprouts Run/Pine Mountain Loop**

10 miles, Strenuous
\$2.00 carpool fee, 23 miles from Roanoke

Celebrate the first day of 2012 with a good hike!
This hike will combine most of the Sprouts Run Trail (approximately 3 miles), a sort of bushwhack from Sprouts Run to the Pine Mountain Trail (unmaintained) and about 1 mile on a gravel road back to the starting point. Pine Mountain is the mountain opposite Wilson Mountain, which we usually do as part of a loop when hiking Sprouts Run. In addition to the normal creekside walking on the Sprouts Run Trail, the Pine Mountain Trail is actually a closed Forest Service Road, which is grassy in places and wooded in others. It contains some good views of mountains to the east and west and also has about four game ponds built by the Forest Service. The bushwhack portion of this hike entails walking on an old logging road for a little way, then climbing up the mountainside a little way and then hitting a grassy road which will then lead to the Pine Mountain Trail.

Larry Austin 540-254-2092
Lois Smith 540-862-7370

**Sunday, January 1, 2012 1:00PM
Fort Lewis Mountain**

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

This out and back hike crosses Mason’s Creek before ascending Fort Lewis Mountain. There are limited views from the summit.

Dave Sutton774-0648

**Sunday, January 8, 2012 8:00AM
Mount Pleasant**

6.9 miles, Moderate
\$5.00 carpool fee, 57 miles from Roanoke

This hike is located in the Mount Pleasant scenic area near route 60 in Amherst County. This loop hike goes to the summit of Mount Pleasant via the Henry Lanum Trail. There are sweeping views to the east and west from two rock outcrops at the summit. The hike will return to the starting point via the Pompey Trail.

Chris Wilson 757-202-3331
or theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com
Edward Wilson 757-202-3331

**Saturday, January 14, 2012 8:00AM
Brush Mountain Work Hike**

Moderate
\$2.00 carpool fee, 20 miles from Roanoke

We will be rebuilding some steps and water bars between Route 621 and the Audie Murphy Memorial in Craig County.

Dave Jones 540-552-3058
Blanche Brower 540-387-9732

**Sunday, January 15, 2012 1:00PM
Cascades National Scenic Trail**

4 miles, Easy
\$5.00 carpool fee, 54 miles from Roanoke
Located in Giles County near Pembroke, the hike uses trails which run along both sides of Little Stony Creek, which ends near the Cascades – an impressive waterfall. Usually the hike will go up one side of the creek and come back on the other. The Forest Service charges a nominal fee (\$3.00) to park at the trailhead.

Chris Wilson 757-202-3331
or theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com
Edward Wilson 757-202-3331

**Sunday, January 22, 2012 8:00AM
Catawba Mountain (Rt. 311) to Sandstone Ridge (Rt. 624)**

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

This hike is in Roanoke County. Heading south on the A.T., we will go along Sawtooth Ridge, with a few ups and downs and occasional good views. We will then pass through open meadows in the Catawba Valley.

Maya Bohler 540-344-6588
or mayabohler@cox.net
Jim Constantin 540-520-1498

**Sunday, January 22, 2012 1:00PM
Mill Mountain Loop**

5.5 miles, Moderate
no carpool fee, in Roanoke

We will use a series of trails to do a loop hike on Mill Mountain. We will hike the Star Trail to the Roanoke star, then take the Watchtower trail to the Mill Mountain Greenway. From there we will take the Monument trail to the Star Trail back to the trailhead on Riverland Road.

Sue Scanlin 540-989-0497
or scanlin@verizon.net

**Sunday, January 29, 2012 8:00AM
Douthat State Park**

10.0 miles, Strenuous
\$3.00 carpool fee, 35 miles from Roanoke

This hike is located in Douthat State Park in Bath County. We will be hiking on trails through this scenic park. Douthat charges \$3.00 parking per car
Kris Peckman 540-366-7780
Rushdat Kunle-Sanni 540-309-7263
or rushdatkunlesanni@yahoo.com

**Sunday, February 5, 2012 8:00AM
Mountain Lake Trails**

10 miles, Strenuous
\$5.00 carpool fee, 54 miles from Roanoke

We will be hiking on trails in the Mountain Lake area. Located in Giles County, Mountain Lake is one of only two natural lakes in Virginia.
Chris Wilson 57-202-3331
or theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com
Edward Wilson 757-202-3331

**Saturday, February 11, 2012 11:00AM
Murray Run Greenway**

6 miles, Easy
no carpool fee, in Roanoke

We will walk the Murray Run Greenway from Virginia Western Community College to Grandin Road, and return. This is the most natural trail of the Roanoke Valley Greenway system and will include the beautiful Murray Run Trail in Fishburn Park. There are some ups and downs but no long climbs. Lunch at the halfway point at All Sports Cafe.
Mark McClain 540-355-6526
or mcclain.salem@gmail.com
Diana Christopulos..... 540-387-0930

**Sunday, February 12, 2012 8:00AM
Montebello Fish Hatchery to Route 56**

9.4 miles, Strenuous
\$6.00 carpool fee, 64 miles from Roanoke

This hike starts at the Montebello Fish hatchery in Nelson County. The hike starts with a steady climb up an old fire road. At 1.0 miles it intersects the A.T. The hike will then head north on the A.T. After a half mile we will reach Spy Rock. Spy Rock is a granite dome with great 360-degree views of the Priest Mountain and other surrounding mountains. It requires some rock scrambling to get to the top. The hike will continue on the A.T., passing the Priest Mountain shelter, before

starting a 3,000-foot descent to route 56. There are outstanding views from the summit of Priest Mountain. Because this hike is through a designated wilderness area it will be limited to 10 hikers.

Mike Vaughn..... 540-992-1350
or mikeva999@yahoo.com
Dan Phlegar 540-389-1783

**Sunday February 19, 2012 8:00AM
Hoop Hole, Upper Loop**

8 miles, Stenuous, \$2.50 carpool fee
28 miles from Roanoke

The hike is located in Botetourt County between Eagle Rock and Oriskany – some 45 minutes from Roanoke. This hike uses part of the lower loop to get to the upper loop which includes a steep climb to the top of Montgomery Knob in the Jefferson National Forest.

Kris Peckman..... 366-7780

**Sunday, February 19, 2012 1:00PM
Chestnut Ridge Trail**

5.4 miles, Moderate
no carpool fee, in Roanoke

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

Chuck Walz 540-774-3596

**Sunday, February 26, 2012 8:00AM
Sinking Creek Mountain Work Hike**

Moderate
\$2.00 carpool fee, 23 miles from Roanoke

We will be clearing blowdowns, clearing underbrush and perhaps redigging some eroded treadway on Sinking Creek Mountain.

Dave Jones 540-552-3058
Kris Peckman 540-366-7780

**Saturday, March 3, 6:00PM
Potluck Banquet
and Business Meeting**

Please come to our only official meeting and elect folks to fill the open slots on our board. What a nice excuse to eat a lot of very good food with good hiking friends.

The program will be by Vince Mier, who thru-hiked the AT this year

Christ Lutheran Church at Brandon Ave & Grandin Rd. Bring a covered dish.

Want to Help?

Call Carolyn McPeak, 890-2855

**Sunday, March 4, 2012 8:00AM
Trout Creek (RT 620) to Dragon's Tooth
Parking, 113 Mile Hike #6**

7.2 miles, Strenuous
\$2.00 carpool fee, 11 miles from Roanoke

The hike is in Craig and Roanoke County west of Salem. After crossing Trout Creek, we will ascend through a fire recovery area, pass by the Pickle Branch shelter, then ascend to the ridge, which we will follow around the crescent-shaped top of Cove Mountain to Dragon's Tooth with its great views and rock-scrambling opportunities. We will descend on the A.T. to the Dragon's Tooth trail to the Dragon's Tooth parking lot.

Kris Peckman 540-366-7780
Rushdat Kunle-Sanni 540-309-7263
or rushdatkunlesanni@yahoo.com

**Sunday, March 4, 2012 1:00PM
Pandapas Pond Trails**

5 miles, Moderate
\$5.00 carpool fee, 48 miles from Roanoke

We will be hiking on the extensive trail system at Pandapas Pond. Pandapas Pond is located west of Blacksburg.

Chris Wilson 757-202-3331
or theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com
Edward Wilson 757-202-3331

**Saturday, March 10, 2012 11:00AM
Roanoke River Greenway (Roanoke)**

8 miles, Moderate
no carpool fee, in Roanoke

We will walk a section of the Roanoke River Greenway to be determined. We expect this will include one or both of the newest sections on either end

of the trail in Roanoke. Depending on the status of the new sections this may be an up-and-back or one-way walk using local bus system for our shuttle. Rated moderate due to distance, we will be entirely on paved trail which is mostly level. This hike will include a restaurant lunch stop en route.

Mark McClain..... 540-355-6526
or mcclain.salem@gmail.com
Diana Christopulos 540-387-0930

**Sunday, March 11, 2012 5:30AM
Sunrise Hike to McAfee Knob**

7.6 miles, Moderate
\$0.50 carpool fee, 6 miles from Roanoke

We will be doing a sunrise hike up to McAfee Knob from Route 311. Located west of Salem in Roanoke County, the hike follows the Appalachian Trail up and back. Extensive cliffs at the top afford unparalleled views of both the Catawba Valley and the city of Roanoke. We will be starting out in the dark, so bring a headlamp or flashlight.

Linda King..... 540-342-2411
or jennelleking@aol.com
Maya Bohler 540-344-6588
or mayabohler@cox.net

**Sunday, March 18, 2012 8:00AM
A.T., Petites Gap to James River**

9.9 miles, Strenuous
\$5.00 carpool fee, 39 miles from Roanoke

The hike is in the James River Face Wilderness located in Bedford and Rockbridge County. It roughly parallels the Blue Ridge Parkway. After a stiff climb to Highcock Knob (3073') it's a pleasant downward trending hike to James River (678') with occasional views to the west and grand finale on the James River Foot Bridge, longest foot-travel-only bridge on the AT.

John Miller 540-375-3250
or John.miller591@comcast.net

**Sunday, March 18, 2012 1:00PM
Daleville (Rt 220) to Hay Rock**

8 miles, Moderate
no carpool fee, in Roanoke

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

Blanche and Merv Brower 540-387-9732

**Saturday, March 24, 2012 8:00AM
Pine Swamp to Route 635 Work Hike**

Moderate
\$5.00 carpool fee, 54 miles from Roanoke

We will be redigging trail, installing water bars, and steps on the Trail from Pine Swamp to Route 635 in Giles County.

Dave Jones..... 540-552-3058

**Saturday, March 24, 2012 11:00AM
Carvin's Cove Trails**

6 miles, Moderate
\$.50 carpool fee, 5 miles from Roanoke

We will be doing a loop hike on trails on Brushy Mountain on the Bennett's Spring side of Carvin's Cove, near Salem.

**Sue Scanlin 540-989-0497
or scanlin@verizon.net**



Mid-week crew with their Niday Moldering Privy prepared by Jim Brown

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

- If accepted for membership, I agree to:
1. Support the objectives of the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club
 2. Abide by the rules of the National and State Parks and Forests
 3. Respect the interests of the owner when on private property
 4. Keep trails and woodlands free of litter and
 5. Abide by instructions of the leader on group hikes and trips

Name(s) _____ New Member Packet fee \$5.00 _____

Address _____ Indiv. # of years _____ x \$10.00 _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ - _____ Family # of years _____ x \$15.00 _____
OR

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Individual life membership \$250.00 _____

Email _____ Family life membership \$300.00 _____

Year you joined RATC (make a guess!) _____ Donation \$ _____

Make checks payable to **RATC, PO Box 12282, Roanoke, 24024-2282** Amount Enclosed \$ _____

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



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Director Western Virginia Land Trust, Roger B. Holnback
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Roanoke Valley Greenways Liaison, Roger B. Holnback
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The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club is an affiliate of
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