

TRAIL BLAZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROANOKE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

Spring 2013

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

WORK HIKES

Sunday, April 14 - 8:00 AM
Mountain Lake Area Trail Clearing

Saturday, May 4 - 8:00 AM
Brushy Mountain Trail Rehabilitation

Saturday & Sunday, June 1 & 2 - 8:00AM
Konnarock – Bluff City Relocation

Hike Scheduling

Contact Chris Wilson

757-202-3331 – TheShoelessWanderer@gmail.com

BOARD MEETINGS

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

Monday, April 8, 7:00 p.m.
Hosted by *Roger Holnback*

Monday, May 6, 7:00 p.m.
Hosted by *Blanche & Mervin Brower*

Monday, June 17, 7:00 p.m.
Hosted by *Kris & Bob Peckman*

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Saturday, June 8, 2013
Troutville Trail Days

Troutville Trail Days will be Saturday, June 8 at the Town Park of Troutville. Activities are planned starting at 9:00 am with the 5K Hiker's Hustle Race where you can compete with the 2013 AT Thru-Hikers! Many activities will be offered to keep people of all ages and interests engaged: live music, historic campsite, Hiker's Hustle Race, Baker's Hustle competition, moderated Thru-Hiker interviews, Trail 101 clinics, children's activities, free shuttle service to guided hikes on the A.T., and many related vendor offerings!

We are looking for volunteers to man the RATC booth from 11 AM to 6 PM and to lead short local hikes at 1 PM, 2 PM and 3 PM. If interested in volunteering or if you have questions, please contact Homer and Therese Witcher at 540-992-3932 or witchers4@juno.com.

Welcome New Members

The Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club welcomes the following new members:

John Baranowski
Lindsay Blankenship
Beth and Sean Campbell
Phil Cantrell
Ann Cash
Tom & Virginia Hutson

Andrew Jackson
Bob Kirby
Audrey Leftwich
Jeff Monroe
Amy Pugh
Bill Richardson

James C. Rogers Jr.
Matthew Schumaecker
Chuck and Carolyn Taylor
David Socky
Jas Strokus
Phillip Strokus

And the following donors:

John C. Everett Jr
Georgia Gallaher
Ursula & Siegfried Kolmstetter
Christopher David Lynch

John R. Miller
Marjorie Felton-Petry
& Dan Petry
Bonnie Pulliam

Gene Rose
William 'Rob' Whitesell
Adam Wood

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

Bob Blankenbaker

President's Report

I want to thank all those who attended our annual banquet and awards meeting on March 2. Dave Socky gave an excellent presentation on his recent trek in the Himalayas. In addition to our regular annual awards to our hike leaders and trail maintainers, we gave the first annual Charles Parry Memorial Volunteer of the Year Award. The award was named after Charles Parry, our long-time Trail Supervisor, who died in December 2010. This award went to Homer and Therese Witcher. In addition to doing an outstanding job as our Shelter Supervisors, Homer and Therese maintain two sections of the trail. They can be found on most weekends out working on the trail. They are truly an inspiration to many of us in the club.

We also elected a new slate of officers. I am pleased to announce that Chris Wilson has agreed to step in and serve as Hikemaster. Adam Wood, our previous Hikemaster, is not able to continue in this position due to heavy job demands. Chris's husband, Edward will take over as Membership Coordinator.

As usual, Carolyn McPeak did a superb job coordinating the banquet. The food was great and the event went very smoothly. Due to family

commitments Carolyn is stepping down as our Social Committee chairperson. Please contact me if you are interested in taking over for Carolyn or are interested in serving on the Social Committee.

Over the past year our club members have accomplished a great deal. I'd like to highlight a few of them here:

- Our members put in many hours in July clearing the hundreds of blowdowns along the trail as a result of the derecho that hit our area on June 29. This was very difficult and hazardous work in extremely hot summer conditions.
- We had an active trail maintenance program with many improvements made to the trail over the past year, including the installation of numerous waterbars and steps.
- The 16 shelters in our section of trail received numerous improvements. These included new roofs installed on two shelters, new picnic tables being installed at four shelters, several shelters being stained, and seven privies moved.

- Our club worked with the National Forest Service and the ATC to improve signage on the trails to McAfee Knob and Dragon's Tooth. This has greatly reduced the number of lost hikers on these heavily used sections of the Trail.
- Our A.T. corridor monitoring program was greatly invigorated. Working closely with ATC, a significant number of corridor monitoring work hikes were accomplished.
- Our two Konnarock trail crew work weeks made notable improvements to the trail up to Dragon's Tooth and also the trail near Campbell Shelter.
- The Ridge Runner program was extended through November. It is hoped this will continue in future years, if funding allows.

- Our recreational hike program was again very active, with two hikes being offered nearly every weekend, as well as some week-day hikes.
- We established an on-line Meetup group as a means to further publicize our hikes and reach out to hikers who may not be aware of our hike program. Over 160 hikers have signed up on the site to date.
- We updated our club's Local Management Plan. This was last updated in 1992.

I greatly appreciate all the efforts of our club members. 2012 was a very productive year for the club. I am sure 2013 will be another great year for the RATC.

Mike Vaughn

Shelter Supervisors' Report - Troutville Trail Days 2013

Detailed planning for the second annual Troutville Trail Days event at the Town Park of Troutville is underway and promises to be even more fun and more interactive than last year! This event highlights the Town's DESIGNATED APPALACHIAN TRAIL COMMUNITY status and focuses on outdoor recreation, nature, health, and fitness while celebrating the Appalachian Trail Thru-Hikers, and the hiking

community at large. A detailed program guide will be posted by 5/15/2013 and kept updated on: www.togetherfortroutville.com. Thru-Hikers are expected to camp out in the Town Park starting 6/7 through 6/9 to celebrate the Appalachian Trail with us and many free services will be offered to them to make them feel welcomed in our community!

Homer & Therese Witcher

Hikemaster's Report

Well it is almost that time that we all love. Wildflowers, the beginning of daylight savings time, warmer temperatures, and those ever-changing shades of green visible on all the tree canopies. How can you not like it? Maybe you have bad allergies like me, but I think it is worth it for the beauty of Spring.

We had a wonderful hike schedule for the Winter 2013 Blazer, and I hope you will find the Spring schedule to also provide some great hiking opportunities. Ed Burgess has once again stepped up to offer a weekly Appalachian Trail hike. These are especially great opportunities for those of you hoping to achieve the 113-mile completion.

As always, I want to say thanks to all of our hike leaders for their great efforts each quarter. I believe for the Spring schedule we actually have more assistant hike leaders than in any of the previous three quarters. We are always trying to improve this statistic. Serving

as an assistant hike leader is a great way to get your feet wet and is a good stepping stone for becoming a hike leader.

As many of you already know, I am stepping down as Hikemaster due to ever-increasing work obligations. It has been wonderful working with everyone, and I thank you for the opportunity to serve on the board this past year. Chris Wilson has decided to fill this position, and I am confident she will do a wonderful job for the club. Chris is a hike leader and has an outstanding knowledge of region-wide trails. She and her husband Edward have offered many unique hikes to the RATC club over the years they have been involved. I am sure Chris will help to spice up future schedules with interesting options for hike leaders. Please join me in thanking Chris and welcoming her into this position.

Adam Wood

Hike Reports

Sunday, December 9, 2012 10:00 AM Dragon's Tooth

Sue Scanlin (leader), Phillip Strokus, Alan Matsumoto, Mike and Sheila Vaughn, Maya Bohler, Brendle Wolfe, Linda Akers, & Joyce Fisher

Here it is December and we had not only sunshine but also 60+ degrees for our hike. Perfect! Around 10:30 we were on the trail with Mike up front and Maya as the sweep. By the time we reached the intersection with the AT, several of us had already shed one layer of jacket along the way and now zipped off our convertibles' pants legs to continue in shorts.

Mike pointed out the new signs here and later at the top as well. The rest of us gave them our seal of approval and appreciation, and to the installers our silent thanks. Well done! May these markers last a long time and prevent future hikers from going the wrong way.

Then came the rocky stretch - let me tell you, it doesn't get any easier with advancing age, even if the convenience of metal bars helps. Up at the top it was windy and quite a bit colder again. As we sat down for our lunch break, the shorts turned back into pants. Several of our group climbed the top of the tooth before we headed downhill again. Mike, Sheila, and Phillip had left a little earlier than the rest of us to do some maintenance and trash picking up on the way, especially at the camping area.

Along the stretch from there back to the parking lot, we noticed a smallish tree on the left that had been bent and broken since our ascent. Makes you wonder about people's desire to leave a trace of destruction.

Sunday, December 16, 2012 11:00 AM Roanoke River Greenway (Salem) Rotary Park to 12 O'Clock Knob Road

Mark McClain, Diana Christopulos (leaders), Conrad & Bee Grundlehner, Georgia Gallaher, Doug Fowley, Mervin & Blanche Brower

Threatening skies deterred a few timid souls who signed up for the trip, but eight intrepid greenway walkers took a chance and were not disappointed as only a bit of sprinkling marred a cool and gray but otherwise glorious day. We started at the easternmost terminus of the Roanoke River Greenway in Salem at Rotary Park and walked the ~3 miles to the bridge construction site at 12 O'Clock Knob Road and W. Riverside (where a span will connect to another segment of the trail adding about 0.7 miles to the total). It appears the bridge work will be

completed in a few weeks. It was a good day for wildlife: in addition to the permanent resident mallards and Canada geese we saw great blue herons and a small flock of hooded mergansers who winter along the Roanoke River. The sumptuous buffet at Shanghai Restaurant was a great reward on the way back to our starting place.

Sunday, December 23 2012 1:00 PM Flat Top Mtn at Peaks of Otter

Dave Sutton (leader) Matt Sutton, Doug Fowley, Melissa Talley

Although the Parkway is closed to motorized vehicles just beyond the lodge, we parked our shuttle car here and walked an additional 2 miles to the trailhead. Along the trail, there was a trace of snow. It was a little cool with some wind while hiking to the top. When we arrived on top there was almost no wind. We took a break here, then headed down the trail to the picnic area where we had parked, with daylight to spare. We had a good hike with some great hikers!

Tuesday, January 1, 2013 10:00 AM Sprouts Run / Wilson Mountain Loop

Chris & Edward Wilson (co-leaders), Kris & Bob Peckman, Susan Terwilliger

A beautiful day for a hike! Unanticipated warm (relatively speaking) temperatures greeted us as we started this early morning hike. We were not only lucky enough to have warm weather but also none of the rain that everyone was forecasting. Unfortunately because of the bad weather that was forecasted there were quite a few last minute cancellations, but that was okay for the 5 hikers that ventured out. Sprouts Run is a hidden little gem in southwestern Virginia where it can sometimes be hard to find solitude on our hiking trails. Although several hunters were spotted on the drive to the trailhead, no other humans were seen during the trek. Fortunately because of the warm temperatures most of the ice had melted that had covered the trail during the previous day's scouting trip, which made for easy passing on the trail. A fun day and wonderful company was had by all.

Thursday, January 3, 2013 10:00 AM Catawba Mountain (Rt. 311) to Sandstone Ridge (Rt. 624)

Ed Burgess (Leader), Mary Harshfield, Jimbo Harshfield

The hike today was very good and it was great to be able to get outdoors and back to nature for awhile. The

morning did not start out very well, however, since Mike called and said he was sick and could not make the hike. Still it did not deter my own anticipation of the hike even though I was very sorry to learn Mike would not be there. I drove to the prearranged meet up location and waited to see if anyone else would show up; if not I had planned to hike up to McAfee Knob by myself and enjoy the views once again. However, within a few minutes Mary and Jimbo Harshfield pulled into the parking area and we exchanged pleasantries while we waited for anyone else who may have decided to come.



Home Sweet Home

The cool temperatures and cloudy conditions did nothing to cool the enthusiasm and anticipation of today's hike. I had been looking forward to getting out and spending some time outdoors with Mother Nature. After the holidays I also felt that it was much needed so as to work off some of the extra calories that had been added to this body. Yet, I knew this one hike was not nearly enough to use up all the calories that I had ingested over the holidays.

At any rate, Mary and Jimbo Harshfield and I set out to enjoy the day in the woods and began our hike along Sawtooth Ridge. The trail was in excellent shape and the views down into the Catawba Valley were awesome as we traveled up and down the many humps along Sawtooth Ridge. We had not gone very far into our hike, when I heard Jimbo call from behind to come back and look at something. Everyone knows how a hiker hates to retrace their steps but since Jimbo said it was worth it, Mary and I decided to go back and see what he had discovered. I am very glad we did because at the base of a tree was a small hole that went into the trunk of the tree which was very worn. However, the interesting part of it was that someone had actually carved a little sign and engraved on it were the words, "Home Sweet Home". I could not help but think of Chip and Dale living there and passing under that sign many times each day. As Jimbo pointed out someone had gone through some extra effort for that sign since it was screwed into

the tree just above the entrance hole. After taking some photos of the of the sign we continued our trek along Sawtooth Ridge and continued to view the sights and sounds of Catawba Valley below.

We eventually came down the ridge to a stream and bridge as we entered an open field where the sun was shining to beautiful. Since Jimbo and I were getting hungry we decided it was a good place to have lunch before crossing Blacksburg Road. The three of sat down in the field overlooking a large stand of cattails below us. Once we finished lunch it was time to move on and we crossed the road and walked through more fields before our ascent up to Sandstone Ridge. As we walked along in the beautiful fields it was nice to see where we had been on Sawtooth Ridge and from this point of view it was very easy to see where it got the name. Looking up at the ridge we could see all the ups and downs we had just climbed earlier that looked like the teeth in a saw. After continuing on through the fields we eventually climbed up to Sandstone Ridge. The trail did not travel very far on this ridge before it came down to Route 624. Since we had left a shuttle car at the Dragon's Tooth Parking lot we had to continue across the road and hike about another mile. It was not long however, until the Appalachian Trail led us to the Boy Scout connector trail that led down to the parking lot. Even though the hike was only about 7 miles, it was a great day of hiking and I hope Mary and Jimbo enjoyed it as much as I did. I always enjoy my time out on the trails but it was even more enjoyable doing it with some great folks like Mary and Jimbo. I can hardly wait for the next hike and I hope it is as enjoyable as this one.

Saturday, January 5, 2013 9:00 AM
McAfee Knob

Dan Dennison led this hike but the report went into that great bit bucket in the sky when Bob had a computer glitch. Please do not discard your reports until you see them in print! Sorry Dan!

Sunday, January 6, 2013 9:00 AM
Ferrier - Lick Branch - North Mountain Trails

John Merkwon (leader), Ivy Lidstone, Fred Meyer, Mike Vaughn, Sheila Vaughn, Bill Reich, Bob Peckman, Larry Austin, Lois Smith, Cody Buse (guest), Erik Storm (guest) and Ken Knott (guest).

I really don't plan it this way but the hike was initially described at 7.6 miles. I updated that length prior to the hike to 10.5 but when we hiked it on Sunday it measured out at 11.5. Message here may be to expect some bonus mileage on a Merkwon hike. This hike started with 3/4 miles uphill gaining 600 feet which wasn't too bad, but the return was a bit of a challenge with a long uphill

stretch broken into 2 segments. The first segment is 3 miles gaining 620 feet and the second segment is 1 mile gaining 750 feet. My hikers were running on empty climbing that last segment! On this hike the work was worth the effort as plenty of great views from both Broad Run and Lick mountains kept the hike interesting as well as the Lick Branch segment which included over a dozen stream crossings. A major downer was that we had one of our cars towed off of the trail head! The vehicle was parked in a wide spot in the road with no residence in sight or other foreshadowing that we were about to be victims of a tow trap! Hike length was 11.5 miles taking 6 1/2 hours for all to cross the finish line. (RATC paid the towing charge. Ed.)

**Tuesday, January 8, 2013 10:00 AM
Catawba Valley Trail**

Ed Burgess (leader), Mary Harshfield, Jimbo Harshfield, Mike Vaughn, Lynne Edwards, Cynthia Munley, Frank Munley, Carol Kinzer, Paula Willis

This hike was very enjoyable by most everyone; however, we did encounter some snow and ice on the trail, which made walking a little tricky; luckily it was only for about 200 feet or so. Once through that section of the trail it was a great hike. The group did great and once we reached the top of North Mountain, the group decided to hike a little farther on the North Mountain Trail, which traverses the ridge of North Mountain. As we walked along the ridge there were some nice views down in the Catawba Valley as well as of Tinker Cliffs, which could be seen in the distance across the valley.

Before heading back down the Catawba Valley Trail to the parking lot we decided to have lunch on the North Mountain Ridge. We found a large log near the trail that would be able to seat everyone and since the area was nearly free of snow, it was decided this was going to be our cafeteria or lunch room for the day.

It was a very nice hike and the wonderful group of hikers made it even better.

**Saturday, January 12, 2013 8:00 AM
Cascades to Butt Mt.**

Mike Vaughn (leader), Carina Hughes, Brendle Wolfe, Sheila Vaughn, Doris Mercado, John Miller, H.R. Blankenship, Doug Knighton, Mangala Kumar, Larry Austin, Bill Reich, Cynthia Munley, Julie Shumaker, Jen Schaeffer, Karen Callahan

Fifteen hikers started out on the beautiful Cascades trail on an unusually warm January morning (it would be a record-setting 73 degrees in Roanoke). The trail along the creek was slick from recent rains. We paused

frequently to take pictures of the tumbling stream. Due to recent rains the waterfall was flowing great. We then started our ascent up the mountain, stopping briefly at Barney's Wall to take in the view. We reached the summit of Butt Mountain at 12:30 and had lunch there. The views across the valley to Pearis Mountain were great. We descended the mountain much faster and were back to our cars by 3:30.

**Sunday, January 13, 2013 11:00 AM
Mill Mountain & Environs**

Mark McClain & Diana Christopoulos (leaders), Lisette Franko, Caryl Connolly, Juel Adams, Theda Weissberg, James Vodnik, Jim Constantin, Lynne Edwards, Conrad Grundlehner, Linda Akers, Linda Harrison, Sharon Probst, Doug Fowler, Bob Kirby

With a promise of partly cloudy skies and warm temperatures (60's), this hike attracted a great turnout. We made it a one-way hike with shuttle, starting the hike at Riverland parking area and taking the Star Trail to the summit of Mill Mountain, then down the Mill Mountain Greenway to the Roanoke River Greenway. Most of the group took a detour to Fork in the Alley for a great lunch before returning to our cars at River's Edge Park. Technology reared its occasionally not-so-ugly head as one of the group called a relative from the Star overlook to see if he could see us on StarCam - not only could he, but he grabbed the image and emailed it to her!

**Thursday, January 17, 2013 10:00 AM
Chestnut Ridge Loop Trail**

Ed Burgess (leader), H.R. Blankenship, Mary Harshfield, Jimbo Harshfield, Frank Munley

The outlook for the day's hike did not look very promising with the latest weather forecast of rain changing to snow with up to 4 to 6 inches accumulation. The outlook seemed even worse after I checked my email and saw several people had decided not to do the hike and within a few minutes of reading the emails, I got a phone call that another person decided not to hike today. At any rate, I still chose to drive to the designated meeting area in the event someone still planned to hike. I was pleasantly surprised when H.R. Blankenship pulled into the parking lot. He told me he had passed two other hikers walking up the road coming toward the parking lot and they turned out to be Mary and Jimbo Harshfield. About the same time, Frank Munley pulled into the parking lot. I was very happy to see such dedicated and enthusiastic people out to hike in such bad weather conditions.



HR, Jimbo, Mary & Frank - Burgess

We left the parking lot and began our hike at 10 AM. Even though it was raining and a bit chilly the five of us went off down the slippery trail. The cold rain and overcast conditions did nothing to dampen the enthusiasm for hiking and the warm friendly conversations. We had a few unexpected views of some huge apartments or condos in the distance as we hiked down very close to a mobile home park. Other than the apartments, the hike itself did not offer any other spectacular views, but it was great to be out hiking in the woods with some great people and enjoying their company and conversations. We arrived back at the parking area a few minutes after 12 noon, which made us all very thankful that we had completed the hike before the snow arrived. It was a fast paced hike but none of us wanted to get caught in some bad driving conditions on our way back home.

After a few quick photographs and saying our goodbyes to each other we all headed to our respective homes to wait and watch for the snowflakes to begin falling.

Saturday, January 19, 2013 8:00 AM
 AT ~~Sinking Creek (VA Rt 630) to Lee Hollow (VA Rt 621)~~
113 Mile Hike #8
The Cascades

Chris & Edward Wilson (co-leaders), Susan & Terry Bateman & Brendle Wolfe

A beautiful day for a hike, but not a beautiful day for driving. Unfortunately road conditions did not allow us to reach our intended hike, but undeterred we headed to the Cascades. For the Batemans, visiting all the way from Gloucester, VA this was a blessing in disguise as

they'd never hiked the Cascades before. A leisurely hike was had with plenty of time to stop for snowy photos. If you've only hiked the Cascades during the summer you're truly missing out! Snowy days mean few people on the trails in this otherwise very busy spot. Lunch was had by the falls and a wonderful day was had by all filled with gorgeous views and inspiring conversations.



Brendle, Terry, Susan, Edward & Chris

Sunday, January 20, 2013 1:00 PM
Daleville (Rt 220) to Mountain Pass Road (Rt 652) - Out and Back

Mervin Brower (leader), Blanche Brower (assistant)
 Curry Fisher, Linda Akers, Jewel Adams

The hike started from Daleville commuter parking lot. The day was bright and sunny with a temp about 50°F. When we started walking up the hill we came across a big blowdown from our recent snow. We had to walk around the fallen trees to get to the other side of the trail. As we continued along we ran across other blowdowns but not as bad as the first one. When we got to the top of the hill overlooking 652, no one was interested in walking to the bottom and then back up. So we stayed on top for about 15 minutes and then retraced our steps. When we got to the first blowdown we encountered, we found it already cleared. We then ran into Homer and Therese who were busy working away. Our group was very impressed with this quick action. We then walked back to the Daleville parking lot.

Tuesday, January 22, 2013 9:00 AM
Black Horse Gap (BRP) to Curry Gap (BRP)
113 Mile Hike #1

Cancelled, Blue Ridge Parkway was closed.

**Wednesday, January 23, 2013 8:00 AM
Catawba Mountain to McAfee Knob via
Campbell Shelter**

Cancelled due to a hiker shortage

**Sunday, January 27, 2013 8:00 AM
Douthat State Park**

Kris Peckman (leader), H.R. Blankenship, Carl Cornett, Anne Hanna, Ivy Lidstone, Fred Meyer, Mike and Sheila Vaughn

Oh well, so it was really 12 miles, not 11 as advertised. Several new hikers originally signed up, but canceled, leaving eight stalwarts. The trails were smooth, the stream crossings easy, and the snow we received Friday afternoon was just snow, and less than an inch deep on the trails. No Yak-traks needed. The weather was lovely, starting off in the low 20s but rising to gloves-off weather by early afternoon. In the snow on the ridge, we saw tracks of rabbit, deer, and we might have seen some bobcat tracks early in the day. A grouse was spotted along the trail, and deer were visible from the cars during the ride to and from the hike.

Douthat State Park has lots of well-maintained trails and nice views of Warm Springs Mountain and the Cowpasture River Valley. We had lunch perched on some rocks on Mountaintop Trail overlooking the lake. It was a beautiful hike with a delightful group of people.

**Tuesday, January 29, 2013 9:00 AM
Curry Gap (BRP) to Daleville (RT 220)
113-Mile Hike # 2**

Cancelled, Blue Ridge Parkway was closed.

**Saturday, February 2, 2013 8:00 AM
Old Hotel Trail / Cold Mountain / Mt. Pleasant**

Chris & Edward Wilson (co-leaders), Doug Knighton, Isabelle Duston, Jen Sharp & Ken Knott

A not so beautiful day for a hike. Freezing temperatures that never reached 32 and strong winds, but a few brave hikers hit the trail anyway! Intending to do two of Virginia's most beautiful hikes, hikers set out early and ready to go for the day; unfortunately Mother Nature had other plans. Icy trail conditions and overflowing creeks made this usually moderate hike into a very strenuous one. Many creek crossings existed in locations that are usually bone dry. Layers of ice under the soil made hiking more difficult than usual. The view at the top of Mt. Pleasant was gorgeous; however, the high winds meant hikers didn't spend much time lingering. The good humor of the hikers was not affected by these challenges however, and even though the group wasn't

able to make it to Cold Mountain it was unanimous that it was still a great day...despite the icicles clinging to our pant legs.

**Sunday, February 3, 2013 8:00 AM
North Mountain**

Mary and Jimbo Harshfield, Micah Johnson, Bob and Kris Peckman (leaders)

The North Mountain trail has very nice new signs provided by stimulus funds. From these signs we learned that our hike was actually 11.7 miles, not the advertised 10.4.



Bob Peckman

We started off with four old-timers and one new member who soon recognized the need for more preparation and only went partway. There was snow on the trail, which increased to as much as 2 inches as we went up to the ridge. Near the bottom of the Catawba Valley Trail were several large areas stained with fresh blood, and some deer hair. Tracks of human and dog were also fresh. The ridge walk offered plenty of climbing as well as beautiful views of the snowy valleys on both sides. The trees were outlined in snow. We saw tracks of rabbit and small birds, as well as one line of turkey tracks. Between the Grouse and Deer Trails we encountered some snow/ice pellet showers which obliterated the valley below. After the Deer Trail the sun peeked out a

couple of times, and we started seeing mountain bike tracks in the snow. Soon two smiling young women came pedaling up the trail—they are tough! Driving back to Roanoke after the hike, we were surprised to find no snow on the ground.

**Tuesday, February 5, 2013 9:00 AM
Andy Layne Trail to Daleville
113 Mile Hike #3**

Ed Burgess (leader), Mike Vaughn, Jeff Monroe

I had been looking forward to this hike for several weeks. I was anxious to hike the Andy Layne Trail for the first time and also to be back on the AT hiking. We began our hike at the Andy Layne trailhead on Route 779. The first part of the Andy Layne was easy walking through the fields even though they were muddy from the recent rains and thawing ice and snow. Once through the fields, we started our ascent toward Scorched Earth Gap and the AT. The hike up was steep in places, and in other places it was a gradual climb via switchbacks, for which I was very thankful. At any rate, after some huffing and puffing on my part, we finally made it to the junction of the AT where we headed northbound toward Lamberts Meadow Shelter. We decided to take a short break and have lunch here at the shelter. After lunch we once again headed north on the AT and began our grand tour of the beautiful valleys on each side of the ridge. After traveling along the ridge for about 6 miles, I heard either Mike or Jeff say something to the effect that the views were so plentiful and beautiful a person sort of gets tired of looking. I suppose that is a correct statement or maybe it is just after seeing the landscape on such a grand scale all along the ridge, we sort of took it for granted and maybe got a little bored. However, the views down in the Catawba Valley and Carvins Cove were spectacular to say the least. Along with all the magnificent views were some beautiful rock formations beside the trail. At one section we hiked beside a wall of rock, that almost seemed to be man made, but the fact is, it was created by a woman that we call "Mother Nature". Many more outstanding rock formations were also seen along the trail, some that had names such as Hay Rock, but other majestic rocks could also be seen that I assume did not have names attached to them.

Even though there were only 3 of us on this hike, I consider it one of the most enjoyable. Not only because of the natural beauty of the trail, but the natural flow of conversation with some outstanding hiking companions.

I would recommend this hike for anyone who wishes to see some fantastic views as well as some beautiful natural rock formations.

**Saturday, February 9, 2013 10:00 AM
Murray Run Greenway & Grandin Village**

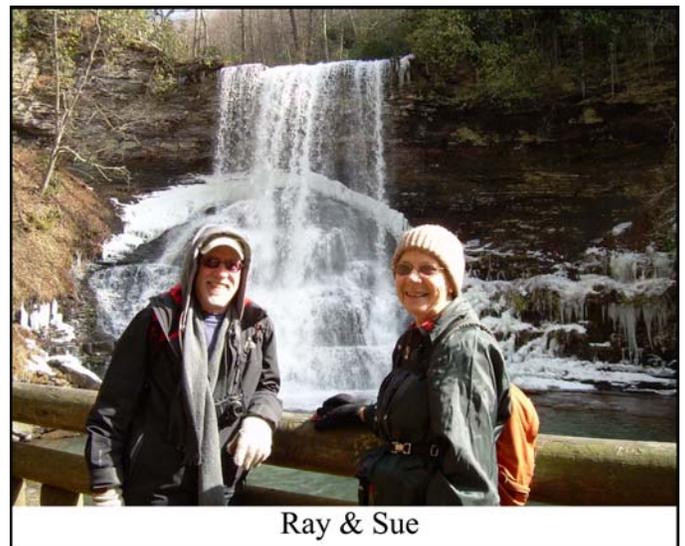
Mark McClain & Diana Christopoulos (leaders), Lisette Franko, Rena Smith, Mary & Jimbo Harshfield, Kathy Paranac, Paul Blaiklock, Lucy Finn, Sharon Probst, Beverly Angle, Caryl Connolly, Pat Cousins, Doug Fowley, Jim Constantin

The promise of sunny skies and mild temperatures (by February standards) brought out a good crowd for this walk on Roanoke's only "natural path" greenway, Murray Run. Starting at VWCC campus on Colonial we walked through the woods and parks traversed by Murray Run Greenway including a detour on the Ridge Trail in Fishburn Park. Arriving at Grandin Road we continued down that thoroughfare to our lunch stop at Healthy Stuff Cakery and Cafe (in Grandin Gardens) where we enjoyed a tasty meal prepared by Big Al Hubbard. We retraced our steps to the starting point, this time following the greenway. The total distance of this urban hike is about 5.5 miles.

**Sunday, February 10, 2013 10:00 AM
Cascades National Scenic Trail**

Sue Scanlin (leader), Ray Lawson (assistant)

A perfect, sunny day for a hike and yet nobody but the leader and assistant showed up. Makes you wonder what is going on.



Ray & Sue

The two of us went anyway and, boy, was it worth it! Along Little Stony Creek, there were more and more icicles on both sides as we approached the falls. At the falls themselves they had formed the typical arch behind the falling water. What a magnificent sight! We returned to the parking lot on the fire road and headed back to Hanging Rock Orange Market. Both of

us were glad we had such a nice day to enjoy the wonderful scenery.

**Sunday, February 10, 2013 8:00 AM
Cove Mountain/Little Cove Mountain
Lollipop Loop**

Larry Austin (leader, filling in for Mike Vaughn)
Paul Jones, Lois Smith, Jen Schaeffer, Kris Peckman,
John Merkwán and Carina Hughes

We commenced the hike around 8:40 behind the Arcadia Chapel. The weather was in the upper 20's to low 30's at the beginning and finally got to the low 40's under mostly cloudy skies. It was cold with a slight breeze at times. We climbed up the Cove Mountain Trail connecting with the Buchanan Trail for a short distance and then headed south on the AT to the Little Cove Mountain Trail. We stopped at the Cove Mountain Shelter briefly for a snack and some of us had hot tea. We had incredible views of the mountains in many directions on this hike. Most of them still had snow on them which made them stand out quite well. We stopped on the Little Cove Mountain Trail about 1/2 way down to enjoy lunch and found a spot which was somewhat sheltered from the wind. Near the bottom of the Little Cove Mountain Trail we veered off the trail to bushwhack a short distance to the bottom of a waterfall which we normally have only seen from on top. We then climbed steeply up the rock cliff to the top with a different view of the waterfall. Jen spotted a blooming trout lily near a rock cliff and then we found some others when we started looking around. It was a nice surprise to see a wildflower this time of the year. From that point we followed an old hunter's trail to the Glenwood Horse Trail which led us back to the Cove Mountain Trail and our descent of Cove Mountain. It was a good hike with lots of climbing but we had a great group of hikers.

**Tuesday, February 12, 2013 9:00 AM
Catawba Mountain (Rt. 311) to Andy Layne
Trail (Rt. 779)
113-Mile Hike # 4**

Ed Burgess (leader), Mike Vaughn, Jeff Monroe, John Hubbard

This hike was one of the best locations in all of Virginia for the scenic views from high up on the ridge. I was hoping the weather would cooperate so we could actually enjoy the views. As we left the parking area on Catawba Mountain it was partly cloudy and cool with a very stiff wind blowing which was of some concern. However, based on the weather forecast it was supposed to subside during the day and also become mostly sunny. The forecast did hold true for the most part, but the morning was very cool and windy along the ridges. But

we were very fortunate to have clear skies and marvelous views from McAfee Knob down into the Catawba Valley. We took a few minutes for photos at the Knob and after looking down the ridge toward Tinker Cliffs decided we best get moving since we had several miles to go. After coming down on the north side of McAfee Knob we did stop at the Campbell Shelter for lunch before heading out for Tinker Cliffs. The sun had been making some appearances and the wind had abated somewhat as we continued along the ridge toward the cliffs. By the time we arrived at Tinker Cliffs it was mostly sunny and the wind had died down to only a few miles an hour, so it was very pleasant as we took in all the views down in the valley below. It was a beautiful sight and looking back to the south and seeing McAfee Knob on the horizon just added to the experience. We could see the ridge we had traversed all the way back to the Knob and it looked much more hiker friendly than it actually was when hiking it.



Jeff Monroe

Burgess

After taking a break and some photographs we decided we should get moving since we still had several miles to the parking area. We continued on north and down to Scorched Earth Gap and the junction of the Andy Layne Trail, which we were taking down to the parking area on Route 779. We had not seen any other hikers all day until just before reaching the junction of the Andy Layne Trail where we met a couple of young guys heading up to Tinker Cliffs. As we came on down the mountain and near the end of the hike, we met 4 or 5 more hikers heading up toward the cliffs. It was nearly 4 PM when

we arrived at the parking area and someone commented that they hoped the last group we met had some headlamps or flashlights since it would be nearly impossible for them to get to the cliffs and back before dark.

I think this is one of the best hikes in all of Virginia, since you get to see 2 of the prime vistas on the AT and pass by 3 shelters along the way. However, I would not recommend it to anyone who is not in good physical condition, since it is over 12 miles in length and has some steep climbs as well as some steep downhill sections. For anyone who chooses to do this hike it is well worth the time and effort.

**Sunday, February 17, 2013 8:00 AM
Bottom Creek Gorge**

John Merkwan (leader), Ivy Lidstone, H.R. Blankenship, Guy Brooks, Bobby Blankenship, Adam Wood, Kris and Bob Peckman.

Although the temperature never got over freezing and the winds were averaging 25mph, a good time was had by all. Well, I think so since this was a two-part hike with 6 of 8 hikers electing the two-hike option. We started the day in the Bottom Creek Preserve. The rhododendron leaves were rolled very tight. We speculated why that may be so. (OK, they curl because it is cold. But why?) I have since found there are six theories but space and probably reader interest does not allow a discussion here. A highlight of the Bottom Creek hike is Bent Mountain Falls at 220 feet making it the 2nd highest waterfall in Virginia. OK, which one is the highest - I faltered as hike leader and didn't have the answer to this obvious question during the hike but I can say in this report that it is Crabtree Falls. Bottom Creek was flowing and we did see some fish that looked kind of orange - it may have been the Orangefin Madtom which is extremely rare and found in only 20 streams in the world. Sad to say we did not identify any Bigeye Jumprocks which are also rare. During the Poor Mountain hike (3.6 miles) Guy noticed his water bottle had begun to freeze. In addition to Guy's water the cascade at Poor Mountain was nearly frozen over which made for an interesting sight.

**Tuesday, February 19, 2013 9:00 AM
Thursday, February 21, 2013 9:00 AM
McAfee Parking to Dragon's Tooth Parking
113-Mile Hike # 5**

Ed Burgess (leader), Jeff Monroe, Mike Vaughn, John Hubbard, Madeleine Taylor, Dan Phlegar

This hike was originally scheduled for Tuesday, but due to the weather forecast we rescheduled it for

today. With temperatures down into the lower 20's, I was expecting a very cold and unpleasant day of hiking but boy was I wrong. The temperatures were cold, but the warm and friendly companions more than made up for the cold conditions. To make this hike even better we had two new hikers join us that I had never met, and they truly made the hike much more fun and exciting.

We began our hike from the Catawba Mountain parking lot with some very cold and crisp temperatures. However, after climbing the first hill and having some warm conversations the body and mind warmed up and the hike was looking to be a wonderful experience. We hiked along Sawtooth Ridge with the many ups and downs as we looked down in the valley below at familiar places along Route 311. We finally arrived at Blacksburg Road and started looking for a nice place to take a lunch break. After crossing the road we hiked for a little while in the field and decided to stop for lunch at a beautiful knoll overlooking the valley. As we all sat down in the middle of the field of dead grasses and the warmth of the bright sunshine, we had some great conversations as we enjoyed our lunch. As we finished lunch, Madeleine checked her thermometer and informed us that the temperature had warmed to the 40 degree range which made for near perfect hiking.

After lunch we continued on through the field of grasses and eventually climbed up and over Sandstone Ridge. After crossing Newport Road, we started our ascent toward Dragon's Tooth. The trail was in great condition as we climbed the mountain and we soon came to the more rocky section that required a little slower speed since we had to look for footholds to get up over the rocks. I enjoyed this part of the hike most of all with the rock scramble and the many Mountain Laurel and Rhododendrons growing on each side of the trail. However, I only had a very light pack, and as someone stated, the thru-hiking backpackers probably hate it. At any rate, we continued on up to Rawies Rest and had some fantastic views down in the valley and North Mountain. Since it was such a clear day we could also see back to McAfee's Knob and Tinker Cliffs. After a brief rest and some photos, we continued on up the mountain and eventually dropped down to Lost Spectacles Gap where we took the blue blazed Dragon's Tooth trail back to the parking lot where we had left two shuttle vehicles.

This was another awesome hike on the Appalachian Trail with some outstanding views and even more important, sharing it with some outstanding people.

**Wednesday, February 20, 2013 8:00 AM
Sunset Field to Petites Gap**

Cancelled due to illness

**Saturday, February 23, 2013 8:00 AM
Troutville to Salt Pond Road**

Cancelled due to weather

**Sunday, February 24, 2013 8:00 AM
Big Stony Creek / Bailey Gap Work Hike
PineSwamp/StonyCreek Area Trail Rehab.**

Steve Burt, Matt Gentry, Jason Hoepker, Carina Hughes, David Jones, Lori Jones, Ivy Lidstone, Vince Mier, Phillip Strokus, Susan Terwilliger, Jim Webb, Megan Webb

The November work hike was scheduled for the Pine Swamp area to work on trail tread. But, when it was determined that bridge repair on Dismal Creek needed to be done we changed plans. Today, we were able to complete the original work hike.

In many places where the trail follows Stony Creek the sidehill trail tread is slipping down the slope. The plan was to re-dig some of the worst areas. As the planned work hike weekend approached, phone messages and emails came that indicated we would have a fairly large crew to get a good amount of trail re-dug.

Then on Wednesday, Robin Reed the Roanoke weather forecaster was yet again all excited about another winter storm to hit our area. The result of this excitement was not as exciting as the forecast, but on Friday morning the Blacksburg area was coated in snow and ice, and it was raining.

When digging trail or redigging trail or when doing general trail repair, the key principle is to manage water—we can't have water gathering on the trail because this causes erosion. Well, Robin Reed said we were going to get snow, sleet and rain, and we did get snow, sleet and rain. If treadway work is all about shaping the trail tread so that it does not gather water, it is a problem when snow, sleet, and rain fall on Thursday, Friday and Saturday before the Sunday work hike because this saturates the soil. You can't manage the water on a trail when the material you are using is mud.

Fortunately, the fall and winter storms have been knocking down trees throughout the RATC's section of trail. So this crew that was so ideally suited for redigging trail could readily be converted to a crew that is ideally suited for clearing blowdowns and underbrush. The conversion entails leaving the digging tools in the RATC's tool shed and instead loading up the cutting tools.

So, we had twelve people come out on a clear, chilly morning, who were not really too worried about what plans the trail supervisor had in his head. After the usual discussion and confusion, the group was divided into three crews. One was given several hand saws and loppers, and they headed off into the Peters Mountain Wilderness. The other two carried chainsaws, and they went to other sections of the trail.

About mid afternoon at nearly the agreed upon meeting time (the trail supervisor was late...), all the crews emerged from the woods to regroup at the Pine Swamp parking area. Cold drinks were served, tools put away, and nearly four miles of trail were clear. As it turns out, many blowdowns were cut, this section of trail needed to have this work done, so the snow, sleet and rain that ruined our digging really helped get our work efforts focused on what needed to be done. Atta Boy, Robin Reed!

**Tuesday, February 26, 2013 9:00 AM
Thursday, February 28, 2013 9:00 AM
Trout Creek (RT 620) to Dragon's Tooth Parking
113 Mile Hike #6**

Ed Burgess (leader), Madeleine Taylor with Sassy, John Hubbard, Mike Vaughn, Mary Harshfield, Jimbo Harshfield, Jeff Monroe

Another awesome hike on the Appalachian Trail with some of the most outstanding people I have had the pleasure to meet. The hike today included another of the gems of the Appalachian Trail, which is known as the Dragon's Tooth. The hike was another wonderful experience and only dampened by the fact that it was cold and windy, especially on the ridge top and at Dragon's Tooth.

The hike began with a bridge crossing and more or less constant climb up to the ridge. As we were making our way up the mountain, we hiked through several open fields that seemed to have been mowed and kept clear of underbrush. It was in one of these fields that we passed the trail leading down to the Pickle Branch Shelter, but since the shelter was some distance off the trail, we chose to continue on up the mountain. We passed by

several huge rock piles as we continued to climb. Once on the ridge, it was up and down as we followed Cove Mountain around and over to Dragon's Tooth. Just before reaching Dragon's Tooth, we had some spectacular views down in the valley below but it was so cold and windy we could not enjoy it for long. After stopping a few times for photos and taking in the view, it was on up to Dragon's Tooth. We decided to take the short blue blazed trail over to the Tooth and have lunch. The sights were amazing both of the rocks and the view down into the valley far below, but it may not have been the best choice for lunch. We searched for places among the rocks to get out of the wind but we soon learned that regardless of where we were the wind seemed to seek us out and find us. So to not get too chilled, we quickly ate lunch and hiked back to the AT and started our descent down the mountain.



Madeleine Taylor Burgess

This is where the hike got very interesting, to say the least. It was mostly rock scrambling and searching for the best way to get down from the many rocks that the trail followed. My mind raced back to an earlier time when I had done this section of the trail as I was carrying a heavy backpack. At that time, I was trying to get down as quickly as possible because I was in a ferocious thunderstorm. With lightning flashing and the thunder rolling all around me, it seemed as though I would never make it through this maze of rocks. Of course with the severe storm the rocks were very slick and what little soil there was between the rocks was nothing but mud, which made the footing very treacherous. As I compared the first time I was here and this time, I realized that this hike was pretty tame as we picked and searched for the best footholds down through the many rocks. With being dry and only a small day pack to carry it was much

less of an obstacle course, and actually fun and entertaining as we hiked down to Lost Spectacles Gap.

At Lost Spectacles Gap we took the blue-blazed, Dragon's Tooth trail back down to the parking lot where we had left a shuttle car to get us back over to the Trout Creek parking area.

The hike today was another wonderful experience on the Appalachian Trail with some great people who enjoy hiking and being outdoors. I can hardly wait for next week as we continue following the AT south in the beautiful state of Virginia.

Sunday, March 3, 2013 8:00 AM
Peaks of Otter – Sharp Top – Flat Top
Fuller's Rocks and Rocky Row

Fred Meyer (leader), Bob and Kris Peckman

The BR Parkway was closed so we did Plan-B. Fullers Rocks and Big Rocky Row provide Olympian views. The hike is 11 or 12 miles and strenuous and we climbed to about 2000 feet above the James River, where we could see the river that created the Gap many years ago. It is Virginia's longest river, about 450 miles long, and in the summer hikers often jump in to cool off. When we reached Fuller Rocks, we could see Cock Knob and Apple Orchard Mountain. Also Big Piney and Peavine Mountains are north of the river. We returned along Saddle Gap trail and had a lovely day, even though it was a bit chilly. It was not as cold as we had feared and our biggest problem was carrying too much clothing. Along the way we met 3 hikers who brought along a dog carrying a pack, and 2 campers. (We even saw a bluebird. Kris)



You can see the James River forever.

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

**Tuesday April 2, 2013 9:00 AM
 Big Horse Gap to New River (RT 460)
 113-Mile Hike #11**

12.5 miles, Strenuous
 \$6.50 carpool fee, 60 miles from Roanoke + long shuttle

This hike follows the A.T. north from Big Horse Gap near Dismal Falls in Giles County. It goes along the ridge line of Pearis Mountain. At 3 miles there is a rock cliff which provides good views of Sugar Run Mountain. The trail passes Doc's Knob Shelter at 3.8 miles. At 9 miles there is another cliff, which provides good views of Wilburn Valley. Angel's Rest is reached at 9.6 miles. This provides great views of the New River Valley and Peters Mountain. From there the trail begins a steady descent to Route 460.

**Ed Burgess H: 540-565-0016
 C: 330-523-9788..... eb1574@gmail.com**

**Saturday April 6, 2013 8:00 AM
 Garden Mountain (Rt 623) to Rich Valley (Rt 42)**

17.3 miles, Strenuous
 \$4.50 carpool fee, 40 miles from Christiansburg + long shuttle

The carpool leaves from Christiansburg. We will be starting out at the A.T. crossing on the top of Garden Mountain in Burkes Garden, Tazewell County (elevation 4,000 feet). The hike will go south on the A.T., passing the Beartown Wilderness Area. There are good views of Burkes Garden at two points along the trail. The hike will generally be downhill, ending in Wythe County. Please RSVP at least 24 hours prior to hike time.

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

**Sunday April 7, 2013 8:00 AM
 Hoop Hole Upper Loop**

8 or 9 miles, Moderate/Strenuous
 \$3.00 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 540-366-7780
 Linda King 540-342-2411
 jennelleking@gmail.com**

**Tuesday April 9, 2013 9:00 AM
 Ribble Trail/A.T. Loop, 113-Mile Hike #12**

9.9 miles, Strenuous
 \$7.00 carpool fee, 71 miles from Roanoke

Located in Giles County, this hike follows Dismal Creek before a starting a steep climb up Sugar Run Mountain. The hike then follows the ridge line for several miles, offering views of the Wilburn and New River Valleys. The hike starts on the Ribble Trail for .4 miles to the A.T. At the A.T. intersection, turn left (north). The trail crosses Dismal Creek on footbridges several times in the next mile. At 1.9 miles the trail passes the Wapiti Shelter and then begins ascending Sugar Run Mountain. At 4.3 miles a rock outcrop provides excellent views of the valley below. At 6.5 miles, reach northern end of blue blazed Ribble Trail. Make left onto the Ribble Trail and begin steep descent of the Ribble Trail, passing the old Honey Springs Cabin. The trail will cross FS 201 several times before reaching the parking area at 9.9 miles, where car is located.

**Ed Burgess H: 540-565-0016
 C: 330-523-9788 eb1574@gmail.com**

**Saturday April 13, 2013 8:00 AM
Roanoke - Walking Half-Marathon Training Hike**

13.1 miles, Strenuous
No carpool fee

We will walk the course of the Blue Ridge Half Marathon, but in the opposite direction of the race and with slight variations. This walk is rated strenuous due to length and ascent of Mill Mountain. Suitable only for hikers who are in good shape and able to maintain 3 mph pace for this distance with minimal breaks. We'll celebrate with group lunch when we're finished. See <http://blueridgemarathon.com/race-options/half-marathon/half-marathon-course-map/> for the route. Contact leader for meeting place.

Mark McClain & Diana Christopulos.....
Mark 355-6526..... mcclain.salem@gmail.com
Diana 387-0930 dianak16@earthlink.net

**Sunday April 21, 2013 8:00 AM
Salt Log Gap to Long Mountain Wayside**

11.0 miles, Strenuous
\$6.50 carpool fee, 60 miles from Roanoke + long shuttle

Located in Amherst County some 20 miles northeast of Buena Vista, this hike offers some outstanding views. The trailhead is on the Appalachian Trail at Salt Log Gap roughly 8 miles from route 60 on a gravel road. Following the A.T. south, the route climbs Tar Jacket Ridge and then Cold Mountain. Both of these summits are open and offer extraordinary views in all directions - Cold Mountain especially. From Cold Mountain we will descend to Cow Camp Gap (during the stagecoach days there was an inn in this area, but nothing remains of it today). The trail then makes a short ascent before a long 2,500 foot descent to Long Mountain Wayside.

Mike Vaughn..... **540-992-1350**
.....mikeva999@yahoo.com

**Sunday April 14, 2013 8:00 AM
Mountain Lake Area Trail Clearing**

We will be working in the Mountain Lake area, clearing blowdowns and trimming underbrush from Bailey Gap Shelter to the War Spur Trail. This section is almost seven miles long and half of it is in a wilderness so we will cut blowdowns with hand tools. Though long, we have access at both ends and the middle so the opportunity exists to use four crews to clear this section. But, we need lots of people to make those four crews.

David Jones.....**540-552-3058**
.....dhjones@together.net
Kris Peckman **540-366-7780**

**Tuesday April 23, 2013 9:00 AM
Kimberling Creek RT 606 to Jenny Knob RT611
113-Mile Hike #14**

9.3 miles, Strenuous
\$7.00 carpool fee, 70 miles from Roanoke

The trail starts by crossing Kimberling Creek on a suspension footbridge. This is one of the longest footbridges on the A.T. The trail then ascends steeply to the wooded summit of Brushy Mountain, before descending to Licksillet Hollow. It then crosses Route 608 and again ascends Brushy Mountain. It passes Jenny Knob Shelter before reaching Route 611, the southern terminus of the section of the A.T. maintained by the RATC.

Ed Burgess.....**H: 540-565-0016**
C: 330-523-9788eb1574@gmail.com

**Tuesday April 16, 2013 9:00 AM
Ribble Trail to Kimberling Creek (RT 606)
113-Mile Hike #13**

5.5 miles, Moderate
\$7.00 carpool fee, 71 miles from Roanoke

Located in Giles County, this hike follows Dismal Creek for several miles. Much of the trail is lined with rhododendron. At 3.9 miles, blue-blazed trail on right goes .3 miles to Dismal Falls. This part of the creek is very scenic. The hike ends at Route 606 and Kimberling Creek. The A.T. goes over the creek on a footbridge.

Ed Burgess **H: 540-565-0016**
C: 330-523-9788..... eb1574@gmail.com

**Saturday April 27, 2013 1:00 PM
Dragon's Tooth Parking to Dragon's Tooth**

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

Located on Cove Mountain near the Craig and Roanoke County line, the hike to Dragon's Tooth ascends steep, rugged outcrops of quartzite which form the spine of Cove Mountain. A difficult hike, Dragon's Tooth summit offers magnificent views of nearby and distant peaks year-round.

Guy Brooks..... **540-581-2023**
.....guybrooks@hotmail.com

**Saturday April 20, 2013 9:00 AM
AT - Catawba Mtn. (311) to McAfee Knob**

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

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.

Carina Hughes..... **540-588-0433**
.....chughes@rcs.k12.va.us

**Sunday April 28, 2013 8:00 AM
Longdale North Mountain Trail**

11 miles, Strenuous
\$4.25 carpool fee, 42 miles from Roanoke

This will be a U shaped hike with a short shuttle. Unlike last fall when we climbed North Mountain we are starting on the top with this hike and doing a ridge walk to an area known as Pete's Cave then going down North Mountain and hiking out on an old Forest Service road to our shuttle location. The ridge walk is loaded with great views and Pete's Cave is a very interesting area.

John Merkwon **540-904-2299**

**Tuesday April 30, 2013 9:00 AM
Black Horse Gap (BRP) to Curry Gap (BRP)
113-Mile Hike #1**

6.9 Miles, Moderate
\$1.50 carpool fee, 16 miles from Roanoke

This hike is located in Botetourt County. From Black Horse Gap on the Blue Ridge Parkway, elevation 2,400 feet, the trail heads south. There are limited views on this section of trail. In 2.4 miles a blue blaze trail on right leads to the Wilson Creek Shelter. After crossing Wilson Creek, the trail ascends steeply. It then descends steadily and crosses Curry Creek. From there it ascends steeply on switchbacks to the Salt Pond Road crossing. Go left on Salt Pond Road for .9 miles back to the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Ed Burgess H: 540-565-0016
C: 330-523-9788..... eb1574@gmail.com

**Monday May 6 – Wednesday May 8, 2013 8:00
Backpacking Botetourt
Thunder Hill to Camp Bethel**

32 miles, Moderate to Strenuous
\$3.00 carpool fee, 24 miles from Roanoke + long shuttle

Trip starts on the Blue Ridge Parkway just south of Thunder Hill shelter to Bryant's Ridge shelter then on to Bobblets Gap. The last day will end at Camp Bethel in Botetourt county. Meet at Camp Bethel. Shuttle to the BRP then off to Bryant Ridge; this is a moderate hike of 9 miles. Day two is Bryant Ridge to Bobblets Gap and is a strenuous day of 12 miles. Day three is Bobblets Gap back to Camp Bethel and is also a moderate day of 11 miles. Trip is limited to 6 people.

John Hubbardffhowdy@yahoo.com

**Tuesday May 7, 2013 9:00 AM
Curry Gap (BRP) to Daleville (RT 220)
113-Mile Hike #2**

9.4 miles, Strenuous
\$1.00 carpool fee, 9 miles from Roanoke

The hike is located in Botetourt County. From Curry Gap on the Blue Ridge Parkway, the trail ascends on Salt Pond Road for .9 miles to the A.T. crossing. Turn left on the A.T. (south). The trail follows the ridge line, with limited views to the valley below. At 3.7 miles the blue-blazed trail on left leads to Fullhardt Knob Shelter and the wooded summit of Fullhardt Knob. The trail then descends from Fullhardt Knob. At 6.7 miles the trail crosses Mountain Pass Road (Route 652). It then ascends an open knoll, with good views of McAfee Knob and Tinker Mountain, before descending and crossing Va. Route 11. The trail continues through mainly old orchards to Route 220.

Ed Burgess.....H: 540-565-0016
C: 330-523-9788eb1574@gmail.com

**Saturday May 11, 2013 7:00 AM
Rock Castle Gorge**

11 miles, Strenuous
\$5.50 carpool fee, 57 miles from Roanoke
Located in Patrick County on Blue Ridge Parkway land. After a steep 2,000-foot ascent, the hike parallels the Parkway - passing alternately through woods and open fields with extraordinary views. On the descent down the other side of the gorge, the hike passes some old cabin sites and a series of interesting rock formations. The last few miles are along Rock Castle Creek - a wild stream with many cataracts.

Carina Hughes 540-588-0433
..... chughes@rcs.k12.va.us

**Tuesday May 14, 2013 9:00 AM
Andy Layne Trail (RT 779) to Daleville (RT 220)
113-Mile Hike #3**

11 miles, Strenuous
\$1.00 carpool fee, 8 miles from Roanoke

The hike is just north of Roanoke, starting in the Catawba Valley and ending in Daleville. The hike starts with a three mile ascent on the Andy Layne Trail, reaching the A.T. at

**Saturday May 4, 2013 8:00 AM
Brushy Mountain Trail Rehabilitation**

This work hike is near the far end of our section just south of Kimberling Creek on Brushy Mountain in Bland County. We will be redigging sidehill trail that is slipping down slope. If we have adequate time and people we may put in some water bars and steps.

David Jones.....540-552-3058
..... dhjones@together.net

**Sunday May 5, 2013 8:00 AM
Catawba Mtn. (311) to Dragon's Tooth Parking Lot
113-Mile Hike #5**

8.9 miles, Strenuous
\$1.00 carpool fee, 9 miles from Roanoke
The hike begins at the 311 A.T. parking lot - just 15 minutes from Roanoke. The Appalachian Trail is followed south over the many humps of Catawba Mountain before dropping down to the open fields of Beckner's Gap. Between Routes 785 and 624, the trail crosses Sandstone Ridge. Beyond 624 the trail heads uphill past the Boy Scout Trail. It then reaches Rawie's Rest, a knife-like rocky outcrop, with good views. Continue on to Lost Spectacles Gap, where a blue-blazed trail on right leads down to the Dragon's Tooth parking lot.

Carina Hughes.....540-588-0433
..... chughes@rcs.k12.va.us
Karen Callahan540-961-0640
..... callahankm@appstate.edu

**Sunday May 5, 2013 1:00 PM
Jennings Creek (RT614) to Bryant Ridge Shelter**

5.9 miles, Moderate
\$2.00 carpool fee, 23 miles from Roanoke

Located in Botetourt County not far from Arcadia and Buchanan. This will be an out and back hike to the Bryant Ridge Shelter on the A.T. This shelter is located on a scenic part of the creek. The shelter has three levels and is well worth seeing.

Mervin & Blanche Brower540-387-9732
.....mervinbrower@verizon.net
..... blanche.brower@verizon.net

Scorched Earth Gap . Go left (north) on A.T, passing Lamberts Meadow Shelter at 3.5 miles. The trail then goes along the ridge of Tinker Mountain with views to the right of Carvins Cove Reservoir. At 6.9 miles reach Hay Rock, a massive fragment of the tilted limestone that forms the backbone of Tinker Ridge. A climb to the top provides good views. At 8.9 miles the trail starts descending from Tinker Mountain. At 10.5 miles the trail crosses over Tinker Creek on a concrete bridge and reaches Route 220 in another 1/2 mile.
Ed Burgess H: 540-565-0016
C: 330-523-9788..... eb1574@gmail.com

**Friday-Sunday May 17-19, 2013 12:00 Noon
 Grayson Highlands/Mt Rogers Backpack Trip**

21 miles, Strenuous
 \$7.25 carpool fee , 72 miles from Christiansburg

Carpool leaves from Christiansburg. Join us for one of the premiere hikes in the U.S. and one that the club does not often offer. Most of this hike will be on trails at over 5,000 feet of elevation. The trail will follow the A.T. through the open mountain meadows of the Mt. Rogers Scenic Area, with a side trip to the wooded summit of Mount Rogers, at 5,729 feet, the highest point in Virginia. There are many semi-wild ponies in the open meadows along the trail. We will camp near the trail in the Rhododendron Gap area for one night, followed by one night spent near an AT shelter. Hike leaves from Christiansburg. RSVPs must be made before May 10. Group size is limited to 12 people.

Chris & Edward Wilson757-202-3331
 theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com

**Saturday May 18, 2013 8:00 AM
 Cascades to Butt Mountain**

10.8 miles, Strenuous
 \$5.50 carpool fee, \$3.00 parking fee, 54 miles from Roanoke

Located in Giles County near Pembroke, the hike will first go along Little Stony Creek to the Cascades - an impressive waterfall. It will then go up the Nature Conservancy Trail to Barney's Wall, a cliff that features a 700-foot drop. There is a great view of the New River Valley from Barney's Wall. From there it will continue along the ridgetop of Butt Mountain to the location of an old fire lookout tower.

Linda King.....jennelleking@gmail.com

**Tuesday May 21, 2013 9:00 AM
 Catawba Mtn RT 311 to Andy Layne Trail RT 779
 113-Mile Hike #4**

11.5 miles, Strenuous
 \$1.00 carpool fee, 12 miles from Roanoke

This hike offers the opportunity to see two of the prime vistas on the Appalachian Trail, McAfee Knob and Tinker Cliffs, in one day. The hike starts across from the large gravel A.T. crossing parking lot on Route 311. Be extremely careful crossing route 311, visibility for cars is limited and they are moving very fast. The trail climbs gradually to McAfee's Knob, passing John's Spring Shelter at 1 mile and Catawba Mountain shelter at 3 miles. At 3.7 miles reach short blue-blazed trail on left to McAfee Knob. The cliffs there offer

magnificent views of the Catawba Valley and the city of Roanoke. The trail then follows the the ridge line to Tinker Cliffs at 8.6 miles, with views of McAfee Knob and North Mountain. Continue north on the A.T. for another half mile to Scorched Earth Gap. Go left on the Andy Layne Trail for descent to RT 779.

Ed Burgess.....H: 540-565-0016
C: 330-523-9788eb1574@gmail.com

**Sunday May 26, 2013 8:00 AM
 Anthony Knob Loop**

10 miles, Strenuous
 \$4.25 carpool fee, 42 miles from Roanoke

Located about 6 miles east of Clifton Forge in the Longdale Use Area of the George Washington National Forest, this hike has a little bit of everything. There are three trails in this area: Anthony Knob, Blue Suck and YACCRS Run at 4.7, 1.4 and 3 miles respectively. Lunch will be between two of Anthony's Knobs with a far off view of Iron Gate.

John Merkwon 540-904-2299
Ivy Lidstone..... bil4444@gmail.com

**Saturday-Monday May 25-27, 2013 8:00 AM
 Backpacking Cumberland Gap National Park**

13 miles (Optional 5 Mile Additional), Moderate
 \$23.00 carpool fee, 211 miles + 20 Mile Car Shuttle

The carpool for this hike will leave from Christiansburg. This is it, the furthest point you can travel west and still remain in the state of Virginia (in fact part of the hike is actually in Kentucky). A moderate hike that affords gorgeous views with several unique points of interest including Skylight Cave, Sand Cave, and Hensley Settlement, a settlement from the 1890s that we'll have time to explore on Saturday night. Includes school house, graveyard, general store and several other settlement buildings. RSVPs must be made before May 18. Group size is limited to 10 to 12 people.

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

**Tuesday May 28, 2013 9:00 AM
 Catawba Mtn RT 311 to Dragon's Tooth Parking
 113-Mile Hike #5**

8.9 miles, Strenuous
 \$1.00 carpool fee, 10 miles from Roanoke

The hike begins at the 311 A.T. parking lot just 15 minutes from Roanoke. The Appalachian Trail is followed south over the many humps of Catawba Mountain before dropping down to the open fields of Beckner's Gap. Between Routes 785 and 624, the trail crosses Sandstone Ridge. Beyond 624 the trail heads uphill past the Boy Scout Trail. It then reaches Rawie's Rest, a knife-like rocky outcrop, with good views. Continue on to Lost Spectacles Gap, where a blue-blazed trail on right leads down to the Dragon's Tooth parking lot.

Ed Burgess.....H: 540-565-0016
C: 330-523-9788eb1574@gmail.com

**Saturday & Sunday June 1 & 2, 2013 8:00 AM
Konnarock Work Weekend
Bluff City Relocation**

We will be back to working on a relocation near Pearisburg that we last worked on several years ago. This year we plan to finish this project, so consider coming out both Saturday and Sunday to dig new trail.

**David Jones.....540-552-3058
..... dhjones@together.net**

**Sunday June 2, 2013 1:00 PM
Thunder Ridge to Cornelius Creek shelter**

6.9 miles, Moderate
\$2.50 carpool fee, 23 miles from Roanoke

Located in Bedford County, this hike has wonderful views from Thunder Ridge Overlook and Apple Orchard Mountain. This route is also known for the Guillotine, a rock formation, where the trail passes under a suspended rock.

**Mervin & Blanche Brower540-387-9732
.....mervinbrower@verizon.net
..... blanche.brower@verizon.net**

**Tuesday June 4, 2013 9:00 AM
Trout Creek (RT 620) to Dragon's Tooth Parking
113-Mile Hike #6**

7 miles, Moderate
\$1.50 carpool fee, 11 miles from Roanoke + long shuttle

The hike is in Craig and Roanoke County west of Salem. After crossing Trout Creek, it ascends steeply through a fire recovery area, passing by the Pickle Branch Shelter at 1 mile. It then continues ascending to the ridge, and then goes around the crescent-shaped top of Cove Mountain to the blue blazed trail to Dragon's Tooth on the right. There are great views and rock-scrambling opportunities on Dragon's Tooth. The trail descends on the A.T. to Lost Spectacles Gap, where a blue-blazed trail on left leads down to the Dragon's Tooth parking lot.

**Ed Burgess H: 540-565-0016
C: 330-523-9788..... eb1574@gmail.com**

**Saturday June 8, 2013 6:00 AM
Hanging Rock State Park**

12 miles, Strenuous
\$7.00 carpool fee, 70 miles from Christiansburg

The carpool for this hike will leave from Christiansburg. A beautiful state park in the western part of North Carolina. On our 12-mile loop hike we will visit a fire tower on Moore's Knob plus outstanding overlooks on Balanced Rock, Cook's Wall, House Rock, and Wolf Rock. Toward the end of our hike we'll visit the park's namesake Hanging Rock. Up and over several mountains we'll experience extended stretches of uphill climbs followed by extended stretches of downhill hiking. In the park there are also several short hikes (.5 miles or less) to waterfalls that we can hike if anyone is interested after the 12 miles. Please RSVP at least 24 hours prior to hike time.

**Chris & Edward Wilson757-202-3331
..... theshoelesswanderer@gmail.com**

**Sunday June 9, 2013 8:00 AM
Lee Hollow (Route 621) to Trout Creek
113-Mile Hike #7**

9.2 miles, Strenuous
\$1.50 carpool fee, 14 miles from Roanoke

AT hike located in Craig and a little bit of Roanoke County, the hike on Brush Mt. includes the Audie Murphy Monument, a tribute to the most decorated soldier of WWII, who died in a plane crash on the mountain in 1971. This hike has a mile of road walk added because the bridge may be out on RT 620.

**Mike Vaughn.....540-992-1350
.....mikeva999@yahoo.com**

**Tuesday June 11, 2013 9:00 AM
Lee Hollow (RT 621) to Trout Creek (RT 620)
113-Mile Hike #7**

9.2 miles, Strenuous
\$1.40 carpool fee, 14 miles from Roanoke

AT hike located in Craig and a little bit of Roanoke County, the hike on Brush Mt. includes the Audie Murphy Monument, a tribute to the most decorated soldier of WWII, who died in a plane crash on the mountain in 1971. This hike has a mile of road walk added because the bridge may be out on RT 620.

**Ed Burgess.....H: 540-565-0016
C: 330-523-9788eb1574@gmail.com**

**Sunday June 16, 2013 8:00 AM
Crabtree Falls & The Priest**

9 miles, Strenuous
\$7.00 carpool fee, 68 miles from Roanoke

The hike is located in Nelson County, and follows Crabtree Creek, with scenic overlooks at the five major cascades, which have a total fall of 1,200 feet. After reaching the top of the falls, we will take a side trail to connect to the A.T. near the Priest shelter. After some more climbing, we will begin a 3,000-foot descent from the summit of the Priest back to Route 56 on the Tye River.

**Kris Peckman540-366-7780
Rushdat Hale.....540-204-2448
..... rhale1987@yahoo.com**

**Sunday June 23, 2013 8:00 AM
Balcony Falls-Gunther Ridge**

11.8 miles, Strenuous
\$3.00 carpool fee, 39 miles from Roanoke

Segments of 6 trails comprise this circuit hike with excellent views of the James River Gorge, its rapids and Arnold Valley. From an elevation of about 760 feet, we will ascend Balcony Falls trail followed by Sulfur Spring Trail. We take the A.T. for a short time followed by the Belfast and Gunter Ridge Trails. Then we take the Glenwood Horse Trail to USFS 815 and then Va 782 which takes us back to where we started.

**Fred Meyer304-546-5572
304-744-9219..... wfmeyer@suddenlink.net
Rushdat Hale.....540-204-2448
..... rhale1987@yahoo.com**

**Tuesday June 25, 2013 9:00 AM
Sinking Creek to Lee Hollow
113-Mile Hike #8**

10.4 miles, Strenuous
\$4.00 carpool fee, 41 miles from Roanoke

Located in Craig County, the hike climbs up Sinking Creek Mountain, then follows the ridge where rock piles and old apple trees remain from the days when even the top of the mountain was farmed. Several slanted rocks offer views of Craig Creek Valley and the mountains beyond. The hike starts with a 1,200' ascent of Sinking Creek Mountain. At .5 miles the trail passes the giant Keffer Oak, a very large, historic tree. At 1.9 miles the ridge line of the mountain is reached. Most of the rest of the hike is along the crest of the mountain, with views of Craig Creek Valley to the right. At 3.2 miles the blue blazed trail to Sarver Cabin Shelter is reached. At 9.5 miles pass the Niday Shelter and continue descent on trail to Route 621.

Ed Burgess H: 540-565-0016
C: 330-523-9788..... eb1574@gmail.com

**Saturday June 29, 2013 8:00 AM
Catawba Mtn (RT 311) to Trout Creek (RT 620)**

12.9 miles, Strenuous
\$1.50 carpool fee, 16 miles from Roanoke

Located in Roanoke and Craig County, the hike follows the roller coaster Sawtooth Ridge, with views of Fort Lewis Mountain on the left and Cove Mountain and North Mountain on the right. The hike continues over Sandstone Ridge and then begins the strenuous climb to Dragon's Tooth, which offers great, near 360 degree views. The hike will then descend Cove Mountain to Trout Creek.

Linda King..... 540-342-2411
.....jennelleking@gmail.com
Fred Meyer 304-546-5572
304-744-9219..... wfmeyer@suddenlink.net

**Sunday June 30, 2013 1:00 PM
Cascades Trail**

4 miles, Easy
\$5.00 carpool fee, \$3.00 parking, 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.

Guy Brooks..... 540-581-2023
.....guybrooks@hotmail.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

Email _____ Family life membership \$300.00 _____

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

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

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PO BOX 12282
ROANOKE VA 24024-2282



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Alternate Regional Partnership Committee Rep., Mike Vaughn
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Roanoke Valley Greenways Liaison, Roger Holnback
Regional Partnership Committee Alternate, Roger Holnback
ATC-LT Coord. James to New River, Roger Holnback
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ATC-LT Coord. New River to Damascus, Steve Reisinger
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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 Western Virginia Land Trust